

THE GRECCIO CIRCLE

Around the year 1220, St Francis of Assisi celebrated Christmas by setting up the first Christmas crib or *crèche* in the town of Greccio near Assisi. He used real animals to create a living scene so that the worshipers could contemplate the birth of the child Jesus in a direct way, making use of the senses, especially sight, sound, and smell.

Since then, millions have celebrated the birth of Jesus through the *crèche*. The Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia invite you to share in helping their ministries around the world by honoring the first *crèche*. Through a gift of \$1,000 or more, you can become a member of *The Greccio Circle*.



What better way to help and support the sisters' ministries for the poor than by participating directly with a gift to the Franciscan Ministries Foundation? Each year at Christmas, special events and prayers will be offered for members of *The Greccio Circle*. Please help the sisters with your gift now and make a difference in someone's life.

The late Archbishop Thomas Murphy of the Archdiocese of Seattle, Washington, once said that the ministry of fund-raising is a sacred trust. He spoke of fund-raising in terms of a *sacramental significance*. He said that through the ministry of fund-raising, the acts of giving and receiving, the giver and receiver become outward signs of God's grace. Archbishop Murphy warns us that if our work is not about God, then it is not Catholic fund-raising.

Author Henri Nouwen wrote: "Ministry is, first of all, receiving God's blessing from those to whom we minister. What is this blessing? It is a glimpse of the face of God." Become a member of *The Greccio Circle* and support the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia's ministries today.

WHAT IS A NAMED ENDOWMENT?



A named endowment is an amount of money (fund) that is given to the Franciscan Ministries Foundation with a stipulation that the funds are invested to earn annual interest rather than spent immediately.

A portion of the annual earnings is used for ministries or retirement. The rest of the earnings are reallocated back into the fund's principle to insure that the endowment continues to grow and yield more interest for future support.

An endowment fund is a gift that keeps on giving. The original amount of the gift is invested to earn yearly interest, which in turn is used to support ministries and retirement.

Individuals who give or pledge \$25,000 or more may establish a personalized Endowment Fund in the name of a loved one or a former or current Sister of St. Francis. Named Endowment Funds can be added to at any time and in any amount.

Donors may fund and name an endowment with a single gift of \$25,000; may add to an already existing endowment fund; or combine several donors to create a named endowment.

Endowments may be funded with a bequest, gift annuity, or cash gift.

MOTHER FRANCIS BACHMANN SOCIETY

We invite you to join the Mother Francis Bachmann Society.

Simply notify us of your plans by returning the card that accompanies this booklet. You are already eligible for membership if you have made arrangements in your Will or trust or through a gift annuity for the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia. If you are planning to establish an estate gift through your Will, you will become eligible for membership once the gift is created.

Through the Mother Francis Bachmann Society, your generous, thoughtful planning for the future of the Franciscan congregation can be recognized during your lifetime.

Planning your legacy: To create your legacy through a permanent fund at the Franciscan Ministries Foundation, you can seed it with any number of planned giving vehicles. With careful planning, you can make a much more substantial gift than previously imagined. Your legacy can make a critical difference to the Sisters of St. Francis.

Bequests: Making a provision in your Will or trust to establish a legacy fund for the Sisters of St. Francis of Philadelphia is perhaps the simplest form of planned giving and the vehicle most commonly used. The Franciscan Ministries Foundation can be the primary or contingent beneficiary.

A charitable gift annuity: A contract between a donor and the Sisters of St. Francis, whereby the donor makes an irrevocable gift of cash or appreciated stock and in return the donor receives a lifetime, fixed amount in quarterly payments.

Life Insurance: Gifts of life insurance can be made by naming the Franciscan Ministries Foundation as the owner and beneficiary of a new or existing life insurance policy. You can continue to pay the premiums, which are tax deductible.

Individual retirement accounts (IRA): IRAs left to heirs may be subject to taxes that would total well over half of the IRA's value, allowing your hard earned dollars to be taken by the government. By designating a gift to charity using an asset that might otherwise be heavily taxed, you can actually save your family money on taxes.

