

## ORIGINS OF THE CTK EDUCATIONAL TRUST

Interview with Joe Caggiano and Gary Witt

In 1979, Msgr. Robert Gass envisioned a solution to a problem of great concern to him. The problem: a fear the cost of a Catholic Education and operating a Catholic School would soon exceed any amount a Parish could possibly budget for it. The solution: the creation and funding of an Educational Trust to underwrite a portion of that tuition and operational cost.



Joe and Cathy Caggiano

That same year, Msgr. Gass approached a relative newcomer to the Christ the King Parish, Joe Caggiano, with his concerns about the funding of the CTK School, and his idea of an educational trust. Joe, his wife Cathy, and their two daughters moved to Omaha

in 1972 from New York City. A job with the Bozell & Jacobs advertising agency brought the Caggianos to Omaha and CTK. Upon hearing Msgr. Gass' thought about the need for a trust, Joe immediately thought of the words of Morris Jacobs, one of the founders of Bozell & Jacobs, words Joe strived to live by: It is incumbent for each one of us to pay rent for the space we occupy on earth and we pay that rent by our service to God, our country, our community, and our family.

At Msgr. Gass' request, Joe chaired the Educational Trust Founding Board of eleven members. At the initial meetings, this Board raised the seed money for the CTK Educational Trust, and coined its mission statement: No child will ever be denied admission to Christ the King due to lack of funds.

Knowing that one-on-one meetings with Parishioners would be the most effective and successful way to raise funds, the Educational Trust Board held a series of wine and cheese parties. Parishioners were invited to these gatherings to discuss with the Board the idea and goals of the Educational Trust and to pledge money. In 1979, the Board also sponsored its first Educational Trust dinner, hosted by Gene & Jo Witt, held on a rainy, wet evening in the CTK parking lot.

In Joe's eyes, the success of the Educational Trust can be traced to strong leadership and continuity of Board membership. In the thirty years of its existence the Educational Trust Board has had only six chairs: Joe Caggiano, Nancy Abboud, Jane Addy, Margorie Wahl, Bill Dyer, and its current chair, Gary Witt. In fact, Joe just resigned from the Trust Board after serving on it continually from

its conception! Over the past 30 years, the principal of the Trust has grown to be in excess of three million dollars. Trust funds have funded a number of projects including the school remodeling, new school roof, new boiler, and student scholarships, to name a few.

Currently, the Trust funds 12.5% of the operational costs of CTK School, and looks forward to its ability to someday underwrite a

### EDUCATIONAL TRUST Founding Board – 1979

Msgr. Robert Gass  
Fred Arkoosh  
Michael Brady  
Thomas Burke  
Joe Caggiano  
Paul Circo  
Michael Easterday  
Charles Heider  
John Mainelli  
John North  
Lloyd Skinner  
William Sweet

larger percentage of the School's operational expenses.

In addition to helping cover the costs of operating CTK School, the Trust also funds and manages 32 scholarships for CTK students and for CTK graduates attending Catholic high schools. The Trust welcomes any contributions to help sustain these scholarships and always welcomes underwriting money for new scholarships!

With fondness, Joe Caggiano recalled and shared the history of the CTK Educational Trust. He strongly encourages all Parishioners to support the Trust on an annual basis or through planned giving.



The Spice committee is pleased to announce this years Spice theme:



SPICE—Supporting Parish Investment in Catholic Education is the premier annual CTK fundraiser. The proceeds from this occasion continue to supplement and enhance the educational experience of all our parish members.

SPICE is set for Thursday, June 4, 2009 in the Christ the King Parish Center. In addition to a wonderful catered dinner we are honoring our theme of laughter with guest Juli Burney as our featured entertainer and auctioneer. Ms. Burney is an award winning teacher, humorist and author.

"You will never laugh so hard or learn so

## HAVE YOU EVER COMPARED THE CHURCH TO GROCERIES?

I promise I will get to the parallel and I hope this title caught your attention because there is a comparison to be made here. First of all I want you to reflect on these economic times that we are going through and ask yourself these questions:

- 1 Have I been impacted by the financial turmoil that our world is going through?
- 2 Have the people I know and love been impacted by this same turmoil?
- 3 Have I adapted my life to confront these economic hurdles?
- 4 If I have adapted my life, what adjustments have I made?

I am going to be presumptuous enough to assume that the answer to questions number one and two is yes. But, even if your answer was no I want you to continue reading because there is a message here for you also.

With the above being understood - please bear with me as we reflect on the possible answers to question number three, yes or no. Whether you have made adaptations or not, you should be saying a prayer either thanking God for giving you the ability to make these changes, or praying for His guidance to determine what (if any) changes should be made.

Now question number four gets a lot tougher because it gets personal. But in a family, personal is a given isn't it? What adaptations have we made in our lives? Have we tightened our financial belts? Have we cut out extras? Have we cut out necessities? How do we prioritize what changes we are going to make, if any? All of these are important questions that need to be contemplated. But, in the center of this contemplation God needs to exist.

During these tough times we still need to pay our utility bills, our mortgage, our taxes, put gas in the car, buy groceries, make our Church contributions. These are all givens, or at least they should be! Let's look at these and see the impact of changing them one at a time.

What if we stopped paying our utility bills? Wouldn't there be some negative consequence? And what about not paying our mortgage or taxes? Having no heat, power or water would be a secondary concern if we ended up with no place to call home. No gas in the car and there would be no transportation to our place of employment and then no wages which creates even more turmoil in our lives. All of these issues deserve consideration when looking at our financial situations.

What if we stopped buying groceries or contributing to our Church family? If we decided to do without food we would eventually starve. Not a very exciting resolution, given the options available to us. Well, it is also imperative that we have SPIRITUAL food. Our communal environment, our meal at the table of the altar, and our faith family support, are all things that are not easy to live without. If we cease or cut back on our support of the Church it would be like starving to death spiritually for the Church and us because we need each other. Starvation, whether physical or spiritual, is still starvation. One of the most important ways that we can continue to be fed spiritually is by financially supporting our Church; the only way we can prevent physical starvation is by continuing to buy groceries. As we continue down the road of financial uncertainty let's make sure we remember the comparison of Church and groceries and the fact that we must keep ourselves fed.

Our finance committee has been working hard along side Father and the parish staff to make sure that all of our contributions are invested into our parish family in the most effective manner. We have seen a reduction in Church support and I am asking you to please consider my previous thoughts as you contemplate your ability to maintain and (if you have been abundantly blessed) possibly increase your support of our parish family.

I thank you for allowing me to share some of my thoughts with you and I pray that we can all work together as a family to help whether these difficult times and arrive at the end of these tough times stronger, healthier and happier both physically and spiritually. May God bless you and yours!

Respectfully,  
John Pflug

