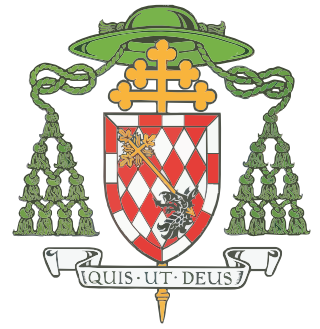


# Your Catholic Legacy



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## Left Alone in the Dark

**A simple task left undone can leave loved ones vulnerable**

**REBECCA GREW UP IN POVERTY IN SOUTH AMERICA. ON ONE CORNER OF HER STREET WAS THE CATHEDRAL. AT THE OTHER END WAS THE PRISON. IT WAS A CHOICE BETWEEN TWO WORLDS.**

Rebecca's father was an alcoholic. His drinking caused the family to suffer but Rebecca cherishes the tender moments she had with him. "My father, even though he was Hindu, would pick up the Bible, turn to the Sermon on the Mount, and read it to me in Latin," she remembers. "I would sit and listen, absolutely spellbound. I soaked up every word."

Rebecca started sneaking into the back of the cathedral to watch Mass and hear it celebrated in the same language that her father used to read to her. She thought it was absolutely beautiful. "I begged my parents to let me be baptized, but my mother said no. Even the priest went to my house to ask on my behalf. The answer was still no."

Rebecca met her future husband, Tom, when she was only 17. He was Catholic but not practicing. He proposed to Rebecca when she turned 19. When he gave her an engagement ring, she accepted but refused to put it on before it was blessed.

Eventually, she entered the RCIA program after she and Tom

immigrated to Canada. It had been a long hard road to Christ. Rebecca remembers the first time she received Jesus in the Eucharist. "I cried like you wouldn't believe. It was the most important moment of my life."

Sadly, Tom was not with her on that special night. He, like Rebecca's father, had fallen into the snare of alcoholism. As Tom slipped away over the years, Rebecca spent countless hours praying for him. Then one day, Tom said he wanted to beat his drinking – there was hope, though it was to be unfulfilled.

Two weeks later, Rebecca left for work and Tom planned to take the kids to school. He told Rebecca he would call her later. As soon as Rebecca got into the office, her phone rang. Her nine-year-old daughter Esther was on the line – Tom was lying on the bed in his suit and a police officer wanted to talk to her.

When she arrived, there were fire engines, police cars and an ambulance in front of her home. The officers would not let Rebecca upstairs because they were still working on Tom. She heard the paramedics say, "1-2-3, clear!"

Rebecca began to cry and, in the midst of everything, she knelt to pray. "I had this feeling...it just washed over me...I could feel Tom leave. I knew I was losing him."

Tom had suffered a massive heart attack. At the hospital, Rebecca asked for a priest and will be forever grateful that one came. She truly

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# Left Alone in the Dark

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believes Tom's soul was saved. Saying goodbye to her husband was not the hardest part, though. She had to face her children when she got home.

And in the days that followed, the nightmare only intensified. Tom had died without a Will.

The next day, Rebecca went to the bank to take out some money. Still in a state of shock, she told the teller that her husband had just died. After leaving the bank she stopped at a grocery store and her debit card was rejected at the cash register.

The minute she said that her husband had passed away all of the joint accounts were frozen – everything at the bank was held as “joint and” instead of “joint or.” She called the bank and said she needed emergency access to her account. She was asked if she could bring a copy of the Will.

Rebecca called her workplace and asked them not to deposit her pay into her bank account because it would take two to three weeks to get back into her accounts.

When trying to purchase clothes for her children for Tom's funeral, Rebecca realized her credit cards that were held jointly with Tom were also frozen. She would only receive access to them if she could prove that she was the sole beneficiary. Everywhere she went, she kept hearing the same thing: “where is the Will?”

Rebecca struggled on. She spoke to her children about where to bury their father. As a family, they decided that a mausoleum was the best choice. Her children felt that their Daddy would like to be in a warm building – a condominium for Tom.

At the funeral home, Rebecca panicked as the costs mounted. Fortunately, she remembered that she had one credit card that was in her name only. Distraught, she called the credit card company and burst into tears when she spoke to the manager. “I literally begged them to increase my limit to cover my husband's burial. Thankfully, they raised it because my credit history was good.”

It's been three years since Tom's death and Rebecca and her children are still struggling with the consequences. “Because Tom died without a Will, the courts must appoint me to handle his estate,” Rebecca says. “I need a Letter of Administration to give me full legal authority. There is no doubt I will be named, but it takes time because there is a backlog in the courts.”

Without a Letter of Administration, even the simple things are hard for Rebecca. For example, Tom's car sat in the driveway depreciating for a year before it

could be sold because she couldn't change the registration into her name. Also, Tom's name is still on the mortgage and it's up for renewal in 2012. His name can't be removed until she receives the Letter of Administration.

Tom also owed back taxes. Rebecca can appeal the taxes on compassionate grounds, but can't file the appeal until she has the Letter of Administration. In the meantime, interest is being applied to the taxes owed.

Rebecca has been passionately pleading with her family and friends to get their Wills done or updated. “Learn from what happened to me”, she says.

When Rebecca reflects on all she has been through over the last three years, she says, “A Will is a simple document that so many people overlook. It costs you almost nothing. The money that I have paid in legal fees would have more than covered the cost.”

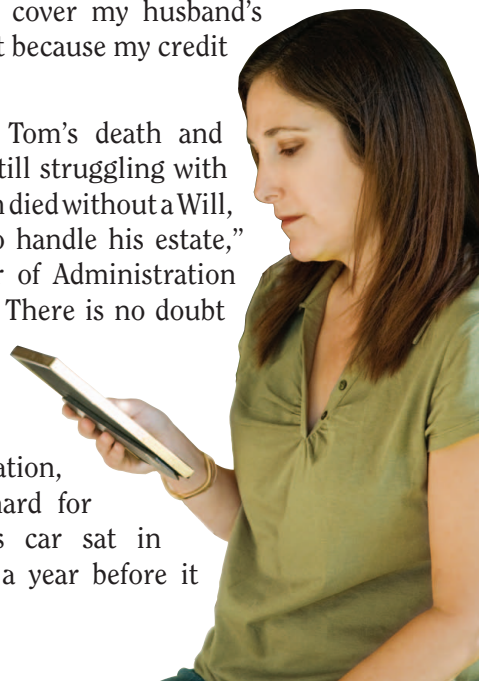
*As of the time of the writing of this article, Rebecca is still waiting to be named as the representative of her late husband's estate.*

## Protect Your Loved Ones!

The Archdiocese of Toronto has just redesigned its *Catholic Estate Planning Guide*.

Available to all Catholics of our diocese free of charge, the guide is an invaluable tool to help you prepare your Will, Powers of Attorney (including Living Wills), funeral and burial instructions, cemetery selection and much more.

If you would like to have a free copy of the *Catholic Estate Planning Guide* mailed to you, please contact: Quentin Schesnuik, Manager of Planned Giving and Personal Gifts. (See back cover for contact information.) All calls are confidential.



# Your Will Planning Checklist

IF YOU ARE PLANNING TO DO YOUR WILL, HERE IS A HANDY CHECKLIST THAT YOU CAN USE. IT WILL SAVE YOU TIME AND MONEY AND ASSIST YOUR LAWYER IN PREPARING YOUR WILL.

## If You Already Have a Will

- Is your current Will out of date?
- Have you moved to a new province?
- Has your net worth or employment status changed?
- Have you recently married or had children?
- Do you want to add or remove any beneficiaries?

## Getting Started

- Have you chosen a lawyer?
- Have you used a tax advisor to minimize current tax and the tax your estate will have to pay?

*\*\* If you do not have a lawyer or tax advisor, the Development Office keeps a list of professionals in your area.*

## Information You Will Need to Gather: Assets

- Bank account
- Life insurance policies
- Safety deposit box or storage facility
- Securities, Investments RRSPs and RRIFs
- Principal residence (current market value)
- Rental properties or cottage (current market value)
- Vehicles, boats, art, antiques, jewellery, etc.
- Do you own your own a business? What is its value?
- Are you expecting any inheritances?

## Create a Summary of Your Liabilities

- List all your debts, including: mortgages, credit cards, car loans, credit lines, etc.

## Your Estate Trustee

- Have you chosen your Estate Trustee and asked him/her if they are willing and able to serve?
- Tell your Estate Trustee where your Will is kept.
- Will your Estate Trustee have the authority to invest your assets until the final disbursement is done? Do you want restrictions placed?

## Guardian of Your Children

- Have you named a Guardian of your minor children?
- Do you have an alternate Guardian in case your first choice is unable or unwilling to serve?
- Have you told your Guardian the importance of making sure your children are raised in the Catholic faith and receive all their Sacraments?

## Your Beneficiaries

- If you are married, have you left your RRSPs or RRIFs to your spouse or dependent child?
- Are the beneficiaries of the assets in your Will consistent with the beneficiary listing in the attached plans (e.g. RRSPs, insurance policies)?
- Are there personal items that you would like a certain family member or friend to have?
- Do you need a testamentary trust for your spouse or dependent child?
- Does a beneficiary require special care?
- Have you included your parish or favourite Archdiocesan charity in your Will?
- Have you notified the Development Office of your bequest intention so you can be included in the Legacy Society of the Archdiocese of Toronto?

## Questions to Ask Your Lawyer

- How can you reduce probate?
- How can you reduce your estate's income tax?
- Should you have a common disaster clause in case of an unexpected accident?
- If you have a business, do you need a succession plan?
- How can including the Church in your Will reduce your estate taxes?

## Other Issues

- If you want to be an organ donor, have you signed a donor card and told your family of your wishes?
- Do you need a Power of Attorney for Management of Property?
- Do you need a Power of Attorney for Personal Care (or Living Will)?
- Is your Power of Attorney for Personal Care (or Living Will) in line with Church teaching?
- Have you shared your wishes with your family?

## Final Arrangements

- Have you pre-planned your funeral arrangements with Catholic Cemeteries?
- Have you informed your Estate Trustee and family that you want a Catholic Funeral Mass and a Catholic burial?
- Have you considered your parish/favourite Catholic charity as your in lieu of flowers designation?

## Cooking Up a Storm with Fr. Jimmy

Each of us spends only a brief time in this life,

**preparing for our eternal life with God.**

Please consider including your parish or favourite Archdiocesan charity such as ShareLife, St. Augustine's Seminary or The Shepherds' Trust in your Will.

Your thoughtful gift will help strengthen the Church and the programs you cherish for generations to come.

If your lawyer requires any sample bequest wordings, including legal titles, please contact our office.

Did you know that you can donate your Air Miles to your Parish?

Based on the number of Air Miles you have, the Development Office can work with you and your pastor to create a wish list of items that are desperately needed in your parish. We then match this wish list to what is available in the Air Miles reward program catalogue.

Your tax receipt is for the fair market value of the gift.



*A smiling Fr. Jimmy Zammit from Immaculate Conception Parish poses with his new cookware. A faithful parishioner used their Air Miles to make this gift to the parish. The Development Office helped to coordinate the gift.*

### Ways You Can Help

#### Types of gifts you can give

- Gifts from a business
- Bequests in a Will or Estate Plan
- Securities (stocks, mutual funds, bonds, GICs)
- Life Insurance
- Registered Retirement Funds (RRSPs, RRIFs)
- Gift of cash
- Annuities
- In-kind gifts (coin collections, art, property)

#### Where might these gifts be designated?

- Your parish (offertory, renovation fund, capital campaign, special project)
- ShareLife
- The Shepherds' Trust
- St. Augustine's Seminary
- St. Michael's Choir School
- The Deacon Mutual Aid Fund
- Vocations
- Other parts of the Church (call for details)

### Contact us

*Your Catholic Legacy*, the planned giving newsletter of the Archdiocese of Toronto, is a free publication that is produced twice a year to keep parishioners informed about issues related to estate planning and the many tax-smart and creative ways they can support their parishes and Archdiocesan charities. While all articles are researched and come from reliable sources, you should always consult an advisor before making any gift.



#### Archdiocese of Toronto Development Office

Catholic Pastoral Centre  
1155 Yonge Street, 5th Floor  
Toronto, Ontario M4T 1W2

Tel: (416) 934-3411 | Toll-free: 1-800-263-2595  
[www.archtoronto.org/development](http://www.archtoronto.org/development)



**Arthur Peters**

Director of Development  
Tel: (416) 934-3400, ext. 559  
[arthurpeters@archtoronto.org](mailto:arthurpeters@archtoronto.org)



**Quentin Schesnuik**

Manager of Planned Giving and Personal Gifts  
Tel: (416) 934-3400, ext. 561  
[qschesnuik@archtoronto.org](mailto:qschesnuik@archtoronto.org)