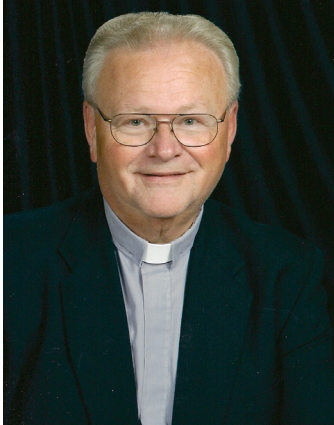


Preparing for the Next Journey

You know how sometimes when you're driving someplace and you kind of zone out in thought and lose a bit of awareness of your surroundings? Or maybe you're intently listening to something on the car radio and you go past the corner where you were intending to turn. A few weeks ago I was driving to my sister's home just south of Holmen. As the freeway ended and I was on the two-lane highway by Drugan's Golf Course, I suddenly wondered why I was going to Eau Claire. Then realized I missed my turnoff to Debbie's by several miles! I've joked that my car "knows" the way to Wausau and Eau Claire, but that day I began to wonder if indeed it did!

My retirement day of December 15 is rapidly approaching. I think I'm ready. I've about finished all the things I'm going to do here; all that's left is to move a few boxes of books and personal items out to the car to take home. Roberto Partarrieu, the new Executive Director, is here and has been prepped and is ready to go solo. He's a good man and will do a fine job leading Catholic Charities. The Board meets on the 15th and we'll officially pass the title to Roberto and I'll be "emeritus." :) That will be good!

In these past few weeks, I've been asked what I am most pleased with at Catholic Charities over the past nine years. There are many things that are pleasing. Just to mention a few would include the establishment of our shelter services – Sojourner House in Eau Claire; the Warming Center in Wausau; and the new Warming Center that just opened in downtown La Crosse. Another would be closely linked to the first and that is Catholic Charities has moved closer to the "street," a little closer to the poor and disenfranchised – not just in shelter services but throughout the organization. And that has been very good. Pope Francis has said he'd like to be the shepherd of a Church that smells a little more like the sheep. I think our Catholic Charities smells a little more "sheep-ish" than it did nine years ago. I'm also very proud of my co-workers at Catholic Charities – they are excellent in professionalism and superior in dedication to our mission; true Servant Leaders. I think by example and pursuit of Jesus and the social gospel we have been evangelizers in our diocese. The mission of Catholic Charities is essential to the Church!



What will I miss? Oh, I believe there may be some things. The long drives...But I always arrived at my destination by being with wonderful people at our different offices and meeting with the many, many good community people in the various locations around the diocese. I've met so many talented and generous people. (And in all those miles only one deer ran into me!) I'll probably also miss the energy and excitement that comes about when working on a new project. But I firmly believe that God is always preparing us for something else on our journey. Just as He prepared me in various steps and ways to be able to embrace the last nine years, I believe God has some new plan in store for me as I enter retirement. Our life in Christ is always a formation, it is never accomplished; we

always grow.

To our Catholic Charities friends and benefactors throughout the Diocese, I express my sincere gratitude for your support. Your goodness inspires me to continue to serve Christ by serving the poor, marginalized and disenfranchised. Thank you for your remarkable service! To my co-workers at Catholic Charities, I wish you continued inspiration, spiritual growth and being in service to our Lord. It has been a joy and privilege to serve with you and to count you not only as colleagues but as friends. May all of you be most blessed in this beautiful Season of Advent and have a joyous Christmas!

*Deacon Richard Sage
Executive Director*

