



# Catholic Families And How They Give Back

JACLYN HOUGHTON BARDIN

**T**he son of Irish immigrant parents, Bob Healey grew up during the Great Depression, and he remembers what it was like to be poor. “When you’re poor, you never forget that,” he said, describing how he wore pieces of cardboard in his shoes to cover the holes. It was this upbringing, along with his strong Catholic faith, that led the 87-year-old down a path of hard work and generosity.

Healey practiced law for 25 years and also co-founded the Viking Yacht Company with his brother, Bill, in 1964. Their family business, the New Jersey-based Viking Group, has grown to include the Viking Yacht Company, financial investments and money management, and commercial and residential real estate, among other ventures.

Although he has been successful professionally, it is Healey’s passion for serving those in need through his philanthropic work that inspires him most. Over the last two decades, he founded four family charities: the Healey International Relief Foundation, the Healey Education Foundation, the Gleneayre Equestrian Program and the Children’s Resource Center. The family donates about \$4.5 million annually to support these foundations.

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“God has been good to me and my family,” said Healey, who has seven children and 11 grandchildren. “You look around and there’s a lot of hurt in our world, and you say to yourself, ‘I’ve got to get in there and answer her [the Virgin Mary’s] call.’”

## ANSWERING THE CALL

According to researchers, philanthropy always has been highly encouraged and often treated as a religious obligation among the three main Western religions — Christianity, Islam and Judaism — but different religious groups call for varying types and levels of giving to the church, to charity or both. Certain Protestant denominations, for example, teach that tithing 10 percent of a parishioner’s annual income is an obligation.<sup>1</sup> Along with financial giving, Catholic tradition emphasizes the gift of self through personal service, exemplified by the charitable work of women and men religious. Sr. Mary J. Oates, CSJ, PhD, author of *The Catholic Philanthropic Tradition in America*, believes Catholic charities in the United States would not have grown as rapidly as they did without the service of the religious sisters.<sup>2</sup>

It is clear that, across the board, religious faith is an important motivator in giving. In fact, a recent study found that 55 percent of respon-

dents who give to charities say their philanthropic contributions are motivated by their religious commitment.<sup>3</sup>

That said, Catholic giving lags behind that of other faiths. A University of Notre Dame study concluded that “the single most important factor explaining the giving gap is a lack of ‘spiritual engagement with money’ on the part of most American Catholics. Rather than seeing their use of money and possessions as a part of their spiritual life — as a part of Christian formation and faithfulness — American Catholics tend to compartmentalize: they tend to separate money from matters of faith and to think that money and mate-

rial possessions have little to do with spiritual or religious issues.”

On the other hand, the study continues, “Catholics who do engage with money as a spiritual matter and who see their money as ultimately God’s, however, are much more financially generous, reducing the Catholic-giving gap almost entirely.”<sup>4</sup>

In recent years, wealthy Catholic individuals and families have chosen to support charitable foundations and set up trusts rather than donating only to their local dioceses.<sup>5</sup> Although the philanthropic efforts of these families vary, their underlying religious faith and Catholic values unite them.

## ABOUT FAMILY PHILANTHROPY IN THE UNITED STATES

According to the *National Center for Family Philanthropy’s 2015 Trends Study* of family foundations:

- From 2002 to 2013, the number of family foundations grew by about 44 percent from about 29,400 to 42,300, and the amount raised nearly doubled from \$12.4 billion to \$23.9 billion.

- About 14 percent of family foundations were created before 1970; 16 percent were created between 1970 and 1989; and 70 percent were created after 1990.

- As the size or age of a foundation increases, the total giving and assets also increased.

- In 2014, about 65 percent of family foundations gave less than \$500,000; 11 percent gave \$500,000 to \$999,999; 18 percent gave \$1 million to \$4.9 million; 3 percent gave \$5 million to \$10 million; and 2 percent gave more than \$10 million.

- For those with a place-based giving strategy, 60 percent gave locally; 29 percent gave regionally; 21 percent gave nationally; 20 percent gave statewide; and 13 percent gave internationally.

- For those with an issues-based giving strategy, 45 percent gave to education or training; 40 percent gave to alleviate poverty; 19 percent gave to health; 15 percent gave to children and youth; 14 percent gave to religiously affiliated programs; 13 percent gave to arts and culture; and 11 percent gave to the environment.

**Source:** Elizabeth T. Boris et al., *National Center for Family Philanthropy’s 2015 Trends Study: Results of the First National Benchmark Survey of Family Foundations*, (Washington, D.C.: National Center for Family Philanthropy, 2015).

## FIGHTING FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

Former U.S. Rep. Patrick J. Kennedy (D-R.I.), son of the late U.S. Sen. Edward “Ted” Kennedy (D-Mass.), learned from a young age that along with public service, his family worked for human rights and equality, causes he said are rooted in the teachings of the Catholic Church.

“President [John F.] Kennedy was the first president to go on national television and talk about civil rights as a moral issue,” said Kennedy. “He also signed the Community Mental Health Act of 1963, which, in the signing ceremony, he said that those with mental illness and intellectual disabilities ‘need no longer be alien to our affections or beyond the help of our communities.’”

Health care issues, especially those related to mental health and intellectual disabilities, have been championed by many members of the Kennedy family. Rose Marie “Rosemary” Kennedy, sister of John F. and Ted Kennedy and their six other siblings, was born with an intellectual disability in 1918. At age 23, she was incapacitated by a prefrontal lobotomy, a brain operation. She was institutionalized for the rest of her life, dying in 2005.

In 1946, the family started the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation, which provides leadership in the field of intellectual and developmental disabilities. Through the foundation, Eunice Kennedy Shriver, one of Rosemary Kennedy’s sisters, started the Special Olympics in the 1960s to provide training and athletic competitions for children and adults with intellectual disabilities.

“My Aunt Eunice really focused on public policy, as well as something that’s really spiritual, like the Special Olympics, which brings people



and their families into a venue where everyone can be celebrated for their abilities as opposed to dismissed because of their disabilities,” said Patrick Kennedy.

In addition to serving on the board of the Joseph P. Kennedy Jr. Foundation, Patrick Kennedy founded The Kennedy Forum and co-founded the One Mind Initiative to advocate on

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behalf of people with mental illnesses and addictions, something he knows about personally. He has bipolar disorder and has battled drug and alcohol addictions.

The Kennedy Forum is a nonprofit dedicated to promoting changes in the way addictions and mental health issues are treated within the current health care system. The One Mind Initiative is a nonprofit that brings leaders from different industries together to collaborate on brain research.

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“The one thing about being in recovery is everywhere I go, it doesn’t matter what people’s political stripes are, they are all there for each other,” he said.

#### HELPING UNDERSERVED POPULATIONS

The Raskob family has a history of philanthropic work dating back to 1945 that has involved five generations, including 136 current family members.

Since its inception, the Raskob Foundation for Catholic Activities has provided more than \$200 million in funding to a variety of Catholic institutions and organizations in 144 countries. Although the foundation does not have designated areas of interest beyond funding Catholic entities, many of the funded projects focus on underserved populations and involve education, health care, poverty and water sanitation.

John J. Raskob was a corporate executive, financier and director of the General Motors Corporation and the DuPont Company. He also con-

ceptualized and commissioned the construction of the Empire State Building. The proceeds of the building’s sale helped Raskob and his wife, Helena, start the Raskob Foundation.

Maria Robinson, MD, great-granddaughter of John and Helena Raskob, has been a member of the foundation since she was 18. Twice a year, the foundation’s active members (about 80 of the 136) get together in four locations to review grant applications and make recommendations to the board, which makes the final funding decisions. As with any family, the members have personal passions. A dermatologist and dermapathologist, Robinson’s passion is health care.

Over the last 10 years, the Raskob Foundation has spent \$7.7 million (14 percent of overall funding) on health care initiatives. Past projects have included funding for mobile clinics in underserved communities and support of Catholic organizations carrying out health care mis-

#### A LOOK AT FAITH AND PHILANTHROPY

The Independent Sector is a national membership organization for nonprofits, foundations and corporate philanthropy programs. In a 2001 survey on the connection between charitable behavior and giving to religion, the group found that:

- About 60 percent of households support their place of worship and other causes. Of the donors to religious congregations, more than 85 percent also support secular organizations, which amounts to about three-quarters of the contributions those organizations receive.
- Households that give to both religious congregations and secular causes give nearly four times as much as those that give only to secular charities.
- About 53 percent of religious-giving households give to organizations in the health area, which is the most popular secular cause for givers to religion.
- The average annual contribution from religious-giving households to health organizations was \$249, compared to \$165 for secular-giving households.

**Source:** Christopher Toppe et al. *Faith & Philanthropy: The Connection between Charitable Behavior and Giving to Religion* (Washington, D.C.: Independent Sector, 2002).

sions in other countries, groups such as Catholic Relief Services and the Catholic Medical Mission Board.

“We recognize that people should have access to health care, so that tends to be one of our unspoken priorities,” said Robinson.

Besides hiring a paid staff and placing a greater emphasis on outcome data, Robinson said not much else at the foundation has changed in 72 years.

“The older I get and the more involved I become, I really appreciate the foresight my great-grandparents had,” she said. “They could have just given their money as an inheritance, but they opted to put a lot of it in the family foundation. They knew that the next generations would have to be faithful stewards of that money and that mission.”

#### ENTREPRENEURIAL PHILANTHROPY

Although some families, like the Ras-kobs, provide money to grantees, the Healey family takes a different approach through entrepreneurial philanthropy. Using this method, they set up a businesslike structure and bring in secular and nonsecular partners to help fund those projects and ensure their continued success.

For the last 15 years, the Healey International Relief Foundation has helped rebuild the lives of people left without food, shelter and health care following the civil war in Sierra Leone, Africa. Among other projects, the foundation’s work has included helping rebuild Serabu Hospital and its nursing school and making the hospital self-sustaining; setting up orphanages; creating a place to

live and an education program for women who otherwise are on the streets; and providing medical and psychological care to the civil war’s many amputees.

The foundation is currently working on a project to create a for-profit IV fluid manufacturing business in Sierra Leone that will support the operation of medical clinics across the country.

Back in the United States, Healey started the Healey Education Foundation in 2004 in response to the closing of many Catholic schools across the

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country and the continuing challenges Catholic schools face, including declining enrollment, increased costs to sustain school operations, increased tuition and competition from other schools.<sup>6</sup>

Over the last half-century, enrollment in U.S. Catholic schools has decreased by about 56 percent (about 5.2 million students in 1960, compared to about 2.3 million in 2016) and the number of Catholic schools has decreased by half (about 13,000 in 1960 compared to about 6,500 in 2016).<sup>7</sup> At the same time, fewer men and women religious were available to staff and run Catholic schools — from 1965 to 2014, for example, there was a 72 percent decrease in the number of religious sisters in the United States,<sup>8</sup> meaning schools incurred higher personnel costs to staff and retain lay teachers and administrators.

The Healey Education Foundation has worked with dozens of Catholic schools to make them self-sustaining within three years through the introduction of business plans and the development of a strong layperson board. About 30 Catholic schools successfully have completed the program so far.

Based on his own experiences attending Catholic schools, Healey is dedicated to helping such schools stay open so future generations

#### CATHOLIC FOUNDATIONS AND DONORS

Out of 1,440 total funders listed in the *Catholic Funding Guide Online*, 950 are listed as giving to “health care” or “health care for the poor.”

The *Catholic Funding Guide Online* is published by Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities and is the only database of its kind that compiles information on funders and foundations with a history of making grants and contributions to Catholic causes.

**Source:** Foundations and Donors Interested in Catholic Activities



can receive the benefits of a Catholic education. A self-proclaimed “wise guy” in his youth, Healey almost was expelled from his Catholic high school for his antics until one of the sisters took him under her wing. She taught him how to study — and to keep his mouth shut, said Healey. He said he often asks himself whether he would have become successful without her help and his Catholic education.

#### **‘A GIFT TO THE WORLD’**

Like the Healeys, the Rauenhorst family’s philanthropic endeavors stemmed from their strong business roots and devotion to their Catholic faith. Gerry and Henrietta “Hanky” Rauenhorst founded The Opus Group in the 1950s, which now includes development, architecture, construction, commercial real estate and structural engineering companies. In 1965, they started the GHR Foundation.

Today, the GHR Foundation funds projects related to health, global development and urban education. It uses a design-build philanthropic approach, which involves helping “create models, form networks, sketch a plan of action and provide advice” during every stage of a project it chooses to fund, said Amy Rauenhorst Goldman, chief executive officer and chair of the GHR Foundation and daughter of Gerry and Hanky Rauenhorst.

So far, two generations have served on the foundation’s committees and boards. In 2015, the foundation awarded \$20.7 million to different projects.

One of the big funding areas is Alzheimer’s disease research, to which the Rauenhorst family is personally connected. Hanky Rauenhorst was diagnosed with the disease at an early age.

“Our Alzheimer’s prevention strategy is zeroing in on a theory of how we can change the state of therapies available for Alzheimer’s treatment,” said Goldman. “It’s a complex problem, but the potential to turn the tide and provide hope for all families that face Alzheimer’s has never been more promising.”

The foundation also supports Catholic schools in Minnesota; Catholic sisters; family support and child protection programs in parts of Africa and Asia; and the Inter-Religious Action Initiative, which is designed to improve relations between

religious leaders of different faiths so they can work on common challenges, such as reducing rates of malaria in Nigeria, Africa.

Although Gerry and Hanky Rauenhorst are no longer alive, Goldman says her parents’ legacy lives on.

“I think of Gerry and Hanky as knowing the foundation would be great, but understanding they wouldn’t see it through to the end,” she said. “They had great trust and confidence that it would be a gift to the world.”

#### **FINDING THEIR WAY**

Each family has a different way in which they cultivate interest in their philanthropic efforts among younger generations.

When family members in the Raskob family turn 18, they receive an invitation to get involved in the family foundation. If interested, they are paired with a mentor from the family who guides them through the process. After a two-year apprenticeship, they can become active members.

In addition to the GHR Foundation, the Rauenhorst family also operates the Enkel Foundation, which serves as a training ground for young family members interested in philanthropy.

Healey’s approach to recruitment of family members is much less formal. A few of his

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children are involved in the foundations, but he believes in letting them find their way to the work.

Bob Healey Jr., for example, took a nontraditional route. After graduating from college, he toured in a punk rock band. After a few years, he traded his Mohawk and piercings for a business suit and joined the family business. But before he could work for the Viking Group, he had to pay his dues working for the Healey International Relief Foundation.

“It was the best thing that happened to me,” he said. “It’s made me realize that while charity is well and good in a country like Sierra Leone, it really starts in your own backyard and with the lives that you affect and the daily decisions you make.”



Bob Healey Jr. is now executive co-chairman of the Viking Group and president of the Healey International Relief Foundation. While growing up, he said, his parents and his Catholic faith taught him the importance of giving back.

“It’s important, regardless of your religious beliefs, that you remember that someone else is always more worse off than you, and it’s important that you do everything you can to solve that problem,” he said.

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