

## HOEING YOUR GARDEN

Once when St. Francis of Assisi was hoeing his garden, a person asked him, “What would you do if you suddenly learned that you would die at sunset?” St. Francis replied, “I would continue hoeing my garden.”

His response has three possible meanings: He was satisfied with the quality of his life and saw no need to alter its course. All of his affairs were in order and nothing remained to be done in the limited time he had. Even though he personally would never harvest any of the fruits of his labour, he was content to keep laboring for the benefit of those who came after him.

Sometimes when an event causes people to confront their mortality, they engage in introspection about their relationships and values, they make amends to those they have hurt, and they fundamentally change their lifestyle. Possibly they are stimulated to complete the estate plan they have long postponed and finally take the steps to assure that their wishes will be fulfilled. Maybe they start thinking about the ways they can use lifetime accumulations to make a difference in the lives of the next generation.

One intrepid elderly individual commented that she expected to live for another seven years. Apparently, she based this on her current state of health and the longevity of her relatives. Obviously, we don't know how long we will be here. That is why a good estate plan should work whether life is foreshortened or we live to 110. A well-conceived plan, for instance, includes contingencies depending on family circumstances at the end of one's life.

However, a complete estate plan also is also an affirmation of the meaning of your life – what you value, your affections, and the ways in which you want your life to have made a difference.

We recognize that a legacy gift that continues the work of our organization, which you have supported during your life, may only be one part of a comprehensive legacy plan, but we would be pleased to discuss ways you can have the greatest impact on the lives of those we serve.

You may be able to accomplish far more than you ever dreamed. According to another quotation attributed to St. Francis, “Start by doing what is necessary; then do what is possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.”

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