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**Homily / Pastor Script: “A Legacy of Faith and Love”**

My brothers and sisters in Christ,  
When we think about the legacy we leave behind, our minds often go to memories, traditions, and the love we have shared. We think about the lessons we have taught our children and grandchildren, the values we have lived out in our daily lives, and the relationships that have shaped who we are.

But our Catholic faith calls us to think even more deeply. It calls us to look ahead to what happens when our time on this earth is finished, and to consider how we can continue to care for the people and the mission that mean the most to us. Today I want to talk about something very practical, yet profoundly spiritual: creating a will.

I know that may not sound like the most inspiring Sunday topic, but I promise you this. It is one of the most loving, faithful, and responsible acts you can do for your family and for the Church you love. It is a decision that reflects your values and your faith.

**Scripture Foundation**  
In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus tells us, *“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and decay destroy, and thieves break in and steal. But store up treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor decay destroys, nor thieves break in and steal.”* (Matthew 6:19–20, USCCB)

Proverbs reminds us, *“The good leave an inheritance to their children’s children, but the wealth of the sinner is stored up for the just.”* (Proverbs 13:22, USCCB)

And St. Paul writes, *“For we brought nothing into the world, just as we shall not be able to take anything out of it.”* (1 Timothy 6:7, USCCB)

These passages remind us that our treasures are not meant to be hoarded. They are entrusted to us to be used wisely in life, and to be passed on in a way that reflects God’s love and our values.

**Why This Matters for Families**  
Creating a will is first and foremost an act of love. Without one, the state decides how your possessions are divided. In Maryland, this means that the law determines who receives your property, regardless of your personal wishes. That can create confusion, delay, and even disputes in a time when your loved ones are already grieving.

A will allows you to make those decisions yourself. You can provide for your spouse, children, grandchildren, or other loved ones in a way that reflects your priorities. You can make provisions for the care of a family member with special needs. You can decide how family heirlooms and meaningful possessions are passed on, and you can give to causes or organizations that matter to you.

When you take the time to create a will, you remove a burden from your family. You give them clarity and peace in a difficult time, so they can focus on grieving, remembering, and supporting each other rather than dealing with legal confusion.

**Why This Matters for the Church**  
Our parish is a spiritual home. It is where we celebrate the Eucharist, where our children receive their sacraments, where we are strengthened in our faith, and where we turn in moments of joy and sorrow. This is a place where the Gospel is preached, where the hungry are fed, where the sick are visited, and where the love of Christ is made present in our community.

Many of you have lifelong ties here. Some of you were baptized in this church. Some exchanged wedding vows here. Others buried loved ones from here. These sacred moments are part of our story as a parish family.

Including the parish in your will is a way of saying, “This faith, this community, this mission matters to me, and I want it to continue for the generations who come after me.”

Legacy gifts can help keep our parish strong for decades to come. They can fund ministries, support religious education, maintain our buildings, and create endowments that provide steady support year after year. Some parishioners choose to make a percentage gift in their will, so that their family is provided for first and then the parish receives a portion as a final gift of gratitude to God.

**The Spiritual Side of a Will**  
A will is more than a legal document. It is a statement of stewardship. Everything we have is a gift from God. We are called to use those gifts wisely in life, and to decide how they will be used after we are gone.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that “the goods of creation are destined for the whole human race” (CCC 2402). This means we are caretakers, not absolute owners. When we make a will, we acknowledge this truth. We plan not just for the distribution of our possessions, but for the continuation of the mission God has entrusted to us.

Think of it as your final offertory. During our lives, we place gifts in the collection basket as an act of worship. At the end of our lives, our will can be one last act of giving, one last way of saying, “Lord, everything I have comes from You, and I want it to serve Your purposes.”

**A Free Resource for You**  
I know some people delay making a will because they think it is too complicated or too expensive. But there is good news. The Archdiocese of Baltimore has partnered with *My Catholic Will* to offer every parishioner the opportunity to create a will online, completely free of charge. This is not just a form you download. It is a guided process that helps you make decisions, record your wishes, and ensure everything is legally sound.

You can begin at [**www.mycatholicwill.com/archbalt**](http://www.mycatholicwill.com/archbalt). You can make sure your loved ones are cared for and, if you choose, include a gift to the parish or other Catholic ministries you love. This is a way to combine practical planning with a statement of faith.

**Closing Challenge and Inspiration**  
So I ask you today, what story will your will tell? Will it be a story of faith, love, and generosity? Will it speak of a person who cared for their family and who valued the mission of the Church?

Creating a will is not about fearing death. It is about living faithfully and loving well. It is about making sure that the gifts God has entrusted to you will continue to bear fruit long after you are gone.

My prayer is that each of us will be faithful stewards, that we will care for our families with love, and that we will strengthen our parish for the generations yet to come. May our final gift be one that builds God’s Kingdom here on earth and prepares us for the treasures of heaven.