

**The Journey
Remarks By Mark Barsanti, Chair Major Donation Committee
Given Thursday December 12, 2013 at the
Precious Blood Cathedral GALA and Auction**

Good evening.

My Name is Mark Barsanti—I am the Chair of the Major Donation Committee for the Journey.

Before Dinner is served tonight I would like a few moments to talk to you about three things:

Leadership, Vision and Good Works.

The single most important role for a leader is to develop and articulate a vision for the future.

Leaders who are not visionaries are not leaders, They are place holders until a true leader steps forward.

The world has been reminded of the **power of leadership** and the **power of vision**, in the days following the passing of Nelson Mandela.

His Leadership and his ability to articulate his vision, took a nation of oppressed people to freedom.

We cannot underestimate the power of VISION on the success of leadership and on the ability to create—

POSITIVE—CHANGE-- FOR --THE --FUTURE.

Imagine the VISION the Jesuits had when they set out from what came to be Montreal to venture out to this place on the shores of the BIG LAKE—what were they thinking? What was their goal? How did they want to impact the future?

—The renaming of this part of the country to “Sault Ste. Marie” is one indication of what they were thinking—imagine the bravery and the foresight it took to stake a claim to a name like sault SAINTE MARIE--this was the 1600's and the church in Europe was in anything but a stable state—it had been struggling for nearly 100 years under the Reformation Movement.

Imagine the VISION the Jesuits must have had to be so bold as to rename this area after Mary.

The Jesuits' vision took root and now more than 350 years later, The Church has generated centuries of GOOD WORKS from and within our Community.

To take things closer to the memories of people here tonight, imagine for a moment the VISION of the leadership of the Grey Sisters when they were considering setting up a hospital in this little out of the way place named after the Virgin Mary.

For 100 years, the church, through the grey sisters, healed the sick, welcomed newborns, helped families in mourning and trained medical professionals to serve generations.

Think of the VISION of the founders of Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church and Blessed Sacrament Church and St. Ignatius Church and the Stigmatine Fathers who worked here—what was the their vision for the communities they wanted to serve?

How many immigrant families who could not speak English or who struggled to fit in to their new society— came to those churches and found guidance, hope,-- and strength—how many families over the last hundred years were fed and clothed by the charity of those churches which existed because someone had a VISION to do GOOD WORKS for those in need in this rough and rabble town named for Mary.

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And even closer to our current memories—think of the VISION of the first Sisters of St. Joseph and the first Basilian Fathers who decided to bring their unique skills to Catholic Education in our City—this little city named after the mother of Jesus. How many teachers and doctors and musicians and artists and social workers and nurses and Professors and Judges were trained to do GOOD WORKS because of the VISION of the Basillians and the Sisters of St. Joseph here in the Sault SAINTE MARIE.

We're here tonight, in part because of the VISION of all those who came before us to do GOOD WORKS BUT even more so because of the GOOD WORKS that will be needed in the future.

The GREY SISTERS are no longer active in our city;

Mount Carmel Church, Blessed Sacrament, St. Ignatius and so many other churches that meant so much to so many are all closed;

The Stigmatines are no longer active in our Community;

The Basillian Fathers are not here anymore, the Sisters of St. Joseph no longer have their own school and they are but only a few women now.

We are soon going to have only one Catholic High school and many of our elementary schools have been closed.

Ours is the last generation who would have the privilege to be witnesses to the GOOD WORKS of all of those Catholic Institutions.

The Journey, my friends, is the VISION for the future of the Catholic Faith in our Community:

The Journey is our response—the response by the catholic community of Sault Ste, Marie--to THE CALL TO ACTION made by our Bishop and our new Pope, Francis.

We were asked—WE WERE CHALLENGED—by the church to bring new life to the catholic community in Sault Ste. Marie.

The Journey is not the structures that are planned,—the Journey is the process→ THE PROCESS by which all of us and many more in our community

are coming together— are joining forces— are sharing our talents and strengths

to create a GATHERING PLACE for all Catholics in the community--and the diocese-- and across north America--and yes--around the world to advance Social Justice and to launch Good Works.

The Journey will bring about some very beautiful ways to commemorate those who came before us and to preserve artifacts of our faith--and to celebrate the major contributions to our catholic faith -- --

but its core goal is to create a place where future generations will come to witness our past so that they can be taught to do good works and advance social justice—not only here but everywhere.

This will happen in the Centre for Social Justice and Good Works. The Centre will form an anchoring presence not only for the Gathering Place but within our community.

This place will be for those who will not know the grey sisters, or the basillians, or the founding churches of our city—Or perhaps even the sisters of St. Joseph.

The VISION is to CREATE a place where we can teach others how to share their VISION in faith and to lead others to do GOOD WORKS—to seek out those in need and to help.

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When I was asked to be a part of the Journey, I struggled with the concept and specifically with the cost. Many of my friends felt the same way—"how many poor could we feed with the money", "how many homeless could we house", "will this really bring youth to church?"

The answer to this is that we need to do all of those things.

If everyone in this room took all of our time and resources and provided for the poor, we would wake up the next day and the poor would be with us still,

If we took all we had and created a youth mission, the disengaged would be with us the next day.

Instead the Journey is about a long term VISION where we are like the Grey Sisters— we will be the builders of an institution that lives long after we are gone—an institution that grows as needed to spread GOOD WORKS based on the VISION of those who come after us.

How many poor will be fed and homeless housed over the next 100 years or more because we created a place and an institution to build catholic leaders and foster **THEIR VISION?**

—SOME MAY SAY ITS UNACHIEVABLE—our goal is to build a facility worth more than \$4MM—many were surprised at that number—but I can tell you friends,

There are LEADERS in this community,

There is VISION in this room---

In only 3 short months we have raised \$1.25 Million dollars!

If you believe the church has a place in the future of GOOD WORKS, a place in training future generations to do GOOD WORKS,

--then THE VISION OF THE JOURNEY will be a reality and we will lead GENERATIONS of others to achieve great things and do GOOD WORKS.

Please enjoy your evening and as you do, reflect on how you can help make this VISION--your VISION—and our POSITIVE CHANGE FOR THE FUTURE.

Thank You

And May God Guide us in reaching our goal.

Mark Barsanti