

***“We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give.”***

***-Winston Churchill***

“During these difficult economic times...” Are we tired of hearing those words as the first quarter of 2009 comes to a close? Perhaps, but one cannot deny that more people are out of work, and more are struggling financially than at any other time in recent history. Consumer spending is down, while earnings are less, yada, yada, yada. We are clearly in a recession, and it is headline news every day.

What motivates people to give charitably? There are numerous philosophical answers to that question; is it religious affiliation, tax savings, relief from personal guilt, social responsibility, or feeling strongly about a cause? During my research, I discovered that the middle class give a higher percentage of their wealth to charity than do the wealthy, while the poor give even more. Andrew Carnegie, well-known industrialist (don't worry-I had to look him up!), argued that wealthy people should give to promote the progress of society. Whatever the motivation, the facts show that the two most generous sectors in our society are the poor (those that earn less than \$20,000 annually) and the wealthy (those that earn greater than \$100,000 annually). Evidence has shown that the middle-class would give more, just by being asked. How many that are asked is relevant to income; the less income, the less they are asked.

As a Chapter, we generously support the food drive for the Salvation Army, and do more for the Father Fred Foundation each year. Yes, we do get to ride during the FF event, and it is a fun way to support our community. However, how many of us get a lump in our throats when we see the signs of encouragement, and hear the cheers for our bikes when we ride down the Peninsula? And are we not proud when we find out how much food we generate for the Salvation Army, even though we freeze our you-know-whats off? What is our motivation?

What motivates our generosity is our own personal choice. However, as a group, owning a Harley, and riding with our Chapter, is not just something we do, it is a way of life. Charitable giving, and generosity, are vital components to the way we live.

Some of us pay our \$20 registration fee, and call it good. Others give far more than that, through a financial donation, or through volunteerism. The amount one gives, whatever it may be, is not the issue. The issue is that we give, and we give generously. History bears this truth.

This year, more than ever, “during these difficult economic times...” it is essential we maintain, if not increase, our level of giving. Charitable organizations, such as the Father Fred Foundation, are seeing record numbers of those seeking assistance. These people are not destitute. They work, they go to school, they have children, they are married, they are single, they are homeless, they can't pay their mortgage, they lost their job, their car broke down; the list goes on and on. It doesn't matter why, it is our community, and they need our help. Will we answer that call?

Father Thome recently announced his successor, Father Iakovos, who we will meet at our April 2<sup>nd</sup> Chapter Meeting. He has already asked if he can ride a bike during the processional to the Peninsula on July 19th. Is there anyone cooler than a priest, or any spiritual leader, who rides? I'll leave that answer to Father Fred.

***Note: Since 1989, The Father Fred Foundation has provided food, clothing, and financial assistance to members of our community. Our Chapter members have supported many other causes in the past, and will no doubt continue to do so. This article submission merely highlights a few examples of our Chapters generosity.***