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Spring 2013

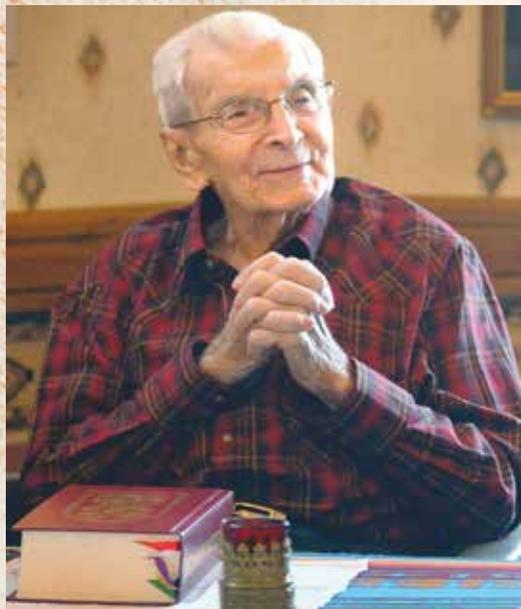
FAREWELL OUR BEGGAR FRIEND

CLOSE FRIEND, HAROLD FISHER, AND FATHER EMMETT IN 1993



FATHER EMMETT HOFFMANN, 1926-2013

Saying “Goodbye” to a Legend



Father Emmett greets guests in the beautiful chapel at the Heritage Living Center.

It can be said that Father Emmett Hoffmann sacrificed nearly 60 years of his life to the Northern Cheyenne people. His humanitarian achievements on behalf of the tribe stand unequalled in the history of the Catholic Church in the 20th and 21st centuries of the American West.

Despite many accomplishments and awards, Father never forgot his childhood farm near Marathon, Wisconsin. He was born in 1926 and he went from the fields and dairy barn of his boyhood into minor seminary at Mt. Calvary, Wisconsin, where he soon earned a reputation for his pranks on fel-

low students and teachers alike. He graduated to the Novitiate at St. Felix Friary in Huntington, Indiana and finally to the Mary Immaculate Friary in Garrison New York. In 1950, he graduated with a degree in Philosophy and returned to Wisconsin to the House of Theology at St. Anthony's Friary.

On August 27, 1953, Father Emmett was ordained a Capuchin priest, a young man who dreamed of traveling to a post in the exotic land of Nicaragua. But his Superiors had other plans for him. Father was 27 years old, a tall, strong man with a robust constitution. They knew he was going to need that strength in the years to come.

His Superior asked Father if he had ever thought about going to Montana and the bewildered young

man said, “No.” Leaning forward over his desk toward Father, the elder Superior looked him straight in the eyes and said sharply, “Well, start thinking about it!” Father Emmett's hope to travel in foreign lands changed to fears of bears and



Priests from Montana and Wyoming attend Father's Mass of Christian Burial.



rattlesnakes. Nevertheless, he was soon on his way to Montana, and to the life God had chosen for him.

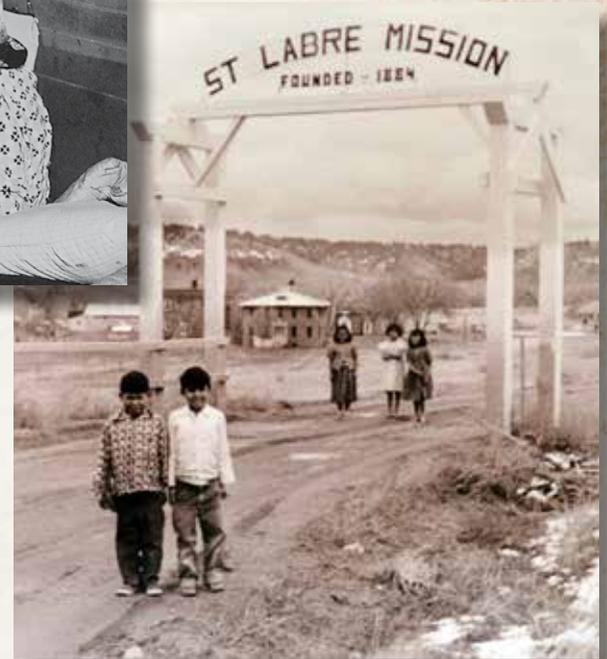
On July 7th, 1954, the temperature was 107 degrees when Father stepped off the train in Miles City. The "Wild West" just looked like an arid wilderness to Father, who soon saw that his new post was a dilapidated old Mission and that 2,000 Northern Cheyenne were living in shocking, semi-starvation conditions not fit for any human being. They were suffering from TB and epidemics of cholera and typhoid. But when it came to his own health, Father ignored the dreaded epidemics to pro-



(left) Mae Medicine Bird, bedridden and alone. (below) The entrance to St Labre Mission when Father first arrived in 1954.

vide immediate physical, spiritual, educational and financial help for them, especially when it came to children and elders.

Hundreds of Cheyenne of all ages had TB and were neglected by the government, living during the brutal winters in shacks and wall tents in frigid temperatures of 40 to 50 degrees below zero. In the face of this outrage and knowing the government wouldn't help him, Father Emmett decided to take action. Within a year he was the Pastor, Executive Director of St. Labre Indian School and Superintendent of Schools. He knew nothing of business but he knew what was right and what was terribly wrong. With his determination and strong faith that God would show him the way, Father organized the first of his highly successful fundraising campaigns.



His great enthusiasm, love for the Cheyenne and his charismatic, optimistic personality foretold an encouraging future for the descendants of warriors who had fought Custer in the Battle of the Little Bighorn.

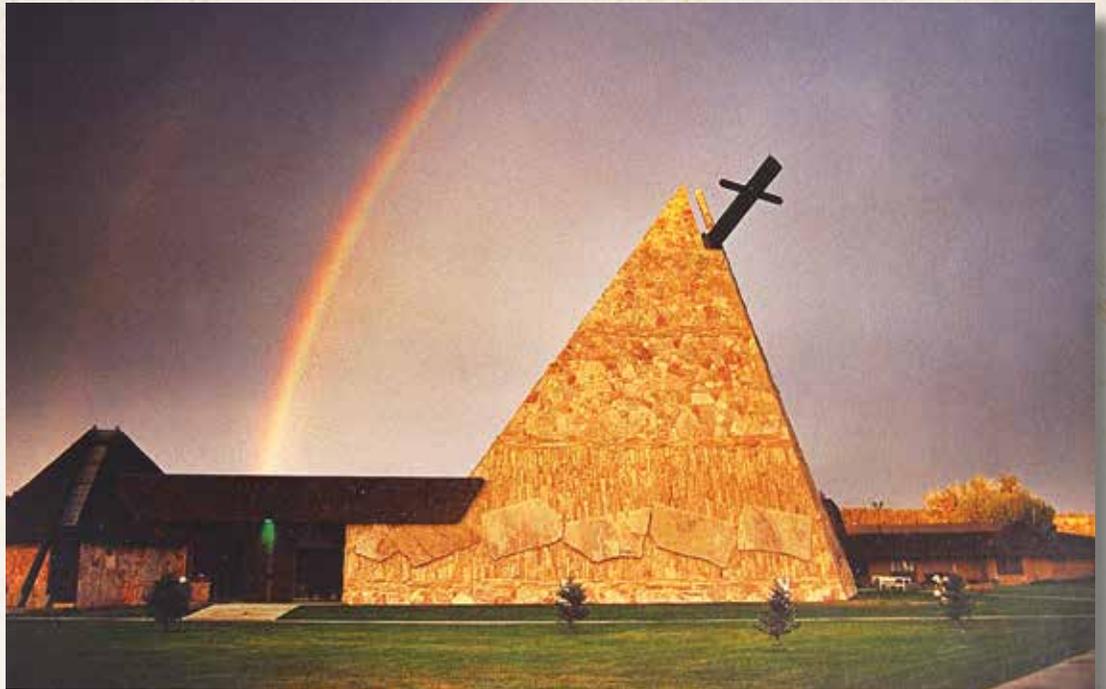
Over the next 50 years, Father Emmett became a giant among fundraisers. With advice from close friends Leo Dohn, Conrad Sump and Paul Morigi, he rebuilt the Mission school, built two more schools and facilitated programs that erected dozens of homes. He also gave funds to begin what became Dull Knife Memorial



Father Emmett with Mrs. Charles Sitting Man in 1958.

College. Over the years, donors helped him to build a 30,000 square foot church, many say is the most impressive Indian church in America. Donors also built two large factories, the largest at 40,000 square feet. He also supported a museum, 5 large group homes for troubled youth, 2 more industries, rebuilt a sawmill and constructed a 52,000 square foot gym complex containing an auditorium with 419 seats, full basketball court, indoor track, racquetball courts, weight room and a large, Olympic-sized swimming pool. He also built a landing strip and earned his pilot's license to fly people to hospitals in emergencies. If that were not enough, he was one of the first founders of a bank in Ashland for Indian and non-Indian community members.

From less than 100 students, St. Labre became one of the finest



(top) A rainbow over the Tipi Church, built in 1971. (middle) A basketball game in the Soaring Eagle Gym.



L to R: Conrad Sump, Paul Morigi and Father Emmett celebrating the Heritage Living Center Grand Opening in 2002.

Indian schools in the nation with an enrollment of 700 students.

Father Emmett was made an Honorary Chief of the Northern Cheyenne Council of 44 less than 10 years after he arrived in Montana. Like the famous Father Flanagan, founder of Boy's Town in Nebraska, he succeeded in monumental goals that others thought impossible.

But by 1994, Father's years of 24/7 days began to take a toll on his health and he retired from St. Labre Indian School, leaving a large endowment for deserving high school graduates to attend college.

But he soon got bored putting around in his garden and decided there was more to be done. From then on, nothing could stop him. Despite multiple heart attacks, aortic aneurisms and strokes, he began fundraising to build the 50,000



Father loved the view of the Tongue River Valley below the town of Ashland.



Eagle Ridge Park in back of the Center is a busy wild life sanctuary.

square foot, Soaring Eagle Heritage Living Center, an assisted living home for Cheyenne elders. Between 2002 and 2003, the Center for 40 elders opened and his biography, *Renegade Priest of the Northern Cheyenne* by Renee Sansom Flood was published.

Faithful donors have made the Heritage Living Center a beacon of hope for Cheyenne elders who would otherwise have been sent far away to nursing homes, isolating them from family and friends on their reservation, most of whom did not have the resources to visit them. Today, the Center has successfully provided the elderly with over ten years of nutritional meals,

warm apartments, Resident Attendants on duty every day and night and medical transportation to clinics and hospitals in Billings, a 4 hour, round trip from the Heri-

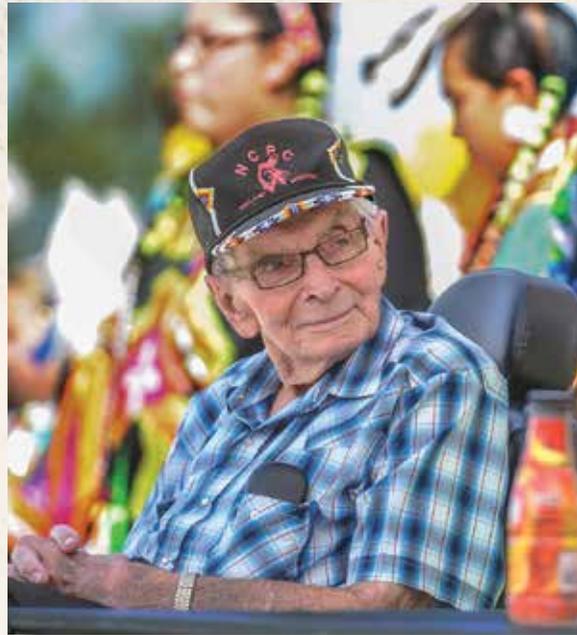
tage Living Center, located on a hill above Ashland, Montana.

In 2005, the once robust priest began his final, long decline in health. We all hoped Father might



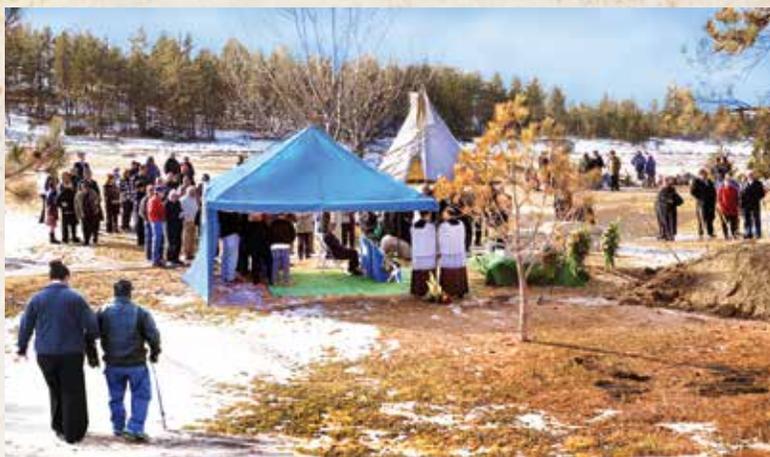
Looking down from the hill above the Heritage Living Center to the hills beyond.

live to his hundredth year, but on February 1, 2013, Father Emmett Hoffmann passed peacefully on to the next camp to join the old chiefs of the Cheyenne who had been his beloved mentors. We honor Father Emmett as a fundraising pioneer and a true advocate for the Northern Cheyenne. The entire course of his life was devoted to God, to humanitarian justice and to the grace of giving to the poor. We have traced his memory in our hearts. Farewell our beloved "Beggar Friend."



(left) Father Emmett watching Cheyenne dancers at his 86th Birthday Celebration. (bottom left) Dancers in full regalia perform at Father's Birthday Pow Wow. (bottom right) Tribal visitors of all ages attended the Heritage Living Center 10th Anniversary Celebration in 2012.





(left) A bronze statue by Mike Capser of Father Emmett Hoffmann now stands in the Heritage Living Center lobby. (top) Elders, family and clergy gather for Father Emmett's burial in Eagle Ridge Park. (right) Fergie, Father Emmett's faithful companion for 13 years and the official "Greeter" at the Center.



DETACH, MOISTEN GLUE STRIP AND SEAL

A Note from Mike

This Spring Newsletter is dedicated to Father Emmett Hoffmann's life and his many accomplishments. I am personally grateful and overwhelmed by the numerous loving cards and letters of sympathy from donors and friends after Father passed away. Thank you to those who expressed your continued love and support of Father's legacy.

I was honored to help fulfill one of Father's last wishes, to see his two sisters who live in Wisconsin. His request touched my heart and of course, I was eager to do what he asked in the little time I knew Father had left. I mentioned Father's wish to a close friend of Soaring Eagle, who then paid for the plane trip to Wisconsin from Billings to pick up Father's two siblings, Marilyn Mondrowski and Sister Phyllis M. Hoffmann of the Order of Salvatorian Sisters.

On the flight to Billings, the ladies told me of how Father would run and play with his dog in the fields when he was a carefree boy on the farm and how they were always teasing him. Father's sister Marilyn told me



Father's last visit with his beloved siblings, Sister Phyllis M. Hoffmann and Marilyn Mondrowski.

with a chuckle that she named her present dog, "Buddy," because that was Father's boyhood nickname.

When we got to Billings, I can't even begin to describe how moving that last meet-



Father and Mike Skaggs discussing future plans.

ing was when they walked into Father's living room and came to sit on either side of him. They each held his hand and spoke lovingly to him. He couldn't talk much but they kissed him and prayed with him for some time.

That night they slept in the bedroom next to his in case he needed something. The next day, they didn't want to leave but knew they must. It was an emotional last goodbye. They held on to each other and tried to be brave. Father watched out the window as they walked to the car and kept watching with tears in his eyes until they drove out of sight. I was honored to fulfill Father's wish to see his sisters one last time and to escort them safely home.

At the Heritage Living Center, some of the elders and staff miss Father Emmett so much, it hurts them to walk past the chapel. Some even go up the stairs and around to another wing and take the stairs down the other side because walking by the chapel painfully reminds them of his absence. This is not an easy feat for someone using a walker or a cane.

Today, Father's old friend, Fr. Pascal Siler, (who was once imprisoned in the

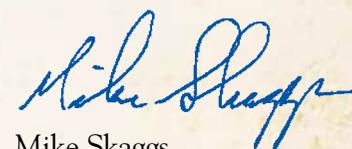
Middle East for 6 months for carrying a Bible) provides regular services for the elders and all denominations are invited to do the same.

The official mourning period of the Cheyenne is one year. It will take them at least that much time to prepare for Father's memorial, another Cheyenne custom that will officially end their grieving period with a feast, a give-away, speeches given by tribal leaders, prayers and dancing.

Father Emmett asked me to report to you on a regular basis about the events and activities at the Heritage Living Center. Just as he encouraged our elders and staff to teach you about Cheyenne customs and history, that, too will continue. Father loved history and wrote extensively throughout his life on the many interesting aspects of Northern Cheyenne life.

I remember the day two years ago when I was meeting with Conrad Sump and Father Emmett, when Father looked me in the eyes and said, "Mike, I'm not going to be around a long time." Then he asked me to become the CEO for Soaring Eagle. I was almost speechless. It felt like he was asking me to join a family, not just to take on a job.

Today, I feel a close, family connection of love and respect for the Cheyenne elders and that special relationship has changed my life for the better. I hope you feel the same way I do and will continue to comfort them with the best of care while they mourn the loss of their beloved friend and spiritual leader.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Mike Skaggs".

Mike Skaggs
Soaring Eagle CEO

The Best Friend I Ever Had in My Life

First of all, I want to send my love and greetings to the Cheyenne elders and staff at the Heritage Living Center and to all the donors who have believed in Father Emmett and helped him to fulfill his legacy for nearly six decades. He worked so hard, it broke his health but it never broke his spirit.

I have to say that I never met a man who cared so much for other human beings. Emmett was the best friend I ever had in my life. Since 1965, when I first met him, I started calling him, "Boss," or just, "Emmett." He was a Catholic Priest and I was a Lutheran CPA from New York. He didn't know much about business but I did. Our differences didn't matter one bit. He was a humorous guy, always joking and I was a serious person. He didn't judge people by their race or religion. He didn't judge at all; he just looked straight into your heart.

The Boss knew he needed a financial advisor and I was hired to manage the finances at St. Labre Indian School. We worked so closely, I knew what he wanted before he asked me. I could read his mind. But he had his own ways and he had an ego. Most great men do. We talked on the phone every day and I came to visit him in Montana at least 6 times a year. Sometimes, my wife Ruth and our two children came with me, or he came to New York for meetings. When Emmett retired from St. Labre in 1994, the school was financially in great shape and it made us both proud.

Emmett was a visionary. If he decided he was going to build a school, a church, or a factory, he was going to do it, no matter what. As his financial advisor, I was more conservative. I always talked straight to him and we learned to collaborate. When

he told me he was going to build the Heritage Living Center for Cheyenne elders, I said, "Geez, Emmett, are you sure you want to do this?" He said that he had faith in God that He would get it done and he relied on me to make sure we used the money to make it happen.

The Boss and I had a wonderful, 47-year friendship and business relationship. We belonged together and if he said God wanted something done, I knew it was true. And that's how the Heritage Living Center was built, with his strong faith and the goodness of people like you, who trusted that Father would use every dime and every ounce of energy to make sure that Cheyenne elders were taken care of and given the love and respect he wanted them to have.

When I knew Emmett was dying, I flew to Montana to be with him. One night there were several of us there with him in the hospital room and he told me that Fergie, his little dog and companion of 13 years was dying of Cushings Disease and diabetes. She could hardly walk and you could see the pain in her eyes. "I want Fergie to be buried with me," he told us. Emmett's nephew took care of that gentle request and two days later, on February 1st, 2013, I was in the hospital room with the Boss when he took his last quiet breath. He had been God's hands for 86 years and the Lord had finally called him home.

At the funeral, I walked up to his casket

and Fergie's ashes were snuggled there close to Emmett in a little box with her name carved on it. I prayed for him and then I said, "Boss, you've done your job and it's over. No man could ever have done more to give the Cheyenne a better life. Don't worry. I will always be here to take care of things for as long as I live."

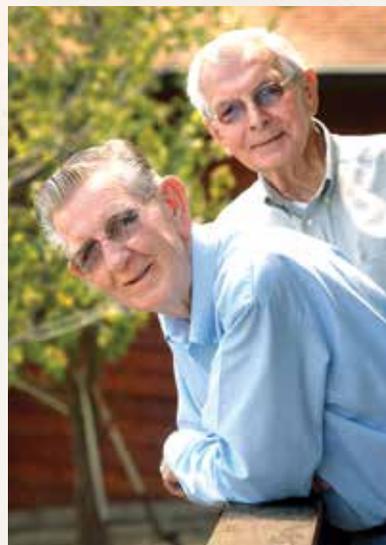
At the burial, I shoveled the first spade of dirt into his grave. Others followed and it took a long time to fill the grave in Eagle Ridge Park. I figured I'd known him and loved him the longest of anyone there and I wanted him to know. As I said before, I never had a better friend. I will always miss him.

I've taken Father Emmett's place as the Chairman of the Soaring Eagle Board of Directors and we'll do exactly as the Boss would want us to do. We'll follow his rules. The Heritage Living Center is a vibrant

facility with a solid staff and Father's hand-picked protégé, Mike Skaggs, as CEO. The Cheyenne deserve a fair shake. Stay the course with us and we'll carry on with the same faith and determination Emmett had. I will never forget how hard he worked to provide for the descendants of the greatest Cheyenne warriors in Western History.



Conrad Sump
Soaring Eagle Board Chairman



Best Friends Conrad "Connie" Sump
and Father Emmett Hoffmann.

Father Emmett's First Gift Annuity

Father Emmett began planning what became the Heritage Living Center in 1997. In 1999, three years before the Center welcomed the first Cheyenne elder resident, Father donated for a Charitable Gift Annuity to the organization he founded, Soaring Eagle, a Public Charity.

He recognized that even before the doors opened to the Heritage Living Center, the long term success of the Center depended on funding through charitable gifts that would last long after he was gone. He knew, too, that by his example, other donors would have faith and confidence in the future of this new charity to help elder Cheyenne residents who needed assisted living care.

Father Emmett was then 73 years old

and he received a significant charitable deduction from his annuity as well as an annual income, part of which was tax-free. He thought it was a good investment in Soaring Eagle's future and would provide him with a stable, fixed income in his so called, "retirement years."

He liked the benefits of giving through a Gift Annuity. Once his gift was funded, Soaring Eagle's Gift Annuity rate remained the same, unlike the stock market or interest rates.

Once his gave his charitable gift, he knew his Gift Annuity would last through his lifetime. As he aged, he continued to get his regular payments and by then, many of Soaring Eagle's other annuitants in their 90s and even those over 100 years old were also receiving their annuity payments right on time each year.

Father Emmett knew that gift annuities were important to some donors as they could enjoy the tax savings because

a portion of their gift would go for charitable purposes. Gift annuitants are also entitled to federal, and state income tax deductions for the year of their gifts. (This amount depends on the state in which a person lives.)

A portion of each annuity payment is tax-free for a period of time and can also be free of state and federal estate taxes depending on a donor's particular situation.

Today, the Soaring Eagle Board's commitment to annuity donors is to provide reliable retirement income and to preserve their gift for use in the coming years until they no longer need their income, usually after they pass away.

You may be at a time in your life where you could follow Father Emmett's example. Consider utilizing a Soaring Eagle Charitable Gift Annuity to meet your charitable goals and enjoy a stable income you can't outlive.



Faithful donors enjoying an afternoon with Father Emmett.



Fergie waits patiently for Father to finish his work before lunch.

SOARING EAGLE Annuity Rates

One Life Annuity

Age	% Rate
65	4.7
66-67	4.8
68	4.9
69	5.0
70	5.1
71	5.3
72	5.4
73	5.5
74	5.7
75	5.8
76	6.0
77	6.2
78	6.4
79	6.6
80	6.8
81	7.0
82	7.2
83	7.4
84	7.6
85	7.8
86	8.0
87	8.2
88	8.4
89	8.7
90+	9.0

Lower two life rates are available.
Please contact us for information.

Join Father Emmett's work by supporting Soaring Eagle with a Charitable Gift Annuity

- ◆ Rates remain unchanged - same dependable rates as in 2012.

Gift Annuities are for Seniors.

Consider how you can:

- ◆ Receive a fixed income for life.
- ◆ Save money on your taxes.
- ◆ Help Cheyenne Elders living at the Heritage Living Center.

Soaring Eagle offers gift annuities
with income rates as high as 9.0%

To learn how a Soaring Eagle charitable gift annuity can benefit you, please request our free, no obligation information.

Please return
the gift annuity coupon
in this newsletter or call
Mike Skaggs at 406-256-8500.



Your Will Keeps on Giving

Please use one of the following sample forms of bequest when preparing your Will:

A. (Whatever is left after other bequests have been granted) "All the rest, residue, and remainder of my estate, I bequeath to Soaring Eagle Public Charity, a corporation created under the Laws of the State of Montana, located at Billings, Montana."

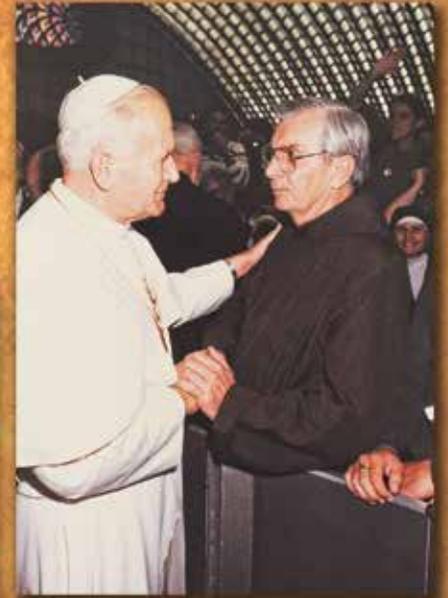
B. "I give, devise, and bequeath to Soaring Eagle Public Charity, a corporation created under the Laws of the State of Montana, located at Billings, Montana, _____% of my estate."

C. "I give, devise, and bequeath to Soaring Eagle Public Charity, a corporation created under the Laws of the State of Montana, located at Billings, Montana, the sum of \$ _____."

D. "I give, devise, and bequeath to Soaring Eagle Public Charity, a corporation created under the Laws of the State of Montana, located at 745 Indian Trail, P.O. Drawer 879 in Billings, Montana, 59103, the sum of \$ _____ for the Wall of Living Memories Fund, to care for Cheyenne elders, the principal of which shall remain in perpetuity."

These are sample forms only. Please consult your attorney when preparing any legal document.

A FATHER EMMETT SCRAPBOOK





THANKS
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**Father Emmett's Biography,
Renegade Priest of the
Northern Cheyenne**
by Renee Sansom Flood

**ORDER FORM
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SOARING EAGLE ANNUITY

**YES, I'm interested in a Soaring Eagle Charitable Gift Annuity.
Please send me more information.**

Name _____

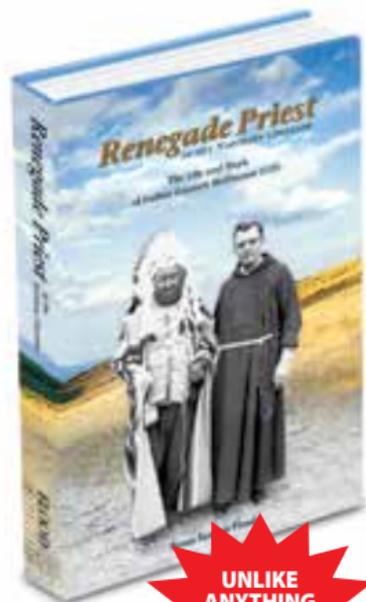
Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Birth date(s) of annuitant _____ E-mail _____

Annuity Amount \$ _____ *Minimum annuity amount \$5000
(up to 2 names/birth dates allowed per annuity.)*

This is a non-binding proposal. Upon receipt of actual payment for an annuity,
a formal contract will be mailed. For more information call (406) 256-8500.



Renegade Priest of the Northern Cheyenne

*The Life and Work of
Father Emmett Hoffmann
1926-2013*

Father Emmett's remarkable story of success is unequalled in the history of the 20th century Catholic Church in the American West.

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ANYTHING
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