



Parish Heartbeats: Stories of Faith In Action

What are your Core Values?

Parishioner John Blumberg had just finished speaking with 200 college students as part of his role in a firm-wide position with Arthur Andersen. A student approached him and said, "Mr. Blumberg, your presentation may change the course of my life." Little did John know that this student's affirmation would, in fact, change the course of his very own life!

John believes his occupation is his calling and many members of SMMP have benefited from John's revelation during Lay Reflections or as a guest at Business Breakfasts. He would tell you it took a "leap of faith" to leave behind a successful career at a firm he loved to start his own business as a professional speaker.

John was the youngest of three boys raised by a devout Catholic mother and a Jewish father. He and his two older brothers attended 12 years of Catholic school in Memphis. John was headed for a Catholic University when fate intervened. Christian Brothers University called him about two weeks before his classes were to begin and notified him the grant money he was promised had not come through. Resources were minimal as his father had passed from a heart attack four years previous. Guided by what must have been the Holy Spirit, John immediately contacted what was then known as Memphis State University and enrolled in their Accounting program. It would eventually prove to be his path into one of the premier CPA firms in the world.

His career at Arthur Andersen would take him from CPA to Human Resources and Recruiting, eventually helping direct Andersen's recruiting worldwide. In the midst of loving his career, John would tell you that he could no longer "ignore the tug of a calling". He began to pray that God provide him a resource to further investigate this "calling" if it were to be.

In 1996, that prayer would eventually be answered by a successful leadership speaker, Kevin Freiberg, whom John engaged for a program at Andersen. At Kevin's invitation,

John would soon find himself sitting in Kevin's home in San Diego. After a full day of deep discussion, Kevin told John that many people approached him about joining the world of professional speaking and he recommended 95% of them to keep their day job. He then looked at John and said, "You, my friend, are in that other 5%." John took a deep gulp and took a long flight of discernment back to Chicago.

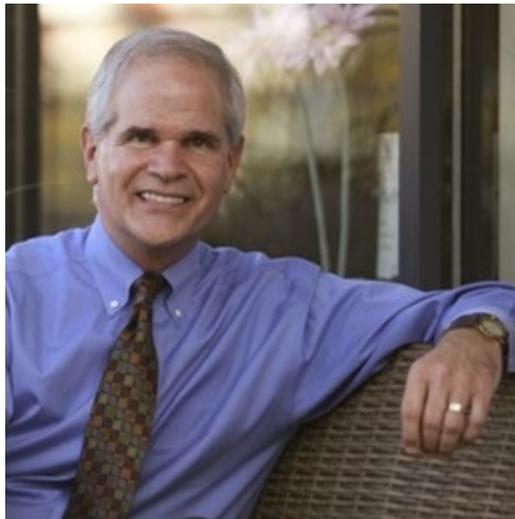
Early years of entrepreneurial success gave way in 2002 and the three-pronged reality of disaster. Within 6-months the World Trade Center was attacked on September 11th, the "dot.com" bust in the economy and the implosion of Arthur Andersen would deliver a blow to John's business in a way he could have never expected. Kevin Freiberg would once again be at his side encouraging him to fall into the trust of God's loving arms and embrace the real journey entrepreneurship!

John had to call on all his spiritual reserves to make it through this trying period. He describes it as one of the most important seasons of his journey.

A decade later, John feels the tug of his calling still challenging him in new ways. His upcoming book, ROI: Return on Integrity, will boldly address the issue of building value with core values in businesses across America.

Through these years, John learned and continues to teach a valuable lesson: Our core values build value ... and may very well help each of us to hear our own calling. How well do you know your own core values? John would suggest that not intentionally knowing them is much like hitting the snooze button on your life ... and possibly on your own calling. It doesn't make life easier ... just more meaningful. It's an exercise that John both teaches and lives.

- by Phil Samuels



Parish Heartbeats is an occasional bulletin column that celebrates the ways St. Margaret Mary parishioners make a difference in the lives of others.