

## **Traveling Companion: Left Blank Intentionally**

### **Fr. Michael Tracey**

As the end of the year financial investments reports arrive, I notice a very interesting trend. It has nothing to do with the state of the economy. It has nothing to do with how my individual stocks may have performed during the past year. It has nothing to do with my profit or loss balance sheet or nothing to do with the amount I may owe the Internal Revenue Service in April. I also know that it has nothing to do with the preservation of the Rain Forest or paper mills.

It is a simple statement that cradles the center of a blank page reminding me that "This page has been left blank intentionally." On one prospectus, I noticed that five blank pages had the same statement. I know that there must be a method in the madness of "wasting" five pages of paper to tell me that they are "left blank intentionally." Am I supposed to conclude that the financial institution generating such a prospectus didn't have enough information to fill all pages or am I supposed to conclude that this was a "paper saving device" that they were using to indicate their commitment to the ecosystem? Obviously, they didn't leave the pages "blank intentionally" so that I could use them to write notes to myself about that particular investment.

Of course, I realized that there was a lesson here. Maybe it was not one that the investment company wanted me to learn "intentionally," but it is a lesson that they allowed me to learn "unintentionally."

I realized the page that was "left blank intentionally" was a reminder of a new day, a new year, a new invitation, a new opportunity, a new beginning.

I realized that the page that was "left blank intentionally" is a reminder of the fresh start that God gives me each day to use or abuse it; to fill it with nothingness or plenty; with pain or pleasure; with hope or fear; with possibilities or procrastinations; with love or hate; with building up or tearing down.

I realized that the page that was "left blank intentionally" is a reminder of a new year that the Lord opens up before me. It is a page that is blank with possibilities if written on and inspired by his hand.

I realized that the page that was "left blank intentionally" is a reminder of the fresh, unspoiled and unsullied start the Lord gives me each day. It is a reminder that the baggage of yesterday is traded in for a "no luggage to check in" for today so that I might travel lightly and lovingly on His coattails today.

I realized that the page that was "left blank intentionally" is a reminder of the lorica of St. Patrick which calls me to a fresh new day, reminding me that "I arise today. Through the strength of heaven; light of the sun, radiance of the moon. Splendor of fire, speed of lightning, swiftness of wind, depth of sea. Stability of earth and firmness of rock. I arise today, through God's strength to pilot me; God's might to uphold me, God's wisdom to guide me, God's eye to look before me, God's ear to hear me, God's word to speak for me, God's hand to guard me, God's way to lie before me, God's shield to protect me."

I don't know about you, but I am going to have a "blank intentionally" New Year which I hope will and know will unintentionally become anything but a "blank intentionally" year.