

2016 Bishop's Annual Appeal

A Message from Bishop Frederick Campbell

My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

When Saint Joseph, a just and holy man, wondered how best to respond to his betrothed Mary's expected child conceived by the Holy Spirit, an angel revealed to him the divine character of the child to be born. Echoing the prophecy of Isaiah, the angel told Joseph that the child shall be called Emmanuel, "God is with us." If God is with us, the angel explained, then Joseph should be with Mary and not hesitate to receive her as his wife. In a similar fashion, in acclaiming the birth of the Savior, Jesus Christ, we also profess that God is with us and therefore we should be with and for others, especially those in need.

I have come to know over the past decade, how the faithful of our Diocese are wonderfully attentive to those around us, taking the initiative to address any individual or common need as it arises. Many times your actions benefit those you do not know. It manifests a compassionate spirit in our diocesan family. These stories of giving are both humbling and reassuring. I thank you for your service in both prayer and action.

As you know, the Bishop's Annual Appeal is an important means by which we demonstrate our love and gratitude for God through our service to our neighbors.

Our theme this year is, "Emmanuel – Be His Hope to Others – God With Us". We

are assured and know that God is with us because everything we have and everything we are, our very selves, are gifts from a generous and loving Father. We demonstrate our love and gratitude for God, and further that spirit of Emmanuel, by sharing our gifts with those around us. As members of the Body of Christ, we are one.

God loves us so much, and wanted to be with us so much, that He gave us the greatest gift of all in His Son, Jesus Christ. We are commanded by Jesus to “Love one another as I have loved you.” Remembering the sacrificial love of Jesus, we are called to serve all others – those known to us and the stranger among us.

Among the services your generosity to the Bishop’s Annual Appeal provide are:

The many ministries and programs operating within our parishes all across the diocese that strengthen our faith.

Those who are in crisis and need in so many ways, while they seek a better life for themselves and their families.

Our seminarians who are being formed for service to our Church.

Our families who need assistance providing for a Catholic education for their sons and daughters.

In addition, your support of the Bishop’s Annual Appeal is a commitment to the support of marriage and family life. Marriage is a sacrament, sealed by the vows of a

man and a woman. Anyone who is married knows that it takes commitment, sacrifice, giving, trust, sharing, faith, prayer, and the support of a community of faith. Marriage is manifested in the gift of children, in the practice of our Faith, in our actions, and in praying together. It is among the most difficult, yet the most satisfying and rewarding work that we can do.

These are just a few of the many ways in which your gift to the Bishop's Annual Appeal makes a great difference in the lives of everyone in the Diocese of Columbus. While we are all familiar with our particular parishes, the Diocese remains the Local Church in central Ohio – the Faithful of the Diocese gathered around the Bishop. This implies a cooperative communal effort to take care of one another with humility and selfless giving. It requires us to see beyond our own needs. We understand and embrace the responsibility we have to respond to the call for support of our brothers and sisters in the Diocese of Columbus. We do this by vigorously supporting the Bishop's Annual Appeal through shared programs, education, and service to the needy through these initiatives.

In this Jubilee Year of Mercy, your support of the Bishop's Annual Appeal makes us all good and faithful stewards of the Church. So many of the corporal works of mercy are supported by your gifts and donations. The mission of our Church is to proclaim and teach the Gospel, and to seek holiness by serving one another, just as Jesus Christ did. It is not only our role, but our responsibility to carry out that

mission. We must never stop showing mercy to all, while giving our time, talent, and treasure for the good of others.

Last year, we were able to surpass our \$6.2 million goal, by raising more than \$7.5 million in pledges from more than 26,000 donors. I cannot sufficiently express my gratitude to all of you for participating in last year's Bishop's Annual Appeal. The funds raised went directly to the ministries I just described.

However, they are not the only beneficiaries. Through your investment in the Bishop's Annual Appeal, you are also investing in your own parish. Every dollar received from you through the BAA over and above your parish goal is returned 100% to your parish. Last year, more than \$1.6 million was returned to the 76 parishes that exceeded their goals.

For 2016, the goal of the Bishop's Annual Appeal has been modestly increased, but the needs are great. As you prayerfully consider your donation for 2016, I ask you to increase your gift if you are able, and to encourage good stewardship of treasure in your own parish family.

Please join me in supporting the 2016 Bishop's Annual Appeal. Our goal this year is \$6.3 million. I am confident that we can meet that goal through the love we share with each other and the love we have for the God who through His Son, Jesus Christ, is our Emmanuel.

Thank you again for your faith and your service, and your generous support of the Bishop's Annual Appeal. You have shown time and again that you will meet any challenge or need with great love and kindness.

May God bless you and your family.