

PULPIT ANNOUNCEMENTS

APPEAL PULPIT ANNOUNCEMENT – January 21 and 22

Read by Pastor or 2017 Appeal Lay Co-Chairs

Dear Friends,

My friends, I come before you and once again ask for your prayerful consideration to give generously, even sacrificially, to our upcoming Annual Catholic Appeal. Each year we come together as a diocesan family to recognize the many blessings God has given to each of us and our common responsibility to reach out to those who are in need, to those who are looking for faith, the message of hope to hear that they're not alone and that in their hour of need there are those willing to stand by them.

This is the time when we once again join together as a diocesan family and share the gifts God has given us so that lives can be transformed and blessed by God's love in concrete ways - one person at a time. Recall that last year, we celebrated the conclusion of our Diocesan Synod. We are now in the midst of implementing the many mandates that the Synod delegates offered to me for my consideration and subsequent approval.

When you look at all those initiatives, in the end they are all about identifying and sharing generously the gifts God has given us for the whole Church so that people's lives can be improved, that people can be touched by God's love and mercy, that their broken hearts can be healed and, if their minds are searching for the truth that they'll find that truth in the One we have found that truth in, who is Jesus the Lord.

The Synod has asked us to put people first and not only rejuvenate our parishes and school communities and build on all the good that is already there, but to become evangelical missionary disciples of the Gospel. But in order to fulfill this mission, we need resources. We need your help. I need your help to realize this expansive and transformative vision that the Synod has given us. It is our path to renewal.

The works of the Church are many including our commitment to education and the hungry, our outreach with Catholic Charities to help the poor, the homeless, the pastoral care of the sick, care for our priests, particularly those who have given a lifetime of service and now in their elder years appreciate a place of dignity and respect, and for so many other ministries in our midst.

My brothers and sisters, I appeal once again to your faith and generosity. Let us join together as a community, brothers and sisters, committed to bringing the Good News of lives that are blessed and transformed in Jesus Christ. As always, I am deeply grateful for your past

generosity and support for me and for my ministry in our midst for all the good works of the Church, for your support of your parishes and your pastors, for your support of our schools and our school communities, for all that you do quietly, generously, faithfully, to allow the Church's mission to go forward.

Frankly, there are few words I can express that can adequately describe my thanks for all that you do. I promise to keep all of you in my prayers as I ask that you continue to pray for me and my ministry.

This is how we reach our sisters and brothers in Christ one person at a time:

- **Feed the Hungry and Homebound**

More than 1.3 million nutritious meals served last year through soup kitchens, food pantries and senior nutrition programs across the County.

The senior nutrition program delivers 500 meals daily and the meal delivery often represents the only interaction the client will have with a person all day long.

The New Covenant Center in Stamford with their new 8,000 square foot facility continues to expand services and their client base with a food pantry shopping experience, life coaching, showers, barber shop and medical and immigration services to help our guests move towards self-sufficiency.

- **Shelter the Homeless**

We provide permanent supportive housing to more than 200 individuals and families.

We recently obtained 20 additional housing units for chronically homeless single adults who are rejoining main stream society from incarceration.

- **Empower and Counsel those in Need**

Conducted more than 15,000 counseling sessions annually for individuals and families to address a variety of coping, mental health, marriage and parent-child issues.

Bridgeport behavioral health services continue to expand significantly through the new collaboration with St. Vincent's Medical Center.

Received a special grant to help offer free counseling services for the "uninsured" population.

- **Strengthen individuals and families in Need**

A quality pre-school early childhood education service program is assisting 130 children of low income families at two program locations in Norwalk.

Disaster relief assistance cares for more than 600 families still dealing with the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy.

Immigration Services continues to “welcome the stranger” and help reunite families by serving approximately 350 people annually, using its expertise in required documentation and also a holistic approach to achieve life-changing outcomes.

Your gifts to the Appeal also helped make it possible to:

- Award financial scholarships to 65% of students in the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport;
- Ensure that children and young adults had the opportunity to participate in religious education programs;
- Educate and train 26 men for ordination to priesthood in our Diocese;
- Educate and train 11 men for ordination to the Permanent Diaconate program;
- Care for 64 senior priests in their dignified retirement;
- Afford our youth with meaningful opportunities to mature as holy and active members of society through a wide range of faith-based programs;
- Respond to spiritual, educational and social needs of persons with disabilities through the St. Catherine Center for Special Needs.

Saint Paul reminds us that those are the things that really matter for they are eternal. And, of course, the greatest of those is love. The Annual Catholic Appeal gives us the resources to make love more real in our midst. And, I come to you to ask for your help.