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MESSAGE TO CLERGY

My Brother Priests,

As we begin the 2018 Annual Appeal this year, let me express my sincere gratitude for your leadership, cooperation and the superb teamwork of your administrative staff to support the charitable, educational and pastoral mission of the local Church through this vital ministry. Needless to say, without the Appeal, we could not achieve our ultimate goal of building the Lord’s Kingdom here in Fairfield County.

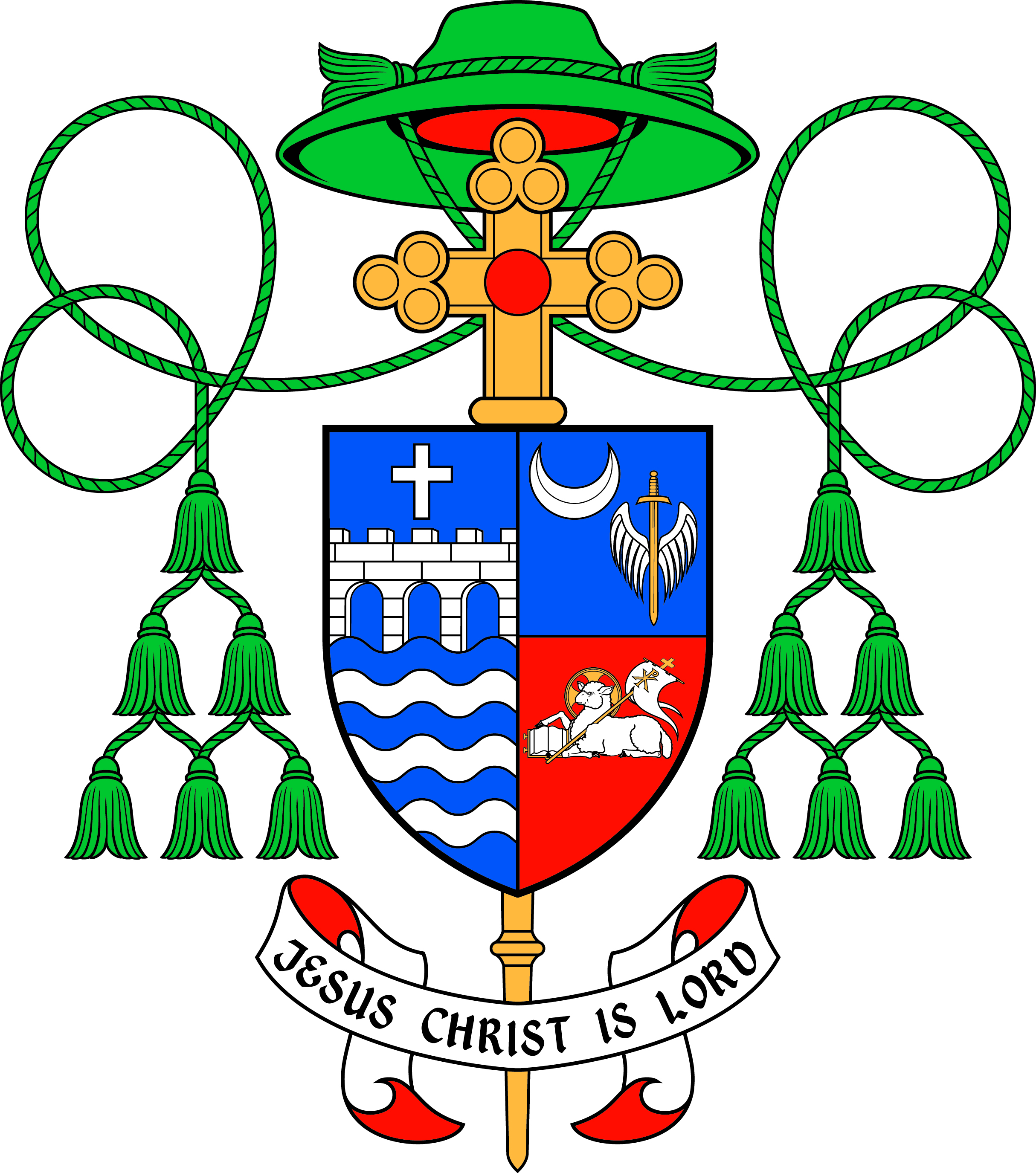
Our Annual Catholic Appeal’s (ACA) core mission focuses on the pastoral, spiritual and human needs of God’s people. Parish Appeal Chairs provide assistance by speaking, coordinating and organizing gatherings and encouraging support. Education Weekend provides an opportunity for parishioners to learn more about the Appeal through the ACA video or personal stories and Commitment Weekend offers the opportunity for parishioners to make their gift early.

Each year the Office of Development reviews the procedures and processes that help us conduct the Appeal. This “Leadership Guide” includes practices and guidelines to assist you with conducting a successful Appeal effort at your parish.

It is my hope that all parishes will follow this plan so that, if properly implemented, the 2018 Appeal can build upon last year’s results and continue to provide substantial funding for both diocesan and parish ministries.

Together we can accomplish even greater things for the Lord!

Fraternally yours in Christ,





Most Reverend Frank J. Caggiano

Bishop of Bridgeport

FROM THE DEVELOPMENT OFFICE



Dear Pastors, Administrators and Parochial Vicars,

Thank you for your cooperation, commitment and leadership that you provided to the Annual Appeal last year. We cannot thank you enough for all that you do for your parishes and the Diocese.

Each year we prepare this Annual Catholic Appeal Pastors’ Leadership Guide to assist and support your efforts at your parish with valuable tools to conduct a successful effort.

In addition to the Appeal solicitation and promotion timetables, we have also included procedures, bulletin/pulpit announcements and suggested Intercessions for the Prayer of the Faithful. Please ensure that your posters are displayed in prominent areas and present the Appeal DVD at a reception or after Mass.

This year we will conduct Education and Commitment Weekends along with two ***In-Pew Weekends on April 28 and April 29 and, June 2 and 3.*** This is a new initiative for the Appeal. Information can be found on pages 18 - 21, please be sure to review. ***Please also note that* *Education weekend is scheduled for January 20 and 21 and Commitment Weekend is March 10 and 11.***

However, please keep in mind that while these materials have been proven to be extremely helpful, it has been demonstrated year after year that the most effective tool to achieve a successful Appeal effort cannot be found in this manual. Rather it can be found in the positive approach and sincere enthusiasm you exhibit when motivating and inspiring your parishioners to participate this year.

As always, we look forward to working with you again in 2018 and are here to help you and your parish office staff in any way we can. So please don’t hesitate to contact us if the need arises.

Sincerely,



William McLean, Jr. Pamela Rittman, CFRE

Chief Development Officer Director of Development

ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL PRAYER

Almighty and ever-faithful Lord we gratefully acknowledge

Your mercy and we place our trust in You.

Your Gospel proclaims the Good News to all

radiant with Your glory and inviting us to rejoice.

Your love and guidance fill our hearts with joy.

May the Holy Spirit inspire us to respond to the

**2018 Annual Catholic Appeal, Joy in Christ, Our Gift To Share**

Bless us with generosity that in love

we may freely share our gifts with others.

Bless us with understanding that we may

recognize that everything we have is a gift from God.

Bless us with wisdom that we may

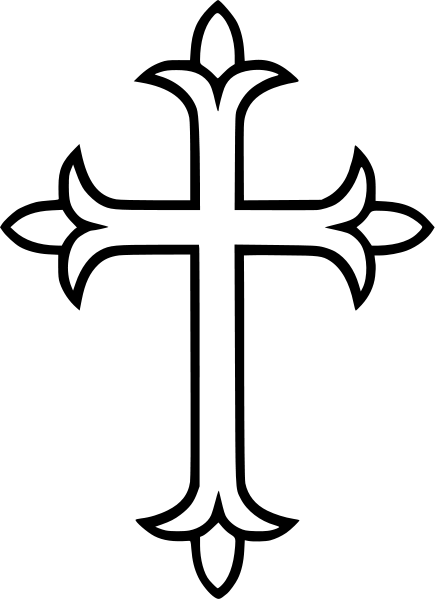
wisely use the gifts God has given us.

Bless us with a true sense of joy —

the fruit of generous and grateful giving.

May Mary, Mother of God, be with us to inspire, guide and protect us.

We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.



CONTACT INFORMATION

For all questions about the Annual Catholic Appeal, please contact the Office of Development, 238 Jewett Avenue, Bridgeport, CT.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| William McLean  Chief Development Officer  Diocese of Bridgeport  238 Jewett Avenue  Bridgeport, CT 06606  (203) 416-1473  [wmclean@diobpt.org](mailto:wmclean@diobpt.org) | Pam Rittman, CFRE  Director of Development,  Annual Catholic Appeal  Diocese of Bridgeport  238 Jewett Avenue  Bridgeport,CT 06606  (203) 416-1479  [prittman@diobpt.org](mailto:prittman@diobpt.org) |

INTERNET RESOURCES

All information for the Annual Catholic Appeal including the video, brochure, Pastors’ Leadership Guide, pulpit, bulletin and weekly announcements can be viewed on The Bridge link under the [Development section on the Diocesan website at www.Bridgeportdiocese.com.](http://www.Bridgeportdiocese.com/)

ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL TIMELINE

| **MONTH** | **TARGET AUDIENCE** | **MAILING** | **PROMOTIONS / EVENTS** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **January 2018**  **January 13** | Past donors | 2017 tax statements | Feature article in *Fairfield County Catholic* |
| All Lay Appeal  Co-chairs |  | Orientation  12:00 Noon |
|  | Deanery receptions | Deanery receptions:  January 21  January 25 |
| **January 20 & 21** |  |  | Education Weekend |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **February 2018** | Bishop Leader Donors |  | Feature article in *Fairfield County Catholic*  Deanery reception  February 4 and 6 |
| **February 1** | All registered households | Solicitation letter with Appeal brochure |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **March 2018** |  | Thank you letters and pledge reminders | Feature article in *Fairfield County Catholic*  Weekly pulpit announcements |
| **March 1** | Bishop Leader donors and all registered households who have not given | Solicitation from Pastor |
| **March 10 & 11** |  |  | Commitment Weekend |
| **April 2018** |  | Thank you letters and pledge reminders | Feature article in *Fairfield County Catholic*  Weekly pulpit announcements |
| **April 12** | Solicit all families who have not given | Request letter from Bishop |
| **April 28 & April 29** |  |  | In-Pew Weekend |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **May 2018** |  | Thank you letters and pledge reminders | Feature article in *Fairfield County Catholic*  Weekly pulpit announcement  Phone calls |
| **May 17** | Solicit all families who have not given | Request letter from Bishop |
|  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |
| **June 2018** | Possible final solicitation follow-up letter to past donors | Thank you letters and pledge reminders | Feature article in *Fairfield County Catholic* |
| **June 2 & 3**    **June 30, Appeal ends** |  |  | In-Pew Weekend  Text to Give Month |

ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL FUNDS

GOAL: $10,000,000

**Catholic Education $1,750,000**

Bishop’s Scholarship Fund $ 1,150,000

Catholic Academy of Bridgeport $ 600,000

**Works of Charity and Pastoral Services…………………...$2,578,000**

Catholic Charities of Fairfield County $ 1,250,000

Pastoral Care of the Sick and Elderly  $ 775,000

Saint Catherine Center for Special Needs $ 250,000

Ethnic Ministries and Strategic Planning $ 303,000

**Catechesis and Evangelization $1,689,000**

The Office of Lifelong Formation $ 250,000

Youth $ 340,000

The Leadership Institute $ 81,000

Pastoral Life and Ministries $ 383,000

Communications $ 635,000

**Clergy $3,456,000**

Formation of Priests and Deacons $ 1,242,000

Pastoral Care of Retired Priests $ 1,760,000

Vocations $ 454,000

*\*In the spirit of financial transparency, the cost to conduct the Annual Catholic Appeal totals less than 5.5 cents on the dollar based on the 2018 ACA goal. Fundraising expenses may also provide additional support to a number of these areas.*

SOCIAL MEDIA PROGRAM

The Diocese utilizes social media messaging throughout the Appeal through Facebook, Twitter and other on-line social media platforms. Beginning in January a strategy is in place to launch the Appeal including a preview of the video and Appeal messaging leading up to the kick-off.

Links and instructions to place the video and brochure for placement on your parish website will be available on the Development website and also sent with 2018 ACA updates.

**Text to Give Month - June 1 – 30**

The Diocese launched a mobile fundraising program last year called **Text to Give**, and it will continue as an option to make a gift throughout the Appeal. Beginning June 1st through June 30th **Text to Give** Month will be highlighted and marketed as a way to make a donation. It is one of the easiest and latest ways to fundraise using mobile technology such as cell phones, smart phones or tablets.

**Text to Give** allows parishioners to make their gift to the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal through their cell phone, smart phone or tablet by texting the keyword, Appeal, on their text messaging app. Once the keyword is texted, a mobile friendly screen will open with options to make a gift.

The program will help parishes increase their participation and will only be in effect during June.

**Text to Give** will be promoted in the months leading up to June through social media and

information sent to Pastors and Appeal Chairs.

2018 APPEAL PARISH LAY CO-CHAIRS

Recruiting volunteers is critical to the overall success of the Annual Catholic Appeal. Each parish is asked to recruit a minimum of two lay co-chairs to work with the pastor and the Development Office staff in conducting the Annual Catholic Appeal. At least one lay co-chair should be a member of the Parish Finance Council, if possible.

The role of the lay co-chairs is to:

* **Be familiar** with the Annual Catholic Appeal case for support, plan and timetable.
* **Ensure** that the Annual Catholic Appeal is effectively carried out in the parish.
* **Provide** leadership to the pastor in securing the parish goal.
* **Speak** at Masses if asked by your pastor.
* **Make** a sacrificial commitment to your parish and the diocese.
* **Make** proper use of Annual Catholic Appeal materials and visual aids (video, Bishop’s audio message, poster, bulletin and pulpit announcements, lay witness talks, etc.).
* **Attend** the Annual Catholic Appeal Kick-off Mass and Bishop’s lay co-chair reception.
* **Host** a small gathering to highlight the Annual Catholic Appeal.
* **Assist** the Pastor with follow-up phone calls or mailings to potential donors.
* **Coordinate and encourage** participation during Commitment Weekend.
* **Be an advocate** for the Annual Catholic Appeal in the parish.
* **Pray** for the success of the Annual Catholic Appeal.

The Development Office will assist the 2018 Appeal Parish lay co-chairs.

2018 ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL COMMITTEE

The role of the ACA Committee is to work with the Development team to further support the leadership of the Appeal.

* **Be an advocate and familiar** with the ACA case for support, plan and timetable.
* **Attend** the ACA Parish Chair training session held in January.
* **Attend** one formal committee meeting and conference call.
* **Attend** ACA receptions.
* M**ake** an early sacrificial gift to your parish and the diocese.
* **Review** ACA progress reports from Development.
* **Provide** assistance to 15 parish chairs, if needed.
* **Speak** at Masses in parishes in your Deanery.
* **Host** a reception at your parish, if available.
* **Take** part in an article featured in theFairfield County Catholicnewspaper.
* **Help coordinate and encourage** participation on Commitment Weekend.
* **Be an enthusiastic advocate for the ACA** and the ways it impacts people in your parish and throughout the diocese.

SAMPLE SPEAKING SCRIPT

2018 APPEAL LAY CO-CHAIRS/MINISTRY REPRESENTATIVES

Good (morning / afternoon / evening),

My name is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. When Msgr. /Father \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ asked me to speak this morning / afternoon / evening on behalf of the Annual Catholic Appeal I was eager to do so because I am an annual supporter of this charitable ministry who strongly believes the indispensable role it serves in carrying out the mission of our diocese.

During the next few minutes, I would like to speak about why I plan to participate again this year, and to ask that you join me through a commitment of your own. The Annual Catholic Appeal is the one time of the year when we are asked as a faith community to extend the reach of our charity beyond this parish in a special way.

Together we can make it possible to provide the many good works that thousands of persons, whom we may never know or ever meet, rely upon and whose lives we can truly help change for the better. When you really think about it, giving to the Annual Catholic Appeal is one very clear-cut way to live the faith we profess.

Through the Annual Catholic Appeal and your generosity, our youth are formed in the faith through works of catechesis. Catholic schools enable children to live and learn the faith by growing intellectually, spiritually and morally. We must also care for our retired clergy and continue supporting our priests, seminarians and deacons to fulfill their vocational calling and serve their parish communities in Word, Altar, and Charity.

Marriage and family life are nurtured and enriched; human needs are addressed as well. Despair is replaced by hope, and the marginalized and forgotten are moved from neglect and isolation to find compassion and kindness. Housing, food and other assistance for the poor are also provided. Life issues are honored, respected and defended, and special care is dispensed to the developmentally and physically disabled, all through services funded by the Annual Catholic Appeal.

It is also a fact that among our 82 diocesan parishes and St. Margaret Shrine, there are those faith communities that do not have sufficient resources to serve its parishioners, and that is where the Annual Catholic Appeal can step in to supplement aid and assist our priests and all parish leaders in providing ministries and outreach.

I would encourage you to re-read the Appeal brochure that was recently sent to your home as it details all of the ministries and services that rely upon and receive funding from this vital charitable ministry.

This year our parish goal is $\_\_\_\_. As of this week our parish has received $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ in total pledges. I encourage you to consider making your sacrificial pledge to the 2018 Appeal. Whether you have been a donor in the past, have missed a few years or have never given, I can assure you that your participation will have a profound and lasting positive impact! Thank you.

SAMPLE TELEPHONE FOLLOW-UP SCRIPT

2018 APPEAL LAY CO-CHAIRS/MINISTRY REPRESENTATIVES

Hello, may I speak with Mr. /Mrs. (Prospect’s name). This is (your name), and I serve on our Parish Appeal Committee for the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal.

I am calling to thank you for supporting the Appeal last year and to ask if you will be renewing your gift this year. As the need for the ministries and services provided by the Appeal continues to increase, the importance of every gift has never been greater. Can we count upon your participation again this year?

IF YES:

Thank you very much. Then record the amount and verify the contact information. Request that the donor complete a pledge card and return it in this Sunday’s Offertory Collection.

Before concluding the call, confirm spelling of the names, address, pledge or gift amount and payment schedule. Thank the donor again and always let the donor hang up first.

IF NO:

I understand. Thank the person for his/her time and say “Goodbye.” Update your roster and indicate “no gift” next to the person’s name and address.

MATCHING GIFTS PROGRAM

Please encourage parishioners to inquire if their employer participates in a matching gift program. In some cases, parishioners may double or even triple their donation to the Appeal. Any matching gifts will be credited to your parish once the pledge is redeemed.

There are also those companies that will match gifts by retirees and/or spouses of deceased employees.

Please use the following in your bulletins.

MATCHING GIFTS TO THE ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL

Please inquire about a matching gift at your company to the Annual Catholic Appeal as it may double your donation and be credited toward the parish goal! Companies amend these policies over time and may support Catholic Charities or the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport. There are also those companies that will match gifts by retirees and/or spouses of deceased employees.

Matching gift forms can be obtained from the Human Resources Department or Benefits Coordinator of your company. Please complete the employee’s portion and submit the form or appropriate paperwork with your pledge card or at the time when your pledge has been fulfilled.

STEP 1

Check with the Human Resources Department, Benefits Coordinator or Payroll Department of your employer and inquire if it offers a Matching Gift Program.

STEP 2

Review donation guidelines and/or a list of eligible charities supported.

STEP 3

Decide how much you want to donate. **Please note that while many companies will not donate to religious organizations, Catholic Charities of Fairfield County or the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport may meet the eligibility requirements.** If your company qualifies, please make your gift payments payable to **Catholic Charities or the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport** and remit the payments to the Appeal Office. If you need more information, please contact us at (203) 416-1312 or 2018ACA@ diobpt.org.

STEP 4

Complete the employee section of the appropriate form and submit it with the pledge card, or at the time of your last payment to ensure that the match will be donated.

If you have any questions about this process, please call the Development Office at (203) 416-[1312 or email us at 2018 ACA@diobpt.org.](mailto:2015ACA@diobpt.org)

Among the Corporate Matching Gift Programs for which the Annual Catholic Appeal would qualify are: Chubb, Dannon, Deutsche Bank, Energizer, GE, GenRe, J.P. Morgan Chase, Kraft Foods, Pfizer, Pitney Bowes, Thomson, UBS, Unilever, and **many more** *(see next page)*.



EDUCATION AWARENESS WEEKEND

JANUARY 20 AND 21, 2018

In the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal, January 20 and 21 has been designated as Education Weekend. On this weekend the Annual Catholic Appeal will formally begin in all parishes. The pastors will introduce and speak briefly on the Appeal and introduce a ministry representative speaker, parish Appeal co-chair, or show the 2018 Appeal video or Bishop Caggiano’s audio message at all Masses.

Parishioners will receive their Annual Catholic Appeal mailing several days afterward. The visible support of the pastor is critical to its success because parishioners will be more motivated to pledge if the pastor is able to inspire and encourage parishioners to give.

In advance of this weekend, please make sure that the ACA posters have been prominently displayed in the church and other parish facilities. In addition, utilize the pulpit/bulletin announcement and suggested prayers of the faithful that can be found in this manual.

Before the video is shown we suggest that the pastor present a brief introduction that focuses on the vital importance of the ACA diocesan faith-based ministries, programs and services to those most in need throughout Fairfield County. They will also inform parishioners that they will be receiving their Annual Catholic Appeal mailing during the next several days. They will emphasize 100% participation and the critical importance of every gift to the ministry and mission of the diocese and their parish.

It would be very helpful to the pastor’s introductory remarks to be familiar with the ACA video and Bishop Caggiano’s audio content which will be viewed/heard during Mass. This sample pulpit presentation has been provided to assist in the introduction of Appeal video:

SAMPLE PULPIT REMARKS

* This weekend the Annual Catholic Appeal begins here at \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Parish and throughout the Diocese of Bridgeport. In 2018 this major ministry of charity emphasizes the vision and enduring commitment to aid to the less fortunate throughout Fairfield County.
* As your Pastor, I want to let you know that I am in complete support of the Appeal, and I am asking that you join with me to do everything we can to make the Annual Catholic Appeal successful in our parish. I am counting on you, members of our parish family, to participate sacrificially in this vital appeal for the good of the Diocese of Bridgeport and its ability to address urgent needs and build new ways to advance our mission as the Body of Christ in Fairfield County.
* It is your gift to the Appeal in response to God’s love that will provide the local Church with the financial means to fund a broad range of essential ministries, programs, and agencies that deliver pastoral care and human service where it is most needed.
* The Appeal theme, “Joy in Christ, Our Gift to Share” is our opportunity to look beyond our parish. It calls us as sharers in the life and mission of the Church, to proclaim with joy the Good News of the Gospel by example and witness in our parish and in surrounding cities, towns and neighborhoods.
* The specifics of the Appeal will be outlined in the literature that you will receive through the mail during the next several days. The countless good works that promote goodness, compassion and service that benefit from this effort allow us to fulfill the mission given to us all.
* Most of us have been especially blessed by God; in health, with family, and our resources. Many of us have the capability to participate in a most generous manner. I ask that each family consider a gift to the Appeal payable over several months.
* And while I realize that everyone’s financial situation is different, I truly believe that contributing to this vital effort is one sacrifice that is most worthy of support and within the financial capability of all our parishioners. Ultimately, the decision you make is between you and God, and through prayer and reflection you will come to a meaningful response.
* In a few moments we will start the Annual Catholic Appeal video presentation or Bishop Caggiano’s audio message or I will introduce \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (name, from a various ministry). Upon its completion I would ask that you contemplate the breadth of its message on your way home or contemplate the good works the Appeal so graciously provides.
* Please keep in mind that while this is our parish and our spiritual home, we are all part of a much larger Church. If we act together as members of one family united in Christ’s love, we can do great things. In doing so, I trust we will have done our part as a parish family in the diocese and together, we will be successful.

Note: Please ensure that the volunteers who have been recruited to assist during Education/Awareness Weekend have been trained to operate video/audio equipment. It is recommended that your volunteers practice with the operation of video/audio equipment so that the presentation is carried out without incident and for the allotted time.

COMMITMENT WEEKEND

MARCH 10 AND 11, 2018

The weekend of March 10 and 11 has been designated Commitment Weekend, offering the opportunity for those parishioners who have not already returned their 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal gift or pledge by mail, to do so by bringing their completed Appeal pledge card and envelope to Mass and placing it in the offertory collection. Please ensure that the Annual Catholic Appeal posters promoting the program are prominently displayed to help parishioners to discern his or her level of support. Please note that all checks handed in on Commitment Weekend do not need to be tallied by the parish staff; please forward directly to Letter Concepts at P.O. Box 436, Kensington, CT 06037.

Below are suggested remarks to parishioners who are still contemplating their level of support:

SUGGESTED REMARKS

• This is Commitment Weekend for the Annual Catholic Appeal in the parishes throughout our Diocese. It is an opportunity for us to come together as a family of faith to support the diocesan-sponsored ministries and services that no single parish could provide.

• Please remember that the pledge you offer will touch the lives of so many of God’s people, whether it be training new priests, educating our young people, serving the needs of the homeless and poor, comforting the infirmed or counseling families in crisis.

• Remind parishioners that the Annual Catholic Appeal is the one time during the year when all Catholics are asked to reach out beyond their parishes to make a sacrificial pledge that will enable our local Church to carry out the works of religion, education and charity that serve the needs of parishes, schools and the people throughout our diocese.

• Encourage parishioners to re-read the Appeal information from Bishop Caggiano that had been sent to their home. Ask them to contemplate prayerfully the generosity of God in their lives and to decide upon a suitable gift that reflects their appreciation for His gifts.

• Invite parishioners to share the Good News and joy of the Gospel, not only with fellow Catholics but also among all of those who must turn to the Diocese of Bridgeport for guidance, counsel and support.

• Your charity will bring renewed hope every day to thousands of these individuals and families throughout Fairfield County whom you may not know or ever meet but whose lives will be changed for the better because you cared.

• Ask parishioners to remember the words of Pope Francis who reminds us “To live charitably means not looking out for our own interests, but carrying the burdens of the weakest and poorest among us.”

• Thank you for pledging today to help meet our parish goal of $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and for supporting the mission of Christ’s Church in Fairfield County.

IN-PEW WEEKEND

In the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal all parishes are required to participate in the “In-Pew” process on the weekends of April 28 and 29, and June 2 and 3. This solicitation opportunity can be further supported by showing the Appeal video, or Bishop Caggianio’s audio message once again before proceeding.

It is important that the pastor provide enthusiastic leadership and follow the step by step process listed below that will help motivate and inspire greater numbers of respondents to utilize this means to make their pledge or gift to the Appeal.

LOGISTICS

* Ushers and/or 2018 Appeal volunteers should be briefed beforehand on the timing to pass out and collect In-Pew Weekend envelopes.
* All remaining pledge envelopes from previous Masses should be removed before the next Mass begins.
* All pews should be stocked with a sufficient number of pencils for use by each family representative.
* It is important to promote the Appeal during the week prior to In-Pew Weekend(s).
* It is suggested that bulletin announcements be inserted during the week of In-Pew Weekend(s).
* Please be sure that Appeal posters are prominently displayed at the doorways/vestibule of the Church.

SUGGESTED SCRIPT

Let me begin by thanking all those in our parish who have already made their commitment to the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal. Today is In-Pew Weekend during which all parishioners who have yet to make their gift are asked to prayerfully consider making their gift or pledge to the Appeal. Support for the Appeal is a tangible way to place a share of our blessings at the service of others, especially those most in need.

And, while we must be mindful of the responsibility to support our parish, we must also recognize that we are all partners in the greater Diocesan mission to serve the growing charitable, educational and pastoral needs of our people.

Your Gifts to the Appeal enabled Catholic Charities to make a difference in the lives of vulnerable and needy people across Fairfield County, through 30+ programs that:

**Nourished the Hungry**

Catholic Charities served over 1.3 million meals across the county through our soup kitchens, food pantries, and senior nutrition programs.

We provided 52,000 lunches at 8 senior centers throughout lower Fairfield County.

We home-delivered over 90,000 meals to elderly homebound clients through our Meals on Wheels service.

**Sheltered the Homeless**

Catholic Charities provided 220 homeless or formerly homeless adults and children with case management services in 121 federally funded housing units.

Our team secured 45 permanent housing units to assist formerly incarcerated people reintegrating into society.

Our case workers helped over 70 homeless individuals move off the streets and into safe housing.

**Strengthened Families and Individuals**

Catholic Charities provided 15,000 counseling sessions to help families and individuals address mental health, marriage and parent-child issues.

Our teachers educated 134 preschoolers of low income families at our Room to Grow Preschools.

We distributed more than 2,600 donated toys and over 1,000 clothing items to almost 900 people during the last holiday season.

We conducted 387 immigration consultations and assisted 22 individuals with obtaining U.S. citizenship.

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

* Award financial scholarships to 85% of students in the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport;
* Award financial assistance for Catholic education through the Bishop’s Scholarship Fund;
* Ensure that children and young adults had the opportunity to participate in religious education programs;
* Educate and train 29 men for ordination to priesthood in our Diocese;
* Educate and train 10 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.

So, at this time, I ask for the support from those who have not yet made a pledge to the Annual Catholic Appeal that reflects your desire to share in the Lord’s special work across Fairfield County.

If you have already participated in the Appeal, please complete and check the “box” on the face of the envelope, “I have already made my pledge” so that we may update our records.

➲ *Please emphasize the instruction to mark this “box” and to not include any additional financial information, otherwise, it may result in double-counting!*

As your pastor, I am encouraging everyone to take part in this program. It is my hope that you will prayerfully consider your blessings and help continue the tradition of service in Christ’s name, seeking out and ministering to those in need.

Please join me and the many faithful who have already participated and shared in this united parish effort by making your pledge today. All that I ask is that you contribute to your best ability. If you’ve been especially blessed, you might consider $100 per month or approximately $1,000 or, perhaps a gift of $250, at $25 per month would be appropriate.

For the next several minutes, I would like to ask a member of each family to take an Appeal envelope and pencil. (Pastor should pick up a pencil and illustrate the steps that parishioners are to follow, walking the parishioners through the completion of the pledge card line-by-line and step-by-step as they complete their own pledge.)

➲ *Ensure that everyone has received a pledge envelope and pencil. Don’t overlook those people who are standing or in the choir loft or cry room. Once everyone has a pencil and envelope, continue with the script.*

I ask you to print your name, address, and phone number in the left-hand section of the envelope.

**(PAUSE)**

Please take a few moments to complete the Appeal envelope. Your pledge can be paid over ten months. You will receive monthly statements. Also, there is no need to provide a payment today unless you wish.

However if you choose, you are welcomed to remit your first payment, cash or check in the envelope. Keep in mind that the sooner you make your pledge, the more flexibility you will have to spread your pledge payments over the course of the year. In a few minutes, I will ask the ushers/volunteers to come around to collect the cards. I thank you in advance for your generosity.

➲ *If preferable, inform the organist to play for several minutes during the process while parishioners complete their cards. When parishioners “look up” and have finished this step, instruct the ushers to collect the cards.*

**(PAUSE)**

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone for your attention and cooperation in this important matter. I am grateful to those families who made their pledge to the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal today during Mass, as well as those who have responded prior to this weekend. Together, we will move forward with *Joy in Christ, Our Gift to Share*, assisting our diocesan ministries.

IN-PEW WEEKEND DO’S AND DON’TS

DO

• Ask all parishioners to consider a commitment at Mass in support of the 2018 Appeal.

• Inform parishioners of several examples of Appeal funds use to help encourage participation from all parishioners. We are looking for equal sacrifice not necessarily equal giving.

• Challenge the parish to surpass the 2017 rate of participation. *“Last year we received gifts from 25% of all households; this year, I know that we can do better and can reach 30% or more this year.”*

• Make certain that a sufficient number of pens and/or pencils are available in all pews or for hand out during Mass.

• Provide instructions a few days in advance to the ushers and volunteers who will be assisting with the In-Pew process.

• Encourage cash and/or checks to be included in the In-Pew envelope. This will start the pledge fulfillment process. The remaining balance will be billed from the Development Office and is to be paid by December 31, 2018.

• Remind parishioners that our parish is part of the diocesan church, and has a responsibility to help support its ministry and mission. *“We, though many, are one body”* (1Cor 10:17) emphasizes the special bond we share as fellow Catholics throughout our diocese.

• Make certain that envelopes are readily available in vestibules for parishioners throughout the Appeal.

• AND MOST IMPORTANT—thank parishioners for their continued support of their Parish and the Diocese.

DON'T

• Place the In-Pew Weekend envelopes in the pews prior to Mass. It is always best to have your ushers distribute them out to families.

IN-PEW WEEKEND CHECKLIST

* Reviewed process with the Development Office staff, if necessary
* In-Pew Weekend has been publicized as an announcement in the weekly bulletin and from the pulpit on the prior weekend
* Sufficient quantity of In-Pew Weekend envelopes are in place for distribution
* Ushers and/or ACA volunteers have been briefed on the process
* Adequate quantity of pens and/or pencils on hand to be distributed or placed at the end of the pews
* In-Pew Weekend materials reviewed
* Speakers have been confirmed and “prepped” by the Development Office staff if requested

Should you have questions regarding the processing of pledges and/or payments following the In-Pew Weekend, please contact the Development Office at (203) 416-1470.

NEW IN-PEW PROCESSING INSTRUCTIONS

Please note that In-Pew processing for the 2018 Appeal has changed. Please do not open

the envelopes and refer to the steps below.

STEP ONE

Sort completed In-Pew Envelopes alphabetically by last name.

STEP TWO

Place the *matching mailing label* over the shaded portion of the In-Pew Envelope (bottom right hand corner). If you detect information that needs to be corrected, mark the correction directly on the label and we will correct it.

If there is no mailing label, please use the additional blank labels included with your In-Pew envelopes, affix the supplied Parish ID label to the envelope.

STEP THREE

Please take the alphabetized envelopes and record the name, (last and first) and include the address. Do not open the In-Pew envelope. They will be opened by gift processing staff at Letter Concepts.

STEP FOUR

Please place a rubber band around the envelopes, place in a box, insure and mail to Letter Concepts.

Please make a copy of the Tally Sheet and include in the bundle being sent to Letter Concepts for recording purposes. Please send the original Tally Sheet to the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Letter Concepts Diocese of Bridgeport

P.O. Box 436 The Catholic Center

Kensington, CT 06037 238 Jewett Avenue

Bridgeport, CT 06606

Attn. Development Office

MISCELLANEOUS

*If a donor lists a parish other than yours* on the front of the In-Pew Envelope, please list on a separate tally sheet. Any remaining, leftover labels can be audited and categorized as deletions, corrections, deaths, changes, etc., and returned to the Development Office.

WHEN IN DOUBT

Please call the Development Office at (203) 416-1474 or (203) 416-1475. Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

*Many thanks for your partnership in success!*

PARISH RECEPTIONS

The primary aim of a Parish Reception is to welcome all parishioners together in support of the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal: Joy in Christ, Our Gift to Share. We encourage you to consider a reception following Mass with coffee and doughnuts. It would last approximately 30-45 minutes.

Each parish’s reception should be in the character of the parish or region, but there are a few guidelines that should be followed in all parishes:

* Set a date early. Parish Receptions should take place between the months of March and June.
* The Pastor acts as the host and Master of Ceremony with the assistance of a parish financial committee or 2018 Appeal Lay Co-Chairs.
* Be sure to send invitations three to four weeks before the reception date.
* Plan an agenda and confirm the availability of speakers with the Development Office in advance.
* Supplement all invitations with a phone call encouraging each guest to attend.

SUGGESTED RECEPTION AGENDA

|  |
| --- |
| Welcome and Appeal Prayer *(3 min.)* Pastor  Overview of the Appeal *(10 min.)* Pastor  Show Annual Catholic Appeal Video *(8 min.)* Pastor/Technician  Invitation to Support the Appeal *(5 min.)* Pastor/Parish Committee  Blessing *(2 min.)* Pastor |

SUGGESTED RECEPTION SCRIPT

WELCOME AND OPENING PRAYER

On behalf of Bishop Caggiano, it is my pleasure to welcome you this evening and for your willingness to consider a purposeful role in the 2018 Joy in Christ, Our Gift to Share Annual Catholic Appeal. In a few minutes I will share an overview of the Appeal, the vital role it plays in providing essential Diocesan ministries and services, and how your generous support will help provide the financial means that will positively affect virtually all aspects of pastoral life.

Be assured that the reach of your charity will be great and far reaching. I hope your gift will soon be counted among those from fellow Catholics who have already contributed to the Annual Catholic Appeal.

*Please recite the 2018 Appeal Prayer.*

2018 ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL PRAYER

Almighty and ever-faithful Lord we gratefully acknowledge

Your mercy and we place our trust in You.

Your Gospel proclaims the Good News to all

radiant with Your glory and inviting us to rejoice.

Your love and guidance fill our hearts with joy.

May the Holy Spirit inspire us to respond to the

**2018 Annual Catholic Appeal, Joy in Christ, Our Gift To Share**

Bless us with generosity that in love

we may freely share our gifts with others.

Bless us with understanding that we may

recognize that everything we have is a gift from God.

Bless us with wisdom that we may

wisely use the gifts God has given us.

Bless us with a true sense of joy —

the fruit of generous and grateful giving.

May Mary, Mother of God, be with us to inspire, guide and protect us.

We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

OVERVIEW OF THE APPEAL

The Annual Catholic Appeal (ACA) is the major source of revenue for the ministries and agencies of the Diocese of Bridgeport. It is these faith-based programs, services and ministries that enable the Church of Bridgeport, under the direction of Bishop Caggiano, and administered by diocesan agencies, to reach across parish boundaries in the areas of Social Justice, Worship/Prayer, Christian Education, Pastoral Care, Church Administration and Evangelization.

*Show the Annual Catholic Appeal Video.*

➲ *Please ensure that the volunteers who have been recruited to assist have been trained to operate the video/audio equipment.*

CALL TO ACTION

As of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (DATE), our parish has received gifts and pledges totaling $\_\_\_\_\_\_ toward our goal of $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, with an average gift of $\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. Before you leave, I encourage you to pick up a pledge card that can be found on the table in the rear of this meeting room. Please give prayerful thought to contributing a gift that is sacrificial and that your means will permit. Be assured every gift will be greatly appreciated, bringing us closer to our goal and making a difference in the lives of those who need our help.

BLESSING

Offer a blessing to the reception attendees.

PARISH RECEPTION FOLLOW-UP

Every family that attended a Parish Reception should receive a follow-up phone call either from the Pastor and/or 2018 Appeal Parish Committee. In this way, it will provide them with an opportunity to ask any related questions and hopefully motivate them to be proactive in supporting the 2018 Appeal.

SAMPLE FOLLOW-UP CALL

Hello, may I speak with Mr. /Mrs. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (parishioner’s name). This is \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (your name), and I serve on our Parish Appeal Committee for the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal. I am calling to thank you for attending the 2018 Joy in Christ, Our Gift to Share Annual Catholic Appeal last week. [*It was a pleasure to meet you at the reception last \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (day of the week)* OR *I enjoyed speaking with you at the reception last \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (day of the week).*] I just wanted to follow up with you to see if you had any questions regarding the Appeal or needed further information about opportunities to participate.

(**Pause, and allow them to respond.)**

Then answer any questions directly and/or attempt to resolve any concerns they might have and explain why you are supporting the Appeal this year.

Remind them of all the good work that is made possible by the Appeal:

• Seminarian education

• Increased training and support for lay ministers

• Enrichment of religious education programs

• Direct aid to the needy through Catholic Charities, etc.

As the need for the ministries and services provided by the Appeal continues to increase, the importance of every gift has never been greater. Can we count on your participation again this year?

*If yes:* Thank you very much. Then record the amount and verify the contact information. Request that the donor complete a pledge card and return it in this Sunday’s Offertory Collection.

Before concluding the call, confirm spelling of the names, address, pledge or gift amount and payment schedule. Thank the donor again and always let the donor hang up first.

*If no:* I understand. Thank the person for his/her time and say “Goodbye.” Update your roster and indicate “no gift” next to the person’s name and address.

PULPIT ANNOUNCEMENTS

2018 APPEAL PULPIT ANNOUNCEMENT – January 20 and 21

*Read by Pastor or 2018 Appeal Lay Co-Chairs*

My friends once again I come to you with a humble heart to ask your support for our Annual Catholic Appeal.

This year’s theme, “Joy in Christ, Our Gift to Share,” speaks to one of the many ways we are united in God’s love as Catholic Christians and members of the family that is our Diocese of Bridgeport.

We are also united in giving thanks to God for His many blessings, and in the ways we respond to His call to serve as joyful missionary disciples of Christ.

Through our God who is love, we are called to love each other as brothers and sisters.

Through the programs sponsored by the Diocese we help those who live in need along their journey of life; help our youth and young adults who are seeking truth by opening their minds, developing their talents and serving all, leading them to fall in love with the Lord. We help the homeless and the hungry who live among us; whose lives are too easily invisible to our larger society; our priests, both active and retired, and the men who are studying for priesthood, who will sacrifice their lives in service to the Lord.

By faith and action, we are called to support each other through forgiveness, kindness, support, love, and generosity.

These are ways we renew our faithfulness in Christ our Savior and fulfill God’s plan that we love the least in our midst as our brother and sister.

It is by living in the joy of Christ and sharing His gifts that we can bring about His Kingdom on earth, one person at a time, one choice at a time.

May we unite in prayer that all may know they are touched by God’s love and mercy; that those with broken spirits can be healed; that lives that seem lost can be reclaimed; that minds and bodies that are suffering can be restored; and that each of us can be renewed in our faith in our God who Is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

My friends I am grateful for your past generosity and support, for your gifts have helped sustain our parishes, schools and the leaders in our midst who serve us generously.

And now I come to you to ask for your continued support, to help our communities to grow ever stronger in faith, hope, and joyful charity.

As your shepherd in Christ, I ask that you prayerfully consider supporting the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal through sacrificial giving.

The Appeal enables Catholic Charities to make a difference in the lives of vulnerable and needy people across Fairfield County, through 30+ programs that:

**Nourish the Hungry**

Catholic Charities served over 1.3 million meals across the county through our soup kitchens, food pantries, and senior nutrition programs.

We provided 52,000 lunches at 8 senior centers throughout lower Fairfield County.

We home-delivered over 90,000 meals to elderly homebound clients through our Meals on Wheels service.

**Shelter the Homeless**

Catholic Charities provided 220 homeless or formerly homeless adults and children with case management services in 121 federally funded housing units.

Our team secured 45 permanent housing units to assist formerly incarcerated people reintegrating into society.

Our case workers helped over 70 homeless individuals move off the streets and into safe housing.

**Strengthen Families and Individuals**

Catholic Charities provided 15,000 counseling sessions to help families and individuals address mental health, marriage and parent-child issues.

Our teachers educated 134 preschoolers of low income families at our Room to Grow Preschools.

We distributed more than 2,600 donated toys and over 1,000 clothing items to almost 900 people during the last holiday season.

We conducted 387 immigration consultations and assisted 22 individuals with obtaining U.S. citizenship.

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

* Award financial scholarships to 85% of students in the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport;
* Award financial assistance for Catholic education through the Bishop’s Scholarship Fund;
* Ensure that children and young adults had the opportunity to participate in religious education programs;
* Educate and train 29 men for ordination to priesthood in our Diocese;
* Educate and train 10 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.

WEEKLY BULLETIN/PULPIT ANNOUNCEMENTS

JANUARY 27 & 28

This week we begin the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal to provide the funds for the pastoral, educational and charitable ministries of the Diocese of Bridgeport. This year’s theme, *Joy in Christ, Our Gift to Share*, calls us to come together as a people of God to live and share the faith we profess as we carry forth the mission of Jesus Christ. When you receive your Appeal mailing this week, please take time to read the information thoroughly, how you can help and give prayerful consideration when contemplating your sacrificial gift to the campaign. Thank you.

FEBRUARY 3 & 4

The Bishop’s Scholarship Fund provides tuition assistance to families who attend our Diocesan elementary schools. Over $2,500,000 in scholarships are awarded each year to students who demonstrate financial need. Every town and school in our Diocese has students receiving these awards. Over 3,000 students applied for tuition assistance last year and the student need was calculated at over $9,540,380. The Bishop’s Scholarship Fund continues to work to raise and distribute funds to families with need so that the grace of a Catholic education is available to all who desire it.

A student at All Saints Catholic School shared, "I was fortunate enough to receive a Bishop’s scholarship, which has allowed me to attend All Saints Catholic School. The classes that I take are challenging and demanding. The teachers equip students with the skills and knowledge to succeed in these classes. All Saints Catholic School has provided a solid educational foundation that will allow me to build a successful high school and college experience and will even help me in my future career. Most importantly, All Saints introduced me to the Catholic faith. My religion teachers have supported me in my journey through learning about the Catholic church. All of my teachers have role modeled what it means to be a Catholic, and the friendships I have built have allowed me to demonstrate my Christian values."

FEBRUARY 10 & 11

The Catholic ServiceCorps provides opportunities for all the faithful, especially young

people, to deepen their relationship with Jesus Christ and broaden their Catholic faith by

inviting them to embrace a life of Christian service and the call to be missionary disciples.

The Catholic Service Corps combines meaningful service to those in need with faith

formation and Christian reflection. Young people of the Diocese are invited to a fuller

understanding of their call to embrace a life of mercy and justice through programs like

the Diocesan Service Challenge Week, Al’s Angels Thanksgiving & Christmas gift packing

events and Toy drive, fundraisers for Catholic Charities, an upcoming summer week of

service and Catholic Relief Services Food Fast.

FEBRUARY 17 & 18

The Leadership Institute works in tandem with parishes to ensure effective sacramental

preparation by offering opportunities for support, formation and mentoring for parish

leaders. Our collective mission is that all who are preparing to receive the sacraments may be

transformed by their encounter with Jesus through the sacraments.

FEBRUARY 24 & 25

Supporting the Annual Catholic Appeal makes it possible to continue promoting vocations to the priesthood that are so vital to the future of our local Church. The indispensable role that our 29 seminarians will perform in the life of the Church necessitates that they receive an unparalleled formation in the spiritual, pastoral, and academic disciplines. The formation and preparation our seminarians receive at St. John Fisher, Redemptoris Mater, and in major seminary spans five to eight years. This year Bishop Caggiano will ordain one seminarian to the priesthood and three to the transitional diaconate.  At an annual cost of more than $21,000, your Annual Catholic Appeal gift will help underwrite this worthwhile investment and help promote and foster vocations to the priesthood throughout our diocese.

“John Fisher Seminary is a real blessing, and to have that within the diocese is phenomenal. I can’t say enough about it. Because we all come there to discern our vocation and get to know each other, and fraternity with others builds. Ultimately, we’re all going to work in the diocese and serve the people of God.

“The value of the Annual Catholic Appeal is felt in my formation. It is because of the Catholic Appeal that I am here and that my brothers are here. We’re able to really dedicate ourselves to the Diocese of Bridgeport—to the Church—and that is the greatest gift we can give to the Church at this point,” says Juan Colon, Jr., seminarian.

MARCH 3 & 4

For over 100 years, Catholic Charities of Fairfield County has mobilized a philosophy of faith in action to provide a broad spectrum of social services to the extended Fairfield County community. Catholic Charities serves the needy through a multitude of programs that include feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless and homebound, strengthening families and individuals, and assisting those on the road to immigration documentation.

Over the last century, Catholic Charities of Fairfield County has become one of the largest private family service agencies in Connecticut, serving over 10,000 individuals annually with the help of over 1,000 volunteers. Last year, Appeal funds made it possible for the agency to serve more than 1.3 million nutritious meals to hungry people, including over 91,000 meals delivered to homebound seniors and 52,000 lunches served at senior centers in lower Fairfield County.

Additionally, Catholic Charities conducted more than 15,000 counseling sessions to help families and individuals address mental health, marriage and parent-child challenges. What’s more, the agency continued to provide a variety of family- focused programs such as: Room to Grow Preschools, which offer early childhood education to children from low income families; case managements services to assist homeless and formerly homeless adults and children living in federally funded housing units; and immigration services which provide hundreds of immigration consultations and help dozens of individuals obtain citizenship every year.

As you can see, your gift through the Appeal is truly changing lives. Eva, a 71-year old who eats lunch provided by Catholic Charities at a Westport senior center site said: “My gratitude for the meals has inspired me to make a small change in my daily prayer: Thank you for giving us our daily bread.”

At last year’s 100th Anniversary Gala, Bishop Frank summed it up this way: “Catholic Charities is love in action.” With your continued generosity and support, Catholic Charities hopes to reach its new goal: to serve Fairfield County for the next one hundred years.

MARCH 10 & 11

This is Annual Catholic Appeal Commitment Weekend throughout the Diocese of Bridgeport. Our parish goal this year is that every family and individual will participate to the very best of their ability, in recognition and in thanksgiving for God’s many blessings. All registered parishioners should have received a special letter from Bishop Caggiano seeking their personal commitment and a pledge of support. If you are among those in our parish family who have already responded in the spirit of stewardship and discipleship or will do so today, fervent thanks and blessings are yours. If you are still contemplating your Appeal gift, please give from your heart on behalf of those whose lives will be changed for the better because you cared. Every pledge and gift is vitally important and will bring us closer to reaching our goal. God will indeed bless and reward your generosity and concern for others, of that you can be assured.

MARCH 17 & 18

If you have not yet responded to the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal, please reflect upon the importance of your support to ministry and outreach that relies upon the charity of the Diocese of Bridgeport. The challenge is immediate and far reaching, but the solution is within our reach!

Please consider the following options when deciding upon the best way to support the Annual Catholic Appeal this year:

* Make a pledge and spread out your payments over 5 months
* Donate on-line by going to the diocesan website, 2018ACAbridgeport.com
* Check if your employer will match your gift through the Corporate Matching Gift Program
* Donate a one-time gift
* Contribute a gift of appreciated stocks or securities

Whatever you decide, your gift will be greatly appreciated and make a difference in lives of others.

MARCH 24 & 25

The Diocese advocates for young people by assisting parishes in meeting the needs of

youth and their families. Since every parish is different, the diocese also offers the chance

for young people to grow in their awareness of the larger church. Some of these events

include rallies for middle school and high school students; the March for Life; the National

Catholic Youth Conference; and Catholic Scouting.

March 31 & April 1

Easter weekend, no Appeal activity.

APRIL 7 & 8

Over the years many corporations in the Diocese have participated in the Matching Gift Program. When making your pledge to the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal, please consult with your employer to determine if they match gifts. If your company does participate, the Diocese of Bridgeport or its designated agencies such as Catholic Charities or the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport may qualify for these additional funds. The company match will increase the dollar amount received [at no extra cost to you. A list of Matching Gift companies has been posted on our website, www.](http://www/)2018ACAbridgeport.com. For further information please contact the Development Office at (203) [416-1312 or email us at 2018ACA@diobpt.org.](mailto:2015ACA@diobpt.org)

APRIL 14 & 15

For over 100 years, Catholic Charities of Fairfield County has mobilized a philosophy of faith in action to provide a broad spectrum of social services to the extended Fairfield County community. The agency serves the needy through more than 30 service ministries that include feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless and homebound, strengthening families and individuals, and assisting those on the road to immigration documentation. But Catholic Charities can’t do it alone. Your gift to the Annual Catholic Appeal will help Catholic Charities to continue to do the incredible work it does for our most vulnerable neighbors in Fairfield County.

APRIL 21 & 22

CONNected Catholic is the diocesan ministry to young adults (age 18-39). The mission of

this ministry is to accompany them on their faith journey. This ministry is vital to helping

young adults stay connected to their sacramental home, the parish. We offer ways to engage

this age group, including Baseball with the Bishop; annual pilgrimage to the Holy Land

to study Scripture; World Youth Day; Theology on Tap and more.

APRIL 28 & April 29

The Diaconate Formation Program is a small and caring community of baptized Christian men who desire to serve God as a deacon. The Diocese of Bridgeport provides an integrated four and a half year program based on the standards established in the National Directory for the Formation, Ministry and Life of Permanent Deacons in the United States. Through prayer, study and the grace of the Holy Spirit, the candidate undergoes a transformation of heart and mind as he humanly, spiritually, intellectually and pastorally prepares himself to be a minister of the Word, Liturgy and Charity. There are now 31 retired and 56 active deacons and 10 men in formation.

“The Deaconate program is not something that’s taken lightly. It’s an incredible program that

has turned out some great men throughout the years and it’s going to continue to do so. The

Annual Catholic Appeal supports the program and enables us to go through it and not have

an extra financial burden on our shoulders. It lets us really concentrate on our studies. It’s

invaluable in that sense, when you are trying to fulfill your vocation of being a deacon,”

comments Deacon Jeffrey Font, Chaplain, Immaculate High School, Danbury and a

parishioner at St. Joseph Parish, Brookfield.

MAY 5 & 6

The Catholic Academy of Bridgeport is a faith-filled learning community made up of four campuses in the city of Bridgeport:  St. Andrew, St. Ann, St. Raphael and St. Augustine, and is accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, (NEASC). Its mission is to provide a Christ-centered, academically rigorous learning environment where cultural diversity is welcomed and celebrated. Students are nurtured, encouraged and challenged in preparation for a successful life of leadership and service. This year we will serve nearly 950 children of whom 85% receive financial aid totaling more than $2 million annually. 80% of students come from families near or below the poverty line. 100% of 2015 students graduated from high school. Ninety-nine percent of graduates go on to attend a competitive college, university or post-secondary program upon completing high school, which is a notably higher rate than students attending Bridgeport public schools. Our students have hopes, dreams and high aspirations for themselves which are supported by the solid foundation they have received at the Academy. As one student recently said, "The Catholic Academy is like a second home to me. Now I know I can achieve anything.” The Board of the Catholic Academy must raise more than $1.8 million in aid each year for those in need.

Education is the gift of a lifetime. Donations to the Annual Catholic Appeal enable inner-city youth to become faith-filled, industrious, responsible and well educated adults. Our world and the Church need these young students to excel academically and to develop a strong and active faith in God.

MAY 12 & 13

Since its founding in 1999, Saint Catherine Academy has been committed to providing the highest quality multi-disciplinary alternative education program to students from all backgrounds and faiths who are impacted with autism, intellectual and developmental disabilities. In 2014, this essential ministry became the Saint Catherine Center for Special Needs to centralize pastoral and educational support for individuals with disabilities. The new Center brings together resources for parishes and religious educators, an inclusive support program for Catholic schools, and St. Catherine’s Academy, the special education school of the Diocese of Bridgeport. In addition the Center offers an Adult Day Service Program for adults with disabilities. Giving to the Annual Catholic Appeal will ensure that this life changing organization will continue to provide a provide quality education, and a living faith for children and adults with special needs.

*The same Jesus who heard the cry for recognition from people with disabilities in Judea and Samaria 2000 years ago calls us, His followers, to embrace our responsibilities to our own brothers and sisters with disabilities. (Pastoral Statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops, 1989)*

MAY 19 & 20

As the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal continues, we are grateful to the parish families that have already made their gift or pledge. For us to achieve our overall goal, it will require the active involvement and personal sacrifice of all members of our faith community. If you have not yet responded to the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal, please set aside a moment to prayerfully consider a gift amount that reflects your blessings. Your gift will help tremendously and, together with your fellow parishioners, will enable the diocese to provide essential pastoral, educational and human needs throughout Fairfield County.

MAY 26 & 27

The Diocesan choir for youth (C4Y) provides young people a chance to share their gifts in

song. The annual Christmas Concert, Spring Concert and special performances throughout

the year highlight the gifts of these talented young people and offers the opportunity for the

faithful to gather in prayer.

JUNE 2 & 3

If you have not yet responded to the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal, please set aside a moment to prayerfully consider a gift amount that your means will permit. Be assured that the Lord knows what is in your heart and how you share your gifts. While it is understood that we cannot all give equally, we are still called by the Gospel to give of ourselves in a way that reflects our blessings. Your gift whether large or small matters greatly to the Diocese, our parish and to the Lord! Scripture tells us, *‘There is more happiness in giving than receiving’*!

JUNE 9 & 10

Elementary Formation supports parish, school and all sacramental Catechetical programs that provide religious formation for children ages 5 – 13 and their families. We also provide assistance, direction and ongoing training for Catechetical leaders and pastors responsible for directing parish elementary Catechesis. This is done through days of formation, parish visits, program assessments and ongoing consultation of catechetical programs from development to implementation including assisting with Catechist selection, training and certification. “There is nothing more exciting than assisting those in parish Catechetical Ministry to engage their students in meeting and experiencing the person of Jesus Christ!  That is why we are here…to support those who inspire faith development in those they serve.”  Rose Talbot-Babey, Coordinator of Childhood Faith Formation

JUNE 16 & 17

We are hopeful that 100% of our registered households will respond to the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal. While the level of sacrifice will differ from parishioner to parishioner, an Appeal gift this year is within the reach of the majority of our people. Please prayerfully consider supporting the Annual Appeal with a pledge or one-time gift as your means allow. Your support is much needed and will be greatly appreciated!

JUNE 23 & 24

The Annual Catholic Appeal closes next weekend. If you have not yet made a gift, please pray about your decision and make a pledge or one-time gift. Donations to the 2018 Appeal helps sustain many who are unable to provide for their families or themselves. From counseling sessions, food and shelter programs, to our clergy and religious, your support is vital in continuing to meet the needs of our community and parishes. Please complete a pledge card today or go directly to [www.2018ACAbridgeport.com.](http://www.2015ACAbridgeport.com/) Together, we are Christ’s guiding light for the lives of thousands in our diocesan communities.

**JUNE 30 & July 1**

The Annual Catholic Appeal closes next weekend. If you have not yet made a gift, please pray about your decision and make a pledge or one-time gift. Donations to the 2018 Appeal helps sustain many who are unable to provide for their families or themselves. From counseling sessions, food and shelter programs, to our clergy and religious, your support is vital in continuing to meet the needs of our community and parishes. Please complete a pledge card today or go directly to [www.2018ACAbridgeport.com.](http://www.2015ACAbridgeport.com/) Together, we are Christ’s guiding light for the lives of thousands in our diocesan communities.

PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

*Following are some sample prayers of the faithful to be included at the Pastor’s discretion.*

* That we may see the work of the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal as an opportunity to extend our love and service beyond the boundaries of our parish and local community, we pray to the Lord.
* For all those in need, that they may find guidance and assistance from the many services available through our generous support of the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal, we pray to the Lord.
* In thanksgiving for all that the Lord has given to us, may we show our gratitude by sharing with others through our generous gift to the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal, we pray to the Lord.
* That God may bless our parish, strengthen our faith, and grant us the spirit of Christian stewardship by opening our hearts to the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal, we pray to the Lord.
* That we will see the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal as an opportunity to join with our brothers and sisters in the parish and throughout our Diocese as Christian stewards to build communities of faith, we pray to the Lord.
* That God might look upon and bless our efforts for the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal, as we strive to proclaim witness to the Gospel in our Diocese and in our parish, we pray to the Lord.
* That God will grant us a generous spirit so we may see the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal as an opportunity to practice Christian stewardship, to strengthen our families, our parish, and Diocesan community, we pray to the Lord.
* That through the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal we might work to build communities of faith in our Diocese, sharing the good news of Jesus with others, we pray to the Lord.
* That we may respond generously to the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal as faithful stewards of the gifts God has entrusted to us, we pray to the Lord.
* That the people of our faith community will open their hearts to those in need by giving generously out of gratitude to God through the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal, we pray to the Lord.
* That each one of us will be open to God’s call and prayerfully consider how we can join in sacrifice to meet the needs of our faith community through the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal, we pray to the Lord.
* That we will see the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal as an opportunity to join with our brothers and sisters in the parish to serve one another as Christian stewards, we pray to the Lord.
* That God will grant us a generous spirit so we may see the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal as an opportunity to understand Christian stewardship to strengthen our families and our parish, we pray to the Lord.
* That through our 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal, we may recognize our call to share God’s gifts with others as a sign of our faith, we pray to the Lord.
* That in gratitude for God's many gifts to us, we share in the mission of the Church by participating in the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal, we pray to the Lord.
* That God might look upon and bless our efforts for our 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal, as we strive to proclaim and witness to the Gospel in our parish, we pray to the Lord.
* That God will bless all those in our parish family and in every parish throughout the Diocese for their willingness to support the ministries and services funded through the 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal, we pray to the Lord.
* That through our faithful response of stewardship to our 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal, we might live as true disciples of the Risen Lord, we pray to the Lord.
* That in gratitude for God's many gifts to us, we share in the mission of the Church by participating in our 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal, we pray to the Lord.
* That the gifts we offer through our 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal will truly reflect our love and thanksgiving for the many blessings that God has entrusted to us, we pray to the Lord.
* That as we make our commitment to our 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal, we may remember God's generosity to us, we pray to the Lord.
* That as we participate in our 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal, may we give thanks to our God for the gifts and blessings we have received, we pray to the Lord.
* That we may continue to journey with God filled with faith and gratitude, by participating in our 2018 Annual Catholic Appeal, we pray to the Lord.

NEW IN-PEW PROCESSING INSTRUCTIONS

Please note that In-Pew processing for the 2018 Appeal has changed. Please do not open the envelopes and refer to the steps below.

STEPS TO IN-PEW SUCCESS!

STEP ONE

Sort completed In-Pew Envelopes alphabetically by last name.

STEP TWO

Place the *matching mailing label* over the shaded portion of the In-Pew Envelope (bottom right hand corner). If you detect information that needs to be corrected, mark the correction directly on the label and we will correct it.

If there is no mailing label, please use the additional blank labels included with your In-Pew envelopes, affix the supplied Parish ID label to the envelope.

STEP THREE

Please take the alphabetized envelopes and record the name, (last and first) and include the address. Do not open the In-Pew envelope. They will be opened by gift processing staff at Letter Concepts.

STEP FOUR

Please place a rubber band around the envelopes, place in a box, insure and mail to Letter Concepts.

Please make a copy of the Tally Sheet and include in the bundle being sent to Letter Concepts for recording purposes. Please send the original Tally Sheet to the Diocese of Bridgeport.

Letter Concepts Diocese of Bridgeport

P.O. Box 436 The Catholic Center

Kensington, CT 06037 238 Jewett Avenue

Bridgeport, CT 06606

Attn. Development Office

MISCELLANEOUS

*If a donor lists a parish other than yours* on the front of the In-Pew Envelope, please list on a separate tally sheet. Any remaining, leftover labels can be audited and categorized as deletions, corrections, deaths, changes, etc., and returned to the Development Office.

WHEN IN DOUBT

Please call the Development Office at (203) 416-1474 or (203) 416-1475. Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

*Many thanks for your partnership in success!*

**2018 Annual Catholic Appeal**

Parish Name:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Town: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Page:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Parish ID Number: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Please Print and Alphabetize by Last Name**

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| **Diocesan ID #** | **Name (LAST, FIRST)**  **include address when lacking ID #** | **$ Amount if written on the envelope** |
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**Number of Gifts Total Amount, if available**

**Please send a copy of this to Letter Concepts, Inc., P.O. Box 436, Kensington, CT 06037-0436 and send the original to the Catholic Center, 238 Jewett Avenue, Bridgeport, CT 06606, Attn: Development Office**

**Questions? Please call the Development Office at 203.416.1474 or 203.416.1475**

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