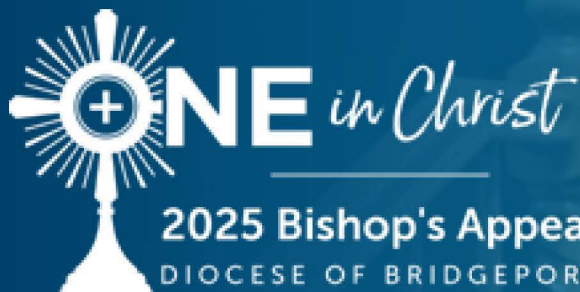


DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT

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IMPACT REPORT

EVERY GIFT AT WORK.



2025 Bishop's Appeal
DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT



EVERY GIFT AT WORK

The Power of Faith in Action.

Every day across Fairfield County, the Church is alive in classrooms, food pantries, hospitals, parishes, and homes. The 2025 Bishop's Appeal and our network of ministries make this possible. Your generosity fuels Catholic education, supports vocations, serves families in need, and strengthens the spiritual life of our 74 parishes.

"The measure of a strong Church is not its wealth, but its witness. Your generosity is that witness in action."

– BISHOP FRANK J. CAGGIANO

Our Numbers

- + **22% increase** in Mass attendance
- + **9,024 students** in Catholic schools
- + **38 seminarians** preparing for the priesthood
- + **1.6 million meals** served annually through Catholic Charities
- + **7,000 faithful** in Eucharistic processions
- + **1,300+ students** receiving tuition assistance in partnership with Foundations in Education
- + **68 retired priests** cared for by our Diocese



HOW YOUR GIFT MADE A DIFFERENCE

Each gift to the Bishop’s Appeal advances the mission of the Church in three ways—**teaching the faith, serving those in need**, and **strengthening parish life**. Every dollar raised directly supports these ministries and the people who bring them to life.

TOTAL RAISED: \$9,230,335

● **Serving Our Community**

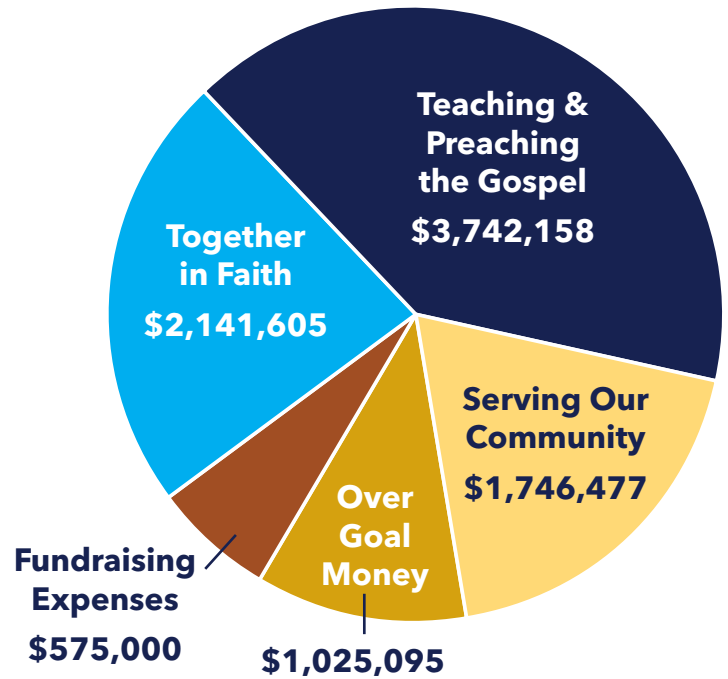
- + Food, housing, and counseling assistance
- + Support for individuals with special needs
- + Pastoral care in hospitals and nursing homes
- + Community outreach and evangelization

● **Teaching & Preaching the Gospel**

- + Catholic education and student scholarships
- + Seminarian, priest, and deacon formation
- + Youth and adult faith formation programs
- + Diocesan communications and Veritas Catholic Network

● **Together in Faith**

- + Care for retired priests
- + Parish vitality and shared services
- + Young adult ministries and parish leadership
- + The Guilds, accompaniment, and renewal ministries



● **Fundraising Expenses**

- + Outreach, mailings, and donor communications
- + Events and stewardship infrastructure

● **Over Goal Money Returned to Parishes**

- + Donations raised above and beyond the goal, returned back to the parish to reinvest in its ministries and community

“Your generosity touches every corner of Fairfield County—from classrooms and food pantries to seminaries and parish pews. It’s one Church, united in mission.”

– BISHOP FRANK J. CAGGIANO

THE TRAJECTORY OF THE CHURCH

Renewal in Motion.

The Diocese of Bridgeport stands at a pivotal moment of renewal. Over the past five years, Mass attendance, ministry participation, and vocations have all trended upward—signs of a Church rediscovering its missionary spirit.

MASS ATTENDANCE TRENDS



This steady growth follows deliberate diocesan focus on **family ministry, youth engagement,** and **parish evangelization.**

"Growth is not just a statistic; it is the fruit of faithful hearts choosing to follow Christ again."

– BISHOP FRANK J. CAGGIANO

PARTICIPATION



22% increase in weekly Mass-goers since 2022



714 young adult events in the last three years



10,000+ participants in online and hybrid formation programs



7,000+ faithful joined diocesan Eucharistic Processions



Four pillars of renewal strength the everyday foundation of our faith and communities:

- 1. Truth**
Preaching and teaching the Gospel with clarity.
- 2. Beauty**
Elevating worship and sacred arts.
- 3. Goodness**
Expanding charitable and educational ministries.
- 4. Accompaniment**
Building cultures of belonging in every parish.



EDUCATING HEARTS. FORMING MINDS.

Our Catholic schools, seminaries, and formation programs form the next generation of leaders who will serve the Church and the world. Through your support, the Diocese of Bridgeport continues to provide exceptional education rooted in faith, service, and academic excellence.

Catholic Schools: Faith in Action



Total Diocesan Reach: 9,024 students across Fairfield County



Academic Excellence: On the IOWA assessment, our students demonstrate that they are ahead of their peers in Math and over two academic years in English Language Arts.



Accreditation: 100% of schools accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges.



Service: High school seniors completed **42,000 service hours** last year.



Teacher Formation: 20 teachers are currently enrolled in the *Catholic Educator Formation and Credential Program* to deepen both pedagogy and faith witness.



“We are not just teaching students to think critically. We are forming young people to reflect Christ’s love, truth, and compassion in the world.”

– STACIE STUEBER,
SUPERINTENDENT
OF SCHOOLS

SCHOLARSHIPS THAT CHANGE LIVES

Through the **Bishop's Scholarship Fund**, in partnership with **Foundations In Education**, more than **1,300 students** receive tuition assistance each year. Behind each scholarship is a story of faith, sacrifice, and hope.

Parent Voices:

Lecilana Rodrigues Da Silva, a mother of two children attending Assumption Catholic School expresses her gratitude for the opportunity to provide her children a Catholic education with tuition assistance from the Bishop's Scholarship Fund. She says, *"So many families cannot afford a Catholic education for their kids, when the Bishop offered scholarships for children, it shows compassion, mercy, and love. It welcomes everyone in the Kingdom of God, regardless of their social class."*



70 **Cities and towns** represented by students in and around Fairfield County

100% The percentage of **schools fully accredited** by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges

\$91M+ **College scholarships awarded** to our 800 graduating seniors

OUR SCHOOLS

5,034
Students Enrolled in 20 Elementary & 1 Special Needs School

1,484
Students Enrolled in 4 Diocesan Sponsored High Schools

2,506
Students Enrolled in 6 Independent Catholic Schools

DID YOU KNOW...

Catholic education in Fairfield County has endured for more than **150 years**. **St. Augustine Academy, founded in 1874**, continues that mission today as part of the Catholic Academy of Bridgeport.

FAITH IN ACTION. HOPE RESTORED.

Through **Catholic Charities of Fairfield County, St. Catherine Center for Special Needs**, and parish ministries, the Diocese serves the vulnerable with dignity and compassion. In 2025, over **1.6+ million meals** were served across our region—alongside housing, counseling, and employment support.

Nemia's Triumph: A Story of Renewal

After a workplace injury left Nemia, a nurse from the Philippines, unable to work, she faced physical pain, anxiety, and a maze of paperwork. Catholic Charities helped her reclaim stability and hope.

Her journey:

- + Counseling and therapy at the Norwalk office
- + Disability and Medicare navigation through the Community Advocacy Program
- + Immigration Services assisting her toward citizenship



"When I was at my lowest point, I longed to return to the Philippines. However, the guidance of the Lord led me to Catholic Charities. With the unwavering support of everyone there, they infused me with hope and never lost faith in me."

– NEMIA, RECIPIENT OF CATHOLIC CHARITIES



STRATEGIC GROWTH & NEW MODELS

- + **Thomas Merton Family Center (Bridgeport)** - A new co-located service model offering meals, counseling, health screenings, and immigration support.
- + **Next Phase:** The Stamford Family Center, will be opening in 2026, with Danbury, and Norwalk Family Centers now in early development.

The Ripple Effect

2025 CATHOLIC CHARITIES IMPACT:



1,600,000+
meals served



5,786
counseling sessions provided
to help those in need



840
families receiving monthly
non-food pantry supplies



8,000+
clothing items and
3,000+ toys distributed



3,500+
toiletry bags and necessities
provided to neighbors

TOGETHER IN FAITH

Building Community. Sustaining Mission.

Faith grows when it is shared. Through ministries that unite generations, support parishes, and care for those who have served the Church, the Diocese continues to strengthen the bonds that make us one Body in Christ.



Seminarian Formation at a Glance

- + 38 seminarians currently in formation
- + **Five seminaries:**
St. Charles Borromeo, St. Joseph, St. John XXIII, Redemptoris Mater, Pontifical North American College

Formation Journey

- + Seven to nine years of preparation
- + Human, spiritual, intellectual, and pastoral formation
- + Master's degree in theology prior to ordination
- + Philosophy studies, parish internships, and pastoral assignments

How It's Funded

- + Supported by the Bishop's Appeal and Annual Seminarian Drive
- + Financial support provided at every stage
- + No seminarian turned away due to financial need



The Diaconate now includes **86 deacons** (49 active, 37 retired), many of whom continue to serve their parishes and local ministries long after retirement.

"Diaconate formation is the centerpiece of my life. I am studying for a master's degree in theology at St. Joseph's Seminary in Yonkers and each month I spend one Friday evening and Saturday with my brothers in formation. I pray the Liturgy of the Hours each morning on Zoom with several Deacons and a formation brother. I pray that the entire process draws all of us closer to the Lord and inspires us to use the gifts God gives us for the betterment of others."

– MICHAEL CRANE, CANDIDATE FOR THE PERMANENT DIACONATE

QUEEN OF THE CLERGY RESIDENCE

For more than 30 years, the Queen of the Clergy Residence in Stamford has been a home where retired priests live out their vocation in peace, prayer, and fraternity. Supported by the Bishop's Appeal, the Residence provides not only housing and healthcare but a genuine community of faith for those who have dedicated their lives to serving others.

A Home of Gratitude and Grace

The Residence offers:

- + 26 retired priests supported each year
- + Living expenses and healthcare support, provided through the Bishop's Appeal
- + Daily Mass and Eucharistic Adoration
- + Pastoral and support staff on-site for health, wellness, and companionship



Many priests continue to serve parishes, hospitals, and nursing homes long after retirement—offering Masses, hearing confessions, and visiting the sick. Queen of the Clergy allows them to continue their ministry while receiving the care and dignity they deserve.

Sustaining the Legacy of Service

Your generosity ensures that those who have spent decades caring for souls are never forgotten. Appeal funds cover operations, facility maintenance, and enrichment programs, while the St. John Vianney Trust helps provide for ongoing needs of elderly priests throughout the Diocese.



"From the first day of the conferral of Holy Orders upon me sixty years ago, I recognized the presence of a growth-giving dynamic between myself and the faithful with whom I was interacting. From the get-go, it was clear to me that the relationship between myself as priest, and the faithful whom I served, was to be a mutual exchange of grace and energy. The needs of the people required a response on my part that served to shape and form me as a work in progress into a more authentic instrument of priestly service."

– MSGR. EDWARD SURWILO, RETIRED PRIEST

GUILDS & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

Faith at Work. Faith in the World.

The renewal of the Church depends on forming leaders who bring faith into every corner of life—workplaces, professions, and daily relationships. The Diocese is doing just that through its Guilds and new young adult formation initiatives.

The Guilds: Faith in Action

The **Guilds of the Diocese of Bridgeport** unite Catholics in shared vocation and witness, bringing together professionals who integrate their faith with their work or special interests. Each Guild forms a community of prayer, friendship, and service.

“The Guilds are building a culture of excellence and faith—ordinary Catholics living extraordinary witness.”

– BISHOP FRANK J. CAGGIANO



Current Guilds Include:

- + **Guild of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus** - Beauty in sacred art, music, literature, architecture, pilgrimage, retreats and Eucharistic adoration
- + **St. Luke Guild** - Healthcare professionals guided by compassion and faith-informed ethics
- + **St. Paul Guild** - Evangelization and missionary accompaniment
- + **Morning Star Guild** - Marian spirituality and devotion
- + **Guild of the Most Blessed Sacrament** - Eucharistic spirituality and adoration

Over **150 members** now participate, with three potential new Guilds launching in 2026:

- + **St. Thomas More Guild** - for Lawyers & Legal Professionals
- + **St. Michael Guild** - for Law Enforcement, First Responders & Military
- + **St. John Henry Newman Guild** for Teachers

Young Adult Ministry: Forming Disciples for a New Generation

Today's young adults face a world that often leaves them isolated, overstimulated, and searching for purpose. The Diocese's Young Adult Ministry responds with accompaniment, formation, and community built around prayer, service, and authentic friendship.

In parishes and regional hubs across Fairfield County, young adults gather for monthly holy hours, speaker series, service projects, and social events designed to blend faith and fellowship. New partnerships with campus ministries at Sacred Heart University, Fairfield University, and Western Connecticut State University ensure that young people encounter Christ at pivotal moments in their formation.



"Young Adult Ministry in the Diocese of Bridgeport is one response to our Lord's call to build His kingdom 'on earth as it is in heaven.' By participating in a faith-filled community with our peers, we strive to live for others in Christ. Our many small groups, service projects, religious and social activities present opportunities to encounter Christ as He reveals Himself to us through new experiences and relationships. I pray that our faith and works, as one body, may be an invitation for others to join us, so that they may be nourished by the consolation of our community."

**– ANTHONY MASI, YOUNG ADULT
ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA PARISH, TRUMBULL**

WALKING WITH ONE ANOTHER.

At the heart of our diocesan mission is the call to accompany one another. Through counseling, pastoral care, and parish outreach, the Diocese of Bridgeport serves those facing loss, illness, and loneliness—meeting them with compassion, not judgment.

The Accompaniment Continuum

The *Accompaniment Continuum* integrates three vital ministries that bridge the spiritual and emotional needs of our community:

- + **Pastoral Companions** - trained volunteers who walk with those in grief, isolation, or transition.
- + **Student Wellness Initiative** - professional counseling for Catholic school students, addressing anxiety, loss, and mental health.
- + **Walk With One** - a ministry of friendship for returning Catholics and those discerning faith.



CARING IN CHRIST'S NAME.

Pastoral Care at the Front Lines

Across four major hospitals and numerous nursing facilities, diocesan priests, deacons, and lay ministers provide sacramental care and human presence to the sick and suffering.

Annual Impact:

- + 1,000+ patient visits per month
- + 40+ clergy and lay pastoral ministers
- + Daily Mass, Anointing, and Sacramental care



"The Pastoral Care Department at St. Vincent's Medical Center serves the mission of the Church by striving to make sure every patient and healthcare provider regardless of their faith, state of life, or socioeconomic status, knows about the dignity they possess as sons and daughters of God."

– DEACON JUAN J. COLON, TO BE ORDAINED A PRIEST MAY 2026

"I thank God for bringing Juan into my life especially when I needed to be reminded how nothing is impossible for God. He not only prayed with me, but for me, as I lost my voice completely and became scared that the throat cancer was winning. Juan met with me every day for one hour after radiation treatment. I am so grateful. The Pastoral Care Associates at St. V's provide outstanding ministry services with compassion."

– COACH KARL BUCKEY WALDEN, RECIPIENT OF PASTORAL CARE OF THE SICK

"Accompaniment is the art of seeing others as Christ sees them, so the love of Christ is tangible in every joy and every suffering."

– BISHOP FRANK J. CAGGIANO

DEEPENING FAITH. EMPOWERING MISSION.

The **Institute for Catholic Formation** stands at the center of the Diocese's commitment to lifelong discipleship. Its mission: to form those who form others. Through workshops, digital learning, and parish partnerships, the Institute equips catechists, educators, and ministry leaders to share the Gospel with confidence and clarity.

In 2025, more than **1,800+ people** participated in person at Institute programs—teachers, parents, catechists, and parish leaders representing every corner of the Diocese.



Core Formation Programs

- + **Catechetical Training:** Certification and continuing education for parish and school catechists.
- + **Family Life and Marriage Enrichment:** Formation for parents as primary educators in the faith.
- + **Youth and Young Adult Formation:** Programs connecting post-Confirmation youth to active parish life.
- + **OCIA Team Training:** Support for parish leaders welcoming new Catholics.
- + **Adult Formation Series:** Speaker events and courses on Scripture, theology, and spirituality.

"Formation isn't a program. It's a lifelong encounter with Christ that transforms the heart."

– PATRICK DONOVAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
INSTITUTE FOR CATHOLIC FORMATION

FORMING PREACHERS. DEEPENING THE WORD.

The newly established **St. Jerome Center for Preaching and Biblical Studies** represents a major step forward for the Diocese's ongoing renewal.

Its mission: to ensure that every homily, Bible study, and parish teaching draws hearts to encounter the living Word of God.

Purpose and Vision

Launched under the leadership of Bishop Caggiano, the Center provides priests, deacons, and lay ministers with advanced biblical and homiletic formation—helping them connect Scripture to daily life in a way that is faithful, engaging, and transformative.

Core Programs

- + **Homiletic Formation:** Intensive workshops for clergy and deacons on preaching that integrates Scripture, theology, and lived experience.
- + **Lay Formation:** Training for catechists and parish leaders to teach Scripture in small groups and retreats.
- + **Bible and the Parish Life:** Weekly parish Bible studies building a deeper understanding of the faith through each Sunday's Gospel readings.
- + **Continuing Education:** Ongoing mentorship and retreats for graduates to refine their preaching craft.



"The Word of God must be proclaimed not as information, but as invitation."

– BISHOP FRANK J. CAGGIANO

GIVING WITH WISDOM.

GIVING WITH PURPOSE.

Donors across the Diocese are using *SmartGiving* strategies to make their generosity go further—maximizing impact while supporting ministries that matter most to them.

SmartGiving means aligning faith, stewardship, and financial wisdom to advance the mission of the Church.

Donor-Advised Funds (DAFs)

A flexible, tax-efficient way to manage charitable giving. Donors can contribute cash, stock, or other assets to a DAF, receive an immediate tax deduction, and then recommend grants to the Diocese or parish ministries over time. This approach simplifies recordkeeping, enables strategic timing of gifts, and allows donors to support multiple Catholic causes with a single vehicle.

IRA Charitable Roll-over (Qualified Charitable Distribution)

Available to individuals age 70½ or older, a QCD allows direct transfer of up to \$111,000 per year from an IRA to the Diocese or parish. At age 73 this can count towards your the required minimum distribution and is excluded from taxable income. It's one of the most efficient ways to give for retirees looking to reduce taxes while making a meaningful impact.

Stock Gifts

Donating appreciated securities can eliminate capital gains tax while providing a full-value charitable deduction. It's a smart way to unlock gains for good—particularly for donors with long-held assets or concentrated stock positions.

Employer Matching Gifts

Many companies match employee contributions to charitable organizations, often doubling or tripling the impact of a gift. Donors can check with HR or corporate giving portals to see if their workplace participates.

Recurring Monthly Giving

Setting up an automated monthly gift provides steady, predictable support to diocesan ministries and schools, while allowing donors to budget their giving throughout the year.

"SmartGiving isn't about the size of a gift—it's about the wisdom of stewardship."

– BISHOP FRANK J. CAGGIANO

LEAVING A LEGACY OF FAITH.

Planned gifts are acts of love that extend generosity beyond a lifetime. Through **estate giving**, donors across the Diocese are remembering the Church in their wills, trusts, and charitable bequests—ensuring that future generations can know and live the faith.

A Legacy of Hope

“When we leave a gift in our will to the Church, it’s our final act of faith—our way of preaching the Gospel one more time.”

– BISHOP FRANK J. CAGGIANO

Ways to Create a Legacy:

- + **Bequests:** Simple gifts through a will or trust.
- + **Charitable Gift Annuities:** Income for life, with remaining value supporting ministries.
- + **Beneficiary Designations:** Naming the Diocese or parish in retirement or insurance accounts.
- + **Endowed Funds:** Establishing perpetual support for scholarships, vocations, or Catholic Charities.

To learn more about **estate giving**, visit bridgeportdiocese.org/legacy or contact the Office of Development for a confidential conversation.

*"Every act of giving—whether of time, talent, or treasure—
builds the living Church of Christ. Together, we are the builders of hope,
the hands of mercy, and the voice of faith for generations yet to come."*

– BISHOP FRANK J. CAGGIANO



DIOCESE OF BRIDGEPORT

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