

2019-2020 CASE STATEMENT



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DIOCESAN ANNUAL APPEAL

CASE STATEMENT 2019-20



VOCATIONS, PRIESTS, DEACONS, AND RELIGIOUS

SEMINARY EDUCATION AND RELIGIOUS FORMATION

- 24 seminarians
- 9 Regency
- 5 Journey

The responsibility, spiritually and financially, of providing sufficient priests for the Diocese of La Crosse belongs to all of us. There will be twenty-four men engaged in seminary studies for our Diocese at college and theological seminaries for the 2019-2020 school year.

The Holy Cross Seminary House of Formation is a program to help young men in the discernment of their vocational call, with an emphasis on the call to the priesthood. Throughout the year, there are discernment retreats offered for the middle school, high school, and college-age men. The Director of Vocations, also the Director of the Holy Cross Seminary House of Formation, along with newly ordained priests, is available for retreats and other teaching events throughout the Diocese.

CONTINUING EDUCATION OF CLERGY:

Our priests need ongoing intellectual formation and regular spiritual enrichment. To help priests more effectively respond to the needs of their people, educational programs, retreats, and sabbaticals are an absolute necessity. Furthermore, some priests are working on advanced degrees so they can assist the Bishop to continue the teaching mission of our Diocese.

OFFICE FOR THE DIACONATE:

The Office for the Diaconate oversees the 61 permanent Deacons of the Diocese as well as those men in formation.

- 23 men in Deacon Formation
- 5 Deacons to be ordained in fall of 2020
- 10 Deacons to be ordained in fall of 2022
- 54 Deacons in active ministry

These funds are for the education and formation of future deacons for our Diocese. Permanent deacons assist the Bishop and priests by their ministry of charity to those who are suffering or on the margins of society, as well as through teaching, proclaiming the Gospel, assisting at the altar, and carrying out other various apostolic works.

VOCATIONS PROMOTION:

These funds are used to support literature, technology, and materials that primarily promote vocations to the priesthood. They also support all vocational, discernment and the vocational portions of confirmation retreats and parish programs for middle school to adults.

INTERNATIONAL PRIESTS:

- 27 International Priests serve in Diocesan parishes

The Diocesan Annual Appeal funds in part the training and support of our international priests for service in the parishes of the Diocese of La Crosse. With the shortage of Diocesan priests, the international priests serve a vital role in providing our Catholic communities with the celebration of the Eucharist and other sacraments in addition to the administration of many parishes.

CLERGY HEALTHCARE:

The Diocese ensures fully funding of our priest's medical needs since insurance does not cover all of their medical needs. The Diocese is in need of more financial support due to rising health care costs and unfunded expenses, including some medications and long-term health care.

VICAR FOR CLERGY:

The Vicar for Clergy oversees the health and well-being of the 92 Diocesan priests, the 27 International Priests and the 41 Senior Priests.

OFFICE FOR CONSECRATED LIFE

The Diocesan Annual Appeal funds the Office for Consecrated Life, which serves the men and women in consecrated life in the Diocese of La Crosse. Specific services include visits with communities and individual consecrated persons, consulting with people seeking canonical status, assisting religious who are seeking ministry in the Diocese, coordinating the Retirement Fund for Religious, and promoting vocations in collaboration with the Diocesan Office for Vocations.

PARISH MINISTRIES SUPPORT

The Offices of the Diocesan Curia assist the Bishop, parishes, schools, and various apostolates in providing for the essential pastoral needs of our people. Gifts to the Diocesan Annual Appeal for the support of these ministries are vital to the well-being of the local Church. The Diocesan Annual Appeal supports the Offices of the Diocesan Curia including:

OFFICE FOR CATECHESIS AND EVANGELIZATION

The Office for Catechesis and Evangelization serves the Bishop, clergy, parish and school staff as well as the laity in our life-long formation as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. The Office assists parishes and schools with in-services at the diocesan, deanery, and parish level with methods and content in handing on the Catholic Faith, based upon the Diocesan Religion Curriculum and Virtue Program. This office also offers and over sees opportunities for certification for Catholic school teachers and parish catechetical leaders and catechists in doctrine, Scripture, and methods to ensure their proper formation to teach the Faith. Adult resources, such as bulletin inserts and materials that correspond with Bible studies and Adult Faith Formation Study Programs, are developed and provided for ongoing faith enrichment. This office also coordinates the Hmong Ministry and Ministry for Persons with Special Needs (MPSN).

The Office for Catechesis and Evangelization maintains an audiovisual and resource library free rental use in the parishes and Catholic schools. This office also collaborates with other Diocesan offices on all matters about religious education, evangelization, the RCIA process, and adult faith formation to serve the needs of the parishes, Catholic schools and the Diocese as a whole.

NEW PARISH MARY, MOTHER OF GOOD HELP HMONG MINISTRY:

- 3,500 people assisted

A good number of Hmong Catholics who reside in the Diocese of La Crosse. With the assistance of a full-time pastor who serves Mary, Mother of Good Help Parish in Wausau and two priest chaplains in the La Crosse area, as well as two part-time Hmong catechists, and the Diocesan Coordinator in La Crosse; Hmong Catholics receive instruction in the faith, ongoing formation, to help become active members in parishes. Hmong are prepared for the reception of the Sacraments and given assistance for the sick and those in need. There is current outreach to the Hmong who has never heard of Jesus Christ and those who are Christian but who do not understand the basic Gospel message. Catholic resources such as a Rosary booklet and Stations of the Cross are being translated into the Hmong language to foster a deeper relationship with Christ through prayer. Young people are encouraged to participate in parish youth ministry to

grow in their faith. Your gift also provides tuition assistance to needy Hmong families with children in Catholic schools.

OFFICE FOR MARRIAGE AND FAMILY LIFE

The Office for Marriage and Family Life assists parishes to establish and maintain the service to marriage through, marriage education to youth, marriage preparation for engaged couples, marriage-enrichment opportunities, and resources to those with troubled marriages.

The office also coordinates the *“Teaching the Way of Love Series”* which equips parents with the skills and confidence they need to talk with their children about topics such as human dignity, friendships, sexuality, chastity, dating, and God’s plan for human love.

The Office oversees several programs, including:

MARRIAGE PREPARATION:

To combat the societal trends attacking marriage, the Office for Marriage and Family Life devotes great time and energy to collaborate and empower individuals at the parish and deanery level to prepare engaged couples for a life-long, healthy, happy and holy marriage. More than 250 couples were married in the Diocese in 2018. There are three main areas of formation:

1. Deanery level retreat called Married Love: Two Becoming One which allows engaged couples to learn from married couples who share on the topics of Faithfulness, Permanence and Openness to Life as well as hear from a clergy on the Covenantal nature of marriage.
2. Parish level pre-marriage inventory called FOCCUS helps engaged couples discuss aspects of their relationship through the guidance of trained facilitators
3. Natural Family Planning instruction is offered by trainers from within the Diocese. This instruction on following the Church’s teachings on love and life is not exclusive to engaged couples and more than 500 individuals receive instruction annually.

The Office also invests in remote preparation for marriage through age appropriate presentations to youth on God’s plan for love and life.

MARRIAGE ENRICHMENT:

The sacramental union of man and woman in Holy Matrimony is a never-ending process of guiding one’s spouse toward heaven. Various conferences, evenings of reflection, and retreats are offered to assist couples on this journey.

- Baptism preparation, by offering training to parish ministers in collaboration with the Office for Catechesis and Evangelization.
- Men's Ministry, which coordinates the annual Men of the Cross conference in late October, empowers ongoing parish and deanery men's groups and provides resource materials and listings of regional men's conferences.
- Women's Ministry, which provides support materials and listings of regional women's conferences.
- Separated and Divorced Catholics, which focuses on providing resources to couples who are separated (e.g., Retrouvaille, Catholic Counselors, Marriage Mentors, etc.) and inviting those who are divorced to stay connected with their church and explore a declaration of nullity.
- The Ministry of Consolation, which provides training to deaneries and parishes for supporting families and individuals during the time of loss.

OFFICE FOR MINISTRIES AND SOCIAL CONCERNS

The Office for Ministries and Social Concerns directs formation for the permanent diaconate as well as programs of formation for the laity, including the Lay Formation Institute and the Leader of Prayer Program. It also coordinates pastoral care of the Hispanic community, implements the directives of the Diocesan Bishop consistent with the social teachings of the Church and collaborates with the U.S. Bishops' programs for national and international relief and development. The Office also is working closely with Catholic Charities, the Diocesan Mission Office, and the diocesan Social Ministry Advisory Committee to foster initiatives of charity and social advocacy in parishes and deaneries throughout the Diocese. Finally, the Office administers grant programs for the continuing education of men and women involved in pastoral work.

LAY FORMATION:

- Thirty-five students in the Lay Formation Institute graduated and were commissioned in June of 2019 (more than 800 commissioned since 1973). Thirty-seven are registered for the class to begin in fall of 2019.
- There are thirty students in the Leader of Prayer program who will be commissioned in August of 2019 (more than 300 commissioned since 1989).

Diocesan workshops toward growth in lay discipleship are ongoing, in collaboration with the Office for Catechesis and Evangelization and the Office for Sacred Worship.

Funds from the Diocesan Annual Appeal support the education and formation of future deacons for our Diocese. Permanent deacons assist the Bishop and priests by their ministry of charity to those who are suffering or on the margins of society, as well as through teaching, proclaiming the Gospel, assisting at the altar, and carrying out other various apostolic works.

HISPANIC AND MIGRANT MINISTRY:

- Over 2000 people helped weekly

Many Spanish-speaking Catholics live and work in our diocese. To meet their spiritual needs, the Church provides Mass and other liturgical and pastoral services in their native language and makes available Spanish catechetical and devotional resources. There are also a growing number of rallies, retreats and pilgrimages for both youths and adults from the Hispanic community. The Office for Ministries and Social Concerns assists with coordination of these pastoral efforts, complementing the legal and material aid provided to the Hispanic Community through Catholic Charities.

OFFICE FOR SACRED WORSHIP

The Office for Sacred Worship serves the Bishop, clergy, and laity of the Diocese. The Office for Sacred Worship seeks to deepen our understanding of the meaning of the celebrated rites, their manner of celebration, and their implications for daily life. It offers sacramental catechesis for all the members of the Diocese and promotes the liturgical formation of those who serve the liturgical assembly in the parish. The Office for Sacred Worship also directs the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), by supporting the activities of parish RCIA coordinators and hosting diocesan celebrations with the Bishop and the RCIA candidates.

TELEVISED MASS:

The televised Mass provides tremendous comfort to those thousands of temporarily or permanently homebound Catholics, whose age or infirmity prevents them from going to their parish church for Mass, by giving them the opportunity to be able to view the Sunday Mass in their home. Although many viewers of the televised Mass regularly contribute to help pay for production and airtime, the costs are much greater than the contributions. The Mass is closed-captioned for the hearing impaired.

OFFICE FOR SAFE ENVIRONMENT

The Diocese of La Crosse is committed to creating a safe environment for children and vulnerable adults entrusted to our care in our parishes and schools. The Office for Safe Environment oversees the

training programs in accordance with the United States Council of Catholic Bishops Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

A safe environment is maintained by thoroughly screening and training all members of the clergy, employees and volunteers who work with children and young people as part of their ministry. Online and in-person educational programs as well as resource materials are used for educating those who work with our youth. Parent volunteers at diocesan schools and parish sites are also trained and screened.

Clergy, employees and volunteers are annually trained to recognize and respond to signs of abuse, and review reporting procedures to maintain an environment for children and vulnerable adults to learn and worship in a safe and welcoming place.

In 2018, 4446 background checks and 1008 finger print cards were submitted and ran for clergy, parish and school employees and volunteers at a cost of over \$73, 000. Background checks are renewed every 3 years, and fingerprints are required of all clergy, paid staff, maintenance staff and coaches.

The Safe Environment program is in compliance with the the local audit required by the USCCB and the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People.

Creating and maintaining a safe environment is a priority for the parishes and schools of the Diocese of La Crosse. We strive to keep all God's children safe and protected while in our care.

OFFICE FOR YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

- Over 3,500 youth participate in a Diocesan rally, retreat, or event

The Office for Youth Ministry and Young Adult Ministry assists parishes and high schools to lead their young people (ages 12-39) to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, ongoing growth in their Catholic faith, and the use of their gifts for the good of the Church and the world. Our first goal is to serve the parishes by assisting them in starting and continuing their youth-ministry programs. Our second goal is to provide opportunities for young people to experience and grow deeper in their faith. The Diocesan Annual Appeal helps support the many events coordinated through this office.

- The training conferences for youth ministers and teams
- Individual parish retreats
- Local, regional, and national conferences
- World Youth Day
- Adventure Camps
- The Immersion Retreat
- Young Adult Retreat
- National and international mission service trips
- Other opportunities that arise that meet the needs of the young people and leaders.

These opportunities are to energize and strengthen the faith of the young people so that when they come back to their parish youth-ministry programs, they can be good examples of living out their faith to their peers and other parishioners.

HIGH SCHOOL FAITH FORMATION:

Confirmed young people need high school programs to help them continue their faith journey in the Catholic Church, discern their vocation in life, and prepare for adult responsibilities.

PARISH SERVICES SUPPORT

CHANCERY AND ARCHIVES

The Chancery Office provides consultation in areas of Church (canon) law. The Chancellor is the chief notary for the Diocese and is responsible for safeguarding official Curial documents. The Chancellor's office processes prenuptial files for marriage, which includes granting permissions, dispensations, and declarations of nullity due to lack of canonical form. The Chancery Office prepares and edits the data for inclusion in the *Wisconsin Pastoral Handbook* and *Official Catholic Directory*.

The Diocesan Archives maintains a history of the parishes and institutions within the diocese. The Archivist provides research for genealogical searches from the sacramental registers and issues sacramental records from the data kept in the Archives.

OFFICE FOR COMMUNICATIONS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Office for Communications and Public Relations seeks to communicate the good news of Jesus Christ, according to the teachings of the Roman Catholic Church, to God's people of the Diocese of La Crosse. Daily, we strive to present the truth and presence of God by promoting the efforts of the diocese through her parishes, clergy, religious and lay faithful using many forms of media and public relations.

The Office for Communications and Public Relations, responsible for communications to the diocese's external and internal audiences, acts as the communications liaison with all the parishes of the diocese and maintains a relationship with similar offices of the other Wisconsin (arch) dioceses. The communications director, serving as the spokesperson and media contact, is also responsible for public relations, promotion, photography, video production and website communication. This individual also oversees the technical and database requirements necessary to maintain an effective electronic communications network.

CATHOLIC COMMUNICATIONS:

Communicating the mission to the faithful of the Diocese of La Crosse on a regular basis, we strive to provide a meaningful Catholic perspective. Through the help of the Diocesan Annual Appeal, we reach all families through our print publication *Catholic Life* and its companion social media. The two-part focus of our message is to inform and enrich those active in their Catholic Faith and to inspire and awaken those who are not.

OFFICE FOR STEWARDSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

Taking heart of the call by our Bishops that “once one chooses to become a disciple of Jesus Christ, stewardship is not an option,” the Office for Stewardship and Development aims to educate and support the different Stewardship efforts within the diocesan’s community. Christ reminds us that to be good and faithful Stewards; we must take a risk with our gifts and not be foolish or timid. (Mt 25:14-30). The Office for Stewardship and Development works to ensure the community has the necessary understanding, strategic planning, and tools necessary to cultivate the Time, Talent, and Treasure required to walk with the people of God’s on their journey to the compassionate heart of Lord Jesus Christ.

DIOCESAN ANNUAL APPEAL

The expenses incurred by the Diocesan Annual Appeal include salaries, promotion, printing, postage, video production, other supplies, and tools required.

OFFICE FOR TEMPORALITIES

The Finance Office, Diocesan Buildings and Grounds, Maintenance, IT/Data, and Holy Cross Center Staff comprise the Office for Temporalities. The Finance Office assists the parishes and answers questions on their financial, payroll and accounting needs. Establishes the Diocesan benefit package, which includes health, dental, vision, life, disability, and 403b retirement plan. The Office for Buildings and Grounds helps the parishes and schools with keeping in compliance with governmental regulations by assisting asbestos and other environmental matters. This office is the primary contact for the processing of construction and remodeling contracts.

LAY EMPLOYEE RETIREMENT

The Diocese of La Crosse Lay Employees’ Retirement Plan needs additional support to fund fully the modest retirement benefits given to the employees enrolled in this defined-benefit plan. The plan began in 1974 to extend greater financial security to those many dedicated lay employees and their families by providing some financial assistance upon their retirement. The plan was frozen December 31, 2006, but there are 500 active employees and over 1,700 eligible participants to receive benefits from the plan.

DIOCESAN FACILITIES: OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

ST. JOSEPH THE WORKMAN CATHEDRAL OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE:

Dedicated in 1962, St. Joseph, the Workman Cathedral, is the Mother Church of the Diocese of La Crosse. Due to the Cathedral's role in diocesan celebrations and liturgies, the Diocese assumes responsibility for a portion of the expenses of the Mother Church of the Diocese.

HOLY CROSS DIOCESAN CENTER BUILDING OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE:

The Holy Cross Diocesan Center is a multi-functional facility that houses and maintains the day-to-day operations of the La Crosse Diocesan administration. Besides the Bishop's business offices and conference room, there are 99 rooms used by the **Diocesan Curia** and **Catholic Charities** administration. In their other Center-space, Catholic Charities runs a disabilities service program for both adults and then for adolescents. Recently moved in, the **Center for Veterans Affairs** provides assistance to homeless vets, as a first step to the **State of Wisconsin** moving in as soon as September, to provide other assistance to vets. The top floor offers apartments and **guest rooms for active and retired priests**, as well as **occasional lodging for the Seminary House of Formation**. The Center houses Christ the King Chapel, St. Martha's Kitchen and Refectory, and a gym. Just added, the Center boasts its own **catering service** by which it can now serve full meals for up to 100 individuals sponsored by the Center's clientele, in both formal or informal style. The ***Mater Redemptoris*** facility, as well as **the Bishop's residence** are also on the same 23-acre campus. The Center provides a venue for large groups and diocesan-wide conferences and events, like those accommodated in the:

Refectory (Dining Room): that include daily staff lunch, Priest Unity Days, Fall Clergy Conference, donor receptions for the Diocesan Annual Appeal, Jubilee Wedding Anniversary celebrations, new teacher formation and other Diocesan Catholic Schools in-services; school administrators' meetings, deacons' meetings, the annual Casa Hogar Dinner, Lenten Luncheon and seminars for Catholic Charities, Seminarian reunions, plus a host of other annual conferences sponsored by offices of the Diocesan Curia.

Bishop's Common Room: that houses meetings held by Deacon Community Board, Catholic Hospital Administrators, La Crosse Deanery Special Religious Education, Rural Life Committee, Presbyteral Council, the College of Deans, St. Joseph Priest Fund, Pastoral Planning Committee and Subcommittees, and Deacon Community Board meetings, Catholic Charities Board and others meetings, as well as things like bible studies, and Curia staff in-services.

Riverview Room: that has meetings held by Catechesis and Evangelization, Consecrated Life, Vocations, Safe Environment, Diocese and Viterbo Collaborative Committee, Catholic Cemeteries, Catholic Charities, St. Joseph Priest Fund, Youth Ministry and NET teams. Occasional use by residents take place here, convenient for the kitchen that is attached.

Christ the King Chapel: that is a backdrop for TV Mass filmed happens, and is a place for First Friday Masses, Masses for the Hmong, Hispanics and MPSN (Ministry for Persons with Special Needs), and other Masses of special events, as well as *daily* Curia staff Masses.

Holy Cross Diocesan Center Crypt Chapel: that provides a place for resident priests to celebrate daily Masses, with occasional retreats and days of recollection had by others.

Gym and on the Ball Fields: where Aquinas High School, Western Technical College, a Catholic men's basketball league, and the Warriors Drum and Bugle Corps are hosts. RUSH Wisconsin West comes for soccer practices when Field for Kids is closed due to inclement weather. Aquinas uses the ball fields during respective seasons for baseball and football, for practices and games.

A full-size maintenance engineer's home is attached to a steam heating plant – that is all separate from but dependent upon the central facility.

The Center also **supports the local community** upon request. Presently it is collaborating with the Western Healthcare Coalition of the State of Wisconsin as part of a mass fatality plan to provide a safe harbor for affected families needing assistance.

Finally, it is important to remember **natural habitat**. Nestled on the shores of the Mississippi, the Center provides lush and beautifully manicured grounds where countless forms of wild life seek refuge. Turtles find safety to lay their young, away from endangering automobile traffic; deer and fox, raccoon and beaver, look up to watch raptors of every kind, all within earshot of a vast choir of song birds that nest in its trees. Countless hours of maintenance service are required to keep all of this in check.

CATHOLIC EDUCATION

OFFICE FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

The Office for Catholic Schools assists the Bishop in planning, implementing, and evaluating the 66 Catholic-education programs in Diocesan Parish Schools and Unified School Systems. It conducts major workshops and in-service training for teachers, administrators, parents and other groups. The office also informs schools of national and state education policies, standards, and issues; administers a standardized Religion testing program; provides curriculum assistance, and assists schools by offering guidance on legal matters and other pressing issues. Most importantly, the Office for Catholic Schools helps to assure the Catholic identity of schools and the spiritual formation of administrators and teachers.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS DEVELOPMENT:

6,696 students in Catholic schools (2017-18)

Capital, infrastructure, and academic development are vital to ensuring that students in our diocese will continue to receive a quality Catholic education. Funds are used to provide training and assistance to improve our 66 Catholic schools.

DIRECT PARISH SUBSIDY FOR CATHOLIC SCHOOLS:

Grants to parishes that support schools

The Diocese of La Crosse takes pride in the strong tradition of quality Catholic education. Parishes that support schools frequently have to forego important projects and purchases to meet the financial needs of their schools.

Tuition assistance to families with children in our schools

There are annual tuition-assistance grants awarded to families based on financial need. In the 2017-2018 school year, \$100,000.00 was allocated from the Diocesan Annual Appeal to help families keep their children in our Catholic schools.

CHARITY, MISSIONS AND THE WIDER CHURCH

CATHOLIC CHARITIES:

Catholic Charities mission is to proclaim Christ's gospel of life and promote human dignity by alleviating poverty and strengthening individuals and families. Catholic Charities receives a portion of their annual budget through the Diocesan Annual Appeal. These funds assist them in their work with individuals,

families, and communities to help them meet their needs, address their issues, eliminate oppression, and build a just and compassionate society. In 2018, 10,088 families and individuals received services from Catholic Charities. With your support, they offer a variety of services on a no-fee or very low fee basis to all who come to their door. Your gifts to the Diocesan Annual Appeal support their:

ST. LAWRENCE COMMUNITY SERVICES

Catholic Charities certified and experienced staff provides charitable outreach, including assistance with rent, mortgage, food, and utilities, advocacy, and financial education and enrichment individually tailored to each client. Struggling families and individuals can receive an evaluation of their situation, develop a plan, and participate in financial literacy and case management. Over \$379,000 in financial assistance and charitable outreach was provided for utility, food, transportation, health-related issues, housing, clothing, and other basic human needs.

DISASTER RECOVERY

Catholic Charities provides disaster relief and recovery services throughout the Diocese. In 2018, flooding and other natural disasters hit many of our communities within the Diocese of La Crosse. Catholic Charities was there, going door-to-door, providing immediate assistance with local gift cards to help those affected with cleaning supplies, alternative lodging, and food replacement costs. In the initial few weeks, they were able to provide over \$40,000 in financial assistance and charitable outreach. They reactivated their Disaster Recovery Helpline and over the next several months continued to have St. Lawrence Financial Wellness Advocates available to provide financial assistance and professional help with resources.

REPRESENTATIVE PAYEE PROGRAM

- Nearly 500 clients annually throughout the southwestern part of the Diocese received assistance.

This program offers case management services to individuals who are living on a fixed income. Assistance with payment of financial obligations and monthly household budgeting are among the services provided in this program. Payments for monthly needs, such as rent, utilities, groceries, and other personal necessities, were provided.

COMMUNITY HOMELESS FACILITIES

- Over 27,000 sheltered nights of service were provided to the many poor, hurting, homeless, and often “faceless” people in our communities.
- 596 homeless community members or those living on the edge of homelessness sought services through Franciscan Hospitality House. This is a 13% increase from 2017.

Catholic Charities works to provide overnight shelter facilities for many poor, hurting, homeless, and often “faceless” people in our communities. Sojourner House in Eau Claire first opened its doors on November 1, 2011, to provide a year-round, safe, clean place where adult men and women, regardless of what their ambitions or hopes. Guests can sleep overnight, shower, clean their clothes, and have food in the evening, as well as a nutritious breakfast while ensuring their personal respect and safety.

The La Crosse and Wausau Warming Centers are open from November 1 through April 30. They offer a warm space, an evening meal, breakfast, and laundry and shower facilities to homeless adults 18 and over who may have been turned away from other local programs due to capacity or eligibility issues. In 2018, the Wausau Warming Center expanded its services to include summertime day service two days a week. On these days, homeless men and women can come in to shower, do laundry, and meet with the staff for assistance. One man even stops in as they assist him in calling his mother to let her know he is alright.

The Franciscan Hospitality House (FHH) is a day center offering services to area community members who are homeless or living on the edge of homelessness. Community members in need can come in during the day and meet with a staff member for area referrals, get assistance with laundry services, or take a shower. On special days, those who visit the center may even have an opportunity to get a haircut, receive foot care, or meet with local professionals for legal advice. It is truly a community center, and it is one of their programs that helps us meet local community members where they are at with dignity. It is instrumental at the beginning of building relationships to help them, when they are ready, create a more sustainable home environment. The FHH opened its doors in 2015 and is open Monday through Friday year-round.

BEYOND SHELTER PROGRAM

In 2016, Catholic Charities embraced the 'housing first' model in housing long-term homeless men and women in our Diocese. In Wausau, the first Beyond Shelter facility opened to house single homeless men, and with the support of the community has grown to three homes. The House of Mercy, located in Loyal, soon followed serving homeless women and women with children in Clark County. In 2018, they received funding to open a Beyond Shelter Home in La Crosse. These facilities offer housing to those who are in need in our communities. They work with these residents by providing them a home with case supervision. The staff is available to connect them with local resources and work with them on overcoming their barriers to a more sustainable living situation.

FAMILY SERVICES PROGRAM

- Finds families forever through their birth parent, relative, and international adoption programs.
- Is currently the only Hague Accredited Adoption Agency for international adoptions in the state of Wisconsin.
- Supports Birth parents through pregnancy to live birth with a free, confidential helpline available 24/7.
- Provides families enjoy family fun events, conferences, training, or received information from their Post-Adoption Resource Center.

Catholic Charities offers compassionate, free support to expectant birth mothers and fathers in all areas of the Diocese, whether they choose to parent their baby or make an adoption plan. This outreach helps fulfill their mission to proclaim the sanctity of human life to promote families, and the capacity of individuals to grow in community. For over 140 years, Catholic Charities Adoption services have been building families throughout west-central Wisconsin.

IMMIGRATION ASSISTANCE

- In 2018, their Immigration staff provided services to 215 immigrants from 27 different countries throughout southwest Wisconsin. Catholic Charities provided a voice for those without a voice.

Catholic Charities' Immigration Program focuses on family and/or humanitarian-based immigration services and assists those needing assistance across the Diocese. This program is recognized by the United States Board of Immigration Appeals and has board accredited staff members. Their Immigration program also provides client access through a contracted Immigration Attorney.

Catholic Charities provides direct legal assistance to immigrants for naturalization, adjustment of status, immigration services under the VAWA program (Violence Against Women Act), and other immigration services. Also, they provide all immigrants with general assistance and referrals for individual needs.

DISABILITIES SERVICES

- Over 57,000 staffing hours focused on individual dignity and strengthening families for those dealing with developmental and emotional disabilities as well as mental health and substance abuse concerns. Nearly 23,000 hours of this service were provided to students with behavioral disorders, autism spectrum, and other developmental

disabilities to help them be successful in school. The primary purpose of the program is to provide parents, caregivers, or school personnel quality services needed to prevent out-of-home placements of participants with developmental disabilities.

The various program services include an Adult Support Program, School Support Services, and After School Support Services. Catholic Charities also collaborates with Bridges of Belonging and provides program supervision/support to The Dwelling Place. The Dwelling Place is a Christian-based home that serves four adult residents living with developmental disabilities.

The Live By Program is another Disability Services Program that continued to see growth through 2018. The Live By is a place for people in recovery and is a collaboration between Catholic Charities and the La Crosse County. Individuals with mental health and/or substance use issues are provided a safe and sober living environment while on the path to full independence. Individuals pay low income based rent and are provided a room to themselves with shared common areas such as the kitchen and living room to socialize with other tenants. Tenants have the opportunity to gain positive rental history for future housing. The Live By is a stepping stone for individuals to achieve housing of their own with the confidence that they can live independently once they've acquired the proper skills to do so.

ST. DAMIEN OUTREACH TO PERSONS WITH HIV/AIDS

- Pastoral care and practical support from Catholic Charities staff and volunteers.

The purpose of the St. Damien Outreach is to provide compassionate ongoing support and outreach to people who are affected and living with HIV/AIDS and those who love them. Catholic Charities engages in this program to fulfill their mission to protect human rights and dignity, to proclaim the sanctity of human life, and to stand in solidarity with those who may be marginalized by society.

VOLUNTEERS ACROSS THE DIOCESE

- 1,572 Volunteers provided 33,375 hours of service through various programs and offices across the diocese to assist Catholic Charities to offer help and hope.

Many Catholic Charities programs and projects are dependent on the generosity of volunteers. Our Community Homeless Facilities could not keep their doors open without nightly volunteers coming in to assist our staff and guests. In order to keep administrative costs down, all of our office locations are dependent on front desk volunteers to answer phone calls and assist with appointments and walk-ins seeking help. Back to School and Christmas assistance programs, as well as fundraising events, are dependent on volunteers. They are thankful to the men and

women who contribute time and engage in the efforts to serve those in need across our Diocese.

SUPPORT OF THE WIDER CHURCH:

As Catholics, we belong to a Church much larger than our parish or diocese. Catholics in the Diocese of La Crosse are committed to supporting the work of the Wisconsin Catholic Conference, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, and the Holy See.

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS:

By funding eleven special collections, the Diocesan Annual Appeal has reduced the number of collections being taken up in our parishes. These eleven collections are:

- Collection for Aid for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe (CCEE)
- Catholic Relief Services (CRS)
- Black and Indian Missions
- Catholic Communications Campaign (CCC)
- Catholic Home Missions Appeal (CHMA)
- Catholic University of America
- The Diocese of La Crosse Home Missions,
 - Casa Hogar orphanage in Peru
- Diocesan Social Ministries
- Pontifical Good Friday Collections for the Holy Land
- Collection for the Church in Latin America (CLA)
- Peter's Pence Collection

WORKS OF CHARITY:

Natural disasters and personal tragedies are examples of situations that often require immediate assistance. Through this fund, the Diocese assists state and national Catholic apostolates that depend on charitable gifts for their survival. The Diocese of La Crosse has a policy that will not allow the use of parish, general diocesan funds, or funds designated for specific apostolates for payment on clergy sexual misconduct claims. The Works of Charity Fund has occasionally, and appropriately, provided funds for the treatment and care of victims of such sinful misconduct as they seek to heal.

For further information on this case statement or any additional questions regarding the Diocesan Annual Appeal, please feel free to contact:

Office for Stewardship and Development

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Visit our website at <http://diolc.org/stewardship>