

Throughout the Gospel, Jesus reveals the Unity of the Blessed Trinity: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. One God in three Divine Persons. God creates us in His own image, endowing us with gifts of time, talent, and treasure for activity in this world. Jesus fashions us into His people in the Church where, in faith, we express our stewardship and discipleship in unity and charity with one another in His Name.

Our Diocesan Mission Statement identifies us and our God-given gifts to be used for the upbuilding of God's Kingdom on earth: *"a sacramental people, who worship God, teach the Catholic Faith, and serve the needs of the human person."* The Diocesan Annual Appeal provides an opportunity to unite our treasures to meet our obligations of charity and mercy united in Christ.

Our Diocesan Annual Appeal provides the necessary funding to finance our charitable obligations as a Diocese to put our time, talent, and treasure into building up the Kingdom of God, inspiring hope for our brothers and sisters in need.

Over the course of this appeal, we will learn more about the encouraging and inspiring examples below of our Diocesan Mission Statement in action.

- **FOCUS: Fellowship Of Catholic University Students;** As we look to expand these groups to our other university area parishes, our UW-La Crosse group discusses how they invite college-age students into a deeper relationship with Christ. Their efforts have provided the Church with three seminarians, several men and women in or considering consecrated religious life, and a countless number of college students to reconnect and stay united with the Church in the last few years.
- **The Watermark Mission:** with the help of grants from the Office for Ministries and Social Concerns, Gary and Rosey Asher from St. Henry Parish in Eau Galle, their ministry unites people from all over the diocese and country to help fix and repair homes after natural disasters, providing hope to those in need.
- **The Bahire Family:** A family who, with the help of the Diocesan Annual Appeal, supported ministries of the USCCB, Catholic Charities, and Gary Veltus, a parishioner of St Mary Parish, Neillsville. They survived the harsh conditions of civil war and refugee camps. They mourned the killing of their parents and the deaths and disappearance of other loved ones, escaped the Congo civil war, and spent eleven years in a refugee camp in Uganda before the Church helped them come to Wisconsin. They are forever grateful for God and the Church; now, they and their children hope to attend college as new homeowners. They can now know peace and have opportunities they never dreamed were possible.

Any support to the Diocesan Annual Appeal, no matter how large or small, helps ensure that we live out our mission as a diocese. Therefore, I invite you to invoke the wisdom and guidance of the Holy Spirit for your opportunity to invest for the first time in the Diocesan Annual Appeal. Your example inspires others to follow and provide generous and sacrificial stewardship. When we come together as one, we truly live out the realities that "We are the Diocese."

Thank you, and may God Bless you.

Very truly yours in Christ,

+Most Reverend William P. Callahan
Bishop of the Diocese of La Crosse