

2025 - 2026

DIOCESE OF LA CROSSE

DIOCESAN ANNUAL APPEAL PARISH MANUAL



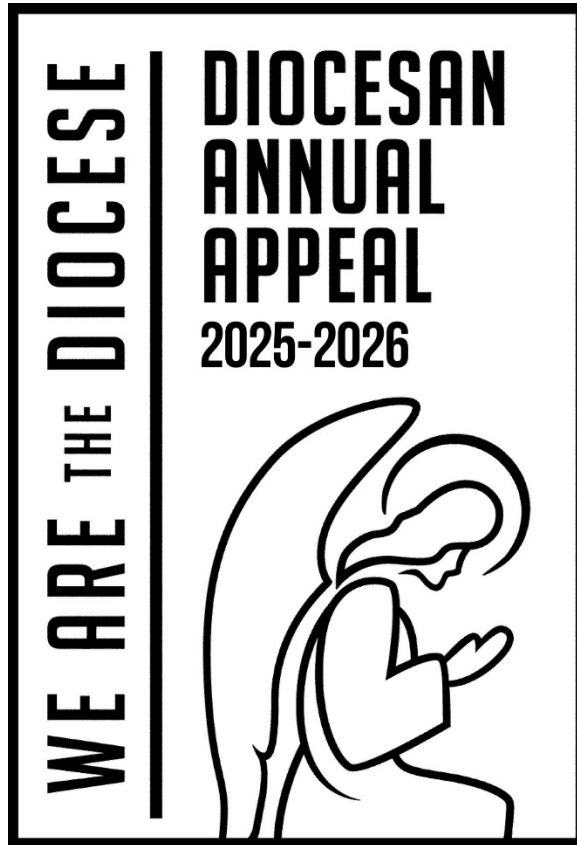
# FUELING MISSIONS OF HOPE

AS THE FATHER HAS SENT ME,  
SO I SEND YOU. - JOHN 20:21

STEWARDSHIP & DEVELOPMENT OFFICE

Jeff Reiter, Director of Stewardship & Development

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O Holy Spirit, Divine Advocate, You who proceed from The Father and the Son, we humbly invoke Your presence and guidance.

Breathe into our hearts a renewed sense of mission, as Jesus breathed on His apostles and said,

“As the Father has sent me, so I send you.”

Enkindle in us a burning desire to share the hope found in the Gospel with all those who dwell in darkness and despair.

Grant us the wisdom to recognize the needs of our brothers and sisters, and the courage to respond with generosity and compassion through the success of this Diocesan Annual Appeal.

Bless our efforts to fuel the missions of hope within our diocese, that we may bring comfort to the afflicted, healing to the broken, and evangelize the lost.

Inspire us to give freely and abundantly, knowing that every gift, no matter how small, contributes to the building of Your Kingdom on earth.

May our actions be a testament to our faith, and may our lives reflect the love and mercy of Christ.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Father, one God, forever and ever.  
Amen.

THE MOST REVEREND GERARD W. BATTERSBY  
BISHOP OF THE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF LA CROSSE

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## A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Parish Appeal Leader,

May the Lord give you peace!

Your role as a Parish Appeal Leader is crucial in this ministry. The ministries supported by the Diocesan Annual Appeal invite everyone—regardless of background or affiliation—to be sent forth in Christ's name, "Fueling Missions of Hope" wherever they are. Anchored in this year's theme and inspired by John 20:21, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you," we are reminded that the Church's mission is not passive—it is active, urgent, and Spirit-led.

Jesus sends each of us to be agents of His healing, hope, and mercy in a world longing for purpose, compassion, and truth. Through the Annual Appeal, we join in this mission as instruments of God's love—uniting our prayers, service, and stewardship to bring hope to others. We do this by:

- **Trusting in the Mission of Christ:** Like the first disciples, we are sent by the Lord with confidence—not in ourselves, but in His grace. As Pope Benedict XVI reminds us, despite our "weaknesses, limitations, and difficulties, we must become like a window open to the light of the living God."
- **Fueling Hope in Action:** Each of us has a unique role in the Church's mission. Whether through education, outreach, or compassionate service, we help bring the Gospel to life by responding to fundamental human needs. The Church's core mission is evangelization and salvation, encompassing the promotion of holistic human development and the addressing of issues related to justice and peace.
- **Cooperating with Grace:** The Holy Spirit works through us when we say yes. Our cooperation enables God's plan of salvation to reach others through tangible acts of generosity and faith. The Holy Spirit is the primary agent of the Church's mission, guiding and empowering believers to proclaim the Good News.
- **Building Community in Christ:** The Appeal strengthens unity across our parishes. We are not isolated disciples but one Body—walking together and lifting one another in love and solidarity. The Church is the Body of Christ, intimately united with Him through the Holy Spirit and the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, forming a single mystical person. Your role as Parish Appeal Leader demonstrates this unity, and we appreciate your participation in it.
- **Living Mission through Vocation:** Whether you're a parent, teacher, worker, or clergy, your daily witness is a vital part of how Christ continues His mission today. The lay faithful, through their baptism, share in Christ's priestly, prophetic, and kingly mission, and are called to seek the Kingdom of God by engaging in temporal affairs and aligning them according to God's will.
- **Stewarding Our Gifts with Purpose:** Our time, talents, and treasure are sacred tools for the mission. By offering them, we help fuel the Church's work in the Diocese of La Crosse and beyond. All Christians are obligated to support the Church's needs and promote social justice, utilizing their resources to assist those in need, including the poor.

With your leadership, we can ensure that the Diocesan Annual Appeal continues supporting the ministries that bring hope, healing, and the Gospel to every part of our diocese.

As a Parish Appeal Leader, your witness is vital. We invite you to prayerfully use your God-given gifts to inspire others—encouraging them to respond to Christ’s invitation to go forth and make a difference. Your encouragement will help parishioners recognize how their efforts expand the Church’s mission beyond their pews—into communities, families, and hearts that long for Christ.

This manual is created to help your parish manage the Annual Appeal. Please review it thoroughly—it's full of crucial strategies, resources, and insights to support your efforts.

If you have any questions or need guidance, the Office of Stewardship & Development is here for you. Do not hesitate to contact us—we’re honored to walk with you in this mission.

Thank you for your faithfulness, leadership, and dedication to the Church. Together, we fuel missions of hope.

In Christ’s peace,

The Office of Stewardship & Development  
Diocese of La Crosse



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## MISSION STATEMENT OF THE DIOCESAN ANNUAL APPEAL

The Diocesan Annual Appeal financially supports the Church's mission by seeking financial and philanthropic gifts and providing all God's people with an opportunity to give sacrificially.

## APPEAL LOGO EXPLAINER

**"Fueling Missions of Hope"** is rich with theological and symbolic meaning. Here's an in-depth interpretation of its key colors, shapes, and scriptural reference:



# FUELING MISSIONS OF HOPE

AS THE FATHER HAS SENT ME,  
SO I SEND YOU. - JOHN 20:21



## BLUE CROSS

- **Symbolism:** The cross is the central symbol of Christianity, representing the redemptive sacrifice of Jesus Christ. The blue color traditionally signifies heaven, divinity, truth, and fidelity.
- **Catholic meaning:** It underscores our faith in God, the authority of Christ, and the commission to evangelize. The association with the Blessed Virgin Mary, who bore Christ into the world, further strengthens the Church's mission to bring Christ to others, reinforcing our divine authority and mission, making each of us an integral part of this sacred mission.



## RED FLAME

- **Symbolism:** Fire is biblically symbolic of the Holy Spirit (see Acts 2:3 – “tongues of fire”) and divine presence.
- **Catholic meaning:** The red suggests zeal, sacrifice, courage, and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. It energizes the mission of the Church and those sent forth by Christ.



## YELLOW/GOLD WAVES AND STREAKS

- **Symbolism:** Yellow or gold is a symbol of glory, light, and the richness of divine grace.
- **Catholic meaning:** These dynamic, outward-flowing shapes may represent movement, hope, and the spreading of the Gospel. They suggest vitality and abundance, reinforcing the idea of “fueling” — that we are supplying energy and resources for mission work.



## OVERALL IMAGERY & COMPOSITION

**The cross, flame, and waves together form a powerful visual metaphor:**

- The cross anchors the image, symbolizing the foundation of our faith.
- The flame represents the Holy Spirit and passionate discipleship.
- The golden streaks suggest that the Spirit and Church are in motion, going out into the world.

This mirrors the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19) and directly ties into the scripture at the bottom of the logo. The elements of the logo, particularly the cross, flame, and waves, are designed to reflect the key aspects of the Great Commission, emphasizing the Church's mission to spread the Gospel and make disciples of all nations.

## SCRIPTURE: JOHN 20:21

***“As the Father has sent me, so I send you.” — John 20:21***

- This is Jesus' commission to the Apostles after His resurrection. He breathes the Holy Spirit on them immediately afterward, which aligns with the fire imagery and underscores the theme of mission and apostolic sending.
- It affirms the idea that the Church's mission is divine in origin: just as the Father sent the Son, now the Son sends us — empowered by the Holy Spirit, nourished by faith and hope, and supported by the resources and generosity of the faithful.

## THEMATIC INTERPRETATION: “FUELING MISSIONS OF HOPE”

**This title and logo together express the Diocese’s mission:**

- To inspire generosity that enables the Church’s evangelizing, charitable, and pastoral works.
- To bring the light of Christ to others through service, outreach, and witness.
- To mobilize the faithful to respond to God's call with faith, hope, and love.

The 2025–2026 Diocesan Annual Appeal logo beautifully encapsulates both spiritual symbolism and a call to action. It invites all of us, as members of the Catholic community, to participate in the mission Christ entrusted to His Church. Let's join hands and fuel the missions of hope.

## WHY DO WE HAVE THE DIOCESAN ANNUAL APPEAL?

The Diocesan Annual Appeal began in 1997 to provide financial support to the Diocese of La Crosse and to fund essential Diocesan programs, including clergy healthcare, seminarian education, Catholic service agencies, and aid for those in need, as well as support for parishes, schools, and the universal Church. By strengthening the Church's financial foundation, the Diocesan Annual Appeal has dramatically advanced the Church's mission both locally and beyond. Being a Catholic means taking responsibility for the needs of one's Parish and the wider Church by recognizing that our gifts come from God and, with grateful hearts, practicing stewardship of our time, talents, and treasures to fulfill the mission of Jesus Christ.

Dioceses generate most of their systematic funding in three main ways: first, through the quota tax on qualified parish income, which is roughly 7% of the revenue for our Diocese. Second, they gain income from endowments and other investments. Lastly, like many other dioceses, the Diocesan Annual Appeal provides direct support for ministries and services. Contributions to the Diocesan Annual Appeal are vital, serving as the lifeblood of our Church's ministerial efforts. Without these appeals, the dioceses would have to rely almost entirely on the Quota paid by all parishes to fund training, ministries, education, and charitable works. Your contributions are essential for sustaining our Church's operations, helping to prevent the need for a higher quota on parish income.

The Diocesan Annual Appeal serves several vital purposes within the Catholic Church, mainly focusing on evangelization, supporting the faithful, and promoting charitable works.

- **Support for Missionary Work:** The appeal encourages donations to fund the spiritual and material needs of missions. It highlights the importance of increasing voluntary contributions to help meet these needs, especially in areas where priests and resources are limited. The appeal aligns with the Church's commitment to promoting missionary vocations and supporting new dioceses, as noted by Pope John XXIII in 1959.
- **Evangelization Efforts:** The appeal is a way to gather resources for ongoing evangelization initiatives. Pope John Paul II emphasized that the Church must focus on evangelization as a vibrant mission, which involves addressing community needs and fostering a deeper understanding of faith among the faithful. The appeal supports funding programs to bring the Gospel into homes, workplaces, and neighborhoods.
- **Charitable Works and Community Support:** The appeal also plays a vital role in backing charitable efforts within the diocese. It allows the Church to address the needs of the poor, the sick, and those in distress, embodying the Church's mission of service and solidarity. Pope John Paul II emphasized that the Church's service to humanity must be closely tied to its missionary activities, thereby ensuring the dignity of every person.
- **Building Community and Solidarity:** The appeal cultivates a sense of belonging among the faithful, inspiring them to work together in service to one another. It seeks to create a family

of families within the Church, where acceptance of the Lord and brotherhood are expressed through collective efforts in evangelization and charity. This communal aspect is essential for the Church's mission, as it helps strengthen the bonds among parishioners and encourages active participation in the life of the Church.

In summary, the Diocesan Annual Appeal is crucial for supporting missionary work, promoting evangelization, enabling charitable efforts, and strengthening a faith community. It embodies the Church's dedication to meeting the spiritual and material needs of its members and the wider community.

## WHY IS IT CRUCIAL FOR PEOPLE TO GIVE TO THE DIOCESAN ANNUAL APPEAL?

Investing in the Diocesan Annual Appeal allows parishioners to make sacrificial contributions that fund Catholic education, ministries, and services for individuals, parishes, and schools throughout our Diocese. Your donations truly make a difference in our community.

The Diocesan Annual Appeal is a valuable teaching moment. It enables parish leaders to reflect on how everything we have is a gift from God and was meant to be shared with others. It also serves as a reminder of our connectedness as a Church. That sense of connection is reflected in the Creed, where we affirm that we are members of the "One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church." However, often people do not fully reflect on the meaning of these words.

The Diocesan Annual Appeal serves as a potent reminder that every Catholic is not only a member of a local Church but also part of the Universal Church. We all share responsibility for the health of the Church across our Diocese and globally. As a united community of believers, the Appeal encourages members from all parish communities throughout the Diocese of La Crosse to contribute, emphasizing our collective duty to be part of the Church.

Our collective giving extends Christ's hands, reaching out to those in need within our Diocese and around the world. Individual and Parish efforts are essential to the success of the Diocese. By reaching your parish's target, you help ensure your Parish's success and allow the Diocese to provide vital services to the 19 counties in Western Wisconsin.

Contributions to the Diocesan Annual Appeal are essential for multiple reasons, as they support the Church's mission and operational needs.

- **Support for Missionary Activities:** The appeal is crucial for funding missionary work and is vital for meeting spiritual and material needs in various dioceses. Pope John XXIII emphasized the importance of increasing contributions to support missions, particularly in regions experiencing a shortage of priests and resources. This financial backing helps ensure that the Church can continue its mission of evangelization and outreach.
- **Charitable Works:** The appeal supports the Church's charitable programs, which are central to its mission. Pope Pius XII emphasized the crucial role of diocesan charity offices in assisting the poor and the needy, demonstrating the Church's commitment to Christian mercy. Donations help sustain these efforts, enabling the Church to meet the community's needs effectively.
- **Building Community and Solidarity:** The Diocesan Annual Appeal promotes a sense of unity among the faithful. It encourages teamwork and shared responsibility in the Church's mission, as emphasized by Pope John Paul II, who called for a renewed commitment to evangelization and community building. This collective effort strengthens the bonds within the Church and improves its ability to serve effectively.

- **Transparency and accountability:** The appeal also highlights the importance of transparency in financial matters. Pope John Paul II emphasized that the financial management of the Diocese should be conducted competently and honestly, making sure that contributions are used for their intended purposes. This accountability fosters trust among the faithful, encouraging them to donate with confidence that their contributions will be managed responsibly and effectively.
- **Supporting Local Parishes:** The appeal is vital for helping local parishes, which are the foundational units of the Church's mission. The funds raised through the appeal support parishes with training and various ministries, enabling them to continue serving their communities effectively.

In summary, contributing to the Diocesan Annual Appeal is essential because it supports missionary work, charitable efforts, community development, financial transparency, and the long-term viability of local parishes. These elements are crucial to the Church's mission and its ability to serve the faithful and the broader community.

## WHAT ROLE DOES STEWARDSHIP PLAY IN GIVING TO THE ANNUAL APPEAL?

Stewardship plays a fundamental role in giving, especially within the Catholic Church. It involves responsibly managing resources entrusted to individuals by God, highlighting the moral duty to use these resources for the common good and to benefit others.

- **Understanding Stewardship:** Stewardship is rooted in the belief that all of creation is a gift from God, and humans are responsible for caring for these gifts. The Catechism of the Catholic Church states that God entrusted the earth and its resources to humans for stewardship and enjoyment, highlighting the shared responsibility involved. This perspective promotes a sense of duty in people to manage their gifts wisely and generously.
- **Moral Responsibility:** Stewardship is a moral obligation to use one's resources not only for personal benefit but also for the good of the wider community. Pope Benedict XVI emphasized that individuals must manage the resources entrusted to them to meet the needs of all members of the human family, avoiding selfish accumulation and fostering solidarity. This view encourages people to see their contributions as part of a larger mission to support the Church and its charitable efforts.
- **Cultivating Generosity:** Stewardship fosters a spirit of giving, where individuals understand their role as caretakers of God's gifts. Pope Francis emphasized that property ownership should involve stewardship that benefits both the individual and the community. This understanding encourages people to contribute to the Diocesan Annual Appeal and other charitable efforts, seeing their donations as a way to fulfill their duty to share the blessings they have received.
- **Accountability and Judgment:** The concept of stewardship also involves accountability. Individuals will need to give an account of their stewardship, as emphasized by the International Theological Commission, which states that the methods used by stewards must be consistent with divine principles. This accountability fosters careful and moral decision-making regarding resource use and sharing.
- **Fostering Community and Solidarity:** Stewardship is crucial for building community within the Church. When people give, they contribute to a shared effort that supports the Church's mission and assists those in need. This communal aspect of stewardship emphasizes that our gifts are to be shared and that everyone has a role in supporting the common good.

In summary, stewardship is integral to giving because it highlights responsible management, moral obligation, generosity, accountability, and community building. It motivates individuals to see their resources as gifts to be shared for the benefit of everyone, aligning their actions with the teachings of the Church.

## KEY DATES

| <b>Mailing</b>                                                                                 | <b>Deadline<br/>For Parish Letters<br/>Inclusion</b> | <b>Expected Drop<br/>Date</b> | <b>Expected In-Home<br/>Date</b> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Initial Mailing<br><br>(Varies depending upon<br>mailing date requested<br>through October 25) | September 5, 2025                                    | September 22, 2025            | September 26, 2025               |
| Follow-up<br>(Giving Tuesday/ Year End)                                                        | November 10, 2025                                    | November 26, 2025             | December 1, 2025                 |
| Holy Week                                                                                      | March 10, 2026                                       | March 20, 2026                | March 27, 2026                   |
| End of the Appeal Year                                                                         | May 15, 2026                                         | May 26, 2026                  | May 30, 2026                     |

## THE THREE-PILLAR APPROACH

### (BEST PRACTICES)

THE THREE-PILLAR APPROACH ENCOURAGES PROPORTIONATE, SACRIFICIAL GIVING.

1. Stewardship Sunday

Use this Sunday to kick off the campaign in your Parish. Identify the needs that are addressed with funds from the Annual Appeal. Set the stage for shared work across the Diocese. Help parishioners understand how their donations are used. Show the Annual Appeal video. Inform them that they will receive a mailing next week requesting their financial support.

2. Commitment Sunday

Deliver the "ask" this Sunday through a homily or lay testimony. Summarize the needs and stories from the previous week. Make an explicit request for prayers and participation in this year's appeal. Announce the parish's goal. Explain how your Parish will use its rebate. Spend time explaining how to give, including the option to be a Guardian Angel member.

3. Amen Sunday

Amen Sunday effectively reminds mass-attending parishioners that their support is essential. This in-pew process will reach out to parishioners who have not registered with the parish and have not received the Appeal mailing.

### THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

- Keep the Appeal before the people use multi-channel messaging with church bulletins, newsletters, announcements, social media, and websites:
  1. Highlight various ministries that use the Appeal funds.
  2. Track progress toward the target (target amount, Commitment and cash total, % of parishioners committing).
- Keep Commitment cards and brochures readily available for parishioners to pick up anytime.
- Follow-up. Personal solicitation is strongly advised to encourage those who can support the Appeal but have not yet responded.
  1. Make phone calls to those who have given in the past but not this year.
  2. Make thank you calls to those who do participate.

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See the Appendix for more detailed procedures and sample scripts for each weekend.

## THE THREE PHASES OF AN APPEAL

**Phase 1: Promote**

**Phase 2: Obtain**

**Phase 3: Thank**

### PHASE 1: PROMOTE THE APPEAL

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#### STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY

The purpose of Stewardship Sunday is to announce the Diocesan Annual Appeal and highlight your parish's efforts. This Sunday is also the ideal time to promote your parish's target for the Appeal and explain which project will be funded with your rebate. Use this day to launch the campaign in your parish. Clarify how the funds from the Appeal address needs within the Parish, Diocese, and the broader Church. Emphasize the sense of shared community across the Diocese. Help parishioners understand how the Parish will utilize the funds. Show the Annual Appeal video. Inform them that they may have received or will receive the mailing next week, requesting their financial participation.

Here are several best practices to help you promote the Appeal in your Parish. Promoting the Appeal actively, especially before and during Appeal Sundays, will demonstrate to your parishioners that the Appeal is a vital part of parish life and will strengthen our unity within the broader Church.

Studies show that a person needs to hear the same message seven times before they start to understand and trust it. Therefore, clarity, consistency, commitment, and repetition are essential in all communication.

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#### BEST PRACTICES

- **Active and engaging Pastor's leadership that emphasizes support and participation in the Appeal. Set an example of generosity. As the chief advocate of the Appeal, the Pastor is essential for presenting it positively and enthusiastically. Parishioners need to know that the Pastor has given to the Appeal and that reaching the parish target is a high priority.**
  - Use homily messages – link the liturgical celebration to the mission of the Appeal and provide the spirituality of stewardship.
  - Send Letters from the Pastor - can be included with the Diocesan Appeal mailings
  - Public Gratitude – Thank the donors (in general) and volunteers publicly

- Speak honestly and enthusiastically about how the Appeal's funds benefit the Parish and the wider Church. Mention:
  - 1.How did your Parish use grants or funding received through the Appeal?
  - 2.How did the Parish use the rebates received previously from earlier Appeals?
  - 3.How do the Curial offices' services help support the Parish?
  - 4.Explain vividly how the Appeal affects real lives.
- Show the Appeal Video at Mass, council and committee meetings, school assemblies, and formation classes; link it on your parish website. The video demonstrates how the gift to the Diocesan Annual Appeal benefits your parish beyond its boundaries.
  - Can each person in the Church see the screen? Do you need to have more than one screen throughout the Church?
  - Does the audio work? Will everyone be able to hear the video? Is it possible to connect the audio through the Church's sound system? Make sure to do a test run before Mass.
  - Will the lighting be a problem? Sometimes, natural light can make it difficult to see a TV screen. Is there another option you could use (i.e., a larger screen or the several televisions throughout the Church)?
  - Is there a parishioner who works for an electronics store or is knowledgeable about video/television equipment? Is there an electronics store that might donate the use of a large screen? Use your resources!
  - Consider showing the video on a TV in the gathering space of your Church as parishioners walk in and during social events after Mass.
- Witness talks invite speakers to testify firsthand about the appeal's impact. Keep the presentations pithy and brief.
  - The Pastor or designated layperson presents them.
  - Encourage parishioners to reflect on others' needs and their ability to commit to the Diocesan Annual Appeal in preparation for Commitment Sunday.
  - Briefly explain the commitment process. Emphasize that a commitment can be payable over a period ending June 30.
  - Promote and encourage Guardian Angel Member Gifts. A Guardian Angel gift is a monthly amount electronically withdrawn from a parishioner's account for 12 months and continues until the supporter requests to end it.

- Publish announcements – use your bulletin and school newsletters to promote the Appeal. Samples are on the DAA website. Please consider adjusting the message to align with your Parish's culture and messaging needs.
- Use social media – Use apps to broadcast messages posted on your Flocknote, Facebook, and Instagram accounts. Check with Curia's Communication department if you have any questions.
- Utilize the marketing materials – Use the posters, banners, brochures, and case statements.
- Encourage 100% participation.
  1. Those previously given to the Appeal will most likely provide again – don't be shy about asking.
  2. Even when no donors have large gifts, the target can be reached if everyone gives a little.
  3. When a parishioner respectfully responds to the Appeal, even a \$0 Commitment, it signifies worthy parish membership.
  4. Consider asking parishioners to return the Appeal Commitment cards as a way to conduct an annual parish census. Parishes that have used this approach have a very high level of giving.

In Phase 1, we focus on promotion to achieve 100% participation among all parishioners. The goal is to encourage every Catholic household to make a stewardship gift to support the Diocesan works and ministries. This phase aims not to set a minimum household gift from the start of the

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#### OFFICE OF STEWARDSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS:

In the weeks leading up to the Appeal weekends, the S&D office works to raise awareness of the Appeal through several channels.

Catholic Life magazine will feature the ministries and good works made possible by the gifts to the Appeal and encourage people to make a gift.

Bishop Battersby sends a personal letter to all Catholic households, thanking active donors for their past support and encouraging them to continue their faithful stewardship, inviting inactive donors to commit. Pastors are also encouraged to submit a letter of their own. A custom-coded Commitment card is included in the mailing.

Word-of-mouth marketing is the most effective and cost-efficient way to spread the good news about those helped by the Appeal. DAA marketing efforts are limited to keeping costs low, so we rely on parish volunteers to tell their stories and personally invite participation.

The Diocesan Communication Office will enhance the Appeal's social media presence by reaching out, starting before the full launch, to increase our visibility, including the use of FlockNote, Facebook, and the MyParish App, among others.

Appeal through its end on June 30, but to motivate everyone to give their best efforts.

Materials supplied by the Stewardship & Development Office:

- Posters
- Video
- Parish-specific blank (In-pew) Commitment cards
- Initial mailing including pre-addressed Commitment cards, brochures, and a parish return envelope
- Special envelopes to send payments to The Office for Stewardship and Development
- This instruction manual. (Also, on the website [www.diolc.org/appeal/](http://www.diolc.org/appeal/))

## PHASE 2: OBTAIN THE COMMITMENT

The first pillar of stewardship is **Hospitality**—warmly inviting and lovingly welcoming. If we do not ask the people of God to pray with us and fail to make them feel welcomed upon arrival, it drastically reduces the chances of them returning or even staying to pray with us. If we are not praying together, how are we staying connected? **Prayer** is the second pillar of stewardship; we must develop a deeper relationship with Christ. We engage in a life of more in-depth inquiry and contemplation. Without a relationship with Christ, **Formation**—the third pillar of stewardship—cannot happen. Without formation, a person does not discern or accept the need to serve. The pinnacle of stewardship is **Service** to others—the fourth pillar. Gratitude forms the foundation of Christian stewardship. Christian stewardship involves our time invested in our God-given talents, which multiply our treasures—that is, our skills, experience, and wealth—so that we can offer and serve God, our Creator and Provider of all our gifts, with gratitude and humility.

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### COMMITMENT SUNDAY

Commitment Sunday offers a meaningful opportunity for parishioners to annually commit their support to the Diocese and the Universal Church by filling out the Diocesan Annual Appeal Commitment card. Pastors should discuss the Appeal during Mass. Additionally, if there is an after-Mass event, make Commitment cards available for parishioners to complete.

Deliver the "ask" this Sunday via homily and lay testimony. Recap the needs and stories from the prior week, direct requests for prayers, participate in this year's Appeal, and announce the parish target. Explain what your Parish will do with its rebate. Spend time teaching how to give, including giving through monthly installments.

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### BEST PRACTICES

1. During Homilies and Witness talks
  - a. The Diocesan Annual Appeal is an opportunity to give proportion to the many blessings received from God. Therefore, we do not apologize for the appeal; this is their opportunity to practice stewardship and participate in the broader Church.
  - b. Highlight the benefits of your Parish reaching your Appeal target and achieving a rebate.
  - c. Be enthusiastic and speak with conviction.
  - d. Encourage 100% participation by the Parish. (A \$1 or \$0 Commitment is better than no commitment.)
  - e. Give facts and concrete examples of how the Diocese supports your Parish. People are more likely to give if they see a connection between the Parish and the Diocese.

- f. Make brochures, blank Commitment cards, and pencils available to all present. Encourage parishioners who have not already done so to support the Appeal by completing Commitment cards and turning them into the collection. **Emphasize that if parishioners have already made a Commitment, ask them to fill out a card ONLY IF they are making an additional Commitment; they then need to indicate on the Commitment card that it is an additional Commitment.** (Commitment cards from parishioners who have already committed a gift and are not making a new Commitment cause Commitments to be recorded twice, resulting in double Commitment reminders, which frustrates and upsets all involved, especially the parishioners.)
- g. Tell parishioners they do not have to make an initial payment; monthly reminder statements are sent if they choose not to opt out.
- h. Promote the idea of committing over a period since it enables people to give more than they could with a one-time gift. (All payments postmarked on or before June 30 will be included in the current year's Appeal.)
- i. Communicate the convenience of paying Commitments (1) by credit card on the Diocesan website, (2) by credit card at the Diocesan Annual Appeal office, or (3) by Automatic Checking Payment. Encouraging Guardian Angel membership through electronic means provides year-round support and is the most effective investment method.
- j. Volunteers should be present to help distribute Commitment cards, answer questions, and collect Commitment cards and payments.

## 2. After-Mass

- a. Choose a convenient place for the event and provide light refreshments (if appropriate).
- b. Brochures and Commitment cards should be arranged on tables with pens and envelopes for parishioners to Commitment.
- c. Volunteers should be present to help distribute Commitment cards, answer questions, and collect Commitment cards and payments.
- d. Explain the procedure briefly for filling out the Commitment card.
- Have "in-pew" Commitment cards available. Use the "in-pew" Commitment card for bulletin announcements. Use cards provided by the Office for Stewardship and Development. These features include special 2D scan coding, enabling faster, more efficient, and more accurate processing. **Gifts received without the correct 2D code may experience processing delays of up to two weeks or more.**

- Set up a Stewardship Table: Set up a convenient and accessible station. Staff it with trained, friendly, and engaging personnel and have a plentiful supply of pens available. Remind people to fill out the card completely. Do not be afraid to include parish service opportunities. The three elements of Stewardship are Time, Talent, and Treasure.
- Return Commitments and gifts immediately—Honor your supporters. Do not create delays in processing their donations. Every gift is a sacrifice that could go elsewhere; acknowledge it as such. Immediately forwarding the gifts to the Office for Stewardship and Development ensures that their donations receive quick and timely acknowledgments. See Gift Processing for more information.
- Encourage 100% participation.

#### OFFICE FOR STEWARDSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS:

The Office for Stewardship and Development mails a brochure, a letter from the Bishop, and a personalized Commitment card to all registered parishioners and other supporters from the previous year. The card includes last year's gift information and a suggested gift amount for this year.

The Office for Stewardship and Development will publish an ad for the Diocesan Appeals Annual Report in the *Catholic Life* magazine.

The Office for Stewardship and Development will be sending timely acknowledgments of all gifts and Commitments. We will also begin sending out reminders for early supporters. We will continue to send reminders every month until the Commitment is fulfilled or through June 30, whichever comes first.

- Those who have previously given to the Appeal are most likely to give again – do not be shy about asking.
- No gift is too small or too large.
- When a parishioner respectfully responds to the Appeal, even a \$0 Commitment, it signifies good parish membership.
- Encourage parishioners to return the Appeal Commitment cards as a way to conduct an annual parish census. Parishes that have used this approach have a very high level of giving.
- Commitment Giving encourages more significant gifts and allows parishioners to budget their support monthly, concluding June 30. Installment payments on Commitments throughout the year encourage more sacrificial giving, whether by check, direct electronic payment from a parishioner's checking account, or credit card (VISA,

MasterCard, American Express, or Discover). REMINDER: A Commitment to the Diocesan Annual Appeal is not a legal debt, and a donor may cancel at any time by notifying, in writing, the Office for Stewardship and Development.

Stewardship is a way of life. Conceptually, Christian Stewardship progresses through four stages. These four stages are stages of maturation in our Christian life. These four stages, also known as the four ships of stewardship, are Leadership, Relationship, Discipleship, and Stewardship.

**Leadership** is responding to Christ's call to follow, leading us into closer communion with Him. This communion is the second ship, **Relationship**. A defining characteristic of relationships is the development of prayer life. As we discern through prayer and formation, we enter the third ship, Discipleship. **Discipleship** is the active and deliberate following of our Lord Jesus Christ, not asking what Jesus would do, but asking ourselves what Jesus does do. Almsgiving is the exemplification of Discipleship. A disciple gives of their Time, Talent, and Treasure generously and often; Discipleship is the necessary precursor of Christian Stewardship. **Stewardship** is our fourth ship; it is the disciple's full maturation. Christian Stewardship sacrificially gives of their Time, Talent, and Treasures. The hallmark of a Christian Steward is their Fasting. They are fasting from conveniences, treasures, and personal and worldly comforts to give back even more of their Time, Talent, and Treasures.

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## AMEN SUNDAY

Amen Sunday helps remind mass-attending parishioners of the support they need. This in-pew process will solicit parishioners who have not registered with the Parish and have not received the Appeal mailing. In addition, Amen Sunday is an excellent opportunity to ask a donor if they would like to become a registered parishioner. Many in the pew do not understand or even know the need to register.

The purpose of Amen Sunday is to generate gifts from parishioners who have not committed to the Appeal. Therefore, encourage parishioners to write something, even zero, on the Commitment card.

Following this in-pew solicitation process, if followed meticulously, will increase your chances of meeting or exceeding your goal. Unfortunately, only about 20% of parish households donate in the first mailing, even in the most mature appeals. Although parish members will receive the mailing, many will not respond to it because they are not interested in giving, and a significant number will ignore direct mail appeals. Also, others are not registered at their Parish and do not receive the mailing.

Completing the in-pew process as directed below is essential. It will succeed in obtaining Commitments from more families than just inviting them to take Commitment cards, envelop them home, or stop at a table. In addition, the in-pew process ensures that each parishioner who attends Mass understands the invitation they are considering and encourages them to commit.

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## BEST PRACTICES

- Ask donors who gave last year – if a person gave in the previous year but has not yet donated this year, they will most likely respond. So focus your energy here first to use your time best. A report to help identify these donors, called the LYBUNTS (Last Year But Unfortunately Not This Year) report, is available through a GivingTrend online reporting system.
- Next, focus on donors in recent years – if a person has contributed to the Appeal in the past few years but not last year or this one, reach out to re-establish a connection and ask for a gift this year. A SYBUNT (Some Year But Unfortunately Not This year) report is available on the GivingTrend online reporting system. Again, this helps ensure you make the best use of your time. In addition, a report to help identify these donors, the SYBUNTS report, is available through the online reporting system.
- Finally, reach out to everyone "In Pew Ask" – sometimes a person might not be registered at a parish but may attend Mass regularly or be active in other facets of parish life. Invite everyone to make a gift and take the opportunity to share the stories of people helped by the ministries, schools, and apostolates supported by the Appeal.
- Send follow-up mailings – use the sample LYBUNT and SYBUNT letters provided on the DAA website.
- Make phone calls to those who have given in the past but not yet this year.
- Share the printed materials and the video to help motivate people to make a gift as you conduct the follow-up.
- Utilize the online reporting system – Use GivingTrend to review reports, see how close you are to your goals, and generate a list of donors who have not yet made a gift to this year's Appeal.
- **Be Persistent—continue promoting the Appeal, following up with donors, and letting us know if we can help. Keep the Appeal in front of people with church bulletins, newsletters, announcements, or websites.** Utilize various media to showcase the applications of the funds generated by the Appeal.
- Track progress toward the target (target amount, Commitment, cash total, the number or percentage of parishioners committing).

#### IN PEW ASK

1. Provide brochures, blank Commitment cards, envelopes, and pens in the pews or hand them out at Mass.
2. Volunteers should be present to help answer questions and collect Commitment cards and payments.
3. Explain the procedure briefly for filling out the Commitment card.

4. The Pastor should update parishioners on the progress of the Diocesan Annual Appeal.
5. Inform parishioners that no gift is too small and that the parish goal is 100% participation.
6. Remind parishioners of the benefits of your Parish achieving the target and receiving a rebate. Talk about the project you have planned to fund with the rebate.
7. Ask parishioners to write the following on their Commitment card
  - a. If they are unable to commit, request a prayer Commitment
  - b. If they would like to Commitment - the amount of Commitment
8. Suppose parishioners have already committed; ask them not to complete a card unless they make an additional Commitment. In that case, they then need to indicate that it is another Commitment on the Commitment card. Commitment cards from parishioners who have already made a Commitment and are not making a new one cause double Commitment records, resulting in upset parishioners.
9. Ask the volunteers to collect the cards.
10. Volunteers should sort the cards after Mass.
11. Note any parishioners who are unable to donate. The Office for Stewardship and Development will record zero Commitments, so they will not receive follow-up mailings.

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#### OFFICE FOR STEWARDSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS:

The Office for Stewardship and Development will send out an acknowledgment for all Commitments. We also send thank you for all one-time gifts, the payments on Commitments, and the final and fulfilling payment of a Commitment.

**Initial Mailing:** A full roster mailing for parishes based on the direction of the pastor to the Stewardship office.

**Follow-up Mailing** (timed for Giving Tuesday) - A follow-up mailing encourages Commitment fulfillment, and a LYBUNT/SYBUNT/Never Ask is sent out for the calendar and tax year advantage.

**Holy Week** - an LYBUNT/SYBUNT mailing for parishes over their goal. Parishes that are under their goal, as well as all who have not yet supported the mission, will receive a complete mailing this year.

**Last week of May** - LYBUNT mailing for parishes over goal are given one more opportunity to participate for the year. For parishes under goal, all who have not yet supported the mission this year will receive a complete mailing.

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## TELEPHONE FOLLOW-UP

After a parish has Amen Sunday, consider conducting a phone follow-up of parishioners who have not responded to the Diocesan Annual Appeal.

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## ORGANIZATION PROCEDURES:

1. Review the parishioners who have not committed to the Diocesan Annual Appeal. The goal is to increase participation. Your highest success rate will be among parishioners who committed last year but have not done so this year. The next highest success rate will be among parishioners who have given something in the past three years. Try to reach as many of these parishioners as possible.
2. Recruit a telephone-calling team. There should be enough volunteers for 20-30 calls per person. Ideal telephone callers have outgoing personalities and are comfortable making calls.
3. Select a central location with multiple phone lines for calling, if possible. This will provide volunteer support and affirmation. Have resource people available to answer donor questions. If this is impossible, allow the volunteers to call from their homes.
4. Set a deadline for completing the work. Callers must return the names and notes to the Parish by a specified date.
5. If practical, let the volunteers select whom they will call.
6. Volunteers making the phone calls should be given Commitment cards with the name and phone number of the parishioner they are calling, which are already prefilled. Volunteers must call only those parishioners assigned to them. If a donor does not wish to make a gift, please write 'N/A' on the Commitment card and submit it with the other cards. We track these, which helps us in future solicitations.
7. Before beginning to make calls, the callers should have a brief training session and read the Case Statement so they can answer questions about the Appeal's allocation of funds.
8. Practice using the sample telephone script and suggestions on the following page.
9. Show consideration by not calling during early or late hours or during meal times (ideally, call between 7:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.).
10. Announce at the preceding Mass that there will be a telephone follow-up for the Appeal. An announcement at Mass will prepare parishioners for the calls. Also, remind parishioners that they can make a Commitment to the Diocesan Annual Appeal after Mass that day to avoid a call. Have blank Commitment cards and pens available.

11. Before a call, Prayer is the most effective action that a member of the telephone calling team can take.

#### *THINGS TO REMEMBER*

- **DECEMBER 31:** The Office for Stewardship and Development, for tax purposes, will only accept payments for the current tax year, **postmarked** on or before December 31. The following calendar year's activity is any payment postmarked after December 31 that we receive in our office. **In adherence to federal and state laws and best accounting practices, we will not backdate gift processing for any reason.**
- **JUNE 30:** The Diocesan Fiscal Year is July 1 through June 30, and the annual appeal runs concurrently. For adherence to responsible and ethical fiscal management, we will process gifts based on the date of the postmark. **In compliance with best accounting practices, we will not backdate gift processing for any reason.**
- **Shortfalls are to be paid via billing from the Temporalities office only.** The Parish will receive an invoice from the Finance Office (mailed out on August 15) and pay it then.

### PHASE 3: THANK THE DONORS

"Gratitude is the mother of all virtues," and we see this in our Holy Mother, the model Steward; she is grateful for the great things the Lord has done for her. A grateful steward also celebrates the gifts of their community. One does not light a lamp just to put it under a basket. Create opportunities to thank and honor those who have made a gift.

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#### BEST PRACTICES

- Say "thank you" often – as people turn in their Commitment cards and gifts, let them know you are grateful for those they help through the Appeal.
- Send personalized thank-you notes or calls – invite the Pastor to send personal thank-you notes or make telephone calls. Remember to focus not only on the amount but also on the sacrificial nature of the giving. Some may not give much, but their gift may be a greater percentage of their income than those who provide significant dollar amounts.
- Celebrate generosity – incorporate thanksgiving messages that celebrate faithful stewardship into the Faithful Prayers and ask the priest to include a "thank you" in his homily.
- Share your success – publish actual statistics and recognition of donors and volunteers in the weekly bulletin

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#### OFFICE OF STEWARDSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS:

Following the close of the appeal, the S&D office will be working to reconcile the final numbers of the appeal. It will issue the final rebate checks and forward to Temporalities any shortfalls.

Unless the donor opts out, the Office for Stewardship and Development sends an acknowledgment of gratitude for every gift received, initial Commitments and payments, all one-time gifts. We generate these letters monthly and mail them to the donor.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

All individuals involved in the Diocesan Annual Appeal are required to attend a Leadership Development session. The Office for Stewardship and Development holds training each year in several locations throughout the Diocese to instruct on the purpose and procedures of the Appeal. The day includes a Stewardship discussion and an opportunity to answer questions.

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### PASTOR, ASSOCIATE PASTOR, DEACON, & PASTORAL ASSOCIATE

Pastors, Associate Pastors, Deacons, and Pastoral Associates lead by their example, instruct, and motivate. They are essential to the success of the Diocesan Annual Appeal. Parishioners respond to their Pastor's spiritual direction with enthusiasm, leadership, and confidence.

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### PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Gives to the Diocesan Annual Appeal
2. Attends leadership development
3. Reads the Appeal materials thoroughly
4. Positively presents the goals and theme of the Appeal
5. Selects competent and enthusiastic lay leadership for the Appeal
6. Assists the Appeal leadership
7. Encourages parishioners to participate
8. Guides the Chairperson to form and carry out a plan, ensuring that every parishioner, whether they come to Mass or not, understands the Appeal's value and receives an invitation to participate
9. Promotes the Appeal positively at parish meetings
10. Speaks at Mass, reporting on progress toward reaching the target and thanking current participants
11. Meets with the Chairperson on at least a monthly basis to review the Diocesan Annual Appeal progress
12. Initiates follow-up procedures

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## PARISH APPEAL CHAIRPERSON

The chair should be a well-respected member of the parish community who supports the Diocesan Annual Appeal's goals. In addition to being familiar with the parish, the chair should present the Appeal enthusiastically to fellow parishioners.

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### PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Gives to the Diocesan Annual Appeal
2. Attend Leadership Development workshops
3. Assists the Pastor in carrying out the solicitation of parish members
4. Forms and carries out a plan, ensuring that every parishioner, whether they come to Mass or not, understands the appeal's value and receives an invitation to participate.
5. Enlists and trains volunteers to help carry out personal solicitations
6. Directs the distribution of Appeal materials
7. Audits GivingTrend reporting
8. Holds weekly report meetings for the volunteers
9. Promotes the Appeal positively at parish meetings
10. Speaks at Mass, along with the Pastor, reporting on progress toward reaching the target
11. Initiates follow-up procedures

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## APPEAL SECRETARY

The Appeal Secretary is the Diocesan Annual Appeal Coordinator in the Parish and is a vital link between the Parish and the Stewardship & Development Office. This person must know the Parish, be capable of keeping accurate records, and be enthusiastic about the Appeal.

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### PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Gives to the Diocesan Annual Appeal
2. Attends leadership development
3. Reads the Appeal materials thoroughly
4. Assists the Pastor and the Chairperson in carrying out the program of solicitation
5. Attends all DAA meetings
6. Maintain parish records
7. Updates the Google Forms for Parish Contact information; found via <http://appeal.dioc.org>
8. Contact the Office for Stewardship and Development with any questions.

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## VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are the foundation of the Diocesan Annual Appeal at the parish level. They should be knowledgeable and enthusiastically promote the Appeal's positive impact on parish life. There should be a minimum of one volunteer for every eight families in the Parish.

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### PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. Gives to the Diocesan Annual Appeal
2. Read the Appeal materials thoroughly
3. Visits and promotes the Appeal positively to other parishioners
4. Follow up with households they have contacted in a timely and appropriate manner
5. Attend weekly report meetings to share their progress and success
6. Helps distribute materials as necessary, possibly through parish mailings and after-Mass events
7. Contact parishioners who have not committed
8. Monitor payment towards Commitments, reminding those with phone calls who fall behind
9. Reports and turns in all Commitments and contributions to the Appeal Secretary

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## OFFICE FOR STEWARDSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT

The Office for Stewardship and Development supports the Parish efforts of the Diocesan Annual Appeal. Therefore, the office should be knowledgeable about the Appeal's impact on parish life so that, individually and as a team, we can enthusiastically promote and support parish efforts by providing training, guides, and best practices.

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### PRINCIPAL RESPONSIBILITIES:

1. The staff gives to the Diocesan Annual Appeal.
2. Read the Appeal materials thoroughly.
3. Visits and promotes the Appeal positively to others in the Curia, parishes, and the public.
4. Ensures the use of the best source data in the office for mailing and donor correspondence
5. Communicates always with donors, staff, and parishes about issues and opportunities as they develop
6. Distribute materials as necessary, possibly through parish mailings, meet with councils and committees, and attend after-mass events as requested.
7. Ensure timely mailings of acknowledgments and reminders.
8. Develop and distribute compelling and quality promotional materials
9. Educate and promote Stewardship as an encounter with Christ
10. Maintain a high level of parish and donor satisfaction as it pertains to processing and reporting of gifts

## EVANGELIZATION:

### USING NEWSLETTERS, BULLETINS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

Evangelization plays a vital role in the success of your parish efforts by utilizing the means available to stimulate donors to commit their financial support. It is crucial to help the donor connect the Appeal with the Church worldwide, the Diocese, and, more directly, your Parish by explaining how the Parish will use the funds and benefit the common good. Your chances of success improve when you follow the best practices outlined below.

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#### AMBO:

The Pastor or Chairperson of the Diocesan Annual Appeal should make announcements during September, October, and November to keep the parishioners abreast of progress toward reaching their goal. Progress reports are available on GivingTrend, which updates daily during the business week. Prepare and write the announcement to remain uniform and factual, no matter who makes it.

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#### BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Bulletins are an essential way to remind parishioners about the Appeal's message and the benefits it will bring to your Parish. Consider using bulletins to report progress, thank the parish Appeal leadership, and remind parishioners of your Parish's progress and the importance of reaching its target.

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#### MONTHLY NEWSLETTERS:

A newsletter is a great vehicle to convey the Appeal message in a permanent, printed form and continually form our parishioners into Christian Stewards. Repetition for emphasis is always valid. Studies have shown that we retain only 10% of what we hear, and a person needs to listen to a consistent message seven times before they begin to believe and internalize a message. Therefore, the newsletter provides an opportunity to reinforce the importance of time, talent, and treasure and to recognize your parish Appeal leaders.

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#### ANNOUNCEMENTS COULD INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

- Highlight an aspect of the case statement each weekend. Use a real-life example
- Remind parishioners of the importance of a rebate by highlighting what it will fund
- An update on the progress your Parish is making toward reaching your target
- Each week mentions the Appeal in the prayers of the faithful
- Ask parishioners to pray a Hail Mary for the success of the Appeal

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## VISUAL AIDS:

As a constant reminder of the Appeal and its importance to the greater Church and your Parish, it is essential that you:

- Display your posters in a prominent location. The Office for Stewardship and Development will have these available at the Diocesan Annual Appeal training workshops. In addition, you can order extras through the Office for Stewardship and Development.
- Show the Appeal video many times after the initial showing. Consider placing a small TV showing the video in the vestibule or another gathering location of the Church before and after Masses.
- Have brochures, In-Pew Commitment cards, envelopes, and pens always available.

## PARISH TARGETS

Each Parish's target is a fair share of the Diocesan Annual Appeal goal. The goal for the 2025 – 2026 Diocesan Annual Appeal is \$6,000,000.00.

Data from the Annual Reports for the 2021-2022, 2022-2023, and 2023-2024 fiscal years determines the goals.

- The number of envelope holders who give \$100 or more per year
- Parish adult envelope income,
- The amount of money a parish spends on K-12 Catholic school education that is separate from tuition income,
- The number of registered parish students enrolled in Catholic Schools

### TARGET FORMULA

#### VARIABLE A:

Line 16 (401): 3-Year Average of the adult envelope receipts for a parish as a percentage of the total 3-year average of adult envelope receipts for the Diocese for the 2021-2022, 2022-2023, and 2023-2024 fiscal years.

#### VARIABLE B:

The 3-Year Average number of envelope holders who contribute at least \$100.00 per year to a parish is a percentage of the total 3-Year Average number of envelope holders who give \$100.00 or more to the Diocese for the 2021-2022, 2022-2023, and 2023-2024 fiscal years.

#### VARIABLE C: SCHOOL CALCULATION 1:

Line 102B (School and Convent), 3-year average for a parish as a percentage of Line 102 for the 3-year average total for the Diocese. This percentage is then multiplied by \$700,000, resulting in C.

#### VARIABLE D: SCHOOL CALCULATION 2:

The total number of students enrolled in Catholic schools for the 2023-2024 school year, multiplied by \$100.00, equals D.

**Step 1.**  $A + B \times (\$6,000,000 (\$700,000 + (\text{School kids} \times 100))) = Y$  (Y = DAA Parish Target + Total School Credits)

**Step 2.**  $Y - (D + C) = \text{Parish Target}$

**Step 3.** For the 2025-26 Appeal year, adjustments and reallocations are necessary to ensure that no parish targets increase by more than 10%. Note Clarification: The exception to this

rule is the new parish and merge parish discounts. The DAA Committee will review this to see if any adjustments are necessary for the 2026-27 Appeal year.

## PARISH REBATES

Parishes receive 100% of all funds the Office of Stewardship and Development processes over the target for a parish. These Rebate checks are issued monthly, during the second week of the month, beginning in January, with a final reconciliation rebate in July. Parish rebates are not included in the envelope receipts used to calculate the target, nor are they used to derive the Cathedraticum, i.e., the Quota. Outstanding balances for money owed for any previous year's Appeals will reduce the rebate checks paid.

## PARISH RESPONSIBILITY

All parishes must meet the target assigned to them by June 30. Follow the procedures and best practices outlined in this manual to give your parish the best chance of raising the target funds. Beginning in August, the Diocese of La Crosse Finance Office will bill parishes monthly for the outstanding balance that does not meet their targets. Additionally, the Finance Office applies an interest charge at an annual rate of 6% to any outstanding balances that remain unpaid for more than 30 days. Please address these payments to the Diocesan Office for Temporalities in La Crosse for target shortfalls.

## TIMETABLE

### KICKOFF – STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY

September 2025 – October 2025

New: Parishes will have more flexibility to choose the weekend they prefer for their kickoff weekend. Best Practice

- Week 1 Stewardship /Announcement Weekend informs parishioners of the upcoming mailing.
- Week 2 Commitment Weekend – Priests to announce the Appeal and show a video
- Week 3 Amen Sunday – Thank all those who supported the Annual Appeal

### DECEMBER 2025

- December 31 – Year-end donations must be postmarked by December 31, 2025, to qualify for 2025 tax year credits.

**Gifts postmarked on or before December 31, 2025, will be included in the 2025 tax statement.** Please encourage your supporters to mail their payment before December 20, 2025. We suggest that you encourage your supporters to mail their payments before December 20, 2025, to ensure receipt at our office.

#### **SEND ALL PAYMENTS TO THE DIOCESAN ANNUAL APPEAL OFFICE.**

Send them directly to the address:

**Diocese of La Crosse**

**PO Box 4004**

**La Crosse, WI 54602-4004**

Encouraging Electronic Giving is an easier, efficient, and secure way to make timely gifts. For the tax year 2025, donors will have until 11:59 p.m. on December 31, 2025, to make last-minute gifts.

### MARCH 2026

- March 27 is the Holy Week Mailing for all parishes: LYBUNTS/SYBUNTS for those over goal, and any parish under goal will include LYBUNT SYBUNTS and New/Never-givers.

### MAY 2026

- Last week of May 2026 End of Year Mailing: All LYBUNTS and any parish under goal will include SYBUNTS and New/Never-givers.

### JANUARY 2026

- January 13, 2026 -The Office for Stewardship and Development will run the first "Parish Fund Progress" report from Raiser's Edge. This report will be the source for calculating rebates. The

following Friday, the Office for Stewardship and Development will mail rebate checks to the parishes with cash received exceeding their target.

- January 31, 2026 - The Office for Stewardship and Development mails tax acknowledgments to all donors who have not indicated they do not want tax statements. For single gifts of \$250.00 or less, parishioners can use their check stubs/receipts for tax purposes. If a donor does not receive a tax statement, they may request one by calling the Stewardship office at 608-791-2653.

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#### FEBRUARY 2026

- February 10 - The Office for Stewardship and Development calculates rebate checks to parishes that exceeded their target in cash. Checks will be mailed to parishes that same week.

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#### MARCH 2026

- March 10 - The Office for Stewardship and Development calculates rebate checks to parishes that exceeded their target in cash. Checks will be mailed to parishes that same week.
- March 23 – Holy Week mailing goes out

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#### APRIL 2026

- April 14 - The Office for Stewardship and Development calculates rebate checks to parishes that exceeded their target in cash. Checks will be mailed to parishes that same week.

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#### MAY 2026

- May 12- The Office for Stewardship and Development calculates rebate checks to parishes that exceeded their target in cash. Checks will be mailed to parishes that same week.
- May 22 – Final Mailing goes out

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#### JUNE 2026

- June 09 - The Office for Stewardship and Development calculates rebate checks to parishes that exceeded their target in cash. Checks will be mailed to parishes that same week.
- All postmarked mail on or before 6/30/2026 will be applied to this year's Appeal; all correspondence postmarked after 6/30/2026 will be used in the following year's Appeal.
- June 30 - The Diocesan Annual Appeal –closes

**Gifts postmarked on or before June 30, 2026, will be credited to the current year's Appeal.** To be fair to all parishes, *there will be no exceptions.* **We will apply any postmarked gifts after June 30, 2026, to the 2026-27 Annual Appeal.** We recommend mailing your payment by early June to ensure it reaches us on time. We will credit all online donations made before June 30, 2025, at 11:59 PM to the 2025-2026 Annual Appeal. Please direct donors to the online giving portal at <https://diolc.org/donate-online/>

**SEND ALL PAYMENTS TO THE DIOCESAN ANNUAL APPEAL OFFICE.**

**Send them to**

**Diocese of La Crosse  
PO Box 4004  
La Crosse, WI 54602-4004**

## REPORTS AND FORMS

### GIVINGTREND

GivingTrend (<https://diolc.givingtrend.org>) is the diocesan reporting subscription for authorized Diocesan Annual Appeal staff and volunteers. GivingTrend updates daily during the regular workweek with the previous business day's activities. Parish leadership is encouraged to use all data on the GivingTrend website to report and promote the Diocesan Annual Appeal. However, private and personal information is available on the site, so extreme care and judiciousness are required to protect our donors' dignity and data.

We have deployed scanning technology in our office. As a result, we have significantly reduced processing times, improved accuracy, and achieved lower processing costs by utilizing this technology. The software enables us to scan, process, and transmit remittance advice (Commitment cards) and checks electronically. The system uses Image Cash Letter technology to send and deposit the check images. The same technology stores use when they scan your check and give it back to you.

Parishes and donors have benefited from the faster process times, which are crucial for an accurate report of the Parish's progress. In addition, parishes can review the information, providing more fabulous parishioner service when a parishioner inquires about their gifts.

The Diocesan Annual Appeal uses standardized Commitment cards. All Commitment cards utilize 2D scan coding to match the donor to the Parish's annual appeal fund. If you are considering sending the parish appeal remittance advice directly from the Parish, don't hesitate to contact the Office for Stewardship and Development for document requirements. **Any remittance advice that does not comply with our standards will experience delays in processing, which may last up to 30 days, depending on the volume of gift processing the Office for Stewardship and Development encounters.**

If you still need to register for GivingTrend, please go to <http://appeal.diolc.org/> for a link to the registration form and training video.

## DIRECT MAIL PRE-PRINTED

(Sample below) Each mailed card will have a 2D scan code containing the Donor's Raisers Edge ID, the Parish ID, and other pertinent processing information. The parishioners' names and addresses will be personalized on each card.

### FRONT OF THE DIRECT MAIL CARD

#### <Parish Name>

<00000000-000-00>

Sample A. Sample

123 Any Street

Anytown, US 12345-6789

- ☐ Please send me information about Planned Giving.
- ☐ Please do not send reminders.
- ☐ Please do not send Acknowledgment/Thank You.
- ☐ Please do not send Tax Statements.
- ☐ This gift is anonymous.



<00000000>

- ☐ **One-Time Gift** (*Paid in Full*)
- ☐ **Monthly Commitment** (*Monthly until 6/30/2026*)
- ☐ **Guardian Angel Member Gift** (*Indefinite monthly withdrawal*)

Please select one of the following amounts

- |                                |                                |                                          |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$25            |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$200 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$75  | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: \$ _____ |

Total Amount Committed \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total Amount Enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

**Please make checks payable to the Diocesan Annual Appeal. Please do not send cash.**

(Note: See reverse side for Electronic Fund Transfers (EFT) and Credit Card payments information. Gift of Securities, Stock or Grain, please call Stewardship and Development Office 608-791-2653 or visit our website [diolc.org/stewardship](http://diolc.org/stewardship).)



### BACK OF THE DIRECT MAIL CARD

**For questions and comments, contact Sarah at 608-791-2653 or [skomperud@diolc.org](mailto:skomperud@diolc.org)**

- ☐ Guardian Angel Member, I authorize the Diocese of La Crosse to automatically withdraw from my checking account or debit my credit card account on the 15th of every month. Donations will continue indefinitely until notification to cancel is given to the Diocese of La Crosse.

- ☐ For Electronic Funds Transfer from a checking account, please enclose a voided check.

- ☐ Credit Card: ☐ VISA ☐ MASTERCARD ☐ DISCOVER ☐ AMERICAN EXPRESS

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

3-digit Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Cardholder Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

By signing, I authorize the Diocese of La Crosse to debit/charge my account as listed above.



Thank you for  
your support  
**GIVE ONLINE**

[diolc.org/donate-online](http://diolc.org/donate-online)

## "IN-PEW" COMMITMENT CARDS

(Sample below). This card will not contain personal information, but it will include necessary coding information in the 2D code, including the Parish ID. These are useful for "In Pew Asks," new parishioners who have misplaced their original Commitment card, visitors, and Amen Sundays. These cards have lines where people can put their name, address, and parish name. The Stewardship & Development Office will assign the account numbers for unregistered supporters using these Commitment cards. For all supporters who are also in your ParishSoft database, we will use their ParishSoft ID. Therefore, be sure they use a card with your parish name for proper credit. Donors should complete the card, specifically their name and address. A completed card is necessary so the correct Parish receives credit for the Commitment and payments and sends reminders to parishioners.

### FRONT OF THE IN PEW CARD

<Parish Name> <Parish city>

|            |           |                                                       |
|------------|-----------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| First Name | Last Name |                                                       |
| Address    |           | Apartment/Unit # <input type="checkbox"/> New Address |
| City       | State     | Zip                                                   |
| Telephone  | E-Mail    |                                                       |

- ☐ Please send me information about Planned Giving.
- ☐ Please do not send reminders.
- ☐ Please do not send Acknowledgment/Thank You.
- ☐ Please do not send Tax Statements.
- ☐ This gift is anonymous.



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- ☐ One-Time Gift (Commitment In Full)
- ☐ Monthly Commitment (Monthly until 6/30/2026)
- ☐ Guardian Angel Member Gift (Indefinite monthly withdrawal)

Please select one of the following amounts

- ☐ \$250 ☐ \$100 ☐ \$25
- ☐ \$200 ☐ \$75 ☐ Other: \$\_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount Commitment \$\_\_\_\_\_ Total Amount Enclosed \$\_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to the Diocesan Annual Appeal.  
Please do not send cash.

(Note: See reverse side for Electronic Fund Transfers (EFT) and Credit Card payments information. Gift of Securities, Stock or Grain, please call Stewardship and Development Office 608-791-2653 or visit our website [diolc.org/stewardship](http://diolc.org/stewardship).)



## BACK OF THE IN-PEW CARD

For questions and comments, contact Sarah at 608-791-2653 or [skomperud@diolc.org](mailto:skomperud@diolc.org)

☐ Guardian Angel Member, I authorize the Diocese of La Crosse to automatically withdraw from my checking account or debit my credit card account on the 15th of every month. Donations will continue indefinitely until notification to cancel is given to the Diocese of La Crosse.

☐ For Electronic Funds Transfer from a checking account, please enclose a voided check.

☐ Credit Card: ☐ VISA ☐ MASTERCARD ☐ DISCOVER ☐ AMERICAN EXPRESS

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

3-digit Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Cardholder Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

By signing, I authorize the Diocese of La Crosse to debit/charge my account as listed above.



Thank you for  
your support  
**GIVE ONLINE**  
[diolc.org/donate-online](https://diolc.org/donate-online)

## PARISH INFORMATION FORM

We use a Google Form to update and maintain the parish contact information for the Diocesan Annual Appeal. Complete the form report as soon as possible. Additionally, please submit any changes to your contact information to the Office for Stewardship and Development using this form.

## PROCESSING OF GIFTS

All mailings from the Office for Stewardship and Development include a return envelope, allowing parishioners to send their initial Commitment and contributions directly to the Office for Stewardship and Development for processing. Therefore, every week, parishes should send any funds they collect from parishioners to the Office for Stewardship and Development:

**Diocese of La Crosse**  
**Office for Stewardship and Development**  
**P.O. Box 4004**  
**La Crosse, WI 54602-4004**

*PLEASE DO NOT HOLD PAYMENTS OR COMMITMENTS.*

Keeping payments or Commitments at the Parish has a significant effect on the Parish's overall Appeal status because of delays in sending in payments and Commitments:

1. Delays our ability to promptly send monthly reminders or make ACH or credit card payments, reducing the probability of collecting all Commitments by the end of June.
2. Annoy the parishioners when they have made a payment; it does not reflect on their reminder, or because it has not cleared their bank account.
3. Increases the chances of lost or misplaced payments.
4. Hurts the potential for success by diminishing its momentum and credibility.

Checks should be made payable to the Diocese of La Crosse. However, the bank will accept checks made payable to the Diocesan Annual Appeal. **Remittance advice (Commitment card) should accompany all payments.**

*NOT ALL GIFTS HAVE COMMITMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THEM.*

Cash Gifts are one-time donations. Gift payments that match or exceed the total amount committed on the remittance advice are not considered committed gifts; these are one-time cash gifts. The only gifts for which the payment represents only a partial payment of the amount committed generate a Commitment. This accounting of Commitment gifts allows for greater transparency for open balances.

**For example:**

J. Smith sends a check for \$1,000, and the remittance advice (Commitment card) has \$1,000 written in the Commitment amount. This gift is a one-time cash gift and will not have a Commitment.

Meanwhile, J. Smith sent a check for \$100, and the remittance advice (Commitment card) had \$1,000 written in the Commitment amount. This gift has an open balance of \$900.00 and will have a Commitment.

Commitment gifts require multiple payments to fulfill.

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**WHAT TO DO WITH GIFTS AND COMMITMENTS RECEIVED AT THE PARISH**

Please proofread all remittance advice (Commitment cards). Ensure all lines are completed and legible, especially the parishioner's name, parish name, and credit card information. If they do not have remittance advice (Commitment card), please use one of the parishes' "in-pew" remittance advice.

1. Put the remittance advice on top of the corresponding payment.

**DO NOT SEND CASH**

Send remittance directly to The Office for Stewardship and Development:

Diocese of La Crosse  
P.O. Box 4004  
La Crosse, WI 54602-4004

2. **PLEASE DO NOT SEND CASH.** If a donor gives cash, deposit the cash into a parish account and issue a parish check for that amount. Please complete remittance advice (Commitment card) with the donor's name, amount donated, and ParishSoft ID, and include it with the check. If the check is for more than one donor, please specify this, complete a Commitment card for each, and include them with the check. Money orders are accepted.
3. Refer all gifts of stock, grains, or other property and commodities to the Director of Temporalities, James Reider, Finance Officer (608) 791-2668, [jreider@diolc.org](mailto:jreider@diolc.org).
4. The Office for Stewardship and Development sends reminders for unpaid Commitments to the parishioner monthly.

## ELECTRONIC PAYMENT OPTIONS

### GUARDIAN ANGEL MEMBER GIFT

A Guardian Angel Gift is a recurring monthly donation made by a member for consecutive months. Their donations automatically apply to the current year's appeal. Guardian Angel Gift payments are processed on the 15th of each month. Deductions will commence at the next transaction date and continue monthly until further notice is provided. A Guardian Angel member can give electronically by ACH from their checking account or using a debit/credit card.

### ELECTRONIC FUNDS TRANSFER (EFT)

To initiate EFT payments, provide the information requested on the back of the Commitment card (see sample card below), send a blank voided check with the Commitment card, and send both to the Office for Stewardship and Development. If a donor includes an initial payment, with a request for EFT of the remaining Commitment, send the Commitment card, voided check, and the initial payment to the Office for Stewardship and Development.

If parishioners wish to modify or stop any electronic payment, they must contact the Office for Stewardship and Development directly (Sarah Komperud at 608-791-2653 or [skomperud@diolc.org](mailto:skomperud@diolc.org)). To comply with federal banking regulations that govern electronic payments, modifications to EFT funds must be made in writing. Email is an acceptable format of "in writing."

### A SAMPLE OF THE BACK OF A COMMITMENT CARD:

**For questions and comments, contact Sarah at 608-791-2653 or [skomperud@diolc.org](mailto:skomperud@diolc.org)**

☐ Guardian Angel Member, I authorize the Diocese of La Crosse to automatically withdraw from my checking account or debit my credit card account on the 15th of every month. Donations will continue indefinitely until notification to cancel is given to the Diocese of La Crosse.

☐ For Electronic Funds Transfer from a checking account, please enclose a voided check.

☐ Credit Card: ☐ VISA ☐ MASTERCARD ☐ DISCOVER ☐ AMERICAN EXPRESS

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_

3-digit Security Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Exp. Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Cardholder Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

By signing, I authorize the Diocese of La Crosse to debit/charge my account as listed above.



Thank you for  
your support  
**GIVE ONLINE**  
[diolc.org/donate-online](http://diolc.org/donate-online)

### CREDIT CARD PAYMENT OPTION

Donors can make Credit Card payments in two ways:

1. By making the payment online.

Go to <https://diolc.org/donate-online/>. This online donation is probably the most convenient for the parishioner: there is nothing to mail or a card to fill out. Visit the website and complete the required fields.

2. By the Diocesan Annual Appeal Office.

Suppose the parishioner wants the Appeal Office to process their credit card payment. In that case, they must complete Section 2 under "Credit Card Information" on the back of the Commitment card (see the sample above) and mail it to the Office for Stewardship and Development. Again, an email address request is necessary for a donor to receive a receipt.

**Questions and Resources for help**

**If you have any questions, comments, or need additional help with the Annual Appeal, please call the Office for Stewardship and Development:**

Sarah Komperud – [skomperud@diolc.org](mailto:skomperud@diolc.org) – 608-791-2653

Jeff Reiter – [jreiter@diolc.org](mailto:jreiter@diolc.org)

## APPENDIX

### STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY

Stewardship Sunday is a day to announce the Diocesan Annual Appeal and your parish's efforts. This Sunday is also the appropriate time to announce your parish target for the Appeal and what project you will fund with your rebate.

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#### PROCEDURES:

1. Show the Diocesan Annual Appeal video. To make the video presentation successful, consider the following before showing:
  - a. Can each person in the Church see the screen? Do you need to have more than one screen throughout the Church?
  - b. Does the audio work? Will everyone be able to hear the video? Is it possible to connect the audio through the Church's sound system? Make sure to do a 'test run' before Mass.
  - c. Will the lighting be a problem? Sometimes, natural light can make it difficult to see a TV screen. Is there an alternative option you could use (e.g., a larger screen or multiple TVs throughout the Church)?
  - d. Is there a parishioner who works for an electronics store or is knowledgeable about video/TV equipment? Is there an electronics store that might donate the use of a large screen? Use your resources!
  - e. Consider showing the video on a TV in the lobby of your Church as parishioners walk in or during social events after Mass.
2. Give an oral presentation at the end of the liturgy.
  - f. They are presented by the Pastor or designated layperson.
  - g. Encourage parishioners to reflect on the needs of others and their ability to commit to the Diocesan Annual Appeal in preparation for Commitment Sunday.
  - h. Briefly explain the process for committing. Emphasize that a Commitment can be payable over a period ending June 30.

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## SAMPLE STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY PRESENTATION

**The script below exemplifies what might be shared with your parish community on Stewardship Sunday. The parish presenter should use it only to help in developing their presentation.**

Good evening/morning/ afternoon,

At this time each year, our attention is drawn to the needs of the broader church community, and we are asked to renew our commitment to support the Diocese with our time, talents, treasure, and prayers.

We are grateful for your past support and hope you will continue supporting the Diocesan Annual Appeal this year. This year, the Diocese has asked our Parish to contribute \$\_\_\_\_\_ as our portion of the Diocesan Annual Appeal goal of \_\_\_\_\_. This goal is easily attainable with everyone's participation, and we hope that all will participate. We ask that every household consider making a gift to the Appeal.

Jesus' words in John 20:21, "As the Father has sent me, so I send you," remind us of our shared mission. On the evening of Resurrection, Jesus gave His disciples peace and invited them to join His mission. This peace represents life and harmony with God, others, and creation. His mission is to proclaim the Kingdom of God and extend the Father's mercy and love to all.

Just as Christ was sent by the Father and sent His apostles, we are called to continue His work. The Church's mission is a continuation of Christ's, achieved through love. This love gives life, and the Church is sent to spread Christ's love so all may "have life and have it abundantly" (Jn 10:10).

The Diocesan Annual Appeal, "Fueling Missions of Hope," represents our shared commitment to this divine calling. It offers us a chance to engage actively in the Church's essential mission, spreading the hope of Christ to those in need across the Diocese of La Crosse.

Funds from the Annual Appeal support the care of our retired priests, who have dedicated their lives to service, and the formation of seminarians and deacon candidates preparing to begin their ministry to the faithful of our Diocese. The Annual Appeal also supports the Church's ministry to Hmong and Hispanic immigrants in our midst and enables the production of the TV Mass for those who are homebound due to age or health. The Appeal also supports Catholic education with direct subsidies and assistance to parishes and individuals.

These are just a few of the ministries supported by the Diocesan Annual Appeal. As you can see, they all share the goal of fostering abundant life in Christ—the life of the body and the life of the soul.

If we, as a parish, meet our goal, more funds will be available for our parish needs. All additional funds received after our target is met are refunded to our Parish. This year, we hope to fund \_\_\_\_\_ with our rebate, including [specific needs]. During this next week, please prayerfully consider making a gift. On commitment Sunday, we will ask you to make your Commitment during Mass. Please remember to pray for the success of the Diocesan Annual Appeal in our Parish.

## COMMITMENT SUNDAY

Commitment Sunday enables parishioners to renew their annual commitment to their Diocese and the Universal Church by completing the Diocesan Annual Appeal Commitment card. Pastors should speak about the Appeal during Mass. If there is an after-Mass event, make Commitment cards available for parishioners to complete.

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### PROCEDURES:

1. During Mass
  - a. Present the Diocesan Annual Appeal as an opportunity to give in proportion to the many blessings received from God. Do not apologize for the appeal; instead, show that this is their opportunity to practice stewardship and participate in the broader Church.
  - b. Highlight the benefits of your Parish reaching your Appeal target and achieving a rebate.
  - c. Be enthusiastic and speak with conviction.
  - d. Encourage 100% parish participation. (A \$1 or \$0 Commitment is better than no Commitment.)
  - e. Provide facts and concrete examples of how the diocese supports your Parish. People are more likely to give if they see a connection between the Parish and the diocese.
  - f. Make brochures, blank Commitment cards, and pencils available to all present. Encourage parishioners who have not already done so to support the appeal by completing Commitment cards and turning them in with the collection. **Emphasize that if parishioners have already committed, ASK THEM ONLY TO COMPLETE A CARD IF they make an additional Commitment; they then need to indicate on the Commitment card that it is an additional Commitment.** (Commitment cards from parishioners who have already committed and are not making an additional Commitment cause Commitments to be recorded twice by the Diocesan Annual Appeal Office, resulting in double Commitments and upset parishioners.)
  - g. Tell parishioners they do not have to make an initial payment; that statement will be mailed to them at the beginning of the month.
  - h. Promote the idea of committing over time since it enables people to give more than they could with a one-time gift. (Final payment needs to be made before June 30.)
  - i. Introduce the convenience of paying Commitments
    - i. By going on to the Diocesan website or parish website if the Parish requested a form from the Stewardship office and entering the Credit Card /EFT information
    - ii. By completing the back of the Commitment card with the credit card/EFT information, Volunteers should be present to help distribute Commitment cards, answer questions, and collect Commitment cards and payments.
2. After-Mass

- a. Choose a convenient place for the event and provide light refreshments (if appropriate).
- b. Brochures and Commitment cards should be arranged on tables with pens and envelopes for parishioners wishing to commit.
- c. Volunteers should be present to help distribute Commitment cards, answer questions, and collect Commitment cards and payments.
- d. Explain briefly the procedure for filling out the Commitment card.

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## SAMPLE COMMITMENT SUNDAY PRESENTATION

The script below exemplifies what might be shared with your parish community on Commitment Sunday. The parish presenter should use it only to help in developing their presentation.

Good evening/morning/afternoon,

Today, on this Commitment Sunday, we, as a diocese, our Pastor, and our Parish, are here to ask for your essential commitment to the Diocesan Annual Appeal. Our goal is to reach [specific target amount]. Your Commitment is a financial contribution and a symbol of your dedication to our greater Catholic Community.

"As your Pastor, I want to thank all of you who have given to this appeal in past years and have responded to a recent mailing from the diocese. I can assure you that the people served by diocesan ministries deeply appreciate the funds you gave."

As part of this unified community, each of us plays a crucial role in attaining the goal of 100% participation. Our collective effort is what makes our greater Catholic Community strong. I want to share why I support the Diocesan Annual Appeal and encourage you to join me in this vital endeavor.

God has blessed my family and me in many different ways. I have the responsibility and opportunity to share these blessings with others. By supporting the Diocesan Annual Appeal, we acknowledge the blessings bestowed upon us and take our part in sharing these gifts with those in need. This shared commitment strengthens our community and our faith.

When combined, our gifts have a profound impact on our local community. They support crucial initiatives, including Catholic Charities, the training of future priests, youth ministry, and children's religious education.

Your gift to the appeal not only helps this diocese but also supports eleven special collections that are no longer held in our parishes, including the Catholic Church's efforts in Latin America, Eastern Europe, and the Catholic Home Missions in the United States, among others. Your contribution is not just vital; it's invaluable to these missions and makes a significant difference in the lives of many.

The appeal also benefits the life of our Parish, as any amount raised above our target is returned to our Parish for its use. This year, we hope to utilize this money for [specific use of surplus funds, e.g., improving parish facilities, supporting local community initiatives, etc.].

If you brought your personal Commitment card, please verify that your information is correct and turn it in today.

We also have a Commitment card specific to our Parish available at the back of the Church if you need one.

If you have already committed, please do not fill out another card unless you make an additional Commitment.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts for your help and support of the Diocesan Annual Appeal. Your commitment is truly appreciated and makes a significant difference in our community.

## AMEN SUNDAY

Amen Sunday is a significant event in our parishes, serving a critical purpose. It is a day dedicated to encouraging gifts from parishioners who have not yet made a commitment to the Appeal. We kindly ask all parishioners to participate, even if it means writing a zero on the Commitment card.

For best results, please follow the in-pew solicitation process meticulously. Even in the most mature appeals, only about 20% of parish households donate in the first mailing. Although parish members will receive the mailing, many will not respond to it because they are not interested in giving, and a significant number will ignore direct mail appeals. Also, many others are not registered at their Parish and do not receive the mailing.

This method has proven to be the most effective in obtaining Commitments from families, rather than simply inviting them to take Commitment cards and envelopes home or stop by a table. The in-pew process ensures that each parishioner who attends Mass understands that they are being asked to consider committing at that time.

---

### PROCEDURES:

1. Provide brochures, blank Commitment cards, envelopes, and pens in the pews or hand them out at Mass.
2. Our dedicated volunteers play a crucial role in this process. They are here to assist, answer questions, and collect Commitment cards and payments. Their presence is invaluable and greatly appreciated.
3. Explain briefly the procedure for filling out the Commitment card.
4. The Pastor should update parishioners on the progress of the Diocesan Annual Appeal.
5. Remember, no gift is too large or too small. The Parish's goal is not just a financial target but a symbol of the collective commitment to the faith community. We aim for 100% participation, as each Commitment, no matter the amount, contributes to the vibrancy of our Parish.
6. Remind parishioners of the benefits of your Parish achieving the target and receiving a rebate. Talk about the project you have planned to fund with the rebate.
7. Ask parishioners to write the following on their Commitment card:
  - a. If they are unable to Commitment - 0
  - b. If they would like to Commitment - Amount of Commitment
8. If parishioners have already committed, ask them not to complete a card unless they are making an additional Commitment; they then need to indicate on the Commitment card that it is an additional Commitment. **Commitment cards from parishioners who have already made a Commitment and are not making an additional Commitment cause Commitments to be double-recorded by the Stewardship Office, resulting in upset parishioners.**
9. Ask the volunteers to collect the cards.
10. Send the collected Commitment cards to the Stewardship Office ASAP.

- a. Delays can cause shortened billing periods; the Appeal ends on June 30
- b. Delays in cashing checks from donors frustrate parishioners' bank reconciliations
- c. Delays could result in the parishioners receiving additional request mailings

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## SAMPLE AMEN SUNDAY PRESENTATION

**This script is an example of what might be shared with your parish community on Amen Sunday. The Pastor should use it only to help develop his presentation.**

As we consider our sacrificial gifts to the Diocesan Annual Appeal, let's remember that we have options. You can commit to a gift payable over several months, concluding on June 30. Alternatively, you can opt for a Guardian Angel gift over 12 months, which allows you to contribute in a manageable way over an extended period.

We are called to share our gifts to support the Church through baptism. We must first help our Parish, Diocese, and the Church worldwide. The Diocesan Annual Appeal is a very effective way to support ministries outside our parish boundaries and the services the diocese provides to our Parish.

As your Pastor, I want to thank all of you who have already given to the Diocesan Annual Appeal, as I also have. I can assure you that the funds you gave are deeply appreciated by the Parish, schools, and people served by the ministries supported throughout the diocese.

At this time, I ask the ushers to pass out the Commitment cards, envelopes, and pencils; even if you cannot donate today, you can still submit a Commitment, and the Stewardship office will send you a reminder. If you have already given or committed and do not wish to do so again, you do not need to take the materials from the ushers.

*(Pause and make sure that everyone has received the materials. Don't forget those standing or in the cry room, choir loft, etc. Once everyone has a Commitment card, continue with the script.)*

I will now lead you through the Commitment process to limit the time it takes.

Please print your first and last name on the front of the card where it says 'Your Name.' Then print your completed address on 'Address' and 'City, State, Zip.' If you have already committed to the Diocesan Annual Appeal, please do not fill out a card unless you want to make an additional Commitment (then indicate at the top of the card 'additional Commitment '). We respect your privacy and do not wish to double-record your Commitment.

You will notice that you can opt out of Reminders, Acknowledgements, and Tax statements. If you do not check these boxes, these will be sent to you automatically.

If you would like information on Wills and Estate Planning, please check the box to request the information, and the Stewardship office will send it to you.

*(Pause until about half of those participating are looking back at you.)*

To Commitment, check the "Monthly Commitment" box on the right-hand side of the "Total Commitment." If you are making an initial payment on your Commitment, fill in the "Total Amount

Enclosed. "You will receive a monthly reminder for your commitment until it is paid in full through June of next year.

For example, a gift of \$20 a month would be monthly until June of next year. The commitment must be paid in full by June 30.

*(Pause until about half of those participating are looking back at you.)*

The back of the Commitment card contains a series of electronic payment options. These are safe and secure methods of payment. Check the box in front of the option you prefer. If you are making an initial payment or just a Commitment at this time and want to receive monthly reminders, please place the initial payment and your Commitment card in the envelope and put it in the basket. We will ensure it is sent to the Stewardship office for processing.

*(Pause until about half of those participating are looking back at you.)*

"When you have completed your payment options, please sign your Commitment card on the front, date it, and fill in our parish name and city, as well as your email address if you have one."

*(Pause until about half of those participating are looking back at you.)*

"Last, there are a couple of boxes at the bottom of the right-hand side of the front of the Commitment card. Please check these boxes if you DO NOT want tax statements, reminders, acknowledgments, or thank you letters.

*(Pause until about half of those participating are looking back at you.)*

"For those of you with questions, we will have people available after Mass to answer them. For those of you who have completed your Commitment cards, please insert them into the envelope, seal it, and we will collect them at this time.

"I thank you for participating in the Diocesan Annual Appeal on behalf of Bishop Battersby, all whose lives are touched by its works, and myself.

May God bless you.

## TELEPHONE FOLLOW-UP

Following Amen Sunday, it is crucial to conduct a phone follow-up with parishioners who have not yet responded to the Diocesan Annual Appeal. This follow-up is critical for increasing participation and ensuring the appeal's success.

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### PROCEDURES:

1. Review the parishioners who have not committed to the Diocesan Annual Appeal. Your participation is crucial to our success. The goal is to increase participation, and your highest success rate will be among parishioners who committed last year but have not done so this year (LYBUNT). The next highest success rate will be among parishioners who have given something in the past three years (SYBUNT). Try to reach as many of these parishioners as possible.
2. It is essential to assemble a well-prepared and trained telephone-calling team. Each volunteer should be comfortable making calls and have an outgoing personality. The team should be large enough to handle 20-30 calls per person, ensuring that each parishioner is reached effectively.
3. If possible, select a central location with multiple telephone lines for calling. A central calling station will provide you with the necessary support and affirmation. Have resource people available to answer donor questions. If this is impossible, allow the volunteers to call from their homes.
4. Setting a deadline for completing the work is essential to promoting the efficiency of follow-up. Callers must return the names and notes to the Parish by a specified date, ensuring the follow-up process is completed promptly.
5. If practical, let the volunteers select whom they will call.
6. Volunteers making the phone calls should be given Commitment cards with the name and phone number of the parishioner to be called on them. Volunteers must call only those parishioners assigned to them. If a donor does not wish to make a gift, please write 'N/A' on the Commitment card and submit it with the other cards.
7. Before beginning to make calls, the callers should have a brief training session and read the Case Statement so they can answer questions about how Appeal funds will be spent.
8. Practice using the sample telephone script and suggestions on the following page.
9. Show consideration by not calling during early or late hours or during meal times (ideally, call between 7:00 p.m. and 8:30 p.m.). We respect your privacy and will ensure that our calls are made at a suitable time.

10. Announce at the preceding weekend Mass that there will be a telephone follow-up for the appeal. Announcing this will prepare parishioners for the calls. Also, remind parishioners that they can make a Commitment to the Diocesan Annual Appeal after Mass that day to avoid a call. Have blank Commitment cards and pens available.
11. Praying before a call is the most effective action that a member of the telephone calling team can take.

## FOLLOW-UP TELEPHONE PRACTICE:

1. Please introduce yourself and tell them you are calling for Father (PASTOR'S NAME) from (NAME OF PARISH) regarding the Diocesan Annual Appeal. Be sure to ask for the specific person named on your card.
2. If they are away, ask for the best time to call back. Some homes may require several callbacks, so don't be discouraged. Do not leave a message; 99% of the time, the call will not be returned.
3. Remember that, in most cases, the parishioners will already know the Diocesan Annual Appeal from previous years. Some people will be pleasantly surprised to learn that they can make a Commitment over the phone, and many will be grateful to the volunteer for calling with a friendly reminder. Tell them, "To reach our parish goal, Father hopes you will consider committing."
4. If they say they misplaced, lost, or did not receive a Commitment card, tell them, "I have a Commitment card in front of me. I can handle the details over the phone. Would you like to commit?"
5. If they seem reluctant, tell them, "The Parish receives all monies over the parish target of \$ \_\_\_\_\_. The rebate will be used for \_\_\_\_\_." Try to convince the people without pressure to commit to the Diocesan Annual Appeal. Be mindful that many commercial hard sales occur over the phone, and that some people are annoyed by any invasion of their privacy.
6. A husband or wife often says they must speak with their spouse before committing. Ask when you can call back for their decision. It is essential to set a specific time and date for the follow-up phone call and ensure that you call back at that time.
7. Taking good notes will help you make callbacks. Include in your notes the date of the call, who you spoke to, the date and time to call back, and brief details of the conversation.
8. If the person wants to commit, say:  
  
*\*(For those who did not Commit last year) "We ask for an average gift of \_\_\_\_ per family. What amount would you like to commit?" (Obtain a specific amount.)*  
  
*\*(For those who Committed last year) "Your Commitment last year was \$ \_\_\_\_\_, and we are asking parishioners to increase their Commitment by a minimum of 10%. What can I put you down for this year?" (Obtain a specific amount.)*
9. Thank them and say, "You can mail your gift to the Stewardship office, drop it in the collection next Sunday, and the Diocesan Annual Appeal Office will mail you a reminder the next month. Please make the check payable to the Diocese of La Crosse."