



Diocese of Erie

2024 Catholic Services Appeal

PARISH LEADERSHIP HANDBOOK



*“That they may all be
one, as you, Father, are
in me and I in you.”
John 17:21*

One Faith One Family





Diocese of Erie
2024 Catholic
Services Appeal

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2024 Appeal At-A-Glance

Important Dates

February 3/4, 2024 Promotion Weekend

February 10/11, 2024 Commitment Weekend

February 17/18, 2024 Follow-Up Weekend

Contacts



Questions about campaign logistics?

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2024 CSA Goal and Allocations

The Catholic Services Appeal helps the Diocese of Erie fulfill its mission to evangelize, educate, serve, proclaim the Word, and celebrate the sacraments throughout 13 counties in northwest Pennsylvania.

Donations to the CSA make the following work of the Gospel possible:

27% | Catholic Schools Office

The Catholic Schools Office in northwest Pennsylvania is dedicated to fostering academic excellence, leadership skills and personal growth among its students. With a strong grounding in Catholic mission and identity, the office ensures that students are educated in a manner that encourages them to embrace and serve God in all aspects of life.

22% | Catholic Charities

Catholic Charities, along with its affiliate agencies, dedicates itself to assisting the less fortunate. This commitment is a living embodiment of the Gospel call to serve others in the spirit of Christ, bringing justice and compassion to those in need.

16% | Office of Communications

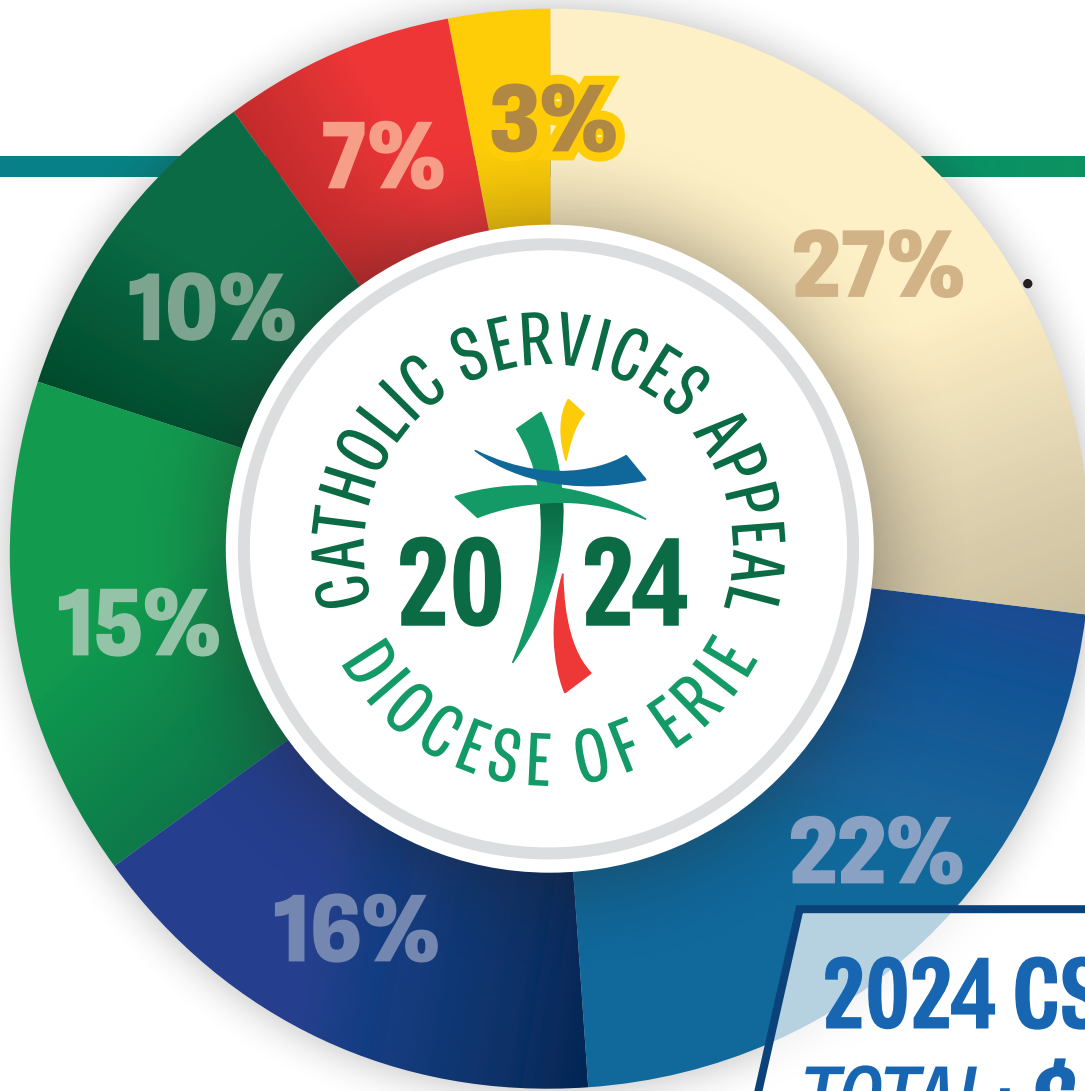
Initiated in 2004, *Faith* magazine remains a vital tool in the Diocese of Erie's commitment to invigorating the Catholic faith across all 13 counties of the diocese. This free publication, distributed four times a year to all registered parishioners, is complemented by a variety of digital media and social networking initiatives, all in line with the Gospel call to evangelize.

15% | Office of Faith Formation

The Office of Faith Formation aims to nurture a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ among individuals and parish faith formation leaders. Through a variety of resources and programs, the office addresses the spiritual needs of Catholics at all stages of life, guiding them to a more profound knowledge of their faith and relationship with Jesus Christ.

10% | Office of Clergy Services

The Office of Clergy Services emphasizes the importance of supporting vocations and adhering to Bishop Persico's guidance for continual prayer and support. From ordination through retirement, clergy members are provided with spiritual retreats, educational opportunities and fellowship experiences to aid in their ministerial duties throughout the diocese.



2024 CSA Goal
TOTAL: \$4,235,000

7% | Pastoral Services

Pastoral Services supports the Diocese of Erie's commitment to Pope Francis's call for outreach to the marginalized in society. This fund facilitates the church's engagement with hospitals, prisons and nursing homes. The Office for Divine Worship contributes to the organization of significant liturgical events, including the annual Chrism Mass.

3% | Diocesan and International Missions Office

Aligned with Pope Francis' dream of a missionary Church, the Diocesan and International Mission Office promotes active missionary engagement locally and throughout the world. The office coordinates missionary education and missionary opportunities in parishes and schools, and supports the Mission of Friendship outreach in Yucatán, México. It also helps the diocese fulfill its canonical responsibility to support the Catholic Church's evangelization outreach.

2024 Catholic Services Appeal Timeline

January

Planning

Decide your parish project if you have not already done so.

February 3/4

Promotion Weekend

- ◆ Hang posters, share bulletin announcement, include intention in Prayer of the Faithful and begin digital communications.
- ◆ A letter from the pastor, personalized pledge card and appeal brochure will be mailed by the diocese to all parishioners in early February.
- ◆ The February issue of *Faith* magazine focusing on what the CSA supports will also arrive in parishioner homes in early February.

February 10/11

Commitment Weekend

- ◆ Invite parishioners to make a commitment to the CSA.
- ◆ Show the CSA Video. If unable to show the CSA video, pastor or lay witness speakers should provide a brief testimony.
- ◆ Use the Pulpit Remarks and the Steps for a Successful In-Pew Process for guidance.
- ◆ Include provided insert and announcement in your bulletin.
- ◆ Include intention in Prayer of the Faithful and continue digital communications.

February 17/18

Follow-up Weekend

Share bulletin announcement, include intention in Prayer of the Faithful and continue to mention the CSA at all masses and in digital communications.

March 22

First CSA Input Deadline

Have all pledges/gifts updated in your database. Deadline dates can be found on the diocesan website.

Week of April 15

Parish Follow-Up Mailing

It is recommended that each parish conduct their own follow-up mailing to those who have not yet given to the CSA. Refer to the provided Follow-Up Ask Letters.

**Thank you and payment reminder mailings will be facilitated by the diocese.*

Best Practices for a Successful CSA Appeal

- ◆ The intentional support and leadership of pastors and parish leaders in conducting well-planned in-pew and direct mail follow-up processes are vital to the success of the CSA. In talking about the appeal from the pulpit over multiple weekends and being intentional with your direct-mail follow-up, you can educate on the ministries of the diocese that serve all our parishes and emphasize the importance of uniting for this important initiative.
- ◆ Promote the CSA using posters, brochures, CSA video, digital messaging, and bulletin insert.
- ◆ All parishes should have someone encourage CSA participation from the pulpit. Refer to the information in the CSA feature in the February 2024 issue of Faith magazine, the CSA brochure, and this Parish Leadership Handbook for talking points.
- ◆ The pages of this Parish Leadership Handbook include suggested text for letters and messaging to assist you in your CSA campaign. Feel free to adjust and personalize them for your own parish. We encourage you to take advantage of these important resources to assist you in effectively communicating the appeal. The examples include:
 - ▷ Sample Pulpit/Homily Remarks
 - ▷ Sample Bulletin Announcements
 - ▷ Sample Petitions for Prayer of the Faithful
 - ▷ Sample Follow Up Ask Letter
 - ▷ Sample Lapsed Donor (LYBUNT) Follow Up Letter
 - ▷ Sample Script for In Person/Phone Asks
- ◆ Pledge payments are to be made directly to the parish. Payment reminders will be sent by the Diocese to parishioners who make a pledge. Those who make a pledge will have the option to choose the frequency of their reminder; monthly, bi-monthly, or twice (May & November) during the ten-month pledge period.
- ◆ Parishes who identify a specific project for their CSA overage do well. Parishioners like to know how their CSA funds help their parish as well as the entire diocese.
- ◆ Follow-up is an essential and integral part of the appeal. In some cases, circumstances may prevent someone from making a gift on Commitment Weekend. It is important that every parishioner has the opportunity to give, and it may require making multiple requests to accomplish this.

Steps for a Successful In-Pew Process

1

STEP 1:

Prepare the church and volunteers for Commitment Weekend

- ◆ Place pledge envelopes and pencils at the ends of the pews or pass out to people as they enter the church. Have extras available.
- ◆ Do a video test run beforehand to test the volume and ensure everything is working properly.
- ◆ Plan and rehearse the pledge envelope collection process with ushers/volunteers and have a coordinator at the back of the church facilitating the collection process.

2

STEP 2:

Communicate the impact of gifts to the CSA

- ◆ Remember that the pastor's leadership is key to the process. His disposition sets the tone for your parishioners. It is important to remain positive and treat the process as a celebration.
- ◆ Extend heartfelt gratitude and thanks to all parishioners.
- ◆ Show the CSA Video. If unable to show the CSA video, pastor or lay witness speakers should provide a brief testimony.
- ◆ Share the amount of your parish goal.

3

STEP 3:

Pastor should lead parishioners by example during the in-pew solicitation

- ◆ Invite every family to consider supporting the vital services and programs provided by the diocese and the parish by making a commitment today.
- ◆ The pastor should let parishioners know that he is also making a commitment right now.
- ◆ Remind parishioners of the importance of their participation – no matter how small the gift.
- ◆ Ask them to consider making a pledge and including an initial payment with their pledge.
- ◆ Let them know of the option to receive a pledge reminder via e-mail which will also save on expenses.
- ◆ Be sure to explain that they have the option to choose how often they would like to get a reminder; monthly, bi-monthly, or twice during the ten-month period.
- ◆ Encourage parishioners to complete the envelopes in church. This will save the parish time and expense by not having to follow-up with those who do not complete an envelope today.
- ◆ Allow two to three minutes for parishioners to make their pledge/gift.
- ◆ Once again, extend heartfelt gratitude and thanks to all parishioners.

Recommendations for an Effective Follow-Up

Direct Mail Follow-Up

- ◆ Using mail is the most common form of follow-up.
- ◆ Consider using a segmented approach to make letters to parishioners more personalized. Past CSA data in the parish database is very helpful in assisting with segmentation to send different letters based on a person's giving history.
 - ▷ Consider segmenting your parishioners as follows:
 - Those who gave to the 2023 CSA.
 - Those who did not support the 2023 CSA but have given in prior years.
 - Those who have never made a gift to the CSA.
 - ▷ If you need assistance with segmenting your mailings, please contact Ministry Platform support.
- ◆ Personalized touches can make a big difference. The more personal a letter, the better chance it will be read, and a gift given.
 - ▷ Personalize each letter with a specific salutation, instead of 'Dear Parishioner.'
 - ▷ Make the letter about your parishioner and how your parishioner is a hero to your parish.
 - ▷ Underline and bold key ideas.
 - ▷ Consider adding a 'P.S.' [it captures the reader's attention]
 - ▷ Make the letter easy to read by using 12 Times New Roman font.
 - ▷ Consider adding a handwritten note. This makes the letter even more personal and is most effective on thank you letters.
 - ▷ Don't be afraid to ask for continued support. For example, invite them to support your mission in other areas of parish life.
- ◆ The first follow-up letter should be sent out the week of April 15th.
- ◆ A second letter to lapsed donors who still have not given is also recommended.

Phone Follow-Up

- ◆ Telephone contact is a very effective follow-up method.
- ◆ This method is particularly effective in reaching out to lapsed donors.
- ◆ Invite a group of parishioners to come to a room at the parish. We suggest doing it as a group as opposed to giving out lists for people to call at home. This is more effective and can be an enjoyable way of securing gifts for the CSA.
- ◆ Callers can record information from the phone call on a pledge envelope or card. The completed pledge envelope should be returned to the parish office for recording in the database.

Digital Communications Follow-Up

- ◆ Communicating with your parishioners using a digital format is now more important than ever.
- ◆ Consider utilizing the following means to communicate with your parishioners about the CSA:
 - ▷ Email/e-newsletter
 - ▷ Website
 - ▷ FB/other social media
 - ▷ Mention CSA during your live stream Masses

Sample Pulpit Remarks

For Promotion Sunday (February 3/4)

Every year, the bishop asks the faithful throughout the Diocese of Erie to support the Catholic Services Appeal (CSA), which is the annual fundraising campaign of the diocese. The CSA funds programs and ministries that are beyond the resources of any one parish. Every diocesan office and ministry supported by the CSA, such as the Catholic Schools Office, Office of Faith Formation, Catholic Charities, and Office of Communications, are available to assist in every area of the diocese. The CSA reminds us that we are all part of the same Catholic family and that the work of the diocese is the work of the Church. By joining together, we can accomplish more than any one parish can accomplish on its own.

Be on the lookout for your personal invitation in the mail. We invite you to bring your pledge card with you to Mass next Sunday. If you should happen to forget yours, pledge envelopes will be available. Please prayerfully consider making a gift to support the CSA.



For Commitment Sunday (February 10/11)

Good morning! (Good evening!) I would like to begin by thanking each one of you for your commitment to our parish and the mission of the Church. I am blessed and honored to serve such a vibrant community of faith and witness the actions of the Holy Spirit in our parish life.

Today, we celebrate Commitment Sunday for the Catholic Services Appeal. The Appeal's theme, *One Faith, One Family*, reminds us of Christ's prayer to the Father on the night before He died. He prayed "That they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you" (Jn 17:21). Each time we celebrate the Eucharist together, like today, we share in this unity as *One Faith, One Family*.

Just as Christ gives Himself to us in the Eucharist out of love, we are called to share His love with others. Each year, the Catholic Services Appeal allows us to join with Catholics from throughout the Diocese of Erie to evangelize, educate, serve, proclaim the Word, celebrate the sacraments and give hope to people in need. This year, our parish goal is **\$XX**. Our gifts to the CSA are put to work immediately to carry out the work of the Gospel.

(Share the CSA video at this time. If unable to do so, share a brief personal testimony of how you have witnessed/experienced the impact of the ministries or programs supported by the Appeal.)

The Church serves each of us and our support is essential in continuing God's work in our area. Every CSA donation also brings us closer to being able to complete our own parish project **[describe parish project]**. I ask for your support to share the love of Christ with a gift to the CSA.

I will be making my pledge today, and I invite each of you to join me, as a tangible sign of our unity as *One Faith, One Family*. No gift is too small, but please give as generously as you can.

There is a pledge envelope in the pew. I encourage you to take a few minutes to fill it out and place it in the collection basket when it comes around. *(To provide guidance on how to fill out pledge envelopes, see Step 3 of Steps for a Successful In-Pew Process.)*

Thank you for your time and generosity. Our gifts, combined with the gifts of all our brothers and sisters throughout our diocese, go a long way in supporting our Church.

Sample Bulletin Announcements

February 3/4 ♦ Promotion Weekend

The 2024 Catholic Services Appeal *One Faith, One Family* Commitment Sunday will be held next weekend in our parish. Please be on the lookout for your personal invitation in the mail. The CSA is an opportunity for Catholics throughout the diocese to unite in carrying out the work of the Gospel. The CSA reminds us that we are all part of the same Catholic family and that the work of the diocese is the work of the Church.

The Church serves each of us and our support is essential in continuing God's work in our area. Every CSA donation also brings us closer to being able to complete our own parish project [**describe parish project**]. No gift is too small, but please give as generously as you can.

February 10/11 ♦ Commitment Weekend

Today is Commitment Sunday for the 2024 Catholic Services Appeal *One Faith, One Family*. The CSA is essential to carrying out the Church's mission to evangelize, educate, serve, proclaim the Word, celebrate the sacraments, and provide hope to people in need, beyond what any parish can provide on its own.

As baptized Catholics, the Lord calls each one of us to share His love and build up His Church. Through our gifts to the CSA, we unite as *One Faith, One Family* in carrying out His life-giving mission. Thank you for your faithful generosity and prayers for the CSA.

February 17/18 ♦ Follow-Up Weekend

A sincere thank you to all who made a pledge and/or gift to the Catholic Services Appeal. United as *One Faith, One Family*, your faithful commitment allows us to live out the mission of the Church. As your pastor, I am inspired and grateful for your support.

Today our parish is at **XX%** percentage of goal. If you have not yet made a commitment, it is not too late. Just drop your pledge card or envelope marked 'CSA' in the collection basket or turn it in at the parish office. Your generosity is greatly appreciated. As a reminder, anything over goal will be used to **[describe parish project]**.

Alternate Ongoing Announcement

The CSA supports essential daily ministries and programs of the Catholic Church throughout our diocese that are only made possible thanks to your collective generosity. The CSA is essential to helping the Diocese of Erie fulfill its mission to evangelize, educate, serve, proclaim the Word, celebrate the sacraments, and provide hope to people in need, beyond what any parish can provide on its own.

Our parish goal this year is **\$XX**. We are currently at **\$XX**. Please join other Catholics from across the 13 counties of our diocese in supporting this important appeal that transforms lives throughout northwestern Pennsylvania. Your participation ensures the success of the CSA, supports our parish needs, and is a sign of our unity as *One Faith, One Family*.

Sample Petitions for Prayer of the Faithful

February 3/4 Promotion Weekend

For the success of the Catholic Services Appeal, that we may all do what we can to be generous with our gifts and respond in faith to sustain and build our local Church as *One Faith, One Family*. We pray to the Lord.

February 10/11 Commitment Weekend

For the success of the Catholic Services Appeal, that united as *One Faith, One Family*, we may all generously share our gifts to continue the mission of the Church in our parish and throughout the Diocese of Erie. We pray to the Lord.

Weeks Following Commitment Weekend

1. For those that have committed to serving our Church financially with their gifts to the Catholic Services Appeal. We pray to the Lord.
 2. For all the intentions that have been entrusted to us on the CSA *One Faith, One Family* pledge cards. We pray to the Lord.
 3. For our parish community, that we continue to use the gifts God has given us to serve our brothers and sisters in need as *One Faith, One Family*. We pray to the Lord.
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Suggested Ways to Honor Prayer Intentions

- ◆ Have pastor pray for the intentions individually in a special way.
- ◆ Conduct a special Holy Hour or Rosary dedicated to the prayer intentions.

Continue to use this petition during the Prayer of the Faithful for multiple weeks:
For all the intentions that have been entrusted to us on the CSA *One Faith, One Family* pledge cards. We pray to the Lord.

Sample Follow-Up Ask Letter

Dear _____,

During these past few weeks, our parish faith community has been actively raising funds to support the **Catholic Services Appeal** of the Diocese of Erie, which allows us a unique opportunity to manifest our unity in Christ as *One Faith, One Family* and live out the Church's mission to evangelize, educate, serve, proclaim the Word of God and celebrate the sacraments throughout northwest Pennsylvania.

The CSA supports essential daily ministries and programs of the Catholic Church throughout our diocese that are only made possible thanks to your collective generosity. These ministries include the Catholic Schools Office, Catholic Charities, the Office of Faith Formation, Clergy Services, the Office of Communications, our Diocesan and International Mission Office, and pastoral services to reach out beyond what our parish can provide.

In addition to all these diocesan ministries that are so essential to the life and work of the Church, the Catholic Services Appeal also provides for the specific needs of our parish, as **[Name of parish]** keeps 100% of gifts raised beyond our parish goal.

OPTIONAL: This year, gifts received beyond our parish goal will be used for [describe your parish project here].

If this letter and your gift have crossed in the mail, please accept my genuine thanks. If you have not yet had the opportunity to do so, I invite you to prayerfully consider how you are called to support the life-giving mission of the Church through a sacrificial gift to the CSA. Then, please complete and return the enclosed pledge envelope to your parish, in-person or by mail. Remember, every gift has impact. It is not how much we give, but how much love we put into our giving.

Thank you in advance for sharing your gifts and responding to the Lord's call as *One Faith, One Family*.

Gratefully in Christ,

Pastor Name

Pastor

P.S. I encourage you to send us your prayer intentions so that we may pray for them collectively during Mass in the upcoming weeks.

Sample Lapsed Donor (LYBUNT) Follow-Up Letter

Here is a proposed follow-up letter for people who have not made a pledge or gift to this year's CSA but have given to the CSA in other years. For assistance in creating your mailing list for this 'LYBUNT' follow up letter, please contact Ministry Platform support. ['LYBUNT' stands for 'last year but unfortunately not this']

Dear _____,

During these past few weeks, our parish faith community has been actively raising funds to support the **Catholic Services Appeal** of the Diocese of Erie, which allows us a unique opportunity to manifest our unity in Christ as *One Faith, One Family* and live out the Church's mission to evangelize, educate, serve, proclaim the Word of God and celebrate the sacraments throughout northwest Pennsylvania.

I hope you have had an opportunity to review the February issue of Faith magazine, CSA brochure, and diocesan website to learn about the ways the CSA supports essential daily ministries and programs of the Catholic Church throughout our diocese. This is only made possible thanks to your collective generosity. These ministries include the Catholic Schools Office, Catholic Charities, the Office of Faith Formation, Clergy Services, the Office of Communications, our Diocesan and International Mission Office, and pastoral services to reach out beyond what our parish can provide.

In addition to all these diocesan ministries that are so essential to the life and work of the Church, the Catholic Services Appeal also provides for the specific needs of our parish, as **[Name of parish]** keeps 100% of gifts raised beyond our parish goal.

OPTIONAL: This year, gifts received beyond our parish goal will be used for [describe your parish project here].

I am grateful for your past support of the CSA and invite you to prayerfully consider how you are called to support the life-giving mission of the Church through a sacrificial gift to this year's Appeal. Then, please complete and return the enclosed pledge envelope to your parish, in-person or by mail. Remember, every gift has impact. It is not how much we give, but how much love we put into our giving. If this letter and your gift have crossed in the mail, please accept my genuine thanks.

Thank you in advance for sharing your gifts and responding to the Lord's call as *One Faith, One Family*.

Gratefully in Christ,

Pastor Name

Pastor

P.S. I encourage you to send us your prayer intentions so that we may pray for them collectively during Mass in the upcoming weeks.

Sample Script for In Person/Phone Asks

Hello, may I speak with Mr./Mrs. **(name)**

Hello, **(Mr./Mrs./or first name)**, this is **(caller name)** and I am calling on behalf of **(Parish Name)**, Do you have a few minutes? I am a volunteer for this year's Catholic Services Appeal, and my goal is to encourage contributions from as many parishioners as possible. The appeal supports critical ministries and programs throughout our diocese that go beyond what our parishes can provide on their own. Every Catholic in our diocese and each one of our parishes is served by the CSA, and thousands throughout our diocese receive hope and healing thanks to the services and ministries supported by the CSA. Additionally, every dollar raised over our parish goal this year will go towards **(details of parish project.)**

Previous Donor

Last year you gave a very generous gift of **\$XX** to the appeal. Would you be able to increase your contribution or match what you gave last year?

Non-Donor

I noticed you have not responded to the appeal this year, and we are hoping we can count on your support. Every gift has impact, no matter how modest. Your gift is a sign of our unity as *One Faith, One Family*. Can we count on your support?

If Gift Is Secured

Thank you for your generosity. I will record your pledge and forward it to the parish office. You will receive a pledge reminder and reply envelope for your convenience. Thank you again for your time and for supporting the appeal.

Unable to Give

I am sorry you are not able to give at this time. Your prayers for the success of the appeal would be much appreciated. Thank you for your time.

Notes

Prayer for the Catholic Services Appeal

*God, loving Father,
in your every act of creation we see your love for us.
Strengthen us for our role in the work
of proclaiming the Gospel.
Open our hearts to listen to the needs
of our brothers and sisters.
Give us joyful spirits that invite others
to be drawn into relationship with you.
Lead us in our support of the mission of your Church,
and remind us always that what we do for the least
of our sisters and brothers, we do for you.
May we serve you in all things,
through Christ our Lord.*

Amen.



Need Assistance?

Please contact **Julia Cooney** at the Catholic Foundation
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