

2021 Catholic Services Appeal Forward Together

Bulletin Support Material

Information in this document can be used in your bulletin to build support for the CSA. It can be used in its entirety or sections can be taken and used as needed. Please use the paragraphs as written without changing any of the wording.

What is the Catholic Services Appeal?

1. Why does the Diocese of Erie conduct the Catholic Services Appeal?

Each year, the Bishop asks the faithful throughout the Diocese of Erie to support the Catholic Services Appeal (CSA), the annual fundraising campaign of the diocese. Gifts to the CSA are put to work immediately to support the ministries and day-to-day programs of the Catholic Church in our diocese and are not invested or reserved for future use.

2. Why is my gift needed to support the work 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. 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, the Office of Faith Formation, Catholic Charities, and the Office for the Protection of Children and Youth, are available to assist in every area of the diocese. By joining together, we can accomplish more than any one parish can accomplish on its own. As unique as each is, together our parishes make up our diocesan community.

3. But I already give to my parish, why also give to the CSA?

The ministry and programs of local parishes are very important. Diocesan leadership and expertise also play a role in our collective success. For example, parishes have access to resources and expertise in Catholic school administration, clergy support, social justice, diocesan wide evangelization, human resources, financial services, and facilities management through various offices at the diocesan level.

4. Are CSA funds used to pay legal fees or settlements from clergy sexual abuse?

No. The Catholic Services Appeal supports the mission of the Diocese of Erie to serve the people of northwest Pennsylvania. All CSA funds raised will be placed in a designated account and used exclusively and solely to support the programs and ministries of the diocese. No funds donated to the CSA have been or will be used to defray expenses related to clergy sexual misconduct issues.

5. What happens if my parish raises more than its goal?

If your parish collects funds beyond its diocesan goal, 100% of those funds are retained in the parish for its needs.

What Did My CSA Gift Make Possible in 2020?

Catholic Schools Office

- CSA funds were critical in assisting the Catholic Schools Office (CSO) as they worked to provide over 5,000 students across the diocese access to Catholic education.
- Last year, the Catholic Services Appeal supported the Bishop's Tuition Assistance Program which helped approximately 300 elementary students with tuition.
- Additionally, the CSA enables the Schools Office to provide direct support to administrators and teachers. The efforts involved in keeping the schools open during the pandemic were extraordinary. Examples include:
 - Developing and implementing a comprehensive "Return to School" planning guide for school administrators. This document helped school leaders maintain in-person instruction while meeting the requirements outlined by government officials.
 - Securing a national trauma expert and clinical counselor to provide training and support for teachers and parents as they helped students deal with the mental and emotional impact of the pandemic.
 - Serving as a support and resource for school leaders in complying with health and education guidelines along with successfully accessing funds available through the Paycheck Protection Program and the CARES Act.

Communications Office

- Much of the work in the Communications Office is supported by funds made available through the Catholic Services Appeal. The Communications Office is in service to all offices of the diocese, sharing information through their website, social media and newspapers around the diocese.
- Publications including *Faith* magazine, which dedicated two cover stories to the pandemic, remained in production, keeping parishioners informed and connected to each other.
- The weekly *Diocese of Erie-News* also never missed a beat, bringing local, regional, national and international news of interest to Catholics to anyone who subscribed to this weekly email, free of charge.
- Readers of both publications and users of the social media efforts that accompany them had easy access to letters from Bishop Persico, to online worship opportunities, to news about new COVID protocols as churches were

able to return to public worship, and to details about how Catholic schools were proceeding.

Catholic Foundation of Northwest Pennsylvania (CFNWPA)

- When stay-at-home orders were issued in March 2020 as a result of the pandemic, more than half of the parishes in the diocese did not have a tool in place for online giving. In service to donors and parishes, the CFNWPA quickly developed a giving platform on its website. Now making an offertory gift to any of the 96 parishes in the Diocese of Erie is fast, easy and secure – from home. Since March 2020, 52 parishes have benefited from this service at no cost to the parish, and more than 250 donors – some from out of state – regularly make offertory gifts using this site.
- The CFNWPA facilitates the annual #iGiveCatholic day of giving for organizations in the Diocese of Erie. In 2020, \$243,498 was raised through #iGiveCatholic to benefit 111 ministries as a result of giving from 1389 donors. Adding to the donations from individual donors, the Catholic Foundation staff secured event sponsorships for 31 generous cash prizes that were awarded to some of the participating organizations.
- Through endowments, the CFNWPA distributes grants to Catholic parishes, schools, ministries and organizations that build the mission of the Catholic Church in northwest Pennsylvania. Because of the financial uncertainty caused by the pandemic, annual distributions and grants from endowments were especially welcomed by beneficiaries last year. In 2020, over \$362,000 in grants and distributions from endowments in our Catholic Foundation helped our Catholic community to weather the financial storm brought on by COVID-19.

Faith Formation Office

- In January of 2020, the Office of Young Adult and Youth Ministry supplied 150 tickets to attend the Archdiocese of Washington's Rally for Life, and along with the Office of Social Justice and Life went with 100 students on two buses.
- Twenty young adults committed to Samuel Group, a seven-month journey for those ages 20 to 30 years who seriously desire to discern God's will for their lives. The Office of Young Adult and Youth Ministry look forward to bringing another group on in the summer of 2021.
- The Faith Formation team hosted livestreamed daily gatherings for several months so people could come together for discussion and prayer.
- They created a special #HolyWeekAtHome campaign, inviting people to participate in activities that would give them hope and purpose in the earliest days of the pandemic.
- The team launched *Simply Celebrating*, an Advent and Christmas micro-site which offered resources to be enjoyed on a weekly basis. Complete with themes,

prayers and activities designed to infuse spiritual meaning into celebrations at home in a year like no other.

Office for the Protection of Children and Youth

- The Safe Environment Training for Youth was modified to include a newly developed remote training session as an option for those schools and parish formation programs that were utilizing remote learning due to COVID precautions.
- Almost 800 volunteers applied and received clearances through the Office for the Protection of Children and Youth.
- Assists schools and parishes as a resource for questions related to the clearance renewal process.