

My dear friends in Christ,

Today there is little doubt that our faith has never felt more meaningful, our prayer has never been more purposeful, and our role in contributing to the greater good never more clear. Challenges today seem to come from every corner of life with an overlay of abundant need. However, our calling is great and purposeful: “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

Our Holy Father Pope Francis writes, *“An evangelizing community gets involved by word and by deed in people’s daily lives.”* Even during this difficult time there are ways we can be active disciples and instruments of God’s love. Serving as a volunteer is essential but certainly far more complicated right now. Simple care calls to housebound friends or neighbors, assistance with groceries and pharmacy needs, providing items for the local food pantry, and serving as parish volunteer to aid with safe weekend Mass attendance for fellow parishioners all make a difference. Spreading the joy of the Gospel can happen most effectively one person at a time; it starts with you and with me!

Another very meaningful way to be an instrument of God’s love, which has a very real and broad impact, is to share our resources with those who have little or nothing at all. This can be done by making a monetary gift to help support the annual Diocesan Appeal (formerly The Bishop’s Appeal) which has provided the major financial resources which enable some 30 ministries of the Church to serve and to care for the spiritual and temporal needs of others. And how rewarding to know that your Diocesan Appeal gift impacts beyond your local parish boundary to include individuals & families throughout our 14 county, 126 parish Diocese!

It is our collective responsibility to ensure that our parishes and the Diocese as a whole are robust in our ability to meet the needs of our faith community. Together, we empower individuals and families toward discipleship. Please consider your gift to the Diocesan Appeal, and your weekly parish offertory, to be among your highest charitable priorities as your Catholic Church strives to serve its mission and your family for a lifetime of generations.

Thank you and may God bless you and yours.

Edward B. Scharfenberger, D.D.
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