

Bishop's Appeal Homily 2019

I'm going to begin my appeal for the Annual Catholic Appeal in what may appear to be in left field by asking, "How did Old Testament Joseph, whose brothers left him in a pit for dead, who was sold in Egypt in a slave, but who eventually won the favor of Pharaoh, and flourished in the midst of calamity? We don't have to speculate. Some twenty years later the roles were reversed, Joseph as the strong one and his brothers the weak ones. They came to him in dread. They feared he would settle the score and throw them into a pit of his own making. But Joseph didn't. And in his explanation we find his inspiration:

Even though you meant to harm me, God meant it for good, to achieve his present end, the survival of many people.
(GEN 50:20)

In God's hands, intended evil becomes eventual good. The eventual good that will come from this intended evil of the crisis in the Church is this. While the limelight is shining on the Church, and well it should be, The Church will pave the way to end the societal epidemic of the sexual abuse of minors. USA Today's February 22 article, "How the crisis of Catholic priests sexually abusing minors mirrors society at large" fleshes out

this point. Since the 2002 Dallas Charter, there has been only .004 percent of credible cases reported. For our Diocese, that was two, two in 17 years. Enforcing the Dallas charter is funded in part by the Annual Catholic Appeal.

Every year since I've been at St. Mary of the Lakes, the Annual Catholic has met with generous success thanks to you. Last year was no exception. Even with the Faith to Move Mountains campaign, St. Mary of the Lakes has raised, not pledged, but raised well over 111% of our Annual Catholic Appeal goal of 139,600. Last year, St. Mary of the Lakes raised \$155,405 for a rebate of \$29,140.

Our goal this year is again, \$139,600 toward a diocesan goal of \$7 million. A parishioner was confused by the bulletin announcement. SML's parish goal is \$139,600 toward a diocesan goal of \$7 million.

With settlements in the current church crisis looming, this \$7 million is restricted, meaning, it cannot be used for any other purpose, but to fund the corporal and spiritual works of mercy that are highlighted in the video we will watch in a minute. Any settlement money needed will come from insurance (priests have malpractice insurance just like other professionals) and the sale of property. For example, if a

parish were to close and the property were to be sold, that money could be used toward settlements.

However, given the current crisis, I know some have already decided they won't be giving this year. And yet, the demand from those on the receiving end of our corporal and spiritual works will not be any less. And to quote today's gospel, the corporal and spiritual works of mercy performed by the Church is by and large, the good fruit that comes from the Church's tree. We will still have as many poor to feed, clothe and shelter, still have as many adults and children to teach, still have as many who are sick, in prison or shut in who need our hands to hold. The ACA funds our Office of Child and Youth Protection, which has been in existence since the Dallas Charter was enacted in 2002. As I said earlier, the efforts of this office has brought our credible allegations to an incredible low of .004 percent, or two cases in 17 years. And SML is a poster parish for compliance. Our practices and policies comply 100 percent of the time every year.

So if one were to decide not to give, then starting in left field with the example of Joseph hits closer to home plate. Remember just a few generations after Joseph, Pharaoh forgot Joseph, enslaved Joseph's Israelite descendants, decided to

provide no straw, but also expected the tally of bricks to be not one brick less.

Those of us who believe the corporal and spiritual works of the Church are the Church's good fruit, and are worth doing well will continue to give. We will even dig a little deeper to make sure the Church's corporal and spiritual works have the resources needed.

So let's take a minute to watch this year's video.

SHOW VIDEO

While some pastors shutter at the thoughts of the Annual Catholic Appeal, pastors like me who lead generous parishioners like you do not see this as a burden, but yet another opportunity to build the kingdom of God on earth and to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ, in good times and in bad.

I'd ask each of you to take a pledge form and a pencil in the pew and I will walk you through making a pledge at this time.

Ushers, please collect the pledge cards.

Thank you for your kind attention and for joining me in making a pledge to this year's Annual Catholic Appeal.