

## THE ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL - WE'RE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER!

Next weekend, you'll be asked to make a pledge for the coming year to the Annual Catholic Appeal which helps to fund many of the services provided for us by the Archdiocese as well as programs that assist the neediest of our brothers and sisters in parishes throughout Cook and Lake counties.

For the past two years, we were given a "pass" on promoting the Appeal during weekend Masses—two years ago because we were just beginning the *To Teach Who Christ Is* capital campaign and then again last year when the impending closure of our school made the promotion of the Appeal seem like not such a good idea. But even without the in-pew appeal in church, many generous parishioners gave directly last year and contributed over 70% of the goal set for us by the Archdiocese.

But this year, we are once again being asked to request your help during the homily time at all the Masses next weekend. Those of you who have contributed in the past have already received a direct mail pledge request, but next weekend everyone will be asked to consider helping in some way, large or small, with this appeal, begun many years ago by Cardinal Bernardin.

When Cardinal Bernardin inaugurated this program back in the 1990's, his intention was to emphasize the truth I've included in the title of this article: *we're all in this together*. Cardinal Bernardin was painfully aware of something that, in many cases, still exists today; it's called parochialism, the feeling among some Catholics (and some pastors!) that a parish is a law unto itself, an island with no connection to, or responsibility for, any other parish. But the simple fact is that we are part of something bigger—both the Church of the Archdiocese of Chicago and the Universal Church. Many second collections throughout the year—Peter's Pence and Mission Sunday being two examples—remind us of these connections. The Annual Catholic Appeal focuses on our connection to the Archdiocese and our responsibility to support one another in this "local Church."

The pledges or gifts you make to this appeal benefit our parish in many ways. For one thing, every dollar contributed over and above our archdiocesan goal remains here. But we also benefit from the services provided by offices of the Archdiocese, including one known as Facilities and Construction which is providing us with guidance and oversight as we begin two of our planned capital projects—the creation of handicapped accessible meeting space and the refurbishment of the washrooms in the school. You provided the funds for that work with your pledges to *To Teach Who Christ Is*, but the Archdiocese in turn provides us—at no additional cost—the expertise needed to begin those projects and complete them in cost-effective and professional way.

So many of you were exceptionally generous in our previous capital campaigns in the past, especially *To Teach Who Christ Is*, and all those contributions have allowed St. Joseph to remain a strong and vibrant parish. Next weekend, please do whatever you can to contribute to the support of the Church in the Archdiocese of Chicago and to demonstrate to all our fellow parishioners throughout Cook and Lake counties that we are indeed *all in this together*.

Fr. Bob