

Samples: General Intercessions

Some suggested intentions to be used during weekends leading up to Commitment Sunday.

1. **That we grow as a community of believers to become of “One Heart and Mind” to assist in carrying on the work of the Church, we pray . . .**
2. **That God may bless our parish and diocese, strengthen our faith and grant us the spirit of Christian stewardship by opening our hearts to the Catholic Services Appeal, we pray . . .**
3. **That we may clearly see how the lives of others are made better by the services funded by the Catholic Services Appeal, we pray. . .**
4. **That the Holy Spirit may continue to guide the work of the Church in our Diocese and that Christ’s message of love may be realized by all, we pray . . .**
5. **That each one of us will answer the call to bring forth gifts to the Catholic Services Appeal that support both our Diocese and parish, we pray...**

For Commitment Sunday weekend:

6. **That the hearts of all those gathered here may be touched by the Word of God as we prayerfully consider our response to the Catholic Services Appeal, we pray . . .**
7. **That we may see the work of the Catholic Services Appeal as an opportunity to extend ourselves in love and service beyond the boundaries of _____ parish, we pray...**
8. **For all those in need, that they may find guidance and assistance from the many services available through our generous support of the Catholic Services Appeal, we pray...**
9. **In thanksgiving for all within our parish family who have previously supported the appeal and for those who will graciously support this year’s appeal, we pray...**
10. **That when we help others by participating in the 2010 Catholic Services Appeal, we give thanks to God for the gifts and blessings we have received, we pray . . .**
11. **For all members of [YOUR PARISH], and the members of our Diocesan family, may we all take comfort in knowing that a gift from one will become a gift to many, we pray...**

Intercessions to be used during follow-up weekends:

12. **That we grow as a community of believers to become of “One Heart and Mind” to assist in carrying on the work of the Church, we pray . . .**
13. **For those who made commitments to pray and fast during this Lenten Season, we pray . . .**
14. **For all who financially supported the 2010 Catholic Services Appeal, that their generosity may be rewarded with the growth, love and joy that giving generously brings, we pray. . .**
15. **That those who have not had an opportunity to make a decision about the Catholic Services Appeal will listen to their hearts and make a generous commitment for the greater work of our Diocesan Church, we pray. . .**

Bulletin and/or Pulpit Announcements: We strongly encourage parishes to repeatedly mention the Catholic Services Appeal prior to and after Commitment Sunday.

For the Weekend of Jan. 30/31

- On Weekend of February 14th, everyone will have an opportunity to make their gift to the 2010 Catholic Services Appeal. Our parish goal is \$_____, and we would like to see all members of our parish make a gift to support this appeal. The theme of this year's appeal is "Of One Heart and Mind". It is when our Church joins together to further the mission and ministry of our Diocesan Church that we truly are witnesses to Christ. We will be reminded over the next few weeks why it is important for us to support the CSA. There will be good information shared over this time that we ask you to reflect upon. All of it will help you better understand why the appeal is conducted each year, what this appeal supports and why you should give. Please take the time to prayerfully consider what you are able to give to support the CSA.

For the Weekend of February 6, 7

- Next Sunday, February 14th will be Commitment Sunday for the 2010 Catholic Services Appeal. Hopefully you have received and have read the information in the special CSA issue of *Faith Magazine*. We ask all parishioners to review and reflect upon all CSA information being shared during this time. In addition to the support provided to our diocesan Church, the CSA will enable our parish to _____. Be prepared to make your pledge next Sunday, and please be as generous as you can. So much is done by our Church because of your gifts to the CSA. It is when the members of our Church are of One Mind and Heart that we truly join our hands together to help accomplish God's work.

For the Weekend of February 13, 14

- Today is Commitment Weekend for the Catholic Services Appeal. Hopefully everyone has taken time to reflect upon all the information that has been shared the past few weeks. We hope that all parishioners will prayerfully consider the opportunity today to offer a gift to this appeal. We would like everyone to participate and help our parish reach its financial goal of \$_____. It is also important to remember that any amount raised above our goal stays in this parish. Thank you for being a part of the Catholic Services Appeal.

For the Weekend of February 20/21 and February 27/28

- The 2010 Catholic Services Appeal is off to a great start. To date, we have received ____ gifts/pledges totaling \$_____ towards this year's Catholic Services Appeal. But we need all of you to contribute. If you have not yet made a gift to the CSA, we invite you to do so today. Every dollar raised to make our goal supports important Diocesan services and every dollar raised over our goal will be kept in the parish to help us _____.

Additional Message to use during March, April and May

- The opportunity still exists for those who have not yet responded to the 2010 CSA. A gift to the CSA- no matter how great or small – can go a long way. A pledge of \$5 or \$10 a month can add up. Even a one-time gift is helpful to the cause. (It can help our parish makes its goal.) or (Since our parish has made its goal, your gift will stay in the parish to be used for _____. To those who have contributed, we are most grateful. For those who still owe a balance on your pledge, please be sure to fulfill it to ensure we are able to do God's work here in (parish name) and throughout the Diocese.

For use when your parish reaches its goal

- Thank you to all who responded so generously to the Catholic Services Appeal. The 2010 CSA has been a success because of you. Your support is greatly appreciated in both your parish and your Diocesan Church. It is when we grow as a community of believers to become of "One Heart and Mind", as we have during the 2010 CSA, that we help assure that those who provide services through the Diocesan Church will be able to continue Christ's work here in the Diocese of Erie. For those who have not yet contributed to the 2010 CSA, know there is still time to join with those who have given.

CSA Bulletin Update: To update parishioners on the progress of the CSA in the bulletin.

Results to Date for the Catholic Services Appeal:

Number of Families: _____

Parish Goal: \$ _____

Donor Goal: 100 % participation

Number of Gifts: _____

Actual to Date: \$ _____

Amount needed for Goal \$ _____

Monthly “Where your CSA Dollars Go” Bulletin Reminders

Do your parishioners ask questions about the financial support that goes to “the Diocese”? More information and consistent education are keys to helping your parishioners answer this question. **All parishes are strongly encouraged to publish these notices each month in their bulletins to help better educate your parishioners about the services that are supported through the CSA.** Please use these monthly Bulletin updates between March 2010 and January 2011:

March: Our Church’s future is dependent upon young people growing in their faith. There will again be an opportunity for this to happen for those involved in the annual Middle School Youth Rally on April 25th in Grove City. The Diocesan Office of Youth and Young Adult Ministry organizes this rally for young people to experience fun, fellowship and faith in a bold and positive way. Those in this office also work to support parish youth ministry efforts. The Youth Office staff offers consultation, resources and services to parishes beginning a youth ministry program, as well as to those with a more developed ministry to youth. This office is funded in part through your gifts to the Catholic Services Appeal.

April: Spring is in the air. Love is all around us. What better time to see if your parish is participating in a new Diocesan program offered through the Family Life Office. The program is called “Ten Great Dates” and it is a simple and easy program for couples coordinated through local parishes. The program helps to strengthen their marriages by arranging set times for husbands and wives to spend time with one another. A series of ten dates are scheduled over a twenty week period. If you would like more information about “Ten Great Dates”, contact Ann Badach in the Family Life Office at 814-824-1261. The Family Life Office is funded in part by the Catholic Services Appeal.

May: Multiple ordinations are taking place in our diocese. One man was ordained a transitional deacon last month. On May 21st, seven men will be ordained to the permanent diaconate. And on Friday June 11th, the culmination of many years of seminary education will occur for five men as they will be ordained as priests, serving to shepherd God’s flock. They all join others ordained before them who now serve night and day, responding to the needs of their people through their presence at daily Mass, weddings, funerals, visiting the sick, visiting the homes and hospitals of the ill and elderly, all while providing spiritual guidance to people of all ages. We remind you that it is the support of the Catholic Services Appeal that helped make possible the education that prepared all these men for ordination.

June: Do you enjoy reading about news and happenings around the Diocese in the *Faithlife* news bulletin published every two weeks? Do you like the various feature articles, Bishop Trauman's or Fr. Joe's regular columns in *Faith Magazine* published every two months? The Diocesan Office of Evangelization and Communications makes possible these publications which help to keep all Catholics in the Diocese informed and inspired by news and stories of people and events within the Church. This office is funded in part by your contributions to the Catholic Services Appeal.

July: *Opening Doors to Faith.* Disability and Deaf Ministries support growth and promote inclusion of individuals with disabilities into the mainstream of the church. The ministry provides activities to enhance spirituality. They include days or evenings of prayer and liturgy which take place all around the diocese in the fall and spring, and overnight/weekend retreats that are planned each summer. A retreat for Caregivers is sponsored twice each year. Your contributions to the CSA make the work of this ministry possible.

August: Retrouvaille is a weekend experience for couples who are experiencing difficulty in their marriage. Held in complete confidentiality and privacy, Retrouvaille is designed for couples who need help strengthening a marriage that no longer feels life-giving. Following the completion of the Retrouvaille weekend, couples are encouraged to attend a 6-week follow-up program. A Retrouvaille weekend is planned for Oct. 1-3. For confidential information or to speak with a couple experienced in the Retrouvaille program, please contact the Family Ministries Office at 1.800.374.3723 or 814.824.1261. Your support of the CSA helps to make programs like Retrouvaille possible.

September: Kids are back in school. Principals and teachers worked over the summer planning for this new school year. Did you know that the Catholic Schools Office also worked over the summer, really year round, assisting teachers and principals in their work? This office provides services such as ongoing teacher training, supervising curriculum, strategic planning and general operation of the Catholic School system. This cooperative effort helps ensure schools provide the best possible education for our children. Your funding of the Catholic Services Appeal helps support these services provided by the Schools Office.

October: Religious Education Classes have begun and children in grades K-11 attend regular classes to grow in the Faith. Those in 2nd, 3rd and 11th grades prepare for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Communion and Confirmation. A great deal goes into the implementation of an effective religious education program, and the Diocesan Office of Religious Education helps these parish programs by evaluating and certifying them, providing for teacher certification for catechists and assisting with planning. The work of this office is supported by the Catholic Services Appeal.

November: Catholic Charities Counseling & Adoption Services is here, now and throughout the year, to help each person - regardless of his/her religious affiliation - to experience the hope of a brighter tomorrow embodied in the Advent season that begins later this month. If you, or someone you know, is lacking hope, or missing out on the beauty of the season due to personal or emotional problems, contact one of our 12 offices throughout the Erie Diocese to help you, or your loved one, rekindle the hope of Advent. You can locate a counseling office near you by visiting the diocesan website at www.eriercd.org. Catholic Charities Counseling & Adoption Services is funded in part by contributions to the CSA.

December: The Diocese of Erie encompasses nearly 10,000 square miles. Catholic Rural Ministries help to reach into some of the more isolated parts of our diocese. This ministry provides pastoral care and connection to people through direct contact including home visits, community retreats, spiritual workshops and youth building programs. There are two offices, one covering Clarion, Venango, Crawford and Forest counties and another that covers Potter and McKean counties. The work of this ministry is funded in part by your support of the Catholic Services Appeal.

January: This month many people will head to Washington, DC for the annual March for Life. Respect Life advocates work year round sharing the importance of respecting all life and issues that affect life. They are able to do so because of the support of the Catholic Charities Parish Social Ministry/Respect Life Office. This office offers education and leadership training through workshops and presentations on Catholic Social Teaching and supports parish advocates in the areas of Justice and Peace/ Respect Life. This office monitors public policy and social issues. A monthly newsletter is sent to all pastors and parishes that include suggested actions which will promote social change and a respect for all life. The work of this office is supported by gifts to the Catholic Services Appeal.

February: Use space in your bulletin to promote the 2011 Catholic Services Appeal. Commitment Sunday for 2011 will be March 6th.

2010 Catholic Services Appeal Prayer

Lord God and Father, we are Your people, united in our love for You and for one another. We thank You for the many gifts You have given to us and we welcome Your presence in our lives at all times.

We ask that You continue to draw us closer and to strengthen our resolve to assist those among us who are most in need.

*Though we are many parts of the Diocese of Erie,
we are One in the Spirit of Christ.*

Through the Catholic Services Appeal, allow us to come together to be Of One Mind an Heart to share our gifts with those who need our assistance. Let us grasp more fully that the help we extend to others is the most powerful expression of our gratitude to You, as well as a genuine testimony to our faith.

Through Your Son, Jesus Christ, make our prayer to You one of faith, hope and charity for all God's people.

AMEN

Ideas for Priest Remarks and Points to Include



1. This year's theme, "Of One Mind and Heart" comes from Acts 4:32-35. Share your own thought on this scripture passage and how this scene could be called the early Church's first annual appeal.
2. If you plan to support the appeal this year, why did you decide to give? Be in touch with those reasons that motivated you and share them with parishioners.
3. Talk about how the CSA is more than some collection or appeal. It is a way for every Catholic in our Church to show his/her love and generosity in a way that helps the Diocese of Erie to provide for those in need.
4. The appeal happens every year because there is an ongoing need. You are asked to support this appeal each year to help meet those needs. The Diocesan Church carries out the mission to serve the people of Northwestern and Central Pennsylvania through varied ministries and services.
5. Our Diocesan Church is comprised of over 200,000 brothers and sisters in 123 parishes and 22 missions in thirteen counties.
6. No one parish alone can take care of the many different needs of the people within our Diocesan Church. Some of these needs require the strength and resolve of our entire Catholic community working and sacrificing together as One Body. That is why every parish participates in the Catholic Services Appeal, so that we - through our collective efforts - can continue building the Father's Kingdom by advancing the work of the Church.
7. While we cannot always be the one to comfort the grieving, feed the hungry, teach the young and minister to those in need, we can - through our generosity-ensure that our Diocesan Church is strong, vibrant and able to meet the needs of so many in the year ahead.
8. Each of our parishes has been asked to reach a goal which is set in order that together, we may accept the financial responsibility for many necessary Diocesan services. Our parish goal this year has been set at \$___. I hope that each one of us shares in a combined effort to not only reach this goal, but exceed it so that our parish will also benefit. Remember that every dollar raised over our CSA goal stays in our parish.
9. The needs met by the Appeal crosses wide boundaries. Funds are provided for a variety of religious, charitable and educational services ministries and programs throughout the thirteen-county Diocese of Erie.

Note to pastor regarding preparations for lay witnesses: The next section provides resources for those giving lay witnesses. Consider having those giving lay witnesses review a final draft of the talk with you. If possible also consider having the speaker rehearse it in your presence... Just in case!

Lay Witness Talks:

Lay witnessing is an important component to a successful CSA. Testimonials delivered to the entire congregation by a member of the parish whose life has been impacted by a Diocesan service or ministry can have a positive impact on how people in the parish view the Diocesan Church. Too often people do not see Diocesan services and ministries at work in the parish. A personal witness can clearly show an example of the benefits of supporting the Diocese.

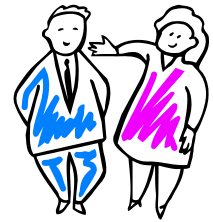
Some General Tips for Giving a Lay Witness

Note: It is not necessary to use every item below, nor is it important to use them in the order presented. Consider your parish to determine what is best to say to ensure a successful appeal.

- ❖ Prepare your remarks ahead of time. Try to keep your remarks to no longer than 5 minutes.
- ❖ Write your talk just as you would speak it. Practice your talk in front of a mirror. Be able to deliver your talk in a comfortable, conversational manner.
- ❖ If possible, practice your talk in the church using the sound system. If you will use a text, be sure that you can look up occasionally and make eye contact with the congregation.
- ❖ Think about varying the tempo and volume of your delivery. Be energetic yet sincere.
- ❖ Pray to the Holy Spirit for assistance. Here is a good short prayer for just before you speak. “Holy Spirit, please be in my heart, in my mind, on my lips and in their ears, so that I might be your effective witness.” *Amen.*
- ❖ Introduce yourself and your association with the parish.
- ❖ After you introduce yourself, let the congregation know how long you will talk. It will help them relax and listen. Your talk should not be longer than 10 minutes
- ❖ One key to a good talk is to smile while speaking, and don’t be afraid to add a bit of humor.
- ❖ Talk briefly about yourself/family, how long you have been in the parish, and any leadership role you may have in parish life. There will be some who do not know who you are.
- ❖ Honestly and briefly tell of your experience in a clear and expressive manner. Don’t be afraid to share if you previously had a negative feeling about the CSA. Share what helped to change your mind.
- ❖ Talk about how this year’s theme “Of One Mind and Heart” speaks to you. Read Acts 4: 32-35 for inspiration.
- ❖ Talk about any positive benefits to you and the parish; give examples of what has happened since your experience. You may wish to mention any follow-up or future plans. Make sure people clearly see how you and the parish have benefited from a particular Diocesan service or ministry.
- ❖ Explain how your experience would not be possible without the help of another part of our “Body of Christ,” the person/people in the particular Diocesan office who helped to make your experience possible.
- ❖ Tell how our parish and all parishes are part of a Diocesan Church and that we all support those working for this Church in a partnership of faith that strengthens the Catholic Church in this part of Pennsylvania. Make sure you tell people that you are also going to support the appeal and why. This is a sign of your leadership and willingness to practice what you preach.
- ❖ Finally, it is important to let the congregation know that their individual generosity in the past made this experience and the ongoing results of the experience possible for you. Thank them.



Welcome/Introduction of Lay Witness



Suggestions

This *morning/afternoon/evening* we welcome *Jim/Amy Hanson*, a fellow member of our parish, who will speak to us about the upcoming Catholic Services Appeal. Jim/Amy will share their thoughts on why this initiative is important to them, to our parish and to our Diocese. Please give *Jim/Amy* a warm welcome.

- Brief (he/she will say a few words about who they are, etc.)
- No build up (it might – make the person more nervous – or – he/she might not live up to the preview)

When the speaker finishes, thank him/her and lead everyone in applauding!!!



SAMPLE LAY WITNESS TALK #1

(Given by someone telling his/her story of personally benefiting from a diocesan service.)

Good Morning (Afternoon, Evening) I am grateful to have an opportunity to speak to my fellow parishioners here at _____ Parish. I have been a member her since _____. I am here because of the importance of the Catholic Services Appeal to me, this parish and our Diocese. I first became acquainted with the CSA when *(At this point briefly share your own thoughts. Share what reaction you may have had to it, even if that reaction was negative. Then talk about what may have change your mind and why you support the appeal now. Conclude these thoughts with how you or someone you know has personally benefited from the appeal.)* Now I see my opportunity today as a representative, speaking for many, many people who are unable to be here to talk to you themselves. Each of them also has a story to share. And I can assure you that there are many stories.

It is the story of a refugee family who has just come to the United States and is living within the diocese. It is the story of someone in the fellowship for separated and divorced group trying to cope with a failed marriage. It is the story of a Catholic School teacher who attends a Diocesan teacher in-service on faith to learn more about how to share our Catholic Faith with children. It is a story of an engaged couple that want to remarry and can take part in a unique pre-marital program called NOVA that helps them to build a strong Christian marriage. It is the story of a single mom who was just laid off, but she and her children can turn to Catholic Charities to find some help so the family does not lose their home.

You see, this talk is not another appeal for money. It is not just a bunch of statistics about numbers of services and ministries, and people who are helped by them. My story and many others are about people you know who need your help. I just happened to be the one doing the asking for help. Without the Catholic Services Appeal, our Diocese may not have been able to answer these requests for help. I hope you realize how much your generosity means to all these people and countless others, not only here at _____ (name of Parish), but all over the Diocese of Erie.

Conclude with. . .

The theme for the CSA is “Of One Mind and Heart”. Please reflect with both your mind and heart what has been shared with you today. Please remember the many people who, through me, shared their story with you today. Please consider joining others in our Church with some response to this year’s Catholic Services Appeal. I invite you to consider pledging to the Catholic Services Appeal. *(See note on the next page)* I thank you for your time today and for listening.

SAMPLE LAY WITNESS TALK #2

(From someone only asking parishioners to support the CSA, no personal testimony.)



Good Morning (Afternoon, Evening) I am grateful to have an opportunity to speak to my fellow parishioners here at _____ Parish. I have been a member her since _____. (Pastor’s Name) has asked me to talk with you for a few minutes about why I pledge each year to the Catholic Services Appeal.

First of all, I love this parish, and I have great admiration for our pastor. If he needs my help to do something worthwhile for our parish, that’s good enough for me.

Secondly, I read the materials about the CSA that were sent to us in *Faith Magazine*. I was very impressed with the stories and facts about how our Diocesan Church does more to teach, feed, shelter and care for children and families than any other single organization in this part of Pennsylvania. That’s a real force for good, and that alone deserves my support. And the appeal also helps our parish by (*mention parish project this year*).

Thirdly, I am aware of how difficult it is these days to run a parish. It is very challenging. In addition to our parish having the usual upkeep, repairs and costs for unexpected maintenance which is similar to what most of us experience at home, there are much larger and more important issues of providing for the spiritual and temporal needs of all our people. I know that my CSA pledge each year provides funding for Diocesan services and programs that are enormously helpful to every one of the 123 parishes that comprise the Diocese of Erie.

In summary, I’d like to thank all those who participated in last year’s CSA. We are tremendously grateful for your generosity and encourage you to maintain your commitment to this worthy cause. Those of you who have not supported the appeal recently or if you have never given to it before, don’t think of **me** asking you to give, know that I am merely asking on behalf of seniors, single moms, young couples, any child learning our faith. All these people and thousands of others are helped through this appeal. Won’t you give to continue to help them?

Note: If the lay speaker is responsible for asking for pledges as part of the In-Pew method, continue with the following remarks. If the priest is doing it, the lay speaker concludes with the above.

Witness Talk outline for those parishes using the Spiritual Approach presented last December. A talk will be given over three weekends, one on Prayer, one on Fasting, and the last on Almsgiving.

| Part of Talk | Prayer | Fasting | Almsgiving |
|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| I first heard about... | Deep prayer experiences | Giving up foods | Giving away money |
| My negative reaction... | To praying was... | To fasting was... | To almsgiving was... |
| What changed my mind... | About praying was... | About fasting was... | About almsgiving was... |
| I have benefited... | From praying because... | From fasting because... | From almsgiving because... |

How to Ask Parishioners to Pledge using In-pew Method.

(Note: If using the Spiritual Approach, you do not want to exactly follow the instructions below. Use instructions on pages 22-23)

- Please pick up one of the pledge envelopes in the pew.
- Look at the back of the envelope flap with the different suggested giving levels. Please consider the amount of your gift -- keeping in mind that the parish goal is \$_____. Every family is being asked to consider helping and supporting the many things provided by the larger Church (The Diocese of Erie) and also supporting our parish project with everything raised over goal.
- Please consider making a pledge versus making a one-time gift. Monthly reminders will be sent to you. Those who have any concerns about pledging need not worry. A pledge is merely a good faith gesture and not a binding agreement if your circumstances were to change later.
- If you want to make a payment towards your pledged amount today, you can, but you do not have to give something today.
- To complete the envelope, turn to the inside of the envelope -- where it says "My Total Pledge to this year's CSA". . . Write in the Amount;
- Then, where it says "Initial Amount". . . Write Zero if none or the amount of the Check or Cash you are putting in the envelope. Please make checks payable to "our" parish.
- Please put down your name, address and phone number (in case we need to call with a question).
- We are again offering the option to receive pledge reminders via e-mail. This will help to save on the expenses for the appeal. If you are willing to receive reminders by e-mail, please check the box and provide your e-mail address. For those making a pledge, we are also offering the opportunity to decide how frequently you want to receive a pledge reminder. The pledge redemption period is ten months. You can receive reminders monthly, every two months or twice (June and December) during the pledge period. Please check the box indicating how often you would like a reminder.

I plan to make a pledge to the appeal now, and I invite you to do the same. Please take a moment to complete your envelope.

PAUSE FOR ABOUT 2 MINUTES TO ALLOW TIME TO COMPLETE THE ENVELOPES

The ushers will now collect your envelopes. On behalf of the thousands in our Diocese who benefit from your generosity, I thank you.

THE FOLLOWING PAGES CONTAIN SAMPLE LETTERS.

Remember that a personalized letter has the best chance of being read!

All sample letters can be easily downloaded from the Diocesan website.

PRE-APPEAL LETTER TO PARISHIONERS

(Whatever appeal method you plan to use, we suggest sending this letter making parishioners aware that the 2010 CSA will be starting soon. The letter should be sent in Late January prior to the arrival of the CSA issue of Faith.

Some may choose to use this letter as part of an advance gift phase. If so, use the variation for paragraph 3.)

January 2010

Name

Address

City, State Zip

Dear _____:

Soon you should be receiving a copy of the special CSA edition of *Faith Magazine* because we are approaching that time when we will be asking you to participate in the 2010 Catholic Services Appeal. This CSA is important for the work of the Church and our parish family. Please give this request prayerful consideration. First, I would ask that you take time to read this issue of *Faith Magazine* as it will help provide excellent information regarding how CSA funds are put to use in our diocese.

Each year the Catholic Services Appeal provides the resources for many services and programs in education, formation and social services. Thousands of people are impacted by these programs and services. You will be able to read about some of them in *Faith*. Every parish, ours included, benefits directly from this appeal. This year's CSA issue of *Faith Magazine* highlights how other parishes like ours have used the funds they have kept as a result of the CSA.

Over the next weeks and months, you will have the opportunity to hear and read more information about the Catholic Services Appeal. Please make an effort to be informed. I always pray that *every* family will consider a gift to this worthwhile effort. I am writing to you now and asking that you consider becoming an active donor to the CSA. It is only because of the combined support of all the parishes in our Diocese that these services can be provided. No single parish could afford them on its own. I have no way of knowing how much you can afford to contribute at this time; only you can answer that question. All I ask is that you take a moment and prayerfully consider what your response will be on Commitment Sunday, February 14th. Please consider making a pledge that can be paid over a ten month period. This way you will be able to make a more generous gift.

(Alternate paragraph 3 to prior donors).

Over the next weeks and months, you will have the opportunity to hear and read more information about the Catholic Services Appeal. Please make an effort to be informed. I am inviting you to continue supporting the CSA as you have in the past. You may wish to make your gift now in advance of Commitment Sunday which this year is February 14th. For your convenience, I have enclosed a pledge envelope. Your most recent gift to the CSA was <gift amount>. Please consider matching or even increasing this amount if you are able. Please return your completed pledge envelope through the mail to our parish or drop it in the collection basket any time up through commitment Sunday, February 14th.

Know that I appreciate all the sacrifices you and your family offer our parish and Diocese.
Be assured of my constant prayers.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Pastor

Appeal letter to last year's CSA Donors

(This letter can be used for parishes using direct mail and In-Pew method.)

Dear

2009 was a milestone year for the CSA, and your generosity helped make it so. We sometimes speak about the CSA and reference those who give as being "Of One Heart and Mind". You joined with over 22,500 families in the diocese to raise over \$6 million in pledges for the first time ever. This outpouring of generosity shows a real understanding of the need to support vital ministries and services provided by our Diocesan Church that meet the needs of the marginalized in our community. To do this during the past year of tremendous economic challenges is truly an expression of love. But these needs are ongoing, and so I now call upon you again to make another faith response by supporting the 2010 Catholic Services Appeal.

Our parish CSA goal this year is \$XXXXXX. You can make it possible for us to exceed this goal. Remember that once we have reached the goal, any funds raised over and above will be kept by the parish. I would ask that you consider matching or possibly increasing your gift of \$_____ (*consider including amount if you can merge from parish records*) from last year. Enclosed is a pledge card/envelope for your convenience. You can return your gift at Mass or mail it to the church office.

Hopefully, you have had a chance to read the special CSA issue of *Faith Magazine* that was sent to you recently. It should remind you of those who are served by Diocesan ministries and services that are funded by the CSA. It also should remind you that much good can be done in our parish by those funds raised over our goal. This year our parish intends to (*provide details of your parish project here.*)

I am grateful to you for all you do for our parish and ask God's continued blessings on you and your loved ones.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor

SAMPLE LETTER TO NON-CONTRIBUTORS

(This letter can be used for parishes using Direct Mail and some may want to use it as a follow-up letter for parishes using In-Pew method.)

Name
Address
City, State Zip

Dear _____,

What inspires someone to give? Is it a picture of a child or an elderly person in need? Images can do a great deal to evoke emotion and help us tap our need to give. I believe that need is a gift to each of us from God. However you may be someone who does not like letters requesting you to give. Nonetheless, I would be most appreciative if you would please give me a few moments of your time to hear my request.

Now I am sure you have reasons why you have not supported the Catholic Services Appeal, but there are many good reasons why you should, and I am asking you to consider making your first gift to this year's CSA. The picture I spoke of above that inspires people to give could easily be someone in our Diocese in need who can be helped by a gift to the CSA. There are thousands of pictures of people who are in need of help. The Catholic Services Appeal is a way to help them, a way to influence people's lives. The many ministries supported by the CSA are so much a part of many people's lives – it is easy to overlook them and take them for granted. However, at every moment of every day – someone, somewhere is making a difference in our Diocese. That work is funded by the CSA. Now more than ever your help is needed... because the need is still great, and the need never stops.

Perhaps you might consider giving because of the difference it will make here at (Parish Name). Once we have met our goal to the diocese, our parish will keep every dollar raised over goal. This year we intend to *(mention parish project.)*

I ask you again to please consider making a gift to the Catholic Services Appeal. The enclosed pledge envelope can be used to make your gift. Please give what you can. You may consider a pledged gift that could be made over a 10 month period. Whatever offering you are able to make, know that your partnership in this year's CSA is very much appreciated.

Sincerely in Christ,

Pastor

**Sample CSA follow-up
reports and letters are
available at**

<http://www.eriescd.org/pds.htm>

**Also watch the Information
Bulletin for additional follow-up
ideas and suggestions.**

LETTER TO PARISHIONERS WHO HAVE NOT MADE ANY PLEDGE PAYMENTS

(Note: Insert the appropriate paragraph 2.)

Dear _____,

As you may have noticed in our parish bulletin, we shared the results of our 2010 Catholic Services Appeal including the amount pledged and gifts received to date.

(Use the following if your parish has exceeded its CSA goal.)

We are pleased that our parish has provided \$ (parish goal amount) toward the services and ministries of the Diocese of Erie which serves people throughout thirteen counties. The gifts have also resulted in \$_____ (amount retained by the parish) which we are using for _____ (parish project). Every additional dollar we receive stays in our parish to use for this project.

(Use the following if your parish has not yet reached its CSA goal.)

Our parish has not yet met our goal. It is important for us to not only reach this goal, but to also exceed it. As soon as pledge payments and gifts reach the parish goal, our parish will retain any additional funds received through the CSA. We plan to use additional funds for _____ (parish project).

I am writing to you to provide a gentle reminder because our records indicate that you have not yet made a payment on your pledge. Although the CSA pledge period does not end until January 2009, we know how difficult it can be to fulfill a pledge when the payment schedule falls behind.

If our records are incorrect, we apologize. Please call our parish office immediately, and your records will be updated. If your circumstances have changed, and you will be unable to fulfill your pledge, please let the parish know so that you will not be sent any further reminders. However, if you are able, please begin to make payments on your CSA pledge.

Your gift helps change lives. It is also an expression of your faith and your willingness to follow Jesus. The CSA is more than dollars. It is a sign of what you can help the Church accomplish to further the mission of Christ on Earth. Together we can do more as "One Heart and Mind".

May God bestow abundant blessings on you and your family just as your gift provides blessings for many others.

Sincerely in Christ,

Pastor's Name

Sample Thank You Letter

Name
Address
City

Dear *Insert Name*:

It is with the utmost gratitude that I write to you for your response to the 2010 Catholic Services Appeal. Your support means a great deal to our Church, especially during these challenging economic times. Important ministries and services of our Diocesan Church and the (describe parish project) for our parish are funded by your gift.

Our parish has raised (\$XXXX). This is a wonderful testament to how we collectively reach out to others. It truly is a reflection of the Catholic Services Appeal theme - Of One Heart and Mind.

Please keep (parish name) and the entire Diocese of Erie in your prayers, as I keep you in mine. It will be my prayer that the Lord will bestow abundant blessings on you and your family this year, just as your gift provides blessings to many others.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor