**2019 Diocesan Services Appeal**

**Homily Helps**

**Recommended for Commitment Weekend, March 16 & 17**

**Alternatively for Announcement Weekend, March 9 & 10**

It is important for the pastor to endorse the DSA and inspire the faithful to participate with his own comments as part of or prior to the Commitment Talk on March 16 & 17 at which time people are asked to make their gift commitments and complete and submit the pledge envelopes.

It is important for the pastor to personally let his parishioners know that he has made his gift to the appeal and why he has done so. This must be done in a sincere manner and not one that indicates any compulsion to do so.

**Following are some remarks for the pastor to consider in preparing his thoughts and comments:**

* “Whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully.” This scripture text assures us that we will be richly blessed for our generosity. The passage from second Corinthians continues – “God loves a cheerful giver. Moreover, God is able to make every grace abundant for you, so that in all things . . . you may have an abundance for every good work.”

Every good work – that is exactly what results from our collective support. Our contributions are put to work, right away, in a multitude of ministries to offer direct assistance to individuals and families and to our parishes, Catholic schools and Catholic Charities agencies.

And every good work includes our ongoing commitment to the New Evangelization. We are united across the diocese in our commitment to Go and Announce the Gospel of the Lord.

* DSA is about so much more than money. DSA helps us all, as donors and beneficiaries, to move along the path of discipleship. Together, we can follow the Lord and witness to the salvation given to us in Jesus Christ.

How can we move along the path of discipleship together?

We can support our seminarians to get the best training they can have to be good and holy leaders of our church. We can care for our senior priests who have dedicated a life of service to the church and its people.

We can serve those people who are helping God’s people who are most in need. When can assure that Catholic Charities has the resources required to make a difference in their lives, to provide the hope and help they need.

We can make sure that our parish staff and parish schools have professional resources available. We can’t do everything on our own here at parish. We need the expertise of worship, and finance, and legal, and human resources professionals at the diocese that serve and support our parish ministries and operations.

Let’s join together to make sure our seminarians, our clergy, our Catholic Charities workers, and our parish staff, catechists and educators and all who are engaged in the life of the church have the resources they need to do their jobs well, and help us form a strong Catholic community of disciples here at parish.

* Perhaps you can give a gift that really represents giving something of your substance. Perhaps you can give a gift where you know you are truly sowing bountifully.

I have made my gift commitment and it feels good to do so. I have contributed because . I hope you feel as good about make your gift decision as I do.

* What I’d really love is for us as a parish to show a really high percentage of participation. I want to beat every other parish in the diocese. I want to have the highest percentage of parishioners who participate in the annual appeal. We would know then, that we are truly sowing bountifully. So please commit to something and help us move along a path of discipleship together.
* I am grateful beyond words for the dedication, commitment, and sacrifice of the people of this parish to engage in the many evangelizing and social ministries of our wider Church. May you be blessed for all that you do for one another.

**[If you feel it necessary or helpful to address the hurt that people feel about the abuse crisis surrounding the wider church, consider the following comments delivered by Rev. Patrick Stewart, pastor of Pax Christi Catholic Church in Lexington, Kentucky. Shared with permission.]**

“It seems like every mass that we have; every kind of little program or project that we take the time to talk about; it seems like every scripture that we hear at our masses somehow reflects back on the crisis that the Church has been confronted with in the past months – the clergy abuse crisis.

We are supposed to be the ones who serve. We are supposed to be the ones who serve the ones who serve. It’s not about prestige. It’s not about power. It’s not about protecting ourselves. It’s about constantly being the servant of others.

I can understand that there are people in church today who have a particular, or personal, or specific reason to be disappointed, to be angry, about this abuse scandal that has ravaged our Church. I can understand that there are people here today whose resentment is towards an image of hierarchy and clericalism that has wandered away from the simple and ideal teachings of Jesus. I can even understand that some people would say, ‘I am not giving money to the church. I am not giving money to the diocese.’

But you see, what I’m trying to say is, you’re not giving the money to the Bishop. I think our Bishop is worthy of a gift, but we’re not giving it to him. We’re giving it to those most in need. We’re serving those who have served for 50 years or more in the priesthood. We’re serving those who are really reaching out to those in need. We’re serving those who are really trying to save marriages, who are helping people save their families and homes. We’re serving those who are bringing the faith to life in our youth and to all who are trying to grow in discipleship.

I think the annual appeal is an opportunity for the Church to be at its best – over and against all the hurt and harm that we’ve seen. I think the annual appeal is an occasion for us to be the Church that truly serves those who serve. And truly serves those most in need.

I invite you to serve those who serve. And I invite you to serve those most in need.”