

Each year, the Annual Diocesan Appeal invites all of us to renew our commitment to the heart of our mission as the Church. **It is a reminder that when our hearts are united in love and service, we become a source of hope for one another and for the world.** In 2026, we are called to again live out the prayer of Jesus, “That all may be one.”

The unity we share as members of the mystical body of Christ becomes visible through the good works made possible by the Annual Diocesan Appeal. Together, we take part in Christ’s mission to bring the Gospel to life in worship, in service, and in love for our neighbor. This mission comes to life across our diocese in a variety of ways. Your generosity makes possible the formation of seminarians who will serve as the next generation of priests, bringing the sacraments and pastoral care to our communities. It provides for deacons and lay leaders who carry the Gospel to parishes, schools, and neighborhoods throughout the diocese.

Through Catholic Charities, your gift brings hope to families facing hunger, homelessness, and hardship. It supports counseling, adoption services, and emergency assistance for those most in need. In our faith formation programs and schools, your gift helps children and young adults grow in wisdom and grace, guided by teachers and catechists who model Christ’s love every day.

Your support also strengthens parish life across our diocese. It helps provide resources for pastoral ministries, evangelization, youth and young adult outreach, and programs that nurture vocations. This sacred time offers a perfect opportunity to grow in heart with the heart of Jesus. How do you seek to return to the Lord with your whole heart? Lent is a time for us to purify our hearts before God. In every community, your gift becomes an act of unity, allowing the Church to serve with one heart and one purpose.

In recent months, I have heard from pastors and ministry directors across our diocese who see the growing needs of our communities firsthand. Our goal is always to help the most people we can, and the reality is that more and more people are requesting assistance. This reality reminds us that the Lord continues to put the needs of our brothers and sisters before us, and that the heart of Christ calls us to respond to these needs with compassion and hope. Your participation in this year’s Annual Diocesan Appeal makes that response possible. **May this Lenten season be for each of us a time to grow in heart with the heart of Jesus!**

As we look to the future, I am deeply grateful for the way you continue to share your faith so generously and tangibly. The Annual Diocesan Appeal is a reflection of who we are as a people of God. When we give from the heart in the service of others, we bring hope to the world and advance the mission of Christ among us.

Thank you for your continued commitment to our diocesan family. With your support, we can strengthen our ministries, deepen our faith, and live more fully the prayer of Jesus: “That all may be one.”

With heartfelt gratitude and prayers,

+Most Reverend David J. Bonnar
Bishop of Youngstown