Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The theme of this year’s Annual Bishop’s Appeal is taken from the first letter of Saint John: LET US LOVE IN DEED AND IN TRUTH. These words of exhortation express well the call to love, which we respond to by our generosity in the Annual Bishop’s Appeal.

The call to love, not just in word but in action, is a prominent theme in the teaching of the apostles, based on Our Lord’s commandment: Love one another as I have loved you. Clearly, the primacy is God’s love revealed to us in His Son.

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, reminds us that “the life of the Church should always reveal clearly that God takes the initiative, that He has loved us first (1 John 4:19) and that He alone gives the growth (1 Corinthians 3:7). God has called us to cooperate with Him through our love. He leads us to do so by the power of His Spirit.

Through our sacrifices in the Bishop’s Appeal, we cooperate with the Lord through our love and generosity. It is a way to love in deed and in truth, supporting the Church’s works of love and mercy in our diocese. We are called to witness to the Gospel of love in word and deed, following the example of Christ.

The Church has the mission of spreading the fire of God’s love in the world. We have the task of spreading the truth of the Gospel, following the example of the apostles. In the works supported by the Bishop’s Appeal, we strive to fulfill this task. In our teaching and striving for holiness, we keep alive the Gospel ideal of charity.

The Blessed Virgin Mary and the saints teach us to love in deed and in truth. In their encounter with God who is Love, they bore witness to that love in heroic ways. Their holy lives inspire us to be generous in the service of love.

I invite you, once again, to join me in supporting the Church’s witness to the Gospel of love in our diocese. Thank you in advance for your generosity to the 2014 Annual Bishop’s Appeal.

You are remembered in my prayers. May the Lord bless you with His abundant love and grace! May our Immaculate Mother Mary, who gave herself to God’s service with untiring love, intercede for us always!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Kevin C. Rhoades
Bishop of Fort Wayne-South Bend
Funding the Mission of the Church

The Annual Bishop’s Appeal provides financial support for diocesan ministries, programs, activities and services that play a vital role in the Church’s mission. The works funded by the Annual Bishop’s Appeal are made possible with your generosity. This work expresses the mystery of God’s love for humanity as St. John described in his first letter: We, for our part, love because he first loved us (1 John 4:19). All we do as a Church is an expression of love, in ministry and service that originates from God, Who first loved us.

Before the first Bishop’s Appeal, the work of the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend was financed, in part, by a 13 percent tax on all parish income. Bishop D’Arcy initiated the first Annual Bishop’s Appeal in 1987 that resulted in the reduction of parish tax to six percent on the parish offertory only. The Bishop’s Appeal funds the required ministries and services throughout the diocese and, at the same time, helps to strengthen parishes by reducing the parish assessment tax.
The Annual Bishop’s Appeal is a primary source of funding in support of the many ministries and services that we do best collectively, as 81 parishes, rather than as individual parishes. The work funded by the Bishop’s Appeal enables our diocese to reach across parish boundaries in areas such as Catholic Charities, Catholic School support, campus ministry, continuing education programs, evangelization, family life, marriage preparation, parishes-in-need assistance, permanent diaconate, prison ministry, religious education, respect for life, safe environment, seminarian education, TV homebound Mass, vocations, young adult and youth ministry.

A successful Bishop’s Appeal is also a financial benefit to our parishes, since all of the funds contributed over the assigned parish goal are returned to the respective parish. A successful Bishop’s Appeal for your parish means success for our diocese, and also success for your parish. Through the years more than $23 million has been returned to parishes exceeding their assigned goal. These funds have been used for capital improvements, tuition assistance, parish ministry support, and other parish funding needs.

Learn more about the Annual Bishop’s Appeal at www.diocesefwsb.org
Living in Christ

You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind. This is the greatest and the first commandment. The second is like it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself (Matthew 22:37–39).

The Sacramental life of the Church is an expression of the Bridegroom's love for the bride. We are the recipients of God's love, and God does not leave us to struggle through life on our own, because Christ lives in and through us in the Eucharist. The Eucharist is a sacrament of charity. Every day the Church takes up its responsibility to draw people to Christ through the holy Eucharist, the sacrament of charity. Through the Eucharist we are strengthened to live a life of charity.

Priestly formation is one of the most important endeavors supported by the Bishop's Appeal. The cost of a seminary education has nearly doubled in the past five years because of rising education costs, as well as an increase in number of seminarians. The increase of seminarians is truly a blessing, yet continues to be a financial challenge. Strong intellectual, spiritual, and pastoral formation of our future priests is of great importance. Your generosity to the Bishop's Appeal supports seminarian formation, the continuing formation of our priests, and the continuing formation of permanent deacons.
The catechetical and spiritual formation of people of all ages is intended to strengthen our Catholic faith and nourish our life in Christ. The Bishop’s Appeal supports the teaching of the faith in many ways including:

- Parish catechetical faith formation for adults, youth, and children
- Tuition grants for needy students attending Catholic Schools
- RCIA ministry
- Education for Ministry: a two-year program for catechists and others involved in parish ministries
- Master of Arts in Theology: opportunity for Catholic educators, catechists, and pastoral workers to obtain an M.A. in Theology at the University of Notre Dame
- Catholic Schools Education Program: a two-week summer school program for Catholic School teachers
If I, therefore, the master and teacher, have washed your feet you ought to wash one another’s feet. I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do (John 13:14-15).

Our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has elevated the theme of being a Church of, and for, the poor. As disciples of the Lord Jesus, we are called to have a special love and concern for the poor. We must have a spirit of genuine solidarity to promote the good of every person, and the good of the whole person. We see in every person the living image of God himself - a brother, or sister, for whom Christ died.

The Bishop’s Appeal gives us an opportunity to renew our commitment to care for the poor and suffering. Our service to the poor is essential to the whole expression of the Church. The Bishop’s Appeal supports works of mercy throughout our diocese by providing ministry to hospitals, nursing homes and other health care facilities. The Bishop’s Appeal also provides service for people in need in the areas of:

- Persons with disabilities
- Prison ministry
- Project Rachel – post abortion healing
- Deaf and hearing impaired
- Victim assistance
The mission of Catholic Charities is to proclaim salvation through Jesus Christ by performing the spiritual and corporal works of mercy throughout our diocese. Catholic Charities receives funds from the Bishop's Appeal to serve in the following areas:

- Pregnancy services that assist women and families who are experiencing a pregnancy in crisis
- ECHO (Education Creates Hope and Opportunity) - providing guidance and resources to pregnant and parenting teens
- Adoption services that assist families through the adoption process
- Basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, medical assistance, and utilities to families in need
- Food pantries providing food for those who are hungry
- Refugee resettlement and placement services – providing assistance to persons coming to the United States under refugee status
- Immigration Services – assistance with citizenship and naturalization
- Hispanic health advocate services – providing interpretation services to Spanish-speaking people to assist with medical appointments
- Villa of the Woods in Fort Wayne - providing residential facilities that house older adults
There are many other charities assisted by the Bishop’s Appeal that provide ministries and services to those in need, as a witness to our Catholic faith:

- Medical care for the poor – Sister Maura Brannick Health Center in South Bend, Matthew 25 Health and Dental Clinic in Fort Wayne, and St. Martin’s Healthcare in Garrett
- Clothing for poor children – the Christ Child Society
- Serving the homeless – Vincent Village in Fort Wayne, and Center for the Homeless in South Bend
- Assistance for crisis pregnancy – Women’s Care Center
- Shelter for single, young unwed mothers – Hannah’s House in Mishawaka
- Providing for special needs – Logan Center and Chiara Home in South Bend
- Food for the poor – St. Mary’s Soup Kitchen in Fort Wayne, and St. Augustine Soup Kitchen in South Bend
- Clothing and household items for the poor – The Franciscan Center in Fort Wayne, Little Flower Food Pantry in South Bend, and the St. Vincent de Paul Society

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Bearing Witness

Whoever is without love does not know God, for God is love (1 John 4:8).

Your generosity bears witness to the reality of God’s love for his people, including the care for our retired priests.

We also bear witness by supporting various diocesan-wide ministries and services such as training for lectors, extraordinary ministers of Holy Communion, and liturgical musicians.

We have 14 parishes throughout the diocese celebrating the Liturgy in Spanish; the Bishop’s Appeal has made it possible to invite and support Hispanic priests in our diocese, and provide Hispanic ministries for our Spanish-speaking Catholics.

The dignity of marriage and the sanctity of human life are under increased pressure in our society. Our young people especially need help in understanding the beauty of their sexuality and the plan that God has for their lives. The Bishop’s Appeal supports family life through:

• ARISE Renew International
• Black Catholic Congress
• Diocesan marriage and family conferences
• First Comes Love Program - “Theology of the Body” for junior-high, high school and university students
• Marriage preparation
• Men’s and Women’s Conferences
• Natural family planning instruction for engaged and married couples
• Pro-life activities across the diocese
We are called by our Lord Jesus Christ to bring the Gospel to others by word and deed. The Bishop’s Appeal supports various activities of evangelization throughout our diocese designed to increase our love for God. We must be on fire in love with God before we convey that love to others. Only through the burning fire of the Holy Spirit can we rediscover the love of Christ every day in our lives through prayer, Liturgy and Sacraments, good spiritual readings, sacrifices and acts of charity.

We face many challenges in our society and culture today, but we must encourage our young people not to be overcome by the world. Dynamic works of evangelization are ongoing and diocesan-wide, all made possible by the Bishop’s Appeal:

- Faithfest: a day of prayer, catechesis, worship and community for high-school teens
- Confirmation Rally: a retreat day for youth preparing to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of Confirmation
- March for Life: bus trip to Washington D.C. - Mass, rally, and march in support of the sanctity of human life
- Theology on Tap: Young adult gatherings for theological presentation and discussion
- Retreats for youth and young adults

Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God; everyone who loves is begotten by God and knows God (1 John 4:7).
Campus ministry is an essential area supported by the Bishop’s Appeal. Our campus ministers assist students in colleges throughout our diocese, resulting in growth of the college student’s spiritual life and knowledge of their Catholic faith. This becomes an incentive to witness to their Catholic faith by serving others.

Catholic communications is the work of evangelization and spiritual formation supported by the Bishop’s Appeal:

• Televised Masses every Sunday morning, as well as a live Christmas morning Mass
• Reflections: a free monthly newsletter sent to viewers of the televised Masses
• Today’s Catholic: diocesan newspaper - sent to our more than 48,000 families (digital copy and Podcast available online)
• Diocesan Web site: www.diocesefwsb.org and Today’s Catholic Web site: www.todayscatholicnews.org

All that is accomplished by the funding of the Annual Bishop’s Appeal is accomplished for the glory of God. The primary work of the Bishop’s Appeal is about passing on our Catholic faith, so all will come to know Jesus Christ. We should be doing all we can to share Jesus Christ with the world!
Thank you for your donation to the Annual Bishop’s Appeal. Your support of our diocesan ministries, programs, activities and services is vital in our efforts to carry out Christ’s mission here throughout the Diocese of Fort Wayne-South Bend.

Thank you to all who have contributed time and talent to the success of past Bishop’s Appeals, especially pastors, priests, parish lay-leaders and diocesan lay-leaders.

Annual Bishop’s Appeal Chairs

Matt and Sharon Edmonds -- 2014
Steve and Pat Spoltman -- 2013
Paul and Kathy Schoenle -- 2012
Don and Bev McArdle † -- 2011
Peter and Nancy Baranay -- 2010
John and Julie Kenny -- 2009
Brian and Jeannelle Brady -- 2008
Dr. Michael and Jeanne Mirro -- 2007
John and Marjorie Bycraft -- 2006
Jack and Cathy Krouse -- 2005
Kathleen Beeler and Richard Doermer † -- 2004 (Part of Legacy of Faith Campaign)
Mary Jane Stanley -- 2003
Donald Schenkel -- 2002
Kathleen Beeler -- 2001
James Fitzpatrick -- 2000
Michael Hammes -- 1999
John Tippmann, Sr. -- 1998
Jonathan Housand -- 1997
Dr. Michael Mastrangelo -- 1996
Daniel Fitzpatrick -- 1995
Maury O’Daniel -- 1994
Joseph Woodka -- 1993
Thomas Blee -- 1992
Jerome Kearns -- 1991
Joseph Dahm -- 1990
Jerry Hammes -- 1989
Richard Doermer † -- 1988
Arthur Decio -- 1987

† Deceased. Please remember in your prayers.