



## March 1, 2008 - 2008 Catholic Appeal Launched

### *Handing on the Light of Christ*

**Brighton, MA** – Encouraging all Catholics to come together during this year's Bicentennial to hand on our Catholic faith and to build a civilization of love, Cardinal Seán P. O'Malley today officially launched the 2008 Catholic Appeal, Handing on the Light of Christ.

The Catholic Appeal allows the Archdiocese to strengthen parishes and schools, launch and sustain faith formation programs for youth, college students and adults, and provide many services for the needy within its 144 cities and towns.

The 2008 Catholic Appeal launches in most parishes of the Archdiocese on March 1st and 2nd. This is the first-time that the Archdiocese has begun its flagship fundraiser in March and in the season of Lent. The change of the Appeal calendar was suggested by pastors in the Archdiocese and supported by over 70% of them in a recent survey.

The financial goal for the 2008 Catholic Appeal campaign is \$15 million. This past year the Archdiocese raised \$14.5 million, against a goal of \$14.0 million. The \$14.5 million represents an increase of 5% from the previous year and 64% over the past several years.

"Lent is a time of special sacrifice as we strive to deepen our baptismal faith and commitment to discipleship," said Cardinal Seán. "Support to the Annual Appeal helps us ensure that our works, values and beliefs live on. Contributions strengthen our parishes, support the education of our children, form our future clergy, religious and lay leaders, and help us build a civilization of love in service to our brothers and sisters."

Held in the Msgr. Linnehan Library of Arlington Catholic High School in Arlington, Massachusetts, the Cardinal was joined by Scot Landry, Secretary for Development, Saint Agnes Pastor Rev. Brian Flatley, parishioners, students, teachers, staff at Saint Agnes and benefactors of the Archdiocese.

Mr. Landry said, "Catholics have a tremendous tradition of sharing their resources to strengthen the Church and reach out to the needy in our communities. This tradition started with the earliest Christian communities two-thousand years ago, was continued by the first Catholics here in Boston two-hundred years ago, and has been a large part of the legacy of the Archdiocese of Boston ever since. The 2008 Catholic Appeal carries on this strong tradition of sacrifice. Parishioners from every one of the 294 parishes and the 144 cities and towns that comprise the Archdiocese will unite to fund vital shared ministries that define our Catholic Church's mission. In this Bicentennial year, we reflect on a truly remarkable level of generosity of Catholics throughout our history and look forward with hope to building upon that legacy, starting with the good we will do together through the 2008 Catholic Appeal."

### **A Parish Reaches Out to Youth in Unique Ways**

Cardinal Seán selected Saint Agnes Parish as the location for the launch of the 2008 Catholic Appeal because of the many ways the Saint Agnes community is Handing on the Light of Christ, particularly to youth. Young people at Saint Agnes parish have many opportunities to come together and learn about Jesus Christ. At the age of 3, Catholic preschoolers can learn about the faith at their own pace in the innovative Catechesis of the Good Shepherd program. Then these young Catholics can move on to either Saint Agnes Elementary School or to the strong parish religious education program.

In later years, there is the opportunity to continue their education at Arlington Catholic. Throughout all of this time, they participate in the outreach and services provided at Fidelity House. On Sundays, the children unite with the rest of the parish community in the celebration of Mass.

Fr. Flatley said, "We are grateful for the help that the central offices and ministries of the Archdiocese provide to Saint Agnes. With the help of departments like the Catholic Schools Office, the Office of Religious Education, and various services that assist us in the management and maintenance of our parish operations, we can do more for our



parishioners and our community. God has blessed us with a loving faith community here at Saint Agnes that cares about one another and which strives to help prepare young Catholics for future leadership in our Church. We thank Cardinal Seán for this honor of being selected as the launch parish for the 2008 Catholic Appeal.”

### **What Contributions Fund**

Gifts to the Catholic Appeal provide 81.8% of the resources for the Archdiocese’s Central Operating Fund, which finances over 50 ministries, programs and offices, including many services for parishes and schools. The Catholic Appeal is to the Archdiocese what the weekly offertory is to our parishes or what an Annual Fund is to a university.

45.6% of gifts received support specialized services to parishes, 21.1% funds education, formation and evangelization efforts, 13.6% underwrites ministries of the Cardinal and the Regional Bishops, 12.5% finances general and operational services, and 7.2% goes for the mailings, materials and management of the Catholic Appeal.

### **Cardinal Seán Celebrates Launch Mass at 4:00 p.m. at Saint Agnes**

After today’s press conference, Cardinal Seán began the 2008 Catholic Appeal campaign in prayer by celebrating the 4:00 p.m. Mass at Saint Agnes. In his homily, Cardinal Seán said “Jesus did not come to attract admirers. He came to call us to be His followers, His disciples, to pattern our lives on His teachings. The more we discover His love, the more we will understand who we are, why we are here and what we have to do with our lives. Our mission requires that we strive to live our lives according to the commandments and the teaching of the Gospel – a road map to living a good life. Part of discipleship means giving of ourselves to build up the Body of Christ – the Church, by using our precious time to volunteer for the activities of the community of Faith. Discipleship also requires that we use our money to build up the Kingdom of God. For all that we have and all that we are is a gift of our God.”

Cardinal Seán went on to ask every Catholic to renew their commitment to discipleship during this season of Lent. “Your contributions to the Catholic Appeal help us as a Catholic community to pass on the faith and to build a civilization of love in serving our brothers and sisters.”

At Mass, parishioners at Saint Agnes received informational brochures that listed all the ministries that are funded through gifts to the Catholic Appeal. These packets are being distributed to Catholics in every parish throughout the Archdiocese. Information is also available online at [www.BostonCatholicAppeal.org](http://www.BostonCatholicAppeal.org).

### **Cardinal Seán O’Malley Homily for the 4th Sunday of Lent, 2008 March 2, 2008**

My dear friends, as we move into our third century as an Archdiocese of Boston, we are so grateful to have this splendid television station to help hand on the faith.

Perez Galdos has left us a wonderful book called *Marianela*. It is the story of a young woman in a village in Spain who has a great capacity for love, for friendship, for service. Marianela had a boyfriend named Pablo who happened to be blind. Marianela cooked for Pablo, washed his clothes, took him for walks, read to him and everyday was so attentive and loving. One day Pablo was sent off to the big city and was operated on for his blindness. And now he now returns to his village and for the very first time in his life he sees this young woman Marianela who loves him more than anyone else in the world ever could or ever would.

But now that he can see, he comes to realize that there are other young women in the village who are prettier than Marianela; and so he breaks off his relationship with her and eventually marries someone else. The irony is of course that when Pablo is blind, he can see. He can see the beauty, the goodness, and the love of Marianela. But when he can see with his eyes, he only sees appearances; he only sees what is on the surface, and appearances often deceive us.

In the book of Samuel, we read how Samuel is sent to anoint a new King for Israel. God warns Samuel not to be fooled by appearances but sends him to anoint not the eldest but the youngest son, David, the shepherd boy. “Not as man sees does God see because man sees the appearances but the Lord looks into the heart.”



Our faith helps us to glimpse the world through God's eyes, to see what is really real, what is truly good, what is really beautiful. In the Gospel, Jesus opens the eyes of a man born blind. The Apostles thought that the blindness of the beggar was a punishment for some sin of his or of his parents. But Jesus says no; it is not a punishment. Jesus sees his blindness as an occasion to manifest God's glory."

Jesus works a miracle and cures the man, but then we see the spiritual blindness of the Pharisees who are incapable of recognizing the true light of the world, Jesus Christ.

Lent for all of us is a Baptismal Retreat as we accompany the 500 adults who will be baptized on Holy Saturday. On Easter we renew our baptismal promises remembering the day when we were washed in the Pool of Siloam, the baptismal font. In our Baptism we are called to enter into Christ's vision of the world and together with our fellow believers build a civilization of love. We do this by living our baptismal call, by coming together to worship on the Sabbath where Jesus makes a gift of Himself to us in the Eucharist. It is here that we find the nourishment to live the mission that Christ has entrusted to us. The word of God, the Bread of Life, together with the witness of our fellow worshipers give us the strength we need to be Christ's disciples.

Jesus did not come to attract admirers. He came to call us to be His followers, His disciples, to pattern our lives on His teachings. The more we discover His love, the more we will understand who we are, why we are here and what we have to do with our lives.

Our mission requires that we strive to live our lives according to the commandments and the teaching of the Gospel – a road map to live a good life. Part of discipleship means giving of ourselves to build up the Body of Christ, the Church, using our precious time to volunteer for the activities of the community of Faith. Discipleship also requires that we use our money to build up the Kingdom of God. For all that we have and all that we are is a gift of our God.

In the New Testament, St. Paul is forever taking up a collection so that the Gentile Christians would come to the rescue of the Hebrew Christians in Jerusalem. I am sure that Paul was quite aware of the spiritual benefit for those who participated in that collection. In the early Church we read that no one was in want, because everyone shared all they had with their brothers and sisters in faith.

Indeed in the Gospels Jesus has many teachings on money, especially the danger it can be when money becomes a false god that keeps us from truly worshipping God and serving our neighbor. Jesus once said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to go through the gates of heaven." Chesterton quipped that ever since Jesus said those words that scientists have been trying to breed smaller camels and engineers have been trying to make larger needles.

The truth is we will all have to give an account some day of how we've used our time, talent and treasure. I am here today to ask every one of you to be generous to the annual Catholic Appeal, a collection that allows our faith community to carry on the mission that Christ entrusted to us. Every gift matters.

In your Church today, please find information packets with brochures that describe all the shared ministries that you support through gifts to the Annual Appeal. I am very grateful to all of those who have been so supportive in the past. Your generosity to the works of the Church will be a source of blessings to you and to countless people who are the beneficiaries of this effort.

Lent is a time of special sacrifice as we strive to deepen our baptismal faith and commitment to discipleship. Your contributions help us as a Catholic community to pass on the faith and to build a civilization of love in serving our brothers and sisters.

May Christ, the light of the world, strengthen our faith and help us to walk the paths of discipleship together, as we as Christ's family strive to carry on the mission He has entrusted to us. God bless you for all that you do for His sake.