

## Annual Catholic Appeal Homily 2020

America's greatest enemy is not from without. It is from within and that enemy is hate. If America ever dies, it will not be through conquest but suicide. Most think the way to heal hate is to be politically correct. But it seems as if even being politically correct to the nth degree does not help, because critics will just pull up a video or a tape recording from a time when no one was politically correct and judge them in that time according to today's standards. That's the essence of the evil of modernism. Being politically correct is ineffective because it leaves our hearts unchanged with all its hidden uneasiness. Hate can only be healed by creating a new focus, and that focus is the third of the three theological virtues, namely love, namely charity.

Charity, first and foremost, is a supernatural gift of God by which we love God above all things, and in that love, to love as He loves. Charity can take many forms, but specifically this evening/morning, we will speak of

charity in terms of generosity or big-heartedness, philanthropy, being generous with our money.

Today's gospel counters the exactness of the Old Testament law (an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth), and introduces the "over and above"ness of Jesus' law. If someone wants your coat, give him your shirt. If anyone presses you for one mile, go for two miles. Today's gospel emphasizes, generosity, going over and above what is expected or required.

St. Augustine's beautiful quote, "God gives where he finds empty hands" is the theme of this year's Appeal. At this time, I ask you to direct your attention the TVs to watch this year's address from Bishop O'Connell.

Show video.

SML has in recent years been very generous to the ACA. Last year, our parish raised \$154,782, surpassing our goal of \$140,000. This year, I am asking everyone to join me in making a gift to this year's appeal, giving what you gave last year, or going "over and above." Echoing Jesus' philanthropy in today's gospel.

The reason why giving to the ACA is important is the funds from ACA help to support the ministries of the diocese that in turn, help ministries in the parish. For example, when we undertook our recent building campaign, I went to the diocese, as I did when there was a building campaign at St. Benedict and the diocese walked me through the process every step of the way. Something I could not have done without.

When we hired Amy Rash as our school principal three years ago, I went to the diocese, and the diocese walked me through the hiring process of a principal every step of the way. Something I could not have done without.

Whenever I come across something as a pastor, and my response is, "Well, that's a first," and I do not know how to handle this "first," I call the diocese. Something I cannot do without.

In your pews are pledge cards and pencils to complete your pledge. On the side of the card with the logo in the upper right corner, please indicate the amount of your gift, and the information below it. If you have already made your pledge via the mailing some of you

have received or on line, please check that box on the card. New to this year's appeal is an approach similar to that of United Way where you can direct your gift to a ministry of the Diocese that is near to your heart. The areas of ministry are listed on the right side of the card. If you intend to pay by credit card, your credit card information is required on the reverse side. Or you can make your pledge and pay by credit card by going on line. That's how I make my gift every year. I'll give everyone a few minutes to complete their card.

Ushers, please collect the pledge cards. If you need a few more minutes to complete your card, you can put it in the collection basket. Also, please leave any unused pledge forms and brochures in the pews and not the book racks so we can get ready for the next Mass.

Thank you for your kind attention and for joining me in making a pledge to this year's Annual Catholic Appeal.

