

**2026 ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL
PARISH LEADERSHIP PROMOTIONAL INFORMATION**



DIOCESE OF MEMPHIS IN TENNESSEE

Office of Development | 901-373-1220 | www.cdom.org

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THEME MESSAGE

Theme: Hearts Poured Out in Love

2026 Annual Catholic Appeal Talking Points

1. The Heart of the Theme

- Hearts Poured Out in Love reflects the very heart of the Gospel.
- Christ does not love halfway—He pours Himself out completely.
- The Annual Catholic Appeal invites us to respond to that same self-giving love through faithful generosity.

2. More Than a Fundraiser

- The Annual Catholic Appeal is not just about raising funds—it is about sustaining the mission of the Church.
- It supports ministries no single parish can accomplish alone, strengthening our shared life as one diocesan family.

3. United as One Church

- Through the Appeal, parishes across West Tennessee come together as one Body in Christ.
- Our gifts—large and small—are united to make a lasting impact across the entire Catholic Diocese of Memphis.

4. Where Your Gift Goes (Mission-Focused)

- Gifts to the Annual Catholic Appeal support:
- Formation of seminarians and future Church leaders
- Home for our retired priests at Villa Vianney
- Evangelization, faith formation, and communications
- Catholic schools, retreats, and spiritual life
- Outreach ministries serving the poor, vulnerable, and those in crisis
- Every ministry is a tangible expression of Christ's love poured out for others.

5. A Shared Responsibility

- The Church's mission continues because the faithful respond generously.
- The Appeal is an invitation—not an obligation—to prayerfully discern how God may be calling each of us to give.

6. Participation Matters

- Participation is just as important as the dollar amount.

- When everyone participates, we witness to unity, sacrifice, and trust in God's providence.

7. Stewardship as a Way of Life

- Giving to the Annual Catholic Appeal is an act of stewardship—recognizing that everything we have is a gift from God.
- Our generosity becomes a visible sign of gratitude, faith, and love in action.

8. Love in Action, Not Just Words

- Hearts Poured Out in Love reminds us that love must be lived, shared, and sustained.
- Through the Appeal, love becomes action—serving real people, meeting real needs, and building a hopeful future for the Church.

9. Invitation to Prayerful Giving

- Parishioners are encouraged to:
- Pray before making their commitment
- Consider an annual, monthly, or one-time gift
- Respond generously and joyfully, trusting that God multiplies every gift

10. A Closing Message

- When we pour out our hearts in love, God works through our generosity to form disciples, strengthen the Church, and carry Christ's presence to every corner of West Tennessee.
- Together, we make this mission possible.

REACHING ALL GENERATIONS AS A FAMILY

- 16 Seminarians and 40+ prospects - Providing the education for our future priests
- Family Life Ministries
- Catholic Campus Ministry – University of Memphis, Rhodes College, University of TN Health Science Center, and the University of Tennessee Martin.
- Catholic Cemeteries – Sacred ground for a family's last resting place together
- Institute for Liturgical Studies – Classes to strengthen spiritual life to be better parents and family leaders
- Our Lady Queen of Peace Retreat Center – Parish men/women retreats, Cursillo retreats
- RCIA training

ALL OF THESE IMPACT THE FAMILY IN MANY, MANY WAYS

Goals:

- To encourage every Catholic to participate in some way
- To secure financial commitments of \$2.5+ Million to support Diocesan ministries for fiscal year 2026-2027

GENERAL TIMELINE

- February 6 Bishop's first letter
- February 21-22 Commitment Weekend
- April 24 Pastor/Seminarian letter
- May 29 Bishop's second letter
- August 15 Final Email ask

Parishes are asked to use the following to promote the Annual Catholic Appeal:

- Video – 2026 Appeal video shown at all Masses in parishes and Social Media Pages
- Lay Speaker to deliver witness talk
- Pastor delivers pulpit talk
- Use of inserts and/or announcements in all parish bulletins (Run bulletin announcement one week before commitment weekend, see Addendum)
- Intercessions during Mass
- Implement the Commitment procedure – gifts/pledges made in all parishes at all Masses.

Following Commitment Weekend:

- Parish secretary/staff: Follow procedure
- Parish: Telephone follow-up calling phase begins
- Bishop/Pastor: Thank you letter mailed to all making gifts
- Bishop: Follow-up letter (w/commitment card) to all who have not yet participated
- Electronic campaign: emails, Facebook postings, etc.

INFORMATIONAL MATERIALS

To be delivered to the parish:

- Annual Catholic Appeal posters
- Annual Catholic Appeal brochure
- “In-Pew” commitment envelopes
- In-pew QR Code Flyers
- 2026 Annual Catholic Appeal Video (available in English and Spanish)

Available on the diocesan web page – www.cdom.org/annual-catholic-appeal in various forms:

- Logo
- 2026 Annual Catholic Appeal Prayer
- Suggested Bulletin Announcements
- Suggested Prayers of the Faithful (Intercessions)
- Pledge Card (English/Spanish)
- In-pew QR Code Flyers
- Parish Manual
- Pledge Guidelines for Parish Staff
- Brochure
- Campaign Poster
- Progress Poster
- Steering Committee
- Social Media Graphics

PARISH LEADERSHIP TEAMS JOB DESCRIPTIONS

This group should include the Presidents/Leaders of all parish clubs and organizations

LAY LEADERS WILL:

- Implement the procedures for the Annual Catholic Appeal and assist the Pastor in the parish effort.
- Recruit other members of the Parish Leadership Team, as needed.
- Help plan, stage, and host any meetings, as appropriate.
- Attend the Parish Leadership Kickoff Luncheon or Dinner.
- Ensure the Commitment Weekend procedures (especially Commitment at Mass) are implemented.
- Coordinate with parish staff person(s) to implement promotion plan at parish.
- Assist in showing the Appeal video at each Mass on commitment weekend.
- Be enthusiastic – make the Annual Catholic Appeal a success.
- Create a positive image – speak and publish positive points about the Appeal and the many programs that provide services to the people of West Tennessee.
- Strive to obtain 100% participation.

PARISH STAFF MEMBER(S) WILL:

- Establish and maintain parish calendar for Appeal activities.
- Maintain list of Parish Leadership Team and other Appeal volunteers.
- Ensure promotional materials (posters, bulletin inserts, commitment cards/envelopes, brochures, etc...) are displayed and distributed at the proper time.
- Assist as required in arrangements for parish meetings, distribution of informational materials, and telephone calling plan.
- Have extra commitment cards available for distribution on Commitment Weekend.
- Coordinate collection of Appeal envelopes/donations with parish secretary on Commitment Weekend and all subsequent weekends during Appeal.
- Coordinate with the Diocesan Department of Development.

WAYS TO IMPROVE PARTICIPATION

(Can be implemented based on your parish needs)

COMMITMENT AT MASS

- One very successful method is to complete the commitment cards immediately following the presentation of the 2026 Annual Catholic Appeal video. This has resulted in very high participation and in reaching the parish goal quickly. The advantage of this process is it encourages people to act while the Appeal is fresh in their minds. This procedure will also reduce the burden of a telephone follow-up if families indicate their intentions on Commitment Weekend.
- The best results occur when the pastor/priest completes a pledge card with the parishioners. Verbally ask them to verify personal information and to prayerfully make a gift selection. If they did not bring a personalized card, have them complete the “in-pew” blank card. It is also beneficial to have either a special collection of the cards or have the parishioners come forward and place cards in a basket at the altar.
- Assure people that every gift is important and every gift helps! Participation is critical to success and shows solidarity with one’s faith family. Those who are not in a position to make a gift are asked to fill out the commitment cards and indicate “prayers only” in the appropriate place. This will reduce the need for telephone follow-up and save expense of additional postage.
- For Commitment Weekend and the weeks to follow, it is very important to have extra “in-pew” commitment cards readily available and easily accessible to parishioners.

USE OF DIOCESAN SPEAKERS *optional

- Individuals from various departments of the Catholic Diocese of Memphis have volunteered to come to parishes to speak about how the Appeal benefits and impacts their ministry. These people have been asked to speak, in their own words, for about 3-5 minutes about the work that they do for the diocese.
- The Annual Catholic Appeal steering committee recommends having speakers the first weekend PRE starts in the fall of 2026. To make arrangements for one of these people to speak some weekend to promote the Appeal process, please call:

USE OF LAY SPEAKERS *optional

- A parish may prefer to have a lay speaker instead of a diocesan speaker. This parishioner would speak about 3-5 minutes giving personal witness as to the importance of the Appeal. These talks can be given prior to introducing the video, during commitment procedures, or at the conclusion of Mass.

TELEPHONE PRE-CALLING PLAN (GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS)

PURPOSE

- The calling plan has a very important purpose: to make each family aware of the importance of participating in the upcoming Annual Catholic Appeal.
- Prior to Commitment Weekend, it is important to contact each family to make them aware of the upcoming Annual Catholic Appeal and to encourage 100% participation.

SAMPLE SCRIPT

“Hi, my name is _____ and I am calling on behalf of Father _____ (pastor). He asked that we notify all of our parishioners of his desire for 100% participation in the upcoming Annual Catholic Appeal. As Catholics, we are part of a larger church, and your participation is needed and appreciated. Please bring your pledge card to Commitment Weekend on _____. Thank you.”

ORGANIZING CALLERS

- The parish calling director is responsible for making arrangements for phone calling. He or she will recruit assistants and they, in turn, will recruit callers.
- The recommended formula for callers is as follows:
 1. Director recruits five assistants (or ten, if needed).
 2. Each assistant recruits five callers.
 3. Each caller calls ten parishioners.
 - a. Some parishes have their own system in place for contacting parishioners. Local procedures instead of the plan given here is the option of the pastor, but the telephone plan is recommended.

Sample Pastor Letter “Volunteering for the Phone Committee”

Thank you for your willingness to serve on the 2026 Annual Catholic Appeal Calling Committee for (Name of Parish).

I am asking that you please call the names on your allotted list beginning Monday, (Date) and before Saturday, (Date). We are merely asking our parishioners to make a ten-month pledge to support the many ministries in which our diocese is involved. This is just a reminder call, and your brief message may be given personally or left on recorders. Please encourage parishioners to participate.

The Annual Catholic Appeal Commitment Weekend is February 21-22.

After you have made the calls, please return the list with response notes in the enclosed envelope. May we all pray for the success of God’s work through the Annual

Catholic Appeal. Remember the many good things accomplished are done in our names as Catholics of the Diocese of Memphis in West Tennessee.

Again, my thanks and may God bless you and your families,

In Christ,
Pastor's Signature

SAMPLE PASTOR LETTER ‘INVITATION TO MAKE CALLS’

I would like to invite you to be involved in the phone calling phase of the Annual Catholic Appeal this year. A personal contact with each of our parishioners is invaluable in terms of encouraging all to be involved. (Committee Chairperson Name) has been most gracious in agreeing to be the Calling Committee Chairperson for this year’s Appeal.

As a member of the Calling Committee, you will be phoning fellow parishioners to remind them of Commitment Weekend, which will be February 21-22. Your brief message inviting them to participate may be given personally or left on recorders anytime between (Date of Commitment Weekend).

You are invited to a Coffee/Pastry meeting day, date and time. At this time, each volunteer will be provided with a short list of names to contact. The list need not be returned to the church office unless it contains comments or information that would be beneficial for us to know: i.e. phone number, address or name changes, left parish, etc.

I hope that you can be present at this short gathering and I look forward to seeing you there. If you are unable to attend, but would still like to be part of the calling committee, please contact the church office (church office phone number).

In Christ,
Pastor's name

SAMPLE PASTOR LETTER “WITH PHONE SCRIPT”

Thank you for agreeing to be part of the Annual Catholic Appeal Calling Committee.

Please begin calling Sunday, (Date) and finish by Saturday, (Date) before 4:30/5:00/5:30 p.m. Mass. Leaving a message on a parishioner’s recorder is permissible. You may use the following script or put the message in your own words.

“Hi, my name is _____ and I am calling on behalf of Father/Monsignor

(pastor). He asked that we notify all of our parishioners of his desire for 100% participation in the upcoming Annual Catholic Appeal. As Catholics, we are part of a larger church and your participation is needed and appreciated. Please bring your pledge card to Commitment Weekend on _____. Thank you.

Any information or comments you receive from parishioners you contact that you feel would be of interest to the church office, (moved, new phone number, disconnected phone number, etc.) please return your list with those notes attached. If there were no changes, you may discard your list when finished calling. I appreciate your help in this important task.

In Christ,
Pastor's Signature

FOLLOW-UP CALLS

(In the week(s) following commitment weekend) preparation for calls

- Following Commitment Weekend, the parish secretary should record commitments made and forward to the diocesan office for recording.
- The phone committee organized for pre-calling should use the list prepared by the parish secretary or the diocesan offices for the phone calls. This list will indicate which families to call for follow-up.
- Follow-up calls should be made starting the week after Commitment Weekend. The recommended time is 6-8 p.m. Calls may be made from any location.
- The following materials should be readied for each follow-up session:
 - List of names of the families to be called
 - Copies of the Appeal brochure and diocesan website address (www.cdom.org) – for more information to answer any questions
 - Parish directory and telephone directory

USE OF POST-COMMUNION ANNOUNCEMENT

“Last weekend we asked all parishioners to make their commitments to the 2026 Annual Catholic Appeal. So far we have received # commitments made for a total of \$. For those of you who have not had an opportunity to complete a commitment card, they are available in the pews. Please take a minute to complete your card and return it to the parish office.”

“Whether or not you contribute, it is important that you complete a commitment card. If you do not wish to contribute, please mark the box indicating you will pray for the Catholic Church in West Tennessee and for this year’s Annual Catholic Appeal

2026 ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL SUGGESTED BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

Bulletin Announcement (Weekend Prior to Commitment Weekend)

Next weekend, _____, is Commitment Weekend for the 2026 Annual Catholic Appeal. Please bring the personalized commitment card you received in the mail to Mass with you as we join together to support our Catholic Church.

Bulletin Announcement (Commitment Weekend)

This weekend is Commitment Weekend for the 2026 Annual Catholic Appeal. Our parish goal is \$ _____. Please complete your pledge card, indicating your gift or pledge to our diocesan church. If you do not have a card, please fill out a commitment card located in the _____. It is important for all of us to participate in order to support our diocesan church.

Bulletin Announcement (Weekend after Commitment Weekend)

Last weekend was our Parish Commitment Weekend for the 2026 Annual Catholic Appeal. If you have not yet completed your card, please prayerfully make your pledge and return it to the church office. Our goal is to have 100% participation in our church family that is the Diocese of Memphis.

Bulletin Announcement (Use until the parish goal is reached)

Thanks to all our parishioners who have made their gift to the Annual Catholic Appeal. (parish name) is _____ % towards our goal of \$ _____. If you have not yet made a gift or pledge, please fill out a commitment card located in the _____. Please participate in the support of our diocesan church.

2026 ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL

SUGGESTED PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

- That the Church in the Catholic Diocese of Memphis may continue to be a living sign of Christ's love poured out for the world, strengthened through the ministries supported by the Annual Catholic Appeal, we pray to the Lord.
- That God may open our hearts to respond with faith and generosity, recognizing that every gift offered through the Annual Catholic Appeal is an act of love that builds up the Body of Christ, we pray to the Lord.
- That all who are formed, healed, comforted, and accompanied through diocesan ministries may encounter Christ's presence and experience hope through the faithful support of the Annual Catholic Appeal, we pray to the Lord.
- That pastors, clergy, and all who lead and serve in diocesan ministries may be renewed in strength and wisdom as they carry out the mission made possible by the Annual Catholic Appeal, we pray to the Lord.
- That as one diocesan family, we may grow in unity and shared responsibility, pouring out our hearts in love so the Church may continue Christ's work throughout West Tennessee, we pray to the Lord.

2026 ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL PLEDGE CARD GUIDELINES FOR PARISHES

With an expectation of processing approximately 6,000 pledges, the following guidelines are designed to make the processing of such pledges flow as smoothly as possible at the parish and the Catholic Center.

Parishes will NO LONGER need to enter the pledge cards into PDS Church Office. The CATHOLIC CENTER is the SYSTEM OF RECORD for all Annual Catholic Appeal pledges and contributions.

Please REMOVE the ANNUAL APPEAL from your parish Online Giving page. Please follow the procedures below depending on how you send pledge cards to the Catholic Center. The 2 options are either drop off or mail in bundles. Please SUBMIT one bundle per week if possible. Put the Sunday collection date on the lower left corner of the envelope. You DO NOT need to run a tape on each batch.

PLEASE submit a HANDWRITTEN PLEDGE CARD with payments that do not have a pledge card submitted. (Anonymous for cash given with no name attached) Be sure to put your parish name for credit towards your annual goal.

If dropping off at the Catholic Center:

Please drop off at 5825 Shelby Oaks Drive, Memphis TN. No one is working in the front office from 12:15-12:45 to open the gate. If you arrive at that time, please call Allison Thron at 901-373-1220.

A. SEALED RETURN ENVELOPES –

1. DO NOT OPEN any sealed return envelopes containing the pledge card and/or payment.
2. These can be bundled together and just dropped off.

B. NO RETURN ENVELOPES – please bundle in the following groups

1. PLEDGES – With no payments (no ACH, check or credit card info)
2. PLEDGES – With CHECK payment ONLY (excluding those with void check for ACH draft)
 - a. Please stack in order, first pledge card, then check, and repeat. Please do not staple check or paperclip to the pledge card.
3. PLEDGES – With ACH and Credit cards (including those with void check for ACH draft)
 - a. Please stack in order, first pledge card, then voided check (if one sent), and repeat. Please do not staple voided check or paperclip to the pledge card.
4. PLEDGES – With cash payment enclosed

- a. For control purposes, ANY cash received with pledge cards MUST be deposited by the parish and a parish check issued to the Catholic Appeal for the total amount of cash received. Please batch the pledge cards and parish check separately and make sure you tell us the donor's name, Diocese ID# and amount for each person who gave cash. PARISH CHECK MUST ACCOMPANY PLEDGE CARDS.

If mailing in bundles:

Please send to: Annual Catholic Appeal

PO Box 341669 Memphis, TN 38184-1669

A. SEALED RETURN ENVELOPES –

1. DO NOT OPEN any sealed return envelopes containing the pledge card and/or payment.
2. These can be bundled together and just mailed in.

B. NO RETURN ENVELOPES – please bundle in the following groups

1. PLEDGES – With no payments (no ACH, check or credit card info)
2. PLEDGES – With CHECK payment ONLY (excludes those with void check for ACH draft)
 - a. Please stack in order, first pledge card, then check, and repeat. Please do not staple check or paperclip to the pledge card.
3. PLEDGES – With ACH and Credit cards (including those with void check for ACH draft)
 - a. Please stack in order, first pledge card, then voided check (if one sent), and repeat. Please do not staple voided check or paperclip to the pledge card.
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ASSISTANCE

If you or a donor have any questions or need assistance regarding general donor or pledge matters, contact Karin Starnes at karin.starnes@cc.cdom.org or 901-373-1271.

ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL LAY TEAM MEMBER CHECKLIST

- Pray for the parish appeal's success.
- Read the resource manual in its entirety.
- Follow the timetable.
- Become familiar with all the Annual Catholic Appeal materials.
- Recruit a sufficient number of volunteers to assist you for campaign preparation, commitment weekend, follow-up, and telephone calling.
- Assist your pastor in all areas of conducting a smooth in-church solicitation.
- Display posters in visible places.
- See that the bulletin announcements are placed in the parish bulletin weekly.
- Arrange for pulpit announcements each week.
- See that the Prayers of the Faithful for the appeal are available each week.
- Make sure that a generous supply of Annual Catholic Appeal brochures and pledge cards are available in the pews.
- Arrange for the Annual Catholic Appeal video to be shown based on commitment weekend.
- Aim for 100% participation, and provide opportunities for every parishioner to be able to fill out a pledge card.