

Frequently Asked Questions about the Idaho Catholic Appeal

Why is our Diocese conducting the Idaho Catholic Appeal? Each year, the Bishop asks each and every one of the more than 170,000 Catholics living in Idaho to participate in the Appeal. He asks us to generously support the on-going ministries of the Church that provide educational, pastoral, and charitable outreach to those living in the Diocese. The Idaho Catholic Appeal provides about 70 percent of the support needed to fund the diocesan ministries each year. The other funding comes from parish assessments, fees for services, investment income and grants, and other donations.

Why do we need the ministries and services provided by the diocese? Many very important programs, ministries and services are beyond the resources of any single parish. It would be impossible for an individual parish to duplicate the scope of ministries and services provided by the Diocese. By having the Diocese coordinate programs such as religious education, seminarian education and vocations, deacon and lay ministry formation, college campus ministries, prison ministries, etc. we eliminate the duplication of services and save both time and money. The Idaho Catholic Appeal funds over 20 separate diocesan ministries and programs and helps support five ministries of the Universal Church.

Is it important to give to the Idaho Catholic Appeal even though I am already giving to my parish? The programs of local parishes are very important because much of the work of the Church and the Diocese takes place at the local level. But, there are certain specialized services such as education, vocations, clergy special needs and priest retirement, diocesan conferences and trainings, and the Nazareth Retreat Center for which the Diocese takes the major responsibility. These are services no one parish can provide and must be shared by all of us.

What should I give to the Idaho Catholic Appeal? God has given each one of us gifts, graces, talents and abilities which are to be shared responsibly and wisely with others. Faithful stewardship is more than occasional acts of charity and service. It is a way of life, a commitment to the giving of our time, talent, and treasure in gratitude for all the blessings we have received. We are continuously challenged to make our financial gifts from substance, not abundance, in proportion to the blessings we have received. As a guide, some give one tenth or 10% of their income. Often they break it down to 5% to their parish, 1% to the Idaho Catholic Appeal, and the remaining 4% to other favorite charities. For some families 10% is right, for other families 10% may be too high or low. Your decision on how much to give needs to be personal and prayerful.

How is each parish goal set? The parish appeal goal is based on an average of the parish's offertory (called "ordinary income") for the past three years divided by the 3-year total offertory income average of the diocese. The resulting figure is then multiplied by the overall appeal goal to determine the individual parish goal. The Bishop asks each parish to do its best to make or surpass its goal. There is a rebate given back to the parish when it surpasses 110% of its goal.

Why does the parish have to pay an annual "assessment" as well as run a campaign for the Idaho Catholic Appeal? Many people mistakenly think the Catholic Church in Rome supports dioceses financially. Dioceses support their own work with the financial help of parishes. Each parish assessment is set at 6% of the parish's offertory income (5% if the parish is on "cash management" with the diocese). The assessment pays for more of the operational overhead of the diocese while the Idaho Catholic Appeal funds the various ministries of the diocese. Also, the Idaho Catholic Appeal seeks donations of "new money," helping to keep the assessment at one of the lowest rates across the country and enabling parishes to use its regular income for local programs and services.