

2024 PARISH GUIDE



SERVING THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH
IN EASTERN MONTANA

*Go Make
Disciples!*





Table of Contents

| | |
|---|--------------|
| Welcome Letter..... | 1 |
| Appeal by the Numbers..... | 2 |
| Your Parish ACA Team..... | 3 |
| Campaign Materials..... | 4-5 |
| Timeline & Calendar..... | 6-7 |
| Tips for a Successful Campaign..... | 8 |
| Announcement Weekend - <i>January 20 & 21, 2024</i> | 9 |
| Commitment Weekend - <i>February 3 & 4, 2024</i> | 10-11 |
| Reminders about Processing ACA Donations..... | 12 |
| Frequently Asked Questions..... | 13 |

Dear Priests and Parish Leaders,

As we approach the 2024 Annual Catholic Appeal (ACA), I want to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to all pastors, parish staff, and volunteers who assisted in making the ACA a success! 2023 was our most successful appeal to date because of YOU. We continued to trust that the people of God of Eastern Montana would give generously, and they responded, raising 95% of our overall goal (as of the printing of this document)! The ACA funds vital ministries and services that benefit all 50 parishes, 50 missions, 11 schools, numerous ministries, and the wider community in the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings. **THANK YOU FOR YOUR PART!**

This is your 2024 Parish Kit. It is for your church or churches (if you are in a cluster or minister to more than just one church/location). This parish guide serves as an outline to conduct the 2024 ACA for your parish. This year, we will be mailing to approximately 13,550 registered households in the Diocese.

Our goal for the 2024 ACA remains at \$1,700,000. We promised to give this “new” no assessment, true appeal process at least two years to see if it would work. After the success in 2023, we have determined that we will continue **without** financial assessments for 2024. This does not decrease the role you play – if anything, this increases the importance of your verbal and outright support of the ACA within your parishes! Our other goal is to continue to **increase participation** across the Diocese. The goal is 100% participation, yes – 100%. When we all give, we can accomplish much more, and our parishioners will be more connected to the ministries of the Diocese. Last year, we accomplished an increase to 26% participation throughout the Diocese (as of the printing of this document). **Led by our own examples of giving** to the ACA we can raise that even higher this year!

Once again, I will be emailing resources to use each week. I am also still scheduling Parish/Cluster visits between January 20 – May 26, 2024. If you have not yet scheduled me to come to your churches – please contact me ASAP to arrange a date. Bishop Fleming has requested that if I have not visited your church yet, that we schedule that this year.

Please know that I am here to help! Feel free to contact me with any questions or for additional resources. I can be reached at **(406) 604-1854** or **BPugh@diocesegfb.org**.

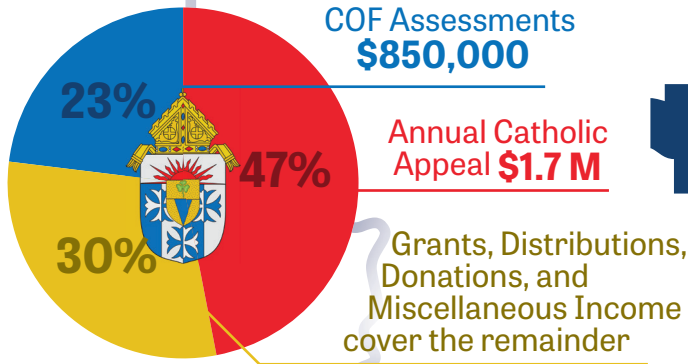
With Gratitude and Blessings,



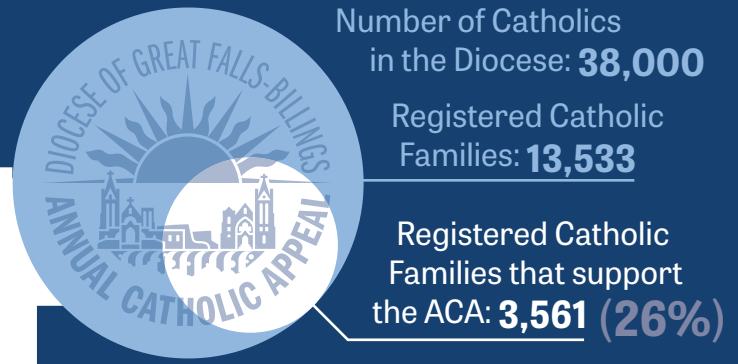
Becky Pugh

Director of Mission Advancement

ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL BY THE NUMBERS



Annual Budget for the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings: **\$3,630,479**

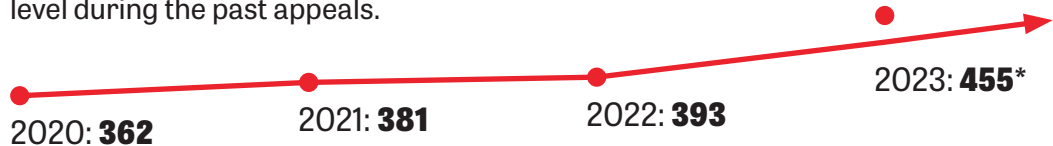


| Year | Raised | Participation | Avg. Gift |
|------|--------------|---------------|-----------|
| 2023 | \$1,601,277* | 26.3%* | \$449.67* |
| 2022 | \$1,369,678 | 23.6% | \$420.28 |
| 2021 | \$1,509,242 | 24.1% | \$454.32 |
| 2020 | \$1,544,098 | 24.8% | \$452.95 |



ST. MATTHIAS GIVING CIRCLE GIFTS:

Our donors who contribute \$1,000 or more to the Appeal are truly why we have been able to successfully eliminate assessments for our parishes. We recognize that without their involvement, we may not have the success we do with this giving-based appeal. Because of this, we established a “Giving Circle” to honor and recognize those donors in 2022. While public recognition was only established last year, we have been able to see the number of donors who have given at that dollar level during the past appeals.



ST. PIUS X FAITHFUL STEWARDS:

Our donors who make sustaining gifts – gifts that are given month after month, year after year – are also important to creating a steady cash flow for the Diocese and help to lower the costs of the appeal and gift processing. Additionally, they often increase the amount of gift that a donor can give. With this in mind, we are establishing the *St. Pius X Faithful Stewards Giving Circle* in 2024.

This also helps respond to what we have been hearing over the past year. Parishioners were asking for an opportunity to be a part of a “Giving Circle” or recognized group but were not able to give \$1,000 or more per year to the Appeal. The *St. Pius X Faithful Stewards* helps to do just that.

In 2023, we had approximately 244 sustaining donors.

*2023 numbers are as of December 5, 2023.

YOUR PARISH ACA TEAM

A strong and faith-filled parish Annual Catholic Appeal Team is essential for a successful Appeal. This includes the pastor, parish staff, and dedicated parishioners who have a history of stewardship with your parish, are involved in parish life, and are committed to seeing your parish succeed with the ACA.

Pastor

As shepherd of the parish, the pastor is also the leader of the ACA effort. The pastor sets the tone for the Appeal, if he is positive and enthusiastic about the ACA and the good work our Annual Appeal accomplishes each year throughout the Diocese, his parishioners will be, too.

A pastor's responsibilities include:

- Supporting the ACA openly, in conversation and action.
- Playing the ACA Video or making it easily accessible for his parishioners.
- Delivering and participating in the Commitment Weekends process – following the In-Pew Solicitation process as suggested (see page 9-11).
- Making a personal gift to the ACA. We know that when the pastor gives to the ACA, the parishioners usually follow. Remember, the size of gift is not as important as that a gift is given.
- Including the ACA in the weekly intentions, mass announcements, and bulletin announcements (samples are emailed to use weekly) throughout the Appeal.
- Including the ACA Prayer as a part of Mass throughout the Appeal.

Parish Coordinator

The Parish Coordinator is the parish staff member responsible for keeping the ACA campaign organized and on task, ensuring that donations and commitment cards from the parish are sent to the Diocese Accounting Department in a timely manner.

The Parish Coordinator's responsibilities include:

- Following the ACA Parish Guide to ensure that timelines and special announcements are completed on the appropriate weekends.
- Ensuring that posters and thermometers are displayed prominently, removing old appeal materials, and keeping the extra supply of commitment cards, brochures, etc. neat, organized, and in a designated and shared location at each church.
- Working with the pastor to receive and process the ACA contributions and commitment cards and forwarding those to the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings in a timely manner.
- Working with parishioners, as needed, to ensure that checks are written to the Diocese versus parish, depositing cash and sending that as a check to the Diocese, etc. following good accounting practices.

Parish Staff or Volunteers

The Parish Staff or Key Volunteers lead the Appeal process for the parish, encouraging parishioners to support the ministries funded by the ACA. They work closely with the Parish Coordinator to coordinate the ACA effort and ensure good practices are followed.

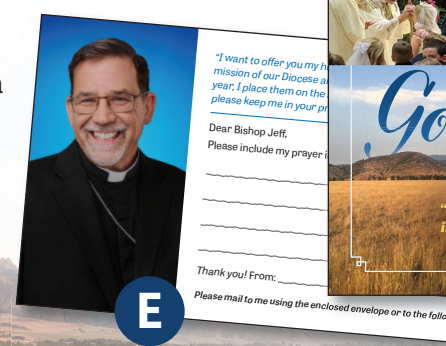
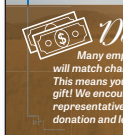
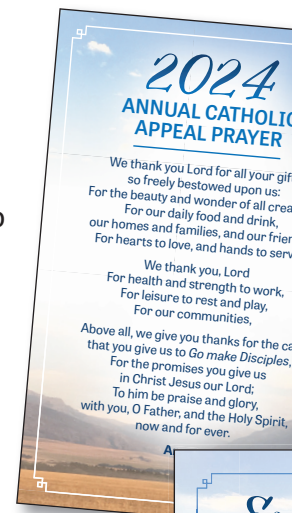
The Parish Staff and Key Volunteers responsibilities include:

- Encouraging parishioner support of the ACA.
- Ensuring that the ACA is included in the weekly intentions, Mass announcements, bulletin announcements, on the parish website or social media pages, etc.
- Assisting with updating the parish participation thermometer weekly.
- Speaking at Mass or to parish groups about the ministries of the Diocese.

CAMPAIGN MATERIALS

Included in your Parish Kit are the following:

- A 2024 ACA Parish Guide:** This is the Appeal Guide. This is used to help guide you through the ACA campaign. Please share this or a copy of this with any key Parish Staff who will be assisting with the ACA for your church(es).
- B Campaign Posters:** These are posters with our 2024 theme “Go Make Disciples.” We have increased the number of posters for each of you this year. Please have one on or next to all exit doors from the church and on any main bulletin board areas. These should be easily and readily visible. Please also ensure all prior year’s materials have been removed (we found items that dated back as far as 2017 in some parishes last year).
- C Participation Thermometer Posters:** We will continue to focus on increasing participation now that we do not have financial goals specific to each church. You will have one for each of your churches. Please write your church name on the poster. You will receive an email with the numbers to put on your poster. Please **ACTIVELY** use these with your parish. We encourage you to have this accessible so that you can “color in” each weekend the increases in participation for that week. These should be placed in a prominent location and shared with your parishioners. This can help inspire people to give.
- D Prayer Cards:** These cards should also be placed in all your pews for the duration of the appeal campaign, and we encourage you to use this prayer as part of your Mass, whether around the time of the offertory, before dismissal, or wherever you best see fit.
- E Prayer Intention Cards:** We included a few prayer intention cards for each church to have available for anyone who did not receive one or misplaced theirs. They can use these cards to send prayer requests to Bishop Fleming. These should be kept with the commitment cards and brochures at a specific, shared location within the church.
- F QR Code & Instructions Card:** These cards should be placed in all your pews for the duration of the appeal campaign. They have the QR code for people to be able to give online with their phones. It also includes instructions on how to give via phone and QR codes. This makes it easier for parishioners to give, no stamp or check needed!
- G Commitment Cards & Envelopes:** These will be used for the First and Second Commitment Weekends. They should be distributed during the “In-Pew Ask Process” (*not just left in pews*) for anyone who did not bring their personalized card from their mailing. Additionally, these should be located at a specific location within the church for people to access at any point during the appeal campaign. Please always share that location with your parishioners. If you are running out, please contact Becky for more.
- H Brochures:** We included a few brochures for each church to also have available for parishioners. These should be kept with the commitment cards at a specific, shared location within the church.



4 *Go Make Disciples!*



SERVING THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN EASTERN MONTANA



Go Make Disciples!

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."
Matthew 28:19

2024 PARISH GUIDE

SERVING THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN EASTERN MONTANA

Go Make Disciples!

Did You Know?
Many employers sponsor matching gift programs and match charitable contributions made by their employees. You could double or even triple the value of your gifts. We encourage you to talk to your human resources representative to see if your company will match your gifts and learn their guidelines for giving.

- Charitable IRA Rollover
- Securities: Stocks, Bonds, Mutual Fund Shares
- Livestock & Grain
- Mineral Interests & Royalties

Go Make Disciples!

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Phone #: _____ E-mail: _____
My home parish is: _____

Please make checks payable to: **Diocese of Great Falls-Billings**. Gifts are tax deductible as allowed by law. *Final gifts must be received by Dec. 31, 2024, to help us reach our 2024 Diocesan goal.*

2024 ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL

In appreciation for God's gifts, please accept my gift of:
 \$1000 \$500 \$100 Other _____

Please choose from these payment options: (can be more than one)

- 1 St. Matthias Giving Circle: \$ _____
 I will fulfill my pledge in _____ installments. *St. Matthias Giving Circle members give \$1,000 or more during the year to the ACA.*
- 2 St. Pius X Faithful Steward: \$ _____ monthly until I ask you to stop.
 Continue my monthly gift as is. Change my monthly gift to the amount above.
- 3 One-Time Gift Enclosed: \$ _____
- 4 Committing to a Gift of: \$ _____ to be paid by Dec. 31, 2024.

Required Credit Card and EFT info on back.



How to scan the QR Code to Donate to the Annual Catholic Appeal

- STEP 1. Take out your cell phone and open the camera.
- STEP 2. Point your camera at the QR Code below.
- STEP 3. Once your camera scans the notification to be directed to the Annual Catholic Appeal page. Then click on "Give Now."
- STEP 4. Complete your online donation!

Scan Here

QR visit: [DioceseGFB.org/ACA](https://diocesegfb.org/aca) to make your pledge online today!

DIocese OF GREAT FALLS-BILLINGS

SERVING THE ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH IN EASTERN MONTANA

Go Make Disciples!

"Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit."
Matthew 28:19

Attn: Bishop Fleming
PO Box 1939
Great Falls, MT 59403

TIMELINE

January 9-11: Parish Kits Arrive

This is your Parish Kit. Please know that if you are in a cluster or are ministering to more than one church – materials were included for all your churches, please distribute materials accordingly.

★ **January 20-21: Announcement Weekend**

Please put up your 2024 ACA posters at every exit and/or main bulletin board(s) just prior to this weekend. We sent extra this year to ensure you have enough to display. During Mass and in bulletins – please let parishioners know that in 2 weeks we will kick off the ACA with an in-pew giving process.

☆ **January 27-28**

Pulpit and bulletin announcements and reminders for Commitment Weekend.

January 30 – February 1: First Ask Mailing

We have two types of initial mailings that will be going out. For those who have contributed to the campaign in 2022 and/or 2023 – they will receive a full packet with letter, brochure, commitment card, prayer card, and prayer intention card. For those who did not give in 2022 and/or 2023, they will receive a full color folded post card with abbreviated materials. We have done this to increase involvement with the mailings by prior non-givers (our research shows more people open the post card) and to decrease the overall cost of the Appeal.

★ **February 3-4: First Commitment Weekend**

ACA Kick-off in all parishes. Present the in-pew solicitation script and – if possibly a lay witness presentation. See samples on pages 9-11.

Following weeks:

Continue to make pulpit and bulletin announcements, include the ACA in your Prayers of the Faithful, recite the ACA Prayer, sing the ACA song, update your ACA progress thermometers for all your churches individually and share how much has been given. The QR code instructions should remain in the pews. Please also have brochures, commitment cards, and envelopes available for parishioners to use.

○ **February 14: Ash Wednesday/Lent Begins**

† **March 31: Easter Sunday**

April 2-4: Second Ask Mailing

Second ask mailing will arrive in homes for those who have not yet given. Occasionally, some people will receive a mailing if they gave their gift after the cutoff date for material printing.

★ **April 6-7: Second Announcement Weekend**

During Mass and in bulletins, please remind parishioners that they will have received a mailing over the last week from Bishop Fleming about ACA, if they have not yet given and to please look for those. Also remind your parishioners that the following weekend will be our Second Commitment Weekend.



April 13-14: Second Commitment Weekend

Present the in-pew solicitation script again this weekend. Ensure you have the QR code & instructions in every pew and that you have commitment cards and envelopes to distribute during Mass. This is an opportunity to reach everyone who is at Mass and may not have given yet and will boost your participation percentages. The in-pew process is extremely successful when it is used/ followed.

May 21-23: Third Ask Mailing (if needed)

Third ask mailing will arrive in homes, if needed. This goes to the parishioners who have not yet given. Again, on occasion some people will receive this mailing if they gave their gift after the cutoff date for material printing. This will be the last "ask" mailing for the 2024 Appeal.



May 25-26: Wrap up Weekend

Final weekend of the 2024 **ACTIVE** ACA campaign. Gifts can still be given through December 31, 2024. Please share about your success, participation and encourage those who have not yet given, to please contribute. Thank your parishioners for their participation on behalf of Bishop Fleming, the Diocese & your parish(es).

2024 ACA CALENDAR

January

| Sun | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat |
|-----|-----|--------------------------|-----|-------|-----|-----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| | | -- Parish kits arrive -- | | | | |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 1 | | |
| | | -- First Ask Mailing --> | | | | |

February

| Sun | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat |
|-----|-----|-------------------------|-----|-------|-----|-----|
| | | 30 | 31 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| | | -- First Ask Mailing -- | | | | ★ |
| 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
| 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 16 | 16 | 17 |
| 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 |
| 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | | |

March

| Sun | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat |
|-----|-----|------|-----|-------|-----|-----|
| | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 |
| 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 |
| 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 |
| 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 |
| 31 | | | | | | |
| † | | | | | | |

April

| Sun | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat |
|-----|-----|--------------------------|-----|-------|-----|-----|
| | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| | | -- Second Ask Mailing -- | | | | ★ |
| 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 |
| 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 | 20 |
| 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 |
| 28 | 29 | 30 | | | | |

May

| Sun | Mon | Tues | Wed | Thurs | Fri | Sat |
|-----|-----|-------------------------|-----|-------|-----|-----|
| | | | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 |
| 19 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 |
| | | -- Third Ask Mailing -- | | | | ★ |
| 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | |
| ★ | | | | | | |

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL

▶ **Be Prepared.**

Study the materials. Have a good understanding of the Annual Catholic Appeal (ACA) and how it makes a difference for YOUR parish and for the Diocese. If you do not understand any aspect of the ACA, please reach out and ask. The better you understand, the better your parishioners will also understand.

▶ **Start Early.**

Be ready well in advance. Look at all the materials, study and know the provided “scripts.” Add the timeline to your schedule so you are prepared.

▶ **Create a Positive Image.**

Promote the ACA in a positive manner. Explain how the Diocese and parishes work together and how diocesan services are a benefit to your parish. The positive support of a pastor can make or break a campaign. It is very important that pastors show strong active leadership and involvement throughout the Appeal.

▶ **Strive for Greater Participation.**

Stress participation. Point out that every person is asked to respond to the Appeal, that we are seeking 100% participation. Use the provided participation thermometer to keep your Church focused on how every person and every gift makes a difference. Update it each weekend. Encourage people who have never given to do so this year.

▶ **Encourage Pledging and/or Sustaining Gifts.**

Remind people that they can make a bigger gift when they pledge over a period of months.

▶ **Be Consistent.**

Make sure that you continue to mention and focus on the ACA throughout the campaign. If you do not talk about it, your parishioners will not feel it is important. If you only talk about it on Commitment Weekend, those who missed Mass will not feel it is a priority. Include the ACA each week in the Prayers of the Faithful, during closing announcements, and in your bulletin every week.

▶ **Use the ACA Video.**

We have a video focused on the 2024 ACA. Use this to share about the ACA. If you have the ability to play it during Mass – please watch it together on Commitment Weekends and test your equipment ahead of time. Share it on your website or social media. Put the video link in your emails.

▶ **Share the Diocese ACA Link on your Website.**

Make it easy for your parishioners to give. Share the Diocese ACA link on your website so your parishioners can go directly to the Diocese website to give. This decreases your workload of following up on checks written to your church or your online giving and needing to transfer those to the Diocese.

▶ **Pray.**

Ask your parishioners to pray for the success of this year’s Appeal.

ANNOUNCEMENT WEEKEND

1. Announcement weekend is **January 20th & 21st**
2. This weekend is an opportunity for you to introduce the Annual Catholic Appeal with the theme “Go Make Disciples” and inspire your parishioners to prayerfully consider giving to this campaign. Encourage everyone to give what they can, whether that’s matching or increasing their donation from last year or giving for the first time. Ask that they watch for a mailing from Bishop Fleming that should be arriving during the upcoming week and ask for them to say “yes” to supporting this year’s Appeal knowing that they are making an important impact in the Great Commission that Jesus gave us to “Go Make Disciples.” Ask your parishioners to bring their commitment cards and envelopes with them to Mass February 3-4 to participate in Commitment Weekend.
3. Please ensure that you have posters up in areas of high visibility – we sent extras to ensure you can have one at your exit doors and main bulletin board areas. (Please do not use/distribute the QR instruction cards or commitment cards and envelopes yet.)

4. EXAMPLE:

“The 2024 Annual Catholic Appeal kicks off with Commitment Weekend Feb 3rd and 4th. This year’s theme is “Go Make Disciples.” This is the mission that Jesus gave to every single one of us – to Go... Make... Disciples. The Annual Catholic Appeal provides us with an easy and convenient way to meet that call – by supporting the ministries and programs of the Diocese that are at work every day in Eastern Montana. Our gifts to the ACA support priorities and needs facing our Diocese that a single parish alone cannot address. I encourage you to prayerfully consider giving to this appeal. Once again, we are striving to increase our participation and ideally have 100% of you give. The size of your donation is not our main focus, but rather that we all give a sacrificial gift as a way to support the mission of the Church. We would love it if you could give what you did last year or perhaps a little bit more. For those of you who have never given, we invite you to give for the first time this year. Watch your mailbox for a mailing from Bishop Fleming this week. I ask that each of you respond to our Bishop’s invitation to support this annual campaign by returning your pledge or gift during Commitment Weekend or soon thereafter. Please bring your commitment card and envelope with you in 2 weeks. We will also have some here. Your support will help our parish and thousands of our Catholic brothers and sisters in our Diocese.”

5. EXAMPLE:

“Go Make Disciples.” You are going to hear this expressed over and over as we kick off the 2024 Annual Catholic Appeal with Commitment Weekend February 3rd & 4th. The theme, “Go Make Disciples,” reminds us that this is the Great Commission. It is our duty to be involved and to actively “Go Make Disciples.” The ACA is one way we can do that, it is how we support the ministries and programs provided to not only our parish but also across Eastern Montana. I encourage you to prayerfully consider giving to the Appeal this year. Every gift counts and no gift is too small. Please consider matching or giving just a bit more than you did last year. And for those of you who have not given previously, please consider giving for the first time this year. Bishop Fleming has mailed out information that you should be receiving in your mailboxes this week. Look that over and bring your commitment card and envelope to Mass the first weekend of February.

IN-PEW PROCESS FOR COMMITMENT WEEKEND

1. Starting Mass on Commitment Weekend – February 3rd & 4th

We recommend and encourage each parish to focus on the Annual Catholic Appeal at the very beginning of Mass. The celebration of Mass should begin as it does each week with the procession to the altar with the Gathering Song, Sign of the Cross, and the Greeting. Then, invite the assembly to be seated and call attention to the Annual Catholic Appeal Commitment Weekend. Afterward, invite the assembly to stand and continue with the Mass as usual, beginning with the Penitential Act.

2. Presentation at Mass – immediately following the Greeting

Pastor: *“Good Morning! (Good Evening!) Today, we celebrate Commitment Weekend for the Annual Catholic Appeal. We are blessed to have a faith-filled and generous parish community. Your sacrifice impacts the mission and ministries of our Diocese. I say “our Diocese” because our Bishop provides support where no parish alone can meet the faith community’s needs. This year we are called to focus on the Great Commission from Jesus. By supporting the ACA, you are helping to support the important work of the Catholic Church in Eastern Montana and our call to “Go Make Disciples.”*

***If you have video capacity – this is a good place to play the video of Bishop Fleming from the Diocese webpage or YouTube channel. Introduce the video by saying, “Let us take a moment and listen to a message from Bishop Fleming on the Annual Catholic Appeal with stories of a few ways your gifts to the ACA impact the ministries of the Church that support our families throughout Eastern Montana.” After the video, “Thank you for your attention.”*

3. In-Pew Gift Reflection and Commitment – immediately following the Homily

Pastor: *“We are a truly blessed community to have the opportunity to support and grow these critical and essential ministries. As you consider your gift to the year’s Annual Catholic Appeal, please remember that 100% of your gifts support these and other ministries and programs within the Diocese and our own parish. I’d like to pause here and ask each of you to take a moment to reflect on your intended gift to the Annual Catholic Appeal. Then, renew your commitment – or make a gift for the first time – by filling out the commitment card that you brought with you or that are being passed out. You can also take out your phones and use the cameras to scan the QR code and follow the instructions on the card in your pew. Our goal is to have 100% participation in the ACA this year – so please know that any gift makes a difference, but the biggest difference will be what happens in your life when you make a sacrificial gift and help to “Go Make Disciples.”*

4. Distribute Commitment Cards, Envelopes, Pens/Pencils

Pass out commitment cards, envelopes, and pens/pencils to those who need them. This is an active step and therefore, you are best to ask ushers or a children’s group to pass out these supplies **at this time**. (Do not have the commitment cards in the pews ahead of time, wait for this step.)

5. Completing the Commitment Card – following Step #3

Pastor: *“Each head of household should now have a commitment card and envelope. You may have remembered to bring your card from the letter you received in the mail, or you may have already made your pledge through the Diocese. If not, I encourage each head of household to submit a commitment card today. Now, please join me in filling out this card line by line, starting with our name.”* (Smile and say) *“Please write neatly.”* **(Pastor/leadership at front of the church/ambo should fill out a Commitment Card with parishioners.)** *“Let’s now move to filling out our address... and then our commitment intention information.”* (When the congregation is looking up toward the front of the church, say:) *“Thank you!” Let us complete our commitment to serve our communities through the Annual Catholic Appeal by coming together as a community of faith and putting our Commitment Cards in the basket at the altar. The ushers will release and direct each pew. We invite you to approach the altar as a family to present your gift for the Annual Catholic Appeal.”*

6. Presentation of Commitment Cards – following Step #5

(Ushers direct pews and procession to present commitment cards/envelopes)

Musician should play the ACA song or another celebratory song during the procession. When the procession ends:

Pastor: *“On behalf of Bishop Fleming and myself, but most especially on behalf of those who will benefit from your generous and prayerful gifts, I thank you for your support, commitment, and loving response to God through the Annual Catholic Appeal.”*

Q: Why is the In-Pew Process so important?

A: Even though parish members will receive the mailing, many will not respond to it. Even in the most mature appeals, only about 15% of parish households donate in the first mailing. Many people ignore direct mail, and many others are not on their parish list and, therefore, do not receive the mailing. Although some will not respond because they are not interested in giving, many simply ignore direct mail appeals, forget to fill it out and/or misplace it.

Q: Why do an in-pew process?

A: The in-pew process is effective in alerting Mass-attending parishioners that their support is needed. Moreover, the in-pew process will solicit those parishioners who have never registered and, therefore, never received the Bishop’s mailing.

Q: Do I need to follow the suggested in-pew Process?

A: The in-pew solicitation process must be followed meticulously. It is important to do the full in-pew process as directed because it will succeed in obtaining pledges from far more people than just inviting people to take envelopes home or stop at a table. The in-pew process assures that each parishioner who attends that Mass understands that he/she is being invited to consider making a pledge at that time.

Q: Why are we doing a second Commitment Weekend this year?

A: Many Catholics do not attend Mass at their own parish every weekend. If they miss Mass on the first Commitment Weekend, they are more likely to pledge during the second in-pew process than they are to stop at a table after Mass. This goes a long way towards reaching and exceeding our goals.

REMINDERS ABOUT PROCESSING ACA DONATIONS

Processing Donations

- All contributions for the Annual Catholic Appeal should be processed through the Pastoral Center. Please encourage parishioners to write their check directly to: *Diocese of Great Falls-Billings* and/or to make their EFT or Credit Card commitment on the Diocese ACA webpage.
- All contributions will be recorded utilizing parishioner data in conjunction with the Parish Soft Family Suite program. Your parish will have access to view your parish's donations via that program.
- Monthly donations via EFT (Electronic Funds Transfer) will be offered and encouraged through the Appeal. These will be managed by the Pastoral Center and will not require parish staff to process.
- "Thank You" letters and year-end tax statements for the Annual Catholic Appeal received by the Diocese will be completed by the Pastoral Center staff.
 - Remember, if you receive a check written to your parish and you then send a parish check versus having the check rewritten by the donor – legally, you are responsible for the tax statement at the end of the year. We encourage you to ask parishioners to re-write those checks directly to the Diocese.

Methods of Giving

● Cash or Check

- These can be one-time gifts or can be made on multiple occasions for any amount.
- Please encourage parishioners to write checks to: Diocese of Great Falls-Billings.
- Please encourage parishioners to write their parish name and city on their commitment card and/or in the memo line so we can help you track your parish's giving in 2024.

● Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)

- These are for repeated monthly automatic withdrawals from a checking or savings account.
- These can be processed through the Pastoral Center on the 5th, 15th or 25th of each month, per the donor's choice.
- As has been the practice for several years, donations through EFT/ACH continue indefinitely until notification to cancel is given to the Diocese of Great Falls-Billings. To cancel, have the parishioner contact the Pastoral Center at **(800) 332-9998** or **(406) 604-1854**.
- If a parishioner wishes to increase their current gift via EFT – please ask that they send their donation form as soon as possible. These gifts are very time-sensitive, and time is needed to update the automated process.

● Credit or Debit Card

- Gifts may be made as a one-time gift or on a monthly automated installment.
- Gifts made via a credit or debit card should be made on the Diocese ACA giving page at www.diocesegfb.org/ACA. They can also complete the information on the commitment card if they would like Pastoral Center staff to enter the information for them.

● Non-Cash Assets such as Appreciated Stock, Mutual Funds, Grain, and Livestock

- We accept non-cash assets, please have the parishioner contact Becky to make this donation.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q: Where does the money raised by the ACA go?

A: The Annual Catholic Appeal is the major source of funding for the diocesan ministries and offices. These ministries help to provide services that no one parish could do on their own. This includes ministries such as: Active and Retired Priest Support, Bishop Support, Seminarian Education, Safe Environment, Tribunal Office, Lifelong Faith Formation, *The Harvest* magazine, Properties and Facilities, St. Thomas Catholic Camp, etc. For a full listing please visit www.diocesegfb.org/ACA.

Q: Does the money raised stay within our Diocese?

A: Contributions to the ACA exclusively and solely support the ministries and services provided by the Diocese to its parishes, missions, schools, ministries, and organizations.

Q: Why should I give to the ACA when I already give to my church?

A: The Annual Catholic Appeal is the major source of funding for the diocesan ministries and offices. These ministries help to provide services that no one parish could do on their own. Without the ACA, these ministries would not be able to exist or flourish. It is important that you support your church, but we also ask that you provide support to Bishop Fleming and his offices, ministries, and programs, which support the good work of the Catholic Church in Eastern Montana.

Q: Am I able to donate electronically?

A: Yes! You can either scan the QR code on a poster or the QR code card which can be found in the pews at your church. That will take you directly to the ACA page. Or you can go to www.diocesegfb.org/ACA and click on “give now” to donate there.

Q: Can I make my donation to support a specific ministry or area?

A: At this time, we do not have the ability for you to direct your donation to a specific ministry. However, when we reach our overall goal of \$1.7 million – then our ministries are fully funded (barring anything unexpected arising).

Q: Do Catholic schools benefit from the ACA? If so, how?

A: Absolutely! We take great measures to make sure we are supporting pastors, principals, and teachers in our diocese to meet the challenges of education and faith development. We support (pay for) the position of Commissioner of Catholic Schools. The Commissioner ensures that schools are maintaining an environment and curriculum that prepares our children to be leaders in our Faith and communities, which is vital to keeping our Catholic identity strong. Additionally, we provide human resources, finance/accounting, and legal support to the schools throughout the year.

Q: What should I give?

A: We ask that you give sacrificially to the Appeal, and only you and your family will know what that gift is. Each person/family is individual. We encourage following a Catholic guide to tithing, which is as follows: 5% of your income to your church, 4% of your income to charitable causes which follow/support Catholic teaching, and 1% of your income to support your Diocese.

We also ask that you offer the gift of prayer. Pray for the Church, for our diocesan family to grow in love, faithfulness, and mercy, and for the needs of all who support or are supported by the ACA ministries.

Q: Does any of the funds raised in the ACA go towards judgments against the Diocese?

A: No ACA dollars ever have been – or ever will be – used to settle claims of any nature against the Diocese.

Q: What is a Giving Circle and why does the Diocese have Giving Circles?

A: Giving Circles are used to recognize groups of donors, often based on how much they give per year or for people who give on a monthly basis. These are used by non-profit and/or religious organizations to honor and recognize their leaders in giving. This helps to increase donations and to lower the cost of processing donations.

The Diocese of Great Falls-Billings decided to create the *St. Matthias Giving Circle* to recognize donors who give \$1,000 or more in a single year. This was done, in part, because we were attempting to eliminate the assessment-based foundation of the past *Care & Share* Appeal. Without these donors, we would not be able to maintain the Appeal without adding back the assessments. While the number of donors who give at this level is low (approximately 15%), they account for nearly half (50%) of the overall money collected during the Appeal.

Throughout 2023, we listened to parishioners who were asking about how they could be involved in a giving circle or recognized group but were unable to contribute at that financial level. We responded by creating the *St. Pius X Faithful Stewards Giving Circle*. This helps to recognize our donors who contribute on a monthly basis, year after year, but at a level of their choosing. These donors help to establish a steady cash flow for the Diocese and help reduce the cost of processing donations. This also helps the donor, often, to contribute more by breaking it up into smaller amounts given over time. Due to the cost of processing fees and initially setting up and maintaining the donations, we do ask that these donors give a minimum of \$8.34 per month to be a part of this giving circle.

**“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father,
and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit”**

Matthew 28:19



THE DIOCESE OF
Great Falls - Billings

Annual Catholic Appeal Office
P.O. Box 1399
Great Falls, MT 59403-1399



Toll Free: 1-800-332-9998
Phone: 406-727-6683
www.DioceseGFB.org/ACA