

**SCREEN: blank red background**

Last weekend was an amazing weekend at St. Pius!

There were so many great things going on.

On Sunday morning we concluded our week of Warm Nights.

For seven nights we hosted over 30 individuals--men, women & children---  
who are homeless in our parish hall.

Also last weekend, we invited everyone to approach the altar at the end of Mass  
to offer a *Prayer of Commitment to Christ*.

And hundreds of people came forward---took a step towards God---  
and their prayer cards are in front of the altar.

And we also encouraged that step to be followed with another.

We asked you to sign up for one of our Lenten small groups and 80 of you did.  
If you are still interested you can stop in the entranceway after Mass.

There is no doubt about it, St. Pius is a vibrant, energized parish!

It's our vision that everyone who calls St. Pius home be committed to their own  
faith and committed to sharing their faith with others.

We don't have to look very far to find people who need the faith and blessings we have.

And whenever we share with others--- especially those in need---  
we're living out Jesus' message in today's Gospel when he said:

*be like a good tree and bear fruit for the Kingdom.*

**SCREEN: Archdiocesan Appeal logo**

This weekend, we're joining with parishes across Maryland and DC for the  
annual Archdiocesan Appeal.

This is the 50th anniversary of this effort.

Now I know some of you just silently said, *OH NO, NOT THE APPEAL!*

Believe me, I know it is always challenging to talk about money in church.

It's especially hard this year because of the clergy abuse crisis.

The crisis has shaken the Catholic Church to its core.

It's made everyone, including me, skeptical of giving money to the Archdiocese.

It's led some Catholics to stop giving entirely.

Others have adjusted their donations to keep from giving

financial support to downtown.

The Archdiocese is aware of this and has made some changes to the Appeal.

The most visible change is with the name.

It's no longer called the Cardinal's Appeal now it's the Archdiocesan Appeal.

This year there is no video from the Cardinal to watch.

And perhaps most importantly, I've been asked to make sure you

know that every single penny donated to the appeal ---100%---

goes directly to programs and charities.

None of it goes to administrative costs and none of it is used

to pay legal bills or settlements of clergy abuse cases.

Last Sunday a historic summit at the Vatican concluded with leaders

resolved to address this crisis with real, concrete steps.

That's not only our hope and our prayer, it must be what all of us keep

demanding and working for.

It's the only way to move beyond this crisis.

So why should you join me in supporting the appeal?

The answer is simple: the appeal is not about the Archdiocese the Cardinal or the Pope.

No, it's about all those who are helped when we give.

For example the appeal provides tuition assistance for families struggling

to send children to a Catholic school (this has benefited our parish & school).

It funds programs that help the sick, helps those with disabilities,

helps the aged, helps immigrants.

Dozens of organizations and ministries depend on our appeal donations

for their funding.

So today, consider a gift to those in need.

I know some of you have already given to the appeal this year, so thank you.

To everybody else, I simply ask you to consider a gift today.

At this time, I ask one person from each household that did not bring your

direct mail pledge form with you, to please take a pledge envelope

and pencil from the end of the pews....

and if those on the end can pass them down to others I'd appreciate it.

- Once you get an envelope & pencil,  
please open the flap and find the pledge form. *(wait briefly)*
- First please print your name,
- address and other contact information in the proper spaces. *(Pause)*
- Please note the name of our parish on the line provided, so that we will receive the proper credit for your contribution. *(Pause)*
- Your pledge can be billed over ten months so there is no need to provide a down payment today unless you wish to. *(Pause)*
- If you have already contributed by mail, please check that box at the bottom of the form and do not fill out any financial commitment information. *(Pause)*
- If you have NOT given by mail, please check the amount of your pledge in the space provided.

If you wish to contribute an amount other than the ones indicated, please check the "Other" box and indicate the full amount of your pledge on the line. *(Pause)*

- Now, please look at the lines provided on the pledge envelope and indicate the total amount that you pledge on the first line.

In the event that you are making a down payment,  
write the amount of the down payment in the next box.

Subtract the down payment from the full amount of your pledge and note the unpaid balance on the line provided.

And you can see it is possible to pay by credit card.

And you can check a box if you want to make this a one time charge or if you want your credit card pledge to be 10 equal monthly payments. *(Pause)*

- Finally, there are FOUR boxes on the outside back of the envelope.

Please check the box that best describes what you have enclosed. *(Pause)*

- Please be sure to tear off the commitment form,  
place it inside the envelope and seal it. *(Pause)*

The ushers will now collect your pledge envelopes.

If you need more time, you can turn in your envelope after Mass.

Please hold your regular offertory envelope a few more minutes until collection time.

**WAIT FOR USHERS TO FINISH THE COLLECTION.**

**AFTER SAY:**

On behalf of those who will benefit from your generosity,  
thank you for your gift to the Appeal.