

# **Archbishop's Annual Appeal encourages Catholics to answer God's call**

Coming off the heels of its most successful Archbishop's Annual Appeal collection ever, the Archdiocese of Baltimore is once again hoping people will respond generously to support a range of programs and services helping those in need.

"When I called, you answered me," from Ps 138:3, is the theme of the Archbishop's Annual Appeal 2010, which provides critical funding for more than 300 parishes, schools, agencies, organizations and ministries in the Archdiocese of Baltimore and around the world.

The appeal was announced to parishes Jan. 30-31 and Archbishop Edwin F. O'Brien once again recorded a homily in both English and Spanish.

"Christ continues to call us to charity," the archbishop said in his homily. "We might have a more difficult time hearing the call because the call can get muffled by the iPod or YouTube or any number of the other digital-age distractions."

The 2009 annual appeal yielded more than \$8.4 million, with the number of gifts increasing from 27,000 to 42,500, according to Melanie Torsella, manager of the fall offertory and annual appeal programs for the archdiocese.

"I think the success of the appeal in 2009 is a reflection of the dedication of pastors, pastoral life directors and parish leaders and the generosity of parishioners," said Torsella. "They responded better than we could have imagined. We also have a very dedicated archbishop who made this a priority, and all parish leaders really followed his example."

In 2009, the Archbishop's Annual Appeal, formerly the Archbishop's Lenten Appeal, underwent a restructuring.

The appeal's new approach incorporates an "in-pew" component, training sessions

and a direct appeal from the archbishop, among other changes.

The archdiocese continues to use the resources of William Bannon, president of Bannon Associates, to implement the new structure.

The campaign strives to keep costs at a minimum, so the majority of funds will reach parishes, individuals, charities, those needing tuition assistance and others.

The “in-pew” or “face-to-face” component of the appeal, proved successful.

“We found that when asked directly, people responded,” Torsella said.

This year, the in-pew envelopes were streamlined to make the donation process even easier, and include instructions in Spanish.

Some 150,000 direct mail pieces were also sent this year, according to Torsella.

The way the appeal is structured, parishes receive 25 percent of funds collected from parishioners, and once the parish goal is achieved, parishes receive 50 percent of any additional funds received.

In his homily, Archbishop O’Brien shared the story of Baltimore native “John,” a former marine, who endured tough times after losing a job and becoming ill. He turned to Catholic Charities’ Our Daily Bread for support, and now volunteers for the organization seven days each week.

“I urge you to join me in listening to God’s call to selfless love by pledging to the annual appeal,” the archbishop said. “The appeal supports food lines and people like John, as well as dozens of other far-reaching ministries and services.”

*To learn more about the Archbishop’s Annual Appeal or to donate online, visit [www.archbalt.org/giving](http://www.archbalt.org/giving).*