

James and Elisa Hamilton add witness to Annual Appeal

FULLERTON – James Hamilton, who with his wife, Elisa, is chairing the 2017 Archbishop's Annual Appeal, is encouraging parishioners of all means in the Archdiocese of Baltimore to participate.

"It's easy for some to say, 'My \$50 is not going to make a difference,' but it does," said Hamilton, 49, adding that larger contributions are also critical.

He should know – an accountant and founder of an auditing, accounting and consultation firm in Nottingham, Hamilton has led the annual appeal for his own parish, St. Joseph in Fullerton. He also serves on the distribution committee of the Catholic Community Foundation of the Archdiocese of Baltimore.

"There are ministries in our community that are too big and too involved to be funded by just our parishes or a few people," Hamilton said. "It takes a larger community to fund and help with the administration of these ministries – without that, they would not exist."

The 2017 annual appeal, "Forward in Faith," follows the great success – more than \$9 million – of 2016.

"That money allowed us to assist so many people, through parish programs, tuition assistance for families in need, the charitable works of Catholic Charities and much, much more," said Archbishop William E. Lori in a video address to be broadcast at parishes as the 2017 appeal begins.

The archbishop emphasized that parishioners' generosity is in accord with Pope Francis' call to solidarity and accompaniment.

"Never tire of working for a more just world marked by greater solidarity," the pope said in 2013. "No one can remain insensitive to the inequalities that persist in the world. Everybody, according to his or her particular opportunities and responsibilities, should be able to make a personal contribution to putting an end to

so many social injustices.”

“This is what we aim to do through the Archbishop’s Annual Appeal,” Archbishop Lori said, “and so I ask that you please consider prayerfully joining me in participating.”

The Hamiltons, as well as their 6-year-old son, Francisco, a student of Immaculate Conception School in Towson, are both benefactors and beneficiaries of the archdiocese and wider Catholic community.

Serving on an lengthy list of boards and ministries, James Hamilton is an alumnus of the former School of the Most Precious Blood and Archbishop Curley High School, both in Baltimore.

His wife, Elisa, is a native of Chihuahua, Mexico.

Though they grew up separately, the Hamiltons both come from Catholic families and awoke to the fullness of their own faiths as young adults.

James spent an Easter break visiting a friend, now Francisco’s godfather, who was studying for a semester in Rome. The trip included a visit to Assisi, birthplace of St. Francis.

“It didn’t start out as a pilgrimage, but it really turned into one,” he said. “I was not expecting all the graces that came to me.”

After a lukewarm period in her own college years, Elisa rekindled her faith with the help of a young adult group and the Cursillo movement.

“What brought me out (for good) was going to the sacrament of confession,” she said. “It was a moment.”

The couple share a soft spot for St. Francis of Assisi, having been engaged on his feast day at the parish under his name in Chihuahua.