

Lenten Appeal exceeds \$6 million goal

The Cardinal's Lenten Appeal exceeded its \$6 million goal for 2007, marking the first time the Archdiocese of Baltimore has met and surpassed its annual fundraising benchmark in its 16-year history.

In 2006 the archdiocese collected 98 percent of its \$6 million goal, which had been its record, said Kathy Whitelock, marketing and communication specialist for the department of development.

However, the development office calculated June 14 it has already surpassed its annual goal for 2007 with \$6,006,091 and the archdiocese still has several months to collect more, Ms. Whitelock said.

"We're hoping to reach \$6.2 million, so we are very excited," she said. "Even though it's called the Lenten Appeal, gifts do come in through the summer and the fall."

St. Luke, Edgemere, had the highest percentage of parishioners participating in the archdiocese during the 2007 appeal, according to Ms. Whitelock.

"We like to be number one," said Pat Grannas, business manager for St. Luke, with a laugh. "This is the third year in a row that we've been number one."

St. Luke Pastor Monsignor Joseph S. Lizer Jr. persuaded large numbers in his congregation to give during the appeal, even if the amount was small. To date, the parish contributed \$74, 864.

"It's not the amount that's important, it's the fact that you have participated that really counts," Ms. Grannas said. "It's that generous spirit that has become a standard at St. Luke's."

With 14 percent of parishioners throughout the archdiocese participating in the 2007 Lenten Appeal so far, a few parishes stood out with large percentages contributing, which include Our Lady of the Angels, Catonsville, and St. Gabriel,

Woodlawn - both with 48 percent - St. Katharine Drexel, Frederick, and St. Veronica, Cherry Hill - both with 47 percent - Holy Family Catholic Community, Middletown, with 43 percent and St. Gregory the Great, Baltimore, with 40 percent.

“We let the parishioners know how our church has benefited from the Lenten Appeal in recent years, with money for capital improvements to the church and rectory,” said Father Augustine Etemma Inwang, M.S.P., pastor of St. Veronica. “They have also been generous, because they know that a lot of people are helped with this money.”

The average of each gift increased this year to \$242, compared to \$235 in 2006, Ms. Whitelock said.

The archdiocese allocation committee June 7 distributed \$3 million of the appeal money, with \$385,000 in grants for Catholic school tuition assistance, \$80,000 for youth ministries and the rest going to Catholic Charities, St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore, the Monsignor O’Dwyer Retreat House, Sparks, and various other programs, she said.

The committee will meet again in October to allocate the rest of the money in grants for religious education, parish emergency capital needs, handicap accessibility, crisis pregnancy programs and another allotment to Catholic Charities and St. Vincent de Paul, Ms. Whitelock said.

“We still have more than \$600,000 in grant requests that we just didn’t have the money for,” she said. “Even though we’ve reached our goal, the need is still there.”

Established in 1992 by Cardinal William H. Keeler, the Lenten Appeal yielded \$2 million its first year.

Sixteen years later, the appeal has totaled more than \$62 million, Ms. Whitelock said, with all of it spent on charitable causes.