

“Mission of Hope”

Approximately 15 years ago, my predecessor, Cardinal William H. Keeler, wisely undertook a process to help the Archdiocese establish a vision statement. This is an important and necessary exercise for any organization because it provides a sense of direction and establishes common goals for those who participate in and support the life and work of the Church.

A period of discernment began when surveys were sent to Catholics actively involved in parish, regional or Archdiocesan activities, and representing different regions, ministerial experience and expertise. The responses were analyzed and used to create a vision of parish life and ministry, and to identify the following five mission priorities to guide the direction of Archdiocesan and parish ministry:

Evangelization-to evangelize ourselves, our families, our parish and local communities, and our world.

Liturgy- to celebrate our faith with joy through vibrant and prayerful worship.

Education- to educate and become educated in the truths of the Gospel and in the formation of conscience.

Service-to reach out in love and service to those in need.

Stewardship-to develop the material, financial and human resources of the Church and to manage them as faithful stewards.

While each parish is expected to employ this vision and these priorities in their plans for a vibrant parish life and an effective parish ministry, these are more than guidelines for our parishes. These mission priorities should also be ours as Catholic individuals. Think of them, perhaps, as landmarks on a spiritual road map that guide us as we seek to exercise our baptismal call as disciples of Jesus.

I would ask that you consider these shared priorities of ours as you receive information about the 2010 Archbishop's Annual Appeal in the coming days.

Through its support of a myriad of programs throughout the Archdiocese, the Annual

Appeal enables the Archdiocese to exercise its mission both in our local Church and the Church universal. Without your financial commitment, as well as your dedication of time and talent, this would not be possible.

In 2009 we had our most successful Annual Appeal ever with over 150 parishes working together to raise more than \$8.4 million! Thank you for your ever faithful and much appreciated generosity. As a result of that generous participation, nearly \$3 million of the amount raised was returned to parishes for community outreach, parish needs, tuition assistance, and operating expenses. With 142 of 153 parishes raising more money in the 2009 Annual Appeal than in the 2008 Lenten Appeal, parishes were able to expand the good works of the Appeal in nearly every parish community in the Archdiocese.

Beyond our parishes and at the heart of our efforts to fulfill our local Church's mission of "Service," Catholic Charities and St. Vincent de Paul of Baltimore also benefited from the increases to the Annual Appeal. With nearly 25 percent of the Appeal funding designated for community and outreach services, Catholic Charities and St. Vincent de Paul serve the most vulnerable and needy. With support given to food banks, shelters, crisis centers and immigration outreach, Catholics and non-Catholics alike receive the care and concern that has become the cornerstone of Catholic outreach.

The Annual Appeal allows our Church to respond to a variety of needs including:

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