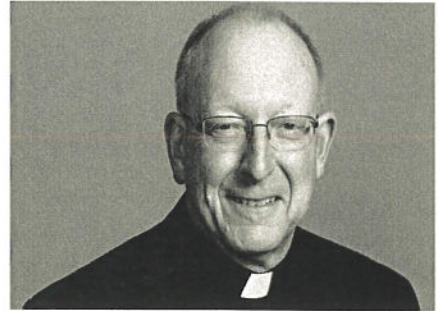




ANNUAL APPEAL FOR CATHOLIC MINISTRIES

Dear Friends in Christ,

We have all had that moment when we walked into a party, a class, or some other group event and realized we didn't know a single person in the room. There is a feeling of the unknown and thoughts come flooding in like, *what do I do now?* or *where is so and so who told me they would be here?* We may even consider, *should I just leave?* Then there is usually that moment of relief when someone comes up and begins a conversation. It's like a pinpoint of light in the darkness.



As the pastor of Saint Katharine Drexel parish in Frederick, I strive to be the person who starts the conversation when someone new walks into our parish. I want to be a light for each person to know that they are welcome-- so whenever I see a new face at Mass, I always make a point of saying "hello." I look back now and realize that I was this "welcoming light" over fifteen years ago when speaking with some people attending Mass in colorful African attire. Before long, they began to invite other African immigrants to join them to worship in a place where they felt welcomed.

Today I am so grateful to be able to say that, over time, we began to see more and more African immigrants at Mass, and eventually an African Faith Community group was formed. Today, they have over 200 members, and our parish has an immigrant outreach and formation coordinator who helps the group plan events and become more integrated into parish life, especially our sacramental preparation programs. This coordinator was made possible in part through our Annual Appeal parish rebate.

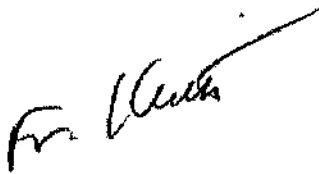
Now, before you start wondering if this is something you can do at your parish, please reach out to your pastor and ask what has been done with the parish sharing funds raised through the Annual Appeal for Catholic Ministries. You see, the gifts that you are giving to support the Annual Appeal go to aid the programs and ministries that serve the people and parishes within our archdiocese. Your pastor will probably say something like, "*We have a new roof*" or "*We had Vacation Bible School last summer*". The list of possibilities of what great things might be happening at your parish are endless.

You are a "welcoming light" when you make a gift to the Annual Appeal. One candle can be a small light in the darkness-- but when more and more candles are lit the whole room becomes bright. When we unite our individual lights, we celebrate our collective

faith and generate the much-needed action that helps our Church in significant ways. You can see this reflected in the theme for this year's Annual Appeal for Catholic Ministries: ***You are the Light of the World***. We are all asked to be a beacon of light for those in the wider family of the Archdiocese of Baltimore who need our support more than ever.

Our Catholic faith community is a gift from God, and we can show our gratitude by loving and supporting those around us. Thank you for sharing your blessings... and thank you for supporting this year's Annual Appeal.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Fr. Keith", with a long, sweeping horizontal stroke extending to the right.

(Rev.) Keith W. Boisvert
Pastor, Saint Katharine Drexel