

Pastor's Column



The Annual Catholic Appeal (ACA)—Time to “Pay It Forward”

This past week we have begun this year’s Diocesan Annual Catholic Appeal (ACA). “Love letters” from me have been mailed out and most of you have received them in the last few days.

Please take time to read and reflect on this information. I pray that it will move you to support this Appeal.

\$1 million of this year’s goal of \$3.5 million will be directed to the Parishes in the Imperial Valley which greatly need our assistance due to the phenomenal population growth they are experiencing.

As we, the Parish of St. Thomas More, have been helped by the Diocese, it is now our time to help our sister Parishes in our Diocese.

If you have not supported the ACA in the past, this is the year to begin to do so. If you have supported the ACA in the past, and you are in a position to increase your gift, this is the year to do so.

Here are some facts and figures that are important information for you to have as you reflect upon your gift to the ACA.

Know that all that you do is much appreciated by me!

Did You Know?

1. The **ten acres of land** on which our Parish Campus is being built was a **GIFT** from the Diocese of San Diego. It has been the policy of the Diocese that it provides the land on which new Parishes will build their Campuses. Our Parish purchased an additional five acres of land several years ago, enlarging our Campus to a total of fifteen acres.
2. The Diocese of San Diego provided St. Thomas More Parish with a **\$2 million INTEREST FREE** loan to help us in the building of our present Parish Center. We had been paying down this loan sporadically between 1999 and 2006. Then in January 2006 we began paying down the debt at \$11,000/month. Our last payment was in December, 2011.
3. The Diocese of San Diego is providing St. Thomas More Parish with a **\$5.4 million loan** which is allowing us to move forward and build our Permanent Church and the Parish Office Building. Due to our good financial standing, the Diocese granted us many exemptions to its loan policy so that we would be able to build in the present economy. **Building now may save us up to \$1 million in construction costs.**
4. The **Annual Catholic Appeal (ACA)** is our yearly opportunity to engage in the Diocesan effort to participate in Jesus’ mission of teaching, sanctifying, and serving.
5. The goal of this year’s ACA is **\$3.5 million**. The money will be directed for these purposes:
 - A. Imperial Valley Parish Development... **\$1 million**
 - B. Catholic Charities..... **\$500,000**
 - C. Education in the Faith,
Priestly & Religious Vocations,
Marriage & Family Life..... **\$2 million**
6. Our **Fair Share Assessment** this year is **\$48,000**. This provides us with the opportunity “to pay it forward” and to assist not only the ongoing mission of Jesus on a Diocesan level, but to directly help other sister Parishes in our Diocese who are in need.
7. Just as we have been helped, it is now our turn to help other Parishes. Last year, only **388 STM households** out of **1,000** chose to participate in the ACA. Last year our assessment was **\$48,000**. We raised **\$52,073** from **39%** of the Parish. The average gift was **\$134.21**. Let us double the number of households participating in the ACA this year. I know that we can do this.
8. **80% of the money raised over** our \$48,000 assessment will be returned to our Parish, and it will be directed to the Operations Budget to ensure that we continue to balance our bottom line.

Please respond favorably to my “love letter.” Please prayerfully reflect upon this information and act accordingly.

Thank you!