**Bishop’s Appeal 2013 Homily**

Hello, my friends, this is Bishop David Ricken. I am happy to be with you today through this recorded message. I would like to share with you our call to be *Alive in Faith*, and how your participation in the Bishop’s Appeal can help make that happen.

Sometimes amazing things happen right before us, yet we really don’t notice them. That’s what happening in your parish and our Diocese. Through the implementation of the 2011 “Called to be Holy” pastoral letter we have begun to make wonderful strides in our Church. This letter focuses on areas where we can become fully engaged and fully alive in our faith. My eyes have been opened to learn of so many examples of our faith coming alive.

I see our faith coming alive as I celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation with students in many different parishes. Through the religious education programs and sacramental preparation offered in parishes, our young people are able to come to know and love Jesus Christ more fully. They know the call of St. Paul to love, and they desire to follow Jesus with their whole lives. Our young people can be an inspiration to us.

So many parish members reach out to others in need through food pantries, homeless shelters, mission trips, direct assistance, and in many other ways. People here know the meaning of   
St. Paul’s beautiful words in today’s reading. St. Paul says the greatest gift is that of love. We show our love in action, and in doing so, we become *Alive in Faith*.

When you make a gift to the Bishop’s Appeal it goes directly to support the work of love which makes our faith come alive. It supports catechists and teachers who share their faith with students through the assistance of those in the Department of Education. It supports the work of human dignity as we support the sacredness of all human life, and help make the world more just through the Department of Living Justice. Of course, the Bishop’s Appeal supports those in specific need through the work of Catholic Charities, which each year reaches out to local people in the tens of thousands.

We have some challenges, yet we continue to be grounded in the love of Jesus Christ to help us truly become Alive in Faith. I ask for your support of this year’s Bishop’s Appeal. So many good things are taking place in our midst. I would invite you to support these efforts through your generous donation.

At this time, I would encourage your priest or parish director to share a bit more information about how you will be able to participate by making a pledge to this year’s Bishop’s Appeal. May almighty God bless you and your family abundantly in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.