**Bishop’s Appeal 2016 Pastor’s Bulletin Messages**

**Bishop’s Appeal Kick-off Weekend, Feb 6-7, 2016**

*Jesus said to Simon, “Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men.” Luke 5: 10*

Dear Friends,

In today’s Gospel, Simon Peter and his fellow fishermen have a frustrating night of fishing. Simon questions Jesus after He suggests they lower their nets and give it another shot. Why on earth would they catch anything now? Jesus put these fishermen to the test. He created a situation so the disciples would learn to trust Him; and Simon is deeply sorry for doubting Jesus who, of course, forgives him. God’s mercy is there for all who ask forgiveness, and all who have faith in Him. Furthermore, Jesus is telling the fishermen they have the ability to transform the world!

Here in our diocese, we have fantastic youth ministers and religious educators who are catching young souls to be disciples of Christ. Youth Ministry does the very thing Jesus did with the fishermen….they bring young people into experiences where they see the face of Jesus in others, where they encounter God’s mercy in an intimate way, and are forever changed because of these events. Here at <<Parish Name>> we have young people who have attended <<Mission trips, March for Life, Youth Jam, Green Bay Youth Conference>>. Students who attend Youth Ministry programs sponsored by the Bishop’s Appeal tend to become very connected with their Catholic faith, and they truly become the future of our Church.

Please make your gift to the Bishop’s Appeal today and help reach out to build young disciples of Christ! Contact our parish office, use the pledge card you received at home, or visit the Bishop’s Appeal website at [www.catholicfoundationgb.org/give](http://www.catholicfoundationgb.org/give). Thank you for your gift to the Bishop’s Appeal, and for your support of <<Parish Name.>>

*This is one of four messages you may use to print in your weekly bulletins during the first four weeks of the Bishop’s Appeal. Each message is tailored to the weekly scripture reading. All four messages may be found on the CD of the 2016 Bishop’s Appeal materials.*

**Week 2 – February 13-14, 2016**

Dear Friends,

Everybody experiences temptation. Sometimes it is simple – like the piece of cake you want but know you should resist. Other times it’s serious – maybe a temptation to gamble or drink. It’s hard to imagine the conviction of Jesus’ experience in the desert; the devil taunted Him and offered him great power. Jesus was still a man – a man who had to make choices when the devil tempted Him. As human beings, many of us stumble. The key is to recognize your mistakes, seek help, and ask for forgiveness. God’s mercy is there for everyone, we just need to ask for it.

Catholic Charities helps people when they stumble. People get into debt, become pregnant but are unprepared for parenting, or they argue with their family. Some temptations can lead to serious consequences. Catholic Charities counselors are there to help people resolve their problems, and to be the *Faces of Mercy* to those in need.

As a <<Pastor or Pastoral Leader>> I witness challenging life situations. We have a wonderful resource in Catholic Charities counselors, with five offices around our diocese. Catholic Charities outreach is tremendous, and they are funded by the Bishop’s Appeal.

Please make your gift to the Bishop’s Appeal today and help Catholic Charities serve people who need help. With your support, they can get back on track. Contact our parish office, use the pledge card you received at home, or visit the Bishop’s Appeal website at [www.catholicfoundationgb.org/give](http://www.catholicfoundationgb.org/give). Thank you for your gift to the Bishop’s Appeal, and for your support of <<Parish Name.>>

**Week 3 – February 21-22, 2015**

*Then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my chosen Son; listen to him.” Luke 9:35*

Dear Friends,

This week, we hear the familiar story of the Transfiguration of Jesus. Jesus underwent a dramatic change in appearance so his inner circle of disciples could behold him in His glory. Peter, James & John had only known Him in His human body. He was their teacher, their spiritual leader – and now, in His transfiguration, they could see he was so much more.

Jesus was constantly teaching His disciples, revealing Himself so they could carry forth His mission. Today, teachers and catechists play a critical role in inspiring our children to follow Jesus just like the disciples. Here at <<Parish Name>> we are blessed to have <<XX>> educators who reveal Him through Bible stories, help build a relationship to Him through prayer, and guide children through the sacraments to a special, holy bond with Him. I am so grateful for their service to our Church.

When you make a gift to the Bishop’s Appeal, you help develop and inspire these educators who influence the faith of our children. In fact, your gift to the Appeal comes back to help train teachers right here at <<Parish Name>>. Please make your gift today. Contact our parish office, use the pledge card you received at home, or visit the Bishop’s Appeal website at [www.catholicfoundationgb.org/give](http://www.catholicfoundationgb.org/give). Thank you for your gift to the Bishop’s Appeal, and for your support of <<Parish Name.>>

**Week 4 – February 28-29, 2015**

*He said to him in reply, “Sir, leave it for this year also, and I shall cultivate the ground around it and fertilize it;* *it may bear fruit in the future. If not you can cut it down.” Luke 13: 8-9*

Dear Friends,

In the Parable of the Fig Tree, Jesus tells the story of a vineyard owner who is ready to chop down a tree that doesn’t bear fruit. The ax is ready to fall. But the compassionate gardener pleads for just a bit more time to fertilize and water the tree. God’s patience has a limit, but in His mercy, He grants us a little more time to bear fruit. Christ is ready and willing to fill us up, to nurture us and care for us.

Of course in the parable, the gardener is Jesus. Here at <<Parish Name>>, we have many special people who bear fruit, those who share their time, talent and treasure – the very best of what they have with others. Our choir shares their beautiful voices, Care Ministers reach out to the homebound, others serve on parish councils. Another way every one of us can bear fruit is to give to the Bishop’s Appeal. In fact, each gift to the Bishop’s Appeal comes back full circle to support our own parish ministries.

Become the *Face of Mercy* with your gift to the Bishop’s Appeal. Contact our parish office, use the pledge card you received at home, or visit the Bishop’s Appeal website at [www.catholicfoundationgb.org/give](http://www.catholicfoundationgb.org/give). Thank you for your gift to the Bishop’s Appeal, and for your support of <<Parish Name.>>