

## **Bishop's Appeal 2023 Homily: Sharing the Light of Christ**

Hello, brothers and sisters in Christ! This is Bishop Ricken, and I'm so grateful for the opportunity to speak to you today via this recorded reflection, and to invite you to participate in this year's Bishop's Appeal. This year, our theme is Sharing the Light of Christ.

This past September, we marked the twenty-fifth anniversary of the death of Mother Teresa. For many of us, St. Mother Teresa of Kolkata is the very best example in our lifetimes of living out the words of Jesus in today's Gospel: "You are the light of the world. . . Your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father."

Mother Teresa certainly did that as she recognized the presence of Jesus in every person she met, especially those most neglected by others. As much as Mother Teresa did for the poor over the course of her lifetime, she knew that she could not do it alone.

Mother once said: "What you are doing I cannot do, what I'm doing you cannot do, but together we are doing something beautiful for God, and this is the greatness of God's love for us – to give us the opportunity to become holy through the works of love that we do because holiness is not the luxury of a few."

Today, in the spirit of Mother Teresa, I would like to invite you to join me in sharing the light of Christ with others as we come together to do something beautiful for God. In all parts of the world, including here in the Diocese of Green Bay, every day brings new opportunities to share the light of Christ.

Each of us does things in our own time and place, but we are also able to do some things together. The work of the Diocese, which is made up of you and me and everyone in northeastern Wisconsin, is a great example of our working together.

We do that in reaching out to support women and families in need. In walking with, "Mom's in Need," Catholic Charities helps women to find life affirming choices. One of those choices is adoption.

Through the Bishop's Appeal, we're able to help both women who do not feel they're ready to raise a child and parents who are seeking to adopt. Through this process, we seek to bring the light of Christ to others in life affirming ways.

We also do that as we share our faith with others. We need leaders to help us with that. You may be aware of my goal to raise up 30 young men to study for the priesthood in our diocese by 2025, as well as to train over 1,000 missionary disciples who share their faith with others.

We are doing this through the brand new Entrust retreats which invite people from our parishes to a deeper relationship with Jesus and the Holy Spirit so that they may share the light of Christ with others.

These are just two of many ways in which the Bishop's Appeal directly brings the light of Christ to our world. Your generosity continues to bear fruit in so many ways as we reach out to others in support of our parishes and ministries.

We help train and support those who share faith with our children in parish faith formation and in our Catholic schools. We provide resources to help people reach out to others as we continue to invite people back to the Mass and to a deeper and deeper love of the Holy Eucharist.

Will you help me in this effort by making your gift to the Bishop's Appeal? As Mother Teresa said, together we can do something beautiful for God. I invite you to join me and thousands of others across our diocese in together sharing the light of Christ through generously supporting the Bishop's Appeal.

Now I ask your priest or pastoral leader to explain how you can make your pledge.

And may almighty God bless you, your family, all the people of your parish, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.