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# Sharing

OUR RESPONSE TO THE NEEDS OF OTHERS



Approximately 30,000 parishioners from the 90 parishes in the Diocese of Fall River showed their desire to "bring good news" to those in need by donating generously to the 2011 Catholic Charities Appeal. The supporters of the 70th Annual Appeal, which was conducted in May and June of 2011, donated \$4,241,127 which included the highest level of donations from our parishes in the history of the Appeal.

This Annual Appeal is the one and only time the Diocese asks its parishioners to come together to SHARE what they have with those in need by helping to fund the Charitable works of its agencies and apostolates.

94 cents of every dollar donated last year went directly to the agencies funded by the Annual Catholic Charities Appeal

*Dear Friends in Christ,*

At this joyful and holy time of the year, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for the generosity you showed in this year's Catholic Charities Appeal. During the Christmas Season, we naturally feel the desire to give thanks and to be even more generous than usual. I feel personally thankful for your overwhelming response to the annual Diocesan Appeal, especially in light of the current state of the economy.

As a Church, we believe in the dignity and worth of every human person— young or old, rich or poor, citizen or non-citizen, born or unborn. We believe that everyone is loved by God and we believe that we have the sacred duty to care for all our brothers and sisters, especially the less fortunate among us and those who need our help in any way. Through the donations you make to the Appeal, you enable us to continue the important programs that the Diocese of Fall River has put in place in order to reach out to those who are most in need and to those who turn to the Church for assistance.

Year after year, you unfailingly demonstrate your love for your brothers and sisters and open your hearts to them with unselfish generosity. Through your contributions, you allow us to feed the hungry, house the homeless, and give toys to children who would otherwise go without. When you give to the Catholic Charities Appeal, you participate in our ministry to the "little ones," who are so beloved of Christ.

Therefore, as we celebrate the Birth of Jesus, please allow me to express my sincerest gratitude to you once again for helping to make the 2011 Catholic Charities Appeal a resounding success.

With prayers for a blessed and joyful New Year for you and your families, I am

Sincerely yours in the Lord,

*+ George W. Coleman*

Bishop of Fall River



**"How beautiful are the footsteps of those who bring good news."**

**(Rom 10: 15-17)**



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For 69 years, Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Fall River has been ministering to those in need throughout southeastern Massachusetts, Cape Cod, and the Islands.

Visit Catholic Charities at: [www.frdioc-catholiccharities.org](http://www.frdioc-catholiccharities.org)

"Without donations to Catholic Charities we wouldn't have any food. I would pretty much be out there starving, with no place to go; cold, hungry. We wouldn't have anything." (Helen, one of the thousands served by our Catholic Charities agencies)



The Catholic Campaign for Human Development, a program sponsored by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, has designated January as **"Poverty in America Awareness Month"**

### Nationally:

Catholic Charities USA reports that in 2010 there were 46.2 million American living in poverty. This is the largest number in the 52 years for which poverty estimates have been recorded.

Children experience a higher rate of poverty, 19 percent, than the rest of the population. Children represent 35.3 percent of people in poverty, but only 24.6 percent of the overall population.

Nationally, 37 percent of young families with children (where parents are younger than 30) lived in poverty in 2010, the highest level on record.

Catholic Charities USA agencies across the country reported dramatic increases in the number of requests for assistance during the third quarter of 2011 with requests from the working poor up 80%, requests by families were up 66%, the homeless up by 60%, and the middle class requests increased by 59%.

### Massachusetts:

The number of households in Massachusetts facing hunger reached 10.2% in 2010; the highest since data has been collected.

According to Project Bread, the number of Massachusetts residents who are hungry or at the risk of going hungry has jumped to over 700,000; the fourth year in a row to show an increase. Thousands of previously "secure" families have now been thrown into poverty.

Households that are "food insecure" (6.3% of Mass. households) have reduced the quality and quantity of their diets because they do not have enough money to make ends meet. In 2009, 18 percent of all Massachusetts children lived in "food insecure" households. And in high poverty areas, children are nearly twice as likely to struggle with hunger. Those who are "food insecure with hunger" (4.5% of Mass. households) are more seriously affected and are forced to frequently skip meals and experience hunger.

### Diocese:

The areas of Southeastern Massachusetts, Cape Cod, and the Islands of Martha's Vineyard and Nantucket have certainly not gone untouched by the negative economic developments of the past three years. Many areas of the Cape and Islands, along with the rest of Southeastern Massachusetts, especially the two largest cities in the Diocese, Fall River and New Bedford, which have unemployment rates that rival the worst in the State (17 and 18% respectively), have seen things go from bad to worse.

The agencies funded by the Annual Catholic Charities Appeal are being inundated by individuals and families who have never sought our help before. These "new poor", added to those whose situations were dire prior to the downturn in the economy, have swelled the number looking to our agencies and ministries for assistance to unprecedented levels. These new unemployed, homeless, perplexed individuals and families are at times embarrassed coming in to ask for assistance, but find that they have no choice.

Thanks to the approximately 30,000 contributors to last year's Catholic Charities Appeal we are able to assist them with food, clothing, shelter, counseling, rental and utility payment assistance, medicine, etc. Where would they be without these generous people?

### What we know!

- Local families are struggling more this year to feed their families due to the downturn in the economy and the high cost of living in Massachusetts.
- The most vulnerable among us; children, elders, families, and immigrants have been devastated by the widespread unemployment, foreclosures and skyrocketing healthcare costs.
- When children are hungry they get sick more often, miss school frequently, and struggle to learn.
- When seniors are hungry they are more apt to be hospitalized and have chronic conditions like heart disease and/or diabetes. They do not want to ask for help and have to choose between food, medicine and heat.

~ They need our help more than ever! ~

**"We who have much are challenged to give and to share what we have with others. No Christian community can be faithful to its duty unless it is a community of Sharing, because if it isn't then in truth it is not a Christian community at all."**

(Diocesan pastor to parishioners)

The 2012 Catholic Charities Appeal begins on May 1st.