



2020/140

THE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC EPARCHY OF PARMA

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

October 2020

Dear

Glory to Jesus Christ! I would like to express my gratitude for your spiritual and financial support for last year's (2019-20) Annual Stewardship Appeal. Thanks be to God, and to your support, it was the Eparchy's most successful Annual Stewardship Appeal ever. A report showing the financial support from each parish is published in the August issue of Horizons.

The Annual Stewardship Appeal provides much-needed financial support for our priests, ministries and missions of the Eparchy. I know that the financial situation today is more precarious than one year ago. Many people have lost jobs because of the pandemic, or even lost close friends and family members. In these challenging times, we need to look to the future with **hope** in Jesus Christ.

The patron of our Eparchy, Saint John the Forerunner, can be a good source of encouragement for us in this difficult situation. John was explicit in proclaiming Jesus Christ to the world, exclaiming: "Behold, the Lamb of God, Who takes away the sin of the world!" (Jn 1:29). John was not pointing to himself and saying that he (John) would help people; rather, he pointed people to Christ, and sent his disciples to follow Christ! As John proclaimed Jesus Christ, we also must proclaim Christ to the world around us.

The true renewal of the Church, of our Eparchy and of our parishes starts with the renewal of our personal relationship with Jesus. Without renewing our relationship with Jesus, all else fails. The main focus of our love needs to be on the person of Jesus and His Word, instead of our own will, strength, beliefs, or plans and visions. We are called to confess with the Apostle Paul: "For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain." (Phil 1:21) Who is Jesus for me personally? This very important question is connected with the Stewardship Appeal.

Why should you generously support the Annual Stewardship Appeal? The Church is neither yours nor mine; the Church is the Bride of Jesus Christ whom He loves. (Eph 5:25) So if you give your time, your talent, or your financial resources, you are not giving it to me, your Bishop, but you are giving it to the Church who is your Mother. Would not any good son or daughter show gratitude to their mother? All of them would, even if it is only a little. This is why we have the Stewardship Appeal and require your help, so that we can develop as a Church this relationship with the Lord Jesus Who is love.

Stewardship is the manifestation of your deep faith. Do you believe that Christ founded the Church, and speaks to you through your bishop and priests? I ask you, on behalf of the priests who have preached and those who are still preaching the Word of God, and on behalf of the seminarians who in the future will be preaching the Word of God in our Eparchy, to support the activities connected with the preaching of the Word of God. Many of the priests serving in our

Eparchy came as mission priests, leaving behind their families and countries so that they could preach the Word of God to you because they know that the Word of God gives life.

Therefore, I am asking you for your financial support for this year's Appeal for the following four needs:

1. Evangelization and Ministries. Evangelization (announcing the Word of God), catechesis (teaching the Faith to children and adults), and ministries – including working with the children and youth of our Eparchy.
2. Charity. Charitable help for the poorest people in our communities and abroad. This includes some poor priests and their families.
3. Retired Priests. Financial support and gap health insurance coverage for our retired Bishop and the thirteen retired priests of our Eparchy.
4. Parishes and Missions. Support for parishes and missions in the Eparchy.

Dear brothers and sisters, I thank you in advance for your contribution to this year's Annual Stewardship Appeal, especially during these difficult and trying times in which we are living. I pray that Christ our God will reward your generosity. May His love live in you and guide your decisions, and may St. John the Baptist, the patron of our Eparchy, always intercede for the needed graces to accomplish the will of God in your life.

Gratefully yours in the Lord,



The Most Rev. Milan Lach, S.J.
Bishop of the Byzantine Catholic Eparchy of Parma

STEWARDSHIP APPEAL

- Evangelization and Ministries - 30%
- Charity – 30%
- Retired Priests – 28%
- Parishes and Missions – 12%

