

2017 Annual Catholic Appeal Witness Talk
April 29-30, 2017

Good evening / morning,

My name is Maggie Stiles and I am actually delighted to be your Witness Speaker for this year's Annual Catholic Appeal campaign at St. Paul's!

You see, not only am I a parishioner here at St. Paul (along with my husband John), but I am the Assistant Director for the Annual Catholic Appeal, and I work at the Chancery. It's not often that I get to speak about why I give to the Appeal at the same time working to make it so successful. So – thank you, Father Vu, for cornering me after Mass that one time and making me – I mean, asking me to speak today. ☺

It's not unusual to find that folks who work for a non-profit – even the Church – do not themselves donate to that non-profit. In my conversations with some of these folks, they say it's because they are paid less and give so much of their time, so they feel that that's their donation. I get that – it's hard work, and can be all-consuming.

However, I give to the Appeal because I want to show my support and appreciation to the Archbishop as well as to my fellow colleagues who work so hard to provide the ministries and services supported by the Appeal. I've worked in the ACA office now for 6 years, and the caliber of the people who surround me day to day humbles me. The Archbishop, for one, is beyond inspirational – he has set the standard for our purpose, which is to serve you – the parishes and the Catholics in the Archdiocese. It is truly a gift to work for him.

The Annual Catholic Appeal, which is my purpose from day to day, always falls around Eastertime, and I love that. It's when we truly feel united with Christ and His sacrifice for us; we are reminded that he died for our sins and those of the whole world. We are reminded that our Catholic faith calls us to that which is so much bigger than our individual perspectives.

Similarly, this campaign is a reminder that we are part of a larger group of Catholics than just those of us sitting here in our favorite pews. We are part of St. Paul parish. Which is one of 173 parishes and missions. That encompass 30,000 square miles. All of Western Washington.

We. Are. Part. Of. That.

So it's at this time that all of our Fathers, as well as now me personally, on behalf of the Archbishop, we are asking for your support of the bigger picture that we are a part of, the many ministries and services that the Archdiocese provides:

From CYO and Catholic Schools, to Marriage and Family life. From Cultural & Ethnic ministries to Hospital Ministries. From Seminarian formation to retired Priest pension and medical. From of Catholic Community Services to the Fulcrum Foundation.

Our donations and efforts join together to accomplish what cannot be done alone: make the Annual Catholic Appeal one of the most successful campaigns in the nation. I'm very proud of that. And I'm proud of you.

The 2016 campaign just ended, raising almost \$15 million dollars, and approximately \$3.1 million went back to parishes in rebates. That's an average of \$19,000 per parish. Do you know how much in rebates St. Paul will get for the last year's campaign? Almost \$30,000. That's outstanding!

The improvement of the main vestibule is possible, in part, because of last year's ACA rebate. This year, our rebate will go towards patching the back parking lot, which is in terrible shape.

St. Paul's share of the overall Archdiocesan Goal is \$37,880, but we're shooting for \$71,500 to incorporate the cost of our parish project. And you know what? We're going to make that happen, and we're going to take action today! As the Assistant Director for the Annual Catholic Appeal of the Archdiocese, I feel like I have the authority to be a little more detailed in what comes next. We're going to make our donations today and knock Father's socks off.

As of this past Friday, 20 of us (out of the approximately 600 households that make up St. Paul) already made our donations – if you are one of those, you can sit back and relax – thank you for taking the time to get your gift in early!

Now, I understand that we have Pledge Envelopes in the pews – if those of you who are sitting near the pledge envelopes could pass them down the row, I'd like to go over them now and invite everyone to participate. Get out your pens, your pencils - and yes – for those of you who don't write checks or have cash on hand - your smart phones!

For those of you who will be using those pens and pencils, listen up:

Fill out your contact information so that when it gets processed up at the parish office, they'll know to mark you off the mailing list. That's important.

Write your gift information on the right side of the envelope – if you don't know what to give this year, here is what I recommend, and you can think about where you fit in the categories I'm going to present to you, and then make your decision.

The average gift of St. Paul parish was \$271:

- If you are going to give below that amount, I encourage you to double your gift.
- If you usually give between \$271 and \$365 (which is the Archdiocesan target gift), take a step and bump it up to \$365.00. Let's try to raise St. Paul's average gift a bit.
- If you usually give above \$365, and I know there are some very generous parishioners here, we are asking you to consider increasing your gift by 5%.
 - John and I are donating \$1,050 this year – we increased it by 5%, which is what the Archbishop asked. I submitted it last week so that it comes directly out of my paycheck over 10 months.
- And if you've never given, take a step this year and give a gift!

Believe me, any gift you give, any increase you can manage, will go a long way.

- If you only want to make a pledge and pay later, write the total amount and we will send you monthly statements.
- If you would like to write a check now, make it out to Annual Catholic Appeal.
- If you would like to use your Credit Card or checking account information, you may do so inside the envelope.
- Seal your envelopes when you are finished. We will collect these and they will remain sealed until they reach the ACA office (unless you don't fill out your information on the front – Anne will then need to open them).

While you're filling out your envelopes, I want to focus on those of you who want to use your Smart Phones:

St. Paul's had 3 mobile gifts last year, so let's increase that number. There is a QR code in the bottom left corner on the Pledge Envelope for you to scan that will take you directly to our donate page. If you don't have a QR scanner on your phone, you can type in the web address that is just to the right of it. Follow the prompts to make your donation and you will receive an email confirmation of your gift – when that happens, know that both the ACA office and the St. Paul parish office will get the same notification – at that same time!

Now, last but not least, I also understand that there might be a few of you who would not like to participate, or who cannot participate, monetarily. I have a special request of you: We need your prayers for the success of the campaign and our efforts. You cannot know how powerful this is.

My Seattle U Search Retreat Story

I went to Seattle University 25 years ago, and they had a retreat that students could go on that was called "Search". It was an opportunity for students to get away from campus, get away from the stress of classes, and focus on friendships, on the future, on what we might be called to do.

The retreat was led by four teams: the leadership team, the cooking team, the entertainment team, and the prayer team. In my four years at SU, I went on the retreat three times – once as a participant, once on the Entertainment team, and finally on the Prayer team. That was the most powerful of them all. During the entire weekend, we prayed for the participants, and at the end of the weekend, we were asked to come to the retreat and be revealed to the students on retreat – the look on their faces when we emerged! The tears of joy and the looks of disbelief – it was powerful beyond belief, and life-changing.

So please fill out the envelope with your name and address, and then write “prayer” on the pledge line in the upper right corner – by on our Prayer Team for the ACA. On behalf of the Archbishop, please know that your prayers are priceless gifts to give, and it shows that you want to take part in this effort.

I end with a passage from Romans, with words from our dear Patron Saint –

Romans 12:1-2; 4-8

¹Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God - this is your true and proper worship.

²Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is - his good, pleasing and perfect will.

⁴For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, ⁵so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.

⁶We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; ⁷if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; ⁸if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

We at St. Paul have always shown incredible support of the Annual Catholic Appeal – I am very thankful to be a part of this parish, and to join with you again in donating.

Thank you, and God bless each and every one of you.