

ACA Talk Sample 2024

Before I start, it is only right to publicly thank Fr. (name) for his so many years of service to the Church! Thank you, Fr. (name), for your support of my ministry and your kindness over the years.

OK, on to the point of why I am here.

Are you a little sick of bad news? Then let me give you some good news.

- 1) A child with no one else to care for them has a safe place to stay, and loving adults to care for them, at Marygrove, part of Catholic Charities of St. Louis.
- 2) A father who lost his job visited a food pantry to help get through a rough stretch.
- 3) Someone suffering because of a past abortion found healing in the Abortion Healing ministry.
- 4) Someone without health insurance, was able to see a primary care physician, who also happens to be a religious sister, at the Rural Parish Clinic, a free, mobile, rural health clinic.
- 5) An abused woman, fearing for her life, found a safe place to stay.
- 6) A child whose parents cannot care for her found placement in a foster home on her way to adoption.
- 7) A family in a rough school district was able to send their child to a safe Catholic school because the tuition was kept lower and because of scholarship help from the Today and Tomorrow Educational Foundation.
- 8) Someone considering a vocation to the priesthood was able to get guidance in their discernment at the Seminary or through the Vocations Office.
- 9) A priest who is in his golden years, after a lifetime of faithful service, was able to find a dignified retirement at Regina Cleri.
- 10) A single mother, trying to do the best she can for her children, found a home.
- 11) And a family with a child who has special needs was able to go to a Catholic school, with all of the kids together, because of the work of One Classroom.

I hope these stories make you happy, and humble. Each of these stories is told through the Annual Catholic Appeal.

These stories, and so many more, are why I love my job working with the Annual Catholic Appeal. There is an immense amount of good that happens, every day, right here in the Archdiocese of St. Louis, and I get to see it. If we could focus on all of the good news, it would absolutely overwhelm the bad news in the world. And I hope that reality gives you a sense of hope and peace in the future.

But each of the good deeds, represented on the case statement, each person who gets help, is the result of one person, or many, making the choice to help serve others...to help build the Church.

That is why this Appeal is so important. Those who don't believe in the Catholic Church, or those who do not believe in Jesus Christ, they cannot see Him in the Church. In the Eucharist, in the body of the

Church. We do. But that's invisible to those who are not Catholic. They look and they see a collection of fallen human beings. They do not see Christ.

It is up to us to show them. This Appeal, in a very concrete way, has the ability to make the mystical and often invisible body of Christ visible to a world that desperately needs to see Him. That desperately needs to experience His love today.

This is why your participation, at whatever level, is important. Because we HAVE to show all of them, all of your neighbors and family and friends, we HAVE to show them the real body of Christ. Christ comes to us in the Eucharist. And He does not just come for our own salvation. He gives us His many gifts, "For the Life of the World."

And (Parish) has responded. Last year, under the leadership of (Pastor, Parish Chair) and a dedicated committee, your parish has grown its support of the mission of the Church, reaching over \$xx,xxx last year, with xx% participation, and I have gotten to know more and more of your fellow parishioners in their generosity. You've already almost reached \$xx,xxx this year, reaching out for your goal of \$xx,xxx. Every gift, of any amount, is important and welcome. Thank you. And may I also thank (Pastor name, Parish Chair) and the committee for their work.

2024 looks to be a challenging year for the Appeal. In the midst of so much change, life looks a little difficult...But that's OK. Because our hope for the Church was never in the political situation, no matter how good it was. Our hope has always been in Jesus Christ (Point to the tabernacle). And, because we are Catholic, the Church will always move to do His will. I am confident that the parishioners of (Parish) will continue to respond.

Perhaps this is a good time to mention All Things New, which is impacting everything in the Archdiocese including the Annual Catholic Appeal. I understand that the changes resulting from All Things New, while necessary, are painful. We still have to respond with love to those in need. All the reasons for your past generosity to the Appeal are still valid. We need your help so that the Church can respond to people who are suffering and who need to hear the good news of the Gospel, through the ministries and programs supported by the Appeal and outlined on the back of the case statement. In spite of these challenges, we must remain united in bringing the love and mercy of Christ to our region.

So many people are suffering. And they feel alone. Like the people I told you about earlier. But Mary, our Mother, their mother, is with them, wanting them to receive help. The Appeal is dedicated to her, and under her protection. And Jesus, our Lord, is with them to, wanting them to experience His love. Wanting them to have hope. The Church brings them hope. And it uses the Appeal to do that.

Thank you for your support. Pledge cards are available at the Church entrance, and (name of volunteer) will be there to help you. There are other ways to give as well, and your parish will receive credit (Explain giving online, text to give, scan to give, etc.)

My name is Brian Niebrugge. I am the Executive Director of the Annual Catholic Appeal, and I will be available after Mass if you have any questions. Every night, my family and I say our evening prayers, and we pray for the Annual Catholic Appeal. This year especially, your parish will be included in that. So we will ask Mary to bless you. Have a great day. Thank (priests at the parish). Thank you for inviting me to your parish.