



REACH OUT IN LOVE

AND FILL EVERY HEART WITH HOPE

GUEST SPEAKER MANUAL & WORKBOOK



ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS



ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL
BUILD MY CHURCH

CRITICAL INFORMATION

Guest Speaker Manual



2023 ACA COMMUNICATIONS MESSAGE: REACH OUT IN LOVE

As a guest speaker, you play a central role in inviting others to actively live their Catholic faith. Your presentation will inspire and motivate many people to support those in our community who rely on parishes, schools and ministries in so many ways.

A special website has been created for the *2023 Annual Catholic Appeal*. Invite people to visit aca.archstl.org to learn more about how the *Appeal* has impacted others. People can also use the QR code and Text-to-Give options that are on all materials.

Thank you for speaking on behalf of those who will benefit from the *Appeal*.

YOUR TALK

To ensure that all parishioners hear a unified message, we ask that you keep the following requests in mind as you compose your talk.

- **Pray** — Say a prayer each time you open your workbook, rehearse or deliver your talk. Invoke the Holy Spirit and your patron saint or another saint to guide you.
- **Mention the 2023 focus** — *Reach out in Love*.
- **No gift is too small** — Every gift is appreciated.
- **All Things New** — In the midst of the All Things New initiative, there are still people who have needs.
- **Mention the ACA website URL, Text-to-Give, and QR code** — In addition to the case statement, the *Appeal* has a special promotional sheet that features the campaign website (aca.archstl.org), the Text-to-Give information (Text “ACA” to 243725), and the QR code. If any of those materials are present in the pews, you can even encourage people to give right then during your talk.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP WITH THIS IMPORTANT EFFORT!

ONE

Letter from the Executive Director



DEAR GUEST SPEAKER:

Thank you for giving of your time and talent to participate in our Guest Speaker Program. Your presence is an example of joyful generosity to others.

We believe the Guest Speaker Program is the single most effective way to reach out to St. Louis Catholics, asking for their support of the *Annual Catholic Appeal*. Your help with this program will assist the ministries fulfilling the mission of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, promoting the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Thank you for accepting this important responsibility.

THERE ARE FIVE SECTIONS IN THIS MANUAL

- 1 Coordinating with the parish**
- 2 Preparing to write your talk**
- 3 Writing your talk**
- 4 Rehearsing your talk**
- 5 Delivering your talk**

If you are an accomplished, experienced public speaker, you will already know many of the things in this manual. We ask you to keep in mind that we are preparing this manual for people with different levels of experience.

FOUR CRUCIAL POINTS TO CONSIDER

- 1 Be brief (5 minutes at most)**
- 2 Rehearse**
- 3 Please do not read to the congregation**
- 4 Speak loudly, clearly and from the heart**

Following these four suggestions should greatly enhance your presentation.

We hope you find this manual to be helpful in preparing your speech. Should you have any questions or need any assistance, please contact the Office of Stewardship and the *Annual Catholic Appeal* at (314) 792-7680.

Gratefully,

Brian Niebrugge

Executive Director

Office of Stewardship and the Annual Catholic Appeal

ONE

Coordinating with the Parish



Before you prepare your talk, please call the pastor at your assigned parish. He is expecting your call. When you speak with him, introduce yourself and ask the following questions.

- 1 I am scheduled to speak the weekend of: _____
- 2 What times are your Masses? _____
- 3 Shall I help set out or clean up pew brochures? _____
- 4 How early would you like me to arrive? _____
- 5 During what part of the Mass will I speak? _____
- 6 Where will the pledge cards be available after Mass on my assigned weekend? *(Please ask for specifics.)*

- 7 Will the case statement or the QR Code and Text-to-Give information be available in the pews? If so, would you like me to ask the parishioners to make a gift during my talk?

- 8 How is your parish most impacted by the *Appeal*? *(Your packet will have a list of any direct support the parish receives. If your assigned parish receives this support, ask the pastor about it.)*

- 9 How are you planning to ask people to give to the *Appeal*?

- 10 What aspect of the *Appeal* is most touching to your parishioners?

- 11 Is there anything else I should know that will help with this talk?

- 12 Is there any specific issue I should address?

TWO

Preparing to Write Your Talk



THERE ARE FOUR BASIC SECTIONS TO YOUR TALK:

1 The Beginning

- Personal story about the program you represent

2 The Middle

- Direct and indirect impact of the *Appeal* in your assigned parish
- The overall impact of the *Appeal* on the archdiocese
- Scriptural reference

3 The “Ask”

- Ask the congregation to support the *Annual Catholic Appeal*
- Let parishioners know how they can make a pledge

4 The Ending

- Say “thank you” to the pastor and congregation

In this section of the workbook, you will gather the information you wish to include in your talk. The following worksheets are designed to help you put this information together.

Experienced presenters may have their own methods of accomplishing this, but the attached notes may still be helpful. Please use whatever method works best for you.

TWO

Personal Story About the Program You Represent



- What is the most touching story you can think of in relation to your program? _____

- Is there someone you work with who truly inspires you?

- Write down specific stories or events that may have happened during the past year. _____

- What has been your biggest challenge? How was it overcome?

- What was your greatest success?

- How many people do you serve?

TWO

Impact of the *Appeal* in Your Assigned Parish



Your conversation with the pastor will assist you with this section. Refer to your notes from that conversation to answer the following questions.

- Does this parish receive direct support in any way from the *Annual Catholic Appeal*?
(Your packet from the Appeal Office will also share any direct support the parish received.)

- What programs supported by the *Appeal* most impact the parishioners at this parish? Which programs do they care most deeply about?

Below is a list of some ways parishes benefit from the *Annual Catholic Appeal* indirectly. Check one or two that you may highlight during your talk.

- _____ **Support for Catholic educational programs, including schools and PSR programs**
- _____ **Support for Catholic Charities**
- _____ **Support for parishioners in need**
- _____ **Support for the permanent diaconate**
- _____ **Support for priest healthcare and retirement**
- _____ **Support for the seminary—training future pastors**
- _____ **Support for vocation programs—helping young people discern their calling**
- _____ **Support for Marriage Prep Programs**
- _____ **Support for Youth Ministry**
- _____ **Support for Pro-Life Programs**
- _____ **Support for parish food pantries**
- _____ **Support for rural healthcare through the Rural Parish Health and Dental Clinics**
- _____ **Training for parish catechists**

THE LIST GOES ON...

Remember to pray every time you open this workbook, rehearse and deliver your talk.

TWO

Impact of the *Appeal* on the Archdiocese



- Scan the list of programs below, which benefit from the *Appeal*. As you review the list, identify the programs that mean the most to you.
- For each program you select, write one or two notes about why that program is important to you, or make note of a personal story you can tell about that program.

SERVING OUR PARISHES DIRECTLY

- ___ Elementary School Assistance
- ___ Stewardship and Development Support for Parishes, Schools and Agencies
- ___ Office of Peace and Justice
- ___ Parish Emergency Assistance Fund
- ___ Basilica of St. Louis, King of France
- ___ Cathedral Basilica of St. Louis
- ___ Parish Food Pantries

SERVING OUR YOUTH

- ___ Archdiocesan and Parochial High Schools
- ___ Archdiocesan Seminary
- ___ Vocation Programs
- ___ Special Education
- ___ Newman Centers on College Campuses
- ___ Religious Formation
- ___ Today and Tomorrow Educational Fund
- ___ One Classroom
- ___ High School Stewardship Essay Program
- ___ Office of Youth Ministry

SERVING THE PEOPLE IN OUR PARISHES

- ___ Respect Life Apostolate
- ___ Evangelization and Discipleship
- ___ Adult Faith Formation
- ___ Natural Family Planning
- ___ Hispanic Ministry
- ___ Office of Racial Harmony

- ___ Catholic Deaf Ministry
- ___ St. Charles Lwanga Center
- ___ *Catholic St. Louis* Magazine
- ___ Catholic Renewal Center
- ___ Elementary Teachers Educational Fund

SERVING THOSE IN NEED

- ___ Catholic Charities
- ___ Rural Parish Clinic
- ___ Sts. Joachim and Ann Care Service
- ___ Criminal Justice Ministry
- ___ Bridge of Hope/Lincoln County Housing Initiative
- ___ Archbishop's Charity Fund
- ___ Messengers of Peace Mission Work
- ___ Meals Program at Sts. Peter and Paul Church

SERVING THOSE WHO SERVE US

- ___ Care for Active and Retiring Priests
- ___ Continuing Formation for Priests
- ___ Regina Cleri Priests Retirement Home
- ___ Permanent Diaconate
- ___ Support for Religious Orders

OTHER

- ___ *Annual Catholic Appeal* Expenses
- ___ Reserve for Unpaid Pledges
- ___ Archdiocesan Services

PROGRAM 01

PROGRAM 02

PROGRAM 03

THREE

Writing Your Talk



The next step is to organize your notes and form them into a coherent talk.

Please remember the point of your speech is not to convey the history of your program. The point is to convince the congregation that the *Annual Catholic Appeal* supports worthwhile organizations—like yours.

THE STRUCTURE OF YOUR TALK

THE BEGINNING ... THE PERSONAL STORY

(USE PART 1 OF “PREPARING TO WRITE YOUR TALK”)

- Your opening comments are the most crucial part of the whole speech. Make sure they carry impact.
- Do not begin talking about the weather, thanking the pastor for allowing you to talk or commenting on how beautiful the church may be.
- If you have a story you wish to tell about a specific person in your organization, begin by immediately telling that story.
- If you have been introduced by the celebrant, your congregation “gets it.” They know who you are, what program you represent, what your function is—there is no need to explain any of that. Jump right in with your story!

THE MIDDLE ... THE TRANSITION

(USE PARTS 2, 3 AND 4 OF “PREPARING TO WRITE YOUR TALK”)

- In this section, you will share how the *Appeal* impacts this particular parish, directly and indirectly. Use your notes from Part 2 of “Preparing to Write Your Talk” to write this section.
- This is where you touch on how the stories you told about your organization are happening in many programs. Tell a personal story about another program, or tell of the good work you have seen other programs accomplish. Use your notes from Part 3 of “Preparing to Write Your Talk” to write this section.
- Finally, you will link the *Annual Catholic Appeal* to the day’s Scripture readings. Use your notes from Part 4 of “Preparing to Write Your Talk” to write this section.

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THREE

Writing Your Talk



THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF YOUR TALK ... THE “ASK”

- Be direct in asking the congregation to support the *Annual Catholic Appeal*. The “ask” is the reason you have graciously agreed to devote your Saturday evening and Sunday to the ACA. Please ask them to support the ACA and tell them specifically how they can do that. Remember to ask them to pray about their gift. All stewardship is closely tied to prayer.
- It is very important that the parishioners know exactly how they can make a pledge. Please be as specific as possible. For example, “Your pledge cards will be available in the St. Thomas Aquinas room just outside the main doors to the left. You may also make your gift online at aca.archstl.org.”
- Include instructions on how people can use Text-to-Give (Text “ACA” to 243725) or the QR code to access online giving pages. You can even ask them to make their gift right then while you are talking.

THE ENDING ... THE “THANKS”

- Finally, please thank the pastor, the staff and, most importantly, the congregation for their time and attention. It is good to be brief.

IF YOU FOLLOW THE STEPS PROVIDED, YOUR SPEECH MAY HAVE THE FOLLOWING STRUCTURE:

- Tell a specific, powerful, heart-warming story about a particular individual.
- Tell a second story (*if time allows*).
- Share the direct and indirect impact of the *Appeal* in this parish.
- Comment about other programs impacted by the *Appeal*. Refer to the pew brochures / case statements.
- Refer to the day’s Scripture passages.
- Make the “ask.” Be specific about where they can pledge, mentioning the pledge card, the website, Text-to-Give, and the QR code when appropriate. Remember to ask them to pray about their gift.
- Say “Thank you.”

FOUR

Rehearsing Your Talk



Even if you have been a guest speaker for many years, it is crucial that you rehearse your speech out loud several times. As you practice your talk, do so in the same manner and with the same detail and inflection that you will use when in front of the parish. In doing so, you will likely see ways to further improve your talk.

Stand up, just as you would if you were in front of the parish.

Then give your talk out loud. Be sure to time yourself. Don't whisper the speech or just review it in your mind but really deliver the whole talk, using the same mannerisms that you would use in front of the parish. Make notes as you go if you find areas that could be improved. Then make the changes and try again.

When you are done, check your time. If you spoke longer than 5 minutes, it is time to start cutting some of your words out. No matter how brilliant the talk is, if you are longer than 5 minutes, people are going to miss what you are saying. Just keep cutting until your talk is under 5 minutes.

Another suggestion is to record your talk. When you go back to listen to yourself, especially if you wait a day or two, you may be surprised at where you can improve.

It may help to give the talk to a trusted friend who is willing to give you honest feedback.

FIVE

Delivering Your Talk



Even if you are an experienced speaker, please read and use the suggestions given in this section. By giving this talk, you become the “face” of the *Appeal* for this parish. The impression that you give will impact ministries supported by the *Appeal* in this parish for years to come.

On the day of your talk, take the following steps. Make sure you arrive early enough to accomplish each task.

- 1** Arrive early.
- 2** Help set out pew brochures / case statements.
- 3** Remember to pray before you talk.
- 4** Go to the location where the pledge cards are set up. Thank the volunteers. The work they are doing at that moment is helping to fund your program.

It's effective to incorporate the names of the volunteers into your talk, if you can. By doing so, you affirm the importance of their work and highlight the commitment of specific parishioners to the *Appeal*. This is especially effective in a smaller parish.

- 5** After Mass, make yourself available to greet the parishioners as they leave church. This can be one of the most rewarding aspects of this program.
- 6** Check in at the pledge card tables between Masses. Introduce yourself to any new volunteers and thank them.
- 7** After Mass, make it a point to thank the pastor and anyone else who was key in helping you that day.
- 8** Help gather the pew brochures / case statements.
- 9** As soon as you get home, sit down and write a brief, personal thank-you note to the pastor. Mail it Monday morning.

Thank you for your efforts. The Guest Speaker Program is one of the most important tools available for promoting the *Appeal*. Your gift of time and talent is helping our local Church fulfill its mission.

ADDENDUM

Scripture Readings & Reflections



APRIL 22/23 Third Sunday of Easter

READING I

ACTS 2:14, 22-33

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven,
raised his voice, and proclaimed:
“You who are Jews, indeed all of you staying in Jerusalem.
Let this be known to you, and listen to my words.
You who are Israelites, hear these words.
Jesus the Nazarene was a man commended to you by God
with mighty deeds, wonders, and signs,
which God worked through him in your midst, as you yourselves know.
This man, delivered up by the set plan and foreknowledge of God,
you killed, using lawless men to crucify him.
But God raised him up, releasing him from the throes of death,
because it was impossible for him to be held by it.
For David says of him:
*I saw the Lord ever before me,
with him at my right hand I shall not be disturbed.
Therefore my heart has been glad and my tongue has exulted;
my flesh, too, will dwell in hope,
because you will not abandon my soul to the netherworld,
nor will you suffer your holy one to see corruption.
You have made known to me the paths of life;
you will fill me with joy in your presence.*

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ADDENDUM

Scripture Readings & Reflections



APRIL 22/23 Third Sunday of Easter

READING I

ACTS 2:14, 22-33

“My brothers, one can confidently say to you about the patriarch David that he died and was buried, and his tomb is in our midst to this day.

But since he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn an oath to him that he would set one of his descendants upon his throne, he foresaw and spoke of the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he abandoned to the netherworld nor did his flesh see corruption.

God raised this Jesus;
of this we are all witnesses.

Exalted at the right hand of God,
he received the promise of the Holy Spirit from the Father and poured him forth, as you see and hear.”

ADDENDUM

Scripture Readings & Reflections



APRIL 22/23 Third Sunday of Easter

READING II

1 PETER 1:17-21

Beloved:

If you invoke as Father him who judges impartially
according to each one's works,
conduct yourselves with reverence during the time of your sojourning,
realizing that you were ransomed from your futile conduct,
handed on by your ancestors,
not with perishable things like silver or gold
but with the precious blood of Christ
as of a spotless unblemished lamb.

He was known before the foundation of the world
but revealed in the final time for you,
who through him believe in God
who raised him from the dead and gave him glory,
so that your faith and hope are in God.

ADDENDUM

Scripture Readings & Reflections



APRIL 22/23 Third Sunday of Easter

GOSPEL

LUKE 24:13-35

That very day, the first day of the week,
two of Jesus' disciples were going
to a village seven miles from Jerusalem called Emmaus,
and they were conversing about all the things that had occurred.
And it happened that while they were conversing and debating,
Jesus himself drew near and walked with them,
but their eyes were prevented from recognizing him.
He asked them,
"What are you discussing as you walk along?"
They stopped, looking downcast.
One of them, named Cleopas, said to him in reply,
"Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem
who does not know of the things
that have taken place there in these days?"
And he replied to them, "What sort of things?"
They said to him,
"The things that happened to Jesus the Nazarene,
who was a prophet mighty in deed and word
before God and all the people,
how our chief priests and rulers both handed him over
to a sentence of death and crucified him.

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ADDENDUM

Scripture Readings & Reflections



APRIL 22/23 Third Sunday of Easter

GOSPEL

LUKE 24:13-35

But we were hoping that he would be the one to redeem Israel;
and besides all this,

it is now the third day since this took place.

Some women from our group, however, have astounded us:

they were at the tomb early in the morning

and did not find his body;

they came back and reported

that they had indeed seen a vision of angels

who announced that he was alive.

Then some of those with us went to the tomb

and found things just as the women had described,

but him they did not see.”

And he said to them, “Oh, how foolish you are!

How slow of heart to believe all that the prophets spoke!

Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things

and enter into his glory?”

Then beginning with Moses and all the prophets,

he interpreted to them what referred to him

in all the Scriptures.

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ADDENDUM

Scripture Readings & Reflections



APRIL 22/23 Third Sunday of Easter

GOSPEL

LUKE 24:13-35

As they approached the village to which they were going,
he gave the impression that he was going on farther.
But they urged him, "Stay with us,
for it is nearly evening and the day is almost over."
So he went in to stay with them.
And it happened that, while he was with them at table,
he took bread, said the blessing,
broke it, and gave it to them.
With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him,
but he vanished from their sight.
Then they said to each other,
"Were not our hearts burning within us
while he spoke to us on the way and opened the Scriptures to us?"
So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem
where they found gathered together
the eleven and those with them who were saying,
"The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!"
Then the two recounted
what had taken place on the way
and how he was made known to them in the breaking of bread.

ADDENDUM

Scripture Readings & Reflections



APRIL 22/23 Third Sunday of Easter

REFLECTIONS

The love of Christ is not passive. It is living and breathing. That's why it is so important that we go to great lengths to share it with our brothers and sisters in need. In *Luke 24:13-27*, Jesus came to walk with two of His disciples on the road from Jerusalem to Emmaus as they discussed His crucifixion. Although the two disciples did not recognize Jesus at the time, He recalled the scriptures and brought them assurance that His death and suffering were necessary: the ultimate act of love that the prophets had spoken of.

Similarly, this week's Gospel reminds us of the importance of the Eucharist, our devotion to the Lord and His will, and our duty as Catholics to proclaim the good news to all others. When Jesus later joined the two disciples at their table and broke bread with them, they were finally able to see Him and recognize His holiness.

And it happened that, while he was with them at table, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them.

With that their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he vanished from their sight.

Then they said to each other, "Were not our hearts burning [within us] while he spoke to us on the way and opened the scriptures to us?"

So they set out at once and returned to Jerusalem where they found gathered together the eleven and those with them who were saying, "The Lord has truly been raised and has appeared to Simon!"

Then the two recounted what had taken place on the way and how he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Luke 24:30-35

In the same manner, we must *Reach out in Love* to those who seek the Bread of Life. It is only then that the world can know the Lord and His limitless love as we do. The *Annual Catholic Appeal* provides us an opportunity to do this as one Church, filling every heart with hope. By acting with Christ in our hearts, His grace and mercy will abound.

Please give to the *Appeal* <<date and place>> or visit aca.archstl.org to learn more about how the *Appeal* helps our brothers and sisters in need to overcome the obstacles they face. You can also Text-to-Give by texting "ACA" to 243725.

ADDENDUM

Scripture Readings & Reflections



APRIL 29/30 Fourth Sunday of Easter

READING I

ACTS 2:14A, 36-41

Then Peter stood up with the Eleven,
raised his voice, and proclaimed:
“Let the whole house of Israel know for certain
that God has made both Lord and Christ,
this Jesus whom you crucified.”

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart,
and they asked Peter and the other apostles,
“What are we to do, my brothers?”

Peter said to them,
“Repent and be baptized, every one of you,
in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins;
and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

For the promise is made to you and to your children
and to all those far off,
whomever the Lord our God will call.”

He testified with many other arguments, and was exhorting them,
“Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.”

Those who accepted his message were baptized,
and about three thousand persons were added that day.

ADDENDUM

Scripture Readings & Reflections



APRIL 29/30 Fourth Sunday of Easter

READING II

1 PETER 2:20B-25

Beloved:

If you are patient when you suffer for doing what is good,
this is a grace before God.

For to this you have been called,
because Christ also suffered for you,
leaving you an example that you should follow in his footsteps.
He committed no sin, and no deceit was found in his mouth.

When he was insulted, he returned no insult;
when he suffered, he did not threaten;
instead, he handed himself over to the one who judges justly.
He himself bore our sins in his body upon the cross,
so that, free from sin, we might live for righteousness.

By his wounds you have been healed.

For you had gone astray like sheep,
but you have now returned to the shepherd and guardian of your souls.

ADDENDUM

Scripture Readings & Reflections



APRIL 29/30 Fourth Sunday of Easter

GOSPEL

JOHN 10:1-10

Jesus said:

“Amen, amen, I say to you,
whoever does not enter a sheepfold through the gate
but climbs over elsewhere is a thief and a robber.
But whoever enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep.
The gatekeeper opens it for him, and the sheep hear his voice,
as the shepherd calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.
When he has driven out all his own,
he walks ahead of them, and the sheep follow him,
because they recognize his voice.
But they will not follow a stranger;
they will run away from him,
because they do not recognize the voice of strangers.”
Although Jesus used this figure of speech,
the Pharisees did not realize what he was trying to tell them.

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ADDENDUM

Scripture Readings & Reflections



APRIL 29/30 Fourth Sunday of Easter

GOSPEL

JOHN 10:1-10

So Jesus said again, "Amen, amen, I say to you,
I am the gate for the sheep.

All who came before me are thieves and robbers,
but the sheep did not listen to them.

I am the gate.

Whoever enters through me will be saved,
and will come in and go out and find pasture.

A thief comes only to steal and slaughter and destroy;

I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly."

ADDENDUM

Scripture Readings & Reflections



APRIL 29/30 Fourth Sunday of Easter

REFLECTIONS

When we act alone, we are limited in what we can do. It is only when we all respond to God's call and act with Christ's love in our hearts that we can make an impact on the lives of those who seek it.

In this week's Gospel from *John 10:1-10*, Jesus said, "I am the gate for the sheep...I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly." Jesus is our shepherd who calls out to us and leads us to verdant pastures. As Catholics, it must be our joyful duty to respond to this call and bring our brothers and sisters in need into His flock so that they, too, can receive this abundant life. Through acts of charity and love towards others, we share God's many blessings and demonstrate our devotion to the Lord.

Beloved:

*If you are patient when you suffer for doing what is good,
this is a grace before God.*

*For to this you have been called,
because Christ also suffered for you,
leaving you an example that you should follow in his footsteps.*

1 Peter 2:20b-21

We are called to follow in Christ's footsteps and seek out those who need His love. And we can do this through our *Annual Catholic Appeal*. When we come together to support the *Appeal*, we can truly fill every heart with hope and serve the Lord with gladness. As one Church, let us *Reach out in Love*.

Please give to the *Appeal* <<date and place>> or visit aca.archstl.org to learn more about how the *Appeal* helps our brothers and sisters in need to overcome the obstacles they face. You can also Text-to-Give by texting "ACA" to 243725.

ADDENDUM

Scripture Readings & Reflections



MAY 6/7 Fifth Sunday of Easter

READING I

ACTS 6:1-7

As the number of disciples continued to grow,
the Hellenists complained against the Hebrews
because their widows

were being neglected in the daily distribution.

So the Twelve called together the community of the disciples and said,

“It is not right for us to neglect the word of God to serve at table.

Brothers, select from among you seven reputable men,

filled with the Spirit and wisdom,

whom we shall appoint to this task,

whereas we shall devote ourselves to prayer

and to the ministry of the word.”

The proposal was acceptable to the whole community,

so they chose Stephen, a man filled with faith and the Holy Spirit,

also Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas,

and Nicholas of Antioch, a convert to Judaism.

They presented these men to the apostles

who prayed and laid hands on them.

The word of God continued to spread,

and the number of the disciples in Jerusalem increased greatly;

even a large group of priests were becoming obedient to the faith.

ADDENDUM

Scripture Readings & Reflections



MAY 6/7 Fifth Sunday of Easter

READING II

1 PETER 2:4-9

Beloved:

Come to him, a living stone, rejected by human beings
but chosen and precious in the sight of God,
and, like living stones,
let yourselves be built into a spiritual house
to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices
acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.

For it says in Scripture:

*Behold, I am laying a stone in Zion,
a cornerstone, chosen and precious,
and whoever believes in it shall not be put to shame.*

Therefore, its value is for you who have faith, but for those without faith:

*The stone that the builders rejected
has become the cornerstone, and
A stone that will make people stumble,
and a rock that will make them fall.*

They stumble by disobeying the word, as is their destiny.

You are “a chosen race, a royal priesthood,
a holy nation, a people of his own,
so that you may announce the praises” of him
who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.

ADDENDUM

Scripture Readings & Reflections



MAY 6/7 Fifth Sunday of Easter

GOSPEL

JOHN 14:1-12

Jesus said to his disciples:

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.

You have faith in God; have faith also in me.

In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places.

If there were not,

would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?

And if I go and prepare a place for you,

I will come back again and take you to myself,

so that where I am you also may be.

Where I am going you know the way.”

Thomas said to him,

“Master, we do not know where you are going;

how can we know the way?”

Jesus said to him, I am the way and the truth and the life.

No one comes to the Father except through me.

If you know me, then you will also know my Father.

From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE...

ADDENDUM

Scripture Readings & Reflections



MAY 6/7 Fifth Sunday of Easter

GOSPEL

JOHN 14:1-12

Philip said to him,

“Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.”

Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip?

Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.

How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’?

Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me?

The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own.

The Father who dwells in me is doing his works.

Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves.

Amen, amen, I say to you,

whoever believes in me will do the works that I do,

and will do greater ones than these,

because I am going to the Father.”

ADDENDUM

Scripture Readings & Reflections



MAY 6/7 Fifth Sunday of Easter

REFLECTIONS

The Lord depends on His servants to act as vessels of His grace and mercy. This week's second reading from **1 Peter 2:4-9** says to "let yourselves be built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." Jesus taught the disciples to evangelize and reach out to others, knowing there were many who yearned for the Bread of Life and that God is waiting in the Kingdom of Heaven with room for all of us.

Jesus said to his disciples:

"Do not let your hearts be troubled.

You have faith in God; have faith also in me.

In my Father's house there are many dwelling places.

If there were not,

would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you?

And if I go and prepare a place for you,

I will come back again and take you to myself,

so that where I am you also may be.

Where I am going you know the way."

John 14:1-4

Answering God's call and sharing His love with others is our joyful duty as Catholics. Let us come together to support the *Annual Catholic Appeal* and help our brothers and sisters who seek the Lord's grace and mercy. As one Church, we will *Reach out in Love* and fill every heart with hope.

Please give to the *Appeal* <<date and place>> or visit aca.archstl.org to learn more about how the *Appeal* helps our brothers and sisters in need to overcome the obstacles they face. You can also Text-to-Give by texting "ACA" to 243725.