

Catholic Services Appeal
HOMILY
BY ARCHBISHOP ALLEN VIGNERON

Third Sunday of Easter — April 26-27, 2009

Readings: Acts 3:13-15, 17-19; 1 John 2:1-5a; Luke 24:35-48

My Brothers and Sisters in the Lord:

As I make the Archdiocese of Detroit my home again, I cannot help but be overwhelmed by the generosity of all those I meet. Whether it has been in one of our parishes, schools, or at Blessed Sacrament Cathedral, our Mother Church, I have been made to feel very welcome. I am most thankful to God that in his Providence he has called me to lead this Archdiocese as your shepherd, and to be back here among so many friends.

During my travels around the six counties, and through conversations with the faithful of our Archdiocese, it is evident that these are indeed difficult times. The economic climate in our community has adversely affected so many of our families, friends and neighbors. Please know that our prayers are with those of you who are suffering. Christ assures us that we do not walk alone, and I pray you are able to find solace and hope in your faith.

Our theme for this year's Catholic Services Appeal is "One Sows, Another Reaps" — very fitting given the challenging days we face. We reflect that in this

Pauline year how St. Paul, in his first letter to the Corinthians, uses this imagery to teach that whatever the ministry or program, we are God's co-workers in the apostolate of the Church. In the Archdiocese of Detroit, those who *sow*, through generous gifts to the annual CSA, help the Archdiocese provide the many ministries and programs who's benefits others *reap* on a daily basis. These ministries and programs advance the mission that Christ gives His Church, a mission we at the Archdiocese know is even more vital to live out in our community during times like these.

Surely we have all reaped the benefits of what a neighbor has sown through the CSA. Our ministries and programs encompass so many areas, from helping men and women discern vocations to the priesthood, diaconate, religious life and lay ministry, to the education at Sacred Heart Major Seminary of our priests, permanent deacons and lay brothers and sisters. The CSA is there when a couple is preparing for the sacrament of marriage, and through the joys and trials that accompany that holy union. The CSA is there to help educate our children in Catholic schools and religious education programs, and through youth ministry, when our teens are growing and learning to make their own decisions and form their own opinions. Then campus ministry is in place to continue encouraging their faith when they go off to college. The CSA stays with our young adults as they

take their rightful place in society, by helping them to make decisions based on their faith in Christ and his Church.

If you've picked up *The Michigan Catholic* after Mass, browsed AODonline.org, downloaded a podcast or watched the Mass for Shut-ins because you were unable to attend Mass at your parish, you have reaped the benefits of the CSA.

The CSA is especially important for our parishes as new members come forth through the RCIA program. Also, the CSA funds other support for parishes, such as guidance for parish pastoral councils, parish planning and Christian stewardship formation. All these CSA-funded ministries and services are more than one parish could possibly provide. But the local Church can help to ensure that all of the needs of our faithful are met, so that many can reap these benefits, because of those who have chosen to sow the seed in faith.

In St. Luke's Gospel this season, we hear two profound messages concerning the Body of Christ. First, the disciples recount how on the road to Emmaus, they came to know Jesus through the breaking of the bread. We, too, draw closer to Jesus through our celebration of the Eucharist. During the Eucharistic Prayer, we pray, "Grant that we, who are nourished by His body and blood, may be filled with His Holy Spirit and become one body, one Spirit in Christ."

St. Luke also describes how Jesus appeared to the disciples and asked them for something to eat, to see the risen Christ not as a ghost but as risen in the flesh. Jesus proceeded to open their minds to understanding the Scriptures and how, through Him, the prophets and psalms are fulfilled.

So it is with us as the Body of Christ. We are called to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ and of his death and resurrection. We do this in very concrete ways when we support the many archdiocesan ministries, programs and services through the Catholic Services Appeal. I thank you in advance for your commitment to the work of the Church, and assure you of my prayerful best wishes for all in our Archdiocese as we strive to carry out Christ's mission.

Amen.