

FORWARD IN

faith

ARCHBISHOP'S ANNUAL
APPEAL 2017

A Parishioner's View

Jeff and Lori Brandt and their three children have been a part of the St. Ann's community for more than 9 years. Most weeks they can be found at the 9:00am Mass, South Transept, third pew.

Monsignor Jarboe asked us to provide a parishioner's perspective on the Archbishop's Annual Appeal. We decided to create a series of 4 articles to be published during the 4 weeks of the Appeal process.

Over the years the Brandt's, being a military family, have witnessed and participated in the Appeal in its many forms in Dioceses from Duluth, Minnesota to Orlando, Florida. When we settled here in Hagerstown more than 9 years ago, we were drawn to St. Ann's, in large measure, by the generosity of the parish and its parishioners as well as its many outreach activities. Those activities range from supporting local Hagerstown charities to missionary trips to Nicaragua and to our sister parish in Haiti. We are proud to be a part of such a giving community.

The Archbishop's Annual Appeal offers us the opportunity to participate in outreach of another nature. As members of the Catholic Faithful, we belong to a group much larger than St. Ann's. We are, in fact, members of a 1.2 billion-person world-wide organization. As such, we have a responsibility to actively contribute our time, talent, and treasure to the larger church. One of the ways we can do so is through the Annual Appeal. The Appeal offers the Archbishop a tool to look at the needs of the Catholic Community throughout the Archdiocese, and focus outreach efforts on a number of simultaneous needs. Thanks to the generosity of St. Ann's parishioners and those of our 143 fellow archdiocesan parishes, over \$9 Million dollars was raised last year.

Have you ever felt like the Appeal was just one more tug at an already shrinking resource pool, otherwise known as your paycheck? If so, you are not alone! We've been there and in talking with others, most of us have felt that way at one time or another. We would offer that it's normal to want to see safety and security for your family first. However, we encourage all of us to consider the likelihood that there are others out there who are struggling more than we are. As we do so, it allows us to identify the excesses we may have in our life that we could sacrifice in an effort to help those in need. The Appeal is about an opportunity to participate in the Gospel in a meaningful way. Jesus commissioned his disciples to spread the good news to all. The Archbishop's Annual Appeal is a way for each of us to participate in spreading the good news by sharing what treasure we have. Consider the impact that the 500,000+ Catholic Members in the Archdiocese of Baltimore could have if we all gave some. We don't see the Appeal as being about how much, we see it about how many of us respond to the call of the Holy Spirit to support the pillars of our faith and live out the Gospel Message.

To steal a theme from one of Monsignor's recent homilies, the Annual Appeal is an opportunity to Stop, Look, and Listen. It's time to stop and take a break from our busy lives to consider all that we have. It's time to look both ways and to see the needs of not just our local community, but that of church communities throughout the greater Catholic Church. Most importantly, it's time to listen for the pull of the Holy Spirit and make a prayerful decision on what we can contribute to this most worthy of causes.

Upcoming articles will attempt to provide the real life stories of the impact of your participation in previous Annual Appeals – so “stay tuned”!



Jeff and Lori Brandt