

Bishop's Appeal 2012: Renewed in Christ
Homily
Bishop David Ricken

Hello, friends, this is Bishop David Ricken. I am happy to be with you today through this recorded message. I would like to share with you our call to be Renewed in Christ, and how your participation in the Bishop's Appeal can help make that happen.

I am sure that at times we can all relate to Job, especially when life becomes difficult. In these economic times, many of our families are struggling to get by. Sometimes we experience illness, as did Simon Peter's mother-in-law. We know that life is not always easy.

It is in these challenging times that we come to appreciate our faith and the support of one another, all the more. For me, I find that support so much in my personal prayer life, as well as in the community of faith, the Church.

Our Diocese of Green Bay tries to help people deal with some of the difficulties of life in a variety of ways. First, we are a people who proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ, so that others may find strength in faith as we do. We are able to do this in a specific way through our religious education programs for both adults and children offered by our parishes and supported by the diocesan Education department.

We also share our faith through retreat programs, such as Christ Renews His Parish. This program, which is parish based, has deepened the faith of many Catholics in several of our parishes. The department of Stewardship and Pastoral Services helps to support this ministry and other ministries in our parishes.

We worship together in word and sacrament, especially at Mass. These past months, we have welcomed the new translation of the Roman Missal and renewed our understanding of the liturgy. I thank you for the renewal that has taken place in our parishes and which has been guided by Sr. Ann Rehrauer from our diocesan department of Evangelization, Living Justice and Worship.

And of course, we compassionately serve those in need. In addition to the outreach done in our parishes, Catholic Charities continues to serve more than 40,000 people every year through budget counseling, pregnancy counseling, adoption services and mental health counseling, to name just a few of the programs Catholic Charities provides to help our sisters and brothers struggling during difficult times.

I find myself Renewed in Christ when I am connected in prayer to God and also when I am connected in service and sharing with others in our communities. As I travel the diocese, I'm so inspired at how parishes reach out to those in need to bring hope and healing.

This past June, I issued a pastoral letter entitled: "Parishes: Called to Be Holy, Fully Engaged, Fully Alive." Over the course of the next five to seven years, each of our parishes will be looking at six focus areas to help us to be Renewed in Christ. During this time, I've instructed the diocesan curia, my staff, to focus on the support of the initiatives occurring in the parishes, as we grow together in holiness.

The support and resources to do this comes from the generosity of so many people like you, through the Bishop's Appeal. Last year, in spite of a difficult economy, many people stepped forward and gave a little more to the Bishop's Appeal. Thank you so much for the sacrifices you made to make this possible! I again come today and ask for your continued support of your own parish, as well as your support of this year's Bishop's Appeal. If in the past you have not been able to make a gift to the Appeal – please consider this year making your first gift. It is in giving that we receive and giving generously brings joy.

We become Renewed in Christ as we grow in holiness. Renewed in Christ is the theme of this year's Appeal. Your gift to the Bishop's Appeal allows us to support the priests, deacons, religious and lay leaders who serve in so many ways. Your support allows us to help parishes' foster growth in faith, as well as to reach out to those in need.

Thank you for all you do, in your family, in your parish and in our diocese to embrace this call to holiness. Thank you for your continued prayer, for your

service and for the sharing of your resources so that we all may be Renewed in Christ.

At this time, I would invite your priest or parish director to share a bit more information about how you will be able to participate by making a pledge to this year's Bishop's Appeal. May God bless you and your family abundantly in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.