



DIOCESE OF GRAND RAPIDS

Sunday Reflection for April 5/6, 2008
Catholic Services Appeal—*So Faith May Flourish*

My Dear Friends in Christ,

Today, as your bishop, I come to you and ask once again for your help...so that we, as God's people, may continue to do the work the Lord has entrusted to us so that faith may flourish. The depth of faith and charity that I see during my parish visits continues to be a source of inspiration and strength, for we are blessed with vibrant and generous faith communities.

The Gospel of St. Luke speaks to us of the risen Lord revealing Himself to the disciples on the road to Emmaus. He walks with them; He shares their sorrow over His suffering and death and, in the breaking of the bread, He opens their eyes to the reality of His risen presence among them. The disciples then return to Jerusalem to share their joy with others so faith may flourish, only to learn that the Lord had also appeared to Simon Peter!

We are the heirs of the first witnesses of the resurrection. We are called to follow the Lord and continue His work in our parish communities and through our local church, a people gathered in communion and common service.

Each year through the Catholic Services Appeal or CSA, we share our financial gifts with the many ministries and organizations that further the mission of the Lord and His Church.

So Faith May Flourish is the theme for this year's Catholic Services Appeal. It calls us to spread the light and joy of Christ using the gifts that our Lord has entrusted to us. Through the CSA, we are able to carry out the work of the church far beyond what any one person or a single parish can accomplish.

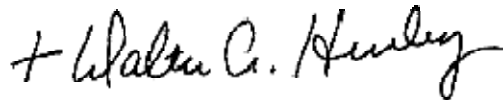
- Your contributions continue to support our works of charity as we address the needs of the poor and vulnerable. Catholic Charities West Michigan, with regional offices and programs throughout our eleven county diocese, provides direct service to over 22,000 people. In addition, more than 250,000 people were fed and clothed through our affiliated agencies and ministries.
- CSA helps fund curriculum development for our Catholic schools and parish religious education programs. It enables leadership formation and training for catechists, Catholic school teachers and administrators. Your contribution also supports the recruitment, education and formation of seminarians, our future priests.
- Each week, Sunday Mass is televised from the Cathedral of Saint Andrew for the benefit of the homebound and as an outreach to the community. CSA helps sustain this vital ministry as well as our internet presence and the coordination and publication of the **FAITH Grand Rapids** magazine received by all parishioners.

- CSA also supports completely the work of our diocesan Tribunal as well as providing financial and administrative services to parishes.
- Our response to many national and international efforts, charities, and needs is made with your generous gifts. The work of the Holy Father and his charities, the Church in Latin America and Eastern Europe as well as the Catholic Home Missions in the United States reflect our commitment to the needs of the Universal Church, an important part of who we are as Catholics.

Thank you for your generous past support of our Catholic Services Appeal. I invite you to read carefully the brochure you will receive as well as reflect on our personal responsibility as stewards of God's gifts. I further invite you to give to the CSA in the measure you have received. Your gift will enable us, as God's people, to faithfully follow the Lord Jesus ***So Faith May Flourish***.

May the Lord bless you and may He bless this great Church of ours!

Sincerely yours in the Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Walter A. Hurley". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "W".

Most Reverend Walter A. Hurley
Bishop of Grand Rapids