

Miss Julia Bader

Annual Catholic Appeal

As a part of the Archdiocese of St. Louis, we hear a lot about something called the Annual Catholic Appeal, but most of us do not know how much the Annual Catholic appeal does for St. Louis. Many parishioners take home the papers every year and just watch them sit on the table without taking the time to donate, but it is extremely important that they do so. The Annual Catholic Appeal supports numerous organizations that make a difference in the community. These organizations support students, church leaders, and the poor and vulnerable while providing an opportunity for people of all ages to show stewardship and to make a difference in their community.

It is our responsibility as Catholics to donate to the Annual Catholic Appeal. As Catholics, we are called to “Give from what you have received and do not turn away from the poor” (Tobit 4:5-11). We are blessed with so many gifts that others do not have. We have closets filled with clothes while others are freezing on the street with only one pair of clothing to keep them warm. We can go to our refrigerators and pick out something to eat, while people across the St. Louis area have to beg for something as small as a piece of bread. It is our duty as Catholics to give some of our many possessions to those who do not have them.

Without the Annual Catholic appeal, many sections of the church would not have enough money to function. The Annual Catholic Appeal supports children who want to attend a Catholic school but do not have the means to do so, it helps provide seminarians with the tools to become great priests, and it helps fund programs that reach out to people in the archdiocese and bring them closer to Christ. The ACA helps fund numerous programs that spread God’s word to people

of all ages. It is extremely important that we spread God's word to future generations and the Annual Catholic Appeal helps make that possible.

The Catholic Social teaching principle of stewardship is an important part of the Annual Catholic Appeal. Stewardship is realizing that everything is a gift from God and shares those gifts with others. It is also taking the time to thank God for all the gifts he has given us. The ACA challenges us to become good stewards; we just have to accept the challenge. I believe I have accepted the challenge and practice stewardship in my daily life.

I love helping others and it is something I want to do for the rest of my life. A couple summers ago, I took part in a weeklong service retreat called Christ Power. We served at a different location each day including places like Worth Industries, I Can Shine Bike Camp, Mission St. Louis, and Neighbors Assisting Neighbors. I was so inspired by everyone I met and it brought me so much joy seeing the smiles on people's faces. I loved talking to people of all different backgrounds and sharing my love for Christ with them. Because of this experience, I now want to become a doctor. I want to be able to reach as many people as I can and make a difference. Since my experience on Christ Power I have volunteered at many other locations including Missouri Baptist Hospital, Keen, Special Olympics, and Carris Healthcare and I have loved every minute of it.

Stewardship is a big part of my life. Volunteering at so many locations and seeing so many people who do not have things we take for granted really puts my life into perspective. It makes me appreciate all of the things I do have and I try not to take anything for granted. I thank God every day for the many blessings that I have and I do my best to share those with others.

God calls all of us to become good stewards. In 1 Peter 4:10 it says "As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace." Donating to the

Annual Catholic Appeal is one of the many ways we can do that. The ACA reaches out to people of all ages, races, backgrounds, and situations. Everyone deserves the basic rights of food, water and shelter, but they also deserve happiness. Even a small donation to the Annual Catholic Appeal can change someone's life. Your donation can provide a meal to someone who was desperately searching for one, help an immigrant find a job and provide for his or her family, educate children on the importance of faith in their lives, or provide medical treatment for those who cannot afford it. In reality, we are spreading love and joy. A donation no matter how big or small can change someone's life. About 91 cents of every dollar raised goes back into the community in the form of direct services. Those 91 cents matter. Therefore, I encourage you to donate.

Howard Zinn said, "Small acts when multiplied by millions of people can change the world." God calls all of us to help make the world a better place. We can do this by donating a small portion of our time and talents with others. These small acts of love, when repeated by millions of people can completely change the world. Donating to the Annual Catholic can be a start in an effort to change the world.