

2026 DIOCESE OF HOUMA THIBODAUX

BISHOP'S APPEAL



2026
Parish Toolkit



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Please feel free to contact our team for any of your development needs.



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I. Introduction

2026 Bishop's Appeal Theme "In God Alone, We Grow in Love"

Most Reverend Simon Peter Engurait is excited to launch the 2026 Bishop's Appeal campaign with the theme he selected, ***"In God Alone, We Grow in Love."*** The theme this year purposely incorporates his Episcopal Motto and serves as a living witness to Christ's love in our diocese and to the vision of coming together as one Catholic family in faith through prayers and actions.

It is through the generosity of our Catholic faithful who support the Bishop's Appeal that the Bishop and our diocese can continue to provide for and build up key ministries that directly impact the lives of our people today and into the future. These specific ministries build upon our faith across all of our parishes, schools, and communities:

- Forming **seminarians** who will one day serve on our altars,
- Teaching our young people the beauty of our faith in our **Catholic schools**,
- Ensuring our aging **retired priests** who continue to serve our parishes are cared for,
- Building upon faith formation within our Ethnic communities, young adults at Nicholls State University are providing other faith formation opportunities, and
- Supporting **youth ministry** that guides our young disciples to encounter Christ personally, grow in their faith, and become active witnesses of His love in their schools, families, and communities.

We could not do this without you, our parishes, who are actively building community within your parishes. Your participation in the Bishop's Appeal serves as a commitment to Christ and His devoted love for us.

Thank you, and God bless you for your help and support!

II. Case for Support: Impact of Your Gifts

The overall goal for the 2026 Bishop's Appeal is to **INCREASE PARTICIPATION** while helping us reach our financial goal of \$1 million for the key ministries below.

Parish Goals can be found online at <https://htdiocese.org/parish-resources>.

Seminarian Education: 10% (\$100,000)

- Educate our 5 seminarians at Notre Dame Seminary and St. Joseph Seminary
- Educate 3 men in the St. Joseph the Worker House of Formation
- Average cost to educate is \$45,000 per year, per seminarian for 9 years
- Provide Room and Board, tuition, and healthcare if needed

Catholic Schools: 25% (\$250,000)

- Annual Educator Convocation providing professional and spiritual development
- St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Cohort - professional development of future leaders in our schools
- Data Specialist who provides data interpretation and analysis to our schools
- Evaluation of classroom performance, with the use of the Bullseye Platform
- Board Training for individual school boards
- Consultative support for administration and development from the Office of Catholic Schools



Retired Priests: 20% (\$200,000)

- Supports the beloved 17 retired priests of our diocese with supplemental retirement income
- Funds supplemental health insurance
- Funds long-term care needs and
- Other required services for them to continue to live in our diocese.

Faith Formation Ministries: 20% (\$200,000)

- Training of youth and adult formation leaders to better serve our parishes
- Serving 500+ college students through campus ministry at St. Thomas Aquinas, located on Nicholls State University, through Colonel Catholics
- Serving the community with formation and evangelization events such as Theology on Tap
- Our ethnic ministries include African American, Native American, and Hispanic ministries. Each of these ministries is unique to our diocese, providing education with culture and spiritually serving a large population within our community

Youth Ministry: 25% (\$250,000)

- To invest in the spiritual formation of our young people within our Catholic schools and parish youth ministries
- To ensure that our youth have meaningful opportunities to encounter Christ—through conferences, retreats, mission experiences, service, and prayer
- To build a support network of trained leaders, catechists, and mentors who can accompany our youth on their journey of faith
- And to foster unity and collaboration across the diocese so that every parish, every school, and every family can share in a vibrant ministry that helps our youth grow in love of God and one another

*Note that percentages are subject to change based on needs determined by the bishop throughout the year.



III. Appeal Timeline and Process

Week of February 16th ~ Direct Mail #1

Invitation mailing for payers and gifts will be sent to previous Appeal donors and other prospects:

- Personal letter of appeal from Bishop Simon Peter
- Appeal Brochure
- Personalized remit card and return envelope
- Postcard to non-donor and lapse donors who are registered parishioners

February 28 - March 1 ~ Education Weekend

- Appeal is announced at all Masses
- Parishes will have a guest speaker
- In-pew pieces and other materials are placed in the Church

February 7 -8 ~ Commitment Weekend

- The priest at the parish will speak about the benefit of the appeal and encourage parishioners to make a gift

February 14-15 ~ Follow-Up Weekend:

- Please read the announcement for the weekend to remind people that there is still time to make their gift

February 21-22 ~ Thank You Weekend:

- Please read the announcement and bulletin insert to thank your parishioners for their gifts to the appeal and remind them that they continue to give throughout the year

Week of May 26 ~ Direct Mail #2:

- Follow-up mailing to donors who have not responded with a gift

Week Of October 19 ~ Annual Report Mailing:

- Annual report mailed to those who have given for 2026 and from 2025 who have not made their gift yet

Week of November 9 ~ Direct Mailing #3 (Lagniappe Mailing):

- Final mailing of the year for those to make an “extra” gift or those who did not make their gift for 2026





IV. Keys to Success

The success of the Bishop's Appeal is centered in the heart of the parish. The bishop and our team rely on our parish priests and parish staff to help educate our parishioners of these essential ministries and to **build a community of prayer and generosity**.

For a successful appeal, we gratefully ask Pastors and Parish Staff to:

- Attend the Bishop's Appeal Training Session led by Bishop and our appeal team.
 - We will dive into the importance of each ministry, define them, and answer key questions often asked.
- **Lead by example.** Pastors should prayerfully consider their own support of the diocese as part of leadership and lead your flock by making a gift during Mass and inviting parishioners to join you in your support.
- Display posters at Church entrances and in the vestibule throughout the year.
- Provide a link on your website to Bishop's Appeal online donation page.
- Invite all parishioners to support the Bishop through the appeal at all Masses during the appeal weekends.
- Share video of Bishop Simon Peter on social media and on your website.
- Take an **active role in educating the community** of these ministries and lead with positivity and support of the ministries selected by our bishop.
- Provide in-pew material on appeal weekends. **IN THE PEW**, please do **NOT put them in the vestibule**. For a successful campaign, the materials should be placed in each pew for them to have while sitting in mass.
- Insert bulletin announcements during appeal weekends and throughout the year.
- Include pulpit announcements during each weekend of the appeal.
- Promptly send any appeal gifts you have to the Pastoral Center.
- Most importantly, thank your parishioners. **Gratitude goes a long way.**
 - Write a personal message thanking your parishioners for joining you and post on your website, social media, etc.
 - **Do a personal 'rough' iPhone video of gratitude** and post on your social media page, thanking and inviting your flock in.

We cannot thank you enough for being part of our team in this mission of faith together. It is our hope that these examples of keys to success will spark your own creativity and personal ideas of gratitude and stewardship for the appeal and within your own parish.



V. Appeal Funds and Ways to Give

Gifts Collected in your Collection Basket or mailed/given to your Church Office:

- **Checks:** If made payable to *Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux* or *Bishop's Appeal*, submit as is with remit card in one envelope mailed to Michelle Ohmer at the Pastoral Center.
- **Cash:** Please collect all cash with a total amount, indicate your parish name, and bring it to Michelle Ohmer at the Pastoral Center.
- **Appreciated Securities/Stock:** Gifts of stock are a great way to make a gift. Please have your parishioner call Amy Ponson for instructions for gifts of appreciated securities at 985.850.3116.
- **IRA Distributions** - Please have your parishioner call Amy Ponson for instructions for gifts of appreciated securities at 985.850.3116.

Please mail all gifts from your parish by April 1, 2026, to P.O. Box 505, Schriever, LA 70395. If gifts are received throughout the year, please continue to mail them to our office. This will help keep our records for follow-up mailings updated and timely.

Online Gifts:

- Parishioners can visit: <https://htdiocese.org/give-now>
- Scan the QR Code on the mail and in pew pieces



Mailed Check and Pledge Card:

- *Donors* can directly mail a check to our offices. All of the contact information is listed on the pledge card for the Pastoral Center.

Other Types of Payment:

- If anyone wishes to use a different type of payment method, they can contact Logan Crosby at 985.850.3136 or Michelle Ohmer at 985.850.3175.



VI. Mass Announcements and Bulletin Inserts

February 28 – March 1 ~ Kick-Off Weekend:

Announcement:

This weekend, we joyfully launch the 2026 Bishop's Appeal under the theme "In God Alone, We Grow in Love." Your generosity directly nurtures our seminarians, cares for our retired priests, and supports our Catholic schools, faith, and ethnic formation ministries. Together, let's grow in love by contributing to our Diocese's mission. This weekend, we welcome XXX as a guest speaker to share about his/her experience and story with the Bishop's Appeal. In the pew, you will find a letter and an informational piece from Bishop Simon Peter Engurait, sharing with you the ministries of this year's appeal. Along with the piece is a pledge card, which, if you prayerfully feel called to do so, can be used to make a gift to the appeal and placed in the collection basket or mailed on your own. Thank you for your generous prayers and contributions to the 2026 Bishop's Appeal.

Bulletin Insert:

Welcome to the Bishop's Appeal: In God Alone, We Grow in Love! The Bishop's Appeal is a beautiful opportunity to grow in love through our faith. Your support for seminarian education and care for our retired priests reflects our commitment to nurturing future leaders and honoring those who have served. Join us in this mission of love and generosity! You can prayerfully make a gift by scanning the QR code on the in-pew piece, placing the pledge card in the collection basket, or mailing it to the Bishop's Appeal office.

For any questions about the Bishop's Appeal or to make a gift in a different way, please contact Logan Crosby at 985-850-3136 or lcrosby@htdiocese.org.



March 7 - 8 ~ Commitment Weekend:

Announcement:

This weekend, we invite you to make your commitment to the 2026 Bishop's Appeal. Under the theme "In God Alone, We Grow in Love," your pledge is essential for sustaining our ministries. Together, we can ensure that our seminarians and various programs continue to flourish in love and service. Help XXX parish reach our goal of XXX, and the Diocese of Houma-Thibodaux reach a goal of \$1 million by prayerfully considering making a gift to the Bishop's Appeal.

Bulletin Insert:

Your Commitment: A Reflection of Love! As we celebrate Commitment Weekend, remember that each pledge is a testament to our shared love for God and one another. Your support for seminarian education, Catholic schools, and youth formation empowers our community to grow in faith. Every gift, no matter the size, contributes to our mission of love. You can prayerfully make a gift by scanning the QR code on the in-pew piece, placing the pledge card in the collection basket, or mailing it to the Bishop's Appeal office. Thank you for your generosity! For any questions about the Bishop's Appeal or to make a gift in a different way, please contact Logan Crosby at 985-850-3136 or lcrosby@htdiocese.org.



VI. Mass Announcements and Bulletin Inserts Cont'd

March 14 - 15 ~ Follow-Up Weekend

Announcement:

Thank you to everyone who has made a commitment to the Bishop's Appeal! This weekend, we follow up with those who have not yet had the chance to participate. Your support is crucial for our seminarians, retired priests, and the ministries that help us grow in love through service. There is still time to make your gift by visiting the Bishop's Appeal page online, mailing a gift, or contacting Logan Crosby with the Catholic Foundation of South Louisiana. Thank you for your commitment of payers and gifts.

Bulletin Insert:

Last Call to Share the Love! If you haven't had the opportunity to make your commitment yet, it's not too late! Your generosity is vital for the education of our future priests and the growth of our youth and faith formation programs. You can prayerfully make a gift by scanning the QR code on the in-pew piece, placing the pledge card in the collection basket, or mailing it to the Bishop's Appeal office. Together, we can grow in love as we support our Diocese. Please consider making your pledge today!

For any questions about the Bishop's Appeal or to make a gift in a different way, please contact Logan Crosby at 985-850-3136 or lcrosby@htdiocese.org.



March 21 - 22 ~ Thank You Weekend

Announcement:

This weekend, we want to express our heartfelt gratitude to all who have contributed to the 2026 Bishop's Appeal. Your generosity reflects our theme "In God Alone, We Grow in Love," ensuring that our ministries can continue to thrive and serve the needs of our Diocese. XXX parish has currently reached its goal of XXX, and we ask that throughout the year you continue to prayerfully commit a gift to the Bishop's Appeal to reach our goal of XXX and the diocese's goal of \$1 million. Thank you for your prayerful consideration and support for the ministries of the diocese.

Bulletin Insert:

A Heartfelt Thank You for Your Love! Thank you for your generous support of the Bishop's Appeal. Because of your contributions, we can provide essential support for seminarian education, care for our retired clergy, and vibrant programs for our youth. Together, in God alone, we grow in love and strengthen our Church. You can still prayerfully make a gift by scanning the QR code on the in-pew piece, placing the pledge card in the collection basket, or mailing it to the Bishop's Appeal office. We appreciate your commitment to our mission!

For any questions about the Bishop's Appeal or to make a gift in a different way, please contact Logan Crosby at 985-850-3136 or lcrosby@htdiocese.org.





VII. 2026 Materials

The following materials will be shipped to parishes by February 20, 2026:

- In-Pew Brochure Pieces - Please place these in your pews not in the vestibules.
- Appeal Posters

Materials Available on the Bishop's Appeal Webpage:

- Appeal Videos
- Training Manual
- Brochure
- In-Pew Letter
- Social Media Resources
- Mass Announcements and Bulletin Inserts
- Bishop's Appeal Prayer Card
- 2026 Parish Goals and Updates
- FAQs





VIII. Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How was the Bishop's Appeal Goal of \$1 million determined? How are the parish goals determined?

A: Considering the needs and resources for the diocesan ministries, the diocese decided to keep the 2026 goal of \$1 million. Parish goals are determined by a formula based on parish offertory income over a given period while also considering the historical performance of the parish's appeal efforts.

Q: Will any of these funds be used for anything other than the defined ministries?

A: No. Funds through the Bishop's Appeal will be used exclusively for the ministries noted. Gifts are restricted for the purposes of the ministries of the appeal only.

Q: What if my parish exceeds its goal? Where does the excess go?

A: Our focus this year is on INCREASING PARTICIPATION and building a community of one Catholic family supporting our diocese. We highly encourage each parish to focus on participation and to work towards reaching its financial goal and beyond. All funds that are received go towards the overall diocesan goal and are distributed based on the allocated percentages. Note that the percentages may change based on changing needs throughout the year.

Q: What type of gifts will be accepted?

A: Gifts are accepted via check, credit card, or through monthly payments. We also accept gifts of stock/appreciated securities, IRA distributions and other similar methods. Please get in touch with Logan Crosby or Amy Ponson for different payment types.

Q: How will the progress of the appeal be communicated to the parishes?

A: A weekly update will be provided on the Bishop's Appeal Webpage under Parish Resources, listed as Parish Goals and updates.



Q: Can a parishioner restrict a gift to one or more programs or ministries?

A: No. Appeal funds are allocated across ministries based on current needs. However, if someone feels called, they can contact Amy Ponson at aponson@htdiocese.org or 985-850-3116 at the Catholic Foundation of South Louisiana to learn more about how to give to a specific ministry.

Q: How will my parish receive credit for parishioner gift?

A: On the direct mail pledge card of the appeal letter, a household registered parish will be printed. Please encourage your parishioners to double-check their parish on this card and make corrections if needed. For gifts sent in the pew envelopes, there is a place for your parishioners to write in Church Parish. For online gifts, parishioners must select their parish before submitting payment.

Q: Where can I find appeal materials?

A: All appeal materials can be found on the Bishop's appeal webpage under Parish Resources. <https://htdiocese.org/parish-resources>

