

DIOCESE OF AUSTIN

Catholic Services Appeal (CSA)

2026–2027 Parish Procedural Guide



*"The community of believers was
of one heart and mind..."*
~Acts 4:32

PURPOSE OF THIS GUIDE

This guide brings the Diocese of Austin (CSA) parish materials into one coordinated, pastor and CSA-coordinator-friendly procedural manual. It is a resource-driven guide that includes the appeal timeline, processes for the weeks leading up to the commitment weekend launch and the weeks following, as well as resources for parish communications.

REVIEW	☐ Read the timeline, pastor responsibilities, and FAQs before training.
PREPARE	☐ Recruit volunteers, identify a lay witness, confirm Mass announcement plans, and stage materials.
INVITE	☐ Speak about the CSA as a diocesan mission that joins together every parish and family.
FOLLOW UP	☐ Thank donors, collect envelopes promptly, complete transmittals, and continue reminders.

CSA PROCEDURAL GUIDE

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CSA PROCEDURAL GUIDE

Parish launch, commitment weekend,
communications, and follow-up



The Catholic Services Appeal invites every family in the Diocese of Austin to take part in the shared mission of the Church. Through the CSA, parishioners help sustain more than 100 diocesan ministries and programs that form disciples, serve families, care for the vulnerable, support vocations, educate young people, and bring the mercy of Christ into communities across Central Texas.

This guide is designed for pastors, administrators, CSA coordinators, parish staff, ushers, communications teams, and lay witnesses. It gathers the essential parish steps into one practical resource so every parish can launch the appeal clearly, prayerfully, and consistently.

People are most generous when they understand the mission, believe their gift will make a difference, and feel personally invited to participate.

Guiding principle for the CSA rollout

- Start with the timeline. Confirm each parish action before the Awareness and Education, Announcement, Commitment, and Follow-Up weekends.
- Assign roles early. Every parish should know who will announce, distribute, collect, count, record, mail, and communicate.
- Keep the message consistent. Use the pulpit announcements, bulletin text, website/social media language, and Prayer of the Faithful provided in this guide.
- Follow the transmittal process carefully. Timely handling of pledge envelopes protects donor confidence and helps the diocese report accurate progress.

- ▶ Important Dates Checklist
- ▶ CSA Kick-Off Weekend Checklist
- ▶ CSA Theme and Ministry Impact Overview
- ▶ Pastor/Administrator Commitment Weekend Responsibilities
- ▶ In-Pew Talking Points and Pledge Card Script
- ▶ Communication Strategy: Bulletin, Pulpit, Email, Website, and Social Media

- ▶ Prayer of the Faithful Intentions
- ▶ Homily Hints and Commitment Weekend Themes
- ▶ Frequently Asked Questions
- ▶ Tips for a Successful Appeal
- ▶ Parish Team Roles and Materials Inventory
- ▶ Envelope Handling and Transmittal Procedures

IMPORTANT DATES CHECKLIST

CSA 2026-2027 Parish Timeline



September	Training and parish planning	Attend training, pick up materials, review all CSA resources, recruit volunteers, select lay witness options, and confirm the parish communications plan.
TBD / September	Bishop Garcia's leadership and general letters	Prepare parish staff and volunteers to answer questions when parishioners receive Bishop Garcia's invitation letters.
Oct. 10 – 11	Awareness and Education Weekend	Read Bishop Garcia's letter, display posters, use bulletin/social graphics, and begin educating parishioners about the ministries supported by the CSA. Invite a lay witness to talk about CSA commitment.
Oct. 17 – 18	Announcement Weekend	Make pulpit and bulletin announcements, show the CSA video in church, narthex, website, or social media, include Prayer of the Faithful intention, and place the CSA banner outside the parish.
Oct. 24 – 25	Commitment Weekend	Conduct the in-pew invitation at every Mass. Pastor/administrator/deacon gives the homily and walks parishioners through filling out the pledge cards, makes the ask and ensures envelopes are collected immediately.
Oct. 26	First transmittal deadline	Complete the Transmittal Form and mail pledge envelopes using the return mailer; obtain tracking for each package.
Oct. 31 – Nov. 1	Follow-Up Weekend	Thank donors publicly, repeat pulpit/bulletin reminders, keep envelopes and pencils/pens available, include Prayer of the Faithful, continue online/social reminders, and keep the CSA banner visible.
Nov. 2	Follow-up transmittal deadline	Complete the Transmittal Form and mail pledge envelopes. After these first two batches, send the remaining batches directly to the Stewardship and Development Office.
November	Pastor follow-up letter	The pastor's letter is mailed by the diocese and sent to families who have not yet made a gift. Pastors have the opportunity to review and approve the letter prior to mailing. Parish should reinforce the message with gratitude and invitation.
January	Seminarian follow-up letter	A letter is sent to donors/families who have not yet made a gift; reinforce vocations and formation impact.
February	Retired Priest follow-up letter	A letter is sent to donors/families who have not yet made a gift; reinforce gratitude for priestly service and pastoral care.

COMPLETE CSA TIMELINE

This full timeline is placed immediately after the summarized Important Dates Checklist so parish teams can move from the overview to the exact parish action schedule.



SEPTEMBER, 2026

- Attend a training session and pick up CSA materials
- Parish planning includes leadership recruitment, lay witness selection, and awareness and education selections
- Recruit dependable volunteers
- Review all CSA materials
- The leadership group will receive Bishop Garcia's letter the week of Sept. 18, 2026
- The general group will receive Bishop Garcia's letter the week of Sept. 24, 2026

OCTOBER 10 – 11, 2026

AWARENESS AND EDUCATION WEEKEND

- Priest to read Bishop Garcia's letter
- Display poster
- Use graphics in the bulletin and on social media

OCTOBER 17 – 18, 2026

ANNOUNCEMENT WEEKEND

- Bulletin announcement
- Pulpit announcement
- Show video in Church, Narthex, or on website/social media
- Prayer of the Faithful
- Use graphics in the bulletin and on social media
- Place CSA banner outside the parish
- Invite a lay witness to talk about CSA commitment

OCTOBER 24 – 25, 2026

COMMITMENT WEEKEND

- Priest or deacon to give a homily
- Keep CSA banner outside the parish (required)
- Bulletin announcement and insert
- Pulpit announcement
- Prayer of the Faithful
- Use graphics in the bulletin and on social media
- Have pledge envelopes and pencils/pens available
- Priest walks parishioners through completing the pledge card
- A priest can also use a prepared homily distributed in training, which is online
- Send out the diocesan commitment weekend email from the pastor to parishioners
- Show video in Church, Narthex, or on website/social media

OCTOBER 26, 2026

- Fill out the Transmittal Form (follow all instructions)
- Mail the first two batches of pledge envelopes and Transmittal Form to the Processing Center in the Return Mailer – obtain a tracking number for each package

OCTOBER 31 – NOVEMBER 1, 2026

FOLLOW-UP WEEKEND

- Bulletin announcement
- Pulpit announcement
- Prayer of the Faithful
- Use graphics in the bulletin and on social media
- Have pledge envelopes and pencils/pens available
- Send out the diocesan follow-up weekend email from the pastor to parishioners
- Keep the CSA banner outside the parish
- Thank all donors from the previous week publicly

NOVEMBER 2, 2026

- Fill out the Transmittal Form (follow all instructions)
- Mail the pledge envelopes and Transmittal Form to the Processing Center in the Return Mailer – obtain a tracking number for each package
- After the first two batches have been sent to the Processing Center, please mail any remaining batches directly to the Stewardship and Development Office
- Continue to have the pledge envelopes available and use pulpit and bulletin announcements

NOVEMBER, 2026

LETTER FROM PASTOR

- Sent to all families who have not made a gift

JANUARY, 2027

LETTER FROM SEMINARIAN

- Sent to all families who have not made a gift

FEBRUARY, 2027

LETTER FROM RETIRED PRIEST

- Sent to all families who have not made a gift

CSA CHECKLIST

Use this complete checklist as the parish execution control sheet for materials, announcements, volunteer coordination, QR code placement, return procedures, and mailing addresses.



- ☐ Review CSA materials
- ☐ Use the “Coordinator Toolbox” for resources and encourage the pastor to use the “Pastor Toolbox”
- ☐ Send out the diocesan-prepared emails from the pastor
- ☐ Place parish banner outside the church the week before, the week of, and the week after the commitment weekend
- ☐ Use prepared social media
- ☐ Follow the timeline and make sure all responsibilities are fulfilled
- ☐ Recruit a dependable volunteer to test and show the CSA video (show in the Church or Narthex and post on your website/social media)
- ☐ Display posters in a visible place
- ☐ Affix the parish QR code sheet to the pews so parishioners can scan to make a gift
- ☐ See that the bulletin announcements are placed in the parish bulletin each week
- ☐ Arrange for pulpit announcements each week
- ☐ Arrange for Prayer of the Faithful each week
- ☐ Arrange for the bulletin insert to be included in the parish bulletin
- ☐ Use the CSA bulletin wrapper the weekend of and after commitment weekend
- ☐ Priest to read letter from Bishop Garcia on October 10 – 11
- ☐ Priest to read the diocesan-prepared homily if he has not prepared one in advance
- ☐ Assist your priest and have a volunteer in attendance at every Mass during the appeal weekend
- ☐ Have a generous supply of pledge card envelopes and pencils/pens available at each Mass during the commitment weekend and follow-up weekend
- ☐ Coordinate the envelope counting
- ☐ Consider handing out pledge cards as parishioners enter the Church or pass them out to each family after the homily
- ☐ Follow the return procedures or pass them out to each family after the homily
- ☐ Mail the first two batches of pledge envelopes and transmittal form via Federal Express, UPS, or USPS to:
Letter Concepts, Inc.
ATTN: Diocese of Austin CSA Processing
33 Massirio Drive
Berlin, CT 06037-2322
- ☐ Mail remaining pledge envelopes to the Stewardship and Development Office at:
Diocese of Austin
Stewardship & Development
6225 E. Highway 290
Austin, TX 78723-1025

CSA KICK-OFF WEEKEND CHECKLIST

What parishes should do at Mass, online, and in print



AT MASS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Announce the CSA at all Masses from Awareness and Education Weekend through Follow-up Weekend. ☐ Show the CSA video in the church, narthex, or on parish screens where appropriate. ☐ Conduct the in-pew commitment process at all Masses on Commitment Weekend. ☐ Include CSA intentions in the Prayer of the Faithful. ☐ Ask ushers/greeters to either distribute pledge envelopes at the door as parishioners enter or during Mass so they can fill out their pledge card. Have pens/pencils ready so every family has an opportunity to respond.
ONLINE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Post the CSA video and the giving link on the parish website. ☐ Place the online giving link prominently on the homepage. ☐ Share the CSA message on Facebook, Instagram, and X where the parish is active. ☐ Send parish emails from the pastor before Commitment Weekend and after Follow-Up Weekend.
IN PRINT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Display CSA posters, send parish emails from the pastor and the parish banner in highly visible locations. ☐ Publish bulletin announcements before, during, and after Commitment Weekend. ☐ Use bulletin inserts or graphics to explain the CSA impact. ☐ Update your parish goal thermometer and display it in the vestibule or gathering space.

PASTORAL EMPHASIS

The goal is not simply to collect envelopes. The goal is to make sure every Catholic family is personally invited to pray, reflect, and participate in the mission of the Church through the CSA.

CSA THEME AND MINISTRY IMPACT

Together, we are ONE!

Parish launch, commitment weekend, communications, and follow-up



Together, we are one is more than a campaign phrase. Rooted in Acts 4:32 — “The community of believers was of one heart and mind...” — it reminds us that the Church is strongest when Catholic families stand together in faith, generosity, and shared mission. The CSA allows each parish to take part in work that no single parish could carry alone.



Ministry Area	How the CSA Helps Us Serve as One
Formation and Vocations	Seminarians, permanent diaconate formation, active and retired priests, and programs that help the Church raise up faithful leaders.
Catholic Education and Faith Formation	Religious education, Catholic schools, youth and young adult ministries, campus ministry, catechesis, and formation for discipleship.
Life, Charity, and Justice Ministries	Works of mercy, dignity of life efforts, family life, outreach to the poor, and support for those facing hardship through Catholic Charities of Central Texas and various social ministries.
Spirituality and Worship	Retreats, liturgical formation, pastoral ministries, music and worship resources, and opportunities for Catholics to deepen their encounter with Christ at Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center.
Multicultural and Mission Outreach	Ethnic ministries, evangelization, parish support, and diocesan efforts that reach communities across Central Texas.

Participation is a visible sign of diocesan unity and parish stewardship.

Every gift matters; the invitation should emphasize prayerful participation rather than a minimum amount. A parish with broad participation builds stronger ownership, better momentum, and greater trust. Pastoral leadership is essential: parishioners respond when their pastor explains the mission and personally invites them.

CSA PARISH & SCHOOL GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Revised program overview



Thanks to you and your feedback, we have simplified the Parish & School Grant Program. We are excited to launch it in conjunction with the 2026-2027 Catholic Services Appeal (CSA).

Program Overview

The program begins with the 2026-2027 CSA and ends with an award reception with Bishop Garcia.

Parishes will be measured on the following:

- Achieves the CSA 2026-2027 goal.
- Achieves the CSA 2026-2027 challenge goal.
- Year-over-year increase in family participation rate.
- Show the CSA video at the parish or post on the parish website/social media.

At the reception, the program will be as follows:

- Parishes that achieve the four CSA benchmarks will be granted \$5,000 each for parish operations.
- **NEW** Parishes that have increased their participation rate from the previous year by a predetermined percentage will receive \$2,500. The parish will be required to meet the four major benchmarks to qualify.
- A \$5,000 grant will be awarded to the campus ministry that has the highest percentage increase in participation rate year-over-year.
- A \$15,000 deanery grant will be awarded to the deanery with the highest combined participation rate.
- Catholic school grants totaling \$30,000 will be awarded for tuition assistance.
- Parishes will receive recognition for achieving their goals.
- **NEW** CSA grant program. Parishes can apply for additional grants based on special needs at a parish or school. Grants will be awarded and selected by a grants committee based on the application.
- **The deadline for a parish to reach the benchmarks is February 15, 2027.**

If you have questions, please contact Melissa Valles at (512) 949-2462 or melissa-valles@austindiocese.org.

PARISH TEAM ROLES

Pastor, CSA coordinator, staff, ushers, and witnesses



- Set the spiritual tone of the Appeal by connecting the CSA to the Gospel and the mission of the Church.
- Speak personally about why the CSA matters and invite each family to participate.
- Review the parish goal and current progress before Commitment Weekend.
- Use the prepared homily, homily hints, or lay witness testimony to lead the in-pew process.
- Walk parishioners through the pledge card and explain the envelope collection process.
- Thank families at Mass and in follow-up communications.
- Attend training and become familiar with all parish materials.
- Coordinate volunteer roles, envelope supplies, pens, pencils, posters, banners, bulletin announcements, website updates, and emails.
- Confirm the pledge envelope handling and transmittal schedule.
- Track parish progress and provide updates to the pastor.
- Make sure every parishioner has an opportunity to participate, including those who were absent on Commitment Weekend.
- Distribute pledge envelopes and pencils/pens at the proper time or as parishioners enter Mass, according to the parish's plan.
- Be attentive and hospitable; the process should feel prayerful and organized.
- Collect completed envelopes immediately after the in-pew invitation.
- Return envelopes to the designated parish contact for secure handling.
- Share a brief, authentic personal witness about why the CSA matters.
- Focus on mission, gratitude, and participation — not pressure.
- Keep remarks concise, pastoral, and aligned with the theme *Together, we are one!*

WEEKEND-BY-WEEKEND PROCEDURE

Awareness, Announcement, Commitment, and Follow-Up



Awareness and Education Weekend Oct. 10 – 11	<p>Purpose: introduce the CSA mission before the formal ask.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read Bishop Garcia’s letter.• Display the poster and parish materials.• Use CSA graphics in the bulletin and on social media.• Begin educating parishioners about the ministries supported by the Appeal.• Lay witness presentation.
Announcement Weekend Oct. 17 – 18	<p>Purpose: prepare parishioners to make a prayerful commitment next weekend.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make pulpit and bulletin announcements.• Show the CSA video where appropriate.• Include an intention in the Prayer of the Faithful.• Place or refresh the CSA banner for the next three weekends.• Ask families to pray about their participation.
Commitment Weekend Oct. 24 – 25	<p>Purpose: invite every family at every Mass to pledge.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pastor, priest, or deacon gives the homily or introduces the lay witness.• Ushers make envelopes, pens and pencils available.• Pastor, priest, or deacon walks parishioners through the pledge card.• Parishioners complete pledge cards during Mass.• Envelopes are collected immediately and secured.• This collection MUST be separate from your weekly collection.
Follow-Up Weekend Oct. 31 – Nov. 1	<p>Purpose: thank early donors and invite those who have not yet responded.</p> <p>Key actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thank donors publicly.• Repeat pulpit/bulletin reminders.• Keep envelopes, pens/pencils available.• Continue website/social/email reminders.• Mention online giving at austindiocese.org/give.

AWARENESS AND EDUCATION WEEKEND OR ON ANNOUNCEMENT WEEKEND

Lay Witness Presentation



Theme: Together, we are ONE.

Estimated length: 4–5 minutes



Good morning/afternoon/evening.

My name is [Name], and I am grateful for the opportunity to speak with you today about this year's **Catholic Services Appeal (CSA)**.

The theme for the 2026–2027 CSA is *Together, we are one*, inspired by the Acts of the Apostles: *“The community of believers was of one heart and mind.”* That beautiful image of the early Church reminds us that our faith is never meant to be lived alone. We belong to Christ, and because we belong to Christ, we also belong to one another.

The CSA is one of the most meaningful ways our parish joins with every parish across the Diocese of Austin to carry out the mission of the Church. Through the CSA, we help support more than 100 diocesan ministries and programs — ministries that no single parish could fully sustain on its own.

When we give to the CSA, we are helping form future priests and deacons. We are supporting seminarians, permanent diaconate formation, active and retired priests, and those who are preparing to serve the people of God for generations to come.

When we give to the CSA, we are helping strengthen Catholic education and faith formation. We are helping young people encounter Christ through religious education, Catholic schools, youth ministry, young adult ministry, campus ministry, catechesis, and lifelong formation.

When we give to the CSA, we are helping carry out the works of mercy. We are supporting ministries of life, charity, and justice — ministries that care for families, protect human dignity, serve the poor, accompany those in hardship, and bring Christ's compassion to those who may feel forgotten.

When we give to the CSA, we are helping people deepen their spiritual lives. We are supporting retreats, liturgical formation, worship resources, pastoral ministries, and opportunities for Catholics throughout Central Texas to grow closer to the Lord.

And when we give to the CSA, we are helping the Church reach across cultures, languages, communities, and parish boundaries. We are helping the Diocese of Austin serve as one body in Christ.

That is why this Appeal matters.

It is not simply about meeting a financial goal. It is about the mission. It is about discipleship. It is about recognizing that the needs of the Church are larger than any one parish, but that together — truly together — we can answer those needs with faith and generosity.

CSA PROCEDURAL GUIDE

Parish launch, commitment weekend,
communications, and follow-up



Each of us has received gifts from God. Some can give more. Some can give less. But every gift matters because every act of generosity becomes part of something larger than ourselves. A gift to the CSA is a way of saying: *I believe in the mission of the Church. I believe in forming disciples. I believe in caring for the vulnerable. I believe in supporting vocations. I believe our parish is part of a larger family of faith.*

When your pastor, priest, or deacon gives his homily on Commitment Weekend and asks you to consider making a gift or pledge to the CSA, I prayerfully hope you feel called to say yes either with a financial gift or one of prayers.

For some families, that may mean making a one-time gift. For others, it may mean making a pledge that can be paid over time. For others, it may mean giving monthly as a steady sign of support. What matters most is that each household takes time to pray and respond according to its blessings.

If you have supported the CSA in the past, thank you. Your generosity has already helped make ministry possible across our diocese. This year, I invite you to renew that support and, if you are able, consider increasing your gift.

If you have never given to the CSA before, I invite you to begin this year. Your participation is important. Your gift, whatever the amount, is a visible sign that our parish stands together with Catholics across Central Texas.

And if this is a difficult time financially, please know that your prayers matter deeply. The Church is built not only by financial gifts but by faith, prayer, sacrifice, and love.

When you are asked to participate, please take it seriously. Please pray over it. Please consider what God may be asking of you and your family.

The CSA reminds us that we are not separate parishes doing separate work. We are one Church. One diocesan family. One people called to serve Christ together.

Together, we are one.

May we answer that call with grateful hearts, generous spirits, and deep trust in the Lord, who gives us everything we have and invites us to share in His mission.

Thank you, and may God bless you for your generosity.

COMMITMENT WEEKEND

Homily

CSA Participation Invitation



This full pastor/administrator resource follows the in-pew flow so the step-by-step Mass procedure and the complete spoken responsibilities remain together.

COMMITMENT WEEKEND – Homily to be delivered by the pastor, priest or deacon.

Announce to parishioners that today is “Commitment Saturday/Sunday” in support of this year’s Catholic Services Appeal (CSA) throughout the diocese. Every family attending Mass today is asked to offer a generous pledge to advance the mission and ministry of the Church.

Deliver a personal homily sharing why gifts to the CSA were important in supporting your formation as a priest or deacon. OR

Read the sample homily included below or on the website at www.austindiocese.org/csa-resources.

Provide a brief recap of the CSA’s importance and the ministries that receive direct funding (see case support brochure online).

THEME

Together, we are one

2026-2027 GOAL

\$7.4 million

LAST YEAR

More than \$9.2 million pledged

Pastoral adaptation: Pastors and administrators may personalize the local examples and commitment instructions while preserving the Scripture-centered message and diocesan facts.

HOMILY

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

In today’s Gospel, a scholar of the law asks Jesus a question that goes to the heart of faith: Which commandment is the greatest? Jesus answers with words that are familiar to us, yet always demanding. We are to love the Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our mind. Then Jesus immediately joins that commandment to another: We are to love our neighbor as ourselves.

Jesus does not separate these two commandments. Love of God and love of neighbor belong together. Our prayer, worship, and devotion must become visible in the way we care for one another. Faith is not only something we profess with our lips. It is something we live with our choices, our compassion, and our generosity.

The first reading from Exodus makes that responsibility very concrete. God tells his people not to oppress the stranger, the widow, the orphan, or the poor. Why? Because God hears their cries. God knows their needs. God says, simply and powerfully, “I am compassionate.”

COMMITMENT WEEKEND

Homily

CSA Participation Invitation



That sentence reveals the heart of God. The Lord is compassionate, and those who belong to the Lord are called to become compassionate as well. We cannot claim to love God while remaining indifferent to the needs of our brothers and sisters. We cannot say that we are one Body in Christ and then look away when another member of that Body is suffering, searching, learning, discerning, grieving, or in need of hope.

This is why the Catholic Services Appeal (CSA) is not separate from the Gospel we hear today. The CSA is one of the important ways we live the Gospel together as the local Church. Through our shared support, the Diocese of Austin can carry out ministries that no single parish could accomplish alone.

Together, we help form seminarians who will serve as our future priests. We support retired priests who have spent their lives serving God's people. We strengthen Catholic education and faith formation. We accompany families, young people, couples, and those discerning their vocation. We support ministries of charity, justice, pastoral care, worship, and respect for human life. We also help parishes and schools through diocesan services and the new Parish and School Grant Program.

Each of these ministries is an expression of the two great commandments. They help us love God more faithfully and love our neighbor more generously.

Our theme this year is ***Together, we are one.*** Those words remind us that we are not isolated parishes or separate groups competing for attention. We are one Church. We are one diocesan family. We are one Body of Christ, united in mission.

Saint Paul tells the Thessalonians in today's second reading that their faith had "sounded forth" and that they had become a model for other believers. Their faith could be seen and heard because it changed the way they lived. In the same way, our faith sounds forth when we act together. It sounds forth when a parish supports a seminarian it may never meet. It sounds forth when a family receives help in a moment of crisis. It sounds forth when a young person is formed in the faith, when a retired priest is cared for, and when a parish receives support to strengthen its ministry.

Last year, the people of the Diocese of Austin responded with extraordinary generosity. Together, we gave more than \$9 million in paid pledges and gifts to the Catholic Services Appeal. That is a remarkable witness of faith, and I thank you sincerely for the part you played in it.

That success does not mean the mission is finished. It means that the mission is alive. It shows what is possible when we recognize that the needs of the Church are our shared responsibility and when each person offers what he or she can.

Our goal for the 2026-2027 CSA is \$7.4 million. That number is important, but the deepest purpose of this appeal is not simply to reach a financial goal. It is to form generous disciples. It is to unite our parishes. It is to make the compassion of Christ present throughout Central Texas.

The Gospel does not ask every person to give the same amount. It asks every person to love. For one household, a sacrificial gift may be large. For another, it may be modest. What matters is that we pray, listen to the Lord, and respond with a sincere and generous heart. No gift is too small when it is offered in faith, and no act of love is ever wasted in the hands of God.

COMMITMENT WEEKEND

Homily

CSA Participation Invitation



Today, I ask you to consider how God is calling you to take part. Perhaps you can renew your gift from last year. Perhaps you are able to increase it. Perhaps this will be your first gift to the CSA. A one-time gift is meaningful, and a monthly gift can make generosity more manageable while sustaining ministries throughout the year.

The psalmist proclaims today, "I love you, Lord, my strength." The Lord is indeed our strength. Everything we have begins with God's goodness. Our response is gratitude - gratitude expressed not only in words, but in faithful stewardship.

Brothers and sisters, when we support the CSA, we are saying that the stranger matters, the widow matters, the orphan matters, the poor matter, the seminarian matters, the retired priest matters, the child learning the faith matters, and every parish matters. We are saying that every person is our neighbor and that, in Christ, we belong to one another.

Together we pray. Together we serve. Together we give. *Together, we are one.*

May the Lord open our hearts, strengthen our faith, and make us generous witnesses of his compassion. Amen.

Together we pray. Together we serve. Together we give. Together, we are one.

May the Lord open our hearts, strengthen our faith, and make us generous witnesses of his compassion. Amen.

COMMITMENT WEEKEND INVITATION

(To be read immediately after the homily)

At this time, I invite every household to make a prayerful commitment to the 2026-2027 CSA. The ushers will distribute the CSA pledge envelopes and pens/pencils. As you complete your pledge, I will complete mine as well.

(Pause while envelopes are passed out and walk through the portions of the pledge card with parishioners to fill out the card out)

Once your pledge is ready, you can place the envelope in the collection basket today. If you need more time, you may also take it home and bring it back next week or mail it directly to the diocese using the envelope.

The ushers will now come forward to collect any completed pledge envelopes.

Thank you for your generosity and support of the CSA. Together, we truly are one.

COMMITMENT WEEKEND IN-PEW FLOW

Step-by-step process for every Mass



1. **Introduce the Appeal after the homily.** Connect the CSA to the Gospel and to this year's theme. Explain that the Appeal supports diocesan ministries that serve people far beyond any single parish.
2. **Name the parish goal and progress.** Share the parish goal, current number of gifts, and the importance of broad participation. If the parish has early donors, thank them.
3. **Emphasize participation over amount.** Invite every family to participate at a level that is prayerful and realistic. Remind parishioners that pledges can be paid over time.
4. **Distribute or locate envelopes.** Ask ushers to make sure one envelope reaches each family. Make pens/pencils available.
5. **Guide the pledge envelope.** Slowly walk parishioners through name, address, parish, pledge amount, payment options, and signature fields. Fill out your pledge card during that time.
6. **Invite quiet prayer.** Allow a moment for reflection before collecting envelopes.
7. **Collect immediately.** Ushers collect completed envelopes during Mass and return them to the designated parish contact. Keep this collection separate from your weekly collection.
8. **Encourage putting all cash in an envelope.** This increases your participation rate and allows families to be thanked for their gift.
9. **Close with gratitude.** Thank parishioners for their generosity and remind them that gifts may also be made online at austindiocese.org/give.

HOMILY HINTS AND PASTORAL THEMES

Commitment Weekend — Oct. 24–25, 2026



The Commitment Weekend homily should help parishioners understand that the CSA is not simply a diocesan request. It is an invitation to live the Gospel through shared service. The strongest message is pastoral, concrete, hopeful, and personal.

- Humility and gratitude. We recognize that every gift comes from God and that generosity begins with gratitude.
- A Church that carries one another. No parish stands alone; through the CSA, parishes help ministries that serve the whole diocese.
- One heart and mind. The theme ***Together, we are one*** should be illustrated through real ministry examples that show Catholics serving together across the diocese.
- Participation as discipleship. Every family can share in the mission through prayer and a gift appropriate to its circumstances.
- Pastor's personal witness. A simple statement such as "I have made my commitment, and I invite you to join me" strengthens the invitation.

Please avoid:

- Long explanations of the administrative process during the homily.
- Pressure language or comparisons between families.
- Making the Appeal sound separate from parish life.
- Focusing only on dollars instead of mission and participation.

Today, the Gospel calls us not merely to speak of faith, but to live it with humility, mercy, and love. The Catholic Services Appeal (CSA) is one way our parish lives that call beyond our own walls. Through the CSA, we help form future priests and deacons, support families, educate young people in the faith, care for those in need, and strengthen the Church's ministries across the Diocese of Austin.

This is why I ask every family to participate today. Your gift, no matter its size, becomes part of something larger than any one of us. Together, we are one!

ENVELOPE HANDLING AND TRANSMITTAL

Secure, timely, and trackable procedures



- Secure all pledge envelopes immediately after Mass.
- Do not leave envelopes unattended in the sacristy, vestibule, parish hall, or office reception area.
- Complete the Transmittal Form according to the instructions provided by the diocese.
- Mail the first two batches of pledge envelopes and the Transmittal Form to the Processing Center using the return mailer.
- Obtain and retain a tracking number for each package.
- After the first two batches, send any remaining batches directly to the Stewardship and Development Office as instructed.
- Continue to make pledge envelopes available after Masses, in the parish office, and near church entrances.

QUALITY CONTROL

Before mailing, confirm that the parish name is clear, the Transmittal Form is complete, and envelopes are bundled according to diocesan instructions. Timeliness helps maintain accurate donor records and parish progress reporting.

BEFORE MAILING

- ☐ All envelopes are gathered from every Mass.
- ☐ Envelopes are secured and counted according to parish procedure.
- ☐ Transmittal Form is completed and reviewed.
- ☐ Return mailer or diocesan mailing instructions are followed.

AFTER MAILING

- ☐ Tracking number is recorded.
- ☐ Pastor/administrator and CSA coordinator know the shipment has been sent.
- ☐ Remaining envelopes are held for the next transmittal.
- ☐ Follow-up reminders continue at Mass and online.

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

Consistent message across parish channels



The CSA should be communicated as a shared act of Catholic mission. Parishioners should hear the same invitation at Mass, in the bulletin, by email, online, and through parish social media: *Together, we are one* in supporting the ministries of the Diocese of Austin.

BULLETIN	<ul style="list-style-type: none">☐ Publish the before, weekend-of, and follow-up announcements.☐ Use CSA inserts/graphics when available.☐ Include austindiocese.org/give in every announcement.
PULPIT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">☐ Use the provided pulpit announcements.☐ Keep the tone pastoral, grateful, and mission-focused.☐ Repeat the invitation beyond Commitment Weekend.
EMAIL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">☐ Send the diocesan-prepared email from the pastor before Commitment Weekend.☐ Send the diocesan-prepared email before Follow-up Weekend.☐ Send a thank-you/follow-up email after Commitment Weekend.☐ Use parish-specific goal and progress where possible.
WEBSITE / SOCIAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none">☐ Post the CSA video or link.☐ Feature the giving link prominently.☐ Share short weekly reminders with ministry impact examples.☐ Utilize the social media prepared in the toolbox.

- Keep the theme visible: *Together, we are one*.
- Use short, specific ministry examples rather than general statements.
- Show parish progress through a goal thermometer or weekly bulletin announcement.
- Thank early donors by group, not by name, unless permission has been given.
- Avoid pressure language. The invitation should be confident, grateful, and rooted in faith.

PULPIT AND BULLETIN ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ready-to-use parish language



To be published in the bulletin on Oct. 17 – 18 (Announcement Weekend).

Next weekend, our parish will take part in the Catholic Services Appeal. Through the CSA, Catholics across the Diocese of Austin stand together as one Church, supporting ministries that form future priests and deacons, strengthen Catholic education and faith formation, serve families and those in need, and advance the mission of the Church throughout Central Texas.

Please take time this week to pray about your participation in the CSA. Every family is invited to make a gift or pledge according to your means. To learn more or make a secure gift online, visit austindiocese.org/give.

To be published in the bulletin on Oct. 24 – 25 (Commitment Weekend).

Today, as one Catholic family, we launch the Catholic Services Appeal (CSA). Our theme, *Together, we are one*, reminds us that when we give together, the Church is able to serve, teach, heal, form, and accompany people across our diocese as one community of faith.

Please prayerfully complete your pledge card today or make a secure gift online at austindiocese.org/give. Thank you for joining together to help our parish share in the mission of the Church.

To be published in the bulletin on Oct. 31 – Nov. 1 (Follow-up Weekend).

Thank you to everyone who has already made a gift or pledge to the Catholic Services Appeal. Your generosity helps our diocese serve as one through ministries that support parishes, families, seminarians, students, the poor, the vulnerable, and all those who look to the Church for support.

If you have not yet made your commitment, pledge envelopes remain available, and secure online giving is available at austindiocese.org/give.

To be published once your parish reaches its CSA goal.

With gratitude, we are pleased to share that our parish has reached its Catholic Services Appeal goal. Thank you for your generosity and for your witness to the mission of the Church.

If you have not yet participated, your gift still matters. Every additional gift strengthens the ministries supported by the CSA and helps our parish stand as one with Catholics across the Diocese of Austin. You may give online at austindiocese.org/give.

PASTOR/ADMINISTRATOR EMAIL #1

Sent the Week Before Commitment Weekend

Subject: This Weekend: *Together, we are one*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This weekend, our parish joins Catholic communities throughout the Diocese of Austin is launching the 2026–2027 Catholic Services Appeal (CSA). Guided by this year's theme, *Together, we are one*, and a diocesan goal of \$7.4 million, the appeal invites every household to help make visible the unity we share in Jesus Christ.

"so that they may all be one" — John 17:21

These words from Jesus' prayer remind us that Christian unity is more than an ideal — it is a way of living. We become one when we pray together, serve together, and share responsibility for the mission of the Church beyond the boundaries of any one parish.

- Through the CSA, our gifts work together to:
- Form seminarians, deacons, priests and lay leaders for service to God's people;
- Strengthen Catholic education, faith formation, and tuition assistance;
- Serve people facing hunger, homelessness, and crisis through Catholic Charities and other ministries of life, charity, and justice;
- Support youth, young adults, families, campus ministries, and multicultural communities;
- Provide retreats and spiritual renewal through Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center;
- Help parishes and schools address important local needs through the Parish and School Grant Program.

Every gift — whatever its size — joins with thousands of others to strengthen the Church across Central Texas. I ask you to prayerfully consider making a pledge this weekend and helping our diocese reach its \$7.4 million goal. When each of us offers what we can, we become a powerful witness that, in Christ, we truly are one.

Make your gift online at www.austindiocese.org/give.

Thank you for your faithful generosity and for the many ways you help our parish live the Gospel. Please know of my prayers for you and your loved ones.

Gratefully in Christ,

[PASTOR/ADMINISTRATOR NAME]

Pastor/Administrator, [PARISH NAME]

PASTOR/ADMINISTRATOR EMAIL #2

Sent the Week After Commitment Weekend

Subject: Thank You for Standing Together as One Church

Dear Parish Family,

Thank you to everyone who responded so generously during Commitment Weekend for the 2026–2027 Catholic Services Appeal (CSA). Each pledge is an act of faith, and together those individual acts become a powerful expression of our shared mission as one Church.

“As a body is one though it has many parts ... so also Christ.” — 1 Corinthians 12:12

St. Paul’s image of the Body of Christ beautifully captures the meaning of this year’s CSA theme, *Together, we are one*. Every parish, every ministry, and every Catholic household have a distinct role, yet all of us belong to one body and share one mission.

Your generosity helps the Diocese of Austin move toward its \$7.4 million goal and supports ministries that form future priests and deacons, strengthen Catholic schools and faith formation, accompany families and young people, serve neighbors in crisis, provide spiritual renewal and assist parishes and schools through the grant program.

If you were unable to make your pledge last weekend, there is still time to participate. Your gift, joined with the gifts of others, will help the Church reach people and communities that no single parish could serve alone.

You can still make your gift by:

- Visiting www.austindiocese.org/give, or
- Scanning the QR code on your pledge card or parish materials, or
- Returning your completed pledge envelope at Mass next weekend.

Thank you for answering Christ’s call with a generous heart. May our united support of the CSA bear lasting fruit throughout Central Texas and remind the world that, though we are many, together we are one in Christ.

With gratitude and blessings,

[PASTOR/ADMINISTRATOR NAME]

Pastor/Administrator, [PARISH NAME]

CSA PROCEDURAL GUIDE

Parish launch, commitment weekend,
communications, and follow-up



Pulpit Announcements

Announcement Weekend:

Next weekend, our parish will take part in the Catholic Services Appeal. Through the CSA, we join Catholics across the Diocese of Austin as one community of faith through ministries that serve, teach, form, and accompany. Please pray about your participation. Give online at austindiocese.org/give.

Commitment Weekend:

Today is Catholic Services Appeal (CSA) Commitment Weekend. ***Together, we are one!*** Every gift matters, and every family is invited to participate. Make your gift or pledge during Mass or online at austindiocese.org/give.

Follow-Up Weekend:

Thank you to everyone who has supported the Catholic Services Appeal (CSA). If you have not yet made your gift or pledge, there is still time to help our parish stand as one in the mission of the Church. Visit austindiocese.org/give.

PRAYER OF THE FAITHFUL

CSA intentions for parish Masses



October 17–18 (Weekend Prior to Commitment Weekend)

- That, as disciples of Jesus Christ, we may answer the Lord's call to serve with generous hearts through our support of the Catholic Services Appeal, strengthening the mission of His Church as one family of faith working together for His glory. We pray to the Lord.
- That the Holy Spirit may unite us in faith and charity, so that through the Catholic Services Appeal we may faithfully share Christ's love with those most in need, recognizing that we are one Body in Christ called to serve together. We pray to the Lord.
- That God may inspire each of us to offer our unique gifts in joyful service to His Church, and through the Catholic Services Appeal help build a stronger, more united community of faith throughout Central Texas. We pray to the Lord.

October 24–25 (Commitment Weekend)

- That, as we prayerfully make our commitment, we may respond to the Lord with grateful hearts, supporting the Catholic Services Appeal as an expression of our unity in Christ and our shared mission to serve His people. We pray to the Lord.
- That every gift entrusted through the Catholic Services Appeal may strengthen ministries that proclaim the Gospel, accompany families, foster vocations, and bring Christ's compassion to those in need, drawing us ever closer together as His Church. We pray to the Lord.
- That the Lord may deepen our spirit of stewardship, so that through the Catholic Services Appeal we may joyfully work together as one Diocese, carrying out the mission entrusted to us by Christ. We pray to the Lord.

October 31–November 1 (Weekend After Commitment Weekend)

- That the Lord may abundantly bless all who have supported the Catholic Services Appeal and reward their generosity by strengthening the unity of our Diocese as we serve Him together in faith and love. We pray to the Lord.
- That the ministries sustained through the Catholic Services Appeal may continue to bear abundant fruit by forming disciples, strengthening families, leading others to know and serve Jesus Christ, and building up the one Body of Christ. We pray to the Lord.
- That, united in the Lord's service, we may continue to answer Christ's call through the Catholic Services Appeal, living our faith with generosity, hope, charity, and a shared commitment to walk together as one family in Christ. We pray to the Lord.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Parishioner-ready answers



Q	How will CSA funds be used?
A	Funds support the diocesan programs and ministries described in the case for support. Gifts are directed to ministry work and are not used for legal fees, judgments, or settlements.
Q	Who will be asked to support the CSA?
A	Catholic families throughout the Diocese of Austin are invited to make a prayerful gift or pledge.
Q	Why should every parishioner be invited?
A	The CSA belongs to the whole diocesan family. Broad participation helps every family see that the work of the Church is shared by all of us.
Q	Is a pledge required?
A	No. A gift is voluntary. Parishioners are invited to consider a pledge because it allows them to make a meaningful commitment over time.
Q	Can a donor give online?
A	Yes. Parishioners may make a secure gift online at austindiocese.org/give .
Q	Can a gift be paid over time?
A	Yes. Pledges may be fulfilled over time according to the diocesan pledge process.
Q	What should a parishioner do if they forgot their envelope?
A	They may use a pledge envelope available at church or give online at austindiocese.org/give .
Q	How should pastors talk about the Appeal?
A	Pastors should connect the CSA to the Gospel, explain its impact, ask every family to participate, and express gratitude.
Q	What is the role of the CSA coordinator?
A	The coordinator helps organize parish materials, volunteer roles, communication, pledge envelope handling, and follow-up reminders.
Q	Why does follow-up matter?
A	Many faithful parishioners are not present on Commitment Weekend or need more time to discern. Follow-up is an act of invitation, not pressure.

DONOR ENGAGEMENT AND FOLLOW-UP

Build momentum beyond Commitment Weekend



1. **Phase 1: Prepare and Educate.** Use the September training and Awareness Weekend to explain the ministries and build confidence among parish leaders.
2. **Phase 2: Invite Everyone.** Use Announcement and Commitment Weekends to make a clear, prayerful invitation at every Mass.
3. **Phase 3: Thank and Report.** Thank donors promptly and share parish progress so parishioners see the impact of participation.
4. **Phase 4: Renew and Upgrade.** Use follow-up letters, LYBUNT lists, and personal outreach to invite renewed support and appropriate increases.
5. **Phase 5: Sustain the Message.** Continue monthly reminders, updates, and ministry impact stories throughout the year.

TONE FOR DONOR FOLLOW-UP

Every follow-up should sound like ministry: grateful, personal, hopeful, and clear. The strongest appeal language thanks people for what they make possible before asking for renewed support.

TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL APPEAL

Practical lessons for parish execution



LEADERSHIP	☐ Pastor/administrator personally supports the Appeal. ☐ CSA coordinator and parish staff understand the schedule. ☐ Volunteers know exactly when and how to distribute and collect envelopes.
MESSAGE	☐ Theme and ministry impact are repeated consistently. ☐ Acts 4:32 and the theme Together, we are one are visible in parish communications. ☐ The parish goal and progress are communicated regularly. ☐ Participation is emphasized as much as dollars raised.
MATERIALS	☐ Posters, banners, pledge envelopes, pencils/pens, bulletin inserts, and transmittal forms are staged before each weekend. ☐ The CSA video and giving link are accessible on the parish digital channels. ☐ Goal thermometer or progress display is updated.
FOLLOW-UP	☐ Donors are thanked quickly. ☐ Non-responders are invited again through pastor letters, pulpit reminders, email, and online links. ☐ All envelopes are transmitted promptly and securely.

Pre-Campaign Readiness Checklist Essential materials and setup required before the CSA launch

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| ☐ CSA posters | ☐ CSA banner | ☐ Pledge envelopes |
| ☐ Pens/Pencils | ☐ Transmittal Forms | ☐ Return mailing envelopes |
| ☐ Bulletin insert or bulletin text | ☐ Pulpit announcement script | ☐ Prayer of the Faithful intention |
| ☐ CSA video link | ☐ Online giving link: austindiocese.org/give | ☐ Parish goal/progress display |

PARISH PLANNING WORKSHEET

Complete before training or parish rollout



Planning Item	Parish Notes
Parish Name	
Pastor / Administrator	
CSA Coordinator	
Parish Goal	\$
Announcement Weekend Mass Plan	
Commitment Weekend Homilist / Lay Witness	
Ushers / Envelope Distribution Lead	
Transmittal Contact	
Website / Social Media Contact	
Bulletin Deadline	
Email Send Dates	
Follow-Up Plan	

CATHOLIC SERVICES APPEAL CONTACT INFORMATION



www.austindiocese.org/csa

Scott Whitaker	Director of Stewardship & Development
Lisa Rosenberger	Associate Director Annual Appeal
Melissa Valles	CSA Administrative Coordinator
Hunter Beaton	Major Gifts Manager
Margaret Kappel	Associate Director Development Operations
Donor Services	
Sonia Martinez	Senior Data Entry Clerk
Mary Rutherford	Data Entry Clerk
Case Fund Statement/Goal Setting/Stock and IRA Gifts	
Lisa Rosenberger	(512) 949-2450
Return Procedures/Parish Resources/Social Media Resources	
Melissa Valles	(512) 949-2462
Ministry Platform	
Margaret Kappel	(512) 949-2444
Pledge Processing/Donor Inquiries	
Sonia Martinez	(512) 949-2458
Mary Rutherford	(512) 949-2543

Parish Resources available at www.austindiocese.org/csa-resources