



DIOCESE of  
MADISON

# HOPE

*does not disappoint*

2025 ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL



## BISHOP'S REFLECTION



This year, the Annual Catholic Appeal (ACA) begins as we prepare to enter the holy season of Lent. Lent is a time for repentance and renewal. The three traditional practices of Lent — prayer, fasting, and almsgiving — open us up to relationship: prayer to God, almsgiving to others, fasting to our deepest, truest self. These powerful pillars of Lent also challenge us to go deeper in the spiritual life, to not only avoid the bad, but to do the good with ever greater generosity and joy. It can sometimes be difficult to embrace these Lenten practices, and yet, in his letter to the Romans, St. Paul teaches that “suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope” (Romans 5:3-4). Hope is exactly what the Resurrection and Ascension of Christ should give us. In addition to being the focus for the 2025 Jubilee Year, hope is also the message of our theme for the 2025 ACA, “Hope Does Not Disappoint”.

As Catholics, we place our hope in our Risen Savior, Jesus Christ. As Christ's disciples, we are called to keep, live, profess, bear witness, and spread our faith in Christ (CCC 1816). Please join me in supporting the ACA and the numerous programs, ministries, and services within the Diocese of Madison that bring hope to our youth, our catechumens, our families, the lost and forgotten, and all those in need.

In hope, I am,

Most Rev. Donald J. Hying | Bishop of Madison

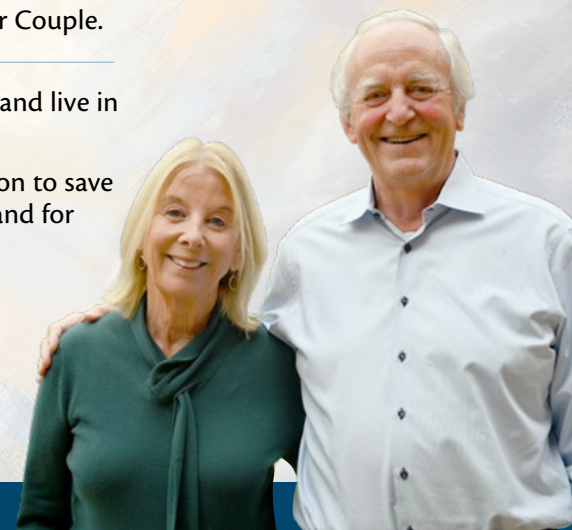
## 2025 ACA CHAIR COUPLE: FRED AND DEBBIE SCHWARTZ

Every two years, Bishop Hying selects an ACA Chair Couple to serve with him as spokespersons for the appeal and to raise awareness of the ministries it supports. For the second year, Fred and Debbie Schwartz are humbled to serve as the ACA Chair Couple.

We grew up in Madison and have been happily married for 48 years. We are members of the Stella Maris Pastorate and live in McFarland. We have three children and ten grandchildren.

To us, hope in the Church means that we believe in God, who makes and keeps his promises, who sent down His Son to save us so that we might belong to Him. We believe that following Jesus' example will lead to a better life for ourselves and for others. We have hope that by living a life pleasing to God, we will one day join Him in eternal life.

We feel hope for our diocese in many ways. Masses are filled with people reverently professing their faith. There is increasing enrollment in Catholic schools and more conversions to the Catholic Church. Evangelization in our pastorates is helping all of us to share the good news of Jesus Christ with others. Our own grandchildren are benefiting from youth programs like Camp Gray. Through our hope in God, we can look at any situation and feel that God will provide us with what we need. Please join us again this year in supporting the ACA.





## YOUR ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL GIFT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

2025 ACA GOAL: \$4.2 MILLION



### *Hope for the Future*

Fostering strong Catholic marriages and families is vital for the future. Whether spiritually walking with engaged couples, providing Catholic education in our schools and faith-formation programs, or offering a host of powerful ministries for the youth of our diocese, your gift makes an impact that will last for generations to come.

#### MINISTRIES INCLUDE:

Camp Gray  
Totus Tuus  
Witness to Love  
Love Begins Here  
Catholic Schools



### *Hope for the Church*

Your gift directly supports the mission of the Church to proclaim the Gospel and make disciples. By contributing, you help spread Christ's message of love and hope, empower parishioners to grow in faith and service, and support efforts that bring new Catholics into the Church.

#### MINISTRIES INCLUDE:

Training for sacramental preparation  
Go Make Disciples  
Called & Gifted™  
Hispanic and migrant support  
FOCUS Missionaries



### *Hope in Action*

Our ministries share Christ's love by offering hope and comfort to the lost, suffering, and forgotten in our diocese. Through compassionate support and practical assistance, we strive to carry out the corporal works of mercy, uplift spirits, and inspire faith in all those in need.

#### MINISTRIES INCLUDE:

The Beacon  
5 Door Recovery  
Adult Day Center  
Walking with Moms in Need  
Parish Mobile Food Pantries  
Care Team Ministries



### *Hope in Difficult Times*

We all face difficult times in life, but through the outreach of the Church, we don't have to face them on our own. The goal of these ministries is to help individuals cope during challenging times, to offer hope and reassurance that they are not alone, and to help them grow in their faith.

#### MINISTRIES INCLUDE:

Lay Them to Rest  
Divorce Ministry  
Mental Health Programs



Please visit [madisondiocese.org/aca](https://madisondiocese.org/aca) for additional information on the ministries supported by the ACA.

## MINISTRY SPOTLIGHT: ORDER OF CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS (OCIA)

One ministry supported by the ACA is sacramental preparation, including the OCIA process for adults to become Catholic. This involves preparation to receive the Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism, Communion, and Confirmation. The OCIA process is not just about learning; it is a profound spiritual journey that touches the heart and soul. One catechumen shared her inspiring story:

My journey to the Catholic faith began about five years ago. One night just before Christmas, a long-time friend and I attended a candlelight Vespers service in Switzerland. I felt the presence of a millennia of saints as we sang hymns a cappella. Periods of silent reflection followed the singing. It was an ethereal and transcendent experience. Afterwards, I wanted a deeper connection with my faith. That experience and longing led me to explore the Catholic Church here in the Diocese of Madison. This past year I officially began to pursue the OCIA process. I reached out to the diocese and was put in touch with my now-friend and sponsor, Michelle. She helped me find a parish that would guide me as I prepared for the sacraments and helped me through the various steps, from attending OCIA sessions to participating in parish activities. I joyfully look forward to entering the Church at the upcoming Easter Vigil Mass and receiving the fullness of God's promises through the Eucharist.

