

© The Catholic News & Herald, Jan. 30, 2009

DSA: A way to proclaim Christ through service

Diocesan Support Appeal funds 30 ministries, 50 programs

by BARBARA GADDY

exemplary contributor

CHARLOTTE — Every day, in many ways, Catholics proclaim Christ by following his example of service to those in need.

In the Diocese of Charlotte, a contribution to the Diocesan Support Appeal is one way Catholics can “proclaim Christ through service,” said Bishop Peter J. Jugis in a letter to parishioners announcing the 2009 appeal.

This year’s DSA campaign, themed “Proclaiming Christ through Service,” runs Feb. 1 through March 8. Its goal of \$4,296,500 provides funds for more than 30 diocesan ministries offering more than 50 programs, including Catholic Social Services, housing, vocations, and educational and multicultural ministries.

The Diocese of Charlotte’s mission statement ends with the words “We seek to become evermore enthusiastically a leaven of service and a sign of peace through love in Piedmont and western North Carolina.” The DSA provides funding for the diocesan ministries that serve people throughout the 46-county diocese.

“Jesus made it perfectly clear that living as a good steward of our resources involves service,” said Jim Kelley, director of the diocesan development office.

“Some of us are called to serve directly as social workers, counselors, priests and permanent deacons, catechists, youth ministers and lay ministers,” he said. “But one way we all can make service to others a priority is through a contribution to the DSA.”

Catholic Social Services programs funded by the DSA provide outreach to the poor, homeless and those in need of life’s basic necessities. They provide programs for engaged couples and senior citizens, as well as counseling, adoption, pregnancy support and Hispanic services in regional offices.

DSA contributions help provide training for catechists, facilitators and youth and lay ministers entrusted with the teaching mission of the church. The DSA helps fund the formation of seminarians for the diocese.

“Someday you or someone you know will be helped by one or more of the DSA-funded ministries,” said Kelley.

Making “dollars and sense” of the DSA

Each of the parishes and missions within the diocese is assigned a target — “their share of the overall goal of \$4,296,500,” said Bill Weldon, chief financial officer for the Diocese of Charlotte.

Targets represent a pro-rata allocation of the overall goal, determined primarily as a function of offertory giving.

“If, through parishioner contributions, a parish exceeds its target, the excess is rebated to the parish,” said Weldon. “If a parish falls short of its target, the parish is expected to make up the shortfall from its budget.”

Last year, 48 parishes exceeded their DSA targets and, in doing so, received distributions from the 2008 DSA to augment parish programs and ministries.

The 2009 DSA provides funding for the 2009-10 fiscal year. Planning for this year’s DSA began last fall as budgeting for the 2009-10 fiscal year began. Establishing the current goal involved analyzing account-by-account budgets for each program and ministry that receives DSA funding.

“Very much aware that these are challenging economic times, additional measures have been taken to contain costs, without significantly impacting program services,” said Weldon.

The amount budgeted for each ministry is published on page 8 of this issue of The Catholic News & Herald.

“We are committed to the highest standards of fiscal responsibility and accountability,” said Weldon. “There are procedures in place to direct the disbursement of funds in accordance with donor intent and to ensure that all financial activity is accounted for properly.”

A complete financial report of the previous fiscal year is published in the fall as a supplement to The Catholic News & Herald. The report includes a breakdown of actual DSA funding by ministry.

Diocesan financial reports for the past five years can be found on the diocesan Web site at www.charlottediocese.org/annualfinancialreport.html.

Putting faith into action

During the past week, all registered households in the Diocese of Charlotte received pledge cards and letters from Bishop Jugis asking for their support of the DSA.

There are several ways to give to the DSA, including credit card gifts, electronic funds transfer, gifts of stock and online giving through the diocesan Web site at www.charlottediocese.org/giving.html.

A pledge may be paid over a 6-month period, beginning the month after the pledge card is received.

“By virtue of our baptism and confirmation, we are all called to proclaim Christ every day of our lives,” said Bishop Jugis in a video presentation for the 2009 DSA.

“The Diocesan Support Appeal gives each of us an opportunity to proclaim Christ through service,” he said.

Barbara Gaddy is associate director of the diocesan development office.

WANT MORE INFO?

For more information on this year’s DSA campaign, visit www.charlottediocese.org/developmentoffice.html.