

LIVING THE FAITH BOLDLY & PROUDLY

After graduating from college, Sam felt a void in her life. She missed her faith community! So, she set out to find it again, in the “real” world, and that’s when she discovered Theology on Tap. “It’s such a relief and really encouraging to connect with my peers who are living their faith, like me, at a point in our lives where we are still finding our way fully to Christ,” Sam shared.

Justin Reyes, Director of the Department of Catechesis and Evangelization, is passionate about programs that minister to today’s young adults like Theology on Tap. This unique lecture series quenches a thirst for both spiritual growth and fellowship with faith-focused topics at its center. “Our ministry helps the Church reach a younger body of Catholics who want to live their faith boldly and proudly. Which isn’t easy in today’s world,” said Justin.

The Diocese of Joliet is blessed with many vibrant young adult groups. Brent, a parishioner of Corpus Christi Catholic Church in Carol Stream, values the generosity of donors who keep these programs strong and growing. He expressed his sincere gratitude, “Your support means so much to all of us who want to honor our deep love for the Catholic Church and maintain its vitality long into the future.”

The CMAA supports all programs affiliated with Young Adult Ministries to bring this important community of Catholics together for faith and fellowship.



YOU'RE INVITED

We invite you to consider joining one of our donor societies with your gift to the Catholic Ministries Annual Appeal



When you pledge \$100 a month for 10 months to the Catholic Ministries Annual Appeal, you are welcomed as a member of the Deo Gratias Society. Members take a leadership role in the work of the Church, becoming partners in a shared vision for the future of the Diocese of Joliet. In addition to spiritual benefits, membership includes an annual Mass and reception with Bishop Ronald A. Hicks, and recognition in our annual publication for society members.



Named for the patroness saint of the environment, paperless recurring monthly giving is the greenest way to contribute, saving valuable resources and reducing the number of diocesan mailings. Members of the St. Kateri Tekakwitha Society make a continuous gift to the CMAA via an automatic bank or credit card withdrawal, providing the diocese with a reliable and stable source of income for the many CMAA ministries.

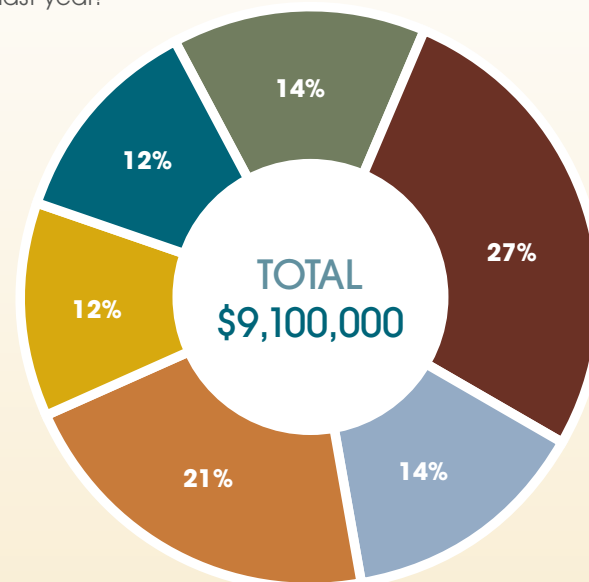
THE LUMEN CHRISTI LEGACY SOCIETY

The Lumen Christi Legacy Society is for benefactors who share in the future vision of the Diocese of Joliet by making a gift in their will because they care deeply about causes that are important in their life. Lumen Christi is Latin for “light of Christ,” as gifts given through this society will provide continued support of the parish, Diocese of Joliet, or the Seminarian Education Endowment for generations to come.

2024 CATHOLIC MINISTRIES ANNUAL APPEAL

In 2024, gifts to the Catholic Ministries Annual Appeal supported essential ministries in the Diocese of Joliet. Thank you for making an impact last year!

- 12%** Serving our brothers and sisters in need through Catholic Charities
- 12%** Educating children in the faith through Catholic schools
- 21%** Strengthening vocations, educating seminarians and supporting clergy
- 14%** Catechesis and evangelization to all ages and abilities
- 27%** Serving parishes, parishioners and protecting God’s children
- 14%** Rebates to Parishes
- 100%** Total \$9,100,000



Open your heart to
God's Goodness

COMMITMENT WEEKEND: MARCH 1-2, 2025

2025 CMAA GOAL: \$9 MILLION

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As Catholics, our missionary spirit calls us to be active participants in the work of our Church by opening our hearts to the needs of others. With hearts full of compassion, we faithfully turn that compassion into action!

This brings me to our 2025 Catholic Ministries Annual Appeal (CMAA) and this year’s theme **Open Your Heart to God’s Goodness**. By opening our hearts to God’s goodness, we reserve space in our lives for those who rely on our help. One way we can do this is by gifting the important ministries and outreach programs that the CMAA supports.

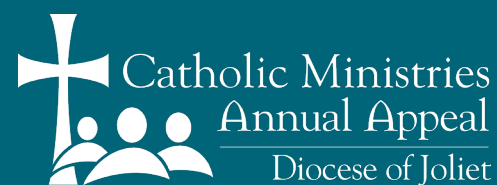
Your kind contributions help our Catechesis and Evangelization ministry serve our parishioners with disabilities through sacramental preparation, fellowship, and worship. Your generosity also ensures that our next generation of priests receive the education and formation needed to prepare them for a life in service to God. These and the many other ministries we uphold benefit our brothers and sisters boundlessly across the Diocese of Joliet.

As we launch our 2025 Catholic Ministries Annual Appeal, please prayerfully consider making a gift. For when we open our hearts to God’s goodness, there is no end to what we can accomplish! Thank you for your prayerful consideration and may God bless you, always.

With best wishes, I remain—
Sincerely Yours in Christ,

+ Ronald A. Hicks

Most Reverend Ronald A. Hicks | Bishop of Joliet in Illinois



DIocese of Joliet
Jolietdioceseappeal.org | (815) 838-8515
Development and Stewardship Office
16555 Weber Road, Crest Hill, Illinois 60403

COUNTIES OF THE DIOCESE
DuPage, Ford, Grundy, Iroquois,
Kankakee, Kendall, Will



WHEN THE PRIEST SHOWS UP JESUS SHOWS UP

Fr. Jeremy Leganski, Associate Pastor of Immaculate Conception parish in Elmhurst, and Fr. Alex Lorang, Associate Pastor of St. Thomas the Apostle parish in Naperville, were both ordained to the priesthood last May. They share a loving and deep commitment to serving their parishioners.

What is Fr. Jeremy most proud of in his first year as a priest? "Being available and present for the people of my parish. Because in some way, when the priest shows up, Jesus shows up." Making everyone feel seen and loved by God is always his goal.

He also values the time he spends with the high school students he serves. Whether they are making college decisions or "wrestling with what the world is telling them will bring them happiness versus what our faith says brings us fulfillment," Fr. Jeremy considers it an honor to walk with them through these pivotal moments in their lives.

Connecting with his parishioners is one of Fr. Alex's greatest priorities. One very special way he does this is through song. As a gifted musician and songwriter, he finds music a way for him to "encounter God's love and share it with his parish family."

He also finds immense joy in hearing confessions. "Being a representative of the Father and granting forgiveness is so powerful and such a privileged place to be." Looking back, Fr. Alex truly believes that he would not be a priest today, if it weren't for the generosity of the CMAA donors.

Fr. Jeremy thanks the CMAA donors from the bottom of his heart, "Your generosity helped educate and shape me in my role as a priest in the great Diocese of Joliet!"

The CMAA supports The Office of Vocations which educates and prepares our spiritual shepherds to guide us in our Catholic faith.



"Their support alleviated the financial worry, giving me the freedom to focus on God's will for me." —Father Alex

CELEBRATING THE ABILITIES IN DISABILITIES

Joe and Lydia Schmitt have four wonderful children and are faith-filled parishioners of Our Lady of Mercy Parish in Aurora. Three weeks after their daughter Autumn was born in 2018, she was diagnosed with Down syndrome. The more the couple learned about her diagnosis, the more blessed they felt.

One day, while the family was participating in a Corpus Christi walk, Joe received a sign. Halfway through the journey, a little boy with Down syndrome, reached out his hand to Lydia, and they walked and talked to the finish. "In that moment, I realized, God placed us here to help people with disabilities grow closer to their faith," Joe recalled. Soon after, Lydia was invited to start a disabilities ministry in their parish. She knew this was her calling and she answered!

"I'm privileged to be a part of a ministry that fosters inclusion and guides this beautiful group of parishioners through sacramental preparation," Lydia said. She went on to share that many families were unaware that children with special needs were allowed to receive the sacraments. "So, to witness them receiving Jesus in the Eucharist for the first time, is even more profound!"

The disABILITIES Ministry serves between 1,500 and 2,000 people annually, across the Diocese of Joliet, through sacramental preparation, fellowship, and care-giver support. Additionally, two Masses are hosted each year, one of which is celebrated by Bishop Hicks.

Renata Cichowicz, Pastoral Outreach Lead, shepherds this ministry with incredible compassion. "It's important to focus on the abilities of those with disabilities. By doing this, we are putting God's words, 'all are welcome' into action, she said. Renata is on a mission to bring this ministry to every parish in the Diocese of Joliet so that no one is ever turned away.

Lydia feels they are well on their way. She offered her viewpoint, "I'm envisioning Mary and Joseph knocking on doors and being told there was no room for them. Thanks to the generous support of our CMAA donors, people who felt far away from their faith family are knocking on our church doors and are welcomed in with open arms!"



The CMAA supports the services that the disABILITIES Ministry provides for people of all abilities throughout the Diocese of Joliet.



FINDING A VOICE FOR MENTAL HEALTH

For a long time, it was a subject discussed in hushed tones, but thankfully ministries like Catholic Charities' Counseling Services are raising their voices in an effort to break the stigma attached to mental health. Division Director, Dr. Corinna House, and her associates, offer a safe space that nurtures trust and deep healing. "Empowering individuals and families to find hope and seek change despite the challenges they are facing is our core mission," she said.

The ministry's outpatient services cover a wide range of therapies that address anxiety, depression, behavioral disorders, and children in crisis due to separation or divorce. Patients range in age from three to four years to lifespan, as mental health conditions do not discriminate by age.

Many clients arrive through referral sources such as the 11 schools Catholic Charities works with within the Diocese of Joliet. Others are referred by parish priests, children and family service organizations or word of mouth.

Dr. House shared her heartfelt thanks to our CMAA donors. "Your support means the world to us. It keeps our doors open letting those who come to us know that it's okay. It's safe to talk and we're here to help!"

The CMAA supports the work of Catholic Charities whose Counseling Services reach those in need of mental health care.



Open your heart to *God's Goodness*