

*Catholic Charities Annual Appeal 2008*

***Theme: You can change the world:  
One person...One family...One community at a time***

*“Let me express my particular appreciation for the many forms of humanitarian assistance provided by American Catholics through Catholic Charities and other agencies.”*

Pope Benedict XVI recognized the importance and hard work of Catholic Charities in his speech to the Bishops during his recent visit. Every diocese in the United States is privileged to have a Catholic Charities organization. Thousands of the most vulnerable and marginalized members of our nation receive compassionate and quality services through the programs of Catholic Charities. Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Ogdensburg is part of this national network. Last year in our Diocese, the staff and volunteers of Catholic Charities served over 30,000 people. What a remarkable accomplishment! And it was all made possible through your generosity!

The Catholic Charities’ mandate includes the two aspects of Christian service. Direct service is the first aspect. Counseling, outreach to families suffering from post-abortion trauma, financial assistance, and community education programs are examples of direct service. The second aspect of Christian service is advocacy. This aspect addresses the public policies and structures that maintain people and groups in poverty or oppressive situations. Organizing the Ogdensburg delegation, that attends the New York State Catholic Conference Public Policy Day, is one example of the agency’s advocacy work.

Throughout its history in the North Country, Catholic Charities has evolved and grown in response to the needs of our people. One of the areas that I am most grateful for is Catholic Charities’ partnership with the parishes. Many times it is the pastor or other parish staff person who recognizes a need and contacts Catholic Charities for support or information. I encourage this relationship between Catholic Charities and the wonderful network of parishes within our Diocese.

Christ, Our Hope was the theme for Pope Benedict’s visit. At Nationals Park in Washington, D.C. Our Holy Father said, *“Those who have hope live different lives.”* (*Spe Salvi* 2). Isn’t this an apt description of the goals and the results of the work of Catholic Charities? In our diocese, we know, that many of our sisters and brothers who come to Catholic Charities are the ones who are in danger of “falling between the cracks”. They are often the working person/family struggling to make ends meet. At times, it is the person who is suffering from depression or another crisis who finds their way to a Catholic Charities’ office or program. Catholic Charities’ services are based on the fundamental belief in the dignity and the sanctity of human life. From that base, the staff works to help individuals and families build bridges to healthier lives. This reality can move a person or family from despair to hope. This is life changing.

Catholic Charities in Clinton County is celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> year of service. We remember in prayers of thanksgiving all of the clergy, men and women who have served

our sisters and brothers through this office. I offer congratulations and appreciation to the staff serving Clinton and Essex counties at the present time. May this office and all of the offices and programs of Catholic Charities continue to be a source of hope for everyone they serve.

Catholic Charities needs your help. Continuing to bring hope to others, providing professional and quality services, reaching out to all in need requires financial resources. The Annual Mother's Day Appeal is one of the most important ways that Catholic Charities raises money. These funds are important because they are used when there are no other resources available to provide a particular service. Your generosity will provide Catholic Charities with the resources to be there for the individual or family needing to find their way back to health and hope. I am proud of our diocesan Catholic Charities. As, your Bishop, I am encouraging you to change the world...One person...One family...One community at a time. You can do this through your donation to the 2008 Catholic Charities' Mother's Day Appeal being held in all of the parishes throughout the diocese on the weekend of May 11, 2008.

Changing the world is the legacy that Jesus' has given us. Let us accept this legacy by sharing our resources with our brothers and sisters in need. Support Catholic Charities in its mission of responding to needs, inviting others to join in advocacy efforts and empowering people to move from frustration and despair to lives filled with hope. Your donation is a great investment in the future of individuals, families and communities. Please be as generous as possible to the Annual Mother's Day Appeal and be assured of my continuing gratitude.

Most Rev. Robert J. Cunningham  
Bishop of Ogdensburg  
May 2, 2008