

50 Years of Sharing Through the Annual Catholic Appeal

Happy Anniversary to all who, during the past fifty years, have been part of the *Annual Catholic Appeal*. Whether it has been for one year or for five decades, Thank You.

In 1959 when Bishop Christopher Weldon initiated the *Annual Catholic Appeal*, his goal was to raise funds to meet the educational, human, pastoral, and spiritual needs of the people of Western Massachusetts, and to carry on the work of Jesus Christ.

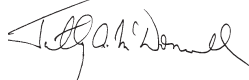
Over the past 50 years, major changes have occurred in Berkshire, Franklin, Hampden, and Hampshire counties. The needs of people who are hurting, the needs of our parishes and our Catholic schools, the need to respond have all increased dramatically, especially during times of economic downturn like the one facing us now. More and more of our brothers and sisters face an uncertain future. Too many of them are at risk; too many of them are lonely, hungry and vulnerable; too many of them are unemployed and without medical coverage; and too many are homeless. It is on their behalf that I must come to you again; I must ask you, if it is at all possible, for you to do even more this year than in the past as we mark the 50th Anniversary

of the *Annual Catholic Appeal*. I ask you to help our elderly neighbors in need, our families in crisis, our children and young adults. I ask your help to promote social justice, to enhance respect for life and to support our parishes and Catholic schools.

Since Bishop Weldon began the *Annual Catholic Appeal* fifty years ago, pastors, volunteers, and donors have been exceptional in assisting the Church, helping provide critical services to so many. I thank all who have done so much, who have been outstanding examples of Christian Stewardship, who have lived their faith in their daily lives by giving time, talent, and treasure. I ask you to join with me in a special way this anniversary year to continue such a wonderful tradition of caring and sharing. I ask you to help continue "A Legacy of Sharing – 50 years of neighbor helping neighbor" through the Annual Catholic Appeal.

You are in my prayers, please keep me in yours.

In Christ,



Most Reverend Timothy A. McDonnell
Bishop of Springfield

