

Today is Good Shepherd Sunday – as we heard in our scriptures – and we are the flock Jesus leads. We follow Him because we recognize His voice. But this is also Annual Catholic Appeal Commitment Sunday, when we recognize that as Catholics we are not just single sheep, but members of a larger flock. Jesus searches for us individually as lost sheep, that is our individual stories of salvation. But we are never saved alone. There are always other people involved in our spiritual journeys. Jesus is a shepherd of the whole flock. The Annual Appeal is our opportunity each year to contribute towards the good of that larger flock, which is the wider Church of the Archdiocese of Seattle within the world-wide Catholic Church.

Last weekend our Seminarian Ben Bray spoke to us about the importance of the whole Archdiocese in relation to his own experience and education as a man studying to be a priest. Your past contributions to the Annual Appeal were the financial resources supporting him through his college years. Individual parishes can't do this. And men

aren't ordained for just one parish, anyway. We priests are ordained for all the parishes. We go wherever the Archbishop directs us.

With that in mind, I have good news to report today. Holy Family parish has been chosen by Archbishop Sartain as the assignment for one of the newly ordained priests this year. Transitional Deacon Chad Green will be ordained a priest on June 3 and will start his ministry here on July 1. He will be here at least a year, possibly longer. Father Steve will also remain with us, so there will be three priests in the rectory.

I think you should be proud that the Archbishop chose Holy Family as a parish for a newly ordained priest's first assignment. You have the reputation in the Archdiocese of being a vibrant parish, in love with the faith – in other words a good community to welcome and help form a new priest. It's always important that a new priest have a good experience in his first parish. He will inevitably make mistakes, as we all do. But it helps to have those first experiences among people who will value and support him.

I mention Chad Green's assignment because he is a concrete reminder, as Ben is, that we need and must support the larger Church. We are not in this by ourselves, or for ourselves. All these years you have been paying for Chad's education, without even knowing him, or knowing that one day he would be your priest, offer mass for you, hear your confessions, baptize your children, bury your parents! But you contributed to his education even so. And now you will not only meet, but benefit personally, from a man who needed your contributions to the Appeal in years gone by.

And the educating of priests isn't the only way the Annual Appeal helps us. There are scores of programs and ministries supported by the Archdiocese that have a deep impact on our parish life and our lives as individual members of the Lord's flock, even though we may not notice them or give credit to the Archdiocese for this help.

But once we do recognize this inter-dependence between the parishes and the larger Church, it's only right that we give back. I have

always supported the Appeal financially, and will do so again this year. But for me as a priest of the Archdiocese I feel the main way I help the larger Church is by giving of my time. I serve on the Presbyteral Council, Priest Placement Board, Seminarian review committee, Permanent Deacon Committee, etc. And as with most of you, I value my time more than my money, so these commitments are a sacrifice. But I have to give back – pay back – for all that the local Church of the Archdiocese of Seattle has given to me. So I get in my truck, and cross the lake, and go to the meetings. That, I believe, is my best way to contribute.

You may not be asked to serve on an Archdiocesan board or committee (although if you are, I hope you will say “yes”). But you also need to contribute to the larger Church. This Annual Catholic Appeal is your best way to do so. At this time, if you have not already sent in your contribution, I ask you to take one of the commitment cards in the pews and prayerful fill it out. If you are a long-time contributor to the Appeal I ask that you take a step forward and increase your gift – as I do

every year. If you have never given to the Appeal I ask that this be the year that you do! What if you were to give the Catholic Church in western Washington just one dollar a day? That's \$365. That's doable for most of us. What other things do you spend one dollar a day on? Are they more important than this?

With a new priest coming to us soon I predict this will be an exciting time for Holy Family. I hope as many of you as possible can make it to Chad Green's ordination at St. James Cathedral on June 3. And when you are there in that beautiful church remember that the cathedral is the church of the Archbishop – but also your own church. We are all in this together, with our Archbishop, and with the Good Shepherd who calls us by name and leads us, not only individually, but as His flock.