

When We Give — We Receive in Abundance!

Alex Buldak, Office of Mission Lead for the Diocese of Joliet, and ten faith-filled missionaries embarked on a journey last January that would not only change the lives of those being served but change the lives of those serving for the better.

Chosen for its connection to the Diocese, the destination was Villavicencio, Colombia, home to the *Hijas de La Madre de Dios*, or *Daughters of the Mother of God*, a vibrant order of religious sisters who feed the needs of those suffering from physical and spiritual poverty. A chapter of this same order serves locally at St. Mary Catholic Church in West Chicago.

The primary goal was to help Sr. Anna Maria and her fellow religious sisters make much-needed improvements to the preschool they run for the children of Villavicencio. The team worked tirelessly cleaning, prepping, painting, and organizing donations. “Our work isn’t about what we do, but about who we can become for the sake of others,” said Alex. “As much as we’re giving, we are receiving so much more.”

Time was also dedicated to worship and prayer. Together, the missionaries shared an epiphany: travelling far from home brought them even closer to God. A profound example of this occurred during silent reflection when one missionary received his calling from God. He is currently in the seminary discerning priesthood. Mission accomplished in many unexpected, miraculous ways!



Scan the QR code to view Alex’s story.

The CMAA supports the Office of Missions empowering parishioners to live on mission through service trips and opportunities within our parishes.



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.



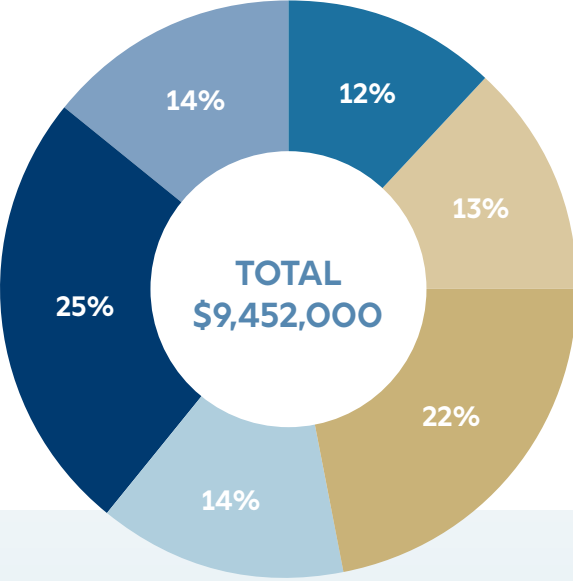
The Lumen Christi Legacy Society is for benefactors who share in the future vision of the Diocese of Joliet by making a gift in their will because they care deeply about causes that are important in their life. Lumen Christi is Latin for “light of Christ,” as gifts given through this society will provide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

2025 Catholic Ministries Annual Appeal

In 2025, 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
- 13% Educating children in the faith through Catholic schools
- 22% Strengthening vocations, educating seminarians and supporting clergy
- 14% Catechesis and evangelization to all ages and abilities
- 25% Serving parishioners and parishes
- 14% Rebates to Parishes

100% Total: \$9,452,000



BEYOND ALL EXPECTATIONS:  
*Faith that Elevates!*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We’re all familiar with the phrase, “Going above and beyond,” in reference to our careers and our daily lives, but not as often in terms of our faith. Our 2026 Catholic Ministries Annual Appeal [CMAA] challenges us to bring this concept to life in harmony with this year’s theme—*Beyond All Expectations: Faith that Elevates*.

The CMAA is our invitation to rise to the occasion by putting our faith into action on behalf of those who rely on the important services our ministries provide. By making a gift, you are accepting Christ’s invitation to serve others with a resounding “Yes!”

Your sacrifice touches many lives across our Diocese each day in profound ways. You hold the door open for those searching for a deeper sense of belonging through our ministries. You pass the baton of our Catholic faith onto the next generation through programs that enrich their beliefs and foster fellowship. You lay the foundation that preserves the legacy of our Church through the education and formation of our seminarians. These are just some of the ways in which your support is transformed into acts of love and service.

As we launch our 2026 Catholic Ministries Annual Appeal, please prayerfully consider making a gift. I humbly invite you—and encourage you—to go beyond all expectations with faith that elevates in support of the CMAA. Your kindness and generosity are greatly appreciated!

With best wishes, I ask God to bless you always.

As I remain—  
Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Ronald A. Hicks

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

Commitment Weekend: February 14-15, 2026





### *Building Bridges: Your Gift Brings Faith to Life*

For Diana Stallings, attending Mass once meant driving long distances just to find a liturgy she could fully participate in. As a member of the deaf community, she yearned for more than interpretations—she sought genuine spiritual empowerment and connection.

Today, thanks to your generosity through the Catholic Ministries Annual Appeal, Diana's experience has transformed. The CMAA supports the Deaf Formation Ministry, enabling Fr. John Maria Abulag, Chaplain for the Deaf, to expand accessible worship across the Diocese of Joliet. Currently serving three parishes, this vital ministry is growing to reach even more communities.

Your gift does more than provide services—it recognizes that the deaf community has its own rich culture and language. “We want to remove barriers and build bridges,” Diana explains. The ministry creates spaces where deaf Catholics don’t just attend Mass; they belong, grow, and thrive in their faith.

John Sefek, another ministry participant, puts it simply:

*“We’re stronger when we’re together, thanks to the unity that your donations help foster.”*

When you give to the CMAA, you’re not just supporting a program—you’re empowering an entire community to live their Catholic faith fully. Your generosity builds belonging.



Scan the QR code to view Diana's story.

### *Going Beyond the Classroom*

Becoming a Catholic priest is an intensive process. Together with a dedicated team of priests, religious men and women, and professors, seminarians spend years building the foundation that’s needed to live a life dedicated to serving God and His people.

An important part of the process are the summer assignments that target specific areas of formation. Last summer, several of our seminarians spent seven weeks in a Spanish language and culture immersion program in Mexico City. They attended classes, toured the city’s religious sites, and celebrated Corpus Christi in a Eucharistic procession through the streets of the city.

Seminarian Joshua Solarz appreciates the value of going beyond the classroom to become a part of the culture and can’t wait to apply all he’s learned to minister to the Spanish speaking community in the Diocese of Joliet. “We need to do everything we can to meet our Hispanic parishioners where they’re at just as God does,” he said.

Joshua is grateful to the CMAA donors for their prayers and support.

*“Your generosity allows me to become the priest that God created me to be!”*



Scan the QR code to view Joshua's story.

The CMAA supports summer immersion programs that enrich the education of our seminarians.



### *No One Chooses Homelessness*

There are many reasons why people find themselves on the street. “No one decides on Monday they are going to a homeless shelter on Friday,” said Barb Sullivan-Thurlby, Division Director of Community Services at Daybreak Center in Joliet. “Challenges and trauma have lead them here.”

The facility provides emergency housing and supportive services to individuals and families in crisis. With 93 beds, it’s always full and there’s always a wait list.

The goal of Daybreak is to guide clients back to independent living. Working one-on-one with an individualized plan is vital. Equally important is serving with compassion. Because as Barb shared, “Being homeless doesn’t mean you don’t have feelings.”

Kortlan considers himself a living witness that the program works. The stigma of ‘homelessness’ hurts.

*“There are good people in here, and as long as you work hard on your end, you’ll have a happy ending. I promise, if you donate, it will help lives!”*



Scan the QR code to view Kortlan's story.

The CMAA supports the work of Catholic Charities who serves those needing emergency housing.

### *Why I Give*

Brian and Michelle Kibler’s giving has been a journey and has all come from saying yes when they hear God asking.

“If it is asked of us, our response should be yes,” Michelle said. “We know what it is to live with less and we know what it is to live with more and we also know that everything that we have comes from the Lord and he has been the one to lead us on the way.”



#### DIOCESE OF JOLIET

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