

BISHOP'S SERVICES APPEAL (BSA) VIDEO/AUDIO MESSAGE

On January 11th, 1918 Pope Benedict XV created out of the Diocese of New Orleans the Diocese of Lafayette. On December 12th of that same year, Bishop Emeritus Jules B. Jeanmard was installed as the first Bishop of Lafayette.

Hi! I'm Bishop Douglas Deshotel, and I am grateful to be able to speak with you today. This year our diocese will celebrate its centennial anniversary. How blest and thankful we are as a people to have experienced the fruits of our Catholic faith for 100 years.

The Diocese of Lafayette is filled with the many traditions and cultures that are derived from our diverse heritage and unique only to our region. Church parishes continue to benefit from the hard work and sacrifice of so many believers who came before us. The groundwork our ancestors and relatives were able to accomplish and foster throughout the years has enabled our diocese to grow and flourish like no other. Our Catholic faith has remained intact since 1918, and our Catholic identity ever present.

Today, priestly vocations in our diocese continue to thrive with 41 men currently enrolled in seminary. We are grateful to have 120 priests in active ministry, serving in the Office of Holy Priesthood. We continue to care for, and assist our 38 retired priests. All of whom have devoted their lives in loving and sacrificial service to you, the Church. Catholic school education in our diocese continues to be in demand, with 32 schools currently offering Christ centered teaching to over 13,000 children. And now, more than ever, Catholic Charities and social service programs in our diocese continue to provide aid to those in most need of God's loving care and mercy.

We have heeded Pope Francis' vision concerning strong marriages and families. Through the efforts of diocesan Office of Marriage and Family Life, we offer to couples, and assist church parishes in providing teaching and education initiatives regarding the sanctity of marriage and the sanctity of life. And, when called upon, our Tribunal Office provides counseling and support to assist those individuals seeking an annulment. These ministries, and many more are offered free of charge to individuals wanting to receive Catholic moral teaching, support and healing.

The Bishop's Services Appeal has been *Supporting the Works of Christ* by ministering to others since 1973. The success of this critical diocesan fundraising initiative is accomplished only as a result of the combined efforts of our 121 church parishes and 28 missions located across the eight civil parishes that comprise our great diocese.

We attribute the overall, and sustaining success of the appeal, *to you... the parishioner. Your support is vital... it is essential...* and together, it allows for us, the opportunity to continue the *works of Christ*. Your financial contribution will have a real and direct impact on the many people who benefit from the various programs, ministries and services that the appeal funds. Your support will help to change people's lives.



“Century of Love” is the theme for our 44th Annual Bishop’s Services Appeal. In the third chapter of Ecclesiastes it reads: *There is an appointed time for everything, and a time for every affair under the heavens... ..this is a gift of God... ..that whatever God does will endure forever...* Your gift to the appeal will *endure* in lives of those touched by your generosity. Your gift will allow the *works of Christ to endure*.

My message, my appeal to you this year is very simple... Make a gift to the Bishop’s Services Appeal. Consider giving \$25.00 dollars, or, maybe \$50.00 dollars each month to benefit the BSA. The gift you make... any gift... of any amount... can be given and pledged over a 10 month payment period. Think about all of the lives that will be touched... *because of you... because of your generous heart.*

Make a gift in thanksgiving to God for 100 years of Catholic faith... for 100 years of Catholic teaching... for 100 years of graces. Show your gratitude to Christ for 100 years of vocations; for 100 years of the celebration of the Holy Mass and the Holy Sacraments.... For 100 years of being loved by our God, and in return, our humble love to Him.

Our Catholic faith has been handed on to us; passed down, from one generation to the other. For in His goodness, He has guided His church, nurtured us, and loved us for over a century. We receive from Him constantly; His love, His graces, *and...* His mercy. And for that, we are eternally grateful.

I encourage you to make your gift to the Bishop’s Services Appeal, next weekend – Commitment Weekend. Please be generous!

Thank you and God bless you.

