



NWCATHOLIC

Publications

The official newspaper and news website of the Diocese of Gary

Touching the Wounds of Christ through Your CSA Gift!

This Sunday is the official beginning of the annual Catholic Services Appeal in our parishes, an opportunity for all of our people to share in the saving mission of Jesus Christ and the Church. This important collection coincides with the Second Sunday of Easter, Mercy Sunday. Every year, the Gospel of the day is the Apostle Thomas coming to faith in the Lord by touching his wounds. I love that image! I often reflect on the fact that Jesus' wounds remain after the resurrection. Certainly, the mighty power that raised Christ from the dead could heal some nail and a spear gash. Why are they still there?

Perhaps the wounds of the Crucified and Risen One remain to remind us that, even after the victory of Easter, we still bear the painful echoes of Good Friday. Sin, evil, suffering and death still have a temporary hold on us. We still carry the wounds of past hurts, unresolved conflicts and painful memories. In the midst of the darkness, however, the good news that Christ has gained the ultimate victory over all of the darkness breaks in with an astonishing power—the power to transform our wounds and sufferings into healing encounters of mercy, grace, forgiveness and peace. This profound change of the meaning of suffering, sin and betrayal is the mystery that Thomas discovers when he dares to touch the wounds of the risen Christ.

A wise, old nun told me when I was a very young priest to listen to every person I meet with a compassionate heart because everyone carries a secret sorrow that they long to tell someone, as they search for healing and peace. I have found her advice to be absolutely true, striving to remember that everyone I encounter is wounded in one way or another. Some people's pain is so plain to see you cannot avoid it; most folks carry deeper wounds that are hidden and seldom revealed. Everyone wants to find transformation of their negative experiences. When we listen, love and genuinely try to lift the burden of another, when we dare to touch the wounds of someone, the healing power of Jesus, both in his death and resurrection is unleashed.

I invite you to consider your gift to the annual Diocese of Gary Catholic Services Appeal through this lens of deep human wounds and needs and the even deeper compassion of the wounded but risen Christ. CSA supports the essential formation of our future priests, deacons and lay ecclesial ministers. The generous and good people called to these important roles of service in the Church need to be formed well so that they can be effective witnesses to the saving Gospel and be compassionate instruments of healing for our people. CSA provides funds for the important work of Catholic Charities, helping women in crisis pregnancy to feel the merciful

love and obtain the practical help they need to choose life for their unborn child through our Women's Care Centers; offering a single-parent family the opportunity to rise out of poverty through Tabor House in Gary; helping immigrants with legal issues through the ISAAC Center and feeding hundreds of people through the food pantry in East Chicago.

CSA gives hope to many families who want to send their children to one of our fine Catholic schools but cannot afford to do so by offering tuition assistance. Your generous contributions give essential lift to the work of our diocesan leadership. The efforts of the Synod have truly begun to take root and flourish in our parishes, the fruit of collaborative partnerships of our diocesan and parish leadership. Evangelization, education, youth ministry, catechesis, stewardship, marriage preparation and support, communication, human resources, the annulment process and technology are vital functions of the local Church which sustain the mission of Jesus Christ to proclaim the Gospel to every creature and to make disciples.

As I continue to strive to know, love and serve our Diocese, I am always inspired by and grateful for the thousands of disciples who are generously engaged in the saving work of touching the wounds of Christ by serving our brothers and sisters. Our local Church is gloriously alive with the Spirit of the risen Lord! I feel Christ's presence everywhere I go, confident and happy that he is building up his Mystical Body right here in Northwest Indiana. As we celebrate Mercy Sunday, God invites us to enter into the very Heart of the Lord, resting in the unconditional embrace of Jesus who heals our wounds and bids us to touch his by reaching out in compassion to our brothers and sisters.

I encourage everyone to be generous and sacrificial in giving to the CSA. This year, those parishes who reach 100% of their goal will receive 10% back, in addition to any overage. Although this sum may be relatively modest, I want our pastors and people to know that the Diocese is here to partner, support and serve you. This 10% can be used to fuel your Synod initiatives or respond to emerging needs in your parish. Know with confidence and joy that when you give your precious resources to the Catholic Service Appeal, you are touching the wounds of the risen Christ by serving the needs of his beloved brothers and sisters. What an opportunity! What a privilege!

Northwest Indiana Catholic Publications consists of the official newspaper and news website for the Diocese of Gary. It is the largest weekly newspaper in the Northwest Indiana counties of Lake, Porter, Starke and LaPorte. To purchase a subscription or to place display or classified advertisements, please call (219) 769-9292.