**Commitment Weekend: March 11-12**

**Purpose of the In-Pew Request**

On Commitment Weekend, all Parishioners attending Mass are invited to show their support of the Catholic Appeal. This is done through a parish-based invitation, called an “in-pew request.”

It is a standard in most dioceses, and many parishes in our archdiocese have incorporated it into their Catholic Appeal campaign. Some parishes have even adapted it to help with their offertory programs.

Even if your parish conducted an in-pew in 2022, it is important to launch your 2023 Catholic Appeal with an in-pew solicitation.

***The pastor’s leadership is critical to the success of the in-pew process. No other member of the parish will be as successful leading the process. People will respond in far greater numbers if the pastor is the one reading the in-pew script***.

If your parish has not tried this method, study it carefully and implement it this year. It represents the only way that leadership can be certain that all of those who attend Mass are conscious of the fact that they have been asked for support. Also, there are scores of unregistered people in every parish who attend Mass regularly. Mail will never reach them because the parish doesn’t have their names, much less their addresses, on its records. The in-pew process is the only way to provide these people with an opportunity to pledge.

**The reasons to conduct the in-pew request are:**

* **It seeks an intentional gift.** The in-pew request helps to ensure that there is a moment in time when the ministries provided by the Archdiocese are considered by parishioners.
* **It helps to ensure early success.** Some parishes are able to reach their assessment within a few weeks of Commitment Weekend meaning a shorter and more successful Appeal campaign.
* **It is a powerful reminder that central ministries serve parishes.** Through witness talks, bulletin announcements, emails, and the in-pew request, parishioners can better understand the ways in which central ministries are at work in their parish.
* **It reaches more people than mailings alone.** While the response rate on Catholic Appeal mailings is excellent, a letter alone is rarely sufficient to implement the campaign.
* **It helps to keep records updated.** Parishes making an in-pew request often identify new parishioners who are not registered at the time of the Appeal. The Appeal team can help your parish update your records through the in-pew request. Additionally, the in-pew request often provides email addresses for parish outreach.
* The in-pew process has been simplified. Parishioners who already gave through direct mail or on-line, can still participate by filling in their name, parish and checking the box:

I have already given to the Catholic Appeal this year

The Pastor’s Commitment Weekend presentation is very important to the success of the campaign. Up to this point, parishioners have heard about the Catholic Appeal and why it is so very important to support it. Some may have already made a pledge on-line or by mail. Now is the time to ask all the rest of the parishioners for their financial support. The fact that the Pastor is leading the process will have a very positive effect on the importance that people place on the request.

**HELPFUL TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL COMMITMENT WEEKEND**

* **Recruit and train help for Commitment Weekend**. Ushers may need some extra help to distribute and collect in-pew envelopes.
* **Supply the church with plenty of in-pew envelopes** and pencils/pens ahead of Commitment Weekend.
* **Do not place in-pew envelopes in the pews before Mass**. They are to be handed out during Mass to the best of your ability.
* **A script is provided but please use language and a tone that works for your parish**. Remember, this should feel like a request to a friend, not a directive.
* **If your parish streams Masses online** be sure to include in your presentation an appeal to those watching virtually. You can tell them that they can make their gift by visiting the Catholic Appeal website at bostoncatholicappeal.org, or they can contact the parish office if they would like to learn of alternative ways to give.
* **Prepare quiet background music** to be played during the presentation.
* **Collect completed in-pew pledge forms during Mass**. Have ushers collect completed forms during Mass and take to a secure place for safekeeping. Do not ask parishioners to take the pledge form home as this greatly reduces parishioner response.
* **Be available and prepared for parishioners to ask questions**. It is recommended that pastors, celebrants, and volunteers remain after Mass to answer questions about the Appeal.