2025/26 FUNDRAISING IMPACT REPORT

How your generosity enables us to set more *Hearts on Fire* throughout Niagara Region & Haldimand County



FROM YOUR HEARTS, TO OUR COMMUNITIES.

DIOCESE OF ST. CATHARINES

"Were not our hearts burning within us, whilst he was speaking in the way, and opening to us the scriptures?

(LUKE 24:32)

A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP BERGIE

Dear Friends of the Diocese,

Our Diocese has embarked on an important journey of renewal through our participation in Dynamic Parish, a multi-year initiative that helps Catholic parishes re-energize their communities and strengthen the ways they welcome, accompany, and engage their people.

This vital work has given us an opportunity to look closely at the life of our parishes and ask an important question: how can we create more opportunities for people to encounter Jesus Christ, grow in faith, and become more deeply connected to the life of the Church?

One answer is more outreach. With heartfelt gratitude, I want to thank everyone who supported the Diocese of St. Catharines this past year. Together, we celebrated our inaugural Light the Way Bishop's Gala and launched our first Hearts on Fire Annual Appeal.

These important moments brought our Diocese together around a shared mission: strengthening our Church and creating new opportunities for people to encounter Jesus Christ and grow in faith.

Your generosity is already helping turn that vision into action. We are investing these funds in our parishes and ministries, supporting evangelization, youth and young adult ministry, and the people and programs that help our faith communities grow.

I invite you to read this report, celebrate what we have accomplished together, and see how your generosity is helping set hearts on fire throughout Niagara Region and Haldimand County.

May God bless you and your loved ones with His peace and abundant grace.



With gratitude and prayers,

+ Gerard Bergie

Most Reverend Gerard Bergie, D.D.
Bishop of St. Catharines



OUR MISSION

Setting Hearts on Fire

A MISSION BIGGER THAN OURSELVES

The Diocese of St. Catharines is on a mission to set Hearts on Fire with the love of Jesus Christ. As our communities across Niagara Region and Haldimand County continue to grow, we are called to ensure that our faith grows alongside them.

That means strengthening our parishes, supporting those already doing this important work, and creating new opportunities for people of every generation to encounter Christ and His Church.

In 2025/26, we took two important steps toward that mission: our inaugural Light the Way Bishop's Gala and our first Hearts on Fire Annual Appeal. Together, these initiatives raised $740,450 to help strengthen the life and mission of our Diocese.

The Impact of Your Generosity

Together, the 2025 Light the Way Bishop's Gala and 2026 Hearts on Fire Annual Appeal raised:

$740,450

to strengthen parishes, support ministry and create more opportunities for people throughout our Diocese to encounter Jesus Christ and grow in faith.

$468,000

is helping fund:













4

Parish Evangelization Ministers

4

Parish Youth Ministers

13

Parish Evangelization Programs

10

Parish Youth Ministry Programs

$272,450

Returned directly to participating parishes for their own projects, programs and operations

















2025 Light the Way Bishop's Gala

November 28, 2025

More than 330 guests gathered at John Michael's Banquet Hall in Thorold for the inaugural Light the Way Bishop's Gala. Parishioners, friends, clergy, sponsors, donors and volunteers joined us to celebrate our shared faith and our shared future at this very special occasion.

Together, the Gala raised an amazing $120,000 to support the mission of the Diocese of St. Catharines.

The Gala itself was only possible through an extraordinary outpouring of generosity and hard work. John Michael's Banquet Hall donated the venue. And our volunteers and employees contributed countless hours to organize, prepare, and host the event.

Our Presenting Sponsor, Vintage Hotels, made a significant investment to help cover the costs of making the Gala possible, while our other esteemed sponsors, donors and auction contributors all made meaningful contributions.

What a success! The first gala showed what can happen when people are willing to step forward and help create something that serves a greater purpose. The light began with the people who made the evening possible, and it continues through the impact of their generosity.







TO THOSE WHO HELPED LIGHT THE WAY

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Jetta Grove Consulting

We are deeply grateful to every sponsor, volunteer, auction donor and participant who gave their time, resources, and energy to make Light the Way possible. Thank you! We hope and trust you can join us again this year at our next gala in November.

"So let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

MATTHEW 5:16

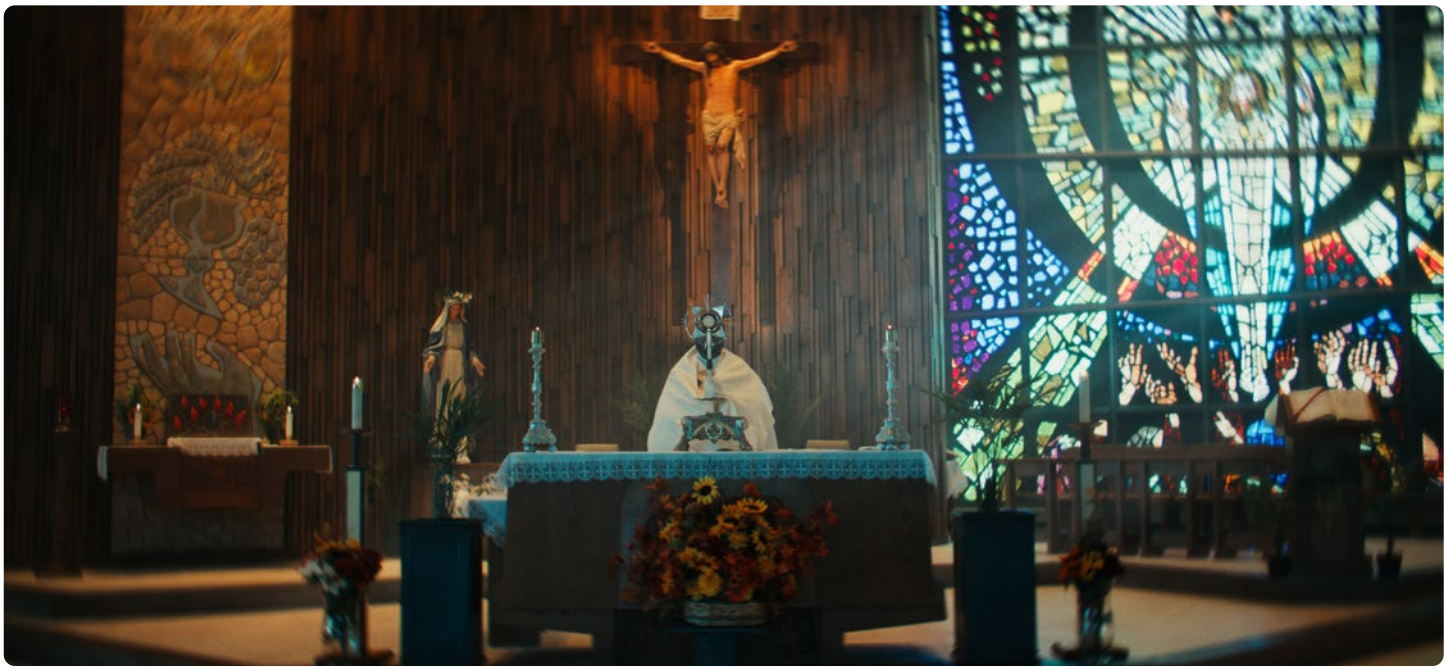
2026 ANNUAL APPEAL

Hearts on Fire



April to May 2026

On Divine Mercy Sunday, the Diocese of St. Catharines launched its inaugural *Hearts on Fire* Annual Appeal, inviting Catholics throughout Niagara Region and Haldimand County to unite behind a shared mission. The appeal reached our community through parish presentations, weekend announcements, brochures, prayer cards, posters, direct mail and digital media.



All parishes were given the opportunity to set their own fundraising goal with commitment that all funds raised over that goal would go back to the parish to help fund their own projects, programs, and operations.

The response inspired and humbled us. Hundreds of donors made gifts of every size, demonstrating how individual acts of generosity can come together to create something much greater. The appeal *alone* raised more than $620,450, providing vital funding to strengthen parish communities and support ministry development throughout our Diocese.



Investing in the Mission of Our Parishes

Together, the Light the Way Bishop's Gala and Hearts on Fire Annual Appeal raised $740,450.

$272,450 (37%)

goes back to PARISHES to fund their own vital projects.

19 parishes set parish goals and 13 made their fundraising goals. We cannot thank them enough for taking part in this appeal! They helped us raise money and so their parishes keep a portion of the surplus. Congratulations on working together to make a difference.

$410,000 (55%)

goes directly to building parish-based evangelization and youth and young adult ministries.

These investments strengthen parish communities, support the people doing this work, and create new opportunities for people to encounter Jesus Christ and become more deeply engaged in the life of the Church.

$58,000 (8%)

went towards the hosting and promotion of both fundraising initiatives.

This investment enabled us to create and produce the gala and the appeal. It also included the hiring of a new full-time communications team member for the Diocese to support these initiatives and the Diocese's other marketing efforts.

Evangelization

$205,000 TO STRENGTHEN EVANGELIZATION IN OUR PARISHES

The Diocese is investing **$205,000** in parish evangelization through ministry positions and approved evangelization programs.

Parish Evangelization Positions $135,000

Up to four parishes will be eligible for financial support when they hire a **Director of Evangelization and Discipleship or equivalent position**. Participating parishes will make a two-year commitment, with the Diocese providing:

- **Year 1:** 50% of salary, up to $22,500
- **Year 2:** 25% of salary, up to $11,250

This commitment means a diocesan subsidy of $33,750 will be available for parishes hiring a Director of Evangelization over two years. These positions will give parishes dedicated people to build relationships, accompany parishioners, welcome those seeking a deeper connection to the Church, and create new opportunities for evangelization and discipleship.

Evangelization Programs $70,000

Funding will also support approved parish-based evangelization programming. This support includes reimbursement for approved programs such as **Alpha, The Search, or an equivalent program** that invite people to explore the Catholic faith and deepen their relationship with Christ. Funding may also support meals and refreshments that encourage fellowship and meaningful conversations about faith. Up to **$70,000** will be available across participating parishes for evangelization programming.

EVANGELIZATION INVESTMENT

Parish Evangelization Positions

$135,000

Evangelization Programs

$70,000

Total $205,000

Youth & Young Adult Ministry

$205,000 TO SUPPORT THE NEXT GENERATION OF THE CHURCH

The Diocese is investing **$205,000** in parish youth and young adult ministry through ministry positions and programs.

Parish Youth Ministry Positions $135,000

Up to four parishes will be eligible for financial support when they hire a **Youth Minister or equivalent position**. Participating parishes will make a two-year commitment, with the Diocese providing:

- **Year 1:** 50% of salary, up to $22,500
- **Year 2:** 25% of salary, up to $11,250

This commitment means a diocesan subsidy of $33,750 will be available for parishes hiring a Youth Minister or equivalent position over two years. These ministry positions will help parishes build meaningful relationships with young people, create opportunities for faith formation and fellowship, and accompany youth and young adults as they discover their place in the life of the Church.

Youth & Young Adult Programs $70,000

Funding will also support parish-based youth and young adult programming. This support includes reimbursement for approved programs such as **Edge, Life Teen or an equivalent program**, along with support for meals and snacks associated with youth and young adult ministry. Up to **$70,000** will be available across participating parishes for youth and young adult programming.

YOUTH & YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY INVESTMENT

Parish Youth Ministry Positions

$135,000

Youth & Young Adult Programs

$70,000

Total $205,000



WHAT THIS MEANS

Building Stronger Parish Communities

The impact of your generosity reaches beyond a single event or campaign. These investments build the capacity of our parishes to evangelize, accompany young people and create sustainable opportunities for people to encounter Jesus Christ and become more deeply engaged in the life of the Church.

By investing in people and equipping parishes with resources for programming, we help create places where relationships can grow, faith can deepen and the love of Christ can be shared. This is your generosity at work.

> "And whatever you do, do it from the heart, as to the Lord, and not to men."
>
> **COLOSSIANS 3:23**



A Message from Nicholas Ali

Everyone desires to know they are loved, valued and called to something greater. Our mission is to help people of every age encounter the transformative love of Jesus Christ.

Through evangelization and faith formation, we create opportunities for people to deepen their relationship with God, strengthen their understanding of the Catholic faith and become missionary disciples who share that love with others.

The Hearts on Fire Appeal allows us to expand this important work throughout our Diocese and create new pathways for people to rediscover the joy, hope and purpose found in Christ.

We profoundly appreciate your generosity.

Nicholas Ali

Director of Evangelization and
Faith Formation Diocese of
St. Catharines

THE MISSION CONTINUES

Help us set Hearts on Fire

What began with Light the Way and Hearts on Fire is becoming an ongoing investment in the life of our Diocese and our parishes. Your generosity strengthens parish communities, supports evangelization and youth and young adult ministry, and creates more opportunities for people to encounter Jesus Christ and His Church.

And there is more to come. Join us for this year's **Light the Way Bishop's Gala in November** as we gather once again in faith, fellowship and generosity. And watch for the **2027 Hearts on Fire Annual Appeal**, when we will come together across Niagara Region and Haldimand County to continue building a more vibrant, missionary and evangelizing Church.

We invite you to be part of what comes next. Together, we can set *Hearts on Fire*.

Join us at the 2026 Light the Way Bishop's Gala

bishopsgala.ca

Watch for the 2027 Hearts on Fire Annual Appeal

bishopsappeal.ca

Stay connected

saintcd.com

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“And let us consider one another,
to provoke unto charity and to
good works.”
HEBREWS 10:24



DIOCESE
OF ST. CATHARINES

Diocese of St. Catharines
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Thorold, ON