

In our gospel today we hear Luke's rendition of Jesus teaching a crowd of people and sharing with them the beatitudes. While these beatitudes seem different from the familiar words often used from Matthew's account, the reason is that Luke's account is meant for a gentile audience unlike Matthew's account which is meant for Jewish audiences.

Because Luke is directing his account to the gentile audience, his first beatitude, BLESSED ARE THE POOR, is more concrete; addressing people who are financially poor. This is then followed by the hungry, the grieving, those who are hated, and those who suffer evil on account of the Son of Man.

Jesus is looking into the faces of these people and he sees fear, uncertainty, and hopelessness. By looking at the face of Jesus and hearing his comforting words the people in the crowd who are living in darkness are seeing a great light.

This ability to give light to those in darkness is a charism, given to us, who in the Catholic church, are the Body of Christ here on earth. Our church on the parish level, the diocesan level and on the universal level can be a source of light to so many.

We are reminded of this when we see the theme for the 2019 annual Catholic Appeal. In the Light of Faith. We witness the illumination of the church through our diocesan office of Catholic Charities, Camp Gray, The Office of Evangelization and Religious Formation, the Office of Family

Ministry, The Continuing education and support of Clergy and many other ministries mention in the Appeal's brochure.

This appeal reminds us of the effect we can cause by our financial support of these offices and ministries that make up our diocese of Madison. By supporting our church through this appeal; we strive to faithfully reach out to others who are struggling and in need of support and encouragement. While it would be easy to stay within the boundaries of our parish with our support, we need to remember that we are also a part of a local church and a universal church.

The 2019 Diocesan Appeal helps us understand the effects that our donation can have on all three levels of church. Next week end we will have a DVD presentation on this appeal and then you will be asked to fill out a pledge envelope indicating how much you would be willing to donate.

Remember this is just not another special collection rather it is the one time during the year that all Catholics are asked to make a financial gift to our diocese so that it can meet the spiritual, educational, and temporal needs of the people throughout the Diocese of Madison.

Please take time to read the Appeal brochure that is in this week's bulletin. The Diocesan Goal is \$3.5 million dollars. Prayerfully consider over this next week what you, as a Catholic household, can afford to donate and then come ready next week end to fill out the pledge envelope.

I have a magnet on my refrigerator that has a quote from the great spiritualist Buddha that makes for a good closing for this homily today:

“Thousands of candles can be lighted from a single candle and the life of the one candle will not be shortened. Happiness never decreases by being shared.”