

Caring for the unborn for the glory of God

The Catholic Charities Expectant Mothers Program began in 2008, and serves approximately 52 families per year, helping mothers and families from the time the child is in the womb, through birth, and for the first six months of the child's life.



"Some of the moms that come to us, they don't know where they're going to sleep the next night. They don't know anything about the hospitals they're going to, they don't know anything about the doctors," said Catholic Charities Expectant Mothers Supervisor Martha McDaniel-Rucker. "They can't afford food, they can't afford clothing, and this is something our program helps them with. We have a food truck every week that we can refer them to. And we give them all kinds of resources they can reach out to."

The program not only helps families financially, but also helps educate and prepare the expecting mother for life with her child.

Each expectant mother meets with a trained Maternal Child Health Educator, who helps with what to expect each month of the pregnancy and focuses on topics such as preparing your other children for the birth of the baby, involving the father in the birth of the baby, and the importance of keeping doctor's appointments and taking vitamins.

"I think the big picture of the Expectant Mothers Program is we (not only) help expectant mothers, we work with the whole family," McDaniel-Rucker said. We want to make them efficient enough to go out into the world to help themselves. We want to make these moms feel they can do it, that 'I went through this, I can do better, I can go a little bit further.' Thank you to the CMAA, your support is helping to bring healthy babies into this world."

The CMAA helps expecting mothers and their families with the proper nutrition and resources they need to welcome and care for their newborn adequately.

Providing shelter to the homeless for the glory of God

"As the mother of 11, people often called me 'wondermom.' But, I didn't feel like a wondermom when I found myself with no roof over my head," said Michelle. After her husband was incarcerated, she was faced with the crisis of homelessness. She had no choice, but to go from shelter to shelter in order to survive. One day, by the grace of God, she was referred to Catholic Charities Transitional and Rapid Housing program. For the first time in a long time, she was able to see the light at the end of the tunnel. Michelle recalled, "Living in shelters was dangerous and scary. Just hearing about the housing program immediately raised feelings of relief and gratefulness and those feelings have never gone away."

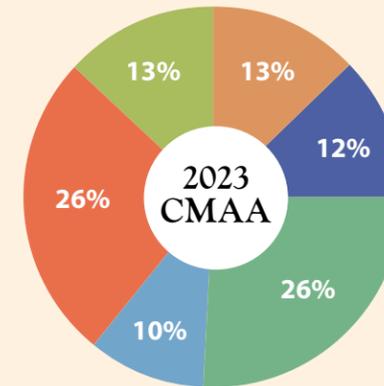
The program provides housing for up to 24 months and teaches life skills to prepare clients to live independently. Sarah Neill, Director of Community Services, shared "The majority of our clients are single mothers, many of whom have been victims of domestic violence or other serious trauma. Some have significant health problems that have resulted in job instability. Most have no support from extended family. Our goal is to provide these families with stable housing, so they can take a breath and focus on navigating other challenges, since their focus has been solely on surviving."

One of Michelle's daughters told her she should write a book about all that she's been through in her life. Michelle said, if she ever does, she'll include a chapter about how much the wonderful people of Catholic Charities helped her out of a very bad situation. That says it all.

The CMAA supports the work of Catholic Charities who serves those in need of safe housing, while overcoming severe challenges.



In 2023, gifts to the Catholic Ministries Annual Appeal supported essential ministries in the Diocese of Joliet.



Serving our brothers and sisters in need through Catholic Charities	13%
Educating children in the faith through Catholic schools	12%
Strengthening vocations, educating seminarians and supporting clergy	26%
Catechesis and evangelization to all ages and abilities	10%
Serving parishes, parishioners and protecting God's children	26%
Rebates to parishes	13%
TOTAL	\$8,662,000
	100%



You are invited to join the *Deo Gratias Society*

When you pledge \$100 a month for 10 months to the Catholic Ministries Annual Appeal, you are welcomed as a member of the *Deo Gratias Society*. Members take a leadership role in the work of the Church, becoming partners in a shared vision for the future of the Diocese of Joliet.

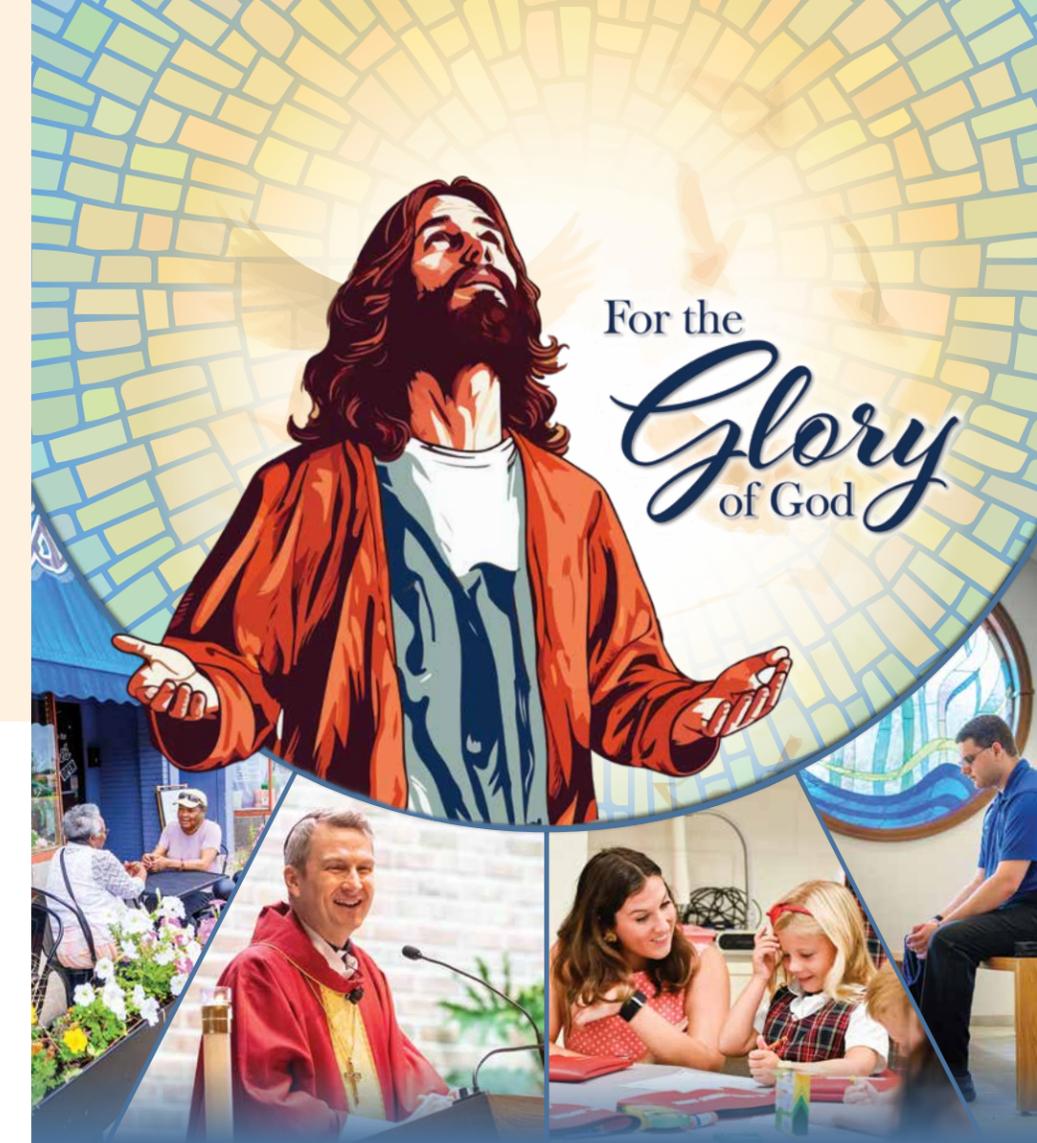
In addition to spiritual benefits, membership includes an annual Mass and reception with Bishop Ronald A. Hicks, and recognition in our annual publication for society members.

The Catholic Ministries Annual Appeal supports the mission and ministries of the Diocese of Joliet. No CMAA gifts are used to settle claims of any nature against the diocese.

DIOCESE OF JOLIET
Development and Stewardship Office

16555 Weber Road | Crest Hill, Illinois 60403
(815) 838-8515 | jolietdioceseappeal.org

Counties of the diocese | DuPage, Ford, Grundy, Iroquois, Kankakee, Kendall, Will



Catholic Ministries
Annual Appeal
Diocese of Joliet

2024 | DIOCESE OF JOLIET | jolietdioceseappeal.org

When we give to the Catholic Ministries Annual Appeal, we are making a difference by helping those in need.

Supporting our seminarians for the glory of God



Andrew Bogusz was a dedicated altar server who felt moved with emotion during the consecration at every Mass he served. Prayerful time spent in the adoration chapel filled him with a powerful sense of connection with Jesus. And his devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary played an important role in who he is today.

Andrew has answered God's call and is now on the path to priesthood as one of our newest seminarians in the Diocese of Joliet. As part of his education in pastoral ministry, he was assigned assistant chaplain at *Lightways Hospice*. The facility provides end-of-life, compassionate care for patients and their loved ones.

"Time is a precious gift from God and I feel privileged to be a part of this 'ministry of presence' in the midst of such a sacred space," Andrew said. Providing spiritual guidance to hospice patients and their families further affirmed Andrew's calling to become a diocesan priest in many ways that touched his heart and filled his soul.

He offered these final thoughts. "Investing in the education and formation of our next generation of priests is an investment way beyond any one individual. It's investing in communion, all the sacraments, and the fullness of the ministries the Catholic Church supports.

The CMAA supports men who are discerning vocations to the priesthood and in seminary formation for the Diocese of Joliet.



Educating Our Catholic School Leaders for the glory of God



Autumn Albreski began her journey in Catholic education as a preschool student and continued down that path through high school. She is now the Kindergarten teacher at St. Raphael in Naperville. Working in a faith-based community was more than a career choice. Autumn considers it a calling. "It was never a question for me, I always knew I was going to teach in a Catholic school." She went on to say, "My mom was my fourth-grade teacher and is now a Catholic school principal. She is my hero, and role model."

As a ministry, The Diocese of Joliet Catholic Schools Office, provides resources and support for the dedicated principals, teachers, and staff who educate and guide young minds and hearts daily.

Autumn wholeheartedly believes that the professional development she's received has been instrumental in making her a better teacher. She offers her gratitude. "I'd like to thank all of those who have donated to the CMAA. It is because of your generous gifts that we, as educators, can continue to make our students disciples of Christ."

The CMAA supports the Catholic Schools Office which provides faith-based professional development and resources for our principals, teachers, and staff.



Engaging our next generation of Catholics for the glory of God

The Diocese of Joliet partners with several organizations to offer youth programs and events. These programs celebrate young people and equip them with experiences that deepen their relationship with Christ and the Catholic Church.

Justin Reyes, Director of the Department of Catechesis and Evangelization for the Diocese of Joliet, is passionate about the parish-based ministries he supports including the Steubenville Youth Conference. The conference unites thousands of teens for faith-building fellowship that's life-changing.

"Something that really struck me was how the conference inspired teens to think more deeply about what God is calling them to do with their lives," Justin said. "A few of the kids I spoke with are even considering religious life or priesthood!"

Matt Laszlo and Leilany Corona are two local high schoolers who attended the conference. "Experiencing the Adoration of the Eucharist was incredibly powerful. I definitely got emotional being in the presence," Matt shared.

Leilany was moved by "The willingness of so many people, my age, to worship and love God with all their heart without feeling judged, like in the real world today."

Our youth are craving connection aligned with their faith. This ministry enables that connection to inspire our next generation of Catholics.

The CMAA supports ministries that help keep our youth engaged and growing in their Catholic faith.