



Walking in Faith

Recorded homily given at all Masses
on April 29/30

“Were not our hearts burning within us while he spoke to us on the way...?” As they hurried back to Jerusalem, the two disciples kept talking about the Stranger they came to recognize in the Breaking of the Bread. Their friend Jesus had risen from the dead! They saw Him and ate with Him! He had truly risen! Their eyes brimming with new-found faith, they hastily walked their good news back to the Apostles. To this day Christians around the world share the joy of their report.

Walking in Faith is the theme of the 2017 Bishop’s Annual Appeal. In the image on this year’s poster two men walk with Jesus into dazzling light. They invite us to walk in faith as they did, to leave behind us the dark shadows of the past, to be in step with the disciples of the Risen One in His Church through the ages.

It’s called the *Bishop’s Annual Appeal* because I ask you as members of parishes in the Baker Diocese to help *your* bishop provide funding, training, and technical resources to promote the Breaking of the Bread in Eastern Oregon. Let me say a word about a few of those efforts.

Funds from the Bishop’s Appeal put Deacon Victor Mena through Mount Angel Seminary, and once he’s ordained this June, *Father* Victor will spend the rest of his days breaking the Bread of Life for the people who made his priestly ministry possible. And God has blessed us with five other seminarians who need our support to follow where Victor has gone.

Like them, your children and grandchildren depend on the Bishop’s Appeal as well. Diocesan catechetical workshops equip dedicated religious education teachers in your parish who prepare them to receive the sacraments. Diocesan-wide youth retreats strengthen their faith as they grow and let them form Catholic friendships across parish boundaries.

Adult faith formation gets a shot in the arm from the Bishop’s Appeal too. Diocesan-subsidized on-line resources like FORMED bring superb Catholic media content right into your home and into every household in your parish free of charge.

So you see, when you make a donation to the Bishop’s Annual Appeal, you’re really donating to your parish in the bargain. Your contribution to the Appeal comes back to you as a roundabout contribution to yourself and your fellow parishioners.

I measure the success of the Bishop’s Annual Appeal not just by total contributions but also by total contributors, and their number has been

steadily increasing each year. This bodes well for the future, because an increasingly generous response to the Appeal makes the Diocese of Baker less dependent on the invaluable assistance of Catholic Extension and Catholic Home Missions. The more we can pay our own way, the freer we are to chart our own course—to offer small grants to our parishes and missions in times of special need, for example.

That's why we set the goal for the Bishop's Annual Appeal a bit higher each year: to build up our financial self-sufficiency within Central and Eastern Oregon and gradually reduce our dependence on the charity of donors from outside our borders.

To walk forward faithfully we must look backwards gratefully. Those who walked in faith before us came a long way on a hard road to sow the seeds of the Gospel and plant the Church in Eastern Oregon. Their sacrifices made it possible for you and me to follow in Jesus' footsteps too. Will we do the same for those who come after us? The Bishop's Annual Appeal attempts to keep the path of faith open for them to walk as we have. Please give careful thought to making a gift to the Appeal this year so that others may discover the joy of walking in faith with you.

May the Risen Jesus walk with you along your way and lead you farther than you think you can go. May He stay with you at the close of the day and open your eyes

in recognition at the Breaking of the Bread. May He show you the path to life and fullness of joy in His presence forever.