**28 OT-C1 “Give Hope to All” CSA 2025**

Naaman is overwhelmed with gratitude for healing. Paul celebrates that not only is the good news of Jesus’ resurrection incapable of being silenced, but Jesus, even at times despite us, is incapable of being unfaithful. And Jesus praises the one out of ten who gives thanks to God through action saying, “your faith has saved you.” Such is our scriptural setting for St. Francis Xavier’s Catholic Services Appeal: (1) gratitude, (2) Jesus’ faithfulness, and (3) action taken on our part.

Our Archdiocese consists of 110 parishes just like our own connected in a common mission, under a common shepherd, sharing a common discipleship in Jesus Christ. I recognize as worthy CSA’s success at helping the 110 provide spiritual formation and training throughout central Kentucky; for helping the 110 connect with Catholics and our neighbors through the Record, radio, and television programs; and helping the 110 with healing broken marriages, broken families, and broken lives through our Tribunal and Catholic Charities loving outreach.

I believe CSA is worthy… no question. My question is whether I am worthy?

Let me tell you a story about a leadership training experience I once had. I once went on a Leadership Louisville retreat where we all participated in a simulated society exercise. It was a game of sorts.

We were randomly divided into four groups: green, blue, red, and yellow bandanas were given out. (I got a green one.) We were then sent to rooms corresponding to the color of your bandana. As I recall the main rule was that people could not freely roam from room to room, but instead “hall passes” were needed and rationed. Yet, we each had a responsibility to interact with the other groups for the purpose of generating “wealth.”

The green room was nice. We had a long table at which we could all sit to enjoy the catered lunch, sodas, bottled water, chocolates and desserts. We received several hall passes and had some nice resources from which to generate commodities.

As we enjoyed our lunch, we calmly discussed how to best proceed in negotiating with the other 3 rooms for trade. We did not realize the other rooms were not equipped like ours!

The blue and yellow rooms had a little something for lunch but nothing as nice as ours. And the red room had nothing. No food, no water, no furniture or even paper to write on. They didn't even have a hall pass to leave their room!

What is most interesting to me as I look back on the experience is how my green room reacted upon eventually learning the reality of the other rooms.

Some in the group basically said, “Too bad, so sad, hate to be you,” and just wanted to enjoy our elaborate lunch and build up our defenses. Others wanted to debate and discuss options looking at every angle so as to reach out to the others but not lose our advantage.

Just a few of us took the initiative to use our few hall passes to take some of our bounty to the red room people, because even though it was just a game, they were really hungry and thirsty, and as we discovered, angry!

Why do I share with you this experience?

I sought out the priesthood as a young man 32 years ago because I wanted to help people. I heard Jesus calling me to this and I responded. I thought becoming a priest would put me into the “thick of it,” so to speak, and in many ways it has.

But the mantle of priestly leadership also comes with a price. For example, in my responsibility for the community my time is consumed with many needs, meetings and projects, and I do not find myself able to do other things for people as often as I would wish.

At times it feels like I'm back in the green room unable to get out to those I want to help. All too often I find myself having to tell someone “no” when asked for some assistance. And I find myself worried that these limitations are preventing me from being the disciple Jesus wants me to be. (Maybe you know this feeling too.)

Alone I cannot be the disciple I believe Jesus calls me to be. Alone I am not enough. But then I read something that Pope Francis once preached that gives me hope. Pope Francis said, “*Let us always remember this: only when we are able to share do we become truly rich, everything that is shared is multiplied.*”

Alone I cannot become the disciple I want to be, but I am not alone. I am now a part of you, and we are a part of the 110. Through CSA what I share is multiplied and the care for others that CSA provides becomes a part of my care for those others.

CSA expands my service for Jesus and helps me fulfill my calling to faithfully love as Jesus loves. For this I am grateful, that through our collective effort I can share in Jesus’ faithfulness. It simply takes the act of my contributing some of my income to the mission. I am grateful for the opportunity.

As I pray over my own donation, scripture bounces around in my head that influences my discernment. “The measure with which you measure will be measured back to you.” “To the one given much, much is expected.” “Do unto others as you would have done to you.” “Whatever you do for the least of my brothers you do for me.”

But the saying that really brought me to my decision came not from scripture, but from something Owensboro’s Bishop Bill Medley once preached. He said, “Don't give until it hurts. Give until it feels good.”

Our parish goal this year’s “Give Hope To All” campaign is $29,200 with 105 households participating. Given my gratitude to Jesus for the blessings in my life, which include being assigned here as your pastor, and out of my desire to partner with the 110 in the work of discipleship, it feels good to me to give $500 towards our goal.

Please join me in reaching our goal. May God multiply our collective generosity and bless us deeply as “we give hope to all.”