

## Mary's Meals

Jesus Christ: Yesterday, Today, and Forever ~

This weekend we are promoting a very fruitful and efficient Catholic charity called Mary's Meals. Most of you have heard me say that God is so great that He gives us everything and is so generous that He lets us keep 90%! The other 10% . . . *belongs to Him*. When it comes to tithing, I have always recommended that we give 5% to our Parish, 1% to the Annual Catholic Appeal, 1% to St. Vincent DePaul, and the remaining 3% to other Catholic charities. Here is a phenomenal Catholic charity to give *one* of those last three percentage points to – Mary's Meals.

Mary's Meals is a Catholic charity that currently feeds over 2.6 million children a nutritious meal in their place of education around the world. We want to partner with them to feed more. Here are some important things to know.

- In many poor nations around the world, schools do not feed the children in their care, they don't have the resources. If children are hungry at school, they struggle to learn. Many children will not go to school if they are not going to be fed, especially when other children eat food from home in front of them.
- When a school enters the Mary's Meals program, enrollment increases as much as 30-40%. That's because hungry children go to school to be fed. For some, it is all the food they will have that day! What's more, a disproportionately large percentage of the increase in student population are girls, because in a lot of the cultures where Mary's Meals operates, girls' education is not as valued as boys.
- All food is sourced locally and prepared by local volunteers. This keeps costs low, supports the local economy, feeds children food they are familiar with and will eat, and builds community.
- I surmise that a lot of the volunteers that prepare the food each day are grandparents who are also hungry, so now they get a nutritious meal too!
- Another amazing benefit of Mary's Meals: now that the children at school are getting a nutritious meal, their younger and older siblings can eat a little more at home, because they don't have to share with their siblings who are being fed at school. The whole family benefits from Mary's Meals.
- Mary's Meals ensures that over 94% of every dollar donated to them is used to get food to the children. That's a super high efficiency rate.
- Mary's Meals does not accept any money from the government, which is how they can stay authentically Catholic, and are able to be so efficient with the monies entrusted to them.

Here is Mary's Meals Vision: That every child receives one meal a day in their place of education, and that all those who have more than they need, share with those who lack even the most basic things. Working together with those who share our vision, we believe there is no good reason why this vision cannot be realized.

By supporting Mary's Meals, we get a chance to live out one aspect of our faith: "Lord when did we feed you," and Jesus replies, "whatever you did for the least of my people, you did for me" (Mt 25:40). Our Catholic Church teaches that those who have much are meant to share it with those who have little (CCC 1033, 1397, 1435, 1825, 2053, 2405, 2443-2449, 2462). Your support and prayers truly give these children hope. You are doing Christ's work when you support Mary's Meals, and it will help you to grow in holiness too.

This is my hope for Columbia River Catholic: that every parishioner donate \$25.20 to Mary's Meals. Why this odd amount? **Because \$25.20 is what it costs Mary's Meals to feed a child a nutritious meal in their place of education every school day for a year.** Imagine that, for the cost of one fast food meal for two, you can feed a hungry child at school for a year. \$25.20 is also an amount that all of us can afford, even the poorest among us can afford \$25.20. Of course, many of us can donate more than \$25.20 and if you can, I hope you will. Whatever you give, your gift will put a big smile on Mary and Jesus' faces.

To donate, first pray for guidance on how much you are called to share with the poorest of the poor. Then scan the QR code to the right, or click on this link: <https://www.marysmealsusa.org/fundraising#/detail/701P500000T088BIAR>. Either way, it takes you to a page on Mary's Meals website specifically for Columbia River Catholic's Parish Family. You can also access the link to our donation button on the home page of our website. Thank you in advance for your care for the poor!



May Almighty God Bless You,

*Fr. Thomas Nathe*

Fr. Thomas Nathe

P.S. If every member of Columbia River Catholic donates \$25.20, we will have fed over a million children in one year! Our example might inspire other Catholic parishes to do the same.

## The Good News of Columbia River Catholic

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The past year has been very challenging for many parishioners, especially our staff. Partners in the Gospel is a real stretch for many of us for different reasons. It could be the kind of thing Satan uses to stoke people's pride and grievances, and then use that to separate them from Christ and His Church. But I'm not seeing that at Columbia River Catholic. While I, the staff, and many volunteers have had to make many difficult adjustments over the past year, we have managed them with skill and grace. So have many of you. Even the most difficult change so far, Fr. Martin's retirement and the new Mass schedule, has been handled by the vast majority of us with understanding and charity. For that, I am so grateful to Almighty God who is so loving and glorious, and you for cooperating with his grace. I'm even seeing some growth in our numbers in the past year, certainly in holiness by many of you.

I want to thank the many hundreds of you throughout Columbia River Catholic (Holy Redeemer, St. Thomas, and Star of the Sea) for making a pledge to this year's Annual Catholic Appeal (ACA). We have hit all our goals, exceeding my own expectations and setting an example of faith for the whole Archdiocese. Here are some numbers that shed some light on where our three communities stand in relation to the other 160 parishes and missions in the Archdiocese. These numbers are meaningless in themselves, but when they represent the faith of the people behind them, they tell the tale of a very special faith-filled community.

- Holy Redeemer's participation rate is 55% while the Archdiocesan average is 20%. This is #1 in the Archdiocese excluding parishes of under 200 families (Holy Redeemer has 1085 families).
- Holy Redeemer is the fourth highest contributor in the Archdiocese. The three parishes that give more are all double Holy Redeemer's size.
- Holy Redeemer Parish is set to have a rebate of \$125,449. This is 1.5 times larger than the next largest rebate in the Archdiocese. This rebate will enable Holy Redeemer to redo our north parking lot, installing a catch basin under it so that we can eliminate the two bioswales on the north side of the parish center. This in

turn will enable us to significantly increase the size of the future parish center when the time comes for that project. It will also significantly improve the north parking lot, enabling us to install full-size parking spaces and potentially creating a drop-off lane there.

- St. Thomas' participation stands at 39% while the Archdiocesan average is 20%. Participants went up from 163 to 213 – a 30% increase in participation from last year!
- St. Thomas is the #2 donor in the Archdiocese for parishes between 101-800 families (St. Thomas has 541 families). St. Thomas is set to receive a \$35,000 rebate. That money will go toward subsidizing our Columbia River Catholic preschool and kindergarten.
- Star of the Sea's participation stands at 47% while the Archdiocesan average is 20%. Participants went up this year from 21 to 32 – a 52% increase in participation from last year!
- Star of the Sea is the #3 donor in the Archdiocese, for communities under 100 families. Star of the Sea is set to receive a \$10,000 rebate that will go toward a much overdue siding project on the church. A project that will cost us almost \$100,000.

If you still haven't made a pledge to the Annual Catholic Appeal, you still can by replying to my letter sent out this week to the holdouts or by contacting the office. Every penny of what you pledge at this point will come back to the parishes for the projects mentioned above.

I love you all.

May Almighty God Bless You,



Fr. Thomas Nathe