

Annual Catholic Appeal Talk

Anthony Lezcano

Sunday April 29, 2018

Good Morning, my name is Anthony Lezcano and my wife Maegan and I became parishioners of St. Theresa Parish in the Spring of 2017. I was delighted to receive an invitation to speak with you today about the Annual Catholic Appeal with how it helps to transform our Church and how it has influenced my life. I spent a decade of my life studying in several Catholic seminaries around the country, in the hopes of one day being ordained to the priesthood. During my last four years of seminary, I was commissioned a Naval Reserve Officer and began serving as a Navy Chaplain in between school years. It was in those last four years that I felt I had the best of both worlds, serving God and Country. It was a great feeling to know where I was headed in life. However, this all changed on the night of June 1st 2013, when God asked me a simple, but terrifying question. “Anthony, do you trust me?”

Of course, my response was “yes”, but I felt that this response wouldn’t satisfy His question. And so, I asked God why He was asking me this question, and He responded with, “Anthony, do you trust me?” After some time reflecting the question, I said, “Yes Lord, you know that I trust you. I have shown this in the time I have committed over the years in preparation for serving you and your people as

a priest.” And like St. Peter, God asked me a third time, “Anthony, do you trust me?” It was at this point that I finally broke down and asked God, “Lord, you know that I trust you, what is it that you want me to do?” It was at this moment, that my life changed, He asked me to discontinue my preparations for the priesthood and follow Him in a different direction. This different direction was entirely unclear and very scary, because I didn’t have a plan B, I was totally committed to serving God as a priest, and so for anything else, well I felt unequipped and ill prepared. Not to mention, I was ready to be ordained in two weeks to the Transitional Diaconate, which would have been on Father’s Day. And since, my dad was ordained a Permanent Deacon, I thought this would have been a nice gift to him.

The stress and anxiety of it all led me into a deeper love and trust in God. It would be the first challenge of many, letting go of control and letting God’s will drive the direction of my life. I was broke, so God immediately found me employment. I was alone, so God introduced me to my wife, which then led to the blessing of two beautiful children, who now help me to grow every day, by teaching me patience.

Many of my experiences in the seminary such as studying Scriptures in the Holy Land, ministering to youth in the San Francisco Juvenile Detention Center or making a weekly visit to hospice care, were in part due to your contribution to the Annual Catholic Appeal. On average it costs about \$250,000 from the moment a

young man walks into the seminary, to the moment the Archbishop lays hands on his head and ordains him a priest. Again, thank you!

As Catholics we belong to a larger Church, not just to this parish, but to the Archdiocese of Seattle. We are joined with 172 parishes and missions in an effort to support more than 60 ministries and services throughout Western Washington. Some of these ministries are Catholic schools, Hispanic ministry, youth and young adult ministry, and Catholic Community Services. As a parish we benefit from these ministries, and the only way we can continue keeping these ministries alive and accessible, is through our generous contribution to the Annual Catholic Appeal.

This year our parish goal is \$75,712. Every dollar given over and above this goal will be returned in the form of a rebate and any potential rebate will be applied towards deferred maintenance, which is a must, and to help fund the cost of property insurance, which continues to skyrocket each and every year. If you haven't done so already, I encourage you to consider a gift of a dollar a day, which is what my family and I have chosen to do, or \$365 or more. If you cannot give at this level, please know that gifts of any amount are welcome. The Archdiocese is asking for those families who gave last year to the Annual Catholic Appeal, to consider giving a gift of 5% more than what you gave in the previous year.

However, if you are unable to make a financial commitment at this time, I invite

you to please fill out a commitment card indicating that you are praying for a successful campaign. Thank you for listening and God bless!

Now at this time, please go ahead and pass the materials down from the ends of the pews, and I invite you to take a few moments to fill out the pledge envelope today. You are also welcome to take it home and discern as a family what your financial commitment will be this year. You can submit your pledge directly online through our parish website or on the Seattle Archdiocesan website. If through the Archdiocesan website, please indicate that your commitment is to go to St. Theresa Parish. Thank you again and have a blessed day!