

March 1, 2026

# A Note Regarding Annual Appeal

From Father Jim Ferry, Pastor  
Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, West Orange

Dear Friends,

**THE JAR OF PRIORITIES** I heard about a teacher demonstrating a life lesson with a glass jar, first filling it with large rocks until no more fit. She asks if the jar is full, and the students say, “Yes.” She then adds pebbles, shaking them into the spaces, followed by sand and water, each time asking the same question. When asked what the experiment teaches, one student suggests it means we can always add more to our schedules. The teacher disagrees, explaining that starting with sand or pebbles would leave no room for the big rocks. These represent life’s most important priorities. The lesson? Always prioritize the “big rocks.”

**A PARISH BUILT ON FAITH** Last year marked the 110th anniversary of our parish, which began humbly in a small home at Cherry and Chestnut Streets in 1914. Through faith, sacrifice, and trust in God, our founders built the beautiful church we now call home. For them, the parish was a “big rock,” a priority sustained by their dedication. Their legacy challenges us to support and grow our parish for future generations.

**THE CHURCH AS A COMMUNITY** Pope Benedict XVI reminds us that the Church is more than a private gathering; it is a community of worship and transformation. As Psalm 62:6 says, “God alone is my rock and my salvation, my fortress where I will not be shaken.”

Please consider a gift to the Annual Appeal, supporting initiatives that strengthen our faith and community.

## ANNUAL APPEAL 2026

The Annual Appeal is a vital connection to those in need. Participating in the Annual Appeal is an investment in the viability and vitality of our Catholic mission.

Our Goal: \$37,192 | Our Incentive: June 30

If we meet our goal by June 30 in donations fully paid, Lourdes Parish saves \$12,000 in assessment expenses to the Archdiocese. Thank you to those who have faithfully supported the “Appeal” annually. If you have not, I ask you to join as a new donor and consider a gift in accord with your means.

**BENEFITS TO OUR PARISH** The appeal contributes to the financial well-being of our parish by fostering collaborations with entities like Catholic Charities.

Furthermore, our school building lease to Catholic Charities provides substantial income. Catholic Charities oversees Mount Carmel Guild Academy which is located in our school building. This rent equals 50% of our parish budget or \$500,000. So, the well-being of Catholic Charities is good for us!

During 2014-2024, Lourdes has benefited from Appeal funding, totaling \$244,000 for construction projects, debt forgiveness, and reduced assessment expenses. (*See table on reverse side.*)

I welcome your questions and ask you to take an envelope from your pew. Checks should be made payable to “Annual Appeal 2026”.

To give online, go to [rcan.org/sharing](https://rcan.org/sharing) and choose “Our Lady of Lourdes Parish, West Orange”.

This message is available as a video on our website.  
Please share!

# Annual Appeal Money Given

— in contrast to —

## Money Granted Back to Lourdes Parish

	Construction Related Grants	Debt Forgiveness Grant	Reduction in Assessment Grant	Actual Money Given by Parishioners to Appeal
2014	\$40,000 (Note 1)	-	-	\$28,364
2015*	\$15,000 (Note 2)	\$66,000	-	-
2016	-	-	-	\$13,485
2017	-	-	-	\$13,309
2018	-	-	-	\$15,093
2019	-	-	-	\$15,079
2020	-	-	-	\$14,340
♥ 2021	-	-	-	\$29,649
♥ 2022	-	-	\$12,000	\$37,578
♥ 2023	\$25,000 (Note 3)	-	\$12,000	\$37,438
♥ 2024	\$25,000 (Note 4)	-	\$12,000	\$35,271
♥ 2025	\$25,000 (Note 5)	-	\$12,000	\$43,968
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$130,000</b>	<b>\$66,000</b>	<b>\$48,000</b>	<b>\$283,574</b>
Total of \$244,000 that has “come back” to Lourdes Parish through Annual Appeal Funds				2026 Annual Appeal Goal: \$37,192

Note 1: Environmental remediation of oil tank. (Completed)

Note 2: Caulking and sealing of church windows (Completed)

Note 3: Heating and AC Upgrade to school (Completed)

Note 4: Heating and AC Upgrade to school (Completed)

Note 5: Roof and skylights on church (Planned for 2026)

♥ For the past 5 years, 2021-2025, we have met and exceeded the annual goal. Thank you!

\*2015 Capital Campaign