

# Diocesan Appeal Impact Report 2022–2023



Diocesan  
Appeal

***"I can do all things through Him who  
strengthens me."*** Philippians 4:13



ROMAN CATHOLIC  
DIOCESE of ALBANY



Dear Friends in Christ,

“I am humbled by the generosity of the 12,764 Diocesan Appeal donors who invested in, thereby strengthening, the Church for all our 126 parishes throughout 14 counties this past year. The principal role of the Diocese is to provide important pastoral and administrative support services to our parishes they could otherwise not afford on their own. Our small but devoted 57 full-time and 23 part-time Diocesan staff are inspired by the generosity of supporters funding their ability to serve you! Here is a snapshot of highlights of their service to parishes this past year. For a full scope of Diocesan services, visit [www.rcda.org/offices](http://www.rcda.org/offices).

Thank you and God Bless!



*+Edward B. Scharfenberger*  
Edward B. Scharfenberger, D.D.  
Bishop of Albany

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# Parish Faith Formation

Full time staff: 4 | Part time staff: 2

One of the top innovations in Faith Formation was the re-establishment of the Diocesan Youth Ministry Team (DYMT). It is composed of 16 teens and 2 young adults from various parishes. The mission of the DYMT is to inspire young people to embrace their faith, advocate for teens across the Diocese, plan events for young people, and to assist the Diocesan director in ministry to local parishes.

**Fun Facts:** In the past fiscal year, the DYMT has hosted two successful events for over 100 young people and their families that included faith/community-building activities, witness talks on the Eucharist, Adoration, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and the celebration of Mass. The Young Church of the Diocese of Albany is alive and growing! The Diocesan Pre-Cana Marriage Preparation program provided formation for 232 engaged couples over the past year through in-person gatherings, small group sessions via Zoom, or in a personalized online format. Engaged couples had the opportunity to learn from seasoned married couples and to dialogue with one another about their hopes, dreams, and fears as they prepare to celebrate and to live the Sacrament of Marriage.

# Prayer and Worship

Full time staff: 0 | Part time staff: 2

**Fun Fact:** Prayer and Worship helped with enhancing the music at some of our main Diocesan events such as the Chrism Mass and ordinations which make these celebrations more beautiful and memorable.

*“Come, let us sing for joy to the Lord; let us shout aloud to the Rock of our salvation. Let us come before him with thanksgiving and extol him with music and song.”* Psalm 95:1-2

# Communications

Full time staff: 1 | Part time staff: 2

Communications received a USCCB grant allowing them to create a video series about the Mass that our parishes can use for all Faith Formation programs and RCIA which will be shareable on websites and social media sites. Work is underway now with the series anticipated to be ready for use by the end of the year. Communications is also now overseeing the Vocations Facebook page and has begun sharing stories about the seminarians, allowing all who donate to see how their support is helping more people to say yes to God’s call.

**Fun Fact:** Donor support is helping to build bridges of hope. Thanks to you, Communications has the staff and resources to share Vocations stories in the hopes of planting a seed in the heart of future priests. Survivor stories are shared on the Hope and Healing webpage, letting someone suffering know that they do not have to walk alone. Stories of the Eucharist and growing support for the upcoming Eucharistic Congress in Auriesville are also being shared. Communications responds to media inquiries and yes, they deal with the tough issues but strive to do it with the heart of Christ. The response should be an action, not a reaction and should represent well the One we serve.

# Catholic Charities

Full time staff: 540 | Part time staff: 197

**Top innovation:** CCMOVE RV for Food Distributions in the Greater Capital Region.

**Fun Fact:** Catholic Charities served more than 100,000 people in the 14 counties of the Diocese of Albany with food, shelter, emergency assistance, counseling, seniors and pregnant and parenting teens.

# Human Resources

Full time staff: 2 | Part time staff: 0

**Top innovation this past year and how it impacted your audience:** The Human Resources Department led the pursuit of alternatives to our longstanding health insurance program covering diocesan, parish, and school staff, as well as clergy and seminarians. They looked for plans that could provide cost savings, continue to provide quality health care, and align covered services with Catholic teaching. The research led to the Reta Trust, a Catholic healthcare trust for Catholic organizations. By enrolling in the Reta Trust, the combined projected savings to staff, parishes, and schools is between \$2.5 million and \$3.5 million during the first 18 months of the program, while offering enhanced benefits that align to Catholic teachings.

# Safe Environment

Full time staff: 2 | Part time staff: 0

**Top innovation this past year and how it impacted your audience:** Safe Environment refined and implemented automated training and background verification process to ensure that all adults working with children, both employees and

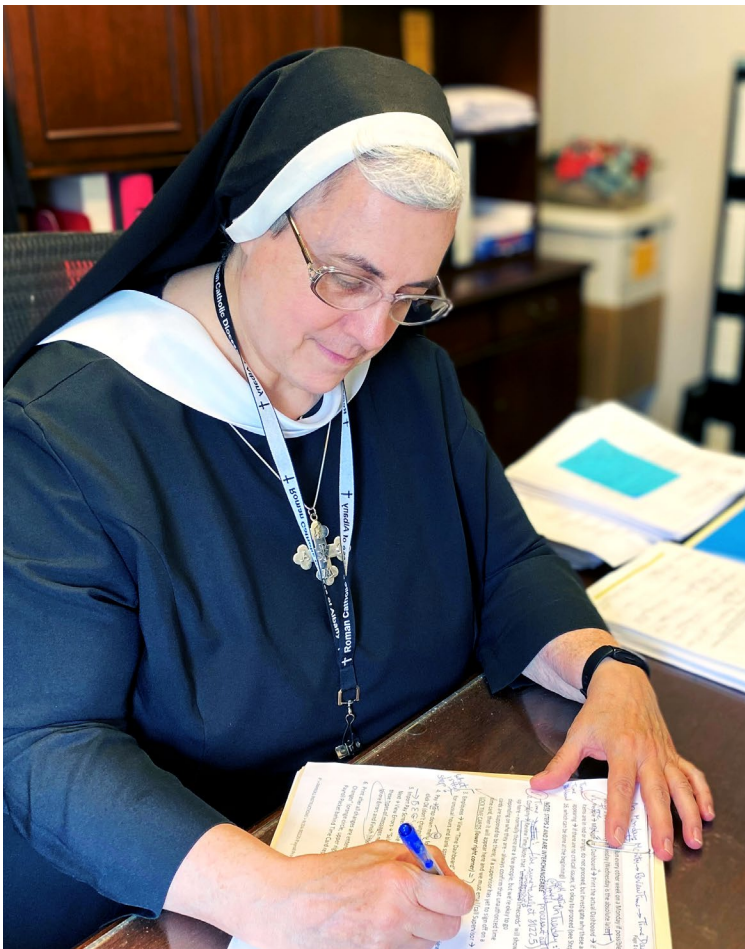




Cindy Schultz Photography



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volunteers, have been properly trained and screened. They instituted onsite visits to ensure safe environment compliance by reviewing records and providing support and guidance. The website was enhanced with the addition of the Hope and Healing webpage which provides information about events and resources that aim to address the different needs of survivors of abuse. This year, seven Hope and Healing Masses were celebrated throughout the diocese. Safe Environment’s plan is to continue to grow and strengthen the support provided to victims of sexual and other forms of abuse, as well as ensure the protection of God’s children.

# Ecumenical Interreligious

Full time staff: 0 | Part time staff: 2

The Ecumenical Interreligious staff involved the ecumenical and interfaith community in inviting responses to proposed Synod questions. Impact: A number of very positive responses on how the “others” perceive our Catholic Church.

**Fun Fact:** The two Cathedrals (Episcopal and Roman Catholic Diocese of Albany) are in a covenant relationship; the Director has asked the four final candidates for the tenth Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Albany to be supportive of that covenant.

# Real Property, Building Services & IT

Full time staff: 5 | Part time staff: 5

In Fiscal Year 2022-2023 new systems were created to improve communications and follow-up with those served by this department. These new systems have decreased response time, so the professional expertise of this office was utilized to 1) draft, implement, and renew over 25 leases for parishes and other Diocesan entities 2) Facilitate over 10 property sales 3) Assist with over 40 building projects and repairs through the Architecture and Building Commission 4) Assist with over 6 encroachments and other property issues 5) Renew over 550 tax-exempt renewal applications for parish and Diocesan property.

**Fun Fact:** The staff is available five days a week, excluding holidays, to answer any Real Property question for all parishes and Diocesan entities. They have many trusted consultants that assist the office on a volunteer basis or for a reduced rate which expands their expertise, thus saving the parishes aggravation and money.

# Archives

Full time staff: 1 | Part time staff: 0

The archives department sourced more than 75 linear feet of shelving for improved storage of collections. The files moved into that space will be better protected from the harmful effects of light, humidity, and temperature fluctuations that accelerate the deterioration of paper records, safekeeping them for future use in answering questions for Diocesan departments, parishes and the lay Catholics served.

**Fun Fact:** Requests for assistance from Diocesan departments, parishes, and lay Catholics are projected to be 20% higher in 2023 than last year. No fees are charged for any requested documents from the Archives.

# The Tribunal

Full time staff: 2 | Part time staff: 4

Your Diocesan Appeal offerings help to fund the ministers of the Tribunal who are needed to examine issues involving marriage nullity (aka “annulment” requests) and to assist the Bishop with various legal issues. Your offerings helped the Diocese send Deacon Andrew Haskins to Saint Paul University in Ottawa from 2019 to 2022. He received his licentiate in canon law and began serving as a Judge in our Tribunal this past year. This is a tremendous help

to everyone and assists the caseload of our only other Judge, Fr. Matthew Frisoni, who is also our Judicial Vicar.

**Fun Fact:** About 80 formal cases were heard last year, and over 225 requests for permission or dispensation prior to the celebration of marriage were received by our Tribunal. Thanks to the Diocesan Appeal offerings, no person or parish is charged a fee for any pastoral services.

# Stewardship & Development

(Diocesan Appeal, The Foundation of the RCDA, and Re-Igniting Our Faith Foundation)

Full time staff: 3 | Part time staff: 1

As the principal solicitors for The Diocesan Appeal, annually the staff look to improve the giving experience for donors as well as simplifying the program implementation process for parishes. This past year solicitation materials were simplified to pare down costs, enhanced reporting tools were developed for parishes to help them see donor information in real-time, and new tools were provided for parishes to help in their stewardship outreach. Again last year costs were minimized such that it cost less than \$.07 to raise \$1.00 for the Diocesan Appeal versus the national fundraising average of \$.15-\$.20 to raise \$1.00.

# Finance Office

Full time staff: 6 | Part time staff: 2

The work of the finance office is far-reaching but to highlight the Diocese-parish interaction, Sister Teresa is featured who supports parish personnel (especially parish bookkeepers) in the use of Diocesan accounting software. She coordinates the annual requests for budget and fiscal year-end financial reports from parishes, which includes the review of reports and follow-up with parish bookkeepers on any issues noted during the preliminary review. She also answers bookkeeping questions and helps to resolve problems at the parish level.

# Catholic School Office

Full time staff: 6 | Part time staff: 5

In response to workforce challenges, the Catholic School Office has expanded on-site, direct administrative services to Elementary Schools in the areas of Human Resources and Finance. Using a centralized, shared services model among a consortium of schools, school leaders realized greater efficiencies at a reduced cost allowing them to refocus or redirect precious resources on enhancing student offerings.

**Fun Fact:** During the 2022-2023 school year, the Catholic School Office applied for and received over \$1.7M in grants on behalf of all Catholic schools in the Diocese of Albany. Grants provided tuition scholarship assistance, counseling support, and academic intervention services to support student learning.

# Evangelization

Full time staff: 1 | Part time staff: 0

**Top innovation this past year:** New engaging and dynamic events: Inaugural diocesan wide conferences for both men and women: Step Up 2022 Men’s Conference attracted almost 300 men from across the diocese to help them grow in their faith and the Unleashing Love 2022 Women’s Retreat attracted almost 400 women from across the diocese. Three “Fire of Faith” adoration events were hosted. The Diocese now touts six regional young adult groups – visit [www.rcda.org/youbelong](http://www.rcda.org/youbelong) for more information. Additionally, 29 young adult events were hosted by Evangelization in the 2022-2023 fiscal year.

**Fun Fact:** The Diocese of Albany is engaging with young adults in many new and dynamic ways. A large-scale billboard campaign was also completed last year, “Are you lost?” and a new “Kindness Matters” campaign utilizing lawn signs launched this summer (2023).

# Chancery

Full time staff: 5 | Part time staff: 1

The Chancery staff directly assists the Bishop in the pastoral and administrative work of the Diocese. On behalf of the Bishop, the Chancery assists with administrative duties, expedites canonical matters, maintains all records, and assists priests, parishes and other entities in the Diocese.

Most parishioners do not realize that the Diocese pays an annual assessment to the Holy See, the NYS Catholic Conference of Bishops and the US Catholic Conference of Bishops which for the 2022-23 fiscal year totaled \$211,477.

# Vocations

Full time staff: 3 | Part time staff: 3

The focus of formation has drastically changed — the formation has a more explicit requirement for a strong human formation component as well as a pastoral integration component that may last from one to three years. The Propaedeutic component is now required of all in Formation that before starting theological studies, this also could be for one to three years. This summer, five seminarians are serving in Selma, Alabama working with the rural poor; three are working with the Schenectady City Mission, two are serving with Catholic Charities locally, and the others are serving in parishes. The funding of vocations from the Diocesan Appeal directly impacts the future of the Catholic Church!



*God Bless you*  
in underwriting the partnership of the Diocese and parishes — Our greater Catholic Church is strengthened thanks to your efforts!



# Diocesan Appeal

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**Diocesan Appeal Year**  
**July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023**