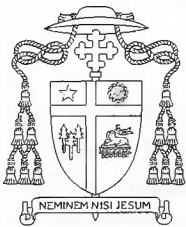


October 18, 2009



Office of the Bishop

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

We continue to pray, fast, and do penance during this month of The Bishop's Appeal as we consider our gift of alms to Holy Mother Church. This is Bishop Alvaro Corrada, your bishop, reminding you that Jesus came to give us new life. He wants us to have life and to have it more abundantly. He wants us to enjoy true freedom. Jesus won for us freedom from sin and death, freedom to choose, and freedom to excel. We are not slaves; not even freed slaves; not slaves to the things of this world. We are free sons and daughters of God.

Nevertheless, we are confronted with the emergence of secular ideology – a threat to our holiness and lasting happiness – that seeks to capture and enslave our hearts and minds. But, the secular world is where we disciples of Jesus live. What are we to do?

In this secular world, in this fallen world that Christ redeemed, we find the rich soil in which to sow the seeds of the Gospel and yield a good harvest. This is our mission. As disciples of Jesus, this is how we counter the deadly effects of secular ideology. We present true teachings of the Church to the world. We invite the world into the full and complete life of the Church – into the full and complete life of the faithful. We do not force. The Word persuades. This is why RCIA (the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults), Faith Formation, Catechesis, Family Life Ministries and Evangelization are so vitally important. This Sunday is World Mission Sunday. Let us remember that our good works in East Texas - our many ministries – are the mission of the Church we must also support with our prayer, fasting and almsgiving. In this abundant life Christ promises, let us also remain faithful to our mission that is Catholic Charities. Let us remember that our works, our prayer, fasting and our almsgiving, too, are necessary for our own salvation, for the salvation of others, and for the salvation of the whole world.

As faithful Catholics, you know there is no other way to live abundantly, as Christ Jesus invites us to do, except by way of the cross that is a total gift of self. The way of the cross is the gift of one's life – the fullness of life – all that we are and all that we have.

In this the "Year for Priests", let us look to our pastors and priests and follow their Christ-like example of self-sacrifice for the people of God. Let us look to our pastors and priests to lead us in a life of penance, prayer, fasting and almsgiving – in a life that is self-emptying, self-giving – a life that is antidotal to the poison of secular ideology. Let us demand of ourselves and our priests and deacons to follow the call to holiness from our baptism. For this, I am most grateful.

I especially thank you for your generous almsgiving through The Bishop's Appeal: When you give alms to the Church through The Bishop's Appeal, you help counter the deadly effects of secular ideology. You help to plant the seeds of faith in the rich soil that is the secular world. You help to bring in the harvest. This is our mission. This is the work of the Church you support – for your own sake, for your family's sake, for your parish, and for the world. The mission of every Catholic parish in East Texas lies within the mission of the Diocese of Tyler. What does not happen in the parishes and the family does not happen in the Diocese.

May God grant us all his abundant life,

Most Reverend Alvaro Corrada, S.J.  
Bishop of Tyler

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