***Background and Talking Points for Catholic Stewardship 2025 Kick-off Weekend***

**February 8-9, 2025**

*This year’s Catholic Stewardship Appeal marks a unique opportunity to inspire parish members by reflecting on the historic Installation of Archbishop Jeffrey Grob and his vision for our future.*

*Describe the ripple effect of our new leader and the impact on our entire region and state. During today’s Mass, we will watch the Catholic Stewardship Appeal video, which offers an overview of the Appeal and includes a special message from Archbishop Grob. Play the CSA video.*

**Points you may consider connecting to help introduce Archbishop Grob’s leadership:**

* He is returning to his home state. Archbishop Grob grew up milking cows on a dairy farm in Cross Plains, Wisconsin. He began his Installation by saying how wonderful it is to be back home in the land of fish fries, supper clubs and brandy old fashioneds.
* His favorite Bible verse, (John 15:5): “I am the vine. You, the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him, will bear much fruit. Because without me, you can do nothing.”
* If applicable, highlight if Archbishop Grob is scheduled to celebrate one of his welcome Masses at your parish. You may also ask parish members for their prayers for the Archbishop, which was one of his specific requests.
* Share an especially meaningful and personal experience from either the solemn evening prayer or the official Installation. Importantly, connect your message to the significance of giving back. Here are three examples you may draw from:

**Theme #1: Opening Doors for Others**

Reflect on the symbolism that stretches back many centuries, led by Archbishop Grob’s knocking on the door of the Cathedral of Saint John the Evangelist. This tradition represents the community’s official welcome of its new leader of the flock and calls on us to consider an important question:

*How is God knocking on the door for us? Are we listening and answering his call? Are we opening doors for others in need?*

* Describe our promising future and connect how this year’s Catholic Stewardship Appeal, and each parish member’s generosity, bears extra importance as we map out our future under our new leader. Encourage prayerful consideration of what parish members may be able to offer this year.
* Take a moment to personally thank your parishioners…for their time, talent and treasure that they have given, both to the Archdiocese through support of the Catholic Stewardship Appeal and to your parish, both past and present.
* In addition, you may consider thanking those who participated in the Installation at the Cathedral of St. John Evangelist, representing your parish.

**Theme #2: Generosity as Pilgrims of Hope**

One of the most meaningful moments of the Installation is when Archbishop Listecki, who led our flock for 15 years, transitioned the leadership to the new Archbishop. There were two quotes that stood out that specifically connect to the Catholic Stewardship Appeal and the importance of generosity.

* First, Archbishop Listecki, in very personal remarks of advice to Archbishop Grob, said, “In the Lord’s command to Peter, He said, “The closer we are to our brothers and sisters in need, the closer we are to God.”

Share that gifts to the Catholic Stewardship Appeal represent a powerful way to support ministries that strengthen the Church and serve people in need — our brothers and sisters who need help throughout the Archdiocese of Milwaukee.

* Second, Archbishop Grob emphasized that “Together, we are writing the next chapters of the church.” He challenged us all to ask ourselves, “Who is that word in our lives that is guiding our hearts and shaping our decisions? “We believers have an opportunity to be pilgrims of hope,” he said. Emphasize that generosity is the very hope our world needs today.

**Theme #3: Unity and Evangelization**

During the solemn evening prayer, Archbishop Grob challenged us by noting that with Jesus Christ as the center of our lives, we can change the trajectory of others around us. “The challenge before us,” he said, “in our next chapter is to work for unity, to share our faith and respond to the urgent need for evangelization.”

* Discuss how gifts to the Catholic Stewardship Appeal help many of our brothers and sisters in need across our region and the funds also play a significant role in growing evangelization.

Gifts to the CSA fuel the vital ministries of the Church across the 10 counties of our Archdiocese, which includes supporting:
	+ - The growing number of seminarians
		- Education for deacon candidates and lay leaders who serve our parishes
		- Young people receiving the sacraments and learning the faith through parish religious education programs and Catholic schools
		- And many more important ministries supported by the CSA

**Conclusion**

I invite you to prayerfully consider supporting this important effort when you receive the Appeal mailing at home this week, or you can find donation envelopes at the back of the church.

A gift to the Catholic Stewardship Appeal is a powerful way to support ministries that strengthen the Church and serve people in need throughout the Archdiocese of Milwaukee. Thank you for your generosity, which truly does God’s work.