

2026 BLA February 8 – Commitment Weekend

We ask that all parishes review the in-pew giving process carefully and follow these instructions as prescribed.

1) PREPARATION FOR COMMITMENT WEEKEND

As soon as you receive the shipment of Bishop's Lenten Appeal supplies, open the boxes, and check to make sure that you have received sufficient quantities of all items.

2) THE IN-PEW GIVING PROCESS

The most important part is being sure that the printed envelope with QR Code for online giving are handed out by ushers/volunteers to each family in all the pews and not simply left in the pews before Mass to be passed out by the person sitting on the end.

3) IMPORTANT TIPS FOR IN-PEW PROCESS

- Preparation: Load every 2nd or 3rd envelope with a pencil, then close the flaps of the envelope, but don't seal them.
- Then 'fan' the envelopes into alternating counts of 8, 10 or 12 before putting them into the baskets for handing out at Masses (see image below). This helps speed distribution of envelopes to parishioners at Masses. You should have enough volunteers to be able to hand out the giving envelopes to all pews in the parish in a few minutes.
- NOTE: There is a separate envelope to be used for Masses in Spanish. Please follow the same procedure for the Spanish Masses (handing out the envelopes pew by pew).





Student Volunteers: Students make excellent volunteers for distributing and collecting envelopes. This provides a meaningful service project while ensuring ample help. When using students, provide adequate adult supervision and training to ensure every family receives an envelope and all envelopes are retrieved.

Primary Goal: 100% Participation

The 2026 Appeal seeks 100% participation from every family in the parish. We prioritize online giving for maximum efficiency and cost-effectiveness. Encourage parishioners to give online during Mass using their phones.

Participation Is Key:

- Every family matters in helping the parish reach its goal
- Every gift strengthens the diocesan family, regardless of size
- 100% participation is the goal—not the dollar amount

Why Online Giving?

- Secure and immediate processing
- More cost-effective than paper statements mailed over time
- Flexible: Donors can change or cancel monthly recurring gifts at any time online or by contacting the diocesan Development Office at (703) 778-8600 or development@arlingtondiocese.org
- Convenient: Complete the entire process in minutes

How Parishioners Give Online:

1. Scan the QR code on the BLA envelope with phone camera, OR
2. Visit arlingtondiocese.org/bla
3. Select "Make A Gift – 2026 BLA"
4. Complete the online form for a monthly recurring gift, one-time gift, or pledge

Please encourage monthly recurring gifts - they provide sustained support throughout the year and help increase participation over time.

Paper Option: Parishioners without smartphones or who prefer paper may complete the giving form on the envelope and return it during collection.

Volunteer Staffing Needs

- One volunteer per church section
- One person per side aisle to manage envelope distribution (retrieving extras from some pews, providing additional envelopes where needed)
- Coverage for standing room, cry room, and choir loft areas
- Extra adults assigned if large numbers of people are standing

Practice Session (Recommended)

Hold a practice session for volunteers before Commitment Weekend. The pastor need not attend.

Establish:

- A clear signal alerting volunteers to move to assigned areas
- Timing for envelope distribution (per the script)
- Role of adults managing side aisles (retrieving overages, addressing shortfalls)

Volunteer Instructions (Provide in Writing)

Ensure volunteers receive clear written instructions covering:

1. Reporting: Where and when to arrive
2. Supplies: Where to pick up materials
3. Staging: Where to wait for the distribution signal
4. Assignment: Specific pew rows assigned to each volunteer
5. Signal: When to move to assigned locations (what signal the pastor will give from the altar)
6. During completion: What to do while parishioners complete their gifts online or fill envelopes
7. Collection baskets: Where to retrieve them
8. After collection: Where to secure envelopes (mostly empty from online givers)
9. Basket return: Where to return collection baskets
10. Post-Mass: Help collect unused envelopes and prepare baskets for the next Mass

BLA Committee Presence: At least one BLA committee member should be present at every Mass to ensure smooth execution and secure any completed envelopes. This person briefs ushers/volunteers before each Mass on the in-pew process and volunteer roles.

Pastor's Critical Role: The pastor should lead the in-pew process at every Mass. If the pastor is not celebrating a particular Mass, he should join to:

- Give a brief homily based on the readings
- Read Bishop Burbidge's letter
- Lead parishioners through the in-pew giving process

Why This Matters: The pastor's Commitment Weekend presentation is crucial to appeal success. By this point, parishioners have heard about the BLA and understand its importance. Some have already given by mail or online.

Now is the moment for the pastor to personally ask parishioners for their support. The pastor's personal ask significantly elevates the importance parishioners place on the request.

The Participation Message: Pastors should emphasize 100% participation as the primary goal - not the dollar amount. Every family's participation helps the parish reach its goal and strengthens the diocesan family, regardless of gift size.

Critical Guidelines

Commitment Weekend is the time to ask for a decision. Please do not suggest parishioners take envelopes home. This approach consistently results in large numbers of unreturned envelopes. Announcement Weekend provided ample time for prayerful consideration.

Emphasize Online Giving First:

Primary Method: Encourage parishioners to use their phones to:

1. Scan the QR code on the envelope, OR
2. Visit arlingtondiocese.org/bla
3. Complete their gift during Mass

Why online is best:

- Secure and immediate
- More cost-effective than paper statements mailed over time
- Donors maintain full control - monthly recurring gifts can be changed or cancelled anytime online or by contacting the Development Office

Alternative Method: Parishioners without smartphones or who prefer paper may complete the giving form on the envelope and return it during collection.



Pastor's Script for Commitment Weekend (February 8)

Good morning/evening.

Thank you to everyone who has already given to the Bishop's Lenten Appeal - whether this year or in past years. Your generosity makes a real difference.

Connection to Today's Readings

In today's Gospel, Jesus tells us: "Your light must shine before others, so that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father."

The Bishop's Lenten Appeal is one way we let our light shine - not for our own glory, but to glorify God by serving those in need. Through your gift, you become the light of Christ for families in crisis, for seminarians preparing for the priesthood, for children learning the faith, and for the vulnerable across the diocese.

Isaiah reminds us today: "Share your bread with the hungry, shelter the oppressed and the homeless." Through the BLA, we do exactly this - together, as one Body in Christ.

Today, I'm asking every family in the parish to participate in the 2026 Bishop's Lenten Appeal.

Why This Matters

This year's theme is "*In Christ, We Are One.*" Through the BLA, we live out this unity by supporting 40+ ministries serving tens of thousands across the diocese - ministries the parish depends on:

- Seminarian formation preparing future priests
- Religious education training for catechists
- Youth ministry resources bringing young people to Christ
- Catholic Charities counseling families in crisis
- Gabriel Project supporting mothers choosing life

Your gift directly impacts lives - perhaps even people sitting in this church today.

Parish Goal: 100% Participation

My goal is simple: 100% participation from every family in the parish.

Not everyone can give the same amount, and I understand. What matters is we all participate together. Whether you can give \$25 a month or \$500 as a one-time gift, your participation helps the parish reach its goal and strengthens the diocesan family.



Every gift to the BLA is restricted exclusively to the ministries described in the appeal materials. Many of these services directly benefit the parish and local community.

Special Matching Gift Opportunity

Generous donors have provided a \$300,000 matching gift:

- First-time donors: Your entire gift will be matched dollar-for-dollar
- Returning donors: Any increase in your gift will be matched

Your generosity goes twice as far. Please prayerfully consider increasing your gift to take advantage of this opportunity.

How to Give Today

I'm going to ask you to take a few minutes right now to make your gift. We'll do this together, and it will only take a few minutes.

If you've already given by mail or online before today, please check the box indicating you've already gave. We do not want to count your gift twice.

Option 1: Give Online (Preferred Method)

The easiest and most cost-effective way to give is online using your phone right now.

1. Please take out your phone and locate the QR code on the envelope you received
2. Scan the QR code with your camera, OR visit arlingtondiocese.org/bla
3. Select "**Make A Gift – 2026 BLA**"
4. Complete the simple online form

Why give online?

- Secure and immediate
- Saves the diocese money on processing and mailing
- You maintain complete control—you can change or cancel your monthly gift anytime by calling the Development Office

I strongly encourage monthly recurring gifts. Just like you support the parish through weekly offertory, a monthly gift to the BLA - even \$25, or \$50 a month - allows you to make a more generous commitment spread throughout the year.

For those giving online right now - thank you. When you're finished, you may place your empty envelope in the collection basket, or simply hold onto it.



Option 2: Paper Envelope (For Those Without Smartphones)

If you don't have a smartphone or prefer to use paper, you may complete the envelope in your hand:

1. Fill in your name, address, phone, and email
2. If you are married, please also fill in the information for your spouse
3. On the lower section, choose a monthly recurring gift, a one-time gift, or a pledge with payments over 10 months
4. If including a payment today, write the amount enclosed
5. Please be sure to include the parish name on the form so that it is credited toward our parish goal
6. After you close the envelope, print your name on the front

You may include a check made payable to "Bishop's Lenten Appeal" or give online later at arlingtondiocese.org/bla.

[Pause for those completing a gift online or using the envelopes]

Final Thoughts

Whether you gave online or filled out a paper envelope, thank you for participating.

If you're unable to give today, I understand - but please still visit arlingtondiocese.org/bla this week to participate in whatever way you can. Every gift matters.

Now the ushers will collect your envelopes.

[Ushers collect envelopes]

On behalf of Bishop Burbidge and myself, but especially on behalf of the thousands across the diocese who will benefit from your compassionate generosity - thank you.

In Christ, We Are One. May God bless your generous hearts.

Guion del Párroco para el Fin de Semana del Compromiso (8 de febrero)

Buenos días/Buenas tardes.

Gracias a todos los que ya han contribuido a la Petición Cuaresmal del Obispo, ya sea este año o en años pasados. Su generosidad marca una verdadera diferencia.

Conexión con las Lecturas de Hoy

En el Evangelio de hoy, Jesús nos dice: "Brille su luz delante de los hombres, para que vean sus buenas obras y glorifiquen a su Padre celestial".

La Petición Cuaresmal del Obispo es una forma en que dejamos brillar nuestra luz, no para nuestra propia gloria, sino para glorificar a Dios sirviendo a los necesitados. A través de su ofrenda, usted se convierte en la luz de Cristo para las familias en crisis, para los seminaristas que se preparan para el sacerdocio, para los niños que aprenden la fe y para los vulnerables en toda la diócesis.

Isaías nos recuerda hoy: "Comparte tu pan con el hambriento, da refugio a los oprimidos y sin hogar". A través de la PCO, hacemos exactamente esto, juntos, como un solo Cuerpo en Cristo.

Hoy, les pido a todas las familias de la parroquia que participen en la Petición Cuaresmal del Obispo de 2026.

Por Qué Esto Importa

El tema de este año es "En Cristo Somos Uno". A través de la PCO, vivimos esta unidad apoyando más de 40 ministerios que sirven a decenas de miles de personas en toda la diócesis, ministerios de los cuales la parroquia depende:

- Formación de seminaristas preparando futuros sacerdotes
- Capacitación en educación religiosa para catequistas
- Recursos de ministerio juvenil que acercan a los jóvenes a Cristo
- Consejería de Caridades Católicas para familias en crisis
- Proyecto Gabriel apoyando a madres que eligen la vida

Su ofrenda impacta directamente vidas, quizás incluso personas sentadas en esta iglesia hoy.

Meta Parroquial: 100% de Participación

Mi meta es simple: 100% de participación de cada familia en la parroquia. No todos pueden dar la misma cantidad, y lo entiendo. Lo que importa es que todos participemos juntos. Ya sea que pueda dar 25 dólares al mes o 500 dólares como donación única, su participación ayuda a la parroquia a alcanzar su meta y fortalece a la familia diocesana.

Cada ofrenda a la PCO se destina exclusivamente a los ministerios descritos en los materiales de la petición. Muchos de estos servicios benefician directamente a la parroquia y a la comunidad local.

Oportunidad Especial de Contrapartida

Donantes generosos han proporcionado una ofrenda de contrapartida de \$300,000:

- Donantes por primera vez: Su ofrenda completa será igualada dólar por dólar
- Donantes recurrentes: Cualquier aumento en su ofrenda será igualado

Su generosidad se duplica. Por favor, consideren en oración aumentar su ofrenda para aprovechar esta oportunidad.

Cómo Dar Hoy

Voy a pedirles que tomen unos minutos ahora mismo para hacer su ofrenda. Haremos esto juntos, y solo tomará unos minutos.

Opción 1: Dar en Línea (Método Preferido)

La forma más fácil y económica de dar es en línea usando su teléfono ahora mismo.

1. Por favor saque su teléfono y localice el código QR en el sobre que recibió
2. Escanee el código QR con su cámara, O visite arlingtondiocese.org/bla
3. Seleccione "Make A Gift – 2026 BLA"
4. Complete el formulario simple en línea

¿Por qué dar en línea?

- Seguro e inmediato
- Ahorra dinero a la iglesia en procesamiento y envío postal
- Usted mantiene control completo: puede cambiar o cancelar su ofrenda mensual en cualquier momento llamando a la Oficina de Desarrollo

Recomiendo encarecidamente ofrendas mensuales recurrentes. Así como apoyan a la parroquia a través del ofertorio, una ofrenda mensual a la PCO, incluso de \$25 o \$50 al mes, les permite hacer un compromiso más generoso distribuido a lo largo del año.

Para quienes están dando en línea ahora mismo, gracias. Cuando terminen, pueden colocar su sobre vacío en la canasta de colecta, o simplemente guardarlo.

Opción 2: Sobre de Papel (Para Quienes No Tienen Teléfono Inteligente)

Si no tiene un teléfono inteligente o prefiere usar papel, puede completar el sobre en su mano:

1. Llene su nombre, dirección, teléfono y correo electrónico en el lado izquierdo
2. En el lado derecho, escriba el monto de su promesa (recuerde, puede pagar mensualmente)
3. Si incluye un pago hoy, escriba el monto adjunto
4. Escriba el nombre de la parroquia en la parte inferior
5. Firme su nombre en el frente

Puede incluir un cheque a nombre de "Bishop's Lenten Appeal" o dar en línea más tarde en arlingtondiocese.org/bla.

[Pausa breve para quienes completan sobres de papel]

Reflexiones Finales

Ya sea que hayan dado en línea o llenado un sobre de papel, gracias por participar.

Si ya han dado por correo postal o en línea antes de hoy, por favor marquen la casilla indicando que ya han hecho su promesa. No queremos contar su ofrenda dos veces.

Si no pueden dar hoy, lo entiendo, pero por favor visiten arlingtondiocese.org/bla esta semana para participar de la manera que puedan. Cada ofrenda importa.

Ahora los acomodadores recogerán sus sobres.

[Los acomodadores recogen los sobres]

En nombre del Obispo Burbidge y el mío, pero especialmente en nombre de los miles de personas en toda la diócesis que se beneficiarán de su compasiva generosidad, gracias.

En Cristo, somos uno. Que Dios bendiga sus corazones generosos.

Pastors may edit the provided script to fit their speaking style. The script emphasizes:

- 100% participation as the goal
- Online giving as the preferred method
- Every gift matters, regardless of size

In-Pew Process Implementation

Execute the full in-pew process on Commitment Weekend (February 8) and conduct a Follow-up Weekend (February 15) as described in this manual. Small details matter - everything from supply availability to volunteer attitudes affects outcomes.

Distribution Requirements

Distribute envelopes by hand to every family. The envelope serves as a visual prompt and contains the QR code for easy scanning.

Do Not:

- Place envelopes in pew pockets before Mass
- Ask people to raise their hands for envelopes

Most people will not take initiative to use their phone at Mass or to retrieve envelopes or raise their hands. Every family should receive an envelope - even those giving online need the QR code.

After Each Mass

Secure any completed envelopes: A designated committee member takes BLA envelopes to a secure location immediately after Mass. Most envelopes will be empty since parishioners are encouraged to give online.

Process in-pew envelopes promptly: Designated parish staff and BLA committee members process any in-pew envelopes as soon as possible and send them to the Diocese Development Office.

Collect unused envelopes: Gather all unused envelopes after each Mass to ensure sufficient supply for remaining Masses and Follow-up Weekend.