



## The Catholic Home Missions Appeal *Strengthening the Church at Home*

In mission dioceses throughout the United States, there is a serious need for priestly formation in order to build vibrant parish communities. The cost to educate one seminarian in a home mission diocese is roughly \$30,000. In an average grant cycle, 18-20% of the funds collected for the Catholic Home Missions Appeal go toward seminarian education.

Last year with your help, the Appeal enabled the home mission diocese of Biloxi, Mississippi, to support 100% of the expenses of educating 12 seminarians. These future priests will be invaluable, as 11 priests are currently retired, and several more are eligible for retirement in the next few years. A unique aspect of seminarian education in Biloxi is training as a sign language practitioner. One-quarter of the hearing-impaired individuals in the Biloxi region are Catholic. Without the help of the Catholic Home Missions Appeal, the desperate need for sign language practitioners cannot be met.

The Appeal also helps the diocesan de l'Epee Deaf Center—the only provider of services to deaf people in

Mississippi—stay afloat. With help from the Appeal, the Diocese of Biloxi is able to address the need within the diocese and serve the deaf community by providing the staffing needed for the center.

Your donations make all of these things and more possible. Please be generous in the Appeal and **strengthen the Church at home.**

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*"The grants we receive from the Catholic Home Missions Appeal help us ensure that the future of these parishes are in the hands of adequately prepared priests who can meet the needs of the residents here. While we have faced many challenges in recent years, this Appeal restores our hope that the future will be brighter and our parishioners will continue to be served."*

*Most Reverend Roger P. Morin  
Bishop of Biloxi*

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**The Catholic Home Missions Appeal** primarily supports dioceses in the United States and its territories that are unable to offer their people the basic pastoral ministries of word, worship, and service without outside help. The Appeal supports a wide range of pastoral services. It focuses principally on ① evangelization activities, ② religious education, ③ ministry training for priests, deacons, religious sisters and brothers, and laypeople, and ④ support of poor parishes across the country.



Catholic Home Missions Appeal | Office of National Collections  
3211 Fourth Street NE | Washington, DC 20017 | 202-541-3346 | [www.usccb.org/nationalcollections](http://www.usccb.org/nationalcollections)

Astar Education Institute

## Caring Host Families Wanted!

The Astar Education Institute is currently inviting families to host an international student for the upcoming school year. This is an extremely rewarding opportunity for your family and community! All you need to provide is room and board, meals and limited transportation as well as treat them as any other member of the family. In return, families receive a **MONTHLY STIPEND** in addition to the unique opportunity to grow closer with a foreign culture. When you open up your family to a foreign student, you are giving them a special view of American culture that will make a profound difference in who they are and how they relate to our country. You, in turn get a unique opportunity to grow closer with a foreign culture. For an international friendship that will last a lifetime. Host today!



### WHY SHOULD YOU HOST?

- Families receive a monthly stipend per student hosted.
- Families enjoy the opportunity to embrace a foreign culture and language.
- Families enjoy the opportunity to share American culture.

**CONTACT KATE FOR MORE INFORMATION TODAY AT 703-368-6838 OR AT [kathleen@astarinstitute.org](mailto:kathleen@astarinstitute.org)**



**A**star Education Institute

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## COURAGE IN TIME OF WAR

Raised in a conservative evangelical Christian household, Iowa native Joshua Casteel decided to emulate the war heroes in his family by enlisting in the Army Reserves at the age of 17. Later he won a congressional appointment to the U.S. Military Academy. Though he did not finish West Point, he studied Arabic in college and after 9-11 returned to military service as an interrogator at the notorious Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq.

But when Casteel was honored with a banquet at a Catholic parish in Des Moines this spring, it was not for his military service. Instead, he received the Bishop Maurice J. Dingman Peace Award for his courageous witness for peace, an effort that began in 2005 with his honorable discharge as a conscientious objector to military service.

## ASKING SIMPLY FOR FORGIVENESS

In notes he emailed from Iraq and later published as *Letters from Abu Ghraib*, Casteel placed his decision to leave the military in the context of his faith journey. After converting to Catholicism, he began to question the spirit of vengeance he felt was underlying the Mideast war. When a military supervisor described the Abu Ghraib detainees as "agents of Satan," Casteel recoiled at the idea of a "Christian jihad against Islam." Challenged by a self-described Muslim jihadist to reconcile his own service in a destructive war with the words of the Sermon on the Mount, Casteel says, "I did not try to justify myself but instead asked God (and my enemy) simply for forgiveness."

## ON THE CROSS WITH THE IRAQI PEOPLE

After his discharge, Joshua Casteel had an unexpected opportunity to practice such forgiveness himself. In Iraq, he had helped operate a "burn pit" inside the prison where toxic waste products were incinerated. Late in 2011, he was diagnosed with stage IV lung cancer (adenocarcinoma). In Des Moines, Casteel insisted he felt no anger toward the army over his condition because "I was in Iraq by choice. No one forced me to go there, and no one forced me to man the burn barrels." Besides, he added, "the bigger tragedy is what is going to happen to the Iraqis of the next three or four decades" because of the pollution of their land, and "there is a certain honor in being able to share in their sufferings—in a certain sense, to be able to climb up on the cross with them."

## UNARMED PROPHETS

Joshua Casteel is not alone in challenging the traditional justifications for Christian service in the military. In the aftermath of World War II, the Second Vatican Council reminded Catholic soldiers of their duty to be instruments of peace and to avoid following orders blindly. But the Council Fathers went farther, upholding the right to conscientious objection and praising what Pope John Paul II later called "unarmed prophets," those who "renounce violence and bloodshed" in order to bear witness to the physical and moral dangers of warfare. These Christian witnesses for peace share the view of Joshua Casteel: "Evil cannot be destroyed by the destruction of things or persons, it can only be redeemed by those willing to lay down their lives for others."

The video "Joshua Casteel: 'To Love One's Enemies'" from **Soldiers of Conscience** is on YouTube at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rM98TuV-RB0&feature=related>.