



February 2014

My Dear People,

The theme of this year's Bishop's Appeal, "Set the World on Fire" draws its inspiration from St. Ignatius. It is said that he used these words as he exhorted his followers to go forth in service and mission around the globe.

In my short time here in the Diocese of Oakland, I have been warmly welcomed and immediately impressed by the depth and scope of the genuine faith that propels our Catholic community in its love of God and passion for the Gospel. In the same way that Ignatius and his companions formed a spiritual tradition oriented in service and mission, I have found the faith community of the East Bay filled with a fire and spirit in its service and mission to each other and the greater community.

As you know, this mailing is about the Diocese's 2014 Bishop's Appeal – *Set the World on Fire*. While all of us are called by our Baptism and Confirmation in the fire of the Holy Spirit to go forth in mission, few are able to actually serve in faraway places around the globe. Most of us find our inspiration and opportunities to serve at our parish and our local diocese. The Bishop's Appeal is but one way to serve as we "set the world on fire".

I am asking every parishioner to consider making a gift to the Appeal. All gifts to the 2014 Bishop's Appeal are important – we are all asked to make a sacrificial and proportionate gift. Those individuals who are blessed with more are challenged to give more, but I am asking everyone to set the world on fire by participating in this year's Appeal.

Please consider a pledge of financial support to the 2014 Bishop's Appeal. A pledge spread out over ten months will help countless individuals.

I thank you in advance for your gift, and know that my prayer is that the Lord's blessings be with you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

† *Michael Barber S.J.*

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Bishop of Oakland