**Sample Bishop’s Letter**

*May be read from the pulpit or inserted into the parish bulletins.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Soon our diocese will be taking up the Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe (CCEE). During the time of communist reign in many countries, practicing the faith became illegal, church buildings were confiscated, and people were forced to hide and secretly share the truths of the Gospel. After decades of institutional oppression and persecution, Catholics still struggle to rebuild not only their physical places of worship but also their church ministries and communities. With your support of this collection, the Church is providing resources to these communities to breathe new life into the faith once again.

The country of Albania is nestled north of Greece on the Adriatic Sea. This small country suffered greatly under communist rule. In the capital of Tirana, located in the middle of the country, the Church is continuing to restore not only its structures but also the spirituality of the faithful after years of oppression. In 1996, the congregation of sisters known as the Company of Mary Our Lady founded a kindergarten, the first Catholic school in the entire capital city. Since then, they have opened a school for grades 1-9 and a daily activity center for children. The sisters are now serving over 700 children daily from all different backgrounds, faiths, and ethnic groups. With your support of CCEE, these sisters will be able to make critical repairs to their building to continue their ministry. Your generosity helps the sisters to continue teaching children and equips the congregation to provide a space to build peaceful communities.

Your donations make a difference for those still struggling in the aftermath of communist rule. Please prayerfully consider how you can support the collection this year or if you can increase your contribution. For more information about the collection and who it supports, visit *www.usccb.org/ccee.*

Thank you for your help to restore the Church and build the future in Central and Eastern Europe.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*(bishop name, title, and signature)*

For more information on the Church in Central and Eastern Europe, visit *www.usccb.org/ccee.*