Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe
ANNUAL REPORT 2014
SUBCOMMITTEE ON AID TO THE CHURCH IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

With genuine gratitude, I am pleased to present this annual report for the year ending December 31, 2014, from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB), of the support you have given to the Church in Central and Eastern Europe. This region of the world continues to face many hardships. While some challenges are related to ongoing recovery of the tyranny of the past, others are due to present day political strife and instability, corruption and civil unrest. Since the collapse of the former Soviet Union in 1991, Central and Eastern European countries have been working to rebuild their religious institutions in addition to political structures, social welfare systems, and their economies. In many cases the Church is the only stable entity in the country and the only hope for the establishment of democracy.

Since 1990, the Subcommittee on Aid to the Church in Central and Eastern Europe has provided grants for projects to build the pastoral capacity of the Church in these regions, which strengthens the foundations of faith for future generations and contribute to the development of the country. Today, grants are awarded to over 25 countries for projects such as church reconstruction, youth programs, evangelization, ministry to families, catechesis, and scholarships for graduate studies. Through these grants, we are helping to restore the foundations of Christian hope to build a future of strong faith in this region.

It has been wonderful to witness firsthand how the generosity of Catholics in the United States has supported the future of the Church in Central and Eastern Europe. Our work could not continue without your help, and the USCCB is most grateful for your support. This report provides examples of how donations are being utilized and provides a financial outline of the grants we are able to give.

If you have any questions, please contact Bevin Kennedy in the Office of National Collections at 202-541-3365 or bkennedy@usccb.org. Thank you for your continued support of this collection. May God bless you.

Sincerely in Christ,

+Blase J. Cupich
Most Reverend Blase J. Cupich
Archbishop of Chicago
Chairman, USCCB Subcommittee on Aid to the Church in Central and Eastern Europe
“[Let us] never tire of opening our hearts and offering a hand to all who ask us for help.”
—Pope Francis, Address to Priests and Religious, June 6, 2015

The Church in Central and Eastern Europe has faced and still faces many social and economic challenges. Since the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, people living in formerly communist countries have struggled to meet their basic needs, and frequently, the situation seemed hopeless. However, in his visit to Bosnia in June 2015, Pope Francis said, “the church must always dare to hope for more, starting from the Gospel and driven by the Holy Spirit who transforms persons, society, and the Church herself” (Address to Young People, June 6, 2015).

The work of the USCCB’s Subcommittee on Aid to the Church in Central and Eastern Europe seeks to “hope for more.” The subcommittee supports projects that transform society and strengthen faith communities to build the future on strong foundations. Grants from the subcommittee support a multitude of projects including evangelization and outreach, formation of religious, scholarships for graduate studies, and construction of church buildings.

**Family Center—Slovenia**

Scholarships from the Subcommittee on the Church in Central and Eastern Europe are awarded with the intent that those who study on the scholarship will return to their communities to use their education to benefit their local Church and society. Ms. Marija Magdic was awarded scholarships to complete her doctoral studies in Sacred Theology, specializing in marriage and family. After completing her coursework, she returned to Slovenia to address national challenges arising from lack of faith and inadequate formation regarding marriage and the family. The Diocese of Murska Sobota, with help from a grant from the subcommittee, opened a Family Center with Ms. Magdic as the program coordinator. The center offers formation, classes, and spiritual support to lay people and clergy alike, equipping them to reach out to others and share the teachings of the Church, especially regarding marriage and family.

The center provides workshops and evening sessions for students and provides connections to other pro-life and family movements in Europe. In this way, the center helps young adults create a support system to give them the courage to build a family-friendly society. In addition, these young adults have the opportunity to pray together, attend retreats, and participate in World Youth Day, strengthening their faith.

For couples preparing for marriage, the center offers a weekend retreat for prayer and discussion in preparation for their celebration of the sacrament. Married couples also join them on the retreat and witness to the grace-filled realities of the sacrament. There are also opportunities for weekend retreats for married couples, focusing on how to build an enduring relationship. In addition, the center offers professional support to couples and families including family counseling and legal advice. The center is also creating a group for young mothers and hosting monthly meetings for families with young children.
Protection of Unborn Life—Czech Republic

The association Obcanske sdruzeni ONZ—pomoc a poradenstvi pro zeny a divky ("Protection of Unborn Life") has worked for 23 years to reduce the rate of abortions in the Czech Republic. When the association opened its doors in 1990, after the former Czechoslovakia transitioned away from communist rule, 50 percent of all pregnancies in the country ended in abortion. Through innovative counseling and support programs at six regional centers for women in difficult situations, the association has played a major role in reducing the abortion rate from 50 percent to 20 percent. The centers work to protect the human dignity of both mothers and children, advocating for the right to life of the unborn.

Recently, the association experienced a crisis when the Czech government withdrew operational support for its programs. The subcommittee provided a critical bridge grant that allowed the association to continue its operations while searching for a permanent funding solution. In 2014, the Czech Bishops’ Conference announced that it would fund the association’s operating expenses from its own budget, thereby guaranteeing the future of the association and its crucial work.
Warm Winter Program—Armenia

Winters in Armenia can be especially brutal, and for the vulnerable elderly, these conditions can become dangerous and life threatening. Many elderly in Armenia are still living in temporary housing, due to an earthquake that occurred in 1988, housing that is now often rotted and rusty. In addition, pensions are very low and cannot cover the rapidly rising costs of gas, electricity, and firewood. These factors make winters very challenging, even dangerous, for the elderly, as temperatures on the Armenian plateau drop to subzero levels and snowfall is heavy. Through a grant from the Subcommittee on the Church in Central and Eastern Europe, Armenian Caritas (AC) was able to implement their Warm Winter program.

Through the Warm Winter program, AC was able to pay the electric and gas bill for 700 high-risk elderly persons in Armenia. And for those who do not have electricity or gas in their homes, volunteers visited them regularly to assist them with their wood stoves. This support ensured that more of the vulnerable elderly remained healthy and survived the winter well. The grants they receive save lives.

Through the steadfast generosity of Catholics in the United States, we can continue to provide grants to these and many other critical projects in Central and Eastern Europe. Your continued contributions and prayers work to build the future for those living in this region.
COLLECTION FOR THE CHURCH IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE

Statement of Revenue, Expenses, and Other Changes in Net Assets for the Year Ending in December 31, 2014

Revenue
National Collections Contributions: $7,527,574
Income on Investments: $1,008,524
Total Revenue: $8,536,098

Expenses
- Grants and Donations: $7,853,306 90%
- Program Costs: $440,677 5%
- Administrative Expenses: $287,387 3%
- Promotions and Fundraising Expenses: $169,724 2%
Total Expenses: $8,751,094 100%

Changes in Net Assets from Operations: $(214,996)
Non-Operating Activities
- Unrealized (Loss) Gain on Investments: $(55,967)
Changes in Net Assets: $(270,963)
Net Assets at the Beginning of the Year: $12,245,625
Net Assets at the End of the Year: $11,974,662

See the complete USCCB financial report at www.usccb.org/about/financial-reporting.

2014 DISTRIBUTION OF APPROVED GRANTS
Total Number of Grants Approved: 290
Total Amount Approved: $7,853,306

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Area</th>
<th>Grant Count</th>
<th>Grant Amount</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Construction and Equipment</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>$4,082,355</td>
<td>52%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Education, Formation, and Evangelization</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>$1,257,680</td>
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<tr>
<td>Poverty Outreach and Miscellaneous Programs</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>$842,407</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operational Support</td>
<td>24</td>
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<td>Scholarships</td>
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<td>Vehicle Purchase</td>
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<tr>
<td>Communications Programs</td>
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<td>$190,280</td>
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