

# STRENGTHENING THE CHURCH AT HOME

## Sample Bishop's Letter

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

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Church has great needs around the world, and the United States is no exception. Many dioceses here at home face challenges due to priest shortages, lack of funds, remote geography, or impoverished parishes. The Catholic Home Missions Appeal answers these needs and provides grants for projects to strengthen the faith of the people. Forty-two percent of all dioceses in the United States receive Catholic Home Missions support for evangelization, catechesis, ministry formation, and other areas of faith development. Your support of this collection will help your neighbors here in the United States and strengthen the Church at home.

In the Pacific Ocean, between Guam and Hawaii, are the Marshall Islands, a collection of atolls and islands covering an area of 500,000 square miles. Given the great distance between these islands, travel is often difficult and communication is unreliable. The islands themselves do not have any local priests and have only one local permanent deacon and sister; and so, the Missionaries of the Sacred Heart provide for the pastoral and sacramental needs of the Islands. Additionally, many people move to the United States after high school, making it hard for the Catholic Church there to find men interested in joining the priesthood. Against those odds, the Marshall Islands welcomed with great joy a seminarian in 2014! Thanks to a grant from the Catholic Home Missions Appeal, they are able to afford to send him to seminary for his studies. Through his studies, he is a witness and example to other young men on the Islands.

In addition, because not all of the islands are able to have a resident priest, the Church in the Marshall Islands relies on prayer leaders to lead the Sunday liturgy of Scripture reading and reflection as well as distribution of Communion. These prayer leaders are required to attend a yearly training and retreat, and all new leaders are guided by experienced prayer leaders. Thanks to a grant from Catholic Home Missions, the Marshall Islands were able to host this training again and bring in the same presenters from the previous year, providing for continuity and familiarity. At the closing ceremony, many of the participants could not contain their feelings of joy and appreciation.

Mission dioceses often struggle with isolation and a lack of educated pastoral and lay leadership. With your support, the Catholic Home Missions Appeal can continue to provide catechesis, lay leadership training, funding for seminarian education, and other essential pastoral outreach in home mission dioceses. Please be generous in the Catholic Home Missions Appeal and help **strengthen the Church at home**. Your support will truly make a difference. Thank you, and God bless you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*(Bishop's name, title, and signature)*

To learn more about this appeal or to find additional resources,  
please visit [www.usccb.org/home-missions](http://www.usccb.org/home-missions).



### CATHOLIC HOME MISSIONS APPEAL

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