



Dear Communications Director/Editor,

For more than 40 years, communist regimes in countries of Central and Eastern Europe marginalized and oppressed the Church. They imprisoned and killed clergy, confiscated churches and convents, and restricted or even prohibited public worship and expressions of faith. Since the communist system ended, the Church has enjoyed greater freedom to form new generations of Catholic disciples, to minister to the spiritual and material needs of the poor, and to build and restore churches to their intended purpose as places of worship.

In Belgrade, Serbia, the parish church of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary and its adjacent parish house were returned to the Archdiocese of Belgrade decades after the property was confiscated by the communist government. The church was restored and became the cathedral for the archdiocese, but the parish house and an attached parish office building were not renovated.

Funding from the Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe helped the archdiocese repair deterioration caused by moisture intrusion, install energy-efficient heating and electrical systems, and repurpose the buildings for better use. Today the buildings accommodate parish offices, rooms for catechism and formation programs, a guest house for pilgrims, a hall for hosting cultural events, and a kindergarten, as well as six apartments designed to house elderly, sick, and disabled priests of the archdiocese. Thanks to the support of the collection from your diocese and Catholics throughout the United States, the Church in Serbia and more than 25 other countries is restoring hope for a better future.

We rely on your help to promote this collection. Please get the word out using your publications, website, social media channels (using the #BuildTheFuture and #1Church1Mission hashtags), and any other outlets available to you. Share this story of renewal occurring in Serbia, or use the additional resources available online, including the social media tool kit, found at www.usccb.org/ccee. If you have any questions, please contact me at 202-541-3365 or mbhren@usccb.org.

Gratefully in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Margaret Hren".

Margaret Hren
Assistant Director, Promotions



Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe

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Photos: Archeparchy of Ivano-Frankivsk



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