



Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown

Office of the Bishop

927 South Logan Boulevard

Hollidaysburg, PA 16648

Phone: 814-695-5579

Facsimile: 814-695-8894

www.dioceseaj.org

Dear Friends in Christ,

Easter is often referred to as a new day full of hope and promise, as Christians all over the world rejoice in the resurrection of our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ! The celebration of this new day of Easter extends all the way through Pentecost Sunday.

In our Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, the hope and promise of a sharing in God's life and love is made possible in practical ways through weekly contributions in your parishes and in your annual contribution in support of ministries throughout the diocese.

It's a new day for us in the Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown as we begin the 2017 Catholic Ministries Drive. How did this come about? Several months ago I established a special committee to examine the effectiveness of the Annual Catholic Appeal and to recommend the best way to fund vital ministries while reducing the burden on parishes.

Listening sessions were held in various locations. Input was sought from pastors, parish pastoral and finance councils. It was determined that the vital ministries would be divided into three categories: Caring for the Poor and Strengthening Families; Nurturing Youth; Forming Clergy and Laity. The 2017 Catholic Ministries Drive will provide 100% of the funding of these vital ministries, which impact people in parishes and communities throughout the diocese.

Each parish will be asked to achieve a target amount. Parishes will not be penalized for exceeding or not making the target. The Catholic Ministries Drive Committee will continue to provide oversight of allocations to the vital ministries that we need to carry out the essential mission of service, pastoral care, and faith formation in our diocese.

In the past few years, special attention has been given to keeping our diocesan administration expenses to a minimum, while maintaining the support services that are necessary to assist parishes, schools and the people of our diocese. We will continue on that path of fiscal responsibility and good stewardship of resources.

I have come to know of your reasonable expectation for financial responsibility. And I know of your generosity in giving. It inspires me to be guided by the saying, "When we know more, we can do more." I need your support and your contribution. More important our fellow parishioners and neighbors need our help.

All of you are a sign of hope and promise to me. I am honored to serve with you and for you in sharing the abundant blessings of the Risen Lord! Thank you for your generous support and participation in the mission and ministries of our diocese. Please know that you are in my prayers every day, and please join me in praying for those who benefit from our 2017 Catholic Ministries Drive. It can and will be a sign of a new day of hope and promise for all.

Sincerely in Christ,

+ Mark L. Bartchak

Most Rev. Mark L. Bartchak
Bishop of Altoona-Johnstown