

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 Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

At the family dinner table, Emily was talking with great enthusiasm about the extra steps in the parish faith formation program because she was preparing to receive her First Holy Communion. Her two older siblings were offering words of advice and encouragement, sounding like they had been receiving the sacrament for ages. Emily's five-year-old brother was quiet the whole time. Finally the mother asked, "Frankie wouldn't you like to receive Jesus?" With a serious face he answered, "I don't think I want that responsibility!"

Christ reminds us that each one of us has responsibility for the good of others when it comes to living the Gospel. An important way to share that responsibility is through our 2019 Catholic Ministries Drive. Each one of us is called to **BE A GOOD SHEPHERD**. We need to **GIVE HELP** wherever it is needed, to **BUILD HOPE** for those who are discouraged, and to **CHANGE LIVES** for those suffering spiritually, physically, and emotionally.

Nurturing Our Youth, Caring for the Poor and Strengthening Families, and Forming Clergy and Laity are the main categories of ministry where our responsibility and commitment to living and sharing the faith takes place. We cannot afford to neglect the valuable work of 14 ministries that are made possible through your contribution.

I see this in action all over the diocese and the results are amazing. Just ask the 900 teenagers at last year's Senior High Youth Conference who packaged 30,000 meals in two hours. They will never meet the hungry people who are helped. They won't hear about the hope that nutritious food brings them. But our young people tell me how exciting it is to share that responsibility which changes lives, even their own lives.

Parents share with me the challenges of passing on the faith to their children. They remind me of the hope it brings to them when catechists are as dedicated and well trained as possible for such an important work. They can tell you why your gift to the 2019 Catholic Ministries Drive is so important.

I need your financial support, your generous contribution. There is no other source of funding for these ministries. 100% of your gift goes directly to these efforts. I have already made my pledge. Please join me.

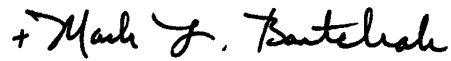
It's easy to understand why Frankie wasn't ready to take on what he perceived as a responsibility. Please remember that whenever we participate in the life-giving work of

Jesus Christ, it is an opportunity for grace and blessing for others and ourselves. The Lord reminds us that it's where we find rest because his yoke is easy and his burden is light (Mt 11:30).

So let's work together and make this happen. **BE A GOOD SHEPHERD. GIVE HELP. BUILD HOPE. CHANGE LIVES.** Thank you for your generous support!

With prayerful best wishes during Lent and Easter,

Most Rev. Mark L. Bartchak

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Mark L. Bartchak". The signature is written in a cursive style with a small cross at the beginning.

Bishop of Altoona-Johnstown