



November 29, 2011

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The holy seasons of Advent and Christmas remind us that God comes to us in Jesus Christ His Son. The story of the birth of Christ reminds us that He came to us with great humility to remind us of the Father's great affection for us all, especially those in need. As faithful disciples of Christ, we must never allow our commercial, secular culture to distract us with talk of "shopping days" and "holidays". Advent reminds us that we are preparing for Holy Days.

Please keep the Good News of our Savior first and foremost in your mind and heart in the weeks ahead. Imitate His love for the poor by remembering those most in need among us by supporting our 34th Annual Diocesan Christmas Collection which will be taken up at our Christmas Eucharistic celebrations. One-hundred per cent (100%) of the money collected through this fund stays in our Diocese to help people in need with emergency utility assistance, shelter, food, transportation and countless other forms of crisis aid.

The funds are administered by Catholic Urban Programs (CUP) in East St. Louis; however, please remember that ***any pastor, parish administrator or parish life coordinator from any parish in the Diocese can appeal to this fund on behalf of needy people in their community.*** They need only contact CUP at 618-398-5616 for assistance. Last Christmas our people generously donated \$93,082 which has been expended to meet the needs of the poor from throughout our Belleville Diocese. It goes without saying that our Annual Diocesan Christmas Collection has been a much-needed source of help for many.

Envelopes for this special collection are in your regular envelope packet. The collection will be taken up at all Masses on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

We are very much aware that with the current economy this has again been a difficult year for many and we ask that you give as you are able. In the name of all who will benefit from your generosity and in my own name, I express profound gratitude. Please pray for me as I will pray for you and your loved ones as we prepare to celebrate the great mystery of the Incarnation of the Word of God.

Sincerely and gratefully yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Edward K. Braxton".

The Most Reverend Edward K. Braxton
Bishop of Belleville

Please read this letter, print a synopsis of it or the suggested bulletin inserts below in your bulletin and make appropriate announcements on the weekends of December 10-11 and December 17-18. The collection is to be taken up at all Masses on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day.

Envelopes for this collection should be in your parishioners' regular envelope packets. Please send the proceeds of this collection to the Chancery no later than Friday, February 17, 2012. Please make the check payable to "Catholic Diocese of Belleville" and indicate "Annual Christmas Collection" in the lower, left-hand corner of the check. Your cooperation in forwarding the check by the requested date is appreciated.

As you are aware, many people benefit from this collection. Below is a listing of the parishes and agencies that have requested and received funds from this collection during 2011.

2011 Annual Diocesan Christmas Collection Recipients

Blessed Sacrament, Belleville	St. John the Baptist, Red Bud
Cathedral of St. Peter, Belleville	St. James, Millstadt
Catholic Urban Programs, East St. Louis	St. Joseph, Freeburg
Holy Childhood of Jesus, Mascoutah	St. Joseph, Lebanon
Holy Family, Cahokia	St. Liborius, St. Libory
Holy Rosary, Fairmont City	St. Luke, Belleville
Holy Trinity, Fairview Heights	St. Mary, Anna
Immaculate Conception, Columbia	St. Mary, Belleville
Our Lady of Good Counsel, Renault	St. Mary, Carlyle
Our Lady of Lourdes, Sparta	St. Mary, Centralia
Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Posen	St. Mary, Chester
Our Lady Queen of Peace, Belleville	St. Mary, Eldorado
Sacred Heart of Jesus, Dupo	St. Mary, Mount Vernon
St. Agatha, New Athens	St. Mary, Trenton
St. Ann, Nashville	St. Mary Church of Divine Maternity, Ellis Grove
St. Augustine of Canterbury, Belleville	St. Michael, Paderborn
St. Augustine of Hippo, East St. Louis	St. Michael, Radom
St. Bernard, Albers	St. Nicholas, O'Fallon
St. Bruno, Pinckneyville	St. Patrick, Ruma
St. Clare of Assisi, O'Fallon	St. Rose of Lima, Metropolis
St. Dominic, Breese	St. Stephen, Caseyville
St. Francis Xavier, Carbondale	St. Teresa of the Child Jesus, Belleville
St. George, New Baden	SS. Peter and Paul, Waterloo
St. Henry, Belleville	

Suggested Bulletin Inserts December 10-11 and December 17-18

The 34th Annual Diocesan Christmas Collection will be taken up at all Masses on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. **All monies collected remain in our Belleville Diocese to help those in need during the coming year**; funds are administered through Joe Hubbard and his staff at Catholic Urban Programs. At this special time of year when we reflect on our many blessings, please remember the many among us who have so little and give generously.

The Annual Diocesan Christmas Collection will be taken up at all Masses on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. Administered by Catholic Urban Programs, these monies are used to assist people from throughout the diocese; any pastor, parish administrator or parish life coordinator may request assistance from it for those in need from their community/area. Please generously support your sisters and brothers who lack the basic necessities of life through this year's Annual Christmas Collection.