

## DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE

March 25, 2009

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

The shortage of priests is a growing problem in the United States. It is further complicated by the lack of funding in home mission dioceses, where parishes often struggle with poverty among parishioners, difficult or isolated terrain, religious hostility, and other circumstances that challenge the practice of the faith.

As an example, in the Archdiocese of Anchorage, in Alaska, there are 11,500 registered Catholic families over 140,000 square miles, yet only 30 active diocesan priests. Each of us can testify first hand to such shortages as our own Belleville Diocese is designated a mission diocese.

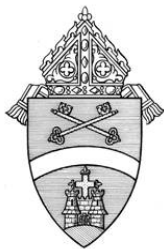
As the Church we are called to solidarity with our sisters and brothers who, like us, need help to practice their faith right here at home. In 2007-2008, Home Mission grants totaling \$70,000 were awarded our diocese and allocated among the Office of Hispanic Ministry, Newman Catholic Student Center, Sister Thea Bowman Catholic School, Permanent Diaconate, St. Benedict the Black Friary, Office of Worship, Office of Youth Ministry, Vocations and Office of Lay Ministry.

This year the Catholic Home Missions Appeal will be held on April 25-26. Please give generously and continue to pray for our diocese and all the other United States mission dioceses. Thank you for your stewardship and faith!

Sincerely and appreciatively yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "+ Edward K. Braxton". The signature is written in a cursive style with a cross at the beginning.

The Most Reverend Edward K. Braxton  
Bishop of Belleville



## DIOCESE OF BELLEVILLE

This collection is to be taken up on April 25-26, 2009.

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, June 5, 2009. Please make the check payable to "Catholic Diocese of Belleville" and indicate "Home Missions" in the lower left-hand corner of the check. Your cooperation in forwarding the check by the requested date is appreciated.

Thank you for your assistance.