



March 31, 2010

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

On April 24-25 our diocese will take up a collection for the **Catholic Home Missions Appeal**. Catholic Home Missions is committed to providing poorer dioceses in the United States with the support they need to sustain essential pastoral care. Over the years, the Appeal has supported religious education, evangelization, youth ministry, seminarian education and ministry training here in our Belleville Diocese as well as in other mission dioceses in Alaska, Appalachia, the Southwest – all across the United States – in Puerto Rico and U.S. territories in the Pacific islands. This important work is made possible through your generosity to this yearly Appeal.

One tangible way to strengthen the Church is through vibrant youth ministry programs in dioceses and parishes. Through youth ministry, young Catholics are evangelized, catechized, trained in leadership roles and encouraged for religious vocations. The young faithful energize the Church and provide a unique vision for the future. Without the Catholic Home Missions Appeal, this essential ministry would not be possible in many mission dioceses in the United States. For additional information about the programs and dioceses supported by the Appeal, I encourage you to visit the Home Missions' website -- www.usccb.org/nationalcollection.

As we continue to recover from the economic downturn, I ask that you be as generous as you are able. The Church in the United States needs our support and together we can **strengthen the Church at home**.

Sincerely and appreciatively yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Edward K. Braxton".

The Most Reverend Edward K. Braxton
Bishop of Belleville