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10 years of giving . . .



neighbors

SPRING 2008

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FROM MISSION AMERICA

1998-2008

MORE THAN \$100.6 MILLION TO MISSION AMERICA

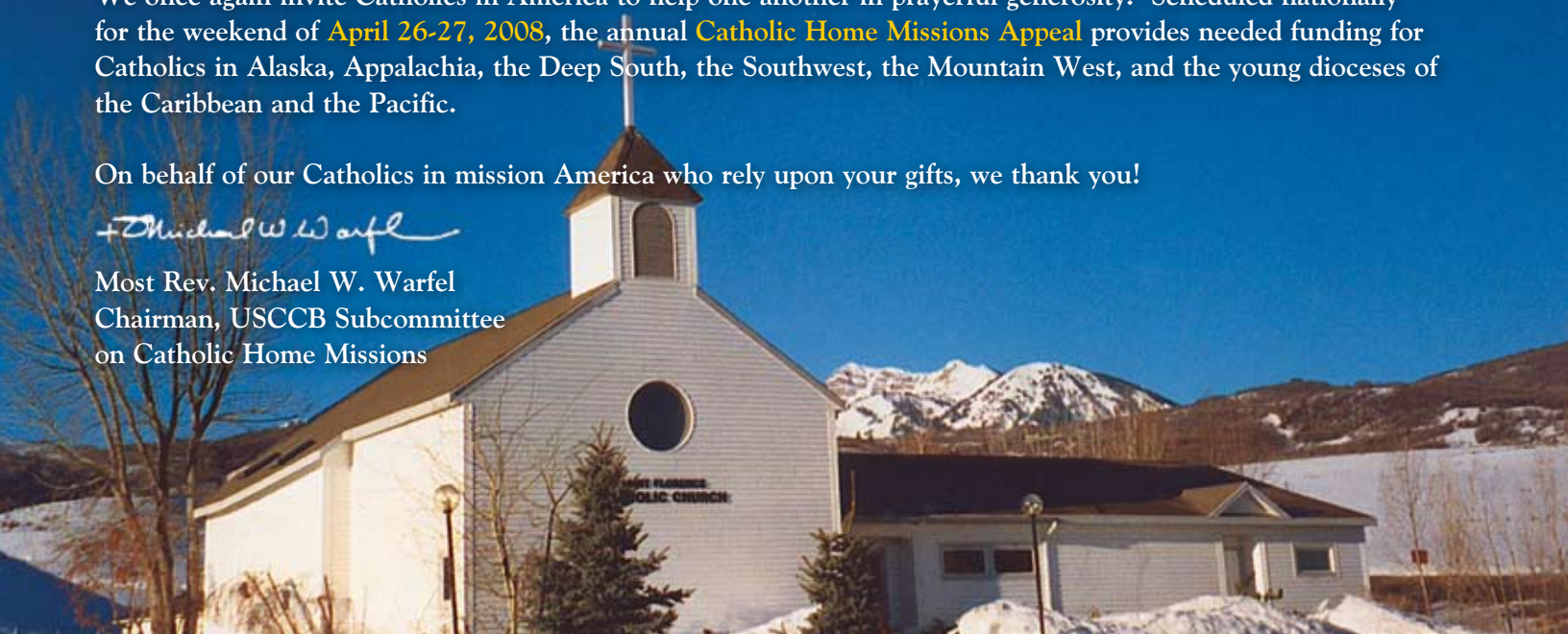
We are grateful to the bishops and priests of the United States whose leadership helps to make the Catholic Home Missions Appeal a success each year in parishes throughout the nation. We are especially thankful to all those who, through their gifts to the Appeal, help fellow Catholics in America practice and nurture their faith in our poorer, isolated mission parishes.

Over the past 10 years, we have been able to allocate more than \$100.6 million to help Catholic mission dioceses in poorer communities to keep their doors open and to provide Mass, sacraments, and religious education for their people. This issue of Neighbors highlights some of those dioceses.

We once again invite Catholics in America to help one another in prayerful generosity. Scheduled nationally for the weekend of **April 26-27, 2008**, the annual **Catholic Home Missions Appeal** provides needed funding for Catholics in Alaska, Appalachia, the Deep South, the Southwest, the Mountain West, and the young dioceses of the Caribbean and the Pacific.

On behalf of our Catholics in mission America who rely upon your gifts, we thank you!

Most Rev. Michael W. Warfel
Chairman, USCCB Subcommittee
on Catholic Home Missions





WILDERNESS MISSION

Of the 21 parishes in the Archdiocese of Anchorage, 13 are located in rural parts of the state, some of them accessible only by plane or boat. Most do not have a resident priest. Using his pilot skills to serve the mission church, Fr. Scott Garrett flies to parishes in places like Clarks Point, Egegik, Igiugig, and Chignik Bay.

Fr. Garrett flies his grueling rounds to serve individuals and families whose little churches may not host a priest for months on end. “I’m trying to meet all the people in my small villages who have deep roots in the Church, but who may have strayed because they don’t have access to the sacraments, the catechesis, and the opportunities for counseling that so many urban Catholics take for granted.”

“Seven of our more rural missions are well served by pastoral administrators who are religious women or lay people. Faith communities without a resident priest host a circuit priest usually twice a month. These traveling priests often fly into small towns and villages to bring Mass and the sacraments, but only when weather conditions permit.”

—Archbishop Roger Schwietz, OMI, Archdiocese of Anchorage, Alaska

MISSION RECOVERY

“Katrina was the worst natural disaster in the history of our country,” said Bishop Thomas Rodi of Biloxi, surveying the devastation in south Mississippi with a visitor.

“Overnight, we lost ten parish churches and six schools. Ten other churches and four more schools sustained major damage.”

The Diocese of Biloxi, poor to begin with, suffered the common fate. The parishes alone sustained property damage upwards of \$70 million. It will take years to rebuild or replace the drowned churches and schools.

Situated just blocks from the Gulf of Mexico, shell-shaped St. Michael’s Parish was once a lovely place of worship. The walls held through the storms, but little survived inside the church when Katrina crashed ashore. The pews have vanished, and the bottom half of the tall stained glass windows are shattered remnants. Katrina even pushed aside the massive two-ton marble altar like a child’s plaything.

Yet a crucifix still hangs in the shadows, presiding calmly over a tangle of exposed wiring, broken glass, and scattered mounds of muddy debris. “Jesus is still with us,” whispers Bishop Rodi. “Mississippi will rise again.”



HIGH PLAINS MISSION

Sr. Eulalia Sanchez speaks simply and carefully, partly because her English is still a little tentative. “Our ministry is evangelization,” she says. “If there is a need, we fill it.”

Sr. Sanchez is local superior of the Missionaries of the Holy Spirit, a Mexican community of religious women doing the Lord’s work well north of the United States–Mexico border. “We are here to meet the needs of recent immigrants to the cities, small towns, and farms of northern Kansas,” she explains.

The sisters have been serving the rapidly growing Hispanic community in the Diocese of Salina, Kansas, since 1998. Affectionately known as the “Madres,” these cheerful, generous women have indeed become spiritual mothers to an extended family, Mexicans by birth but Kansans now.

Bishop Paul S. Coakley reflected, “The Madres and our Mexican priests continue to build up our local church and help strengthen it to carry out its mission of evangelization. They are a special treasure to us all.”



FROM AFRICA TO UTAH: A MISSIONARY IN THE HOME MISSIONS

Fr. Albert Kileo was ordained in 1992 in Tanzania, a priest of a small missionary order popularly known as the Holy Spirit Fathers. His first assignment often kept him away from his parish and on the roads of east Africa for months at a time. This experience prepared him well for his current ministry as pastor of St. Helen Parish in Roosevelt, Utah.

The Utah missions typically serve few families and may be hours apart, even where travel is easy. With only 55 active priests for 48 parishes and 19 missions, the diocese relies on priests not only from Tanzania but also from Colombia, Brazil, India, and Poland to minister in Utah's small towns. Without their dedicated service, churches like St. Helen would have no resident priest.

Staffing mission parishes will continue to challenge the resourcefulness of mission dioceses.

HISPANIC YOUNG ADULTS: MISSION TO IDAHO

"We need to find ways for effectively training more of our Catholic laity to play pivotal leadership roles within the diocese," said Bishop Michael Driscoll. "We especially need to continue ministry programs that empower our Hispanic families. I place a lot of confidence in our dedicated Hispanic young adults."

Laura Henning, the young woman who serves as diocesan youth ministry director, enthusiastically agreed. "Young Hispanics constitute more than 45% of the Catholic population under age 30 in the United States today. We simply can't afford to lose their youthful idealism, joyful faith, and passionate energy."

The wide-open 84,000-square-mile Diocese of Boise, which covers all of Idaho, certainly leaves space for everyone's talents, young and old. Catholics account for about 10% of the state's 1.3 million people, but the need for culturally diverse pastoral gifts in Idaho is growing. More and more families, mostly Mexican, are arriving to work the vast fields of the Snake River Plain in the south. Already, about 5,000 Hispanics attend Sunday Mass at 15 locations across this rich valley.



Photos by David Suley, Catholic Home Missions





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Subcommittee on Catholic Home Missions

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United States Conference of Catholic Bishops
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Spring 2008

• SUBCOMMITTEE ON CATHOLIC HOME MISSIONS • Who Are We?

The bishops' Subcommittee on Catholic Home Missions was founded as the American Board of Catholic Missions in 1924.

In cooperation with the Black and Indian Missions Board (1885) and the Catholic Church Extension Society (1905), the Subcommittee provides financial support for missionary activities that strengthen and extend the presence of the Church in the United States and its island territories in the Caribbean and the Pacific. The principal beneficiaries of the annual Catholic Home Missions Appeal are approximately 90 home mission dioceses, which include the Eastern Catholic Church eparchies.

Bishop Michael W. Warfel, Chairman
Dr. David J. Suley, Director, Catholic Home Missions
Mr. Kenneth Q. Ong, Grants Specialist

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STRENGTHENING THE CHURCH IN *America*

Catholic dioceses throughout the United States and its dependencies work hard to meet the faith needs of their parishes, but they need your help.

Please support those communities where the Church is striving to take hold and to grow.

Please give generously when the Catholic Home Missions Appeal is taken up in your parish.

**NATIONAL COLLECTION DATE:
APRIL 26-27, 2008**