**Sample Bishop’s Letter**

*May be read from the pulpit or inserted into the parish bulletins.*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Catholic Home Missions Appeal supports dioceses in the United States and its territories that lack the resources to provide basic pastoral ministry to their populations. Through annual grants, Catholic Home Missions funds catechesis, seminarian education, lay ministry training, Hispanic ministry, and other pastoral programs in needy dioceses. As a result of parishioners’ generosity, Catholic Home Missions impacts the lives of nearly 9 million Catholics. The dioceses funded by the Appeal comprise nearly 45 percent of all U.S. dioceses.

The state of Mississippi has the highest number of families living below the poverty line in the U.S., as well as the lowest per capita income and a low level of formal education. For the **Diocese of Jackson**, these challenges are combined with an immense area—the diocese encompasses two-thirds of the state—and only a small number of Catholics. One of the biggest problems is a lack of priests to reach people under these difficult circumstances. The head of the diocese, Bishop Joseph N. Latino, commented on this shortage, “I’ve buried more priests than I’ve ordained in my 10 years of tenure.” With limited resources, this reality hits this home mission diocese hard. A grant from Catholic Home Missions helps cover the cost of educating the diocese’s 10 seminarians, whose education each costs $35,000–$37,000 per year. As future priests of the diocese, these men will bring the sacraments and provide a Catholic presence to the faithful.

A mission diocese often times must compete with high rates of poverty and a lack of educated pastoral and lay leadership to serve the community. With your support, the Catholic Home Missions Appeal can continue to provide essential pastoral outreach in home mission dioceses. Please be generous in the Catholic Home Missions Appeal and help **strengthen the Church at home**. Your support will truly make a difference. Thank you, and God bless you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

*(Bishop’s name, title, and signature)*

For more information on the Catholic Home Missions and the dioceses and eparchies funded by the Catholic Home Missions Appeal, please visit *www.usccb.org* (search “home missions”).