**Sample Bishop’s Letter**

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

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Throughout his pontificate, our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has often spoken of the need for Christians to evangelize others through accompaniment. Through listening patiently, building trust, and being mindful of others’ dignity, we can help one another encounter Christ’s merciful love, especially those who suffer from emotional wounds, loneliness, and doubt. For Central and Eastern Europeans living in countries that experienced 70 years of communist oppression, the Church especially needs to accompany people to an encounter with Christ that is patient, understanding, and filled with hope instead of fear, anger, and anxiety.

In Slovakia, the Alexis Counseling Center has accompanied nearly 2,500 women and their loved ones with devotion. Since 2010, the center has provided counseling to women experiencing the anxieties of an unplanned pregnancy or the grief of pregnancy loss, as well as to their partners, family members, and friends. In addition to promoting psychological healing, the center also helps vulnerable women who have experienced miscarriages and abortions to find housing, material and financial assistance, and support groups.

In Albania, lay people are preparing for lay ministries as catechists and extraordinary ministers of Communion through a three-year study program that provides in-depth knowledge of the Gospel, the Church, and sacraments, liturgy, and spirituality. This formation program equips participants to be active, faith-filled agents of evangelization and accompaniment to those who desire to know Christ and the Church.

Ministries of accompaniment such as these are made possible with grant monies raised through the Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe. When you participate in the collection, you help the Church in Slovakia, Albania, and more than 25 other countries accompany people who still experience the hardships and wounds caused by communism. Your support for and promotion of the Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe is crucial to the success of ministries that affirm the dignity of children, youth, and other vulnerable people and show them the love and mercy of Jesus.

For more information about the collection and who it supports, visit *www*.*usccb*.*org/ccee*. Thank you for your help to restore the Church and build the future in Central and Eastern Europe.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

(*bishop name*, *title*, *and signature*)

For more information on the Church in Central and Eastern Europe, visit *www*.*usccb*.*org/ccee*.