

Sisters and brothers in Christ,

Peace be with you. With this letter I am launching our new year of the Diocesan Appeal. Last year we saw a meaningful increase in participation across the Albany Diocese, and I am deeply grateful. It is my great hope that you will once again consider supporting the work of the diocese this year.

In my last letter I spoke of the “momentum” I feel among us. Many of you felt that same momentum and responded with increased generosity. I am especially grateful that this growth came after we reached a settlement with survivors of sexual abuse and while we were still completing the bankruptcy process – and even though every parish had been informed of the significant funds directed toward that settlement. **Your trust in our diocese at this moment in our history is humbling. I will never betray that trust.**

To strengthen that trust further, I want to share a few concrete ways I am directing the resources you entrust to us:

+ VOCATIONS AND THE NEXT GENERATION OF PRIESTS AND SISTERS.

On July 1, 2026, I appointed our first full-time vocation director in more than thirty years. Father Sam Bellafigliore left parish ministry to dedicate himself completely to vocations and university ministry. Across the country we are witnessing a hopeful rise in young people considering priestly and religious life. Albany needs to be ready to accompany those whom the Lord is calling. Funding this full-time position through the Diocesan Appeal is an investment that will directly strengthen our parishes for years to come.

+ GREATER ACCOUNTABILITY AND STEWARDSHIP.

We are taking deliberate steps to protect the assets of the diocese and our parishes and to be more transparent with you, our donors. This includes rigorous review of spending and staffing at the Pastoral Center. In the parishes we are restoring an internal auditor rather than relying solely on external firms. The goal is stronger relationships with our finance team and more consistent protocols across the diocese.

+ A NEW CULTURE OF SUSTAINABILITY AND PLANNING.

Beginning this fall, every parish and diocesan office—including my own—will develop a five-year sustainability and growth plan. I will personally review and approve each plan with the help of a new Diocesan Pastoral Council composed almost entirely of trustees from our parishes. Some criticize the Church for acting “too much like a business”; others say we lack proper business discipline. The truth is that many of our communities have operated reactively, without a clear long-term vision. No healthy organization thrives without intentional planning. Under my leadership, this disciplined approach will become standard. I believe it will help us move from maintenance to mission and growth.

We live in both the temporal and the spiritual realms. The initiatives I have described require real resources. Whatever you are able to give this year will be honored, carefully stewarded, and used for the good of all our parishes and people. I am grateful for every gift and for the confidence you place in our shared mission. **May the Lord continue to bless you and your families.**



Sincerely in Christ,
Most Rev. Mark O'Connell, JCD, Bishop of Albany



Diocesan Appeal

Appeal Dates: July 1, 2026–June 30, 2027 **WEB:** TheDiocesanAppeal.org **EMAIL:** Stewardship@RCDA.org **PHONE:** (518) 453-6680

☐ **YES, I/we want to support the 2026–27 Diocesan Appeal** with a: ☐ **GIFT** ☐ **PLEDGE** of ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ \$_____ CODE DA0926

Gift = donation paid immediately; **Pledge** = a formal commitment to make a specific total gift by 6/30/27 via installments or one payment

Parish on record to receive credit for your Appeal gift:

Please write in preferred parish for gift credit if incorrect: _____

Make your GIFT, PLEDGE with PAYMENTS, or RECURRING GIFT by check, online, or credit card. ▶ Balance is due by 6/30/27 (for all payment types)

CHECK Make check payable to "Diocesan Appeal".

Check enclosed is: ☐ **PARTIAL PAYMENT** = \$_____ ☐ **FULL PAYMENT** = \$_____

ONLINE

Scan the QR code or visit: donate.thediocesanappeal.org



CREDIT CARD

Please charge my credit card for:

☐ **ONE-TIME PAYMENT** = \$ _____

☐ **PARTIAL PAYMENT = \$** _____

☐ I/we would like to set up automatic **PLEDGE PAYMENTS** of \$_____ per month beginning (MM/YYYY) _____ thru (MM/YYYY) _____ to fulfill the total amount of my pledge of \$_____ no later than 6/30/27 as I have signified at the top of the form.

☐ I/we would like to make a **RECURRING GIFT** of \$_____ per month beginning (MM/YYYY) _____.
I understand that this gift will recur every month until I tell the Diocese to stop.

Card #: **Exp. date:** _____ **Name on card:** _____

Phone (required): _____ Email: _____ Signature of cardholder: _____

Please fold this form along the dotted line and place in the return envelope enclosed.

PLEASE APPORTION MY GIFT AS FOLLOWS:

If nothing is chosen, gift will be directed toward General Budget Underwriting of Diocesan Services.

NOTE: These are the only choices — no write-ins; thank you.

_____ % General Budget Underwriting of Diocesan Services **_____ % Parish Mission Support Services of the Diocese**

_____ % Parish Operational Support Services of the Diocese **_____ % Vocations**



Use our easy to use smart giving tools to make a gift with your IRA, Stock, or DAF – learn more at: www.rcda.org/offices/stewardship

Please DO NOT mail CASH!