Dear Friends,

2020 started like every other year but quickly became one that we will not soon forget. COVID-19 touched people in many ways and continues to do so. We pray for all who have passed from the pandemic, people whose health has been compromised and those who have been economically impacted.

In this issue of IMPACT, you will find stories about how our diocesan programs and ministries have managed during this time of uncertainty for so many, an update on Straight & Narrow’s rebuilding plans after the August 2019 fire and some final thoughts from Bishop Sweeney.

Please know how grateful we are to all who have supported our 2020 Diocesan Ministries Appeal (formerly known as the Bishop’s Annual Appeal). Your generosity has been a tremendous blessing, especially during a time that has been particularly difficult for so many.

May God bless you, your families and loved ones. Let us pray that 2021 will be a year that brings us hope and joy as people of faith.

Tim Potter
Chief Development Officer

Do not fear: I am with you; do not be anxious: I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand.

— Isaiah 41:10
Managing Through A Difficult Year...
We all know the impact that COVID has had on the world, our country, our state and our Diocese. We asked several individuals in our Diocese to describe how they have adapted during the coronavirus and to share any signs of hope as we continue to deal with this pandemic.

Joanna Miller
Executive Director, Department for Persons with Disabilities (DPD)
DPD has continued to operate our twelve residential programs for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities 24 hours a day, seven days a week throughout the pandemic. Our staff have been committed to providing help and creating hope to all those they care for on a daily basis, often putting their own lives and health on the line to ensure the same high quality of care is provided.

The staff have become pros at supporting the individuals at home all day, finding many new and creative activities to do, as well as helping them connect with their friends and family via Zoom, FaceTime and Duo. This has become the new normal for everyone and they have taken it in stride. Even our pet therapy volunteer has done zoom visits with his dog Bella and the residents of the group homes!

Our CARE (Catholic Adult Religious Education) Program was able to enhance its offerings to meeting twice a month in a virtual world. This has enriched the lives of the people we support and it is something they look forward to. Providing opportunities for their spiritual development and celebrating all the special events of the liturgical calendar add so much joy to their lives. Their love of Jesus is infinite.

Fr. Brendan Murray
Retired priest living at Nazareth Village, our residence for retired diocesan clergy
We have gotten used to wearing masks when we come together at Nazareth Village. And we try to keep more socially distanced. And when we ask “How are you doing?”, we mean it more than a formality.

We pray for one another and ask each other to do that. This morning, one priest was going to see a doctor for a procedure and stopped by and asked me to pray with him. We take care of each other here at Nazareth Village.

Joseph Murray
Director, Early Learning Programs
Early childhood education is meant to be a ‘hands-on’ experience where young students are guided by a knowledgeable, caring teaching staff while learning alongside their peers. The pandemic has forced us into a remote learning model, with teachers and students interacting in Google Classroom. All children enrolled in the Catholic Charities Early Learning Programs received a Chromebook, and staff and families went through Google Classroom training to ensure a successful transition to the virtual learning environment.

Staff and family training in Google Classroom is paying dividends. The key to all of this has been our dedicated staff of educators and family workers. It has been wonderful to see the support they provide not only to students and families, but to each other. The statement heard often at the start of the pandemic, ‘we will get through this together’ is seen daily in the early learning programs of Catholic Charities.
Karina Calabuig  
*Site Director, Catholic Family and Community Services/Hope House*

We have a few different programs at Hope House and some have been more affected than others during the pandemic. Before the pandemic, we were operating a “client choice” food pantry where our clients could individually select items themselves from our shelves. Since the pandemic, we have been distributing pre-filled bags which has allowed us to continue to serve our community and also limit exposure to our staff and volunteers.

Our “Fix-It” program has also been impacted by the coronavirus. Through the Fix-It program, we go out to a senior citizen’s home and do minor home repairs. As expected, entering homes at the height of the pandemic was not possible. However, knowing that our staff are required to wear masks and sanitize any surfaces they touch before they leave all homes, has given our senior clients the confidence to welcome us back into their homes more and more.

I have been so happy with the teamwork our staff has shown during these difficult times where we have all had good and bad days. Through it all, we have supported and encouraged each other through the pandemic.

Francis Lennie  
*Seminarian for the Paterson Diocese*

The main impact COVID has had on seminary life is that it has disrupted how we interact with each other outside the classroom. Like everyone else, there was no opportunity to socialize by going to a movie or out to dinner. Luckily it did not affect the class schedule as much. Immaculate Conception Seminary at Seton Hall implemented a hybrid model in response to COVID. If the class meets twice a week, we would be in the building for one class and then be virtual for the next. Also, some classes were small enough to meet in person for the whole semester. It has worked well because I do enjoy being in the classroom. The seminary has done everything to keep us safe.

I have witnessed many acts of kindness during this pandemic. Many people are seeing each other as brothers and sisters again and supporting one another. For example, the Giving Tree program where gifts are given to children in poor communities saw a tremendous outpouring of generosity and support in December.

Know of my prayers for all of you. I pray that the Lord helps you through all your struggles. Also know that God is with us, in our good times and bad times. He gives us the hope that no matter what there is still Glory on the other side. We all will get through this difficult time.
**Straight & Narrow**

In August 2019, a fire destroyed a building at Straight and Narrow that housed those who were looking to separate themselves from the scourge of addiction. Over $319,000 of funds from our 2019 Appeal were allocated to help in the re-building efforts. Below is an update from Angela Nikolovski, Executive Director of Straight and Narrow.

I want to extend my sincere gratitude for your support of Straight and Narrow especially after experiencing such a devastating tragedy. I also want to share the progress that we have made on our rebuilding project as we look to the future with hope.

As you know, on August 24, 2019, Straight and Narrow’s 410 Straight Street facility was destroyed in a massive six-alarm fire. The building housed our 50-bed men halfway house, women’s clinical office space and a warehouse. An adjacent warehouse also lost in the fire was used to store our many donations from clothing for adults and children to furniture, equipment and children’s toys.

The halfway house clients are currently relocated at an alternate agency location in Passaic. Our primary goal was to continue to provide treatment services to the men at the halfway house who had lost everything.

The site surveying and engineering analysis is about to begin. We have visited other treatment programs to brainstorm design concepts. Our plan for a new structure is to best maximize our space, allow for the highest standards in patient care, and ensure that the flow of services meets regulatory requirements. We are at the point where we are eagerly awaiting completed architectural drawings.

The overarching goal is to establish a comprehensive setting to best accommodate our daily client and operational needs. The new building will include replacement of the 50-bed male halfway house, a warehouse space, and related amenities which were lost in the fire.

While our plans call for a July 2021 groundbreaking date, we hope to keep the faithful of the Diocese updated as we move forward.

Thanks again for all your support and prayers.

Sincerely,
Angela Nikolovski, LPC, LCADC
Executive Director
Straight & Narrow, Inc.

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**A Final Word From Our Bishop...**

It has been about a year since the word “coronavirus” became a part of our world vocabulary. In that time, many people have passed away and families have grieved the loss of loved ones. Even more have become ill. In addition, the pandemic has had a negative financial impact on families and businesses alike.

After being named Bishop of Paterson during this uncertain time, I soon discovered the resilience and creativity of our parishes in adapting to the current situation. So many of our pastors stepped up and found ways to connect with their parishioners through social media. Their commitment to reaching out and communicating in new ways has been inspiring.

Our Catholic Charities agencies also faced incredible challenges in order to continue their ministry to tens of thousands of people. They exceeded expectations by assisting a record number of people who came to them in desperate need which was made worse by the impact of COVID.

Last year, our schools innovated and adapted in a short amount of time. Our principals’ leadership complemented the stellar work of our teachers to ensure that Catholic education thrived in our students’ homes. In September, our schools returned face-to-face for our students. We are committed to navigate a

*continued...*
path from good to better to the best we can do for our students.

Equally inspiring has been the response of the faithful to our Diocesan Ministries Appeal. As a pastor for ten years in Brooklyn, I was asked by my Bishop to promote the Appeal each year in my parish. Now, for the first time, I was reaching out to you and other Catholics in the Paterson Diocese as Bishop asking for your support in the midst of a pandemic!

I am so grateful to all who contributed to the 2020 Diocesan Ministries Appeal. Many of our parishioners responded to the Appeal and its theme – Love Thy Neighbor – with a true spirit of generosity. In many ways, I am convinced that with the help of the funds raised through the Appeal, we have responded to the impact of the coronavirus with determination and compassion. I can’t thank you enough for your participation. If you have yet to make a pledge to the 2020 Appeal, gifts are still gladly being accepted by mail or online at www.2020appeal.org.

Thank you for all you do to help build up God’s kingdom in Morris, Passaic and Sussex Counties. I also ask for your prayers and assure you of mine.

Faithfully yours in Christ,
Most Reverend Kevin J. Sweeney, D.D.
Bishop of Paterson

It is the Lord who goes before you;
he will be with you and will never fail you or forsake you.
So do not fear or be dismayed.
– Deuteronomy 31:8

Contact Us

Our Development office is here to help you meet your philanthropic goals, whether it is making a gift to our Diocesan Ministries Appeal, remembering the Church in your will and estate plans, establishing an endowment in memory of a loved one or supporting any other cause that is important to you.

Diocese of Paterson
Office of Development
Monday – Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
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