January 23, 2020

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Many dioceses here in the United States face challenges due to priest shortages, lack of funds, remote geography, or impoverished parishes. The Catholic Home Missions Appeal supports these dioceses that struggle to make ends meet and to serve the many needs of their parishioners. Home mission dioceses are those dioceses in the United States, its territories, and former territories that cannot provide basic pastoral services to Catholics without outside help. Basic pastoral services include Mass and the other sacraments, religious education, and ministry training for priests, deacons, religious sisters, and lay people. Right now, over 40% of dioceses are considered home mission. Thanks to your generosity, these dioceses were assisted with nearly $10 million in assistance in 2019.

American Samoa, an archipelago of seven islands in the South Pacific and the only United States territory south of the equator, is located over 500 miles closer to New Zealand than it is to Hawaii. Over 97% of the territory’s population lives on the largest Island, Tutuila, leaving the small number of residents in the outlying Manu’a islands to be served by one catechist and one priest, who visits monthly to celebrate Mass and to bring sacraments to the faithful. Despite these limited resources, the residents of Manu’a are growing in faith, with more becoming interested in being baptized and welcomed into the Church.

Your generosity has helped sustain this invaluable ministry to the faithful in the isolated environment of the Diocese of Samoa–Pago Pago. By supporting the Catholic Home Missions Appeal (CHMA), you continue a tradition of support for mission dioceses in the United States dating back to 1924.

I encourage you to be generous on the weekend of February 2 to help strengthen the Church at home. Your support will truly make a difference. For more information, please visit www.usccb.org/home-missions.

With every prayerful best wish, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

+ Robert J. McManus
Most Reverend Robert J. McManus
Bishop of Worcester

Please read or print this letter in the parish bulletin on the weekend of January 26 and take the collection for the Catholic Home Missions Appeal at all Masses on the weekend of February 2.