



## My brothers and sisters in Christ,

Over the last year, we, as a community of faith, have been on a path that few, if any, have ever walked before. As this year began with the hope of continued prosperity, we were confronted with a global pandemic that compelled us to close our businesses, modify the ways our parishes provided essential ministry and retreat into the safety of our homes. As each of us considered how we would manage in this “new normal,” we watched as many of those we knew, were close to or cherished, became ill or lost the means to support their families. If this were not enough, we have watched, over the last several months, our nation struggle to address issues of equality, economic disparity and social justice.

Yet, amid all of this uncertainty, and at times, chaos, the love of your Creator, the promise of your faith and the mission of your Church remains constant. Although many of us continue to feel the burdens that have been placed upon us in this present moment, we also must embrace the opportunities that the events of the last few months have given to us. Many of us have become closer to members of our immediate families, we have come to understand and appreciate the sacrifices made by our brothers and sisters who cared for those who were ill, we were made to see the plight of the poor, disadvantaged and those who live at the margins of our society and many of us renewed our relationship with our Creator through prayer.

We are a people of hope – no matter the circumstances and uncertainties of the present hour – we understand and believe that Jesus gives hope to those who are ill, to those who are abandoned, to those who suffer from economic hardships and to those who live in fear and isolation. His love is ever constant, never changing and without limits. We may all take comfort in the surety that He has gone before us to prepare a place with him and our heavenly Father.

In this moment, we are called to share in challenges that now face us. As never before, the world, our country, our state and our Diocese need the healing, teaching and redemptive presence of our divine Savior. As we look back on what we have endured, we must now look forward to what we must do for our brothers and sisters in faith.

Your support of the Annual Diocesan Appeal provides essential operating support for those Diocesan ministries, outreach programs, parishes and schools that bring the light of Christ that dispels the darkness of suffering, pain and ignorance. Never has the need for your support been greater and never will the impact of your generosity be more deeply felt.

Please know that as each of you walk in your own journey of faith, your heavenly Father walks besides you and, as a people of hope, you may be assured of my prayers for your parish, your families and you.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

*+ Michael F. Olson*

Most Reverend Michael F. Olson, STD, MA  
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