



OFFICE OF THE BISHOP
DIOCESE OF MANCHESTER

March 1, 2022

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

A new vision for the Church in New Hampshire

Looking out at the Catholic Church in New Hampshire, I see a strong, hopeful, and faith-filled people who love their Church and are committed to nurturing their faith for generations to come. Signs of thriving Catholic life are found throughout the Diocese of Manchester. We see it in parishes and schools from the Great North Woods to the Lakes Region, from the Upper Valley to the Seacoast, from our largest cities along the Merrimack River to the intimate beauty of the Monadnock region. No matter how remote or urban the place, we find our Catholic brothers and sisters teaching the faith to people of all ages; trained lay ministers serving their parishes and pastors to ensure that a vital sacramental and liturgical life remains at the core of their communities; and others living out the Gospel message to love one another through acts of mercy and Catholic social outreach ministries. The Manchester diocese is the spiritual home to the Catholic faithful of New Hampshire who are committed to the Gospel message of living out the Good News of Jesus Christ.

The vision for our diocese – the Church in New Hampshire – is one in which the faithful embrace their Catholic identity, grow in their faith throughout their lives and celebrate their faith in vibrant parishes and schools. We all can participate in this vision. But we must be willing to do things differently and work together to realize it.

The Church in New Hampshire, like elsewhere in the country and the world, faces many challenges. Yet we also are blessed with much reason for hope and elements of great beauty. We face the deleterious effects of contemporary society's moral relativism, extreme individualism and even indifferentism. Feeling alone and despairing of hope, many people desperately hunger for the response Jesus taught us: "*Love one another as I have loved you.*" Our Lord's command continues to ring loud and true in our many parishes, schools and ministries, which are standing tall in our cities and expanding in our towns and throughout the countryside. The faithful continue to give to and participate in their parish and school communities despite difficult times. You are the Church, and we need your involvement to ensure our faith continues into the future.

While I recognize the needs and people of our diocese are diverse, our common mission "to bring a New Hope and the Good News of Jesus Christ through our Catholic faith" remains the same. I hope this new vision resonates with all of you. As our blessed apostle St. Paul reminds us, "*As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ*" (1 Cor 12:12). Unified in that same spirit, we go forward together boldly to embark on a new endeavor for our diocese.

To that end, I will introduce a combined campaign and fundraising effort with our parishes and the ministries of our Church called the *New Hampshire Catholic Appeal: Future of our Faith II*. There is precedent for this. In February 1995, the Diocese of Manchester conducted the historic "The Future of Our Faith" campaign to secure the needs of Catholic education, the education of seminarians, retired clergy, and to assist parishes that were challenged to meet operational needs.

Today, the financial needs of our Church remain consistent with those addressed by the initial “Future of Our Faith” campaign. After praying to build upon its success and discerning the current needs of the Church of New Hampshire, I’ve chosen to consolidate many Catholic collections and appeals into one effort as we move forward as one Church.

The *New Hampshire Catholic Appeal (NHCA)* will be an annual appeal managed by the Diocese of Manchester in parishes across the state. It will be held each spring, with some parishes starting in May 2022. The *New Hampshire Catholic Appeal* will not be a diocesan fund nor a Bishop’s fund. It is a ministry fund for Catholic education, seminarians, retired priests, missions and multicultural efforts, evangelization through our diocesan magazine, parish support and Catholic Charities New Hampshire. I hope you will join me in this new chapter of our Church.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter A. Libasci", with a small cross symbol to the left of the first letter.

Most Reverend Peter A. Libasci
Bishop of Manchester