

# STRENGTHENING THE CHURCH AT HOME



The Church has great needs around the world, and the United States is no exception. Many dioceses here at home face challenges due to priest shortages, lack of funds, remote geography, or impoverished parishes. The Catholic Home Missions Appeal answers these needs and provides grants for projects to strengthen the faith of the people. Forty-two percent of all dioceses in the United States receive Catholic Home Missions support for evangelization, catechesis, ministry formation, and other areas of faith development. Your support of this collection will continue to help your neighbors here in the United States and strengthen the Church at home.

The population within the Diocese of El Paso in West Texas is 80% Catholic, one of the highest percentages of Catholics of any diocese in the United States, and more than two-thirds are Hispanic. However, the rural parishes experience poverty, extreme geographic isolation, and rugged terrain. Through a grant from Catholic Home Missions, two Missionary Sisters of Jesus have served five parishes, six missions, and nearly 4,000 Catholics through the West Texas Evangelization Program (WTEP). These two sisters are the only presence of consecrated women in the

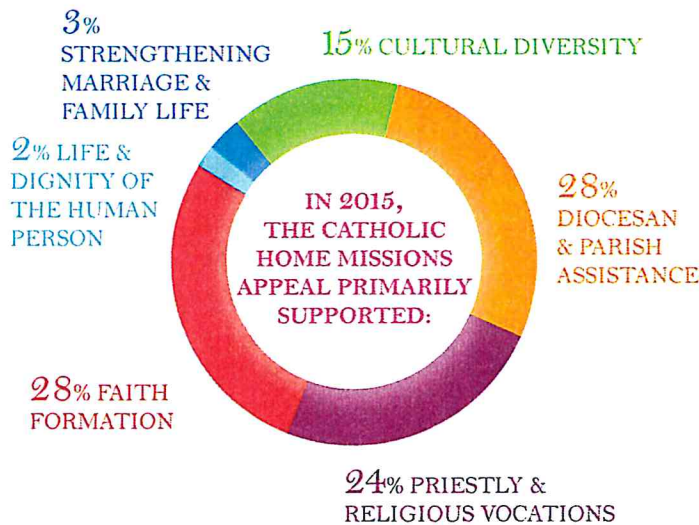
area, and with the shortage of priests, they do much to help strengthen the local Catholic communities.

Through WTEP, the sisters have helped form small faith-sharing groups, conducted Lenten missions, and made door-to-door visits in the neighborhoods. They have encouraged parishioners to live out the works of mercy by visiting those confined to their homes and ministering to those in prison as well as their families. Even when prisoners are moved, the sisters continue to provide outreach through letter writing. WTEP also brought medical professionals to provide much-needed health and wellness presentations to these rural communities, which otherwise lack access to these resources.

In the Pacific Ocean, between Guam and Hawaii, are the Marshall Islands, a collection of atolls and islands covering an area of 500,000 square miles. Given the great distance between these islands, travel is often difficult and communication is unreliable. In addition, because not all the islands are able to have a resident priest, the Church in the Marshall Islands relies on prayer leaders to lead the Sunday liturgy of Scripture reading and reflection as well as distribution of Communion. These prayer leaders are required to attend a yearly training and retreat, and all new leaders are guided by experienced prayer leaders. Thanks to a grant from Catholic Home Missions, the Marshall Islands were able to host this training again and bring in the same presenters from the previous year, providing for continuity and familiarity. At the closing ceremony, many of the participants could not contain their feelings of joy and appreciation.

Through your donations, home missions like El Paso and the Marshall Islands will receive the resources they need to support their parishes and **strengthen the Church at home**. Your gift today is an act of solidarity with your struggling brothers and sisters in Christ. Thank you!

## 2015 Distribution of Funding



## CATHOLIC HOME MISSIONS APPEAL

OFFICE OF NATIONAL COLLECTIONS  
 3211 FOURTH STREET NE • WASHINGTON, DC 20017-1194  
 202-541-3400 • FAX 202-541-3460 • [WWW.USCCB.ORG/NATIONALCOLLECTIONS](http://WWW.USCCB.ORG/NATIONALCOLLECTIONS)

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