



Christ is the light which illumines the way. —Blessed John Paul II
Support the Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Soon, our diocese will take up the **Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe**. This Collection supports essential unmet pastoral needs in Central and Eastern Europe and areas of Asia formerly under Soviet control. Our assistance is vital to the growth and strength of the Church in these regions.

In addition to pastoral projects, scholarships, and other initiatives, the Collection supports Catholic organizations that work to ease the burdens facing those who live in the region. Many elderly residents of the former Soviet region of Georgia awoke one morning to find their pensions and life savings gone. Former doctors, lawyers, and musicians now find themselves with the equivalent of \$50 a month to live on. This stipend doesn't even cover the cost of one loaf of bread per day, leaving nothing to pay for transportation, clothing, or medicine. Collection funds are essential to keeping medical dispensaries and shelters open and ensuring that religious and lay ministers are available to help those in need.

In the neighboring Republic of Azerbaijan, Mother Teresa of Calcutta's Sisters of Charity run a homeless shelter with aid from the Collection. In addition to providing bread, medical care, and transitional housing at the shelter, the sisters visit the poor and elderly who are bedridden or too sick to travel to the city, helping to bring the light of Christ to those living in the darkness of poverty, illness, and loneliness. The sisters combat the destruction brought on by 70 years of state atheism, which undermined Christian ideals and contributed to increased alcoholism and deterioration of the family unit.

Please be generous in the Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe where ***Christ, the Light, continues to illuminate the way.*** Your support will truly make a difference. Thank you and God bless you.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "R. Daniel Conlon". To the left of the signature is a small blue cross.

Most Reverend R. Daniel Conlon
Bishop of Joliet

For more information on the Church in Central and Eastern Europe and the projects funded by the Collection, please visit www.usccb.org/nationalcollections.