



The Most Reverend Charles C. Thompson  
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Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The annual *Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe* will be held the weekend of February 10-11, 2024. Throughout his pontificate, our Holy Father, Pope Francis, has often spoken of the need for Christians to evangelize others through accompaniment. Through listening patiently, building trust, and being mindful of others' dignity, we can help one another encounter Christ's merciful love, especially those who suffer from emotional wounds, loneliness, and doubt. For Central and Eastern Europeans living in countries that experienced 70 years of communist oppression, the Church especially needs to accompany people to an encounter with Christ that is patient, understanding, and filled with hope instead of fear, anger, and anxiety.

Your generous support of this annual collection makes it possible to provide counseling to women experiencing the anxieties of unplanned pregnancies. It provides funds for programs to train catechists and other pastoral ministers to be active, faith-filled agents of evangelization and accompaniment to those who desire to know Christ and Church. It serves to bring relief and hope to those experiencing the desperation caused by war and conflict.

These ministries of accompaniment are supported through grant monies raised through the *Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe*. When you participate in the collection, you are helping the Church in 27 countries restore the faith and show our vulnerable brothers and sisters the love and mercy of Jesus.

I urge you to be as generous as you can.

Gratefully yours in Christ,

+ *Charles C. Thompson*

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