



A LETTER FROM THE BISHOP

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

We are celebrating our 40th Anniversary as a diocese this year. What a great accomplishment to have had forty years of serving Christ and making His kingdom present here in our four beautiful counties in Central New Jersey.

Forty has long been an important number in Scripture; it is mentioned over a thousand times throughout the Bible. We know some of them quite well. Moses' 40 years in the desert and 40 days on Mount Sinai communing with God and receiving the Ten Commandments, Jonah's 40 days preaching Nineveh to repent, and of course, Jesus' 40 days and nights fasting in the desert. All of these 40's representing periods of testing and temptation.

I think that we, too, have passed difficult tests in our 40 years as a diocese. I am so grateful to you for your significant contributions to making our diocesan Church robust and moving forward. We certainly have had our challenges. The past two years, the coronavirus has impacted all of us and affected our daily living in so many ways. Many of our loved ones have died or suffered financially from the pandemic. Hurricane Ida tested us again with flood damage, loss of homes and leaving others without clean water and food. Certainly, our Church has faced challenges too with the past failures by some of the Church's leaders, including those failings of our own founding bishop. Yes, we have been through more than our share of testing; but we are not alone. Christ promised to be with us always—until the end—and so He has been, and promised to continue to be faithful to us.

As I pray and think about our current moment, I am moved to gratitude because of all you have done to help our local Church. I have been your bishop now for a little over five years. When I came here, I certainly had no idea of what tests and challenges we would face. However, I found a community of such love, of such faith, of such determination, anxious to build a better future, to give our children and grandchildren a brighter day in the Church and in our world. Together, we are *Continuing to Fan the Flame of Faith into Service*.

This year also celebrates the 40th anniversary of your generosity through the Bishop's Annual Appeal. You know well that the appeal supports so many things that helped us transcend what we faced. You can read more about some of the ministries in this brochure and can find more on our website www.diometuchen.org. All these things and so much more.

I am grateful that you have responded even more generously in the past few years. I ask you to do it again in this 40th anniversary year so that we can continue to serve those in need. If you can, reach a little deeper if you are able, especially since some people are not able to give due to the effects of the different crises we have faced recently. I am confident that whatever the future may hold, together, with Christ, we can for sure face it with serenity and joy.

Know of my love and prayers for you, especially on my morning walks praying the Rosary and in my Eucharistic chapel in the Bishop's residence. Please pray for me. I depend on your good prayers.

With renewed best wishes, I remain

Yours in Christ,

Most Reverend James F. Checchio, JCD, MBA
Bishop of Metuchen