

October 2011

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:



This past April provided me with the most fulfilling experience of my ministry as a bishop. It was the ordination of Fr. Steven Gallagher as the newest priest for the Diocese of Juneau. In all the years that I have served in the area of priestly formation, it was a magnificent experience for me, now as a bishop, to ordain a man to serve in the person of Christ.

Being the smallest diocese in the Country, it was also amazing that with one ordination, this meant that the presbyterate of the Diocese increased by 10%. We wish Fr. Steve well as he provides priestly ministry at Holy Name Parish in Ketchikan. At this time, the Diocese has no one in the seminary studying for the priesthood. However, I am aware of a number of men who are discerning this vocation. At the same time, I am pleased to say that we have five fine men preparing for the permanent diaconate for the Diocese of Juneau. Through it all, it is my hope that we will help create a vocation culture in Southeast Alaska that will assist in supporting vocations to ordained ministry and consecrated life.

I see a lot of potential for the Diocese and I am excited about the possibilities of growing, strengthening and expanding the Catholic faith in Southeast Alaska. I am grateful for the efforts made in catechetical programs throughout the Diocese. Along those lines, this year we had 31 people from the Diocese as part of the 140 pilgrims from Alaska who joined 30,000 youth from the U.S. to go to World Youth Day in Madrid, Spain. Our 31 Southeast Alaska representatives gathered with 2 million people to celebrate Mass with Pope Benedict XVI on August 21, 2011. It was a sign of the universality of our Church and a complete joy to celebrate the Eucharist with the successor of St. Peter.

Many people followed our steps through this pilgrimage by way of our diocesan website. If you have not visited our new website, I invite you to please do so (www.dioceseofjuneau.org). It is here that I hope that we will be able to reach more and more people with what we are doing in the Diocese and continue, through this technology, our part in the New Evangelization of the Church. Since we will be putting more energy into our diocesan website, it has been decided to cut back our distribution of the Southeast Alaska Catholic newspaper to once a month. This will also help us cut costs for the Diocese.

The challenge of conducting ministry in Southeast Alaska includes financial ones. Recently, our parish in Wrangell, St. Rose of Lima, was renovated to be much more energy efficient. (As many of you know, St. Rose of Lima was the first Catholic parish in Alaska - established in 1879.) This was made possible through a bequest of one of our dedicated parishioners. In talking to Fr. Thomas Weise, this will save us \$6,000 to \$8,000 a year in energy costs. We are grateful for this bequest. So, in addition to your consideration of making a pledge to the Faith In Action (FIA) campaign, I ask that you also remember the Diocese of Juneau in your will. Your parish family and your diocesan family are here for you. It is my hope that you will remember us as you pay your bills and look to the future.

I pray that the Lord will bless our work and, through your generosity, it is my resolve to continue the spread of the Gospel message and the celebration of the Sacraments throughout the Diocese of Juneau. With your participation in the FIA campaign, I can envision the good work and potential of the Diocese coming to fulfillment.

Thank you for your consideration and be assured of my prayers for you and your loved ones.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Edward J. Burns".

Bishop Edward J. Burns