



# Sent on Mission

---

ANNUAL REPORT | 2022-2023



DIOCESE OF  
METUCHEN



## *My Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,*

The past year has been marked by unprecedented challenges and uncertainties, but one thing remains abundantly clear, sharing the life giving message of Jesus Christ has never been more necessary. As we have reached out to our brothers and sisters in need, sharing the love and mercy of Christ with compassion and generosity, we have witnessed the Holy Spirit at work in our midst, transforming lives. Our evangelization efforts have not only brought peace to those who are suffering, but they have also reignited the flame of faith within our own hearts, renewing our zeal for lighting a fire in the heart of our world.

Yet, amidst the joy, we cannot ignore the reality of a world torn apart by conflict and strife. In a world that seems to be in constant agony, our longing for peace becomes ever more profound. As One Church Together, called to be instruments of His peace, let us redouble our efforts to be ambassadors of reconciliation and healing to all. Let us be peacemakers in our families, our communities, and our world, bearing witness to the transformative power of Christ's love to overcome division and bring about lasting peace.

As the Universal Church gathered for the First Session of the XVI General Ordinary Assembly of the Synod of Bishops, we were reminded how the Church, especially within the Church of Metuchen, has served as a beacon of hope, inviting all to journey together as a synodal Church, where each voice is heard, valued, and discerned in our shared mission of spreading the Gospel. Throughout the past year, we have engaged in meaningful dialogue, prayerful reflection, and discernment, deepening our understanding of what it means to be rooted in communion, participation, and mission.

The National Eucharistic Revival has also been a source of renewal and grace for our diocese, as parishes throughout our four counties embraced our Eucharistic Lord. Through Eucharistic Adoration, especially at the St. John Neumann Pastoral Center in Piscataway, the dedication of our priests in celebrating the Mass, and acts of charity inspired by the Eucharist, we have experienced the transformative power of Christ's presence among us, strengthening our unity and our commitment to building up a diocese ready to set hearts on fire.

In reviewing our 2022-2023 Annual Report and Financial Summary, I hope you will see how our diocese has embraced this Eucharistic mission through your generous support to the Bishop's Annual Appeal and the ministries of our local Church. Through our ministries, outreach, and pastoral initiatives, we have sought to make the Eucharist the center of all that we set out to accomplish. Through the sacraments and our spiritual and corporal works of mercy, our diocese has continued to witness to the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist and to share His love with all whom we encounter.

As our Church prepares for the National Eucharistic Congress, in Indianapolis, in July, 2024, we are reminded that we have been prepared to be sent on mission. In every pastoral visit, I am reminded of the great blessing in my life – the people of Metuchen. You continue to prepare your hearts and extend them to our brothers and sisters in our communities most in need, especially through your continued support of the Bishop's Annual Appeal, which makes these ministries possible. By your sacrifice, you bring our Eucharistic Lord to be present among us, and for that I am most grateful.

I encourage you, in these final months of the Eucharistic Revival let us recommit to Sunday Mass and to take some time with our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament whenever you are able, to intentionally seek His will for our lives and our beloved Church of Metuchen. United in that prayer, please know of my love, prayers and continued gratitude for you.

With renewed best wishes, I remain

Yours in Christ,

*+ James F. Checchio*

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





## The Heart of Our Mission

The Diocese of Metuchen proclaims the Gospel of Jesus Christ, celebrates the sacraments and exercises His works of mercy so that all might participate in His salvation and discover the lasting joy of a relationship with Him.

The Diocese of Metuchen encompasses the New Jersey counties of Middlesex, Somerset, Hunterdon and Warren.

Below is a view of our mission in the Diocese of Metuchen in 2023



# 622,254

## CATHOLICS IN THE DIOCESE OF METUCHEN

### BAPTISMS

3,510



### FIRST COMMUNIONS

3,288



### CONFIRMATIONS

3,353



### MARRIAGES

681



### PARISHES

90



### SCHOOLS

26



### CHARITY & JUSTICE CENTERS

9



### CATHOLIC HOSPITALS

1



### NEWLY ORDAINED PRIESTS

1



### TRANSITIONAL DEACONS

4



### SEMINARIANS

20



### MEN IN FORMATION FOR THE PERMANENT DIACONATE

29



### STUDENTS IN PARISH FAITH FORMATION PROGRAMS

23,476



### CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

1,925



### CATHOLIC SCHOOL STUDENTS FROM PRE-K-8

5,216



NATIONAL  
**Eucharistic  
Pilgrimage**

**DIOCESE OF METUCHEN | MAY 27-28, 2024**

The St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Route of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage will begin in New Haven, Connecticut, and will pass through the Diocese of Metuchen on May 27-28, 2024.

During these two days, the Diocese of Metuchen will welcome the National Eucharistic 'Perpetual Pilgrims' as they process from the Cathedral of St. Francis of Assisi, Metuchen, to St. Peter the Apostle University and Community Parish, New Brunswick, and St. Augustine of Canterbury Parish in Kendall Park.

We encourage you to pray and walk with them as they witness to the world that Jesus is here, present in the most Blessed Sacrament, and that He accompanies us - all of us - on our pilgrimage in life.

**Learn more at [www.diometuchen.org/nep2024](http://www.diometuchen.org/nep2024)**



# *What's New*

---

*Our Mission in 2022-2023*



## STEWARDSHIP AND DEVELOPMENT:

Central to our understanding of Christian stewardship is the concept of accountability. The Office of Stewardship & Development and the Office of the Bishop recently set up the Bishop's Annual Appeal Foundation. The Foundation operates exclusively for the benefit of the Diocese, its parishes, schools, and affiliates. Donations to the Foundation exclusively support the activities and mission of the Diocese.



## CATHOLIC SCHOOLS:

Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Metuchen continue to advance the Gospel message through academic excellence. In 2023, the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) commonly known as the 'Nation's Report Card' noted that Catholic Schools in general show positive achievement in a post-COVID-19 educational environment when compared with their public educational counterpart which showed significant decline in their math and reading scores. In addition to academic achievements, through support from the Office of Human Life and Dignity, the Diocese of Metuchen piloted the Theology of the Body Curriculum provided through the Ruah Woods Institute, providing teachings that combine Catholic faith and academic rigor.



## HISPANIC MINISTRY AND OUTREACH:

In June 2023, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved of the National Plan for Hispanic/Latino Ministry. Under the guidance of Deacon Edgar Chavez and Rev. Gustavo Rodriguez-Perez, the Office of Hispanic Evangelization and Pastoral Ministry instituted the Hispanic Bible School serving over 200 Hispanic leaders with a dedicated structure of formation. Aiming to address the growing need to support the Hispanic faithful, the Hispanic Bible School intends to grow and help journey with our Hispanic brothers and sisters in deepening a relationship with Jesus Christ and to be formed and equipped evangelizers within their communities.



## MULTICULTURAL MINISTRY:

Participating in the National Black Catholic Congress (NBCC), the Office of Multicultural Ministry took part in the 13th gathering of Black Catholics with over 2,500 Black Catholics including those who serve the African American Apostolate from across the nation. Since that gathering the Diocese of Metuchen has worked to implement the Pastoral Plan from the NBCC, highlighting strategies and diocesan initiatives that will help our local Church understand the significance of the NBCC and the role that scripture has in guiding our mission and ministries.



## EVANGELIZATION AND COMMUNICATION:

Through the Secretariat for Evangelization and Communication, the Diocese of Metuchen has been able to significantly invest in the production of The Catholic Spirit with the hire of new editorial and diocesan leadership by welcoming the lay Secretary for Evangelization and Communication and a new Editor-in-Chief of the Catholic Spirit. The Office of Communications and Public Relations provided more digital and written content about our Catholic faith through digital communication and social media platforms. The Evangelization & Communication ministry is essential to expanding our effort to share the Gospel message and make His love known to all. We have increasingly come to understand that these tools are necessary for reaching people where they live and work.



## EUCCHARISTIC REVIVAL:

In 2023, the National Eucharistic Revival parish phase focused on fostering Eucharistic devotion within our communities. Spearheaded by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and led locally through the Secretariat for Evangelization and Communication, the Diocese of Metuchen was selected as an official stop of the St. Elizabeth Ann Seton Route of the National Eucharistic Pilgrimage which will take place May 27-28, 2024 with visits to the Cathedral of St. Francis of Assisi, Metuchen, St. Peter the Apostle University and Community Parish, New Brunswick, and St. Augustine of Canterbury Parish, Kendall Park. The National Eucharistic Pilgrimage will conclude in Indianapolis as the Catholic Church in the United States gathers for the first National Eucharistic Congress in 83 years.

# Financial Summary

## FISCAL YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2023

ASSETS		2023
Cash and Cash Equivalents	\$	22,009,343
Accounts and loans receivable from parishes, net		9,912,325
Contributions receivable, net		288,065
Prepaid expenses and other assets		3,020,423
Notes Receivable, net		12,370,362
Investments held primarily for parishes, cemeteries, perpetual care, insurance reserves and donor restricted funds		245,862,043
Inventory of Crypts		7,028,597
Property and equipment, net		17,093,684
<b>TOTAL ASSETS</b>	\$	<b>317,584,842</b>

LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		2023
<b>LIABILITIES:</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$	6,575,078
Deferred revenue and support		168,538
Custodial Funds		1,333,987
Clergy retirement & post retirement obligations		21,576,450
Loans payable		15,645,196
Self-Insurance Incurred But Not Reported (IBNR) reserves		18,684,325
Obligation due under split-interest agreements		28,597
Funds held for parishes, parish cemeteries and affiliates		92,047,722
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES</b>	\$	<b>156,059,893</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Without donor restrictions	\$	159,737,681
With donor restrictions		1,787,268
<b>TOTAL NET ASSETS</b>	\$	<b>161,524,949</b>
<b>TOTAL LIABILITIES &amp; NET ASSETS</b>	\$	<b>317,584,842</b>

**OPERATING SUPPORT & REVENUE****2023**

Program Revenue	\$	31,301,167	52%
Assessments		8,858,000	15%
Bishop's Annual Appeal		8,138,642	14%
Investment Income		6,116,794	10%
Cemeteries		4,177,350	7%
Donations & Bequests		1,502,850	2%
	\$	60,094,803	100%
Realized/Unrealized Investment Gains, Net	\$	22,511,604	
Total Operating Support & Revenue	\$	82,606,407	

**OPERATING SERVICES****2023**

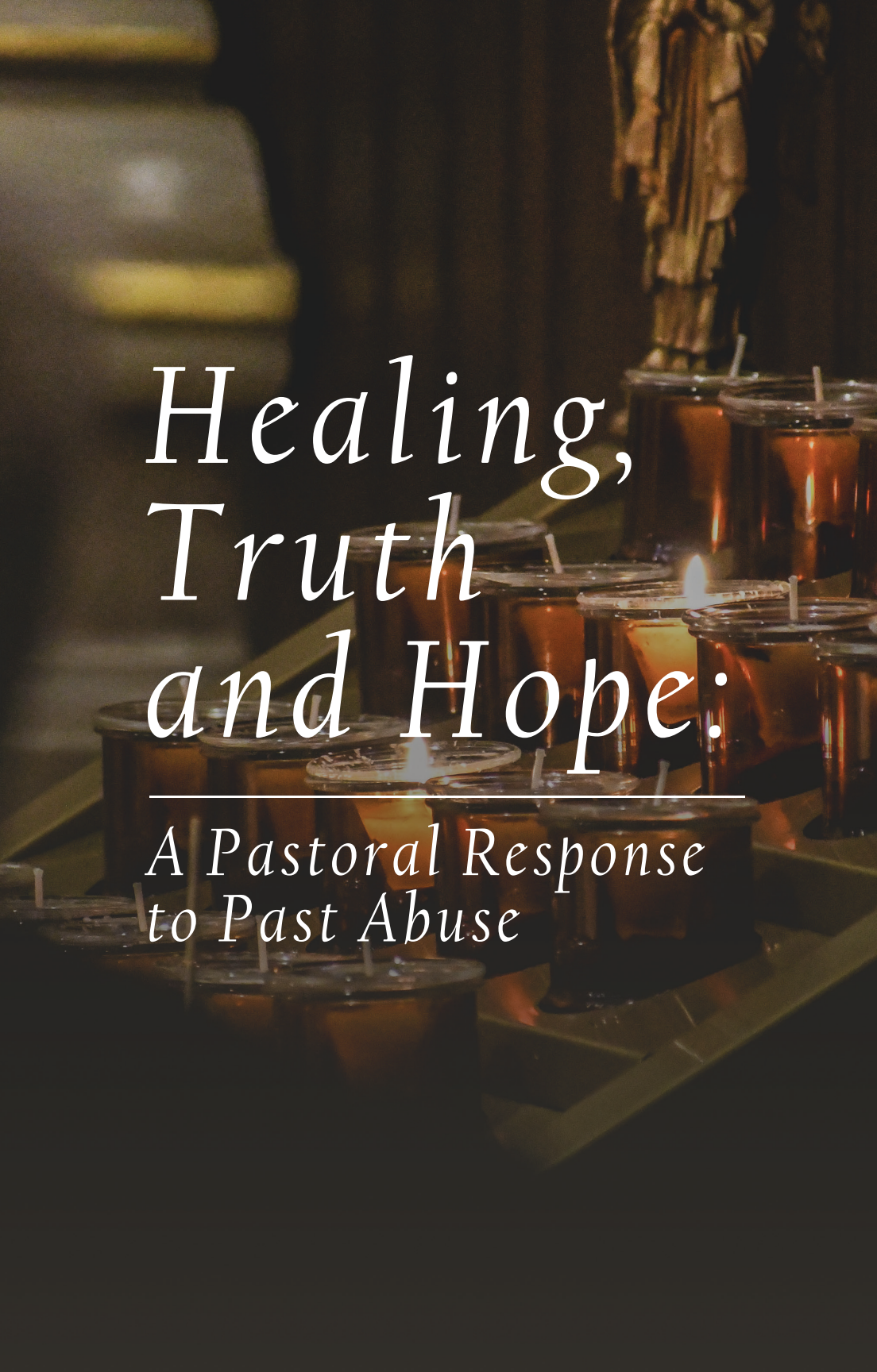
Health Insurance and Property & Liability Insurance Claims/Premiums Paid	\$	23,569,926	45%
Parish/Cemetery/Affiliate Interest on Deposits, School and Catholic Spirit Subsidies		7,985,282	15%
Priestly Ministry and Formation		5,340,404	10%
Cemeteries		3,274,979	7%
Parish, Cemetery & Diocesan Support Services		2,990,409	6%
Pastoral		2,972,941	6%
Diocesan Properties Operations, Maintenance and Depreciation		2,754,427	5%
Catholic Charities		1,700,000	3%
Development		1,458,422	3%
Total Operating Services	\$	52,046,790	100%

**STATEMENT OF ACTIVITY AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS****2023**

Operating support and revenue	\$	82,606,407
Operating services		52,046,790
Increase in unrestricted net assets from operations	\$	30,559,617
Non-operating revenue		5,813,343
Increase in net assets	\$	36,372,960
Net assets, beginning of the year	\$	125,151,989
Net assets, end of the year	\$	161,524,949

**STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS****2023**

Net cash provided by operating activities	\$	14,334,259
Net cash used by investing activities		(19,413,484)
Net cash provided by financing activities		3,286,825
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents	\$	(1,792,400)
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of the year	\$	23,801,743
Cash and cash equivalents, end of year	\$	22,009,343
Supplemental Data:		
Interest Paid	\$	3,085,063

A row of lit candles in glass holders on a tray, with a statue in the background. The scene is dimly lit, with the primary light source being the flames of the candles. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, elegant serif font.

*Healing,  
Truth  
and Hope:*

---

*A Pastoral Response  
to Past Abuse*

Through our procedures, through our outreach, and through our prayers, the Diocese of Metuchen continues to work to prevent abuse and to facilitate healing for survivors of abuse.

The Diocese of Metuchen has:

- **0% OF CREDIBLY ACCUSED PRIESTS IN PUBLIC MINISTRY**

\*Any accused priest is subject to an extensive and thorough investigation under the scrutiny of Law Enforcement and the Diocesan Review Board, consisting of a survivor of clergy sexual abuse, a former Attorney General and Supreme Court Justice of NJ, a former County Prosecutor, a Superior Court Judge, medical and psychiatric professionals, educators and other qualified professionals.

- **24/7 AVAILABILITY TO REPORT ABUSE**

- **5,966 ADULTS WHO WERE BACKGROUND CHECKED AND TRAINED TO RECOGNIZE AND REPORT SIGNS OF SUSPECTED ABUSE**

\*Number reported from July 1, 2022- June 30, 2023 and includes priests, deacons, candidates for ordination, educators, employees and volunteers working or ministering to children and young people.

- **22,980 CHILDREN WHO RECEIVED AGE-APPROPRIATE TRAINING TO GUARD AGAINST ABUSE.**

\*Number reported from July 1, 2022- June 30, 2023 and includes Catholic school students and students in parish religious education programs.

- **90 PARISH BACKGROUND COORDINATORS TO FACILITATE BACKGROUND CHECKS**

- **26 SCHOOL BACKGROUND COORDINATORS TO FACILITATE BACKGROUND CHECKS**

- **\$3.3 MILLION PAID IN SETTLEMENTS SINCE THE FOUNDING OF THE DIOCESE IN 1981; \$1.27 MILLION OF THAT WAS PAID THROUGH THE INDEPENDENT VICTIM COMPENSATION PROGRAM.**

\*No gifts to the Bishop's Annual Appeal, to Catholic Charities, to Catholic Schools, nor monies given for a specific ministry or apostolate are used to fund settlements. The total funds paid reflects all settlements through June 30, 2023.

More information about the measures in place to prevent abuse in the Diocese can be found by visiting: [diometuchen.org/healing](https://diometuchen.org/healing)

# HOW TO REPORT ABUSE

If you suspect abuse by a member of clergy, an employee, or a volunteer for the Catholic Church, please:

- Immediately notify local law enforcement
- Notify the New Jersey Division of Child Protection and Permanency by calling 1-877-NJ ABUSE (652-2873) or 1-800-835-5510 (TTY/TDD for the deaf), available 24/7
- Contact the Diocese of Metuchen's Director of Child and Youth Protection by calling (908) 930-4558 or visit [diometuchen.org/healing](http://diometuchen.org/healing) to file a report.

---

## HOW TO REPORT ABUSE BY A BISHOP

In response to Pope Francis' *Motu proprio, Vos estis lux mundi*, or "You are the light of the world," the U.S. Bishops launched the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting service, which ensures all levels of Church hierarchy are held to the same level of accountability. A similar independent reporting structure had already been established by Bishop James F. Checchio in the Diocese of Metuchen. Complaints of sexual abuse and related misconduct by bishops can be submitted to the independent service by visiting [ReportBishopAbuse.org](http://ReportBishopAbuse.org) or by calling (800) 276-1562.

This third-party service does not replace existing reporting systems for complaints against Bishops, priests, deacons, religious brothers or sisters, or lay persons working or volunteering for the Church, which were established in 2002 with the Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. The reporting of sexual misconduct by anyone in diocesan ministry should continue to be reported in accordance with the Diocese of Metuchen's child protection policy outlined above.

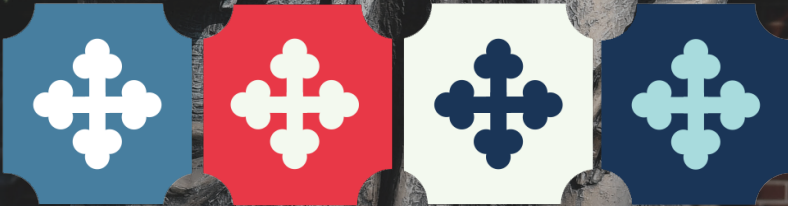
**"The implementation of the Catholic Bishop Abuse Reporting service reaffirms the commitment of Bishop Checchio and his brother bishops to live according to the Gospel and to place themselves under the same high standards applied to their priests, deacons, and lay personnel,"** said Anthony P. Kearns, Chancellor for the Diocese of Metuchen. He further said, **"This service is another step forward in ensuring accountability is maintained on all levels and is the latest in a long history of actions taken by the Diocese of Metuchen to ensure protection of all of the faithful."**



# *Pray for Vocations*

---

"Lord, you have called me. Here I am." On September 7, 2023, Sr. Anna Palka, of the Sisters of Jesus Our Hope professed perpetual vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience to Christ her Bridegroom at St. Mary of Mount Virgin Church, Visitation Parish, in New Brunswick, NJ.



ONE CHURCH *Together*



As we approach the fifth anniversary of our diocesan consecration to Jesus through Our Lady of Guadalupe in December 2024, the Diocese of Metuchen is filled with gratitude for our journey together. Over the course of the liturgical year leading up to this momentous occasion, we are excited to embark on a collective reflection and celebration of the profound ways in which the Holy Spirit has been moving within our four counties.

Throughout each month, we will unite in prayer, dedicating our intentions to the missionary work that defines the essence of our pastoral and ministerial efforts as a diocesan family. We aim to spotlight the unity of the Body of Christ, recognizing and cherishing the diverse ways in which the Holy Spirit operates within our community. By doing so, we hope to foster a deep sense of connection and shared purpose among the faithful, strengthening the bonds that make us a vibrant Church - Together.

We are called to a profound spiritual renewal in this moment of Eucharistic Revival within our local Church. Let us collectively turn our hearts and minds back to Him, rediscovering the wellspring of His saving love that has sustained us throughout these years of renewal. May our return to the Blessed Sacrament be a testament to our commitment to communion.

As we anticipate the joyous celebration in December 2024, let our journey of prayer, reflection, and unity be a testament to the enduring grace that flows through our diocese. May the upcoming anniversary reaffirm our dedication to Jesus through Our Lady of Guadalupe and a rekindling of the flame of faith that binds us together as one body in Christ.



As **'One Church,'**  
let us pray to  
the Lord!

Prayer is needed now more than ever. Let us know how we can pray for you today. Your intentions will be lifted up in prayer by the religious of our diocese.

**Submit your prayers at**  
[www.diometuchen.org/prayer-requests](http://www.diometuchen.org/prayer-requests)



Learn more about the **'One Church Together' Campaign**  
at [www.diometuchen.org/onechurchtogether](http://www.diometuchen.org/onechurchtogether)

Non Profit Org  
US Postage  
**PAID**  
Diocese of  
Metuchen

POST OFFICE BOX 4000  
METUCHEN, NEW JERSEY 08840