



Diocese of Worcester
Office of the Bishop
49 Elm Street
Worcester, Massachusetts 01609

August 1, 2025

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

For more than 40 years, and in some countries more than 70 years, communism ruled Central and Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union's many republics. Rapid, sometimes harsh transitions to market economies led to ongoing attitudes of materialism that have left poor and dependent people, including children, seniors, and people with disabilities, particularly vulnerable.

After decades of persecution, Catholics of the Armenian rite, the Chaldean rite, and the Latin rite have experienced a new era of freedom since Georgia became independent from the Soviet Union. These communities have set about rebuilding the Church, but poverty and remote, rural locations have made this work very difficult. Over 30% of Georgians live below the poverty line - children, the sick and the disabled are the most affected.

Catholics in the village of Arali kept the faith during years of persecution and now that their church is restored and they have a priest, they are able to celebrate Mass as a community. With assistance from the Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe, Catholics in Georgia are able to rebuild churches, provide medical care for the poor, and to pass on the faith to the next generation so that the Church can once again thrive where once it was persecuted.

Your support of the **Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe** on the weekend of August 10 is crucial to the success of ministries that affirm the dignity of children, youth, and other vulnerable people and show them the love and mercy of Jesus. Please be generous to the collection. For more information about the collection and whom it supports, visit www.usccb.org/cee. Thank you for your help to restore the Church and build the future in Central and Eastern Europe.

With every prayerful best wish, I remain

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend Robert J. McManus
Bishop of Worcester

*Please announce the Collection for Central and Eastern Europe on the weekend of August 3
and take up the collection on the weekend of August 10.*