



The beginning of The Year of Faith

The attention of the nation has been focused on the disaster wrought by Hurricane Sandy on the East Coast. With our diocesan collection we'll lend a hand from afar to our fellow citizens as they struggle to put their lives back together. But here in Eastern Oregon, too, ranch families still suffer from the fury of last summer's huge fires, as I was reminded on my November 3rd visit to Jordan Valley. The unanticipated expense of buying hay weighs them down now; anxiety about access to grazing land next spring shadows their view of the future. Please continue to hold these neighbors of ours up in prayer along with the victims of nature's wrath on the other side of the country.

The people have spoken; the elections are decided. As St. Paul prayed for the Emperor in his day, so we ask God to bless our President and all those elected on the state and local levels. As the results make clear, however, in the forthcoming national debates Catholics will need to awaken a widened appreciation for the fundamental importance of religious liberty to the American way of life. This challenge calls for a better understanding of Catholic teachings on marriage and the family in particular so that we may bring them to bear in public debate with confidence in the values that underlie them. We hope to make available

accessible diocesan-wide instruction on these questions during this Year of Faith.

To encourage widespread participation in the Year of Faith, Pope Benedict has called for bishops to establish pilgrimage sites and special catechetical programs with plenary indulgences attached to them. Barry Metzentine, our new Director of Evangelization and Catechesis, is working to implement the Holy Father's wishes here and should be able to publicize our program in the next month or so.

We look forward to launching the annual Diocesan Appeal by early December. As you will see, the format for the Appeal is a bit different this year, and that took a bit more time to develop than expected. When you have the materials in hand, please give thought and prayer to how you can support our effort to go "Forward in Faith" together.