



January 16, 2019

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Peace and all good things!

On a road that leads from Jerusalem to Jericho there begins one of the most beloved parables in the Bible. It is the familiar account of the Good Samaritan. It is on that road where Jesus is asked "*Who is my neighbor?*" Jesus tells the story of a man who is beaten, robbed and ignored until a Samaritan pauses on his own journey to care for the man's basic needs.

We think of our neighbor as someone we know who lives next to us. Jesus redefined a neighbor to be the person we do not know and any person who is in need. The Samaritan responds just as Jesus would – without prejudice. The challenge is for us to imitate the Samaritan. Would we recognize a neighbor in need? Would we stop to help or continue on? In a time of gated communities and tall fences around us, we must ask if we are truly able to see the need of our neighbors.

With your generosity to the 2019 Bishop's Annual Appeal, we are able to assist our neighbors throughout the Diocese of Savannah. You may already know that the Appeal will fund 20 seminarians and provide faith formation for all throughout South Georgia, but did you know that the Appeal reaches every corner of this very large Diocese?

The Bishop's Annual Appeal will provide campus ministers at 11 colleges in our Diocese and furnish food and clothing through 13 Catholic Charities outreach centers spread throughout our seven Deaneries. In addition to our seminarians, we have educated more than 75 men through the Permanent Diaconate program. Dozens of ministries and programs including Family Life, Evangelization, Black Ministry, Hispanic Ministry and Youth & Young Adult Ministry are funded through the Appeal, as well as the Southern Cross newspaper and our Child and Youth Protection program. Through our diverse ministries and programs, we have already identified our neighbors in need. We ask you to be a Samaritan to your neighbors in the Diocese of Savannah.

Our theme for the 2019 Bishop's Annual Appeal is **Who Is My Neighbor?** I invite our entire diocese to respond with compassion that has no boundaries. In closing the parable, Jesus commanded to His disciples, "Go and do likewise."

There is joy in giving. Now it is up to us to "go and do likewise" and carry out Jesus' healing mission on earth by helping our neighbors in need.

Jesus taught us to pray and He commanded us to give.

I thank you for all that you do to serve Christ's people and I ask that you join me in continued prayers for all of our neighbors who call South Georgia home.

With prayerful best wishes, I am



Gratefully yours in Christ,

+ Gregory J. Hartmayer, OFM Conv.

Most Reverend Gregory J. Hartmayer, OFM Conv.
Bishop of Savannah