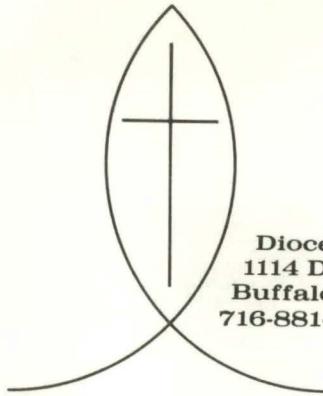


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Diocese of Western New York
1114 Delaware Avenue
Buffalo, New York 14209
716-881-0660

Dear Rectors and Wardens:

I write you concerning the pledge to the Diocese for 1974 from your congregation.

Each year you solicit the members of your congregation asking for a pledge of financial support. You attempt to inform your people of the needs of the church, urge them to be generous and inspiring them to be faithful stewards of the gifts God has given them. It can be very frustrating when people fail to recognize those needs and shirk their responsibility as members of the Church.

The Diocese has a similar relationship to its parishes. The Diocese urges its parishes to be faithful stewards of the gifts they receive from their parishioners and to remember others outside the parish boundaries. It can be very frustrating when parishes fail to recognize Diocesan needs and shirk their responsibilities as members of the Diocese. The same must be kept in mind when the Diocese considers its pledge to the National Church. I am suggesting that the Vestry, when making a parish pledge to the Diocese, tell itself the same sort of thing it has been telling its own parishioners. Likewise, the Diocese must "practice what it preaches" when it signs a pledge to the National Church.

At our last Convention, our Diocesan Treasurer commented that the Diocese of Western New York was in better financial condition than it had ever been in his own personal experience. The Diocese is financially solvent, not because we have ample funding, but because we have trimmed expenses in order to live within our income. We have not been able to pay our "fair share" to the National Church. New work, involving added expenditures have been delayed. Being solvent is no great virtue if such solvency results in stagnation.

At the same Convention, the Diocese voted to increase the minimum clergy salaries and to become more of a "servant Church", striving to meet the unmet needs in our communities. Translated into practice, this means increased expenditures for both the parish and the Diocese. It also means that the individual parishioners are supporting, through their pledge to the Diocese, many worthwhile programs.

From 1968 to 1972, pledges to the Diocese decreased each year from a high of \$335,000. to a low in 1972 of \$277,000. - a decrease over a five year period of some \$57,000. - during an inflationary spiral! Last year (1973) we reversed that trend with an increase in pledges amounting to \$4,500. It would be tragic if we were to fall back now. With this in mind, I am asking each parish to pledge at least as much as they pledged in 1973 with the earnest hope that they

will be able to continue this new trend by increasing their pledge for 1974.

I am confident that you will take all of this and more into consideration when you decide upon your pledge to the Diocese for next year. The enclosed pledge form (sent only to the clergy) should be returned to the Diocesan office no later than January 3, 1974. We must have them by this date in order to formulate the 1974 budget.

I am deeply grateful for your support during the last three years as your Diocesan. I continue to be encouraged by signs of renewal and vitality and invite you to share my enthusiasm.

Faithfully yours,

+ Harold Barrett Robinson

Harold Barrett Robinson
Bishop of Western New York

November 13, 1973

HBR/w
Enc.