The Final Phase of Our Campaign to Preserve and Celebrate
THE HISTORICAL LEGACY, DIVERSITY AND SACREDNESS OF SAINT MARY CATHEDRAL
Our Vision

OUR VISION IS TO BE A SHINING LIGHT OF CATHOLIC THOUGHT AND ACTION, LIVED OUT THROUGH OUR PARISH AND SCHOOL, AS AN EXAMPLE TO ALL IN THE DIOCESE OF AUSTIN AND THE STATE OF TEXAS, EXHIBITING INTEGRITY IN ALL THAT WE DO AS WE SERVE JESUS CHRIST.

LAUREN MILLER, Saint Mary Cathedral Parishioner

Photos by Arlen Nydam
Dear Cathedral parishioner/friend,

Great cities have great Cathedrals. Austin is no exception. Saint Mary Cathedral’s origins date back to the 1850’s, when Austin had a population of 600. The Cathedral is a historical and holy place, a place rich in tradition and culture, and a place where generations have found solace, strength and inspiration.

It is a beautiful church where from a distance you can see the tall towers and smaller spires that balance and gracefully complement each other. High above the entrance of the church is the statue of Mary, the Mother of God, to whom this church is consecrated, and in the background is the peerless rose window with the steeples rising to the sky on each side - all under the cross of Christ.

Generations of believers have had the privilege of hearing beautiful melodies from the old tracker pipe organ, or the ringing of St. Mary’s bells blessed and hung in the tower in 1896. They have admired the exquisite Tiffany tracings of the stained glass windows brought from Munich and Le Mans and installed in 1891. Each window tells a story and denotes the families who sacrificed to build the magnificent church we pray in each week.

Today, Saint Mary Cathedral continues to be an active and vibrant Church and a part of Austin’s history. It is a beautiful place that sits in the busiest section of Austin and is in walking distance from our Texas State Capital. As with any building from the 1870’s, however, the Cathedral has been challenged by time.

I am proud to serve as rector of Saint Mary Cathedral, and greatly appreciate the commitment you have shown with your financial and spiritual support for so many years. As we work on the final phase of restoring this historic place, I hope you will continue your support and help us complete our efforts. I truly believe God is asking each of us to prayerfully reflect on how we have been blessed to have this beautiful Cathedral for all these years and to generously support this campaign to the fullest extent our situation allows.

Saint Mary Cathedral is more than just a historic building, it is part of Austin’s history and is part of our Catholic identity in Austin. I ask you to help me Restore, Renew, and Rejoice the historical and future presence of Saint Mary Cathedral and thank you, in advance, for your willingness to support this very important cause.

God bless,

Very Rev. Albert Laforet, Jr.
Rector
“The sky is falling! The sky is falling!” said Chicken Little. We are all familiar with this memorable children’s story about the chicken that became untrustworthy because what it said too often caused others to doubt. For the past ten years, you have heard the same refrain about our Cathedral. The truth is that our building was indeed falling.

Our restoration efforts started back in 2003, when a large piece of plaster fell from around the Immaculate Conception window down to the sanctuary during the Cathedral School Mass. Thankfully, no one was injured.

When work commenced to repair the window and the plaster around it, other structural needs began to surface:

• the vaults over the congregation in the nave were determined to be unsafe;
• the roof was leaking;
• windows, including the Immaculate Conception window, were loosely held together.

In 2009, when the bells were replaced with a new digital system, the wood supporting the bells was found to have deteriorated to a point that the whole structure was in danger of falling.

In 2011, a parishioner was outside the Cathedral comforting her crying child when a piece of stone fell from the bell tower, missing the two by just a few feet. During the repairs to the tower, major problems were uncovered, including:

• pinnacles needing extensive repairs;
• the rose window beginning to collapse;
• the four crosses in danger of falling off.

Recently, while repairing the stonework, it was discovered that many of the roof tiles had fallen. This is a serious safety issue since if a roof tile were to fall off the Cathedral and hit someone, it would be catastrophic.

We are at a critical juncture in this long, unintended adventure. To address these needs, we have three clear tasks before us:

• retire our remaining debt incurred over the years for some of the repairs;
• meet immediate safety needs of the Cathedral including the roof, handicapped ramp and sidewalks, and lastly, re-lead and repair the stained glass windows in the nave.
Saint Mary Cathedral is conducting a three-year campaign to complete the work started over ten years ago. **RESTORE, RENEW, REJOICE** is the final phase of our campaign to preserve and celebrate the historical legacy, diversity and sacredness of Saint Mary Cathedral.

**GOAL 1: RESTORE | $821,000**
Meeting the **Restore Goal** will retire the debt from the loans incurred with the restoration of the bell tower, facade work, and the rose window projects which will allow the Cathedral to enter into the final phase financially responsible.

**GOAL 2: RENEW | $1,450,000**
Achieving the **Renew Goal** will ensure the safety of our parishioners by:
- replacing the wooden wheelchair ramp with a permanent stone and concrete ramp;
- resurfacing and leveling the sidewalks;
- repairing the roof and replacing roof tiles, and
- making the entries to the Cathedral compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

**GOAL 3: REJOICE | $255,000**
Upon completing the work to address the 24 stained windows in the nave, we will complete the tasks listed to preserve the beauty and integrity of our historic Cathedral.

“As I look at the sunlight streaming through the stained-glass windows, I thank God for all His many gifts and think of my family as well as the generations of the faithful who experienced this awe-inspiring beauty. It's time for us to do our part to renew the Cathedral and its mission for the future.”

**PAUL SEALS, Campaign Co-Chair**
Pledges
Pledges are commitments of payments to be made over time. We have chosen a three-year campaign to assist families in making their best gift. Please consider making a 10-20 percent down payment (more, if you are able); the remainder can be spread over the three-year pledge period, choosing the frequency of payment schedule that works for you.

Cash
Most commonly, donors make cash payments using a check, credit or debit card, EFT or automatic bill pay. You may benefit from such payments with a charitable deduction on your tax return.

Securities
Stocks, bonds or mutual fund shares that have appreciated can have an immediate impact on our campaign and also create an income tax deduction for you based on their current value.

Life Insurance
You may donate to the campaign by making Saint Mary Cathedral the owner and beneficiary of your insurance policy.

Corporate Matching Gifts
A matching gift program provided through your employer or board membership may allow you to increase the value of your gift. Please inquire at your place of employment before you make your gift.

Planned Gifts
Planned giving is the process of carefully selecting the best method and asset for making a charitable gift. Such a gift can enable you to take full advantage of the tax laws to accomplish your financial and charitable goals.

WAYS YOU CAN GIVE
Selecting the best gift plan depends on your personal financial situation and goals. As tax laws are always changing and each individual’s situation is unique, donors are encouraged to consult with financial advisors to determine the most beneficial contribution method. Gifts made by cash or check are common and are certainly appreciated, but the following methods of giving provide increased advantages and flexibility for the donor and Saint Mary Cathedral toward reaching the campaign goal.

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Everyone has a stake in the campaign’s success. In considering the best gift you/your family can make, we encourage you to do the following:

- pray the campaign prayer;
- consider what Saint Mary Cathedral means to this community, what it means to you and your family;
- answer the call to be a good steward of the gifts you have been given, the gifts you’ve enjoyed, and
- if appropriate, consult with your financial advisor to determine how you can make your best gift.

Your Support

When I pray at the Cathedral, I often think of the parishioners who have gone before me and worshiped Our Lord within the same walls. Their dedication has given us a beautiful space to worship and pray in; I think we have an obligation to pass on a beautiful and safe cathedral to future generations.”

ROSY JALIFI, Campaign Co-Chair

“
Christian stewardship is using the gifts God has given us to do the work God is calling us to do. All that we have in this life is a gift from God. Part of being a good steward is giving back to God some of what we have been given, in loving gratitude for God’s many gifts to us.

A pledge is your commitment to financially support the campaign over a specific time period. The advantage of a pledge over a one-time gift is the ability to spread out your gift over a period of 36-months.

What you pledge is between you and God. It is something you should take into your prayer life and approach thoughtfully. Even more important than the amount you pledge is that you pledge. It is a tangible sign of your commitment. It says, “I am here and I am going to help.”

“What I have pledged, versus making a one-time donation, I feel more invested in the project and what is happening at the parish. It is not a “one and done and move on” type of participation. Making a pledge is a more thoughtful process. It means taking inventory of what we have and what we have been blessed with and giving back to God — not giving once and being done, but giving in a genuine heartfelt way, like He gives to us.”

John Paul Perales
Saint Mary Cathedral Parishioner

“The heart of our Catholic life is reverent liturgical celebrations, and this is most important to preserve in the heart of our diocese, Saint Mary Cathedral.

EDWARD CHECK,
Saint Mary Cathedral Parishioner

The following chart is provided to serve as a guide as you prayerfully consider your level of support over a three-year period.

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Campaign Prayer

Almighty God, we praise you for the beauty of creation and we thank you for creation reflected in the grandeur of our Cathedral. Loving Father, inspire us to respond generously to the needs of your Church, may we experience Your Divine love, care and protection as we restore and renew Saint Mary Cathedral.

May the work You began in our forefathers continue as we preserve this great legacy dedicated to our Blessed Mother. Restore the splendor of Your life in us; renew and strengthen our faith in You; and may we know the joy of faithfully serving You through generous stewardship.

We lovingly entrust ourselves and our campaign to the prayers of our patroness, Mary, the Immaculate Conception. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Memorare

Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that anyone who fled to thy protection, implored thy help, or sought thy intercession, was left unaided. Inspired with this confidence, we fly unto thee, O Virgin of Virgins my Mother; to thee do we come; before thee do we stand, sinful and sorrowful; O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not our petitions, but in thy mercy hear and answer us. Amen.