

November 2018

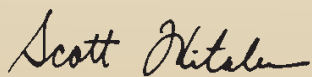
Dear Friends,

I always look forward to November, when we gather with family and friends and give thanks for the many blessings in our lives. As a steward of Christ, I recognize these blessings are gifts from our generous and loving God, and I am called to share my bounty with those less fortunate in the spirit of Christian stewardship.

In this newsletter, you will read how gifts to *Encountering Christ* will help ensure Catholic Charities of Central Texas is there to help individuals and families in need. The services they receive from this important direct service arm of our diocese make a significant difference in their lives during times of disaster, financial insecurity and personal crisis. Most important, Catholic Charities serves them with the love, respect and dignity they deserve.

May you and your loved ones know Christ's bounty this Thanksgiving, as we begin preparing our hearts for His birth at Christmas.

Sincerely,



Scott Whitaker
Director of Stewardship and
Development



DIocese OF AUSTIN
6225 E US 290 HWY SVRD EB
AUSTIN, TX 78723
encounteringchristcampaign.org
(512) 949-2400

‘God’s timing is perfect’

Every day in the Diocese of Austin, Catholic Charities of Central Texas helps us answer our call as Catholics to care for those living on the margins of our communities.

“The greatest thing about Catholic Charities is that it exudes and bubbles out our Catholic social and moral teachings,” said Executive Director Sara Ramirez. “It’s for the greater good of the community. We’re reaching across all denominations. Even for people who don’t have faith, we get to show them what His love looks like.”



Since 1999, Catholic Charities has provided protection and care to children, help to families and a new beginning for refugees and immigrants, and restored dignity to the elderly. The direct service arm of the Diocese of Austin also supports parishes’ spiritual work by meeting their clients’ material and social needs to break the cycle of generational poverty.

**The number of families Catholic Charities serves annually
has more than tripled over the last 10 years.**

But even though the number of families Catholic Charities serves annually has more than tripled over the last 10 years and is expected to rise to 100,000 a year by 2028, being physically present in only the Austin and Bryan/College Station areas has limited its reach in the 25-county service region.

“Demand for our service is out there,” Sara said. “It’s just that we are not in those communities, and we don’t necessarily have the resources to provide services to everyone who comes to us.”

Continued on page 2

Continued from page 1



Encountering Christ will change that, with \$5 million directed to Catholic Charities to renovate a diocesan building in Waco, which, according to analysis, will have the greatest immediate effect and help provide additional services to historically underserved communities.

“We’ve always been a part of Waco, but now we will have a physical presence there,” Sara said.

Campaign funds will also be used to reconfigure the current facilities in Bryan/College Station and the Austin offices to accommodate additional staff and volunteers so more clients can be welcomed.

When it comes to *Encountering Christ*, “God’s timing is perfect,” Sara said, adding that for donors, the campaign is an opportunity to “live out their values, to leave a legacy. I always say, ‘The legacy you leave, is the legacy that you lived today.’ What do you want to be remembered for?”

For an in depth look at the work of Catholic Charities, visit encounteringchristcampaign.org/videos and watch the “Catholic Charities of Central Texas” video.



Catholic Charities is dedicated to helping people of all ages, faiths, ethnic backgrounds and economic circumstances.

Services and assistance include:

- Counseling services
- Disaster response
- Financial stability
- Gabriel Project Life Center
- Immigration legal services
- St. Michael’s Veteran Services

VOLUNTEER PROFILE | Cathy Smith

As a parishioner at St. Mary, Church of the Assumption in Waco since baptism, Cathy Smith was excited to learn about the effect *Encountering Christ* would have in her parish and community along with the Diocese of Austin as a whole.

“I see the needs on the diocesan level, and I see the needs on our local level,” she said, noting that St. Mary’s circa-1940s buildings have maintenance and facility issues to address.

But especially concerning, according to Cathy, are the number of people in Waco who would benefit from the physical presence of Catholic Charities of Central Texas. Thanks to *Encountering Christ*, Catholic Charities will open a Waco office, which will be housed in St. Mary’s currently unused school building.

The parish does what it can to serve the poor — giving out upward of 1,100 sack lunches a month, as well as toiletries and clothing, through its homeless lunch program. A portion of St. Mary’s share of campaign funds will be directed to this outreach program, which is currently volunteer run and funded with donations.

But community members are more than hungry. “We need Catholic Charities,” said Cathy, who is a parish staff member as well as a member of the campaign executive committee. “Every week we have requests for funding — they need help for rent. People need help for utilities, need a coat. Just yesterday, I had a phone call from a mother with two small children who was stuck in a motel and had no money to pay the next week’s rent.”

Knowing the building where she attended school for eight years will experience a new life benefitting the community is “a joy,” Cathy said. “That’s what the Church is all about.”



Cathy Smith