Dear Friends,

I want to extend a special thank you to the pastors and leaders of Wave 3 parishes who recently gathered with Bishop Joe Vásquez at four Leadership Summits. Their enthusiasm for this campaign to strengthen the Diocese of Austin is much appreciated!

It is hard to believe we are now launching the final wave of *Encountering Christ*, and I cannot help but reflect on how far we have come since the Pilot Phase began in January 2018. While we will meet our $85 million goal during this last leg of fundraising, we owe our success to the generosity of many during the past year and a half. We are incredibly grateful to the more than 12,300 individuals who have accepted the invitation to participate in *Encountering Christ*.

I am especially pleased to report that your contributions are already being directed to support the needs identified in both the diocesan and local case statements. Look for details on how ministries and parishes are benefiting from campaign gifts in future issues of this newsletter and at encounteringchristcampaign.org.

Sincerely,

Scott Whitaker
Director of Stewardship and Development

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**Grants benefit teachers, schools — and especially students**

Thanks to a grant from the *Advancing Our Mission* Endowment, Brian Atteberry has transformed his classroom at Reicher Catholic High School into a makerspace.

“These grants make a teacher’s vision possible,” said Brian, the Waco school’s director of technology, who used his nearly $3,000 grant for a 3D printer, a computer numerical control router and a vinyl cutter.

Now when his students design projects using sophisticated computer programs, they no longer remain digital. “They just start designing and creating and innovating,” he said. “The engineering design process just comes to life.”

A key component of educational excellence lies in equipping the Diocese of Austin’s 22 Catholic schools with the tools needed to supplement and enhance their teaching. The *Advancing Our Mission* Endowment provides teachers and schools with grants to upgrade technology, giving a comprehensive educational experience to the diocese’s more than 5,000 students.

*Encountering Christ* will direct $1 million in campaign gifts to the *Advancing Our Mission* Endowment. An investment of this level ensures grants may be disseminated from this endowment for many years to come.

For the 2018-19 school year, the diocese received 49 applications for *Advancing Our Mission* grants and awarded 34 grants ranging from $150 to $3,000.

“Our teachers appreciate the opportunity to apply for grants that enable them to provide their students with access to new programs,” said Rob Whitworth, associate superintendent of the Diocese of Austin Catholic Schools. “Some of these are programs that are simply purchased and implemented while others are the brainchild of the teacher.”

Brian’s long-term goal is to engage students beyond his classroom and create interest in STEM subjects and careers. “I would love to see all kids in there, just to experience creating something on the computer, then creating a physical object,” he said.
Bishop Vásquez welcomes Wave 3 pastors and parish leaders to Leadership Summits

More than 500 pastors and parish leaders attended Leadership Summits earlier this month, formally launching the final wave of *Encountering Christ*. The 24 parishes participating in Wave 3 have already raised more than $4.3 million of their collective goal of $33.4 million. They will complete their campaigns in December.

A special thanks is extended to the pastors and parish staff members who hosted these events at St. John Neumann Parish in Austin, St. William Parish in Round Rock, St. Jerome Parish in Waco and St. Mary’s Catholic Center in College Station.