

October 2019

Dear Friends,

I am excited to report we are in the final stages of fundraising for *Encountering Christ* and our \$85 million goal is well within reach. Thanks to the generosity of more than 13,000 faithful stewards, we have now raised \$80 million.

As you are aware, the third and final wave of parishes is now participating in *Encountering Christ*. Although this wave will be the one to push us over our goal, credit is due to each of you who contributed to this campaign in some way. Our success would not have been possible without the many volunteers who dedicated their time in their parishes, the prayers you lifted up for the campaign or the financial resources you sacrificed.

If your parish has already participated in the campaign and you were unable to make a gift at that time, it is not too late. We welcome your support and prayers during this last push to strengthen the diocese and our parishes for future generations.

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

Campaign benefits campus ministry

Campaign gifts are helping make Our Lady of Wisdom University Parish in San Marcos a “place of refuge” at Texas State University.

The campus ministry is under-resourced, said Father Craig DeYoung, who was excited to learn *Encountering Christ* would benefit both his parish and its vital ministry to students.



Andrew Alvarado, president of Our Lady of Wisdom’s Commission for Life and Dignity, uses his code to enter through the new secure doors purchased with campaign funds.

“We serve about 600 Catholic students each semester, but there are probably about 13,000 Catholics on our campus,” he said. “The opportunity is there.”

The Diocese of Austin is blessed with one of the country’s largest populations of Catholic college students, with tens of thousands of students across 14 colleges and universities served by campus ministry, missions and six university Catholic centers. *Encountering Christ* will direct \$7 million to the diocese’s current campus ministry programs, including capital investments so campuses have spacious and visible facilities to welcome and minister to students.

“We want to really make this place a second home, especially for our freshmen who are not home for the first time in their life,” said Breanne Saldivar, Our Lady of Wisdom’s campus minister.

Through its campaign, Our Lady of Wisdom addressed plumbing issues in the outdated restrooms and peeling paint, and improved the sound system. The parish also updated the doors to the sanctuary and added security cameras and a passcard system to the make the space more secure.

“We ultimately want this place to be a place of community, a place of fellowship, a place where students can come in between their classes,” Breanne said. “But as much as they love the community here, if the building is not up to standards, students will find another place to study.”

Our Lady of Wisdom raised 151 percent of its goal during *Encountering Christ*, thanks in large part to the generosity of the parish’s permanent community. These parishioners live in the San Marcos area and chose Our Lady of Wisdom as their home parish because they support the mission and want to be there for students, Father DeYoung said.

“They want to see the ministry succeed, they want to see the mission of Christ advanced, and they want to see the Kingdom of Heaven built,” he said.

As *Encountering Christ* nears goal, your questions about the next step in the campaign answered

With *Encountering Christ* close to meeting its \$85 million goal, parishioners across the diocese are — understandably — asking questions! Here, Scott Whitaker addresses the ones he hears most often.

Q: Now that *Encountering Christ* is nearly finished, what happens next?

Scott: First, and most important, the campaign is not over. The past two years, when parishes conducted their campaigns in a series of waves, were just one phase of *Encountering Christ*. This active fundraising phase comes to a close at the end of 2019, when the third and final wave of parishes complete their campaigns. All parishes will then be in the fulfillment phase, a five-year period for those who made pledges to fulfill them.

Q: When will my parish receive the funds we raised during the campaign?

Scott: Parishes receive their portion as parishioners fulfill their pledges. These funds are placed in a special account for each parish. Every parish had a

goal for the campaign and will retain 30 percent of the pledges fulfilled up to that goal. If a parish raised more than its goal, it will receive 70 percent of those overage funds. The local needs parishes identified for their campaigns will be tackled as the funds are received, and it is exciting to see parishes from the early waves already completing projects.

Q: When will the diocese begin fulfilling the needs outlined in the campaign brochure, like for clergy, Catholic schools and religious education, Catholic Charities of Central Texas and campus ministry?

Scott: The campaign has received \$18.8 million in cash as of Oct. 1. As every dollar comes in as a gift or a payment of a pledge, it is split 30-70 between the diocese and the parish it was pledged to — so the diocese must wait for pledges to be fulfilled to begin our projects, too. With funds received so far, we have already created the seminarian endowment,

invested in the priest's pension plan and trust and began work on the St. John Paul II Residence for Priests. As more pledges are fulfilled, more items will be checked off the diocese's list. It is very exciting.

Q: How will we know what the diocese has accomplished?

Scott: Our plan is to continue these newsletters to keep you up to date on our progress and a monthly update in the *Catholic Spirit*, our diocesan newspaper. You can also connect with us on social media. The diocese has very active Facebook, Twitter and Instagram accounts.

Q: What happens if pledges are unfulfilled?

Scott: A pledge is a commitment made with the best of intentions. However, we understand that life circumstances change. If you have a question or concern about your pledge, please call my office at 512-949-2400! We are here to help you in any way we can.



Campaign helps build faith formation center

St. Paul Chong Hasang Parish has completed construction on its new faith formation center. The parish conducted an independent campaign, *Building a Legacy for Our Future*, to raise extraordinary funds for this parish project alongside *Encountering Christ*. The 7,200-square-foot religious formation center will better accommodate the more than 300 children enrolled in faith formation at the Harker Heights parish.