

The *Christ Our Hope: Building a Vibrant Church* campaign is underway throughout the state. The goal of the effort is to unite as Catholics to renew, strengthen and secure the future of the Catholic Church in Vermont. As part of our continuing campaign education, we offer this list of frequently asked questions. If you have others, please contact the Diocese at (802) 658-6110 x 1226 or [ekane@vermontcatholic.org](mailto:ekane@vermontcatholic.org). Thank you.



# Frequently ASKED QUESTIONS



## THE CHRIST OUR HOPE CAMPAIGN AND COVID-19

### Why move forward with a campaign as our community works through the COVID-19 pandemic response?

These times have only reinforced that now, more than ever, the Catholic Church in Vermont, especially our parishes, need assistance from those who can help. The number one priority of the Synod to create vibrant parishes has become even more important. We know some families will be able to give while others may not. However, as Catholics, we recognize that stewardship, while important in good times, is even more important in times like these.

### Could the campaign have been delayed?

Over the last two months, while following the direction of the state of Vermont and evaluating our options, we delayed campaign activities to focus on community outreach and the celebration of Easter through virtual participation. After consulting with the campaign's clergy and executive committees and based on the guidance of the CDC and the needs of our parishes, we decided it was best to move forward with a campaign after restructuring the timeline. We will combine all parishes into one wave, with kickoff celebrations occurring in mid-August and the campaign concluding in November.

### How will we ask people for money now? What will I be asked to give?

We understand that families in our faith community have been impacted;

however, it is important to consider that many may have the ability to give and want to help. It is our responsibility to offer everyone the opportunity to participate in this historic campaign with the understanding that no gift is too small.



## THE PARISHES

### Who will be involved in the campaign?

All parishes are participating under a unified timeline, with every parishioner given the opportunity to participate through prayerful consideration of a sacrificial gift that is meaningful to them.

### How will we use the funds raised in this campaign?

Since this is a parish-focused campaign, 60% of the funds raised will return to the parish to support the campaign goals as defined by parish leadership. For example, a parish may use the dollars to pay for a capital improvement project, to enhance offertory or create/replenish a reserve fund. The other 40% will go to endowments in the Vermont Catholic Community Foundation. The intent is to use those funds to support faith formation to strengthen our Catholic schools, youth ministry, evangelization efforts, and emergency assistance delivered by Catholic Charities. All distributions of funds are minus campaign expenses.

### How will this campaign affect offertory? The Bishop's Annual Appeal?

The hope is it won't affect either. Your weekly commitment turns on the lights, pays for staffing, parish ministries and programs. Simply put, it keeps the

parish functioning. It's the same with the Bishop's Annual Appeal. The Diocese uses those dollars to support its various ministries and outreach programs. Hopefully donors will consider a gift above and beyond their regular support knowing they have three years to fulfill that commitment. If one must decide between campaign or ordinary giving, the Diocese encourages them to continue supporting ordinary giving.

Please note, the intent was to include the Bishop's Annual Appeal as part of the campaign. However, due to COVID-19, we launched it separately, with an accelerated timeline to provide immediate relief to the Diocese for operational costs and ongoing ministry to the vulnerable across the state. The campaign commitment form will include space to make a gift to the Bishop's Annual Appeal, if needed.

### Who will ask parishioners to support the Christ Our Hope campaign?

You will receive your gift request in a letter signed by Bishop Coyne and your pastor. Campaign volunteers from your parish – along with the pastor – will place follow up phone calls to parishioners to review the goals, answer questions and encourage participation.

### What are the campaign expenses? How will these be paid?

Standard campaign expenses, such as printing, postage, mailing and design costs, will run through the VCCF. If the campaign reaches goal, at least 90% of every dollar will go to program delivery. Parishes and VCCF share the fixed campaign fees of \$1 million paid from campaign income. The expense for each parish is 4.8% of its average ordinary income; VCCF pays 3.2% of expenses for each parish's average ordinary income. Parish expenses will be deducted from the parish's first disbursement.

(over)

## PARISH FAQs CONTINUED

### Are the campaign expenses an additional assessment on parish offertory?

Each parish's portion of the campaign expenses will be paid from campaign funds raised NOT offertory.

### Where will donors send their gifts? Where will the money be kept?

The Vermont Catholic Community Foundation (VCCF) will process/hold gifts and commitments for the restricted purpose of campaign initiatives. After accounting for costs, the VCCF will disburse funding based on payments received, not commitments. Disbursements will occur semi-annually.

### Does a parish need to meet its campaign goal in order to receive distributions of funds raised?

Parishes will receive their 60% distribution from campaign funds raised twice a year regardless if they meet their goal.

### Can I just support my parish directly?

We hope you continue to support your parish directly through your regular Sunday giving. The intent of this campaign is not to divert funds that go toward normal operating needs. This is a special effort designed to meet extraordinary needs. This campaign is intended to be transformative, to position parishes and the Catholic Church in Vermont to thrive for years to come. In short, supporting the campaign is supporting your parish directly – as well as uniting for the common needs of serving the poor and strengthening faith formation.

### What happens to campaign donations if a parish merges with another?

According to canon law, if a parish merges with another parish, campaign gifts as well as other assets go to the new parish NOT the Diocese.

### What kind of financial transparency can we expect during the campaign and beyond?

Transparency is a top priority for this campaign and the Vermont Catholic Community Foundation. The Vermont Catholic Community Foundation is a separate 501c3 organization from the Diocese of Burlington and will manage this campaign on behalf of the entire Vermont Catholic Community. The Foundation shares its audited financials annually in its annual report, in the Vermont Catholic magazine and on its website:

[www.vtcatholicfoundation.org](http://www.vtcatholicfoundation.org). Regular updates of campaign goals, projects and fundraising will be communicated

during the campaign through many avenues – the Inland See, bulletin announcements, Vermont Catholic magazine and the Vermont Catholic Community Foundation annual report.

### What types of projects could the parishes choose for the use of campaign funds?

Parish projects should aim to bring vitality to the parish, promote parish life, evangelize and serve the faithful and the surrounding community. Options include building projects, renovations of existing buildings, overdue maintenance needs, debt reduction, offertory relief or building an endowment fund. Some parishes might take more of a direct ministry approach by adding an employee to develop a new ministry or providing materials for an existing ministry.



### Will we receive reminders about our pledges during the three-year campaign?

You will receive regular giving updates and reminders, but to reduce the expenses associated with gift redemption, online payments or automatic withdrawals are encouraged.

### How do you determine the gift request that families are asked to consider?

Ask amounts are based on several factors: planning study results, families' history of parish support, input from church leadership, and the understanding that for this to be successful it will require sacrificial gifts. Some will give more than asked, others not as much. Please note the request is not an expectation, but an invitation for people to prayerfully consider being generous with God and to make a meaningful and sacrificial gift in thanks for the graces bestowed upon us.

### Will the campaign accept planned gifts?

Absolutely! An important goal of this campaign is to help parishioners understand the opportunity and benefits of establishing gifts in their will or estate plans through the Vermont Catholic Community Foundation in perpetual support of their parish and/or ministries they love.

### Does a campaign commitment result in tax benefits?

Gifts to the campaign are eligible for charitable tax deduction that may significantly reduce the amount of tax you pay. However, deductions and their benefits are case dependent. Donors with specific questions regarding tax benefits should contact their attorney or financial adviser.

### Why do you emphasize making a three-year commitment?

Multi-year commitments allow donors to consider giving more than is possible through one-time gifts. Additionally, commitments fulfilled over multiple years are not as big a strain on household budgets. This is important in a campaign of this magnitude.

## WHAT OPTIONS WILL I HAVE TO MAKE A GIFT OR PLEDGE? WILL ONLINE GIVING BE AVAILABLE?

There will be several ways to make a gift or make payments on your commitment to the campaign, including:

Setting up a pre-authorized gift (automatic withdrawal) from a checking account (preferred)

Setting up a recurring credit card payment

Visiting [christourhopevt.org](http://christourhopevt.org) to make your gift online

Paying by cash or check through the mail

Making a stock or securities transfer

