

## Campaign helps connect rural parishes



The Diocese of Austin's rural parishes not only face unique challenges — they often feel isolated from other parishes in the diocese. *Encountering Christ* is helping to address these issues, according to two Wave 1 pastors.

“Parishioners are beginning to feel more connected to the diocese through the capital campaign and recognize the challenges we face as the Austin diocese continues to grow exponentially,” said Father Darrell Kostihá, who became pastor of St. Joseph Parish in Cyclone and Sts. Cyril and Methodius Mission in Marak in June — around the same time Wave 1 parishes were preparing to launch their campaigns.

He saw firsthand how parishioners at both churches “pitch in and work hard to get things done for the greater good” as they held their annual picnics. They have applied that attitude to *Encountering Christ* as well. “They recognized the need and benefit of the capital campaign not only for the diocese but also for their particular parish,” Father Kostihá said. “Even though it has been a difficult year for the farmers and ranchers it shows their capacity and heart to see beyond themselves to help others.”

St. Joseph has raised 117 percent of its campaign goal and Sts. Cyril and Methodius is at 75 percent. Both parishes will make facility repairs and improvements with their share of campaign funds.

*Encountering Christ* provided a “good opportunity to explain how this relationship between the parish and diocese works, and especially for a parish our size,” said Father Uche Andeh, pastor of St. Mary Mission in Pin Oak and St. Margaret Parish in Giddings. “They are there to help serve us, and they make us better. They make my work easier, they make our ministries here flow a lot better.”

Parishioners were especially excited to learn about the diocesan funds to be directed to struggling rural parishes. St. Margaret is at 106 percent of goal and is preparing for a new parish hall, while St. Mary has raised 181 percent of its goal and plans to use campaign gifts to build a reserve fund.

“People were pumped about this,” Father Andeh said. “They see this as an opportunity for them to contribute to the wellbeing of the diocese.”