

DONOR 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 impact *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.”