



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What is *Encountering Christ*?

A. *Encountering Christ* is a capital and endowment campaign to raise \$85 million in gifts and pledges for local parish needs while strengthening ministries, Catholic education and faith formation, supporting our clergy and enhancing growth and development across the diocese.

Q. Why is the Diocese of Austin embarking on a capital and endowment campaign?

A. Through our pastoral plan, *Encounter that Leads to Transformation*, we developed a roadmap for a vibrant and secure future for this diocese. *Encountering Christ* will allow us to fulfill the mission of our diocese as we outlined together.

Q. Is the Catholic Services Appeal taking place during the campaign?

A. Yes, the Catholic Services Appeal will continue to be conducted annually. *Encountering Christ* is a capital and endowment campaign to meet the future needs of the diocese, while the Catholic Services Appeal helps fund the ongoing operating expenses of the Diocese of Austin each year. Individual parish goals for the Catholic Services Appeal in 2018 and 2019 will remain the same as for the 2017 CSA. The campaign office will work with parishes to educate parishioners on the difference between *Encountering Christ* and the Catholic Services Appeal.

Q. Which parishes are participating in *Encountering Christ*?

A. All 123 parishes and missions are taking part in the campaign in four parish “waves” during 2018 and 2019. The Pilot Wave will take place from January to June 2018, and will be followed by Waves 1, 2 and 3 in subsequent six-month periods through 2019.

Q. How will parishes participate?

A. Parishes will conduct their own *Encountering Christ* campaigns, supported by a member of the campaign team and relying on the following five principles to reach their targets:

- Prayer
- Personal visits
- Proportional giving
- Phase-by-phase approach
- Pledged gifts

Q. How will campaign funds support clergy?

A. *Encountering Christ* will direct \$12 million to supporting the holy men who serve us, beginning in their seminary years through their retirement. These funds will be used to encourage vocations, especially among Spanish-speaking populations; to offset the cost of education and formation for seminarians; to meet the anticipated shortfall in the pension plan for retired priests; and to expand the St. John Paul II Residence for Priests.

Q. How will the campaign strengthen parishes?

A. Our parishes are the heart of our diocese, and we must ensure their strength and sustainability. The diocese will reserve \$10 million from *Encountering Christ* to support the expansion of parishes in need of assistance accommodating increased membership and new ministries, as well as for the construction of new parishes in the future. Campaign funds will create an endowment to provide operational and emergency support for our 80 parishes and missions in rural areas. Thirty percent of the funds raised — \$22.5 million — will fund local needs parishes identify.

Q. How will the campaign form emerging disciples?

A. *Encountering Christ* will ensure current and future generations of disciples are well-formed, prepared and excited to embrace and share their faith with our world. The diocese will direct \$20 million in campaign funds to parish religious education programs for children, expanded formation opportunities for adults and parish catechist training and certification efforts; an endowed scholarship fund for Catholic school families; an endowment providing grants for technology and materials; and Catholic ministry programs serving thousands of college students across 14 colleges and universities in our area.

Q. How will the campaign embrace discipleship?

A. *Encountering Christ* will provide \$14 million for true missionary discipleship, a unifying goal of our pastoral plan. Funds will be used to encourage and develop leadership in schools and parishes, especially from our Hispanic and other emerging ethnic communities; to begin a network of young adult programs and ministers; and to expand the reach of Catholic Charities with a new office in Waco and reconfigured facilities in Bryan/College Station and Austin. To strengthen retreat experiences and broaden their

availability for those who seek to reflect on their faith, *Encountering Christ* will upgrade Cedarbrake Catholic Retreat Center, expanding the chapel and constructing a multipurpose meeting and dining space designed specifically with youth in mind, as well as two dormitory-style cabins.

Q. How are parish targets set?

A. Parish targets are 130 percent of a parish's offertory for the 2016 fiscal year.

Q. How will campaign funds be allocated?

A. Thirty cents of each dollar collected from pledge payments and one-time gifts will be placed in the corresponding parish's DIAL account, beginning with the first dollar. When the parish goal is met in cash payments, that amount will increase to 70 cents per dollar.

The funds allocated to the shared ministries of *Encountering Christ* will be distributed based on the percentage allocated to each ministry in the campaign case statement. Available funds will be directed to ministries as needs arise, regardless of whether the campaign goal has been met.

Q. Will *Encountering Christ* affect parish offertory?

A. Offertory is expected to remain constant during *Encountering Christ's* five-year pledge period.

Q. How much will families be asked to give?

A. Every family in the diocese will be asked to consider a sacrificial gift to *Encountering Christ* in the spirit of Christian stewardship.

Q. Can donors make gifts of stock or other non-cash gifts?

A. *Encountering Christ* accepts publicly traded securities as payments on pledges, as well as deferred gifts.

Q. Why emphasize pledged gifts?

A. Pledges may be paid in installments over five years, allowing families to make larger commitments than they might otherwise consider. Pledged gifts are typically four to five times larger than a one-time gift.

Q. Why is an initial payment requested? Is it required?

A. While not required, many donors are eager to begin fulfilling their pledges. In addition, an initial payment is a strong indication of a donor's commitment to completing a campaign pledge. Initial payment checks should be made payable to: *Encountering Christ*.

Q. How should payments be made to fulfill a pledge?

A. Donors may choose to fulfill their campaign pledge with monthly, quarterly or annual payments. The Diocese of Austin will process each gift and provide a gift acknowledgement letter confirming the preferred schedule for pay-

ment reminders. If a donor does not receive a gift acknowledgement letter in a timely manner, please contact the campaign office at (512) 949-2400.

Payments on *Encountering Christ* pledges should not be made to the parish or included in the parish offertory basket. The Diocese of Austin is facilitating this process to ensure parishes are not burdened with auditing payments during the five-year pledge period.

Q. Why are donors asked to complete a pledge card?

A. Pledge cards record and acknowledge campaign commitments as well as provide donors with a reminder of their requested payment schedule. Donors sign the pledge card to authorize the terms of their gift. *A pledge card is not a legally binding document.*

Q. Can a donor fulfill a pledge with a credit card or automatic bank withdrawal?

A. Yes, the diocese recommends all donors fulfill their pledges with a credit card or an electronic fund transfer (automatic bank withdrawal), but especially those who opt to pay on their pledge monthly. *Encountering Christ* will receive thousands of pledges during the campaign, and more than 80 percent of donors will choose to make monthly payments. If all monthly donors fulfill their commitments by credit card or automatic bank withdrawal, they will save the campaign considerable costs associated with monthly reminder statements, return envelopes, postage and staff time for processing payments.

Q. Are gifts to the campaign tax-deductible?

A. You will receive an acknowledgement of your gift for tax purposes. Please also consult with tax and financial experts.

Q. What is the cost of the campaign as a percent of revenue?

A. The cost of the campaign relative to the financial goal is approximately 6 percent. This cost includes professional fundraising counsel for more than two years, printed promotional materials for more than 130,000 families, specially produced campaign videos, database management and gift acknowledgement and pledge fulfillment for tens of thousands of donors. All costs are flat fees for services performed.

The Diocese of Austin will pay all campaign costs. The parish share of the campaign will be allocated exclusively to the needs parishes identify.

Q. Besides giving, how else can people help the campaign?

A. Prayer is at the heart of the Gospel. Every family should pray for the success of this campaign and for the Diocese of Austin. Your prayers are a great gift to *Encountering Christ*.

Additionally, every pastor will require the assistance of a team of dedicated volunteers to ensure the parish campaign is a success. If you are interested in helping, please call your parish or the campaign office at (512) 949-2400.