

Headline: Wave 1 underway in 58 parishes

Wave 1 of *Encountering Christ* has now launched, with 58 parishes beginning the capital campaign to meet local and diocesan needs. Bishop Joe Vásquez welcomed Wave 1 pastors and Campaign Executive Committee members for an orientation and kickoff at Ascension Parish in Bastrop on August 1, at the Mayborn Convention Center in Temple on July 31, and at Sacred Heart in Austin on July 26.

“It means so much to me that you are supporting your pastor, parish and me as we embark on this journey together,” Bishop Vásquez told those gathered at Ascension Parish. “I am grateful for the faith that you have in God and the Diocese of Austin.”

Sacred Heart Parish in Austin hosted another orientation for the wave’s predominately Spanish-speaking parishes. All total, 750 pastors and volunteers attended these Wave 1 orientations.

Bishop Vásquez explained to volunteers that when the diocese explored the viability of launching a capital campaign, they asked themselves, “What is God asking us, the Diocese of Austin?” and “What are the needs of the diocese?”

“In exploring and discussing these questions, we discovered that the diocese is extremely blessed; we are grateful for all that God has done and is doing in our diocese,” he said. “But, we also realized that this local church continues to grow; thus, there is always more that can and should be done to serve the needs of the people.”

He added, “To continue to have a strong diocese, we must create strong parishes where priests and faithful work together to create a community of faith.”

Wave 1 parishes plan to use their share of campaign funds — 30 percent up their goals, and 70 percent over goal — for a variety of local needs, from strengthening ministries and programs to maintenance and repairs to their churches, parish halls and religious education centers. They have a collective goal of \$10.7 million.

The seven Pilot Phase parishes have now raised 126 percent of their \$2.2 million goal.

All parishes in the diocese will participate in *Encountering Christ*. The remaining parish waves will begin in January and July 2019.