

Final wave of parishes launching the *Encountering Christ* campaign



Bishop Joe Vásquez blesses an *Encountering Christ* volunteer at a campaign event.

The third and final wave of *Encountering Christ* launches this summer, and the campaign is on track to meet its \$85 million goal.

“Our diocese is blessed with generous faithful who embraced this campaign as an opportunity to strengthen our church for future generations,” said Bishop Joe Vásquez. “I am personally grateful for their many sacrifices to ensure the success of *Encountering Christ*.”

More than 12,000 families from parishes throughout the diocese have contributed \$64.6 million to the campaign — 76 percent of goal — since Bishop Vásquez launched the capital and endowment campaign in January 2018 to fulfill many of the goals of the Diocesan Pastoral Plan. Each gift to *Encountering Christ* helps support seminarians and retired priests; strengthen Catholic education, faith formation and discipleship; care for those in need; and provide for local needs at parishes.

Pastors and hundreds of volunteers from the 24 Wave 3 parishes will attend four Campaign Executive Committee orientations at the beginning of August, at St. John Neumann Parish in Austin, St. William Parish in Round Rock, St. Jerome Parish in Waco, and St. Mary’s Catholic Center in College Station.

Father Patrick Ebner has been conferring with his pastoral and finance councils about how Holy Family Parish in Copperas Cove will use its share of campaign funds. They plan to beautify the church sanctuary with new LED lighting, sacred artwork and stained glass windows to “uplift the parish spiritually,” as well as purchase new and permanent hymnals and missalettes.

The stained glass windows will be handmade in Bryan, Texas, and the parish hopes to feature St. Cecilia, the patron saint of musicians, and St. Michael the Archangel, the patron saint of the military, for nearby Fort Hood and its parishioners who are members of military families.

Encountering Christ’s support for diocesan needs, such as seminarians and the poor through Catholic Charities of Central Texas, is also vitally important, Father Ebner said. “I see the need for the campaign, for the sacrificing of your time and talents and treasure to work for a need that no one parish can do on its own.”