



## Saint John Vianney Catholic Church

Dear Families of Saint John Vianney Parish,

Greetings in our Lord Jesus Christ. By now, you have probably heard of Bishop Spalding's "Legacy of Faith, Hope and Love" Campaign. Our bishop has set forth a vision of building endowments for the future of the Catholic Church in our diocese and this campaign is for that purpose. This is a three-year campaign, though the pledging for this campaign will be from now until early December – basically, a two-month run. I mentioned this at the Masses a couple of weekends ago and then various parish volunteers and myself will be available to answer any questions from here onward. I will mention this officially one more time at the end of our campaign window and that will be it.

So, what is the Bishop seeking to financially endow? He wants to build the reserves primarily for Catholic education – that's where a plural majority of the money is going – so that our diocese can provide scholarships for at least 500 more students to our schools each year. He also wants to build the reserves on our seminarian fund, so that we can fully-fund the education of at least 5 more seminarians each year. Furthermore, he wants to build a fund for parish projects, so that counties which have no Catholic parishes can build a church; and so that parishes already in existence can find assistance in expanding their facilities or repairing the facilities they have. Finally, he wants to build a reserve for Catholic Charities, with the stated intent of spreading Catholic Charities Services further into the diocese.

This fundraising campaign has built-in incentives. If our parish hits our goal in pledges – which I will explain in a moment – then we receive 25% of the money back for our own use. If we receive pledges above our goal, that flips for every dollar beyond: 75% comes back to us.

As part of this, the diocese asked us to identify a good project for our returned money from the campaign and after consulting with various experts and with our finance council, we have identified a good project. I have remarked on various occasions regarding how generous and conscientious our parishioners have been in regard to our "little temple", donating and putting up numerous of devotional pictures and statues in our nave, with more to come. This follows in the spirit of Saint John Vianney himself, who saw the ornamentation of his church with religious icons and statues as essential to the work of building his community's faith. What many people do not know, however, is that Saint John Vianney's other task was repairing the church itself, which was in shambles at his arrival.

You may notice that the roof isn't exactly caving in on us in the large church, but that there are places where the molding is pulling away from the ceiling. There are also places where past damage has actually broken through. When the wind is blowing just right and the rain comes down, we have a nice little waterfall which runs down the plate glass at the back of the nave here. None of this indicates that we need to panic just yet; we are proactively observing all of this. Nevertheless, all of it points to the need to assess and repair our roof in the large church. Even in

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the worst-case scenario, the estimates I've received indicate that the 25% returned to us from the Bishop's campaign will cover the full cost. If, however, the roof damage is not nearly as bad as the worst-case scenario, we can use these funds for next-step, next-level projects. For instance, we would use the funds to repaint the wall behind the altar; to freshen up the other walls in the nave; and even to render something beautiful with our ceiling. All of these secondary projects are, of course, secondary, but that gives you the full vision of how we may be able to use the funds, in the best-case scenario.

The three-year goal the bishop has given us for this campaign is \$572,824. I am fully aware that this sounds like a staggering figure, but please remember: this is a three-year campaign. I did the math on this as a rough estimate and if every family on our parish books pledged \$45 a month for these three years, we would surpass our goal. Again, that's a rough estimate; of course, there will always be those who do not give, and of course some of our families simply cannot afford \$45 a month. Yet my point is: roughly \$575,000 over three years is not nearly as frightening a number as it first sounds.

To be clear on this point, Bishop Spalding emphasizes that his request for giving to this campaign is a *request* and it is meant to be a request for *sacrificial* giving *beyond* what you already give. In other words, as he has put it to me, he is not looking to take away your tithing from our parish or your charitable giving to other organizations or so on; this is a request made above and beyond the usual call to arms and Bishop Spalding wants to acknowledge this directly and honestly.

As I mentioned, we will have parish volunteers who, in the coming weeks, will be carrying this message forward. I will also set aside some time for anyone who desires to talk about any part of this campaign as well.

Thank you in advance for any generosity you feel called to offer in response to our bishop's request. May God bless all of us and our parish here.

Yours Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr Richard Childress". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Fr Richard Childress