



BLESSED VIRGIN MARY MISSION

17370 Sweed Road
Washington, TX 77880

Dear Friends,

Our gracious Lord has blessed us abundantly and, with the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we have grown together, evolving into the giving and caring community of faith we are today.

Through our Pastoral Plan, *Encounter that Leads to Transformation*, we have experienced Jesus Christ in a more intentional way, and developed a roadmap for a vibrant and secure future for our diocese. In this spirit, we have launched the *Encountering Christ* campaign to benefit parishes and important diocesan ministries. The campaign goal of \$85 million will allow us to fulfill our mission as we outlined in the Pastoral Plan.

Blessed Virgin Mary Mission will benefit from *Encountering Christ*, and has a goal of \$20,000. Of this amount, 30 percent or \$6,000 will remain at Blessed Virgin Mary to meet locally identified needs.

Please take a moment to review the impact *Encountering Christ* will have in both Blessed Virgin Mary and our diocese.

Sincerely in Christ,



Most Reverend Joe S. Vásquez
Bishop of Austin



Father Ernesto Elizondo
Pastor, Blessed Virgin Mary



DIOCESE OF AUSTIN

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Blessed Virgin Mary Mission
Washington



“So we, though many, are one body in Christ.”
~ Rom 12:5

Encountering Christ

The Diocese of Austin is a thriving and growing community of more than 500,000 brothers and sisters in Christ. Our faith-filled presence has had a profound influence on Central Texas, and we continue to welcome more and more faithful to our parishes and missions each year.

Our diocese has seen many changes over the last 70 years. In the last dozen years alone, the number of Catholics in our area has grown by more than 25 percent. To address the challenges and opportunities these changes have created, the diocese spent a year praying about, reflecting upon and discussing a vision for our future. This year of discernment resulted in *Encounter that Leads to Transformation*, our Pastoral Plan inviting all members of our diocese to a deeper encounter with Jesus Christ, leading to renewal and transformation of ourselves, our homes, our ministries and our community.



Photo courtesy of Joshua Guenther

Strengthened by prayer, *Encountering Christ* allows us — in a spirit of stewardship and unity — to build a vibrant and secure future for the Diocese of Austin.

This campaign will raise a minimum of \$85 million to fulfill the vision of our Pastoral Plan and share in:

- Supporting Our Clergy
- Strengthening Parishes
- Emerging Disciples
- Embracing Discipleship



\$12 million to support our clergy

The men who dedicate their lives to serving us need our support at all stages of their journey. By supporting our clergy from seminary through retirement, we will encourage seminarians and priests to experience the fullness of their vocation, lifting them up as they help us consider and live out our own calling.



\$14 million to embrace discipleship

Fostering encounters with Jesus Christ leads to a deeper engagement that will transform our ministry, resulting in true missionary discipleship. Witnessing our faith is an essential part of Catholic-Christian discipleship.



\$20 million for emerging disciples

Our responsibility as Catholics is to ensure future generations of disciples are well-formed, prepared and excited to embrace and share their faith with our world. We continually seek to support the spiritual development of our children and young adults as well as engage them in educational and formational opportunities.

\$35.5 million to strengthen parishes



Our diocese benefits from the diversity of our 123 parishes and missions, which are urban and rural, small and large, multilingual, with schools and without. Given the critical role of parishes, ensuring their strength and sustainability is of the utmost importance.

Each parish in the diocese is rooted in the church but has its own identity and charism — and unique needs. *Encountering Christ* will have a significant impact on parishes, with \$22.5 million of the campaign's \$85 million goal remaining in parishes to address local needs. If we meet our campaign goal at Blessed Virgin Mary, we will receive \$6,000.

Our loving parish is devoted to Christ and his church and has a strong history of community and faith. Founded in the birthplace of Texas, we are proud to be the oldest African American Catholic community in our state. For more than 150 years, we have worshipped together and formed families in the faith.

Encountering Christ will allow us to invest in the future of our diocese and our parish. We plan to focus our efforts on our youngest members, the next generation of leaders, by working to finish our religious education building. One day, our children will be the ones supporting the church as well as our priests and religious, and we will see the fruit from this effort for many years to come.

\$5,000 for the religious education building

Encountering Christ will allow us to work toward finishing the religious education building. We have planned several projects that will help this building function more efficiently and better support our religious education classes and programs for parishioners of all ages.

Restroom amenities: To fulfill our primary need of a restroom, we will install a commode, a cabinet and a sink in the empty room in the religious education building. We will also need a small septic tank to complete this project.

Concrete floor stain: To preserve the concrete floors, we will apply a stain to serve as a sealant.

Paint: We will repaint the walls with the same white paint to help brighten the space.

\$1,000 for a new stove

Our parish's current stove is too old to use and requires a butane tank. We will install a new stove with an electric ignition.

AN INVITATION

Let us reflect on the many blessings the Lord has given us. Recognizing that all of our material goods are gifts from the Lord, we are asked in the Gospel to give back a portion of these gifts in thanksgiving for God's generosity and goodness to us.

Your gift is an opportunity to leave a legacy for the Catholic Church in Central Texas. Scripture tells us that Christian stewardship goes beyond giving of our surplus. It is a gift made from our substance.

It is in this spirit of Christian stewardship that we undertake this extraordinary campaign of *Encountering Christ*.