

September 6, 2020



Dear Parish Family and Friends,

Next week we are kicking-off a landmark Archdiocesan-wide campaign entitled *Called to Serve as Christ: A Campaign for our Priests, Sisters and Family of Faith*. This \$100 million campaign is for the purpose of revitalizing the depleted pension and medical needs for our retired priests and women religious. In addition, the Archdiocese will use funds from this campaign to strengthen our parishes, including St. Joseph. This campaign is a highly significant undertaking, one that will, if successful, benefit the Church for many years to come. We are one of more than 70 parishes participating in this fourth and final wave of the campaign.

Each parish is asked to do its part in leading the campaign to success by asking parishioners to prayerfully consider a three-year financial pledge to the campaign. Our parish goal is \$2,190,953. Your response to the Annual Catholic Appeal was overwhelming, especially given these extraordinary times. I know that our parish—through prayer, hard work and generosity—will do our part to accomplish this goal. **I am excited to tell you that our parish will receive 15% of all funds raised by our parishioners for the campaign. We will use these funds to build up the Parish Capital Maintenance Fund.**

I want to offer some thoughts on the letter you will receive for the *Called to Serve as Christ* campaign. Archbishop Etienne will ask you to consider pledging a specific amount for the three-year campaign. Like you, I was initially taken aback when I saw the amount the campaign was requesting of me. Given this I wanted to reach out to each of you prior to receiving the letter. It might help you to know that the amount requested is based on your personal history of giving to the parish and the Archdiocese. And it's exactly that: a request, not an expectation. I remind us that the purpose of such a campaign is to aim high, so as to lead us to think beyond what we might ordinarily give, and for us to consider if we can do more than we might otherwise initially believe. Your requested amount is simply a place to start your discernment about what you might give. It is not an expectation.

St. Paul said to first-century Christians that “God loves a cheerful giver.” (2 Corinthians 9:7). If the gift you are thinking of giving to the *Called to Serve as Christ* campaign comes with worries or grumblings attached, then it is likely not the right amount for you. Prayerfully decide in your heart what the right gift is for you, and let it bring you happiness and peace. You will be doing a great work for our retired sisters and priests, as well as our parish.

Our hope and focus here at St. Joseph is for each parish household to participate in the campaign with a gift, pledge and/or prayer. I only ask that you participate in a way that is sacrificial and meaningful to you and does not take away from your regular monetary stewardship of our parish and our mission.

Finally, if a parish volunteer or staff member reaches out to you to discuss the campaign, please be receptive and responsive to them as they are only following up on behalf of Archbishop Etienne, and by extension, myself. I greatly appreciate the work they are doing for the good of us all. And even more, I'm personally blessed by the generosity of the people of St. Joseph.

You will be hearing more about this effort in the coming weeks. For now, I ask that you join me in prayer that the *Called to Serve as Christ* campaign may be successful. And please keep your minds, ears and hearts open to the message of this landmark initiative. If we all work together, I know we will be richly blessed.

Sincerely in Christ,

Fr. Gary Lazzeroni, Pastor