

# Leading the FLOCK

BY BISHOP DANIEL E. THOMAS



## *“Living Christ”*

*“Living Christ”!* In this Easter Season, it is the Living Christ who we proclaim, the one who suffered, died and rose to save us!

For more than 110 years, we have been proclaiming the Living Christ in our thoughts, words and deeds, and in all our work as the Catholic Diocese here in Northwest Ohio.

Now, *“Living Christ”* takes on new meaning, as together we are making history in publicly launching our diocesan *“Living Christ”* Campaign!

This historic capital and endowment campaign will address significant needs in parishes, schools, and ministries of our 19 county diocese, and its impact will be felt today and resonate for generations to come. In launching the *“Living Christ”* campaign, we are being responsible stewards who, like our predecessors, are doing everything we can to guarantee a bright future where the Gospel is preached and authentically lived.



When I arrived in the Diocese of Toledo in 2014, in partnership with the clergy, lay leaders and pastoral staff we cast a vision and invited the faithful to foster holy families, holy vocations and holy disciples. We began a restructuring process to enhance the protection, governance, management and transparency of funds that support our ministries, pastoral activities and temporal functions of the diocese.

All this work led to the development of the Diocesan Strategic Plan to help determine how we carry out our vision and mission to become a more faith-filled, united and vibrant Diocese of Toledo. One of the pillars of that Plan is to develop financial resources that will ensure a sustainable mission and ministry far into the future, including planning for a capital and endowment campaign. After extensive consultation throughout the diocese, and after a professional evaluation, it was determined that we should move forward with a capital campaign. The prudential judgment was made to pause the launching of a

campaign due to the pandemic; but one year later it was once again considered and determined that as a diocese we should move forward with a campaign.

Through the *Living Christ* campaign, we seek to fulfill our responsibility as faithful Catholics to serve the physical, spiritual and pastoral needs of all people in Northwest Ohio. Our *Living Christ* Campaign will aim to raise a minimum of \$65 million dollars to enhance the vitality of our local Church with a focus on six priority areas: Strengthening Our Parishes; Supporting Our Clergy; Caring for the Poor; Emerging Disciples in our Catholic Schools; Restoring Our Mother Church – Our Lady, Queen of the Most Holy Rosary Cathedral; and Forming Our Lay Leaders.

The campaign logo has particular meaning, as it is both expressive of the campaign theme and reflective of our history as a Diocese. The logo is uniquely ours, as it is a stained-glass image from the Cathedral Rectory, placed there by the first Bishop of the Diocese, Bishop Joseph Schrembs. There are three unique features of this depiction of Jesus, the *Living Christ*! As the Good Shepherd, he has a sheep over his shoulders, indicating how he cares for us his sheep; and in turn entrusts to us the care of his flock. As the Sacred Heart, Jesus shows the love of His Heart for all of us; and in turn empowers us to show the love of His Heart to all in need. As the Fisher of Men, he holds a fisherman's pike, signifying his desire to catch all of us for himself; and in turn encouraging us to become fishers of all people for his Kingdom.

As we publicly launch our Campaign during this Joyful Easter Season, I am thrilled to share the exciting news that we already have a tremendous jump start to the campaign! Over \$7.3 million dollars has been raised to date through generous

leadership gifts and pledges, which includes personal and leadership gifts from our priests of nearly \$800,000! Our 8 parishes from around the diocese which served as the initial or pilot wave of activity, have cumulatively raised over \$6.2 million dollars, 154 percent of their goal! Early efforts of our Wave One parishes have already achieved over \$4.4 million dollars, or 33% of the Wave One goal. We are truly blessed and inspired by the overwhelming generosity and engagement which has provided incredible momentum to our efforts; and I am humbled to report that, as of today, we have reached over 28% of our overall goal in gifts and pledges! Thanks be to God!

The timing of this message coincides with the start of the first of three waves of activity throughout our 122 parishes. Each parish will conduct the Campaign in its local community, either this Spring, this Fall, or in Spring of 2023. With this public announcement, I invite all the good folks throughout our region to pray for, participate in, and promote our *Living Christ* Campaign, now and when it begins in your parish.

Through the great generosity and sacrifice of all our brothers and sisters in Christ, I am confident we will ensure a bright future of faith, hope, and charity for generations to come. Today, this campaign serves as our "Holy Opportunity" to be and to share the *Living Christ* with everyone. May the Holy Spirit, who brings the Risen Christ to life in each of us, prompt all our efforts for the success of our *Living Christ* Campaign.



Most Rev. Daniel E. Thomas  
Bishop of Toledo  
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