



TO TEACH WHO CHRIST IS

A Newsletter for the Campaign for Parishes, Catholic Education and Faith Formation February 2018

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Ash Wednesday marked the beginning of our spiritual fasting and a period of time where we commit to spending more time with God and His word. As I walked up to the altar to receive my ashes, I observed those around me and thought about how blessed we are to be one body, coming together to reflect on all Jesus sacrificed while fasting in the desert, during his final days and on the cross.

I often feel this way when I consider the people of our archdiocese – in moments of celebration and solidarity, the people of our Church in Chicago are bound together by a faith that guides us to honor and support one another. From critical facility issues to millions of dollars being allocated to Phoenix Scholarships for Catholic education, the *To Teach Who Christ Is* campaign is tangible evidence of that honor, support and sacrifice. We've been a shining example once again of what it looks like to come together as brothers and sisters in Christ to sustain the teachings of Jesus and those who follow and worship Him.

As we aim to grow closer to God during this Lenten season, let us look back on the ways He has united us in making a difference in parishes and schools across the Archdiocese of Chicago.

God bless you all as you journey through Lent. Thank you for your continued support of this campaign.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Steven Messina
Manager of Major Gifts
Department of Stewardship and
Development

New Tabernacle at St. Walter Completes Years-long Renovation

There's something about completing a project, particularly a renovation, that reinvigorates space and those who come across it. So is the case at St. Walter, where a new tabernacle, the final piece of a years-long renovation to the parish's sanctuary, was finally completed as a result of support from *To Teach Who Christ Is*.



The sanctuary's new tabernacle was created by artist Margaret Sawczuk and her husband, and is comprised of oak boards. The structure's surface was covered with light and darkened stains to obtain the same color as the backdrop to the altar at St. Walter, and then was covered with many layers of oil finish. The letters inscribed on the tabernacle door, 'IHS,' are the first three letters of the name of Jesus in Greek. The tabernacle was blessed on February 4 by Most Reverend Andrew P. Wypych.

"The tabernacle is the final piece of the Sanctuary Beautification Plan that began in 2008. It expresses what was originally planned for the renovation: to reveal the mystery

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and reverence of Christ in our midst,” said Fr. Jim Mezydlo, pastor at St. Walter. “We received and placed the tabernacle the day before Christmas Eve, and it was such a gift for all of us to finally be able to enjoy.”

The tabernacle and pedestal were handmade by Polish artist Margaret Sawczuk and her husband. It is comprised of oak boards joined together at 45-degree angles to obtain the optimal aesthetic effect. To avoid tension and deformation, there were no nails in the wood construction, only wooden pins and screws. The tabernacle was blessed and dedicated on February 4 by Most Reverend Andrew P. Wypych.

“We’ve received simply wonderful feedback and positive words from our parishioners,” said Fr. Jim. “This piece is an excellent example of the good this campaign brings to our parish, and we are so grateful. Our parish, in my view, is a true picture of unity in our city, with parishioners from all backgrounds who respect one another and want to see our faith thrive in Chicago. They’ve also been incredibly patient and have looked forward to the completion of this project for some time now. I’m thrilled we were able to put the generosity and support we received through *To Teach Who Christ Is* toward this meaningful and beautiful final piece.”

This was the first project St. Walter planned to help improve the parish. The church will be investing in new hymnals next, followed by refinishing the benches in church. The ultimate goal is to continue building a vibrant and faithful church for its parishioners where people feel inspired and safe every day.

How Your Campaign Contribution Counts

To Teach Who Christ Is is in the second year of its fulfillment phase. This means today and the coming years are extremely important to our work through *To Teach Who Christ Is*, as parishes and our many other facilities receive funds from pledge payments to move forward and complete projects. Below is an overview of the many ministries you support when you fulfill your *To Teach Who Christ Is* pledge, and how it’s put to work right away.

Parish Vitality

Ensuring parishes in the Archdiocese of Chicago are strong and vibrant communities of faith is a primary mission of *To Teach Who Christ Is*. Every parish in the archdiocese participated in the campaign, taking on pre-determined respective targets. Parishes retain 60 percent of all funds they raise for local needs, and share the remaining 40 percent with other parishes and ministries for the benefit of Catholics throughout the archdiocese. Parishes are currently using the funds they raise for the needs identified in their personalized campaign brochures, and they receive these funds as pledges are fulfilled.

Catholic Education Scholarships, Religious Education Innovation and Academic Excellence

Catholic education will always be an essential element of *To Teach Who Christ Is*, as up to \$150 million in campaign funds will be directed and awarded as Phoenix Scholarships. Scholarships provide continuing opportunities for families throughout Cook and Lake Counties to obtain a Catholic education.

Religious education – teaching who Christ is – is integral to our mission. Funds are enhancing the academic excellence of our Catholic schools through technology grants, professional and leadership development and school reform efforts, and are currently being used for new regional director positions, and to implement a diverse curriculum.

To Teach Who Christ Is funds are also being used to develop parish-based programs and approaches to religious education and faith formation to engage children, youth, young adults and adults in the Catholic faith.

Critical Issues

Your pledge also goes to more than 2,800 structures, including sacred spaces, parish activity buildings, convents, rectories and schools in Cook and Lake Counties dedicated to the local Church. Structural improvements ensure a foundation where Catholics can come together, practice faith, give praise and be comforted in times of need.

If you have a question about your pledge, connect with the campaign office at 312.534.8500 or toteachcampaign@archchicago.org. All support is important, and your contributions are making this the most successful capital campaign in the history of the Church.

CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Overall Campaign Goal: \$350,000,000

Total Raised to Date: \$423,106,585*

Percent of Goal Pledged: 121%

Pledges Paid to Date: \$181,365,108

Percent Paid to Date: 52%

*includes cash, documented pledges and bequests

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