

TO TEACH WHO CHRIST IS

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

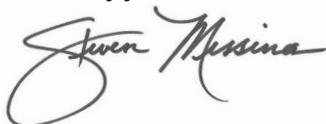
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

January often serves as a fresh start as we turn the calendar to enter a new year, bringing hope for what's to come. For our team, it's an opportunity to revisit *To Teach Who Christ Is* with renewed minds and ambitious goals. This year, we have many initiatives planned to reach parishes and local communities, and our hope is that lives will continue to be changed through what God has in store through the campaign. As we enter 2018, I can't help but think about all we have to look forward to.

I always find myself awestruck looking back on where we started versus where we stand today. Just this time last year, we had \$407 million raised in pledges, with \$124 million pledges fulfilled. I'm happy to report that this year, our total raised to date has increased to nearly \$423 million, with nearly \$176 million pledges fulfilled – that's just about a 42-percent increase in pledges fulfilled in the past year.

As always, we are extremely grateful that donors like you have kept the campaign's momentum going, allowing us to reach goal after goal. We appreciate your thoughts and prayers as we enter this next year of *To Teach Who Christ Is* fulfillment.

Sincerely yours in Christ,



Steven Messina
Manager of Major Gifts
Department of Stewardship and
Development

Working with *To Teach Who Christ Is* to Keep Divine Savior a Divine Place to Worship

When Fr. Rich LoBianco describes Divine Savior in Norridge, where he serves as pastor, his love for and commitment to the parish can't help but shine through. As he discusses the church's mission and its people, it's evident that he holds those same sentiments – he speaks of parishioners' deep connection to the life of their church, and you'd be hard-pressed to question his sincerity.

It's the same sense of earnestness when he speaks of *To Teach Who Christ Is* and the positive impact it's had on Divine Savior.



Lay minister Jan Magnuson, who chaired and led Divine Savior's campaign to success, in front of the new audio video equipment during the parish's Advent Adult Faith Formation presentation of "A Thrill of Hope – The Christmas Story in Word and Art."

"The campaign has been such a blessing to us," said Fr. LoBianco. "It's a novel concept, allowing parishes to develop their own case statements for their pragmatic present needs, while simultaneously supporting the wider goals of the archdiocese. At my suggestion to the finance board and parish leadership team, we agreed to go for a stretch goal, allowing us to embrace a larger scope of work in phases, tackling one goal at a time. Our parishioners are savers, yet they are remarkably generous and respond to concrete needs, and I just knew that with the careful explanation of our plan and rationale, and some continuing formation on our obligations to the wider archdiocese's mission needs, we would be successful."

Fr. LoBianco was right. By diligently and strategically contacting parish members, asking for participation and support, and seeking out cornerstone and leadership gifts from parishioners, the parish's original goal, \$515,000 with a stretch goal of \$790,000, was exceeded, raising \$873,000 in actual monies and pledged gifts.

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From the generosity of parishioners through donations and pledges for *To Teach Who Christ Is*, Divine Savior has been able to accomplish a number of capital improvements to beautify their facilities and spiritual home both inside and outside their buildings. Externally, the parish's parking lots were patched, seal coated and striped, and will eventually be completely rebuilt with revived landscaping, new sidewalks and curbs. Internally, the parish's major meeting space and rooms for formation programs received important upgrades, including ceiling mounted projection, AV and sound bar systems, along with aesthetic improvements like new window and wall treatments. The parish's worship space also received upgrades, like new, more comfortable fabric pew kneelers and continuing improvements to its sound system. If these weren't enough, Divine Savior has even more plans for capital improvements down the road like upgraded lighting and new furniture.

"The goal, always, is to create a comfortable and inspiring space for our current parishioners, and hopefully to new ones, as well, to find and connect with Jesus," said Fr. LoBianco. "Of course, the real strength of our faith community is not its facilities, but the living Body of Christ, our people. In them is where Christ's spirit of goodness and love dwells. They are devoted and committed disciples, who have a deep and abiding love for this, their spiritual home. We are incredibly grateful to *To Teach Who Christ Is* for giving us the opportunity to make improvements that better serve our dedicated parishioners, who make our parish so wonderful."

Most Blessed Trinity Forms Executive Committee to Steward a Successful Campaign

Most Blessed Trinity was built as three parishes in Waukegan – Immaculate Conception, Holy Family and Queen of Peace. Today, in addition to the Most Blessed Trinity Academy, the three serve as worship sites, through which one pastor and three associate pastors conduct 12 masses and serve more than 6,000 parishioners. Most Blessed Trinity operates with a socially-minded spirit, supporting life in all stages and focusing on social services, from the local food pantry to its domestic violence shelter.

When meeting its *To Teach Who Christ Is* goal, pastoral and lay leadership became critical to the campaign's success, to raise awareness of needs and potential impact. Named the campaign's executive committee, members spoke at all 12 masses at each of Most Blessed Trinity's three worship sites, sharing stories of faith and conversion, the joy the parish brings to their lives and the resources it provides for the community.



Fr. Jacque Beltran, pastor at Most Blessed Trinity, revels in the hard work and accomplishments of the parish's executive committee to make the *To Teach Who Christ Is* campaign a success.

"We worked through parishioner directories to confirm where we needed to update contacts. We called parishioners and met with them to provide an overview of the campaign, answer questions and assist with pledges," said Fr. Beltran. "Through the process, we made clear the long-range goal of this campaign: maintaining a strong, vibrant parish for generations to come."

Since meeting their goal, Most Blessed Trinity has finished the roof of Immaculate Conception, renovated the pillars inside the church and conducted wall and window repair and painting. For future use of funds, the team is working to renovate other worship sites, addressing the repair of the sacristy roof at Queen of Peace as well as necessary repairs at Holy Family.

"The *To Teach Who Christ Is* campaign has been a blessing for our parish," said Fr. Beltran. "It brought parishioners closer together by providing an awareness of parish needs, identifying goals to assist with those needs and following up with transparency for parishioner pledge dollars. Parishioners are empowered and enriched by the campaign, as we realize that through our pledge dollars, we have made a positive difference in our worship sites and our school. We are proud of what we have done to create a legacy that will have an impact for years to come."

CAMPAIGN UPDATE

Overall Campaign Goal: \$350,000,000

Total Raised to Date: \$422,718,916*

Percent of Goal Pledged: 121%

Pledges Paid to Date: \$175,734,963

Percent Paid to Date: 50%

*includes cash, documented pledges and bequests

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