



**Most Reverend Raymond J. Boland**  
**Bishop Emeritus**  
**Diocese Kansas City ~ St. Joseph**

**Diocesan Capital Campaign**  
**Gift of Faith**  
July 19, 1999



I would like to announce an undertaking of great importance to the communities that the Catholic Church serves in western Missouri.

Over the past three years, the Diocese of Kansas City ~ St. Joseph has been taking stock of where we are today. Our study shows that we are healthy and growing. This examination challenges us to continue the work of our ancestors and to ensure that the Catholic Church remains vital throughout our 27-county area. We've inherited a great legacy, a Church that feeds the poor, educates the young and strives to bring comfort in a troubled world.

To build on that tradition, we must address pressing needs and plan for the future. Today, we are launching the campaign that we call Gift of Faith. It will be our generation's contribution to what is a 160-year tradition of faith and service.

Gift of Faith is a \$25 million capital campaign. This effort, the largest in the history of the Diocese, offers each Catholic household in our 99 parishes and missions the opportunity to pledge its support to continue the work of the Church.

Throughout our history, we've stood for values and ideals that have impact beyond the walls of our churches. We believe that Gift of Faith reaffirms that we

- Promote and defend the dignity of every human person;
- Show consideration for people who are poor or marginalized;
- Approach problems with solutions that seek the common good;
- Commit to be responsible stewards of resources.

Gift of Faith will unite the Catholic community and will enable us to continue to live out these principles. Our effort plans improvements in five major areas.

The first objective is to provide \$9 million for Catholic education. The largest portion will fund \$8 million in capital improvements at our four Diocesan High Schools and contributes \$1 million to our educational endowment. Archbishop O'Hara, Bishop LeBlond, St. Pius X and St. Mary's High School each will receive \$2 million for strategic improvements. Based on their individual needs, we will fund upgrades in science and technology equipment, add classroom space and make improvements to facilities.

These four schools proudly claim more than 16,500 alumni. Many of these men and women make their homes here and offer civic and professional contributions to local communities. Enrollments in these schools have grown steadily over the past decade, and today's students deserve the best we can offer. I might add that Catholic schools are not just for Catholic students. Last year, 21% of our students were of other faiths. Capital improvements to our high schools are wise investments that will continue the exceptional quality of education provided throughout our history.

Gift of Faith also plans a \$1 million gift to our Endowment Trust Fund for Catholic Education. The Trust Fund is an important source of scholarships that open doors for those who otherwise could not afford to attend. Currently, in our four diocesan high schools, about 26% of our young people need some form of financial assistance. We're proud of our contribution to their education.

Also, this same endowment grants funds to parishes for religious education programs.

The second component of the Gift of Faith is revitalization of Kansas City's historic landmark, the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception. Built in 1883, the Cathedral needs major repairs and restoration. For more than 100 years, this building has stood in proud testimony to our presence in the community. Over the years, time and the elements have taken their toll.

Preservation of this structure is far beyond the ability or responsibility of people who make Cathedral Parish their spiritual home. Much like the role that St. Peter's Basilica plays in the world Church, local cathedrals are symbols for local communities.

A total of \$7.5 million will be necessary to bring the Cathedral into compliance with current building codes. Because of the important role that the Cathedral plays in our community, we will set aside another \$1 million as an endowment fund for future maintenance.

Our third objective is to ensure dignified retirement for our Diocesan priests. I challenge each of you to recall a parish priest who witnessed your marriage, baptized your children or brought comfort to your family in times of grief. Currently we have 40 retired priests.

Although many remain active in parishes, in the next three years 71 diocesan priests will be over the age of 65.

Because of their unwavering service, we have a duty to offer back a measure of support. Gift of Faith will provide \$2 million to the Priests Retirement Trust Fund. With the \$8 million currently reserved, this contribution will keep the fund on sound footing for many years to come. Gift of Faith also will fund the work of our parishes. Throughout the diocese, local parishes offer stability to neighborhoods and services to people in need. For our members, people come together to hear the word of the gospel and then mobilize to put that word into action. Others caught up in life's transitions—like the elderly and the young—turn to the Church for support.

Oftentimes, it is through our parishes that they are connected with meaningful and necessary services.

Because parish life is the backbone of our Church, we want Gift of Faith to recognize and support their efforts. When a parish reaches its goal, 10% will be returned. When a parish exceeds its goal, 50% will be shared for local projects. In consultation with our parishes, we know that they have construction projects, educational programs and charitable works that require funding.

Finally, Gift of Faith will continue to provide for social welfare programs that serve the people of our community. Our annual Diocesan appeal Together We Can raises nearly \$2 million that is used to better the quality of life for children, youth and the poor. Through the regional offices of Catholic Charities and our schools, we become part of the safety net for people of all faith backgrounds. These are ongoing needs, and we must remain committed.

We are asking our members to consider those needs when they make their pledge to Gift of Faith. Through their generosity, we will continue to

- Strengthen elementary education in areas struggling with finances – particularly in the central city neighborhoods of Kansas City and in St. Joseph;
- Provide foster care, adoption services and support for women faced with crisis pregnancies;
- Offer home care for the elderly, family counseling, low-income housing and emergency assistance;
- Assist parishes that can't afford to hire staff; and
- Reach out to young people and immigrant populations with supports and services.

Given the scale of this project, we know that our Office of Stewardship and Development will need support. To enhance their efforts, we've retained a nationally known consulting firm experienced in Catholic philanthropy. Guidance In Giving has a proven record, and I am pleased that they will be working with us. It is important that you know that the cost of fund raising, including all expenses, will be approximately 4 cents on the dollar.

At this time, we have early commitments that total almost \$2 million. Over the last five years, seventeen of our schools and parishes have conducted capital campaigns that have reinvested \$35 million in the community. With results such as these, I know that we can be successful, too. This effort will be another Gift of Faith to our community.

A Catholic Community of Believers located in Western Missouri  
under the leadership of Bishop Raymond J. Boland