

A LETTER FROM REVEREND DENNIS DIRKX



Dear Friends,

All of us at St. Robert Parish face the same challenge today that the apostles faced 2,000 years ago-- spreading the message of God's loving redemption. Jesus' final message before His ascension was to "Go and Teach." The

apostles were eyewitnesses to Christ's life, and as teachers they enjoyed an advantage that we don't have today: their training or religious education was gained through personal experience of being with Jesus. Today, our religious education comes not from personal experience but from studying God's Living Word, the Bible. Thus, religious education has become a crucial ministry of the Church. Whether in the form of a homily delivered at Mass, the education provided by our Catholic Schools, or the vocations training provided by St. Francis Seminary, religious education allows us to study Christ's teachings and reinforces why it is important that each of us spread God's message of love. In order to "Go and Teach" God's Word, we must first know God's Word. And that takes education.

The Archdiocese of Milwaukee has embarked on a major fundraising campaign to raise \$105 million in three years. The theme, Faith In Our Future, reinforces the campaign's focus: the enhancement of Catholic education, faith formation of children and adults, and preparation of deacons and lay persons for the ministry and men for the Priesthood. The goal is to have 100% participation among the 211 parishes served by the Archdiocese, with 60% of the contributions raised remaining with each respective parish to meet its own needs, and 40% going to Archdiocesan initiatives to support education goals for our entire Catholic community. Our goal for St. Robert Parish is \$2.15 million, with our parish's portion being dedicated to meeting the unique needs of our parish community.

As you pray and give thoughtful consideration to your future involvement in the campaign, please reflect on how our community has benefited from the commitments made more than 90 years ago by those who had enough faith in the future to build our parish campus, which provides for the education of all of us today. Now God is asking us to have Faith In Our Future, and make investments that perpetuate His will to "Go and Teach."

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Dennis Dirkx

Rev. Dennis A. Dirkx

COMMITTING TO OUR FUTURE

As the first non-ethnic church north of Milwaukee, St. Robert Parish was founded by parishoners who came from diverse backgrounds. This diversity blesses our Parish in many ways. For with diversity comes a multitude of talents -- talents we receive from the Holy Spirit. We are called to share our diverse talents in the broad range of ministries of the Church, collectively serving all people as the Body of Christ. We welcome everyone to Christ's table and are indeed blessed by all who choose to join us there.

As we approach the celebration of St. Robert's first century, we can look back at archive photos and see how the church, school and Parish Center (formerly the convent) have expanded and improved during the past 100 years. (If you haven't been in the school lately, stop by to see the beautiful result of the recent facelift.)

However, there are many serious structural limitations that prevent accessibility -- just ask anyone who must try to get around St. Robert buildings in a wheelchair or someone who has limited mobility or trouble climbing steps. The campaign planning committee listened to parishioners during meetings this summer and heard a consensus of opinion that easier accessibility throughout our buildings was a priority. We plan to install an elevator in the school building to allow greater accessibility to classrooms, parish meeting rooms, and the gym. Also, the heavy parish doors will be power-operated so



that parishioners can enter without assistance. In addition to greater accessibility, other important funding priorities include:

* assisting our sister parish in Uganda with funds to complete the roof on St. Jude School;

COMMITTING TO OUR FUTURE (CONT.)

- * designing a 21st-century Media Resource Center in our school building that would be used for the religious education of our youth and adults;
- * replacing the decades-old carpeting in the sanctuary and gathering space;
- * creating a Eucharistic Adoration Chapel;
- * establishing an endowment for religious education; and
- * replenishing the nearly depleted capital reserve fund.

We all play a role in building God's Kingdom here on earth, from the simplest acts of kindness, to the most formally organized efforts of teaching the faith, serving the poor, and building the church infrastructure. All of our actions, big and small, help to ensure a faith-filled future. We thank God for the opportunity to do his work and pray that our expenditures further his Kingdom and spread his message of love.

FACTS ABOUT FAITH IN OUR FUTURE

- A \$105 million fund-raising campaign for Catholic education and faith formation.
- A joint effort between parishes and the archdiocese.
- Response to pastoral priorities established by Archbishop Timothy Dolan.
- \$63 million allocated to parishes for individual parish initiatives.
- \$42 million allocated to the archdiocese to strengthen Catholic education and faith formation.
- Enhances Catholic education and faith formation of youth and adults at parish and archdiocesan levels.
- Builds awareness of faithful stewardship.
- Parishes participate in one of four waves occurring between July 2007 and June 2009.
- A sacrificial gift, beyond present commitments.



FAITH IN OUR PARISHES A Message from Archbishop Timothy M. Dolan

Thank you for your partnership in one of the most important ministries we share: educating and forming our youth and adults in the faith! Learning has been a part of the Archdiocese of Milwaukee since its beginning more than 150 years ago. Today, we carry on a remarkable and diverse educational mission together.

Our mission encompasses 211 parishes where 50,000 youth attend parish-based religious education programs. Our mission includes 134 archdiocesan Catholic grade and high schools educating over 34,000 students. Beyond educating Catholic students, Catholic schools open their doors to all who seek a quality, faith-based education. And, our schools strengthen the broader community by producing future leaders equipped not only spiritually and academically -- but possessing the values, morals and ethics necessary for effective leadership in our community. Our seminary is forming 41 young men for the priesthood, and many adults are training for the diaconate and lay ministry. All 700,000 Catholics in southeastern Wisconsin have ongoing opportunities for faith formation.

Sounds impressive, doesn't it? But the real question is how do we build on that for our growing Church? How do we meet the need in our parishes for expanded ministries?

The answer is *Faith In Our Future*, a \$105,000,000 campaign to fund Catholic education and faith formation. *Faith In Our Future* is our response to the many blessings God has given us. It is an opportunity to become more faithful stewards of God's abundance, as well as to raise critically needed funds.

Since parishes are the heart of Catholic education and faith formation, *Faith In Our Future* will direct the majority of funds to parishes. Your parish can address its most essential capital, endowment and ministerial needs, keeping in mind the pastoral priorities of Catholic education and faith formation.

For our part, the archdiocese will utilize our share in supporting education and faith formation with direct subsidies, expanded services and endowments that benefit our parishes, our schools, our seminary, and the educational initiatives of the archdiocese.

Embarking on this campaign is bold and exciting! Why? Because we have faith in Our Lord Jesus Christ who invites us to learn and teach in His name; we have faith in our parishes where Catholic education and faith formation begins; and, we have *Faith In Our Future* because Jesus Christ is with us today and always!

I invite you to reflect prayerfully and purposefully on your participation and respond generously to make this campaign a success.



All contributions will be held in the *Faith In Our Future* Trust for the use and purposes set forth in the *Faith In Our Future* Campaign and for no other purposes. This campaign funds Catholic education and faith formation within the Church of southeastern Wisconsin.