

Saint Michael the Archangel

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Three weeks ago I introduced to the parish the Archdiocesan program called “**Changing Lives Together**”. The purpose of this initiative is to strengthen the parishes of the Archdiocese and in turn the Archdiocese itself. The other materials in this packet will provide details about the purpose of this initiative.

I would like to provide more detailed information about what this initiative could mean for St. Michael's. After his installation Archbishop Vigneron began a review of the various ministries and finances of the Archdiocese of Detroit. As a result several actions were taken to reduce spending. The most critical aspect of the review identified the need for an initiative that would strengthen our parishes and schools. The initiative hopes to generate \$135,000,000 to achieve four goals. First, to strengthen parishes by raising needed capital to reduce debt or make repairs (\$95,000,000). Second, to strengthen Catholic education by adding capital to the Stewards For Tomorrow tuition assistance endowment (\$15,000,000). Third, address long overdue facility repairs at Sacred Heart Major Seminary, as well as, support the education of future priests and lay leaders (\$8,000,000). Finally, to secure a continuing Catholic presence in the City of Detroit by underwriting parish ministries and faith formation programs (\$4,000,000).

The main focus of **Changing Lives Together** is to focus on the financial strength of the parishes in the Archdiocese of Detroit. Each parish will be given a “benchmark” based upon 90% of parish income from 2009-2010. For St. Michael's the “benchmark” will equate to \$947,981, to be collected over a three year period. From this “benchmark” 30% (\$284,395) will be directed to the Archdiocese to strengthen the “Stewards For Tomorrow” education endowment, Sacred Heart Major Seminary, and the needs for city programming. Should we fall short of the “benchmark” the Archdiocese will receive only 30% of what we collect. Should we exceed the “benchmark” the Archdiocese will receive only the 30% of the original “benchmark”. To put it another way, should we exceed the “benchmark” what we owe to the Archdiocese will **NOT** increase.

The remaining 70% of the “benchmark” (\$663,586) will be retained by the parish to address its needs. In the case where a parish is in debt 75% of what is retained must be used to pay down debt. St. Michael's has no debt and so whatever we collect will allow us to address some of the needs of St. Michael's facilities.

The Parish Pastoral Council has reviewed our situation and made recommendations as to what projects should be addressed. For example, the Council acknowledged the need for repairs and

updates to the church building which is now 50 years old. Through the efforts of this initiative if the parish retains \$200,000 then we will either refinish or replace pews and kneelers. If the parish retains \$300,000 then, along with pews and kneelers, the parish would address the issue of its aging doors. If \$375,000 is retained the parish could add air conditioning to the gym, which would be important as the wood floor is being impacted by the heat and humidity of the summer months. At \$450,000 the replacement of the east end of the school roof could be added to the list of projects.

There are other projects that have been identified by the Parish Pastoral Council. The church building, as I mentioned above, is 50 years old this year and needs to be updated. Should we raise two to three million dollars then we could consider some significant facility issues. For example, the church bathrooms are not handicap accessible and are very much in need of updating. The narthex (or vestibule) needs to be expanded so that we can have a larger gathering area, and it needs to be soundproofed so to reduce noise during Mass. The opening in the center of the narthex allows sound to travel directly into the choir loft where it is picked up by the choir microphones and consequently spread throughout the church. Also the sanctuary area needs to be updated, and yes, the tabernacle will remain where it is. A number of parishioners have brought to my attention the carpet is worn in several areas and needs replacement.

Throughout St. Michael's history much of its resources have been used to support the ministry of Catholic education. Now we need to turn our attention to the church building itself. The identified projects above are not an exhaustive list of what was identified by the Parish Pastoral Council, but in view of the economy, it was what they thought most important for your consideration.

To meet the "benchmark" of \$947,981 it would require, based upon 760 regularly contributing households, that each contribute \$1,247, or \$416 per year over three years. To address the more significant building issues, such as the bathrooms and the expansion of the narthex (vestibule), it would require that we retain at least 2 million dollars which would equate to a total contribution of \$2,631 or \$877 per year for a three year period.

I fully appreciate that this initiative is taking place during difficult economic times. The need to strengthen parishes is real and needs to be accomplished. Some are not going to be able to participate because of unemployment or under employment, while others are trying to "catch up". What is being asked of those who can participate is to make a "sacrificial offering" meaning to seriously consider this request in determining what level of contribution is possible for you. It is important that we take pride in this house of worship and address its specific needs. In this packet you will find a pledge card. Remember, this initiative is payable over a *three year period*. Please fill out the card and return it to St. Michael's either in the Sunday collection or by mail. To help us to keep our costs at a minimum, I would ask that all cards be returned. If you cannot contribute then please mark zero on the amount line; this way we will not contact you again. I thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Rev. William H. Tindall