

There are two things that strike me about our Gospel reading today.

The first is the immediacy with which the apostles
left everything to follow Jesus.

In the first instance, for Simon and Andrew, they were out fishing...

They were casting their nets into the sea.

Jesus calls to them with his clever play on words:

“Come after me and I will make you fishers of men.”

Mark tells us that immediately they abandoned their nets and followed him.

In the second instance, I picture James and John, on shore in the boat,
doing what fishermen do in their boats,

untangling nets, cleaning out their tackle box,

perhaps cleaning some fish, and Jesus calls to them.

They too, leave their father, “So long dad.”

And immediately begin to follow Jesus.

It strikes me that they really had no idea what was in store for them.

They did not know the road that Jesus would eventually ask them to walk.

It was for them a leap of faith...a trust in Jesus...a trust in God.

And the second thing that strikes me is that Jesus
determined it was best for him to not work alone.

I mean think about that...Jesus could have done it by himself...

He's God. But he chose to involve others to help him do his work
entrusted to his care.

Those two thoughts apply also to us today:

First, like the apostles, when we choose to answer Jesus' call,
we don't always know where it will lead.

Second, Jesus still chooses to work with us to build his kingdom.

With those two ideas fresh on our minds I am excited to publically kick-off
our capital campaign: ***A Future Full of Hope.***

Let's begin with the campaign title: where does it come from?

It actually comes from scripture: Jeremiah 29:11

“I know well the plans I have for you,' says the Lord, 'plans for your welfare
and not your woe...plans so as to give you a future full of hope.”

I am convinced that this new Church is about our future, a Future Full of Hope.

I believe it is always important when we endeavor into something as important as this campaign is, to realize where we come from in order to help us see where we should be going.

That none of these decisions have been made in a vacuum,
But each step is a continuation of a process

When I first began as your pastor in 2013,

I promised you that as we moved forward in an uncertain future:

Two parishes were sharing a pastor for the first time.

An adjusted the Mass schedule to accommodate one priest.

A plan on a shelf called Vision 20/20—

calling for one parish in one location

with a pre-school through grade 8 Elementary School.

I knew that plan had been passed by both parish councils

but I was not sure where it stood with the parishioners at large.

And so six months into my pastorate, in January of 2014,

we (meaning myself and the pastoral team) decided to do a survey.

We wanted to see where people stood

with the ideas proposed in the Vision 20/20 plan.

I was a little surprised when the surveys came back

that 74% of the parish favored us moving forward to become one parish.

That support was later confirmed by 78% of the parishioners

at a parish assembly.

And so began the task of choosing a location, designing a church building,
and raising the money necessary to build it.

In August of last year I announced that SJPII Parish would soon begin
a \$5.5 million capital campaign to build a new worship space.

As we further looked at the numbers we determined that really
a \$6 million campaign was needed.

And so now that is our goal for our campaign

with a stretch goal of 6.5 million dollars

When I announced the campaign last August I said this,

And I am quoting directly from that homily:

“Can we raise \$5.5 million dollars?

I know we can because we worship a God who is not a stingy God.

We worship a God of abundance who has called us to a new vision
of how we are to be Church.”

So now, I ask the same question again?

Can we raise \$6 million or even stretch ourselves to \$6.5 million?

Once again, I know we can because we serve a God of abundance.

Today I am pleased to announce that to date:

A Future Full of Hope Capital Campaign has received
324 pledges (that is 27% of our registered families).

These 324 pledges total \$5,080,369

That is already 85% of our \$6 million dollar goal and 78% of our stretch goal.

324 pledges... \$5,080,369 ...85% of our \$6 million goal...

78% of our stretch goal...

WE SERVE A GOD WHO IS NOT STINGY...

WE SERVE A GOD OF ABUNDANCE. AMEN?

I want to take a moment and thank our campaign executive leadership team:

Don and Joyce Day, Mike and Debbie Waiz, Mike Whalen,

Chuck and Jo Jones, Joan and Mike Hurley, Tex and Bunky Very,

Todd & Mary Jo Davis, Keith & Jenny Alexander

and Chris and Sonya Rosio.

I also want to thank all the campaign workers

who have made a sacrificial gift of not only their treasures,

but also, a sacrificial gift of their time and talent

by making calls and visits to help us to achieve

the success we have achieved so far.

I'm excited and amazed and a little bit humbled

by where we are right now in this campaign.

We do serve a God of abundance.

But, my friends, we are not there yet.

Today we kick off the public phase of this campaign.

This is the part of the campaign where we need **all parishioners**

to come together to support this endeavor.

I'm asking everyone in this Church today to do three things:

1) I want you to continue to pray for the success of this campaign.

2) Over the next three weeks, our many campaign workers will be contacting each of you either in person or by phone, I want you to welcome that call or a visit. And I want you to wait until that call before making your decision.

3) I want you to pray about what God might want to accomplish through you for this campaign.

I honestly believe with all my heart that if you do that, we will reach our goal

because we serve a God who is not stingy. We serve a God of abundance.

The pledge we are asking all parishioners to make is a 5-year pledge.

We are asking each of you to consider a five-year pledge so that

each of you can maximize your gift to this campaign.

We are off to a great start, but our campaign is a campaign of the many, not of the few. We need the participation of each and every one of you!

And we are asking that your gift be sacrificial...for you

The easiest thing to do in a campaign like this would be to take our goal: 6 million dollars, divide that by the number of contributing parishioners we have, about 600...and ask each person to give \$10,000.

That's really good math, but it is not good stewardship...

For me, personally, a \$10,000 gift would not be sacrificial at all.

For others, a \$10,000 gift might be impossible.

I'm asking you to pray about your gift...I'm asking you to stretch yourself...

I'm asking you to consider a gift of a truly sacrificial nature TO YOU.

And let me be clear, that I am not asking any of you to do something that I am have not done already, myself.

I want to share with you a little bit about the process

I went through personally to make my own pledge to the campaign.

For me personally, I began with a belief that has been at the core of my being for the last 20 years or so and that belief is this:

I don't own anything. Everything I have belongs to God...

I am simply the manager of it...

So I began to pray:

God what do you want to accomplish through me for this campaign.

And I had a number in my head...

and when we did the feasibility study a couple of years back,

I shared that number with the person doing that study-

I think his name was Jonathon...and I told him that I thought I could give somewhere between \$50,000-\$60,000 toward the campaign—

I felt like that gift was a sacrificial gift—How did I come up with that number?

Knowing that this campaign was on the horizon,

I had begun saving a little bit a couple of years ago.

I don't know if all of you know how we priests are compensated.

We make a base salary of \$26,000-\$27,000 a year

and we get our housing paid for besides.

We get that housing until we retire, then we are responsible for our own housing.

So for the last several years I have been saving for my retirement house.

\$500 a month.

I decided that for 5 years I could contribute that to the campaign.

And so I had to wrestle a little bit with the wisdom of stopping those payments with the desire to make a truly sacrificial gift to this campaign.

And so I prayed...God, it's your money...I'm only the manager...

What do you want to accomplish through me for this campaign...

I truly heard God say...I'll take care for you...

for now, don't worry about your future house.

The other thing that helped me to make a sacrificial gift

is that I turn 59 and a half during this campaign...

And as I prayed, I felt God tell me that I could donate 10% of my retirement savings to the campaign...and that I'll be okay when I go to retire.

That is how I came up with my final gift which is just over \$100,000 to this capital campaign.

And this is a sacrificial gift for me for the next few years...

It is essentially a cut of 50% in my salary.

But I am doing it because I believe that strongly that God is asking me to do it

And that what we are doing is God's will.

Now, I am certainly not asking all of you to give an equal gift...

but I am asking all of you to make an equal sacrifice...

I am asking all of you to prayerfully consider a sacrificial gift FOR YOU.

We serve an awesome God...

We serve a God of abundance...

God was watching over the people of St. Joe Hill in 1853

when that parish was founded.

God was watching over the people of St. Paul in 1947

when that parish was founded.

And now, God watches over us...

And if we are faithful to him...day in and day out...

If we pray this prayer,

God what do you want to accomplish through me for this campaign?

If we do that, I am convinced that we will be successful...

I am convinced that God will provide for us...

A Future Full of Hope.