

When I was asked to give a talk about the building campaign I, did not hesitate to say yes as I fully support the vision of Building Forward in Our Faith, and while thinking about what I might say, I kept going back to words of a challenge that were given to me years ago.

I was not born into the Catholic faith as many of you. I really had no formal religious upbringing. Long story short, I was “invited” by my sister who joined the church when she married to take some classes devoted to joining the Catholic church. But first, I had to personally meet with Deacon Bill Olson who was in charge of the RCIA program. I don’t remember everything Bill and I discussed at that meeting, but I do remember he told me that joining the church was not something to be taken lightly - it was a true investment, and how you invested was a clear parallel to what you ultimately received.

The year I was in RCIA was the year the interior of the church was being renovated. I’m sure some of you can remember back to that time and how the decisions to make the changes were debated amongst parishioners, various ideas offered as well as the “how will we pay for it” discussion. But despite all that, Easter 1984 I was baptized in front of this then new beautiful altar - the first person to bend my head over the bowl of the then new baptismal font which we still use today and hear the words, ‘In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit’. Through baptism I invested in the Catholic Church. It was then time to take Bill’s challenge to heart and take all that I had been given through that baptism and keep investing. Afterall, is that not what all who are baptized are called to do?

Throughout my years at St Marys I have watched our parish change and grow, and I have witnessed some investment into our facilities, our faith formation program, and our service organizations. And I have seen us rally and come together to invest in some wonderful causes; the attainment and rehabing of the current REC was one of those times. We finally had an adequate space for faith formation, some offices and space to gather for social occasions. We were proud of that building and it showed in our parish life. But as the REC aged and needed repairs beyond what we were capable of managing, I felt some changes occurred within our parish life as well which made me recall Bill’s words of ‘how you invest is parallel to what you receive’. Do we invest in one another? It seems to me that God has given us this opportunity, and if we want a better parish life, it’s time to invest, and if we all are not willing to invest in the life and future of our parish, what can we hope to receive in return?

So that challenge given to me so many years ago I now pose to you and I personally invite all of you, whether baptized in this building or anywhere else on this planet, to invest in St Marys. First of all, invest your time and talents, and get involved. Our parish has so many opportunities, but we need you. Join a commission, volunteer for something, become active! Second, invest your monies into the Campaign project. Attaining our goal can only be done with money - that is the plain, hard truth. I know money is tight. Make sacrifices, think outside the box of regular donations, support raffles, dinners and any other money raising activities that come along. When you are asked the weekend of Oct 31/Nov 1 to make a Campaign pledge, increase your pledge, pay ahead of your pledge schedule if at all possible, or at least extend

your payments - invest! Lastly, invest your prayers. All of us have a story we could share of how prayer made a difference in our lives. I know because all of us have truly been blessed beyond words with so much, and that just doesn't 'happen' without divine intervention. Perhaps some days those blessings are easier to list than others, but none the least, we have been blessed. Combining our prayers for a spirit filled parish life and successful Campaign is an investment I cannot wait to see the return on.

Those that came before us invested in St Marys in all three of the ways I have cited. They had to. Without that investment we would not have the brick and mortar that we call our church. We now have a great opportunity to invest in our expansion and build something that can be seen by others in the community as a symbol of our faith, our traditions and our future, and I'm not necessarily just talking about the brick and mortar. Thank you.