



ST MARY'S CHURCH, NEWPORT

RI'S FIRST ROMAN CATHOLIC PARISH, 1828
A NATIONAL HISTORIC PLACE, 2008

For Immediate Release

Contact Rev. Kris von Maluski

401-847-0475 or stmarynewport@aol.com

St. Mary's Church *Souls In Harmony* Campaign Achieves \$1.2 Million Goal

van Beuren Charitable Foundation awards grant of \$150,000 for restoration initiative

Newport, RI – January 22, 2018 – Historic St. Mary's Church is pleased to announce that its *Souls In Harmony* campaign has achieved its \$1.2 million fundraising goal. The preservation and restoration campaign was initiated to restore the nearly 200-year-old church's hazardous choir loft and surrounding area, as well as refurbish its one-of-a-kind Casavant Op. 2462 pipe organ. Since the start of the *Souls In Harmony* campaign in late 2016, more than 600 parishioners, community members, local organizations and corporate donors have contributed to its success.

The project drew national attention due to the church's illustrious history and stunning beauty as a premiere example of mid-19th century Gothic Revival architect. A generous \$150,000 award from the van Beuren Charitable Foundation accelerated the campaign's year-end effort to reach the goal that ensures the preservation of the church's property and assets for future generations.

"We are forever grateful to all those who donated their time, talent and resources to our campaign and truly blessed to have received the Foundation's generous award that helped restore our historic church building and choir loft," Pastor Kris von Maluski. "We are honored with the extraordinary outpouring of support for our campaign and privileged to share St. Mary's as a treasured community place that has been an integral part of the local area's heritage, traditions and cultural vitality for almost 200 years."

The preservation project included rehabilitating the back of the church's centuries-old clerestory walls and ornamental belts, panels and massive arches, pilasters and capital heads, reconditioning huge stained glass window frames, refinishing and reconfiguring the choir loft floor surface and space,

St. Mary's Church, 12 William Street, PO BOX 547, Newport, RI 401.847.0475 www.stmarynewport.org

restoring other structural deterioration due to age and eliminating public safety and fire hazard conditions. The restoration of the choir loft began following the dismantling of a massive pipe organ with 30,000 pieces for shipping and refurbishing by its original builder, the Casavant Frères Company in Quebec, Canada.

To celebrate the success of the *Souls In Harmony* campaign, St. Mary's will hold an "appreciation reception" later this spring. Information on this event and other St. Mary's concerts, special events and activities, including the popular "Return to Camelot" multimedia presentations about the wedding of President John F. Kennedy to Jacqueline Bouvier, and plans for the closing concert of the 2018 Newport Music Festival's 50th Anniversary Season, which will be held at St. Mary's in July, will be available on the church website at www.stmarynewport.org.

To learn more about St. Mary's Church, the restoration project or to schedule a media tour please contact Father von Maluski at 401-847-0475 or email stmarynewport@aol.com, or Cody Mead, Director of Liturgical Music, at 401-239-8239 or cw.mead@yahoo.com.

About St. Mary's Church

St. Mary's is Rhode Island's First Roman Catholic Parish, established in 1828. The church, in its present location, was built in 1848. For two centuries, it has held a prominent place in Rhode Island's history and U.S. military history as the Church that served as the U.S. Navy Academy's chapel during the Civil War (1861-1865). The Church gained international acclaim as the location where President John F. Kennedy married Jacqueline Lee Bouvier on September 12, 1953. In 1975, St. Mary's was included as a contributing resource for Newport Historic District's recognition in the National Register of Historic Places, and in 2008, St. Mary's was singled out as an American treasure when it was named to the National Register of Historic Places.

About van Beuren Charitable Foundation

The van Beuren Charitable Foundation was established in 1986 by John A. "Archie" and Hope H. "Happy" van Beuren. Early conversations around the family table formed the principles that continue to guide vBCF today: encouraging family involvement, developing firsthand knowledge of the community, and operating with integrity, intelligence, and imagination. Having contributed over \$67 million to the Newport region since its inception, the Foundation has emerged as a strategic partner to like-minded charitable organizations and remains committed to strengthening the community in its priority areas of interest.