



## **ST MARY'S CHURCH, NEWPORT**

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

For Immediate Release  
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### **St. Mary's Church *Souls In Harmony* Campaign Receives a Generous \$200,000 Grant from the Alletta Morris McBean Charitable Trust**

Newport, RI – November 1, 2017 – With much gratitude and honor, St. Mary's Church is pleased to announce that its *Souls In Harmony* campaign received a \$200,000 grant award from the Alletta Morris McBean Charitable Trust in support of its preservation and restoration initiative to rebuilt the choir loft and surrounding area and refurbish its one-of-a-kind Casavant Op. 2462 pipe organ.

"This wonderful gift is a blessing for St. Mary's Church that we are so thrilled and privileged to receive," said Father Kris von Maluski. "We are very grateful to the Trustees for supporting our remarkable church and this very important campaign that helps ensure the preservation of St. Mary's Church and our magnificent pipe organ for future generations."

The grant brings the campaign closer to its goal of raising \$1.2 million. Thus far, St. Mary's has raised approximately \$875,000 or nearly 75% of the goal. Hundreds of individuals, families and friends of St. Mary's have contributed to the effort, which also helps to expand St. Mary's music performance and educational programs into the community.

St. Mary's *Souls In Harmony* campaign was launched last winter following the dismantling of the church's nearly 60-year-old Casavant pipe organ – a 33,000 piece instrument that is historically meritorious for its ingenious engineering and mechanics, and a sound that is unique only to St. Mary's Church. The project drew national attention due to the history of the church as a national landmark and the nature of disassembling the pipe organ piece-by-piece for shipping and restoration by its original builder, the Casavant Frères Company in Quebec, Canada.

Once the choir loft was emptied of the massive instrument and over the next several months, restoration of the space and surrounding area took place, including reconfiguring the choir loft floor, stabilizing structural deterioration and eliminating public safety and fire hazard issues. When the pipe organ returned, St. Mary's invited the community for a "Festival of Pipes" celebration and the premiere performance of the refurbished instrument. During the June weekend event, St. Mary's was recognized with a citation for the successful preservation and restoration project by the Rhode Island House of Representatives, presented by Newport Rep. Lauren Carson.

"We are forever grateful for the extraordinary support our campaign has received from so many individuals and organizations," said Father von Maluski. "We believe that music has the power to transform communities and we extend our deepest gratitude to all those who have helped us succeed in our fundraising effort."

Contributions to St. Mary's *Souls In Harmony* campaign can be made online at [www.stmarynewport.org](http://www.stmarynewport.org). For more information about upcoming music activities and special events, music education and to participate as a member of St. Mary's choirs for adults and children, as well as media tours, please contact Father von Maluski at 401-847-0475 or email [stmarynewport@aol.com](mailto:stmarynewport@aol.com), or Cody Mead, Director of Liturgical Music, at 401-239-8239 or [cw.mead@yahoo.com](mailto: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.