

Hope IS ON THE HORIZON

BY PATRICK GRACE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

ROB ROGERS, BOARD CHAIR, CATHOLIC COMMUNITY FOUNDATION



"I wait for the LORD, my soul waits and I hope for his word." – Psalm 130:5

As we finally begin to emerge from the COVID-19 pandemic, we recognize that the world of philanthropy and faithful giving has been tested and altered. That is why we are especially thankful for you and your unparalleled generosity, which was a sign of great hope during the last year.



In the following pages of this Annual Report, you will read about the heroic work that was on full display last year, all because of your willingness to be our partners in philanthropy. You will meet Patricia who struggled to pay rent and utilities during the pandemic. Because of your support of Catholic Charities and a generous gift from the Samuel H. and Maria Miller Foundation to the Emergency Assistance Fund, Patricia's needs and the needs of thousands of others were met. As always, we are genuinely inspired by your witness, and it was never needed more than during this past year.

You will also read about the incredible progress of our Heart of a Shepherd campaign, which has thrived and reached \$25 million, including a \$3 million commitment from the diocese. As you know, the Heart of a Shepherd campaign is aiming to provide an overdue renovation to our seminaries in Wickliffe where 75 men are currently in formation; augmenting our Priestly Retirement Fund for those who have served so faithfully over the years; providing student loan relief for recently ordained priests who will be surviving on modest salaries; and giving direct and immediate assistance to parishes that are participating in this campaign. More than 4,000 donors have already pledged their support to offer us this initial momentum, which has enabled work to begin on many of the capital initiatives mentioned above.

Not surprisingly, the needs of our vibrant Church in Northeast Ohio continue to evolve. That is why we embrace other plans, which you will likely hear us sharing in the coming months.

- Some structural and cosmetic updates to our Cathedral, which serves as the home of Bishop Malesic (and a few other priests) and is the spiritual center of our diocese.
- An exciting educational partnership with the University of Notre Dame's ACE Academy, which will begin with a pilot of two urban elementary schools in Akron and will re-focus efforts and energy surrounding enrollment and costs.

As always, our work with Catholic Charities remains the centerpiece of all of our faithful philanthropy, and that courageous and compassionate work was on display last year as we raised more than \$14 million from almost 47,000 donors. This level of support owes an immense debt of gratitude to our faithful priests. They carry out the message of Catholic Charities in their daily work and the numerous communications they share with you throughout the year.

Recently, we began partnering with the diocese to share the message that 'Hope is on the Horizon' as we have now safely re-opened our Churches and welcomed the faithful back to Mass and the sacraments. We are delighted to keep sharing those messages as we know how eager you are to experience the fullness of our life of faith as things continue to move toward normal – or better than normal, as Bishop Malesic encourages.

While we make that journey together, please share our optimism that 'Hope is on the Horizon' and also know that God's grace is working through your faithful philanthropy and love of the Church. For that, we are eternally humbled and grateful.