



Statement of His Eminence Cardinal Justin Rigali

February 23, 2009

Last year, the Archdiocese of Philadelphia concluded its celebration of 200 years of serving the people of God. It provided the opportunity for me to invite a group of priests and lay leaders to identify the most promising opportunities and most pressing needs facing our local Church today and in the future. The result of this collaborative reflection is an extraordinary endeavor designed to meet the pastoral, educational and charitable needs of the Church of Philadelphia now and well into the future. It is my pleasure today to announce *Heritage of Faith – Vision of Hope*, a historic capital and endowment campaign for the Archdiocese of Philadelphia.

This extraordinary initiative is a direct response to the challenges facing our parishes and Archdiocesan ministries. Because our needs are great, our aim is high. Our plan is to raise at least 200 million dollars to be used exclusively to meet six specific goals. These are: strengthening parish life; access to a high-quality Catholic education for children; the restoration of the historic treasure that is the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul; an investment in priestly formation and campus improvements at Saint Charles Borromeo Seminary; the pension and health care needs of retired priests, and outreach to our less fortunate brothers and sisters in the region by providing vital human services.

The economic realities of the present are a cause of anxiety for everyone. Some may argue that now is not a good time for this endeavor. But the needs of the Archdiocese cannot wait for the future. They require our response today. The remarkable early results of *Heritage of Faith – Vision of Hope* indicate that this is the right response and the right time. I am pleased to announce that 43 million dollars in pledges and gifts already have been received.

It is fitting that we are here at Saint Barnabas Parish today, one of twelve parishes that, last fall, tested the campaign plan. In a display of generosity that is mirrored among the other parishes, Father Babowitch and the parishioners of Saint Barnabas exceeded

their goal for the campaign. In fact, the twelve parishes exceeded their combined goal by more than two million dollars, raising a total of nine and a half million dollars.

I am grateful for the inspiring charity of the more than three thousand donors who have made pledges already, and for the many others who I am confident will support *Heritage of Faith – Vision of Hope* in the coming months. I invite all Catholics to join me in this historic effort by making a sacrificial commitment to the campaign. Our combined gift will make a lasting contribution to the future of the Church of Philadelphia.

An initiative of this importance requires the efforts of many people. The Priests Advisory Committee, led by its chairman, Monsignor Francis Beach, has been indispensable. The participation of so many lay people who have served on campaign committees has likewise been invaluable. In particular, I acknowledge the dedication of Mr. Jim Delaney and his wife, Jackie, who are with us today, as well as the chairman of the Leadership Gifts Task Force, Mr. Eustace Wolfington, who unfortunately could not be present. The priests of this Archdiocese and the lay members of the Task Force have led by example, and I am most very grateful for their help.

Through the efforts and extraordinary generosity of the people of God in the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, I am confident that this campaign will succeed. I am certain that through the intercession of Saints John Neumann and Katharine Drexel, the Lord will inspire us to share with others our Heritage of Faith and our Vision of Hope.

###