



Archdiocese of Philadelphia
Office of the Cardinal
222 North 17th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19103-1299

February 19, 2009

Dear Faithful of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia,

As the Archdiocese of Philadelphia enters its third century of serving the people of God, it is with gratitude that I reflect on the profound faith, vision and generosity of the Catholics who have preceded us. Along with the blessings of parishes, schools and institutions that we enjoy today, comes the responsibility for us to pass on to future generations all that we have received. Last year, we recommitted ourselves as a Catholic community to serving God and neighbor as we celebrated our Bicentennial as a Diocese. Taking the opportunity that the year-long Jubilee celebration presented, I invited a group of priests and lay people to assist me in identifying the needs of our Archdiocese now and in the years to come. The fruit of our reflection is a concerted effort to meet the challenges of the Church at this historic time.

With confidence, I am pleased to announce HERITAGE OF FAITH ~ VISION OF HOPE, a capital and endowment campaign that will support the charitable, educational and pastoral needs of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Our aim is high: minimally \$200 million, but our needs are great. These monies will be deposited into a separately incorporated 501 (c)(3) charitable fund to be used exclusively to meet six goals: (1) to revitalize and renew parish life as the primary place in which we publicly live our faith, (2) to enable access to a high-quality Catholic education for many more of God's children, (3) to renovate and restore the historic treasure that is the Cathedral Basilica of Saints Peter and Paul, (4) to invest in priestly formation and campus infrastructure at St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, (5) to ensure a dignified retirement and health care for retired priests, and (6) to respect the dignity and meet the basic needs of people in our region by providing vital human services.

Certainly the economic realities of the present are a cause of anxiety for all of us. Our nation faces much uncertainty and some would argue that now is not the time to begin an endeavor such as this campaign. The needs of the Archdiocese, however, cannot wait for the future. They require our response today. I am certain that this is the right response. I am very pleased to report that the early results of HERITAGE OF FAITH ~ VISION OF HOPE are truly remarkable. The pilot phase, just concluded, was nothing short of extraordinary. Twelve parishes raised \$9.5 million, exceeding their collective goal by \$2 million. The campaign is currently underway in more than 50 parishes, and in the coming 16 months, each of our 269 parishes and missions will participate. To date, HERITAGE OF FAITH ~ VISION OF HOPE has received more than \$40 million in gifts and pledges. This inspiring display of generosity is a testament to the leadership of our priests, the commitment of campaign volunteers and the extraordinary charity of more than 2,500 donors.

I invite you to join me by making a sacrificial commitment to HERITAGE OF FAITH ~ VISION OF HOPE and am deeply grateful to those who have already done so. Our combined efforts will make a lasting contribution to the future of the Church of Philadelphia and help the Archdiocese live out the Bicentennial theme: Serving the People of God in the beginning, now and always. For two hundred years our Heavenly Father blessed the Church of Philadelphia. Faith-filled people have humbly sacrificed their time, talent and treasure in building a community of believers with Jesus Christ as our foundation and cornerstone. We look to the future with grateful hearts, united in prayerful solidarity for this historic endeavor.

Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the patronage of our Blessed Mother, Saint John Neumann and Saint Katharine Drexel, may the Kingdom of God continue to grow within the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. Through the generosity of many, may our HERITAGE OF FAITH ~ VISION OF HOPE campaign be successful. May the Lord instill in us the desire to share our Heritage of Faith and invite others to embrace our Vision of Hope.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Justin Card. Rigali". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cardinal Justin Rigali
Archbishop of Philadelphia