



## A Capital Campaign for St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church

August 25, 2025 | Msgr. Jace Eskind

***For every tree is known by its own fruit. Luke 6:44***

*Just as an oak tree drops acorns for a future grove, St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church is planting another seed of faith from the mighty oak under which we were born. Every parishioner is invited to help till the soil so this acorn can grow into a strong sapling and, in time, another live oak spreading the Catholic faith to our children and community. Join us in building the new SMdP Parish Life Center—a place to teach the faith on our own soil, gather as families, and support our ministries. To bring this dream to life, we must raise \$12.5 million through a capital campaign of pledges over the next 3 years.*

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### **Our Growing Tree Through the Years**



The first acorn of St. Martin de Porres was planted in the early 1950's when seminarians and nuns from Sacred Heart Catholic Church began traveling to the African American children of this area, preparing them to receive their sacraments. That acorn sprouted into a strong young sapling as the community grew, embracing their faith and one another in love. Thanks to the generosity of Mr. Frank Granger and Mrs. Natalie Vincent, a chapel church was built, and the first Mass was celebrated on Christmas Day in 1951. This developing community was established as a mission of Sacred Heart and was served by the priests and religious sisters from that parish. In 1970, the care of the mission was transferred to Our Lady Queen of Heaven. Under the leadership of OLQH, the community continued to grow, and we were established as a parish in November of 2002 with Fr. Keith Pellerin as our founding pastor. In 2009, Fr. Keith invited the then 528 families to plant a new acorn of faith by joining in the Crossing the Road capital campaign to build our beautiful church. Today, we are nearly 1500 families strong and our families have given so generously over the years, we paid off the debt 3.5 years ahead of schedule.

We have been celebrating Mass in our present church for so long now that many are surprised to learn it was originally planned to serve as a chapel when a new and larger church became necessary. Just as anticipated by our early leaders, we have grown, and we anticipate growth will continue well into the future. More seating space is needed in our current church. Our growth and the effects of the 2020 hurricanes have made it crystal clear to many that our most pressing needs have changed. The necessity for meeting spaces for parish ministries and organizations as well as for larger parish-wide gatherings is greater than any other need we have. Further,

when our leaders began studying the options we have for creating these gathering spaces, they learned that, by expanding the wings on either side of the nave, we can increase our church seating by 300 more worshippers.

This is great news for two reasons:

1. Enlarging our present church will meet the immediate need for more places to sit during Mass, at least for the foreseeable future. The day will likely come when we need to build a larger church. But, for now, by making this pivot from the original plan, we increase the number of seats and ensure attendance at our Masses can continue to grow.
2. We can direct our planning toward the creation of community gathering and meeting space by building a new 29,000 square foot **Parish Life Center**. This building will provide multiple meeting rooms for our children's, youth, and adult religious education programs as well as for other ministries. The new center will also include a large hall for fellowship gatherings that will seat 500 people around tables of 8, or accommodate more than 800 people in conference-style seating (folding chairs in rows). Further still, the new Parish Life Center will provide ample space for the parish's daily ministry operations.

Our plan, therefore, is:

- ✝ to build a Parish Life Center (see more precise details below) and fund it through the *Forward Together* capital campaign;
- ✝ and, while we raise funds in the campaign over the next three years, to move forward on the expansion of the wings of our church to enlarge our seating capacity. Many factors will determine when this renovation and expansion of the church will take place.

Do we have money saved to expand the church? And where will we celebrate Mass during this church expansion? The architect tells us that the expansion and renovation of the church can take place without interfering with the celebration of the Mass. Further, the estimated cost to expand our church is \$2 to 2.5 million. Much of this has already been raised and is in our savings.

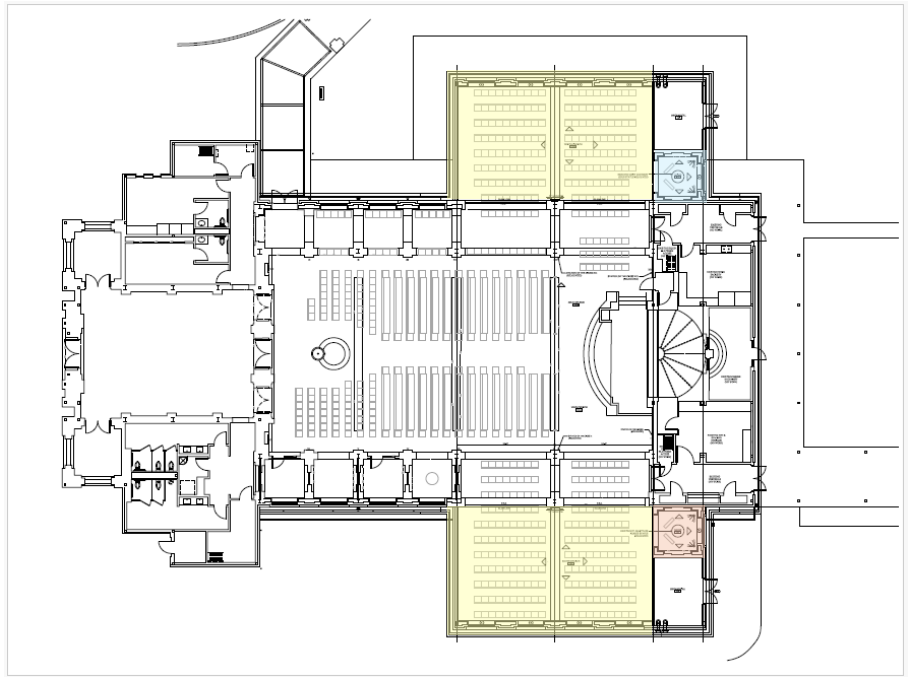
Where did this money come from? From our generous families. Although the last capital campaign ended years ago, many families continued to give to the building fund, and our savings grew exponentially. Today, we have nearly \$1.5 million in our building fund. Additionally, we anticipate receiving FEMA reimbursements for repairs to the church caused by the last hurricanes. While we do not know the precise amount, it could be as much as a half million dollars. Whatever the amount is, the good news is that we have most of what will be needed to expand the church. Consequently, all that we raise in the *Forward Together* campaign will be directed to the building of the new Parish Life Center.

*The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that a person took and sowed in a field. It is the smallest of all the seeds, yet when full-grown it is the largest of plants. It becomes a large bush, and the birds of the sky come and dwell in its branches. --Matthew 13:31-32*



### Church Expansion Plans

- ✝ The addition will add approximately 300 seats.
- ✝ The new homes for the Marian Statue and the St. Martin de Porres Statue will have their stained glass relocated with them.



### *Tested Through Trial and Storm*

The storms of life will always challenge us, but our faith is secure in God who will never leave us alone. Our children are growing up in a world many of us struggle to recognize. We know that every life is sacred... that each person is created in the image and likeness of God and this is the source of our inherent dignity. But the world teaches that those most vulnerable, precious infants in the womb and our cherished elderly, are a burden, and therefore are disposable. Our young people are bombarded with messages that challenge what our faith teaches them. Our families are yearning for a faith home for their children... a place where they can come to know Jesus surrounded by a community who loves them. St. Martin de Porres can be our shelter in these storms.

Unfortunately, the literal storms in our lives – Hurricanes Laura and Delta – destroyed the humble buildings we did have in which we could minister to our children, youth, and adults. Because of our exponential growth, we were already bursting at the seams but were still making do with what we had. Now, the parish staff is crowded into what was designed to be our Music and Meeting Rooms – and even that space can't house our entire staff, so some work remotely. Because of the office equipment and desks in these rooms, we no longer have a place to offer Children's Church, and our Music Ministry team has lost their rehearsal space. Simply to have a place to meet, our ministries and organizations at SMdP are forced to compete for the limited facilities we do have. Some even gather off-site because weekly daytime events may be cancelled due to the need to schedule funerals.

Right now, our church is trying to do the impossible: build a thriving faith community without the spaces to make it happen. We are stuck. But we aren't going to stay that way.



*When you pass through waters, I will be with you; through rivers, you shall not be swept away. --Isaiah 43:2*

We invite you to dream and pray with us about what our future could look like in our new Parish Life Center:

Components		Potential Ministries & Events
<b>SMdP Parish Hall</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>† 6,000 sq ft meeting space that will seat 500-800 people</li> <li>† State-of-the-art technology for meetings and events</li> <li>† Commercial kitchen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>† We can host large events like SMdP Celebration Day or date nights for couples.</li> <li>† Weekly fellowship, like coffee and donuts, after Mass can become a new tradition.</li> <li>† Dinner meetings for the KC's or Catholic Daughters are a possibility.</li> <li>† Day and evening retreats can be offered for youth or adults.</li> <li>† We have space for celebrations for our RE students.</li> </ul>
<b>Granger/Vincent Parish Library</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>† A quiet space devoted to honoring our heritage and allowing for contemplation and reading</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>† Our Hall of Founders photos and stories can be respectfully displayed.</li> <li>† Shelving for books and comfortable seating will invite folks to come, read about our faith, and rest in the silence.</li> </ul>
<b>Faith Formation Wing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>† 12,600 sq ft</li> <li>† Individual classrooms for RE grades 1-11</li> <li>† Dedicated space for our Youth</li> <li>† Storage for supplies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>† Our RE classes will all be able to meet in our own dedicated space, allowing us to tailor each classroom for that grade's needs.</li> <li>† Larger classrooms for upper grades can be a shared space for adult ministries like the Altar Society.</li> <li>† Classrooms can host adult small group meetings or Bible studies during the week.</li> </ul>
<b>Parish Office Complex</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>† Private office space for staff members</li> <li>† Office equipment needed to run the ministries of the church</li> <li>† Dedicated storage space for supplies and parish records</li> <li>† Conference room for meetings</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>† With the staff moved into their own 7,000 sq ft wing, Children's Church and breakfast after Daily Mass can return to the Meeting Room.</li> <li>† SMdP Music Ministry will regain their rehearsal and office space.</li> <li>† The parish staff will have the room and the tools to administer the ministry of the church.</li> <li>† Clergy and staff will have private spaces to counsel or offer assistance to those in need.</li> </ul>
<b>SMdP Back Porch</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>† Casual outdoor space with patio furniture, a fire pit, BBQ equipment, etc.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>† Parish celebrations can spill over into this inviting outdoor space.</li> <li>† Youth events can easily shift from the Youth Room to the firepit.</li> <li>† Children will have a place to run, laugh, and play.</li> <li>† SMdP BBQ!! (Need we say more?)</li> </ul>

*Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? Who will go for us?"  
 "Here I am," I said; "send me!" --Isaiah 6:8*

## Step Forward, Join Together

### *A note from Monsignor Jace Eskind*

The recent demolition of our former church and office spaces reminds us of the reality in which we, as a community of faith, are living. What once provided a place for meetings, fellowship, religious education, youth group gatherings, and offices for Parish Staff are no more. ***We are on the threshold of what will be the future for St. Martin de Porres for years to come. Now is the time for us to act.***

Now is the time for each individual family to step forward and join with members of our SMdP parish family as we begin the process to build the new Parish Life Center. Since every family will benefit from the use of the new Parish Life Center, I am asking each family to actively engage in this campaign through your prayers and generous financial giving. We need ***not equal gifts but equal sacrifice*** type of giving. This means that God has granted each of us varying capacities to give. He asks us, therefore, to give in response to what He has granted us. We need the extravagant giving of many and the extraordinary giving of a few. If we each do our part, this vision will become a reality.

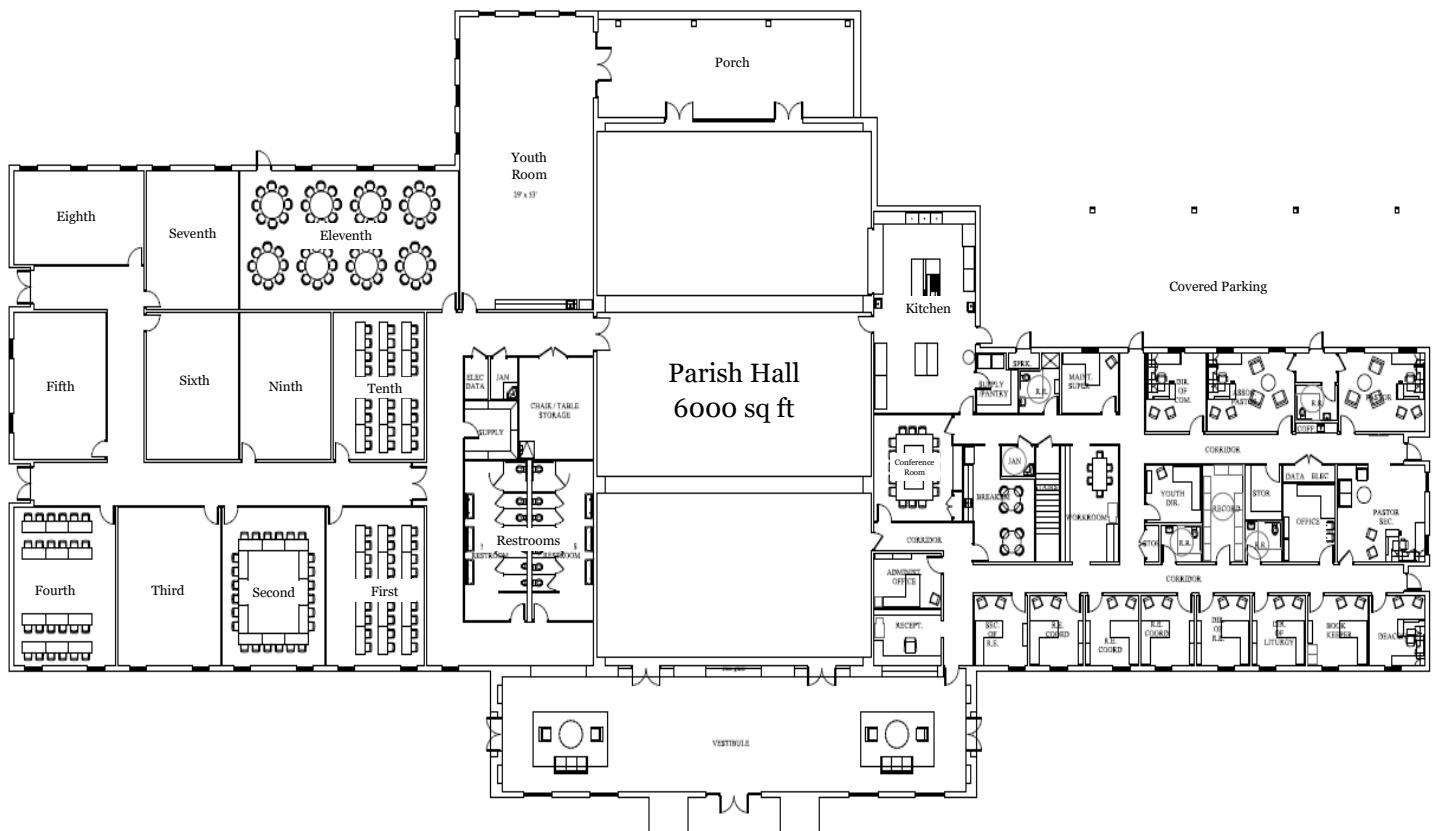
Our beloved St. Martin de Porres parish community will celebrate its 25th anniversary in November 2027. Wouldn't it be wonderful to celebrate Mass in an expanded worship space sometime during that celebratory year and to see our new Parish Life Center under construction?

**The future is now!** May God richly bless our preparations for the next quarter century of parish ministry.

With prayers and with anticipation, I remain yours,  
Fr. Jace



## SMdP Parish Life Center



*Faith is the realization of what is hoped for  
and evidence of things not seen.  
Hebrews 11:1*



### My Own Step Forward

While we do not know how God will bless our parish with the \$12.5 million needed for the Parish Life Center, we are boldly asking that He will. The gift chart that follows outlines the suggested numbers and amounts of gifts that we believe will be necessary to reach our goal in the *Forward Together* capital campaign. You are invited to prayerfully consider a challenging but attainable gift to be given **over three years**. Further, we ask that your commitment and gift to the campaign be "over-and-above" your general offertory giving (or 1<sup>st</sup> collection).

We have options should our capital campaign raise something less than current estimated costs. For example, should the pledges be less than the actual cost of the new building, we might elect to borrow the difference. As noted, our history indicates an ability to pay off facility debt early.



## Gift Chart

Total Amount (3 years)	Number of Gifts	Total of Level	Cumulative Total	% of Goal
\$1,500,000	1	\$1,500,000	\$1,500,000	12%
\$1,000,000	1	\$1,000,000	\$2,500,000	20%
\$750,000	2	\$1,500,000	\$4,000,000	32%
\$500,000	2	\$1,000,000	\$5,000,000	40%
\$250,000	3	\$750,000	\$5,750,000	46%
\$100,000	6	\$600,000	\$6,350,000	51%
\$50,000	10	\$500,000	\$6,850,000	55%
\$30,000	30	\$900,000	\$7,750,000	62%
\$21,000	50	\$1,050,000	\$8,800,000	70%
\$15,000	60	\$900,000	\$9,700,000	78%
\$9,000	80	\$720,000	\$10,420,000	83%
\$6,000	140	\$840,000	\$11,260,000	90%
\$3,000	200	\$600,000	\$11,860,000	95%
<\$3000	Many	\$700,000	\$12,560,000	100%

### *What might this look like on a monthly basis?*

- ✝ \$100,000 given over 3 years would be about \$2778/mo
- ✝ \$30,000 given over 3 years would be about \$833/mo
- ✝ \$15,000 given over 3 years would be about \$417/mo
- ✝ \$6,000 given over 3 years would be about \$167/mo

**To be successful, we will need the generous giving of all,  
and the extraordinary giving of a few.**

What God wills, God makes possible. That's why we are moving forward with confidence and faith that we are doing what God is leading us to do. Yes, there will be challenges. But we believe this *Forward Together* campaign is God's will, and that He will provide for our parish through the generosity of our people, just as He has in the past.

God has poured out His blessings upon this community that began with catechism classes under the oak tree. The people of SMdP have always seen the importance of teaching our children the beauty and majesty of our Catholic faith. Today, we move ***Forward Together*** in a bold way, united by faith, sharing our gifts and talents responsibly, willingly, and compassionately.

### St. Martin de Porres Catholic Church

A diverse family, united by faith, reflecting God's love, as a community of service.

***They will be called oaks of justice, the planting of the LORD to show his glory. -- Isaiah 61:3***

*Forward*  
TOGETHER