

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO



Spiritual Renewal



.....GENERATION
TO GENERATION:
ANSWER THE CALL



Pope Francis

"I dream of a missionary option", that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything, so that the Church's customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today's world rather than her self-preservation."

Evangelii Gaudium, No. 27

Pope Benedict XVI

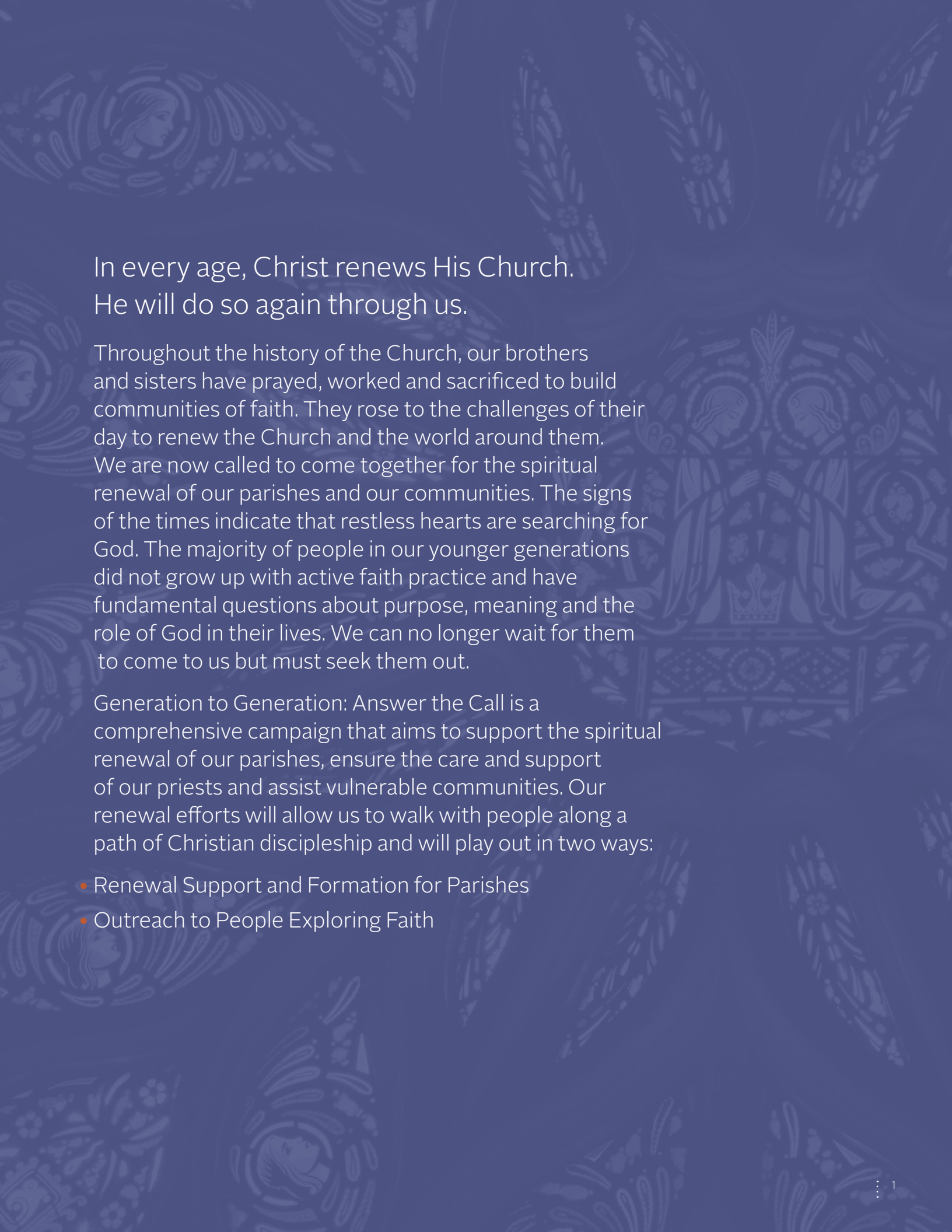
"The Church is missionary by her nature and her principal task is evangelization."

Address, October 26, 2006

Pope Saint John Paul II

"I sense the moment has come to commit all of the Church's energies to a new evangelization and to the missions ad gentes [to the nations]. No believer in Christ, no institution of the Church can avoid this supreme duty: to proclaim Christ to all peoples."

Redemptoris Missio, No. 3

The background of the entire page is a dark blue color with a repeating pattern of stylized, light blue halos and figures. These figures appear to be saints or angels, depicted in profile or facing forward, surrounded by ornate, leaf-like patterns. The pattern is dense and covers the entire background.

In every age, Christ renews His Church.
He will do so again through us.

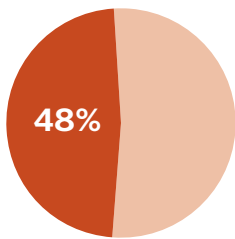
Throughout the history of the Church, our brothers and sisters have prayed, worked and sacrificed to build communities of faith. They rose to the challenges of their day to renew the Church and the world around them. We are now called to come together for the spiritual renewal of our parishes and our communities. The signs of the times indicate that restless hearts are searching for God. The majority of people in our younger generations did not grow up with active faith practice and have fundamental questions about purpose, meaning and the role of God in their lives. We can no longer wait for them to come to us but must seek them out.

Generation to Generation: Answer the Call is a comprehensive campaign that aims to support the spiritual renewal of our parishes, ensure the care and support of our priests and assist vulnerable communities. Our renewal efforts will allow us to walk with people along a path of Christian discipleship and will play out in two ways:

- Renewal Support and Formation for Parishes
- Outreach to People Exploring Faith

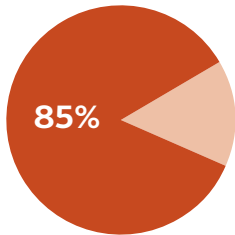
Restless hearts are searching for God

St. Augustine said that our hearts are restless until they rest in God. The signs of our times suggest many hearts are restless. Faith practice has declined over the past generations, and our younger generations also report higher levels of anxiety, loneliness and spiritual hunger.



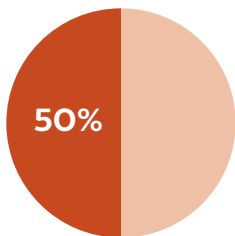
48% of Gen Z identify as “Nones”

(*The Nones*, Burge, 2023, p.83)



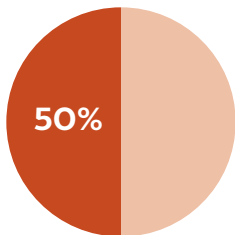
85% of young adults raised Catholic do not practice weekly

(Barna Young Adult Survey, 2019)



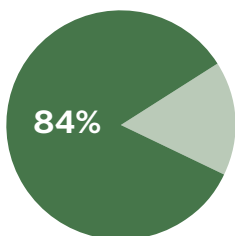
50% of Gen Zers with anxiety

(Anxiety & Depression Association of America, 2023)



50% of adults over 18 with loneliness

(Surgeon General's report, 2023)

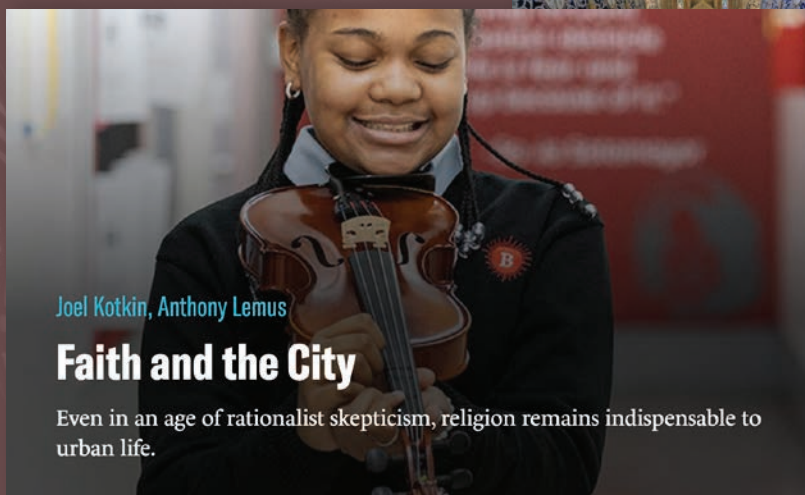
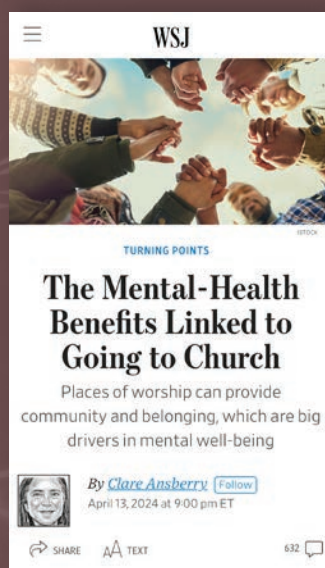
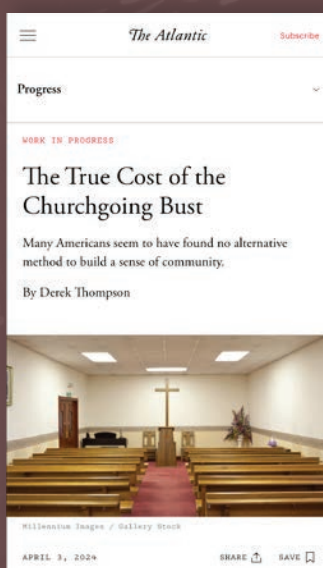


84% of Americans “want to grow spiritually”

(Barna interview, 2024)

Society suffers without the light of Christ

Christianity changed human history. Jesus Christ transformed humanity's understanding of human dignity. Society suffers without the light of Christ. This darkness diminishes care for the poor and vulnerable, our concept of marriage and family, our sense of community and solidarity with others, and the importance of civic engagement and charitable giving.



To encounter Jesus Christ

A summary of parishioner perspectives on what it means to encounter Jesus Christ:

WONDER AND AWE

- Be connected to something greater than yourself
- Enter into wonder
- Be deeply touched
- Be drawn in as never before
- Desire to be more than you are

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

- Be fully known
- Know you are loved personally by God
- Have your heart be opened
- Have your mind changed
- Know your truest self

INNER PEACE

- Experience forgiveness and healing
- Feel helped in carrying your heaviest burdens
- Be at peace within yourself
- Know you can trust God and His will
- Be redeemed
- Obtain peace of soul

PURPOSE

- Discover meaning and purpose in your life
- Know your higher calling
- Be on the way to something more than you could ever have imagined
- Be on the path to the eternal

COMMUNION WITH OTHERS

- Become freer to give and serve
- Be willing to embrace the crosses that love demands
- Desire to share Christ's light in the darkest corners
- Care for the vulnerable
- Find grounding for deeper friendships
- Become more able to forgive others
- Be in communion with all
- Know you ultimately belong

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**EXPERIENCE TRUE JOY.
THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING
OF SPIRITUAL RENEWAL.**

“God became one of us
so that we might
become one with God.”



The imperative of our time— becoming missional parishes

Jesus commanded his followers to “go and make disciples” (Matthew 28:19–20). From the very beginning, we have been a missionary church. We have always accomplished this work friend-to-friend and family member-to-family member. This was how the early Church grew in the beginning and how the Church renewed itself in other times. We are again in a new time of renewal, called to share our faith in new ways.

Over the past few years, we have learned from examples of renewal throughout the world. We have conducted our own research by interviewing and surveying spiritual explorers early in their faith journeys. We have experimented with early renewal efforts in partnership with other parishes. Guided by the Holy Spirit, we have used these experiences to develop a structured approach to help ignite the spark of renewal in our parishes.

Together, we are embarking on a generational journey to reintroduce the light and peace of Jesus Christ to the people in our lives and to our communities.

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**“I CONTINUE TO DREAM OF A...
NEW ERA OF MISSIONARY
ACTIVITY AMONG CHRISTIAN
COMMUNITIES.”**

— Pope Francis, 2022



“Go and make disciples.”

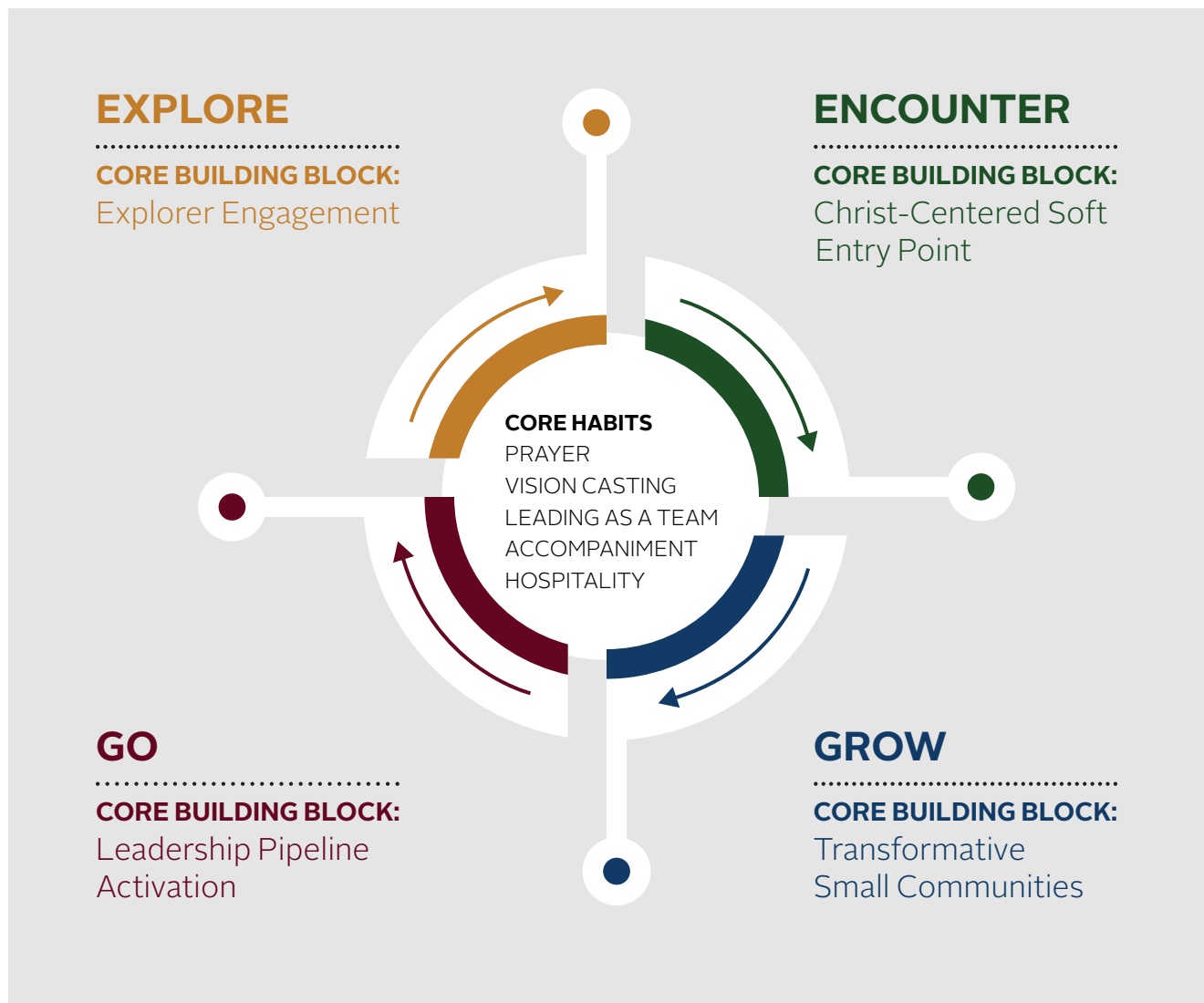
— Matthew 28:19–20



Accompanying people along a discipleship path

We are called to accompany people along a path of Christian discipleship, often starting earlier in faith journeys than we might assume. Our experience-based approach to renewal focuses on the following:

- Supporting disciples along a full continuum of “explore,” “encounter,” “grow,” and “go”
- Building core parish habits that support renewal



Our efforts support parishes and spiritual explorers on the renewal journey

We are part of a global community of missionary disciples inviting people to life in relationship with Jesus Christ. We will bring together the gifts and zeal of our parishes with the learnings and capabilities of our archdiocesan renewal team. Led by the Holy Spirit, together we will renew Christ's Church. This generational effort will focus on two initiatives: The Archdiocesan Renewal Center and digital outreach for people exploring faith.

THE ARCHDIOCESAN RENEWAL CENTER—RENEWAL SUPPORT AND FORMATION FOR PARISHES

Our Renewal Center will focus on the following activities:

- **Intensive on-the-ground support of parishes**

Our early work suggests that deep partnership combined with a structured approach is often required to ignite the spark of renewal. Together, we will help parishes communicate the vision of renewal, build a strong parish leadership team, set team priorities, establish new cultural practices, organize for renewal and launch initial steps. These initial steps will include new “entry points,” non-judgmental spaces outside of the context of Mass where people can explore questions of faith and enter into community with others.

- **Ongoing calendar of renewal workshops and events**

The center will launch learning programs on the foundations of renewal for pastors, staff and lay leaders, enabling them to implement new ideas at their parishes. The center will also host regular events for parish members to pray, learn and be inspired about renewal.

- **Ongoing faith research**

Our efforts have been rooted in analyzing faith trends and learning from global examples. We have also formed perspectives from interviews with more than 40 spiritual explorers and an independently conducted quantitative survey of 2,500 Catholics and former Catholics.

STRUCTURED APPROACH TO IGNITING RENEWAL

Three-phase approach based on global learnings

Tilling the Soil

(6 months)

- Vision-sharing
- Leading as a team
- **Encounter:** Entry point pilot

Initial launch

(12 months)

- Vision-sharing and leading as a team
- **Encounter:** Entry point growth
- **Grow:** Prepare for small communities
- Hospitality and accompaniment
- Inspiring liturgies

Ongoing momentum

- Vision-sharing and leading as a team
- **Encounter:** Entry point growth
- **Grow:** Small communities growth
- **Go:** Leadership and faith-sharing
- **Explore** and build momentum
- Inspiring liturgies



WORKSHOP OFFERINGS

For teams of pastors, staff and lay leaders

“Understanding Faith Trends”

“Meeting the Needs of Spiritual Explorers: Spiritual Profiles”

“Launching Christ-Centered Entry Points”

“Best Practices in Launching a Parish Leadership Team”

“Evangelization Foundations”

“Hospitality and Engagement 101”

“Launching Small Communities”

“Go Forth: Sharing Our Faith”

“Go Forth: Discerning Your Spiritual Charisms”



DIGITAL OUTREACH FOR PEOPLE EXPLORING FAITH

More than 80% of Americans state that they want to grow spiritually, but many younger adults are hesitant to begin their exploration in a church environment. They are open to exploring digitally.

We are creating tailored online workshops and curated content, hosted on a digital platform, that will invite those who are spiritually hungry to engage in spiritual exploration based on their own attitudes, preference and prior experiences (their “spiritual DNA”). Our efforts will start by offering online support and fostering community for those exploring their spirituality. We will eventually connect them to host parishes ready and able to receive and accompany them on their faith journeys to discipleship in Jesus Christ.

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EXAMPLES OF SPIRITUAL EXPLORER PROFILES

These profiles will help inform tailored content and approaches to engaging spiritual explorers.

Tough Questions	Purpose and Mystery	Healing
Questions existence of God. Seeking intellectual basis for faith. Focused on exploring questions about existence of God and compatibility of faith and science.	Views God as distant and mysterious but seeking purpose and the meaning of life. Focused on reflecting on personal gifts and exploring questions of personal calling and purpose.	Has suffered from trauma, anxiety or addiction. Seeking peace and belonging. Focused on healing, healthy relationships and community.

Early efforts are providing encouraging signs

Renewal is igniting faith in Jesus Christ

“It wasn’t until I attended Alpha* that I had an encounter with Jesus, was filled with the Holy Spirit, knew my purpose, who I was and whose I was.”

— Michelle F., parishioner

“Alpha* provides a space where you can truly explore those questions you have about faith. It really showed me how to find what faith and religion mean to me.”

— Connor O., parishioner

Renewal is forming committed leaders

“I feel much more comfortable inviting friends and family, and I even spoke in front of the whole parish, sharing my story. I want to reach the ‘hard to find’ people. I want to make an impact in our community.”

— Andrea M., young adult parishioner

Efforts are renewing priestly ministry

“I am more energized than ever in my priesthood, and I am grateful for my friendship with the parish renewal leader who supports me.”

— Fr. John S., renewal pastor

Archdiocesan partnership is helping parishes renew

“Having the support of the archdiocese has helped us as a parish to energize and revitalize our community.”

— Fr. Xamie R., renewal pastor

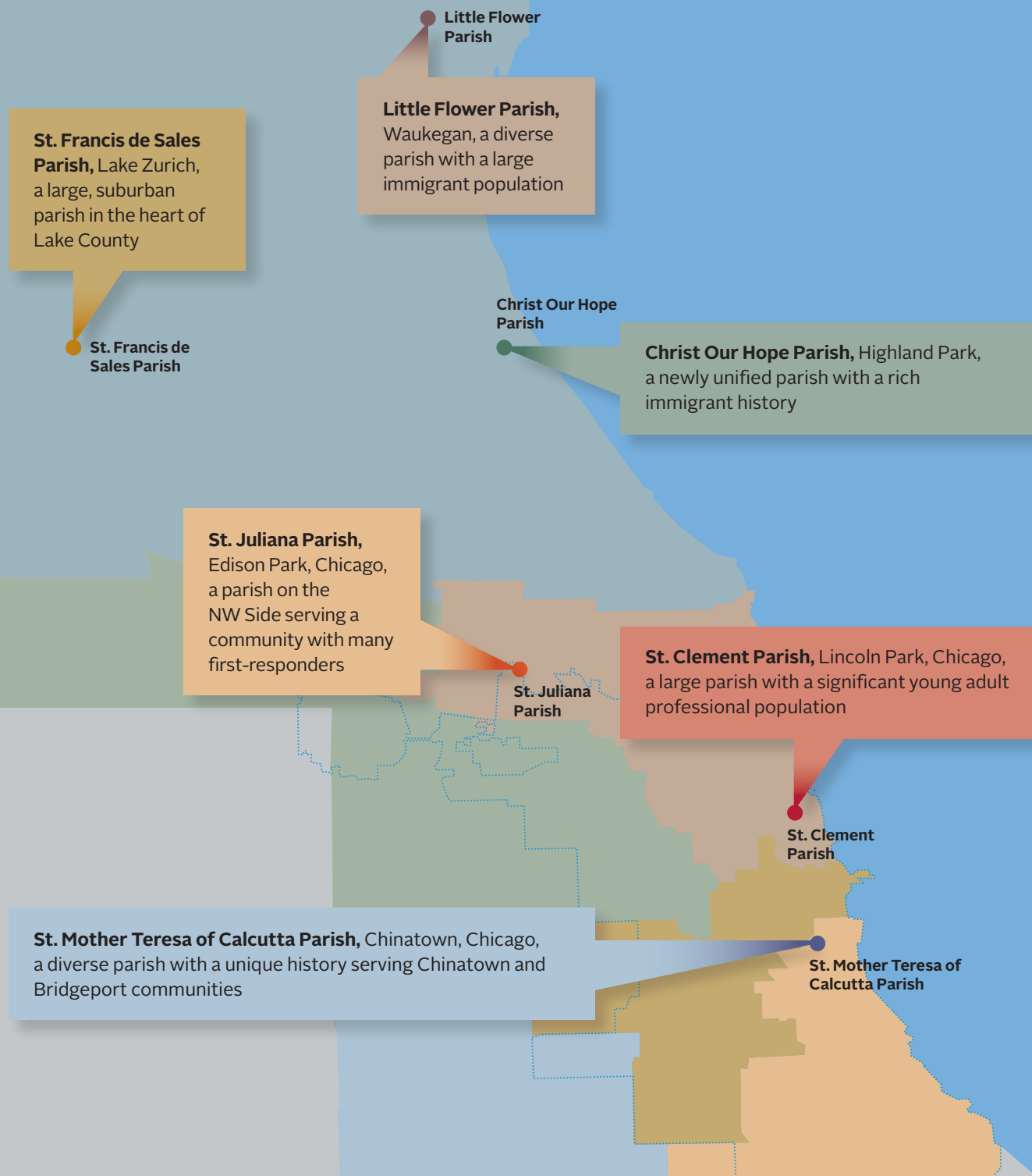
“I appreciate that the archdiocese brings structure and process to this vision of renewal.”

— Barb E., parish staff member

*Christ-centered entry point program used by many archdiocesan parishes as they launch renewal.

Renewal efforts underway at a diverse group of parishes

Some examples of parishes who have started on the journey of renewal: forming a team, building core habits, launching entry points, and dedicating resources to the work of renewal.



Signs of a missional parish

Equipping parish leaders to invite the spiritually hungry to a relationship with Jesus Christ and be fully present and active in our Church.

FOUNDATION

We remain true to the rich tradition and essential tenets of our Catholic faith. We **worship** in vibrant liturgies, with the Eucharist as the source and summit of our Christian life. We **pass on to each generation** the fullness of our Catholic Christian faith and tradition. We are **sent into the world** to witness the Gospel through service.

RENEWAL BUILDING BLOCKS

- We offer meaningful Christ-centered **“entry points”** of non-judgmental exploration within a community that provides space for an encounter with Jesus Christ. (ENCOUNTER)
- We actively invite all members of our parish to participate in **small communities** of belonging and ongoing formation. (GROW)
- We continually **activate and train newly committed parish leaders**, empowered to serve our parish and community and comfortable sharing our faith. (GO)
- We equip our communities for **outreach to those exploring** questions of meaning, purpose, healing and belonging. (EXPLORE)

CORE RENEWAL HABITS AND PRACTICES

- We are **led by the Holy Spirit** and **pray regularly for the renewal** of our Church.
- We engage our parish community in our **renewal vision** and regularly communicate with members about how best to enhance our renewal vision for today's times.
- We **lead as a team**, bringing the gifts of individuals together to support our pastor in renewal.
- We intentionally create moments of **space, prayer and reflection** in our liturgies and parish activities to create opportunities to encounter Jesus Christ.
- We offer a **compelling hospitality experience** to all who connect with us, whether at Mass, another liturgy, an event, online or through our parish office.
- We have an established engine of **intentional accompaniment**—purposely welcoming new members into our community, accompanying them on their faith journeys, and connecting them to parish opportunities.
- We have a parish practice of **inviting those outside** our church to join us through well-proven entry points or other activities that best suit those in early stages of their faith journey.
- We regularly **share stories** of lives changed through our renewal efforts, enhancing our ability to proclaim the Gospel in our time.
- We continually **evaluate whether our programs and activities meet our aspiration** for “fresh encounter,” “deep belonging” and/or “bold sharing” in Jesus Christ and adjust our priorities accordingly.

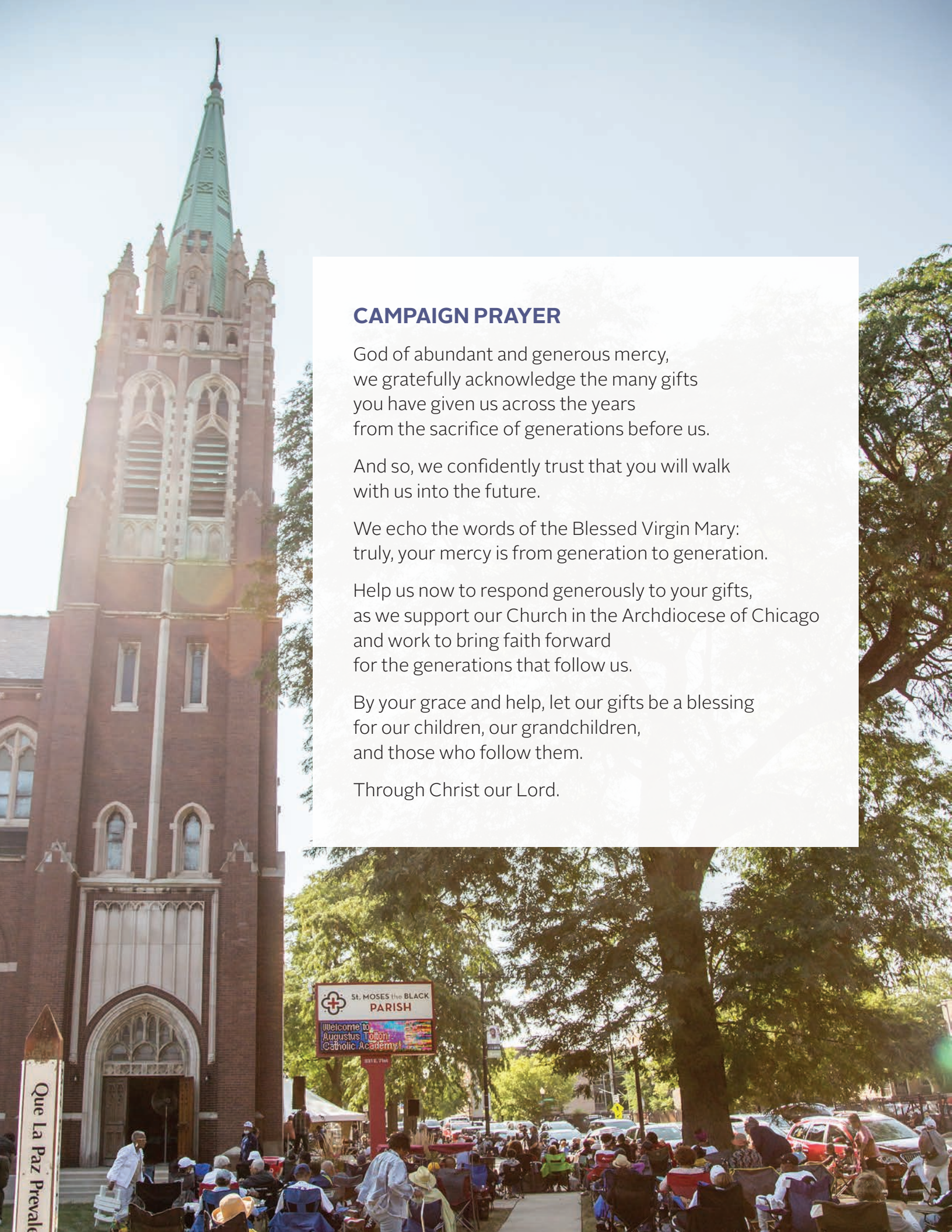
Fruits of a missional parish: new disciples, more deeply committed disciples, disciples equipped for mission in Jesus Christ



LEARN MORE AND SUPPORT SPIRITUAL RENEWAL EFFORTS

For more information on Spiritual Renewal efforts
at the Archdiocese of Chicago, please visit
renewmychurch.org.

For more information on supporting Spiritual
Renewal efforts at the archdiocese through the
Generation to Generation campaign, please contact
312.534.7959 or **gentogen@archchicago.org**.



CAMPAIGN PRAYER

God of abundant and generous mercy,
we gratefully acknowledge the many gifts
you have given us across the years
from the sacrifice of generations before us.

And so, we confidently trust that you will walk
with us into the future.

We echo the words of the Blessed Virgin Mary:
truly, your mercy is from generation to generation.

Help us now to respond generously to your gifts,
as we support our Church in the Archdiocese of Chicago
and work to bring faith forward
for the generations that follow us.

By your grace and help, let our gifts be a blessing
for our children, our grandchildren,
and those who follow them.

Through Christ our Lord.



Gifts to Generation to Generation will be held in separate, restricted accounts and used solely for the specific priorities set forth in the Generation to Generation campaign case statement as well as the relevant local parish case statement. The campaign goals are approximate and based on anticipated needs and contributions. Final distributions will be based on actual contributions and net of related campaign expenses and fees.

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