UPON THIS ROCK

The Holy Spirit has prompted Bishop Malone to dream and plan for the future of the Roman Catholic Church in the Diocese of Buffalo. Our church has been built on the sacrifices of our ancestors which provided a firm foundation of faith, sacrifice, community and outreach. Our diocese was established in 1847 and provided a platform that so far has served the people of our diocese and the greater Western New York Region for one hundred seventy years. What will our church be like one hundred seventy years from now?

That question has been with Bishop Malone. He has consulted with the Diocesan Finance Council, the Bishop’ College of Consultors, the priests and lay leaders of the diocese. The conclusion: the foundations of our diocese must be shored-up to ensure that our church will be around for people one hundred seventy years from now.

There should be endowments to prop up the necessary pieces to the puzzle of the Roman Catholic Church in the Diocese of Buffalo. The essentials are the Cathedral in downtown Buffalo as the face of the diocese during downtown’s revitalization period. Also Christ the King Seminary to ensure education for the clergy and laity and an oasis of retreat and prayer for all God’s people. Catholic Charites endowment to expand and develop charitable outreach to the underserved outside of Erie County. The Mother Teresa Home to say to all that life is sacred to us as Catholics. This facility will provide assistance to young mothers or mothers-to-be who have no support family behind them. We will be their support family. If families want to send their children to Catholic schools, tuition assistance should be made available. In Catholic schools, classrooms and labs have to be up-dated to exceed demands of modern education. There will be an endowment for evangelization and catechesis – evangelization to reach out to the Millennials and beyond about the eternal importance of the message of Christ and updates for teachers of religion to engage families-in-whole in religious education. Along with that an endowment for outreach through social media. An endowment for the healthcare for clergy which right now is underfunded by twenty-four million dollars. A parish support endowment to help churches in financial crises with grants to cover the crises they face. And last but not least, foundational support for the local church of neighborhood parishes.

These are the foundations that will ensure the future of the Diocese of Buffalo.

The diocesan goal is one hundred million dollars over five years spread across 161 parishes. The bishop is personally raising millions of dollars on his own to see to it that this initiative succeeds.

Our goal at BMT Parish is five hundred thousand dollars over five years. Each individual parish is assigned different goals according to each parish’s population and weekly collections.

Our goal seems out of reach but already now certain parishioners have already been approached and have replied to this initiative with pledges of over two hundred and fifty million dollars – fifty percent of our goal. They have seen the future and they want to be foundational to its success.

We now will have open enrollment in Upon This Rock. Those not already contacted will receive information in the mail detailing this initiative for our parish. Please read and pray over the materials because they are personally directed to you. The so-called “ask” in these letters are over the top to be sure but they have been based on your support of our parish and your Catholic Charities contributions. Please return the enclosed envelope within the next two weeks. We will have the last two weekends in March set aside in church for the commitment from the friends of BMT Parish.

Your Catholic Charities pledge will be bundled into Upon This Rock. You should not receive any solicitations in the mail from Catholic Charities. Your pledge for this year, and this year only, will be to Upon This Rock. Based on the average pledges, BMT parish raised forty thousand dollars *per* year. Therefore, the first forty thousand dollars received through Upon This Rock will go to Catholic Charities. For example, the first three hundred and fifty dollars of my five-year commitment will be my donation to Catholic Charities and my check will be addressed not to Catholic Charities but to Upon This Rock this year. If you do receive a letter from Catholic Charities it is a mistake and please disregard.

As far as our own parish is concerned, 35% of the monies raised as our participation in this initiative will return to Blessed Mother Teresa Parish. If we exceed our goal, then 55% will come back home. This will set up a fund to address a new boiler in church, the last remaining boiler in the school building, the roof on the second story of the school building and the church parking lot. So we have a lot riding upon the success of this initiative.

I hope you will consider this initiative of “Upon This Rock” with an open mind and an open heart. Future generations will hold us in high regard for keeping the Church alive here in Depew and in our diocese and for Western New York as a whole.

Thank you.