

the **One** FAITH HOPE LOVE bulletin

Catholic Community Foundation for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati

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Helping families access Catholic education

The application period is now open for Catholic school tuition assistance covering the 2017-18 academic year in our archdiocese.

Expenditures will include \$2 million from benefactors of One Faith, One Hope, One Love, to help more families have access to quality, affordable Catholic schools. The initial application deadline was Jan. 31. Those who applied by then were to receive notification by Feb. 10. Those who missed the Jan. 31 deadline may apply through Feb. 28.

Application details and options can be found at catholicbestchoice.org or call 513-421-3131.

The CEF board, headed by Archbishop Dennis Schnurr and Bishop Joe Binzer, is responsible for overseeing and implementing campaign tuition assistance. At the board's regular meeting in December, members approved \$335,000 in other expenditures as follows:

- A parish religious education Catechetical Institute project (\$85,000): The archdiocese is developing a Catechetical Institute combining digital instruction with "discipleship-focused process of forming parish catechists and schoolteachers."

- Governance (\$72,000): The administrative model for archdiocesan high schools includes boards of limited

jurisdiction. Needs include continuing oversight and board training. Staff members are attending board meetings as advisers to the schools, the first step to providing additional oversight and support. Additional staff time is necessary for individual attention within each of the high schools.

- Professional development (\$71,000): The Catholic Schools Office, attentive to surveys of principals, is planning programs for this year and developing a long-term strategy. A significant need exists to recruit and train future school leaders as well as to retain current ones. According to the Schools Office, leadership in our schools has been changing at a rate of almost 25% for the past two years.

- Summer school (\$40,000): Extension and enhancement of programs, with emphasis on remediation.

- Preschool programs (\$40,000) to provide oversight, consultation, and other support for schools considering or implementing such programs. To date, 65 preschools exist with an additional five scheduled to open next fall.

- Latino Outreach (\$27,000). Programs previously targeted elementary schools, but these students are beginning to enter our high schools and services.

Previous allocations include K-4 religion teacher materials, approved in June.



The call and the blessing

Andrew Smith had been an Air Force officer for only a short time when he received a life-changing spiritual message: a disembodied voice inviting him to consider the priesthood.

Several years later, he'd been a seminarian for only a short time when he received a life-changing message of a more material kind: He was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis.

But although his path toward the priesthood has been unpredictable, his goal is certain.

"I plan to be ordained in 2018," said Mr. Smith, a third-year theology student at Mount St. Mary's Seminary of the West.

He was raised in Beaver Creek, the fifth of seven children in a family belonging to St. Luke parish. After entering the Air Force via the ROTC program at the University of Dayton, he was assigned to Wright-Patterson Air Force Base with responsibilities for what he calls "the business side" of the drone program – purchasing, contracting, training, equipment testing.

One evening during that period, at age 23, he heard the voice.

"It was one day after work," he remembers. "I was in the basement on the computer, just reading news or something normal, when I heard God's voice saying 'Andy, maybe you'd be happier being a priest.'"

His reaction?

"Surprised," he recalls, laughing. "But I know what I heard."

He didn't, however, drop everything and enter the seminary. For starters, there was the matter of his Air Force contract, which required more than five more years of service.

Nor was the voice a "road to Damascus" mandate. "It was an invitation, not an order," Mr. Smith says.

"I began thinking about it. I loved the Air Force, loved my job, and I still owed the Air Force time," he said. He began a

discernment process, under no pressure to decide right away.

Over time, his attraction to the priesthood ebbed and flowed. He served deployments in the Middle East, including Saudi Arabia and Qatar, and was assigned to logistics for the F-16 program at Hill Air Force Base in Utah, where he rose to the rank of captain.

The crunch finally came as his military obligation approached its end.

"I had to make a decision," he says. "Either suppress it, which didn't seem like a good idea, or give everything to God."

But having cleared the hurdle of indecision, he'd progressed only about a year-and-a-half at Mount St. Mary's when confronted with multiple sclerosis, a mysterious, chronic, and potentially debilitating disease.

MS is a condition in which the body's immune system attacks the central nervous system. The disease usually exerts no significant effect on life expectancy, but symptoms are various and unpredictable, ranging from mild to disabling.

"The biggest problem for me is fatigue," Mr. Smith says. "Even with eight hours sleep, I have to take like a three-hour nap."

He also suffers severe pain in his feet, another common MS symptom.

"I have to wear sandals instead of shoes," he says. "I tell people if Pope Francis can wear sandals, I can too."

The cause of MS is unknown. Since Mr. Smith's case could conceivably be related to his military service, his Veterans Affairs benefits cover treatment.

A future challenge will involve managing his symptoms amid demands he'll face as a parish priest.

"I do think about that quite often," he says. "I try not to dwell on it. As a parish priest I won't be able to do everything people want me to do. I'll need an understanding parish staff. I'll probably have to be assigned to a smaller parish."

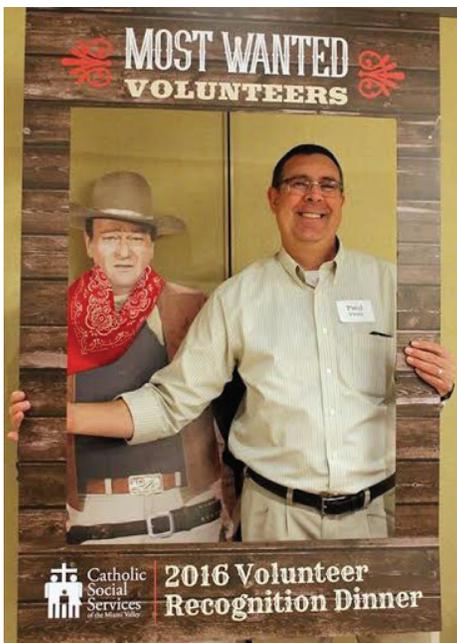
But the disease also has brought spiritual enrichment. He thinks of its burdens especially when he contemplates the fourth Sorrowful Mystery, the Carrying of the Cross, and what he calls "the experience of loss and pain."

"One blessing is that it's knocked my ego down," Mr. Smith says. "I can't do everything I want to do. I can't be the superstar. It's made me put everything in God's hands."

"Even just being American, or being a man, a lot of value is placed on what I can do, what I can produce," he says. Having MS "has forced me to have a deeper prayer life and an understanding that my identity comes from being loved by God, not by what I can do."

"I've always looked at this a blessing from God. He is in control, so I think about the future but I don't worry about it."

Benefactors of One Faith, One Hope, One Love are helping to Foster Vocations. Find out more at 1faith1hope1love.org



Stepping forward, stepping up

Paul Fleitz, an Air Force research scientist, was leading a refugee family on a Dayton excursion when he stepped onto an escalator.

As he turned to speak, he received a surprise.

“I had expected them to follow me,” he said, “but they hesitated. They’d never been on an escalator.”

That brief incident provides a kind of metaphor for the challenges in helping refugees rise to a better quality of life.

Paul is a volunteer mentor for a family of five from Eritrea, a nation of about 6.5 million people on the Horn of Africa along the Red Sea (site of another dangerous exodus). He’s been working with the family since their Dayton resettlement about two years ago.

“They’re a mother and four kids,” he said. “I primarily work as a tutor for the older daughter, who is 16 now.”

Thousands of Eritreans flee their homeland each month. The country has been called the “African North Korea,” but some say its brutal dictatorship is even worse. The organization Reporters

Without Borders ranks Eritrea lowest among 180 countries for freedom of expression, just below North Korea.

Paul doesn’t know what circumstances led this particular family to leave their devastated homeland, because volunteers are told not to ask.

But, he says, “You can assume refugees are from a bad situation. It’s just a question of how bad.”

His involvement with refugee resettlement began when he answered a newspaper ad for volunteers.

Paul was assigned to the Eritrean family and has worked with them since. “They spoke no English at all,” he said. “The mother still doesn’t speak English. She’s disabled and can only walk short distances.”

Paul’s primary duty is to meet with the 16-year-old each week for tutoring, which includes basic reading and math. “She’s reading at about a third-grade level,” he said.

The family’s native language is Tigrinya, spoken by about half of all Eritreans. Paul doesn’t speak it, but is able to manage with the help of a telephone interpreting service via a Dayton Public Schools subscription.

“The family currently lives in a house in the [North Dayton] area where the neighbors are almost all refugees and speak many languages, but the neighbors communicate well with each other, which I found interesting,” he said.

Catholic Social Services of the Miami Valley has been key in the effort to help refugees adjust and prosper. “Dayton gets about 250 refugees a year,” Paul said. “Catholic Social Services does a really good job of getting jobs for them so they have some income to build on.

“The refugees come in with nothing. They get a certain allotment of money and other help. Catholic Social Services has to move on to the next family, so they rely a lot on volunteers.”

Benefactors of One Faith, One Hope, One Love are helping to support Catholic Charities and Social Services, including refugee services. To find out more, go to 1faith1hope1love.org

Tell us your story!

Do you have a success story to share from your local effort – about a particular blessing, a great volunteer, or how funds from **One Faith, One Hope, One Love** are helping your parish? Please share it! Contact Paul Clark at (800) 686-2724 (ext. 2231) or paul.clark@1faith1hope1love.org.

And for the latest news, photos, features, and each parish’s updated gift numbers, visit our website at 1faith1hope1love.org.

By the numbers

Total amount pledged.....\$166,189,244

Total amount redeemed....\$64,390,924

Percentage of pledges redeemed.....39%

Balance.....\$101,798,300

(As of the first week of December. Monetary numbers are rounded to the nearest dollar.)



One Faith, One Hope, One Love is a call to devote ourselves more fully to the mission of our Church. Through our shared sense

of stewardship, this effort seeks to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ and meet the needs of our community. The effort represents the largest capital campaign for our archdiocese in over 60 years.

Retired priest: 'It's hard for us to go fishing'



William Cross's mother wasn't exactly thrilled when he converted to the Catholic faith.

Back then, in 1964, he was a University of Cincinnati student on scholarship to study business administration. "She was very skeptical about my conversion," he recalls.

She was even more adamant, a little over a year later, about another announcement by her son.

"When I told her I'd decided to enter the priesthood, she was against it," he said.

But she agreed to learn more about her son's new path. Which led to yet another unexpected development.

"I was the one who baptized her," he said. "Both of my parents converted before they died. Dad only had about a sixth- or seventh-grade education, and he couldn't understand a lot of what they were teaching him about the faith, so I took it on myself to instruct him."

The young convert entered Mount St. Mary's Seminary and became Father William Cross in 1974. Today, at age 70, he's officially retired, but like many of his senior brethren he remains busy with priestly duties, celebrating public Masses and helping in other ways.

"It's hard for us to go fishing while the younger guys are doing three and four parishes," he said.

A Cincinnati native, Father Cross graduated from Taft High School in the city's West End neighborhood. "I grew up with Catholic friends and I was always impressed with their faith," he says. "Then in the '60s I saw priests who were active in social justice and civil rights. I was impressed with their commitment."

To enter the seminary "I had to get

a dispensation because I'd only been Catholic for one and a half years," Father Cross recalled. Cincinnati Archbishop Karl J. Alter granted the request, and Father Cross began studies that led to his priestly ordination in 1974.

"My first assignment was Resurrection in Dayton, then to St. Joseph in the East End as associate pastor for four years," Father Cross recalled. "I wanted to go into teaching, so that led me to McNicholas High School for two years and I served at Guardian Angels parish in Mount Washington for four."

He later taught religion at Purcell High School (now Purcell Marian) for 17 years and McAuley High School for two. Pastoral assignments included at St. Margaret Mary in North College Hill and at St. Andrew in Avondale.

Father Cross regularly celebrates Masses at his former parish, St. Margaret Mary, and at nearby Assumption Church in Mount Healthy. He's also remained active with Purcell Marian, conducting retreats and celebrating Masses there.

"Teaching high school was the best," he said. "That was the most rewarding part of my priesthood. I really learned a lot from working with students.

"It's all been a great reward."

Benefactors of One Faith, One Hope, One Love are helping to support retired diocesan priests. To find out more, go to 1faith1hope1love.org.

Cremations increase; parish responds

Responding to a rising number of funerals involving cremation rather than in-ground burial, St. James the Greater Church in White Oak has added a columbarium to its parish cemetery.

The columbarium, an above-ground structure for interment of cremated remains, contains 144 niches, each able to hold two urns.

"Every year we see an increase in the numbers of people who've made that choice," said Father Thomas Nolker, pastor, who led prayers at the columbarium's blessing a few weeks ago. Until now, he said, "their only option at the parish cemetery was to choose full graves."

The columbarium was funded by the parish share of gifts to One Faith, One Hope, One Love. Parishioner Mason Sillies, as his Eagle Scout project, landscaped the area surrounding the new structure. He raised funds from parishioners and organized volunteers to complete the work, which involved building a stone wall and planting bushes, trees and flowers.

"In the last 10 years we've probably at least tripled the number of funerals with cremated remains," Father Nolker said.

Benefactors of One Faith, One Hope, One Love are helping to support their local Parish Priorities. To find out more, go to 1faith1hope1love.org.