

OUR CAMPAIGN FOR

THE CHURCH ALIVE!

FOR ONE CHURCH *Alive* IN SIX COUNTIES

GOOD WORKS

An Impact Report to Donors – Summer 2018

PASTORAL APPROACH TO ADDICTION RECOVERY

With more families and individuals affected by the epidemic of **opioid abuse and alcoholism**, the board of directors of *Our Campaign for The Church Alive!* approved funding to help establish a diocesan-wide **Addiction Recovery Ministry**.

Developed by **Father Michael Decewicz**, pastor of St. Juan Diego Parish in Sharpsburg, the ministry will include 12-step meetings, prayer and Bible study groups, educational forums, and provide referrals to community resources.

Allegheny County recorded **735 overdose deaths** in 2017, the third straight record year. Fatal overdoses also have risen dramatically across the other five counties of the diocese. Readily available **heroin** is often mixed with **fentanyl**, a synthetic opioid that is 50 times more potent.

“Addiction disconnects people from themselves, from loved ones and from God,” said **Jim Hanna**, who helped to establish the parish-based Substance Addiction Ministry four years ago. “This new diocesan center will make a difference.”

“Like most pastors, I have presided at many funerals of young people who have died from this epidemic,” said Father Decewicz, who describes himself as a recovering alcoholic. “I feel a passion for the church to be a visible sign and presence of **love and healing** for those in need.”

On Mission Implementation to Begin

Parishioners across our diocese are getting ready to welcome new clergy and members of neighboring parishes as the first changes are implemented in the **On Mission for The Church Alive!** revitalization initiative.

This summer, lay leaders learned best practices in **hospitality** as revised parish Mass schedules go into effect the week of October 15. **Bishop David Zubik** has placed 188 parishes into 57 groupings that eventually will become new, multi-site parishes.

New clergy teams will gather feedback on the interim Mass and confession schedules within six months after they are implemented.

“Church is about encountering each other and our God,” said **Mimika Garesche**, diocese parish services consultant. “Our new parishes are a huge opportunity for us. We are ambassadors for Christ.”

ON MISSION FOR THE CHURCH ALIVE!



Damon Krynicki

CARING FOR ALL OF GOD’S PEOPLE

Donors’ sacrificial gifts are supporting children and adults who faces physical and mental challenges.

A campaign grant is helping **McGuire Memorial** expand a program that assists those with special needs to participate in work opportunities, volunteering and recreational outings.

“I like to say that everyone has a niche—you just need to find it,” said **Damon Krynicki**, director of the agency’s **Employment Option Center**. Clients receive vocational assessments and training, life skills, school-to-work programs and paid jobs. At the facility, they label and stuff envelopes, shred documents and work in housekeeping.

The School at McGuire Memorial, also supported by the Campaign, is licensed as an approved private school, providing individualized special education services for students ages 3-21 who have multiple intellectual and physical disabilities, or who are on the autism spectrum.

Krynicki offered a **thank-you to donors**. “These gifts are going to a good use,” he said. “They better peoples’ lives and help our community partners.”

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COMING ALIVE IN CRAFTON

A parish that's older than the Diocese of Pittsburgh and faced serious problems just a couple of years ago is **making a comeback**, thanks to strong leadership and the faith of its people.



The original **St. Philip Parish** in Crafton was founded in 1839. The new St. Philip was created from the merger of four parishes in Pittsburgh's West End neighborhoods. The churches of **Holy Innocents** and **Guardian Angels** closed, and **Ascension** church, once the site of Pittsburgh Railways' division headquarters and trolley barn, became part of St. Philip Parish.

Today there are fewer weekend Masses, but the pews are fuller, ministries are growing again and the offertory has increased. Four Society of St. Vincent de Paul conferences merged into one very active group. A joint **parish mission** drew more than 300 parishioners a night, a combined **fish fry** saw record attendance, and other fundraisers have grown.

"God wants us to be unified, to be one body," said **Father John Gizler**, pastor of St. Philip Parish. "Building community is challenging. But we can't move forward if we're looking back."

Much work lies ahead, especially in supporting youth and young adult ministries. However, parishioners like **Katie Phillips** are optimistic.

"The key is to be open to new ideas and positive changes that can take place," she said.



Father Gizler shows the St. Vincent de Paul poor box at Ascension church that used to be a trolley car fare box.

Supporting Latino Catholics

The **U.S. Latino population** has accounted for half of the nation's population growth since 2000, and more are moving into southwestern Pennsylvania, with nearly seven out of 10 practicing the Catholic faith.

The Campaign is providing funds for **pastoral support** to keep the Latino Catholic culture strong, helping to expand **faith formation programs** and training for catechists, youth and young adult leaders.

"At a time when family life seems to be suffering so much, our Latino brothers and sisters remind us of the sacredness of family life and the importance of the bond between parents and children," said **Auxiliary Bishop William Waltersheid**.

Spanish-language Masses are celebrated at **St. Catherine of Siena Parish** in Pittsburgh's Beechview neighborhood, at **St. Regis Parish** in Oakland, Our Lady of Joy in Plum, **St. Paul** in Butler and **Our Lady of the Miraculous Medal Parish** in Meadow Lands, Washington County.



Bishop Waltersheid, center, leads a Eucharistic procession in Beechview.

COMING HOME AGAIN

The number of **marriage annulment inquiries and cases** in the diocese continues to increase since Bishop Zubik waived fees, which were an obstacle for many petitioners.

A Campaign grant is partially offsetting the cost.

Divorced Catholics who wish to remarry in the Church need an official finding by a church tribunal that their first marriage, although entered in good faith, was not spiritually binding. An annulment opens the door to **full participation** in the sacramental life.

For more information, contact the Tribunal Office at **412-456-3033** or tribunal@diopitt.org.