

## 11th Sunday in Ordinary Time

On January 5, 2020, Epiphany Sunday 4 and a half years ago, I announced town hall meetings after Masses the following weekend. Our finance and pastoral councils were discussing how to improve our parking and adjunct buildings. Members and friends of the cathedral then met in the chapel to hear the proposal: a capital campaign to remove the buildings next to the cathedral, put up a new one, and improve our parking. We received sufficient support to proceed, though people asked important questions. A year later we hired a fundraising company, For the Greater; an architectural firm, SFS, who had completed the renovation of the cathedral back in 2003; and JE Dunn as the contractor. Parishioners formed a building committee, a campaign cabinet, and an arts committee. Even when the pandemic locked us in, we continued our work. The costs kept rising from a projected \$9 million to \$15 million. We learned that a multi-tiered parking garage would nearly double the price for only 40 more cars. Today we have over \$13 million pledged and more than 74% of those pledges paid. We have a new debt to pay off, but we are now in a better position to do so with a new hall to receive visitors, new meeting rooms for those inquiring about the faith, new offices for our pastoral staff, and a new parking lot to accommodate those who come to worship here, praising God who answered our prayers and brought us to this weekend of the blessing of our new building, the Bishop Hogan Center.

All of this required a leap of faith. People sacrificed their income, trusting that other parishioners and neighbors would join them. Members sacrificed their time, trusting that their expertise would make a difference. Drivers sacrificed convenient parking, trusting that a better day would arrive. It is here.

How fitting then that we hear in today's second reading the classic words of Saint Paul about the Christian life: "we walk by faith, not by sight." If we walked only by what our eyes told us, we might never take a leap. But with faith, we can go far. Paul reflects on the whole of the Christian life—even its end. He contrasts the comforts of being alive with our perpetual yearning: "While we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord." The pleasures of life delight us, but those God promises are even greater. Therefore, Paul writes, "we would rather leave the body and go home to the Lord." That is where true happiness lies. That is where our leap of faith is guiding our steps. On the day we die, Paul writes, "each may receive recompense, according to what [we] did in the body, whether good or evil." Paul uses this image for that day: "we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ." At the Easter Vigil, when the bishop or priest baptizes new followers of Christ, he hands over a white garment, addresses them by name, and alludes to this passage from Paul as he says, "you have become a new creation and have clothed yourselves in Christ. Receive, therefore, the white garment and bring it unstained before the judgment seat of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you may have eternal life."

My brothers and sisters, in order to accomplish great things, we stand ready to sacrifice. We strive to keep white the garment we received on the day of our baptism that we may bring it unstained before the judgment seat of Christ. Every time we sacrifice to build something for the glory of God, we do not walk by sight; we walk by faith.