

November 12, 2023

Father has asked me to give a parish update on the Project Advance campaign.

Now most of you here will likely not remember when Project Advance began. Looking around, many of you were not even born when it began! For all of you, Project Advance is something that comes up every year as an initiative of the Archdiocese in which we are all invited to financially participate.

But let me just wind back the clock to **when** Project Advance began; **why** it began; and **what** part each one of us is called to play.

Project Advance began in **April 1980**, that's 43 years ago, under the direction of Archbishop James Carney – a great leader; a great shepherd and a man with a vision for the Archdiocese going forward. He saw a need to build up the financial resources to meet the ongoing needs for repairs and maintenance of many of the physical assets of the Archdiocese, but also a greater need to put in place the funds for longer term projects – the acquisition of land for new parishes and the building of new churches as the Catholic population in the diocese grew. Archbishop Carney was also a great believer in Catholic education and saw a need to build high schools to build leaders of tomorrow. This was how Project Advance began.

Project Advance was to be a 5-year initiative. Its goal was to raise \$3 million in each of the 5 years with every parish set a goal. But here we are 43 years later still promoting the campaign which brings me to the **'WHY'** it is still going! Project Advance was a resounding success from the very beginning. The generosity of the Catholic community was overwhelming which enabled not only the major building projects to move forward but also provided funds to expand into many, many social projects impacting a great many lives. Without Project Advance it would have been extremely challenging to provide the financial resources to fund:

- Sanctuary Mental Health Ministries
- 'The Door is Open' – a ministry to feed the hungry
- Sancta Maria House - a healing and recovery home for women overcoming addiction
- Domestic Abuse Services Ministry
- Catholic Justice Services – an outreach to those in prison
- VANSPEC – a one-on-one catechism program for children and adults with special needs
- and many other corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

So, Project Advance is **much more** than a campaign going on somewhere out there which has little effect or impact on any of us here at St. James. Far from it. It has **everything** to do with us because these are all projects and ministries which are **ours** – the Universal Church. And Project Advance is also the perfect vehicle for us to raise funds which **directly** impact our parish. Once we reach our Archdiocesan goal, **every dollar comes back to our parish to support our parish projects.** This is why Project Advance over the years has been a huge success not only for our parish but for all parishes.

When St. James parish was formed 30 years ago, our Archdiocesan goal was about \$12,000. Why so low? Well, we were working hard to save to build our church and the Archdiocese recognized our struggle and saw our commitment to build our church. And that goal set for us stayed at that level for most of the first 20 years of our existence. Today, with our beautiful church built our parish Archdiocesan goal is **\$24,600**.

BUT we've still got to get there!!

As of this past weekend, we have raised **\$15,240**. That's 61% of our Archdiocesan goal. **34 families** have been generous. That's **34 families** out of 225 registered in this parish. Our heartfelt gratitude to you who have donated and to those of you yet to make a pledge, remember, **'God will not be outdone in generosity!'** This is

a campaign in which all of us are called to prayerfully consider how we can support our parish. This also includes our young adults, many of whom have part-time jobs.

Our task today is to have one great push forward to reach our goal. On the table in the foyer are donor pledge forms. I urge you all to take a copy and either pledge online directly to the Archdiocese making sure to note you are donating from St. James Parish, **OR** fill in the donor form, place it in an envelope marked Project Advance and return it to church next week. Time is of the essence for your participation in this year's campaign. The end of the year is rapidly approaching. Remember, **ALL** donations are tax deductible.

Remember also ...

NO donation is too small or too large!

EVERY pledge counts.

EVERY gift is important, so let us strive to have 100% participation by our parish.

Participation is what counts.

When you get home today, I invite you to reflect on the words found in Luke 21:1:

"As Jesus looked up, he saw the rich putting their gifts into the temple treasury. He also saw a poor widow put in two very small copper coins. "Truly, I tell you," He said, talking to the Pharisees, talking to the rich, "This poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave gifts out of their wealth, but she, out of her poverty, put in all that she had to live on."

Malcolm Roddis