



ARCHBISHOP CHARLES CHAPUT

## Holy Week and the gift of priesthood

Holy Week is the most sacred time of the Christian year. And on every Holy Thursday, priests of the archdiocese gather at the annual Chrism Mass to renew their fraternal bonds and the meaning of their vocation.

The readings of the Chrism Mass have a special beauty and power, and they deserve the attention of all the faithful, not just our priests:

*First reading: Is 61:1-3a, 6a, 8b-9*

*Second reading: Rev 1:5-8*

*Gospel: Lk 4:16-21*

The Bible has dozens of dramatic moments, but the one that arguably matters most is the last line of the Chrism Mass Gospel: *“Today, this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing.”* If human history has a center, this is it. If Scripture has a direction and meaning, this is it. All of God’s contact with humanity either leads up to this point, or flows from it. As C.S. Lewis once famously observed, in speaking these Gospel words Jesus is either stating a fact, or he’s blaspheming, or he’s mentally ill. There’s no middle ground. And the people in the synagogue who heard him say the words, understood this very well — which is why they tried to assault him.

Christ’s radical claim requires a radical response. The apostles who followed him reconfigured their lives and risked or gave away all that they owned. Joy and fruitfulness come from this kind of discipleship, but very little comfort. Faith is not a leisure activity. And it may become even less so in the years ahead as many people forget their religious roots and drift away from the Church as their home.

Living the Catholic faith, for every committed Christian, is a life of conscious focus and sacrifice. But for priests, whom Christ configures to himself through ordination, this is especially true. The priesthood is a “helping profession” only in the sense that it “helps” to have someone around who’s willing to live, serve, intercede, suffer and die on our behalf. Jesus lived and died for all of us. In like manner, priests are called to live and die for their people in his name. Otherwise the priesthood means nothing.



The lives of our priests have a purpose that no one else can fulfill. As Isaiah reminds priests in the Chrism Mass readings, “God has anointed” them. Anointing is the outward physical mark of a permanent, interior covenant. Priests have a mission to which they must conform their lives; a mission to heal the wounded; offer real and enduring freedom to their people; to comfort the suffering, to restore gladness and glory to those who mourn.

The people who carried the Catholic faith forward in history, who made the culture of beauty, music, art and architecture rooted in the Christian understanding of God and humanity — these generations were taught, spiritually fed, and shaped by priests exactly like the men who minister to us in our local Church. Where there is Catholic faith anywhere in the world, it exists because priests offered their lives for the sake of Jesus Christ and the people God called them to serve.

The crisis of our time is not finally a crisis of resources or personnel or intelligence or talent. God has given us enough of all these things, if we steward them with prudence.

Rather, what too many people lack today is faith. Unbelief is easy, like adultery in a marriage where the spouses have stopped cultivating their love out of indifference or resentment. But it leads nowhere, because faith is the only firm foundation for human hope.

Fidelity can be difficult. But it leads in the opposite direction — to meaning, hope and life. And priests play an irreplaceable role in strengthening the faith of the Christian people.

This Holy Week, as we remember Christ’s suffering on the cross and ready ourselves for the joy of the Resurrection, please also remember our priests. They need our love and support as brothers in the Lord’s work. Thank God for them. Pray for them in a special way. The bond of Christian people and their priests is the strength of the Church in a skeptical world that has never needed the Word of God more urgently.

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## NEWS BRIEFS

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### Archdiocese's campaign raised less than \$200 million, documents show

A clear picture of the success of the Archdiocese of Philadelphia's Heritage of Faith-Vision of Hope capital campaign emerged in new audited financial statements released April 10.

The campaign ran from February 2009 to June 2010 with the hopes of raising at least \$200 million for the archdiocese.

The financial statements audited by the firm Grant Thornton report on the assets and activities of the HOF-VOH organization, which is a separately incorporated entity from the archdiocese, for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2012 and 2013.

Together with an extensive supporting document also released April 10, the information examines the reported \$221.5 million in gifts and pledges made to the campaign since its inception.

Some of the 51,300 gifts and pledges were included in combined parish campaigns whereby a parish raised funds for its own capital needs during the time of the archdiocesan campaign.

Eighteen parishes ran such campaigns during the time of the HOF-VOH campaign. Even though those parish campaigns were not part of the larger effort, the \$36.5 million they raised was applied to the archdiocesan fundraising total and gave the appearance in published reports that the campaign exceeded its goal. In fact, the figure adjusts the total to \$185 million.

Also, some of the gifts included in the

total were for planned giving in which a person leaves a part of his or her estate to a beneficiary, such as a parish or the archdiocese, over the years and even after death. Donors pledged \$6.9 million in this form during the campaign.

The supporting document pointed out that because the reception of the gifts is not guaranteed — a donor can change a beneficiary or the amount of the gift at any time over the years — generally accepted accounting principles require such gifts to be excluded from the financial statements.

After accounting for \$18.4 million in write-offs of pledges determined to be uncollectable and another \$33.8 million characterized as "doubtful pledges" and thought to be likewise uncollectable, the \$185 million adjusts to just under \$126 million available to collect, of which \$101.5 million was collected in cash as of June 30, 2013.

As a feature of the campaign, parishes could expect to keep 35 percent of all funds pledged, and parishes that exceeded their fundraising goal could expect to retain 65 percent of funds raised over it.

According to this model, \$30.5 million from the HOF-VOH campaign was distributed to parishes.

Of the \$71 million remaining, \$15.4 million was allocated toward campaign expenses.

After considering these allocations and adjustments, \$55.6 million remained to fund the seven originally stated priorities of the campaign in the archdiocese.

They included financial support to parishes through the Interparochial Cooperation Commission (IPCC), Catholic education,

restoration of the Cathedral Basilica of SS. Peter and Paul, St. Charles Borromeo Seminary, care for retired clergy and human services to the needy.

Since its inception through a pilot program in 2008, the Heritage of Faith-Vision of Hope campaign in the archdiocese sought support from the region's Catholics to support parishes and institutions for the future. That support continues to take place almost four years after the campaign's close.

The audited financial statements for HOF-VOH show that for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2013, more than \$13.6 million was allocated to the campaign beneficiaries.

The previous year, more than \$16.3 million was allocated to them.

Gospel choirs set to raise funds for Philadelphia youth

Our Lady of Hope Church at 5200 North Broad Street in North Philadelphia will host gospel choirs from Philadelphia's St. Charles Borromeo, St. Raymond, St. Martin de Porres and Our Lady of Hope parishes, as well as East Bethel Baptist Church, Neumann University and Temple University on Sunday, April 27 at 3 p.m.

Although they are adult choirs, the beneficiaries will be youth programs sponsored by Our Lady of Hope, the archdiocesan Office for Black Catholics and Tonya Dorsey's New Vision Foundation, a group that gives music scholarships to talented kids. Proceeds from the benefit concert will be shared equally among the three groups.

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