

# *DIOCESE of LA CROSSE*

— + —  
Office of the Bishop

13 March 2020

Rev. Msgr. Mark Pierce  
St. Michael Parish  
611 Stark Street  
Wausau, WI 54403

Very Reverend and dear Msgr. Pierce:

May the Lord give you peace.

I send this letter to you in your capacity as President of the Board of Directors of St. Ambrose Financial Services, Inc. I, furthermore, take this opportunity to thank you for your dedication and leadership to this important institution that serves our Diocese so well.

As you know, the Mother Church of our Diocese, Saint Joseph the Workman Cathedral, is in serious need of repair. InSite Consulting Architects were hired to assess the need and provide us an estimate of the cost. The overall project is in the area of 5.7 million dollars, which would include all of the stonework, along with repairs and upgrades to HVAC, electrical, stained and storm glass, gutter repair as well as carpet replacement and flooring upgrades where needed. This was a comprehensive look at the whole building including the rectory for current and future needs of this significant Church and landmark.

As you can imagine the cost of such repairs is not within the purview of the small parish community that calls the Cathedral their home. The Cathedral is, of course, the Mother Church of the Diocese of La Crosse, in addition it is an architectural gem and a city landmark. It goes without saying, then, that her care falls to the whole of the Diocese and to that end, I foresee the need for a diocesan wide capital campaign (as yet to be named).

I have for some time also been considering the needs of our Diocese and believe that the establishment of a Catholic Foundation would assist the entire Diocese, in areas of differed maintenance issues at the parish level as well as diocesan buildings, pastoral ministry initiatives, catholic educational needs, seminary education and greater initiatives necessary for our future spiritual, social, and financial health. This would be an independent organization having as its main focus the broad needs of the Diocese of La Crosse.

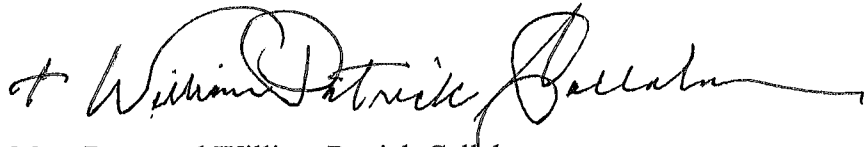
My plan would be to combine these two projects to create a single campaign. As you can imagine, however, to set up such a Foundation takes time and coordination, in addition to the eighteen-month to two-year time frame to conduct a major campaign as we have described delays any work on the Cathedral far into the future.

With the immediacy of the needs of the Cathedral, I would like to move quickly and efficiently. I know that St. Ambrose has significant funds through the Deposit and Loan portion of your service to the Diocese and that you would like to use those funds for the greater good, meaning all the parishes. I, therefore, ask that you and the Board to consider a charitable gift to cover the cost of the Cathedral project.

Such a gift would truly assist our parishes because this is a sum of money that would then not need to be assessed to the parishes through a campaign. To make it clear that you are helping the parishes we could assess each parish and have them request assistance from St. Ambrose and have you in return grant them the amount to cover their assessment. The details of how to do this can be determined later. The question becomes would St. Ambrose be able and willing to do this? The first phase which would cover the most immediate needs of the steeple and stone work is about 4.5 million dollars. Any gift, of course, would be appreciated. If the board could be gracious enough to cover the entire cost it would be most helpful and appreciated. I know this is a huge request but trust in your wisdom and generosity.

Looking forward to your timely response in the hopes of moving forward on the project this spring. Fr. Dhein and Jim Reider would be happy to answer questions that the board might have.

Fraternally yours in Christ, I am,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "William Patrick Callahan". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "W" and a long horizontal flourish at the end.

Most Reverend William Patrick Callahan  
Bishop of La Crosse