

From the Pastor's Office

The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica

The Lateran Basilica, also known as St. John Lateran, is the Catholic cathedral of the Diocese of Rome. Every Catholic Diocese has a Cathedral Church where the Bishop presides as the Bishop. St. Mary Cathedral in downtown Austin is the Cathedral Church for the Diocese of Austin. Are you confused yet? I thought the Vatican was the Cathedral Church of the Catholic Church? The Vatican is the place where the great liturgies of the Church happen, but the Episcopal Church of Rome is St. John Lateran. The Lateran Palace was the primary residence of the Pope until the Middle Ages. St. John Lateran is one of seven pilgrimage Churches in Rome. Founded in 324, this is the oldest public church in the city of Rome. The Lateran Palace was originally a private home, later the home of the Emperor Constantine's wife Fausta, later given to the Bishop of Rome. When a "cathedra" – a chair - became the symbol of papal authority, the Bishop's chair was placed in John Lateran Basilica. The dedication of this Cathedral in the 12th Century is the feast we celebrate today. I went to visit this Cathedral when I was in Rome. In case you are interested the next time you go to Rome, to the right-hand side of the building is another building which houses the Holy Stairs. Legend has it that the emperor's wife Helena went on excavation to Jerusalem. Among the treasure she took back to Rome was the actual stairs that Jesus climbed when He stood in front of Pontius Pilot for sentencing. You are not allowed to climb the Holy Stairs. However, you are allowed to climb it on your knees as a penitential act. I did that. I was stuck behind a very devout Italian mama who decided to offer a decade of the rosary on every step. Ten hours later I eventually reached the summit. I could pass her but she was a bit large. My knees were in agony when I reached the top. I think doing that penitential act once in my life was enough. The interior of the Basilica is huge. I was very impressed by the huge doors entering the building. The marble floors were spectacular. The famous relics of this church include the wooden table of the Last Supper. Reliquaries, ornamental containers house the severed heads of St. Peter and St. Paul. There are also relics of St. John the Baptist. This feast day connects us with history. We are an old historic church. We claim succession all the way back to Jesus. Lots of the "modern" churches are off-shoots from established Churches. Usually, the founder of the new Church was a maverick pastor in the old. When he/she couldn't abide, they just left and founded their own Christian church. I am delighted for them. They can leave us alone. Our Catholic history and our Catholic churches are magnificent to behold. Long may we celebrate them.



With love,
Fr. Pat



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**** AN IMPORTANT UPDATE FROM FR. PAT COAKLEY ****

November 4, 2025

My Dearly Beloved Parishioners,

I want to take this opportunity to update you on a few things. Just to revisit it, previously we ran a Capital Campaign to raise funds for the refurbishment of the Church. In the months that followed, we renovated the bathrooms of the Church. Then for several months, we renovated the seating in the Church. Now we have come to the big one. We want to replace the air conditioning system completely. You will know that this is urgent because you have sat through some tropical masses in St. Catherine's. Our air conditioning system is over 40 years old. It is time to replace it. The plan is to take out the machinery we have installed already and put the new air conditioner machinery on the roof of the Church. This is a big engineering job. For months we have been in conversation with engineers and architects making plans. We must apply to the city for planning. Previously we informed you that there is money left over from the Capital Campaign to help us fund this project. However, we don't have enough. Estimates run at about \$1.5 million for installing everything. We have begun a pledge campaign to raise the balance of what we need, which is about \$800,000. People have assured me that they are completely on board with the thing. People can see and experience for themselves that we need new air conditioning. However, people are very slow to donate to the fund raising. I am asking you please, could you begin to donate? We cannot move forward without your support. I know you love us and you love our church. I need you to ***"show me the money,"*** now.

We have also decided to delay the project by a few months. Initially we thought about beginning our restoration immediately after Christmas, in January 2026. We have now decided that it would be best to begin post-Easter 2026. The planning application is going to take time. People are not donating money. There will be a lot of disruption to our use of the Church, so we thought it best to do the heavy work while we begin to disperse for the summer.

There is something else that is very concerning to me. We are a very large parish. Estimates run between 12,000 to 15,000 parishioners. We are what they call a Mega Church. We are very proud of who we are. We have a reputation as being a warm-hearted and caring community. However, I was told recently that we ran a diaper campaign asking people to donate so we can reach out to families who struggle to keep things going. At the end of the campaign, I was informed that we received one bag of diapers as a donation. Nobody else bothered. To make it worse, we have been appealing to the parishioners to come forth and help us with our Marriage Preparation program. We have received no calls about that! Our RCIA program has been asking for people to come forth and commit to sponsoring our Catechumens and Candidates. We have only a few who made contact! What has happened to our caring community we are all so proud of? Where are you people? We can't go forward without your help and support. We need you to step up. Why is it that the twenty-somethings and the thirty-somethings never step up? Where are you people?

I appreciate that we are all busy and we all have our commitments. I don't take your participation for granted, but I wouldn't be doing my job if I didn't tell you about the state of things. Come on people! I love you.

With love,
Fr. Pat

How to Donate for Sanctuary Repairs

1. By Check – You may leave a donation by check in the Sunday collection baskets by placing it in an envelope labeled “Sanctuary Repairs.” You can also stop by our offices from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. on weekdays to drop off a check donation.

2. Online by Credit Card – You may make a donation by credit card on St. Catherine of Siena’s Vanco page (**CLICK HERE**, scan the QR code below or click the “Give” button at the top of our website home page, www.stcatherine-austin.org):



You may also donate directly through our website (scan the QR code below):



Thank you for your generosity!