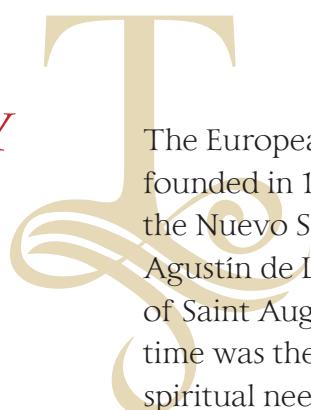
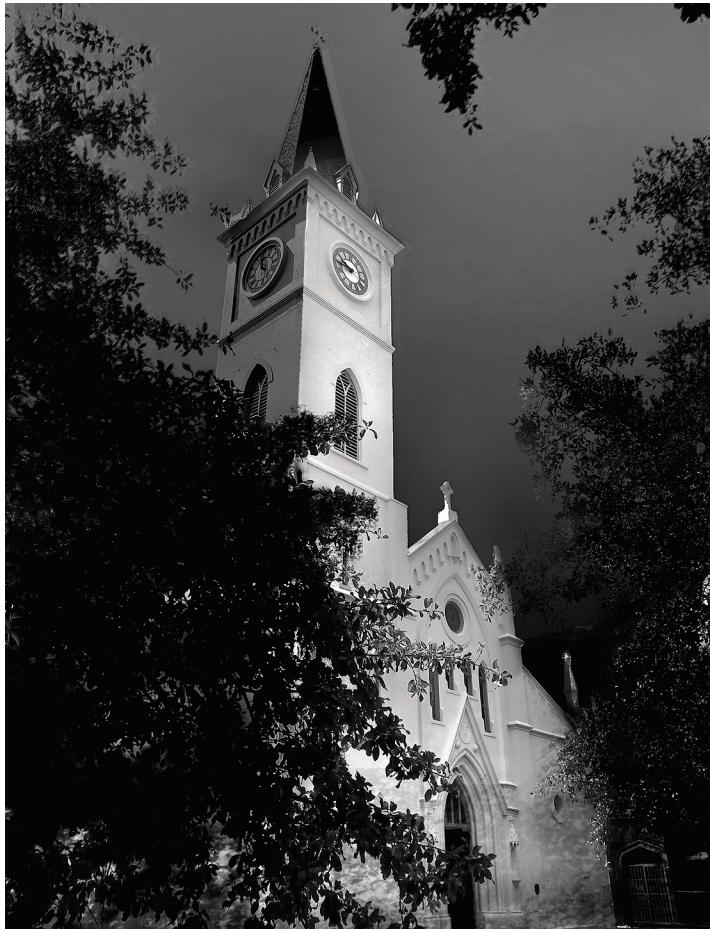


## OUR STORY



The European colonial settlement of Villa de San Agustín de Laredo was founded in 1755 by Don Tomás Sánchez. At that time the area was part of the Nuevo Santander region in the Spanish colony of New Spain. Villa de San Agustín de Laredo was named after Laredo, Cantabria, Spain and in honor of Saint Augustine of Hippo. Ministering to the needs of the citizens at the time was the Franciscan Pastor of Revilla (now Guerrero, Mexico) but, as the spiritual needs of Laredoans increased, it was clear that a resident priest would be necessary. In December of 1759 a large contingent of Laredoans petitioned Bishop Fray Francisco de San Buenaventura Martínez de Tejada to send a priest for the 270 citizens living on both the northern and southern banks of the Rio Grande. Sanchez told the Bishop that a chapel was already under construction and that, although the citizens were very poor, they would be willing to pay 150 pesos annually and furnish the most essential vestments for Sunday Mass.

Apparently, the Bishop was moved by their plight and agreed to offer the extra funds to provide a priest. On January 6, 1760, the founding date of the parish of San Agustín de Laredo, over 250 years ago, a new priest arrived from Boca de Leones (now Villaldama, Mexico). The fact that a diocesan priest was assigned to work with the then Hispanic community of Laredo is important because, at the time, Hispanic Catholics were historically served by religious order priests. In fact, the only other Hispanic community served by diocesan priests in the Southwestern United States at the time was in the Diocese of San Antonio.



Very little is known about this first cleric who served Laredo and whose name we know is Juan Jose de Lafita y Verri. Fr. Juan Jose came from Boca de Leones in 1762, remaining until 1767. The environment at the time was a frontier environment with all of the challenges of a frontier town. In 1767, the future of Laredo and the parish church of San Agustín became firmly planted when two representatives of the viceroy, Juan Fernando de Palacio and Jose Osorio y Llamas were sent on a formal visitation of the area. Surrounding lands were distributed to the citizens and to the Church including lands south of the river unifying both Laredos, at least until 1848, when both were separated once again as a result of the war against Mexico.

The initial building funds for the first church of San Agustín came from the rental of common lands and by charging small fees to cross the river from a canoe ferry. Later the governor and others levied stricter rules, particularly on housing and livestock to help raise additional funds to build the church.

Construction for the first church began in 1761 and was completed in 1764. This structure served the faithful until the present-day Church of San Agustín was built in 1872.

Today, that initial parish of San Agustín serves as the Cathedral Mother Church for our Diocese of Laredo. The diocese itself was founded on August 9, 2000 by His Holiness Pope John Paul II. At the time, then Auxiliary Bishop James Anthony Tamayo from the Roman Catholic Diocese of Galveston-Houston was named the first Bishop of the Diocese of Laredo. The diocese serves nearly 300,000 members worshiping in 32 Parishes and 17 Missions and covers an area of 11,905 square miles. While the diocese itself is spread across seven counties in South Texas, its rich cultural and religious heritage can be traced back nearly 250 years to about 270 Hispanic citizens who loved their Catholic faith enough to make Laredo their town and San Agustín their spiritual home. Ours is a story of dedication and devotion. Ours is a faith that has remained unshakable for generations. Ours will be a cathedral that is the Mother Church for the people of God in the Diocese of Laredo.



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Ours is a faith that has remained unshakable for generations.

Ours will be a cathedral that is the Mother Church for the people of God in the Diocese of Laredo.



## OUR FAITH

Our Cathedral stands as the symbol of unity where the people of the Diocese of Laredo come together with our Bishop to be in solidarity with the Universal Church.

*It represents our deep sense of faith and worship and brings us all around one common table to share in the love of Christ.*

## THE CATHEDRAL

As Christ's vicar and representative, marked with the fullness of the sacrament of Orders, the bishop leads the particular Church (Diocese) in communion with the pope and under his authority (*Lumen Gentium*, 26; *Christus Dominus*, 3; *Ceremonial of Bishops*, 5).

The cathedral church is the church that is the site of the bishop's *cathedra* or chair, the sign of his teaching office and pastoral power in the particular Church and a sign also of the unity of believers in the faith that the bishop proclaims as shepherd of the Lord's flock (*Ceremonial of Bishops*, 42).

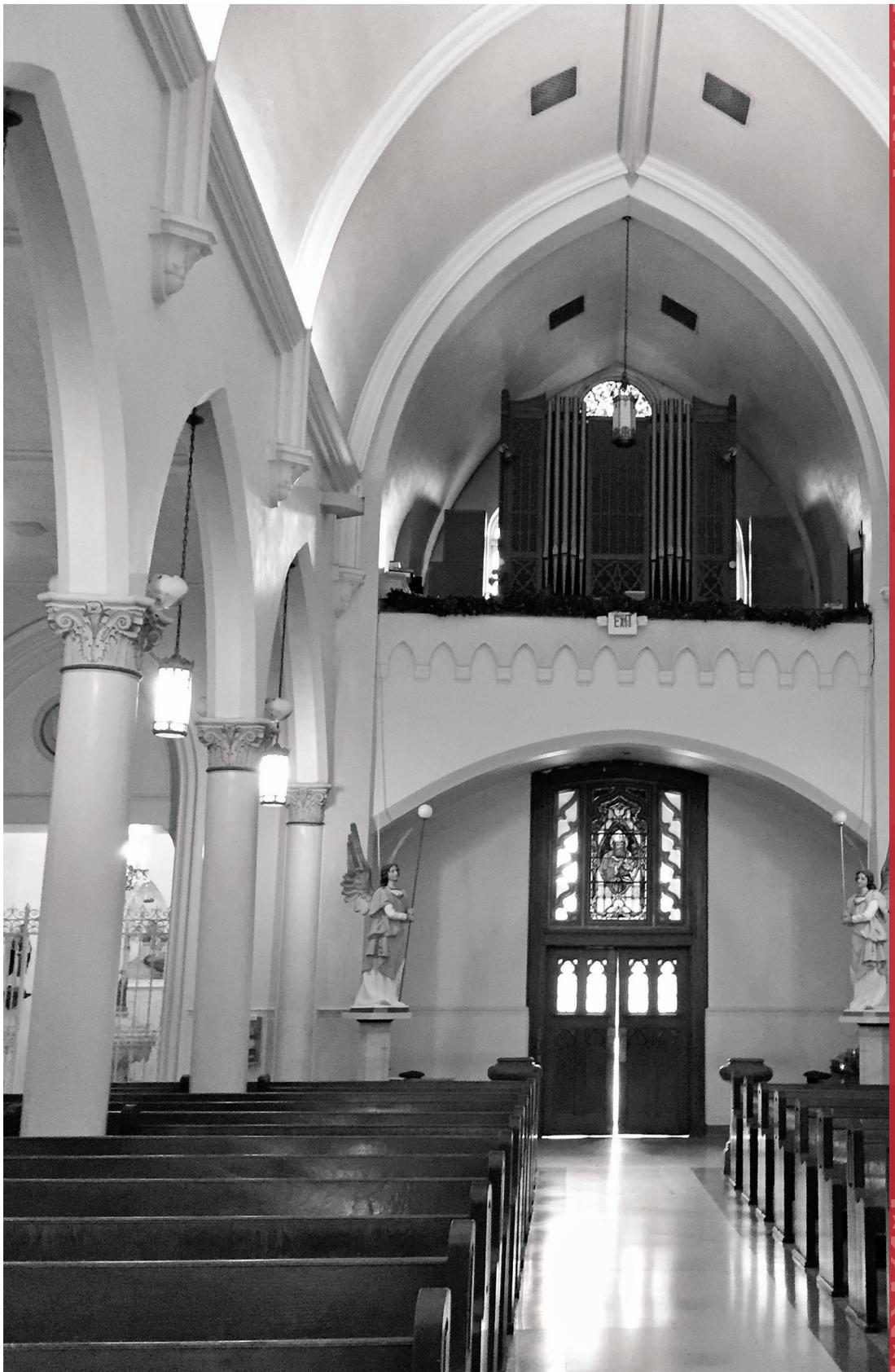
## THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SAN AGUSTÍN CATHEDRAL

Our Cathedral is the place where our catechumens, aspiring to join our beloved Church, are introduced to our Bishop and to the larger Church of Laredo on their way to full communion with the people of God. It is where the Holy Oils, used in sacraments by our beloved priests and deacons, are blessed and distributed to each community. It is where the men, who have been called by God to serve as deacons and priests, are ordained into those roles.

Our Cathedral, most of all, is the *heart* of our diocesan Church: the place where we, the Catholic Church of the Diocese of Laredo, gather with our Bishop to pray, offer worship to God, participate in the saving mysteries of salvation, gather as a family of faith, hope and love, and further the mission of Jesus Christ by proclaiming the Gospel to the world.



*The  
San Agustín  
Cathedral  
Restoration project  
will be completed  
over the course of  
one to two phases  
depending on funds  
made available  
through this  
campaign.*





# OUR CATHEDRAL

## RESTORATION AND RENOVATION CAMPAIGN

Our first phase will involve addressing the most urgent and immediate repairs to our 145-year-old San Agustín Cathedral. We must prevent any further damage to our already deteriorating stained-glass windows. Through the generosity of two foundations the campaign has already secured funding for the restoration of seven of the twenty-four stained-glass windows at our Cathedral. The restoration of the other seventeen stained-glass windows, to their original beauty, is a main priority.

After nearly a century and a half settling into the ground, due to the extreme temperatures in our region of the country, serious cracks within the building walls and church terrazzo floors are not only prominent but in need of immediate repair. Our Cathedral's ceilings throughout the temple will need to be repaired and, in several areas of the church, completely replaced. In addition, the pews of the church are in disrepair and will need to be replaced. Finally, the entire interior of the building will be repainted and the existing marble structures restored to their original beauty and splendor.

The beauty of San Agustín Cathedral is undeniable, but the present church of San Agustín was erected in 1872 and was never designed to be a functioning cathedral and mother-church for an entire diocese. The **San Agustín Cathedral: Our Story, Our Faith, Our Cathedral** campaign project will seek to reconfigure the existing church to one that will help it fulfill its role as the properly functioning cathedral for the people of the seven counties that encompass the Diocese of Laredo. To that end, our existing *Cathedra*, the bishop's chair, will be replaced with one that is more dignified and reflective of the splendor and beauty of the Cathedral. The existing altar will be extended to accommodate more of our priests at

diocesan celebrations and the vesting room will be renovated. We will create better accessible restrooms that are more convenient to the Cathedral space.

Since music is such an important aspect of our worship as Christians, our campaign will help us to expand the existing choir loft to accommodate more music ministers as well as restore the beautiful pipe organ that fills the Cathedral with inspirational music. We will invest in a functional audio and video system so that attendees can better participate in liturgies. Our Cathedral's electrical and lighting system will be replaced as well as the HVAC system to a more efficient and modern one. Finally, our campaign will allow us to install new emergency lights and an up-to-date security system.

Once the aforementioned repairs and renovations are completed, the next phase of our work will focus on the exterior details of the building and our historic bell tower. The clock tower, which is such an important part of the skyline of Laredo, will be restored as well as our bell and all of the internal mechanisms that make it work. We hope to conclude this phase by installing modern and more efficient exterior lighting.

The final phase of the restoration of San Agustín Cathedral will focus on the building of a covered parking lot and the creation of a Diocesan Conference Center at the site of the old San Agustín School. This final phase would create the space for a centralized location for diocesan events, conferences and trainings.

The entire project will be prioritized and progress according to its structural urgency and the availability of funds.



## PRIORITY 1

### RESTORATION EFFORTS

based on Historical Significance, Physical Conditions and addressing some essential Building Code Requirements to address life-safety and immediate concerns:

- † Restoration of Stained Glass Windows (24 windows)
- † Repairs due to Foundation settlement (cracks on walls, floors, ceilings, buckled roof, etc.)
- † Façade-Exterior Restoration (historic features, plaster, details, windows, doors, masonry-wrought iron fence)
- † Bell-Clock Tower Restoration (structural, life-safety, stairs, windows & louvers and maintenance on stabilization)
- † Restoration of Clock and Bells at Tower
- † Interior Restoration of historic and architectural features (details, columns, etc.)
- † Repairs due to life-safety or building code issues (pews/kneelers, fire alarm, security system, emergency lighting)

## PRIORITY 2

### RESTORATION-REHABILITATION EFFORTS

directly addressing Liturgical issues:

- † Liturgical improvements to Altar expansion and Vesting areas
- † Choir expansion and restoration
- † Pipe Organ restoration
- † Pew Replacement
- † Acoustics, Audio and Video systems

## PRIORITY 3

### GENERAL BUILDING SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT

- † Exterior and site lighting
- † New Ceiling and New HVAC System
- † Interior Lighting
- † Accessible restroom facilities and accessible routes between Cathedral and Parish Hall

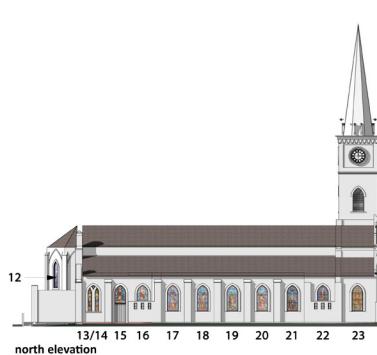
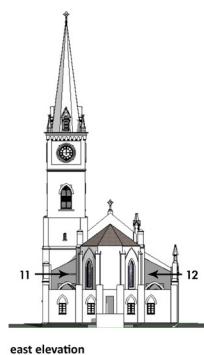
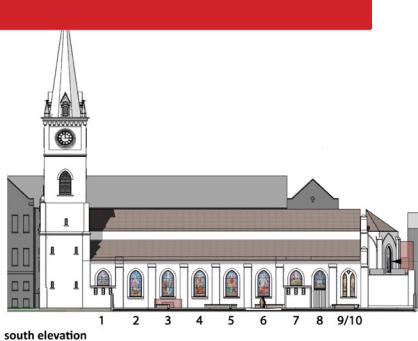
## PRIORITY 4

### ADDITIONAL PROJECTS

- † Cathedral Offices
- † Conference Center
- † Multi-Level Parking Garage



## CATHEDRAL RESTORATION PROJECT



1 - The Prodigal Son



2 - The Coronation of Mary



3 - The Assumption



4 - The Descent of the Holy Ghost



5 - The Ascension



6 - The Resurrection



7 - Christ Curing the Paralytic



8 - Apparition of Our Lady of Fatima



9 - The Annunciation to Mary



10 - Birth of Christ



11 - Divine Providence



12 - Balance of Good and Evil



13 - Mater Dolorosa



14 - Immaculate Conception



15 - Apparition of the Sacred Heart



16 - Christ Giving the Keys to St. Peter



17 - The Agony in the Garden



18 - The Scourging at the Pillar



19 - The Crowning with Thorns



20 - The Carrying of the Cross



21 - The Crucifixion



22 - The Good Shepherd



23 - Memory of Rev. Bishop P. Verdague



24 - Rose Window



## WHAT YOU ARE ASKED TO DO...

- To **PRAY** for the success of the campaign
- To **SHARE THE GOALS** of this campaign with others
- To **REFLECT, PRAY** and then make a **FINANCIAL SACRIFICIAL GIFT**

Bishop Tamayo invites each of you, as a faithful member of the Catholic Church in the Diocese of Laredo, to bring your gifts and add them to what others will offer to raise \$11,000,000.

As a good steward, you are called to reflect on the abundant gifts you have received from God. Consider all the ways your life has been blessed and respond to God in the same measure that He has given to you.

Everyone is asked to be a part of this effort, but not everyone is asked to give the same amount. This brochure includes a gift plan that can be used as a guide in making your decision. Please consider it carefully and select the gift that best expresses your gratitude to God as experienced in your life today. Your gift can be made as a pledge payable over a four-year period on a monthly, quarterly, semi-annually, or annual basis. Reminders will be mailed to your home based on your pledge plan.



## AN APPEAL FOR SPECIAL GENEROSITY...

Your contribution should have some relationship to how generous God has been to you. If you are financially able to pledge \$10,000, \$25,000, \$50,000 or even \$100,000 or more, we ask you to be leaders in our campaign with these substantial gifts. Not everyone can make the same gift, but everyone can make the same sacrifice.

Your campaign pledge is a restricted gift, used solely for the case elements highlighted in this brochure. Parishioners are asked to continue their support to the annual Catholic Sharing Appeal throughout their chosen pledge period.

## AS YOU MAKE YOUR PLEDGE, PLEASE REMEMBER...

- † Pledges can be fulfilled on a monthly, quarterly, semi-annual or annual basis, whichever is more convenient for you.
- † These gift plans forecast payments over four years.
- † Pledges are not legally binding but rather an indication of your giving intention.
- † Contributions to the campaign are tax deductible as provided by law.
- † Please make checks payable to: *San Agustín Cathedral*

If you have any questions or would like more information on other types of giving opportunities including stocks, securities, bequests and others, please contact the Office of Stewardship and Development at (956) 727-2140.

