

West Coast Divine Mercy Shrine and Retreat Building and Spiritual Enlightenment Plan Summary

The Divine Mercy Eucharistic Society, located in El Cerrito, California, is writing to seek your support for the building of a West Coast Divine Mercy Shrine and Retreat Center. The resultant facilities and spiritual amenities envisioned at this miracle location will serve as a visible sign of hope, renewal, and learning for the Western United States, providing an instrument of healing and exploration for all people (believers or nonbelievers) of all ages, races and religious affiliations seeking healing and inner peace. The West Coast Divine Mercy Shrine and Retreat Center will be a physical counterpart to the National Shrine of Divine Mercy located in Stockbridge, Massachusetts where thousands of visitors explore their beliefs in the idea of contemporary religious and Catholic faith. An overview of this project along with supportive materials referenced here is viewable on our website.

CURRENT REQUEST: We have devised 5 phases of fundraising, growth and evangelical success. The estimated cost for the first three phases of the project (which focus on building the basilica/church and overall land preparations) is \$30 million. Later phases will complete the building of priest/staff housing and retreat accommodations as well as structures for a volunteered property caretaker. With this request we are seeking a donation of \$3.5 million (or a substantial portion of that amount) to serve as an anchor challenge grant. As noted below, the funds will be used to facilitate preparing the site, beginning construction and the development of our major fundraising tools, as well as for providing for a portion of the mortgage costs. We anticipate matching this contribution with smaller foundation grants, personal donations and tithing of similar amounts. If our plan and prayers lead to the success we expect, the building of the basilica/church is estimated to be underway by 2008. Once we have achieved this level of incentive funding for Phases 1 through 3, we believe we will be able to call upon a large array of local and national supporters to participate for its completion in 2010.

ORGANIZATIONAL OVERVIEW: We began our merciful outreach to various souls and hearts in the late 1990s. By 1998 we incorporated as a California 501(c) 3 nonprofit (Tax ID: 94-3211617). Since that time we have met regularly at the Divine Mercy Chapel and Center next door to St. John the Baptist Church on San Pablo Avenue in El Cerrito, offering the only 24/7 Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration Chapel within the Diocese of Oakland. Our faith draws upon the message of Love and Mercy entrusted by Our Lord to St. Faustina, the first Saint canonized in the 21st Century. More than 200 congregants attend regularly and participate in a pledge of devotional time and financial aid (when possible). These generous congregants and hundreds more immediately affirmed the strength of their love of God by coming together to start collecting contributions for the operating expenses of what is now known as Mary's House, a 13-bedroom residence for homeless pregnant single women. Mary's House opened in 2002 and has served more than 75 women and their infants. In a similar light we believe we have been called to the mission of bringing about the hope of the West Coast Divine Mercy Shrine and Retreat Center. Within just a few months we collected \$450,000 to lay the foundation for the Shrine—a commitment that has helped us to secure the respect, acceptance, and endorsements of the Bishops of the Dioceses of San Francisco, San Jose, and Oakland, California. As Matthew has said (5:7): "Blessed are the Merciful, for they shall obtain Mercy."

SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION: Our prayers and trust in God have led us to put together several preliminary steps toward the creation of an effective capital fundraising and building campaign for the Shrine. This includes identifying multiple phases that will allow us to progress from humble beginnings—dozens of believers already visit the future site on a weekly basis to pray for its acceptance—to its completion in 2010. With nearly 40 million people living and visiting California and the West Coast, we believe it is most appropriate that a magnet Shrine like this be made available as a symbol of the ancient and contemporary traditions of the world's Catholics, Christians in general and all religious believers. The Divine Mercy

devotion of Catholicism continues to grow as the faithful acceptance that the love, faith, and cultures of these diversity people can be a source of spiritual connectedness to Our Lord. The West Coast Divine Mercy Shrine and Retreat Center will give citizens, immigrants, and tourists alike a faith-centered place to seek Mercy for their own needs and practice Mercy with their fellow seekers the world over. A detailed statement of the spiritual impact of this project and a personal statement by Thelma Orias, the president of our works, have been prepared and posted on our website. (Evangelical Statements)

CAPITAL BEGINNINGS: Phases 1 through 3 of the capital initiative will center on fully acquiring the land, investigating legal requirements, preparing architectural and related plans and estimates, and building the basilica structure. Each phase also involves preparing donation and tithing materials, arranging direct meetings and commitments from targeted donors, and conducting educational projects for the public and the community of faithful. We have developed a fundraising plan to begin this work and carry us through as we secure funding from multiple sources. We expect that personal spiritual pilgrimages to the site will be an important method for generating a large pool of everyday faithful as contributors and volunteers. Our financial goal for Phase 1 is \$5 million, toward which we are seeking this challenge grant. Preliminary architectural renderings have already been posted on our website, depicting the facilities in the hills adjacent to Highway 680 near the City of Sunol in Alameda County. We have secured control of the land and formalized the purchase agreement, requiring us to secure monthly mortgage payments. The Divine Mercy Eucharistic Society and the Shrine and Retreat project have obtained the support of other church and community leaders across the United States. Recognized authorities such as Professor Robert Stackpole, STD, Director of the John Paul II Institute of Divine Mercy and Professor of Theology at Redeemer Pacific College in British Columbia have joined our boards of directors and advisors. Other members and faithful include Fr. Stan Fortuna, CFR, of Fr. Benedict Groeschel's Franciscan Capuchin Renewal in Brooklyn, NY; and Msgr. James Lisante, pastor of St. Thomas Moore in Long Island, NY. The Most Reverend Allen H. Vigneron, Bishop of Oakland; the Most Reverend Patrick J. McGrath, Bishop of San Jose; and the Most Reverend Ignatius Wang, Auxiliary Bishop of San Francisco, have provided personal endorsements for the Shrine. And other professionals, such as Mr. Salvatore Caruso, a licensed architect and inspired congregant, and members of building and trade unions have stepped forward to render their professional expertise to begin moving the work of this Merciful Mission forward. The tools we work with are our Faith, Perseverance and Trust in God, who always provides. Trust being the essence of the Divine Mercy message, "Jesus, I trust in You." A full listing of our board and advisors is also listed on the website.

ONGOING SUCCESS: As Phase 1 evolves, Phase 2 will focus on the readying the land for building uses, finalizing architectural and engineering requirements, securing contracts to move forward, purchasing materials and scheduling the construction elements. This phase is estimated to cost about \$14 million, providing sufficient funding to move toward actual construction. Phase 3 will see the completion of the building of the basilica/church (estimated at \$12). The last phases (4 and 5) are expected to cost a total of \$14 million as well, bringing the total cost of the Shrine and Retreat to nearly \$45 million. Phases 4 and 5 will complete the ancillary housing and retreat components and add final touches so the faithful can come for learning and sharing their spiritual enlightenment. Preliminary legal and zoning reviews have demonstrated that the land can be used for all of these purposes. The Shrine itself will include a Perpetual Adoration Chapel, outdoor Stations of the Cross, and a garden for our Blessed Mother and Saints. In addition, the closing celebration of our overflow of Mercy will be the erection of a 24-75 foot statue of Jesus to make the Shrine visible to all passersby.

HOPEFULNESS: Our Divine Mercy Shrine and Retreat Center will be a visible sign of hope, renewal and learning in the Bay Area. We believe, like its national counterpart, that it will serve to bring together the people of all ages, races, ethnicities and religious affiliations and concerns for generations to come. The \$3.5million matching grant we seek from the Valley Foundation will serve as a critical affirmation of the mercy and devotion that our followers feel while laying the professional groundwork for this multi-phase fundraising and building campaign. A list of other outstanding grant and donor requests is available.