



# ST. VINCENT DE PAUL HIGH SCHOOL

## OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Dear SVHS Alumni and Friends,

Over the past 18 months, COVID-19 has changed nearly every aspect of our lives, but few places more completely than in Catholic secondary schools, including St. Vincent de Paul High School.

COVID-19 has dealt a very heavy blow to our school. Example: In fall of 2020, 55 new first-year students were set to attend, making the largest first-year class in years. Then COVID-19 lockdowns returned mid-summer, and 20 of them withdrew. They were understandably reluctant to pay \$19,000 per year to a school they could not attend in person. That represented a one-year loss of \$380,000. Over four years, that loss alone becomes \$1.5 million.

In addition, more families requested significant financial aid or withdrew due to COVID-related hardships. We did all we could to help them, putting further strain on our budget. SVHS received two Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loans, but they were not nearly enough to cover our costs, let alone significant and unplanned COVID-related expenses. There has not been a more challenging time in our school's 103-year history.

On my arrival, I determined that we must first put our administrative and financial house in order before soliciting significant donations and legacies from Alumni and friends. After four years of hard work and austere economies, we have done so. I now ask your full support.

I turn to you, our alumni and other supporters, to join in an historic effort to place our school on a firm financial footing for the next generation. Alumni know first-hand the personal advantages of an SVHS education, for Catholic students and those of other faith communities. Too seldom acknowledged is our contribution to our local area, and it is impossible to imagine Petaluma or our surrounding communities without SVHS. We offer the only alternative to state-controlled public high school, and strive to form students not only academically, but spiritually and socially-- matters of character which can transform from both private and public life.

In the past, we sent out routine annual appeal letters, and received a corresponding response. Due to the seriousness of the challenges we now face, this year is completely different. SVHS has always had tremendous residual strength, and still does. However, we can no longer take that for granted, and must act now. I send this letter not as a principal or fundraiser, but as Pastor and President, who is also an Alumnus of SVHS and SVES. We are organizing representatives for each decade of graduates, from the longest standing to the most recent, in addition to individual donors. I ask you to consider a single or multi-year pledge to SVHS so that we can preserve and pass on to others the great advantages that were given to us.

With Every Blessing,

Rev. William P. Donahue