



THE CATHOLIC INITIATIVE

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PULTE FAMILY CHARITABLE FOUNDATION LAUNCHES NONPROFIT, THE CATHOLIC INITIATIVE Groundbreaking, Vatican-Approved Funding Model Created to Restore and Endow Vibrant Catholic Churches, Schools, and Parishes in Perpetuity

BOCA RATON, Fla. – March 9, 2025 – The Pulte Family Charitable Foundation, a nonprofit organization supporting humanitarian works worldwide, today announced the launch of The Catholic Initiative, an innovative, Vatican-approved funding model created to restore and endow vibrant Catholic churches, schools, and parishes for generations to come.

The model is the first of its kind in the world in faith-based fundraising and shifts ownership of church buildings and campuses to a newly created nonprofit organization created solely for this purpose, with The Catholic Initiative assuming responsibility for restoring and maintaining the property going forward. Through iron clad, 200-year leases, The Catholic Initiative ensures that parishes retain exclusive and permanent rights to use the sites as Catholic churches and schools, without the risk of funds being redirected to other priorities. Catholic Initiative fundraising then goes to establishing an endowment to provide for future capital and operational needs, support repairs, routine maintenance, and the financial support of an onsite priest.

The Pulte Family Charitable Foundation, founded by William J. Pulte, a devout Catholic, master builder and philanthropist, is guided by the belief in the inherent dignity of all persons and works to meet the basic human needs of the most marginalized members of the human family, including socioeconomically disadvantaged youth; the aged; persons with physical, emotional, and mental disabilities; and those with the fewest material resources. During William J. Pulte’s lifetime, he donated hundreds of millions of dollars to Catholic churches and causes. The Foundation’s current generation of leadership wished to continue that legacy while creating a philanthropic model that ensures sustainable funding for generations to come. “The Foundation was built on the ethos of ‘to whom much is given, much will be required,’ and a commitment to embodying an entrepreneurial spirit—finding new ways to solve challenges,” said Kevin Doyle, Chief Operating Officer for the Pulte Family Foundation and

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President of the Catholic Initiative. “The Catholic Initiative honors that ethos by pioneering a new model of investing in vibrant churches, schools, and parishes in underserved communities, ensuring their long-term sustainability. This model frees religious leaders and Catholic educators from their financial burdens and allows them to focus on their true mission: serving their parishioners and students.”

During the past 30 years, more than 2,000 Catholic schools have closed, along with roughly 2,600 Catholic parishes, representing not just the loss of physical spaces but community hubs central to parishioner life. The Catholic Initiative provides sustained support over generations, allowing priests to focus on their missionary efforts and not on perpetual fundraising.

The Catholic Initiative is launching with three flagship projects aimed at investing in vibrant Catholic communities where the lack of financial resources is holding back their potential. First, it is undertaking a full restoration of the historic Basilica of Ste. Anne in Detroit, Michigan, along with sustaining an endowment to secure its future. Second, it is securing the property ownership of Chicago’s oldest Catholic all-girls high school – Josephinum Academy of the Sacred Heart – and establishing an endowment to support the long-term vitality of the school. Third, it is raising an endowment for Bulldog Catholic, the thriving campus ministry led by Fr. Mike Schmitz, which is dedicated to forming and inspiring the next generation of young Catholics. Two additional projects in the Midwest are currently in development and will be announced in the coming months.

The Pulte Family Foundation’s transformative leadership has drawn the attention of major partners nationwide. Among them is Fr. Mike Schmitz, a widely respected Catholic priest and host of the popular podcasts *Bible in a Year* and *The Catechism in a Year* produced by Ascension. In addition to his chaplaincy at the University of Minnesota Duluth, he has joined the Board of Advisors for The Catholic Initiative and will play an active role in guiding and supporting each of its projects.

“I was deeply inspired by the vision and innovation behind The Catholic Initiative,” said Fr. Schmitz. “This model isn’t just about financial support, it’s about unleashing the full potential of Catholic churches, schools, and parishes. Many Catholic communities are vibrant and alive with faith, they just need the resources to thrive for generations. I felt called to be part of something that can truly transform the future of the Catholic faith.”

The Catholic Initiative is part of a series of “**Legacy of Hope**” Projects that the Pulte Family Charitable Foundation is spearheading. These efforts aim to usher in a new era of philanthropy with creative models of giving designed to sustain and transform communities for generations, uplift the marginalized, and secure the future of faith and service. These scalable models are setting a new standard for making strategic, impact-driven philanthropic investments/gifts.

“Our goal with The Catholic Initiative is to build a model that will transform lives for generations to come,” Kevin Doyle said. “We hope we can shift the conversation for priests and parishioners—from one of constant fundraising to one of renewal, sustainability, and the needs of the community.”