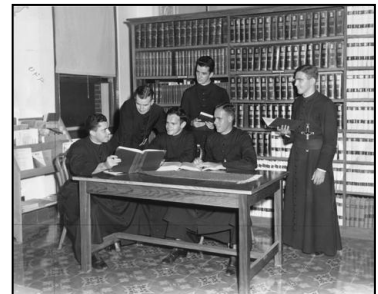




Building on Faith
Oblate School of Theology Capital Campaign
Case Statement

More than one hundred years strong: For more than 100 years, Oblate School of Theology, has been fulfilling its mission of theological education in the tradition of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate. Throughout this century of service to the Church in San Antonio, throughout Texas, and across the United States, Oblate School of Theology has been “building on faith.”

Each year hundreds of new and returning students – part-time, full-time and those in active ministry – come to Oblate School of Theology to be strengthened theologically, to have their vision of ministry challenged and stretched and to build on their commitment to minister to God’s people in need.



At no time has the need for solid theological education been more important than today. Our world is over-rich in everything, except clarity. Throughout its history, the Oblate School of Theology has been responding to the needs of the day – addressing the Church’s need for the sound theological formation of seminarians and religious sisters and brothers, deacons and lay students across the South and Western United States. Today, the Oblate School of Theology is being positioned to reach out across the United States and internationally to meet the needs of the next 100 years.

When this school was founded, theological education was a special domain reserved for the few – those in priestly formation. Today the situation has changed with the explosion in educational access, a significantly better educated laity and a global rise in interest in theological and

spiritual matters. The times call for a renewed commitment to clarity and excellence in theological education.

The Oblates of Mary Immaculate: In 1849, when the religious community, the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, was in its infancy, missionaries were sent to the new State of Texas. Ministering on horseback across south and central Texas, the Oblates soon came to be known as the Cavalry of Christ. These missionaries, formed for the spreading of the gospel and service to



the poor, soon became a fixture in the religious landscape of Texas. In the succeeding years, the Oblates never lost the spirit of their founder St. Eugene Mazenod. He founded the Oblates on the two pillars of being a servant and priest to the poor and educating seminarians for this ministry.

Within fifty years of arriving in Texas, the Oblates settled in San Antonio where they assumed responsibility for downtown's Church of St. Mary and many other parishes. To support the growing ministry and the need for priests, Oblate Seminary (today, Oblate School of Theology) was founded in 1893. One year later, San Antonio became home to the Southern Province of the Oblates of Mary Immaculate.

Oblate School of Theology Today: From its humble beginnings focusing on the formation of Oblate seminarians, Oblate School of Theology has grown to be a center of theological education for seminarians, religious sisters and brothers, deacons and diaconal candidates, and lay students. Many of these students are pursuing degrees and programs of theological study as a preparation for lives of active ministry in parishes, the mission fields, and Church administration. Others study at Oblate as a matter of personal enrichment and spiritual development.



In 1927, the Oblate School of Theology was moved to its present 33-acre site between San Pedro and Blanco in Northwest San Antonio. There, the school has flourished. In 1955, the Oblate Renewal Center (St. Joseph's Retreat House) was founded to provide retreats, spiritual programs, and academic offerings for those in active ministry seeking renewal and continuing education. 1995 was a historic year for the school as the founder of the

Oblates of Mary Immaculate, Bishop Eugene de Mazenod was canonized by Pope John Paul II. Throughout the universal church, he is now known as St. Eugene de Mazenod.

Throughout these years, Oblate has educated and formed men and women who have substantively influenced the life of the Church in San Antonio and the Southwestern United States including.....

Today, there are over 100 full-time and 90 part-time students enrolled at Oblate. 68 Seminarians from over 17 dioceses across Texas and the United States study at Oblate alongside 20 members of 11 communities of religious men and women and 52 lay students. Each day, the faculty of Oblate School of Theology is building on faith, the faith of the students they teach and the faith of those whose history has shaped the buildings, grounds and programs of the current School of Theology.



“Since 1971, the Archdiocese and Assumption Seminary have valued our relationship with Oblate School of Theology. The training of our seminarians in the faith is a critical element of their years of priestly formation. They are able to respond best to their special vocation with the grace that comes from an education in the authentic beliefs of the Catholic Faith.

Oblate School of Theology has also played an important role in the training and education of our lay and religious men and women, preparing them to be effective evangelists, bringing the gospel to a world that so desperately needs to know the love of God.

As we strive to build Oblate’s future together, our Church and our society will need Oblate more than ever before. It’s faithfulness to Jesus Christ and the truths He teaches through His Church will help us to understand that there is more to this world than we can discover through reason and science. Catholic schools of theological study must provide leadership in exploring and defending the beauty, the mystery, and the truth of the human person while broadening our understanding of God.”

Most Reverend Jose Gomez
Archbishop of San Antonio

Building on Faith – A Bold Vision for the Future: The Board of the Oblate School of Theology is committed to a future that builds and expands upon the school's location in San



Antonio, Texas and its unique history. San Antonio is the emerging epicenter where Hispanic and Anglo culture and church are meeting. Additionally, San Antonio is the birthplace and locus of the ACTS Retreat movement which is renewing the apostolic enthusiasm and mission of the laity across the Southwest. Oblate School is proud to house the ACTS Missions headquarters on

campus and to provide post ACTS courses for members of the community interested in studying their faith. In this changing context, there is a great need for a theology school that truly leads in truth, charity, and service.

In the spring of 2007, the Board along with the faculty committed to a bold vision of Oblate School of Theology becoming a national leader in theological education. Such a vision has resulted in a planned expansion of facilities, programs, financial aid, and endowment funding.



This expansion is the heart of the Building on Faith Capital Campaign. The future of Oblate School of Theology is to be an academic resource for a diverse population of students. The students of the future will include: those in priestly formation, candidates for the permanent diaconate, those in religious communities, and lay women and men. Increased student

populations will include numbers of lay students from those who will serve as lay ecclesial ministers to those who simply want to deepen their knowledge of theology and/or spirituality.

This bold vision of national leadership in theological education requires substantial funding for the present and an endowment that will assure a future of continued leadership. To achieve this vision, Oblate School of Theology has embarked on one of the largest capital and endowment campaigns for a Catholic theological school in the United States. With a goal of raising \$30 million dollars, Oblate School of Theology is positioned to realize its dream of continuing to proclaim the gospel and serve the poor and the Church.

A Gift Building on Faith: Early in this Building on Faith Capital Campaign, Oblate School of Theology was blessed with a transformational \$15 million Challenge Gift from longtime friends and San Antonianians, Gayle and Tom Benson, owner of the New Orleans Saints. Mr. Benson, a longtime friend of the Oblates has watched the school grow over the years and is committed to seeing this vision of theologial leadership realized. In making his gift, Mr. Benson wanted to inspire and challenge others to give. With his challenge, he intends to match all capital and endowment gifts to Oblate School of Theology up to a \$15 million total. In so doing, he hopes to assure the success of this \$30 million capital campaign.



In speaking of this gift, Mr. Benson said,

“My faith in the work of the Oblates has grown as I have watched these priests educate and serve. The Oblate School of Theology is an important resource for the Church. It must grow and it needs a sound endowment for its future. This gift is built on my faith, that God has been good to me and blessed me with many friends at this School of Theology over the last fifty years. Others for generations to come need to benefit from the gifts, wisdom, and leadership of the Oblate School of Theology.”

The Fundraising Goal: With a fundraising goal of \$30 million and a lead challenge gift of \$15 million, Oblate School of Theology is halfway to the fundraising goal. The Building on Faith Capital Campaign is co-chaired by Deacon Robert Kusenberger of Del Rio, Texas, Mrs. Anna Torres, adjunct faculty member of Oblate School of Theology and Mr. Tom Kemmy, former Oblate lay missionary of San Antonio. The trio of champions for Oblate School of Theology is committed to seeing each of the remaining \$15 million raised so that Oblate can continue its work of “building on faith.”



According to Fr. Ronald Rolheiser, OMI, president of Oblate School of Theology,

“This campaign will succeed only with the help of those who believe in the value of sound theological education and the role that Oblate can play in the future. Through this campaign, Oblate School of Theology will take its rightful place alongside Notre Dame, Fordham University, and Boston College as a global leader in theological education! Building on Faith – we are asking you to join us by considering an outright gift or grant or a three-to five-year pledge to this campaign on behalf of the students and faculty of Oblate School of Theology today and for years to come.”