

Detroit archdiocese launches \$135 million campaign

Robert Delaney Catholic News Service | Sep. 8, 2011

DETROIT -- Strengthening the 270 parishes of the Archdiocese of Detroit is the No. 1 priority of the \$135 million stewardship campaign officially launched Sept. 6.

Strong parishes make for a strong archdiocese and a strong church, Detroit Archbishop Allen H. Vigneron said as the multi-year "Changing Lives Together" campaign was rolled out before an audience of priests and lay representatives from throughout the archdiocese, plus members of the media.

The campaign already has been conducted in a pilot wave of several parishes, but now will begin successive waves that will eventually involve every parish in the six counties that comprise the archdiocese.

Seventy percent of the funds collected -- \$95 million, if the campaign reaches its target -- will remain in the parishes of those who donate to the campaign, to be used for whatever purposes the parishes themselves have identified, such as fixing roofs and boilers, establishing new ministries or enhancing tuition assistance.

"One of the most important things to me is that we all do this together, that we stop and think about the mission of (your) parish, and that we work together to accomplish what we need to do -- that we identify the resources we need for our mission," Archbishop Vigneron said during the Sept. 6 launch event at Our Lady on the River Parish in Marine City.

In addition, successful completion of the "Changing Lives Together" capital campaign would provide:

- \$15 million for strengthening Catholic education.
- \$8 million to strengthen formation for priests and seminarians, as well as to train lay leaders.
- \$4 million to strengthen ministry in the city of Detroit by increasing Christian witness and establishing a fund to provide grants for parishes and ministries.

The archbishop urged the parish leaders present to "invest themselves in this program."

During the pilot phase of the campaign, more than 6,700 households from 18 parishes pledged more than \$11 million, which was called "a very encouraging start."

A second wave already is in progress.

Mark Justice, a member of the "Changing Lives Together" campaign at the Cathedral of the Most Blessed Sacrament, said the cathedral parish exceeded its goal of \$110,000 during the pilot phase, receiving pledges for nearly \$172,000.

The cathedral, where parishioners see their facility as a host parish for the archdiocese, will update some facilities, improve its facilities for youth activities, and improve and increase services in its own community and its cluster partners as well.

Justice added that he believes the fact that they started and ended each meeting with a prayer helped make their effort a success.

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