Eyes to the future

By the numbers

$42.5 MILLION
Catholic Diocese hopes to raise for its Lafayette Centennial Campaign, of which:

30 PERCENT will fund the diocese's 121 parishes.
25 PERCENT will aid the Seminarian Education Endowment Fund.
23 PERCENT will go toward the Priests' Welfare Trust.
12 PERCENT will go toward a new Catholic student center at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.
10 PERCENT will go to the Matthew 25 Endowment for Service to the Poor.

$18M in hand as major fundraising campaign kicks off

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The Catholic Diocese of Lafayette has launched a $42.5 million fundraising campaign to support its parishes, priests and student centers and to provide new services for those in need.

The Centennial Campaign: Building Our Future Together fundraising effort has been launched ahead of the diocese's 100th anniversary in 2018.

More than $18 million already has been raised through the campaign, which is to continue through summer 2017, the diocese said in a Tuesday news announcement.

Thirty percent of the money raised will fund the diocese's 121 parishes, which serve 100,000 households across Acadia, Evangeline, Iberia, Lafayette, St. Landry, St. Martin, St. Mary and Vermilion parishes.
Projects may range from renovations, expansions, debt payments or personnel, according to the campaign’s brochure.

As the diocese reports a three-fold increase in educating seminarians — both because of higher education costs and more men seeking to join priesthood — another 25 percent of funds raised will aid the Seminarian Education Endowment Fund, the brochure states.

Forty-five men were undergoing vocational studies within the diocese last year at an average cost of about $30,000 a year per seminarian. Funds directed toward seminarian studies also will help upgrade local seminary facilities.

Another 23 percent will fund the Priests’ Welfare Trust, which provides pensions to the diocese’s 37 retired priests and those set to retire in the future. The trust, as it stands today, funds 50 percent of the benefits, according to the diocese.

Twelve percent raised will help fund the diocese’s plan to build a new Catholic student center on the University of Louisiana at Lafayette campus, which is home to Our Lady of Wisdom Church. The fund will also help pay for renovations at LSU-Eunice’s Catholic student center.

The remaining 10 percent will go toward assisting the disadvantaged by establishing a new endowment, called the Matthew 25 Endowment for Service to the Poor, which will become a perpetual funding source for the Diocese’s food pantries, diners and soup kitchens, along with its social service centers and thrift stores throughout the region.

About half of the 600,000 or so residents in Acadiana identify as Catholic, according to the diocese.

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