ABOUT THE DIOCESE OF BURLINGTON

The Diocese has a wide reach:

- 37,000 Catholic households
- 76 parishes and 35 missions
- 91 Diocesan priests
  (47 of whom are in active ministry)
- 36 Religious priests
- 49 permanent deacons
- 95 sisters
- 10,302 served by Catholic Charities
- Over 10,000 students in Catholic schools and parish-sponsored religious education and youth ministry programs

The Diocese of Burlington has a rich history that has led us to the vibrant Catholic community that we enjoy today. The people of God in the Diocese of Burlington are continually generous. Annually, more than $11,800,000 is contributed through the parish offertory and more than $3,000,000 is provided through the annual Bishop’s Fund Appeal in support of a wide variety of educational, pastoral, and charitable works. We are grateful for this generosity as it allows us to do the Lord’s work each year, but as we look to the future, we must continue to plan and prepare for the growing needs faced by our parishes and Diocese.

Direct Parish Support

The parish is the center of our Catholic life. It is where we enter into and deepen our relationship with Jesus Christ through worship, Word and Sacrament, especially in the weekly celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. Recognizing that a diocese is only as healthy and strong as its parishes, there is a critical need to support the local needs of every parish. The needs in our parishes widely vary. Some parishes require improvements and renovations to make churches more conducive to worship, provide easier access to facilities for the elderly and disabled, and create the capacity to institute new outreach ministries. Others are eager to improve religious education, update technology or increase or establish endowments.

Adequate facilities, along with new programs, will better position parishes to respond to current and emerging needs within the parishes and their surrounding communities. Recognizing that the vitality of each parish is tied to its economic stability, the Diocese is proposing that the majority of all funds raised (60%) be returned to directly address local parish needs. Each individual parish would be able to identify their greatest needs and determine how to best allocate their returning share of campaign funds.

The immediate prioritized need for this component is $15,000,000.

Originally part of the Archdiocese of Boston, the Diocese of Burlington was established in 1853 by Pope Pius IX with the appointment of Louis De Goesbriand, Vicar General of Cleveland, OH, as the First Bishop of Burlington. The Diocese of Burlington serves the entire state of Vermont and its 76 parishes and 35 missions. Nearly one fifth of the State’s population (620,000) is Catholic.
Catholic Formation and Education

As we continue to embrace this *Year of Faith*, we have an opportunity and responsibility as a Diocese to re-invigorate life in our parishes, reach out to those estranged from the Church, enrich the sacramental life of the Church, strengthen our catechetical programs, and broaden the reach of Catholic education to children and adults. These goals, which advance our New Evangelization, are only achievable with adequate human and financial resources. While the *Year of Faith* ends on November 24, 2013, our Diocese is committed to taking a proactive approach to improving evangelization efforts and further improving Catholic education.

At present, less than 30 percent (30%) of parishioners in Vermont regularly attend Mass. We must work more diligently to ensure we are proclaiming and sharing the gift of faith within our communities. Through a targeted approach to extend the Faith Formation of our people and Catholic Education, campaign funds would be directed toward:

- Supporting the Office of Formation to extend its outreach and programs;
- Providing religious education resources for our families who homeschool their children;
- Strengthening the Marriage, Family, and Respect Life ministries; and
- Increasing the availability of catechetical materials and programs for parishes.

By allocating needed resources to these areas, we will be able to bring more people closer to the Church and with a better understanding of its mission and teachings. Increased catechesis at the parish and family level will help foster a better relationship with Jesus Christ for both children and adults.

As a component of Catholic education, Catholic schools are an integral part of the vibrancy and formation of every Catholic community. For more than 140 years, the Diocese of Burlington has provided quality Catholic education, and we continue that heritage in 13 schools today. Over 2,000 students are served by more than 250 professionals who are committed to excellence in Catholic education. Our Catholic schools combine compassion with a strong discipline that enables students to concentrate on learning, become self-disciplined and respect other people.

Unfortunately, the reality in our Diocese is that the rising cost of educating a student in a Catholic school has resulted in an increase in the cost of tuition, and a growing need to provide financial assistance to families. An average of all of the Catholic elementary and high schools in the state shows that 64 percent (64%) of our students receive some level of financial aid each year, and this number is expected to rise. The high cost of tuition is causing some students, who would have benefited from attending a Catholic school, to be turned away. We must provide additional resources to these families so that Catholic education remains an opportunity for all who want it, and does not become a privilege of the wealthy.

**The immediate prioritized need for this component is $3,750,000.**

Safe Environment

Relationships among people are the foundation of Christian ministry and are central to Church life. Defining healthy and safe relationships is not meant, in any way, to undermine the strength and importance of personal contact or the ministerial role. Rather, it is to assist all who fulfill the many roles that create the living Church to demonstrate their love and compassion for children and adults in the most sincere and genuine relationships.
Today, the Diocese of Burlington is committed to fostering safe environments and operates in full compliance with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops “Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People”. Campaign funds would ensure the Diocese continues to implement new safe environment programs, provide further training to clergy, lay leaders, and parents, and collaborate with the broader Vermont community to protect families and create a safe and inviting place in our parishes, schools and all our diocesan institutions, with a particular focus upon the welfare of our children.

**The immediate prioritized need for this component is $1,000,000.**

**Vermont Catholic Charities**

As Catholics, we are called to be charitable in our daily lives. We are called to do so because through selfless and sacrificial charitable acts, we participate in the Love of God and are brought closer to him through our actions. In our own Diocese, Catholic Charities extends the compassion and healing ministry of Jesus Christ and His Church to individuals, families, and communities across the state of Vermont. Vermont Catholic Charities provides counseling services to individuals, couples, and families, supports Marriage, Family and Respect Life ministries, operates residential homes that care for our elderly women and men, and assists individuals and families in developing skills, connecting them to community programs, and providing immediate short-term financial aid and support. Additionally, Vermont Catholic Charities ministers to those in prisons, those who have been released and to their families, offering a sense of hope and spiritual renewal. This is an essential ministry in our Diocese as our country is home to the largest number of incarcerated men and women in the entire world.

“And the King will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of the these least brothers of mine, you did for me’ ”

Matthew 25:40

With an increasing demand for all of these services, the Catholic Church recognizes the need to support and grow these programs, and campaign funds would be used to expand existing programs and create new programs.

**The immediate prioritized need for this component is $2,500,000.**

**Supporting Our Clergy ….. In Active Ministry**

While the educational cost of vocations is historically a major expense for most dioceses, we are blessed to have these costs covered by the generosity of donors so very supportive of our ministries. While we are grateful for this support, the Diocese also recognizes the need for ongoing support for our clergy in active ministry. This is increasingly important as our parishes will always require well trained and educated spiritual leaders. Funds would be made available through this effort for continued training and educational programs that would assist priests to more effectively meet the pastoral and temporal needs of their parishes.

To support this cause, the creation of an Institute for Liturgical Improvements is proposed to help pastors in enriching the celebration of Holy Mass at their parishes. For example, by providing workshops on developing well prepared homilies that address contemporary issues and present the truths of our faith in a convincing and faith-filled manner, as well as enhancing music programs, parishes could make improvements that will contribute to
improved Mass attendance. Through continued support of our clergy in active ministry, there is an opportunity to re-invigorate parish life and bring parishioners closer to the Church.

**Supporting Our Clergy ..... In Retirement**

The Catholic faithful have long been noted for their loyal support of the priests who commit their lives to meet the spiritual and sacramental needs of their communities. As ordinations have declined or become stagnant over the past few decades, many priests remain active in retirement to meet the needs of understaffed parishes. As more priests are nearing retirement age, we have a responsibility to ensure they live their senior years with a suitable income, not contingent upon having to do supplemental work, as many of them are unable to do so because of health issues.

To support these priests, the Priests’ Benefit Retirement Fund was established in the 1950’s to provide a retirement pension for senior priests, as well as for the healthcare expenses of the priests of the Diocese of Burlington. In an effort to grow this fund, Bishop Salvatore R. Matano established the annual collection for the Priests’ Benefit Retirement Fund as a way for the faithful of the Diocese to contribute toward their parish priests’ pension in gratitude for the priestly ministry rendered by these dedicated priests to the faithful whom they served in parishes and continue to serve in sacramental ministry.

To meet the needs of our retired diocesan priests, campaign funds would be allocated to the underfunded pension liability in the Priests’ Benefit Retirement Fund, and would serve as a significant step toward ensuring our priests receive adequate pensions in their retirement years.

**The immediate prioritized need for this component is $1,500,000.**

**Additional New Initiatives**

While a major capital campaign would benefit each parish at the local level, as well as meet the financial needs of existing programs and ministries, a campaign also presents opportunities to support new diocesan initiatives. The Diocese of Burlington intends to utilize a portion of campaign funds to support a Hospice Care Ministry. As our state has recently passed legislation that would make physician assisted suicide a legal option for the terminally ill, there is a serious need for a Catholic operated hospice ministry within the Diocese. It is important that the end of life is not viewed solely as a medical experience, but one of a spiritual journey that requires palliative care with reverence and dignity. A Hospice Care Ministry would supplement services offered by Catholic Charities for the elderly, and would ensure we are caring for all people during every stage of life.

In addition to assisting individual parishes, campaign funds would be allocated for the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, as it is the Mother Church of the Diocese of Burlington. A portion of campaign dollars would be used to enhance the church’s exterior and interior, creating a more beautiful space for worship and making necessary physical improvements. The potential for endowed funds would also enhance diocesan liturgical celebrations which unite the entire Diocese in prayer.

**The immediate prioritized need for this component is $1,250,000.**
CAMPAIGN PLANNING STUDY

A Diocesan Campaign Planning Study Committee has been convened to prepare and guide this study exercise, and receive reports that will be generated after interviews with pastors and lay leaders throughout the Diocese are conducted. At present, a goal of $25,000,000 for a capital campaign is being explored, a sum that will directly benefit every parish and assist the Diocese in meeting its most immediate needs and responding to the challenges and opportunities of the future. These funds will be allocated to both immediate programmatic dollars, as well as establishing endowments to support some of these initiatives, where appropriate and practical.

Your advice and counsel during this critical planning period is greatly appreciated.

PROPOSED OPPORTUNITIES

As the Diocese of Burlington moves forward, we have the opportunity and obligation to strengthen and preserve our future as a beacon of the Catholic faith throughout the State. To seize this moment, the Diocese is considering a major capital campaign that will help provide for the future by strengthening every parish and deepening the faith life of every man, woman and child. Thus, a strong commitment to evangelization necessarily permeates all areas of our work. The Diocese hopes to raise significant funds to address vital ministries and programs that may include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case</th>
<th>Proposed Funding</th>
<th>Allocation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Direct Parish Support</td>
<td>• Provide immediate assistance for local parish needs</td>
<td>$15,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catholic Formation and Education</td>
<td>• Provide resources for the Office of Formation, Marriage, Family and Respect Life ministries; homeschool families; and catechetical programs. Provide critically needed tuition assistance for Catholic school students</td>
<td>$3,750,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safe Environment</td>
<td>• Provide safe environment education and training to clergy, lay leaders, and parents, and foster healthy relationships with the broader Vermont community to protect children</td>
<td>$1,000,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vermont Catholic Charities</td>
<td>• Support and expand current programs and introduce new initiatives through Catholic Charities</td>
<td>$2,500,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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| Supporting Our Clergy             | • Provide support to clergy in active ministry, and create an Institute for Liturgical Improvements  
• Ensure suitable pension income and healthcare for retired priests                                                                                      | $1,500,000  |
| New Initiatives                   | • Create a Hospice Care Ministry and support Cathedral Renovations and Diocesan liturgical celebrations                                                                                                          | $1,250,000  |
| TOTAL:                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                              | $25,000,000  |