Good, holy, and compassionate priests are a gift to God’s people and the parishes they serve. Our future as a Catholic community will be even more vibrant if we have a flourishing priesthood.

We are grateful that so many young men are now discerning a priestly vocation; nearly 30 men are currently enrolled as seminarians for the Diocese of Grand Rapids. In the past five years, we have been blest with a 45 percent increase in the number of men entering the seminary. We look forward to their gifts and leadership as a large group of faithful and faith-filled diocesan priests enter their well-deserved retirement. Within the next decade, more than 30 of them will reach or be over retirement age.

As a diocese, we are committed to ensuring these young men get the best possible formation and education so that they and we will benefit for decades to come from their priestly presence among us. We also wish to show our gratitude to those who have graciously served. It is in support of this commitment that the Diocese of Grand Rapids is undertaking the Our Shepherds – Our Future Capital Campaign, a $33 million-dollar campaign to support seminarian education and priest retirement.

**We are asking everyone in the diocese to participate. How deeply reassuring would it be if 100% of the families in our diocese stood in solidarity with these men as they have stood with us?**

We do not expect you to make such a commitment lightly. A gift of any amount to this campaign will be deeply appreciated because we know that what may be considered a small dollar gift for some may well be a large sacrifice for others. We also know that you and others have questions. This insert is the third in a series of four which will answer some of the most frequently asked questions regarding aspects of this campaign.

If you have a question that is not being answered, please submit it to Annalise Laumeyer, diocesan director of communications: alaumeyer@grdiocese.org. She will attempt to provide you an answer promptly.
How is each household being asked to contribute to Our Shepherds – Our Future?
Each registered household will receive an invitation from Bishop Walkowiak which includes their appeal letter and the campaign case statement. This letter includes a suggested request amount that each household is being asked to consider as a three-year pledge.

Why is each household being asked for a specific amount?
Your suggested request amount provides a place to start your family’s discernment. The right amount to give can only be determined through your prayerful discernment. We are hopeful that your contributions to this campaign will be over and above what you already give to parish offertory and the Catholic Services Appeal (CSA) so that our critical ministries may continue.

How is my suggested request amount determined?
Individual factors including contributions to parish offertory over the last three years, historical giving to the diocese and the amount you may have suggested if you participated in the campaign feasibility study were combined with national data to determine suggested request amounts. You know your financial responsibilities and obligations best; this amount should be a guide to begin your discernment.

How am I to discern a gift to this campaign amidst all of my existing financial obligations?
• Pray! Our church – including our diocese, your parish, and our seminarians and priests – needs your prayers.
• Learn about the needs of this campaign. Read the case statement which will be mailed to you and visit GRdiocese.org to learn more. Your parish’s campaign ambassadors can answer any questions you may have. Your final decision may be different from the amount suggested in your letter; it is your gracious discernment that is most appreciated and most important to your final decision. You will have three years to pay your pledge. Every gift counts!

How do I make my gift?
Each parish household will indicate its decision on a pledge card. For some, this pledge card will be provided by a parish ambassador who has volunteered to visit with them. The number of households able to be visited depends on the number of parish ambassadors. For others, the pledge card will be included in their appeal mailing. You may also make your gift online at GRdiocese.org.

Whom should I contact if I have questions?
Your parish office and parish ambassadors are here to help, please reach out to them.