



OUR SHEPHERDS OUR FUTURE

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

SEMINARIAN EDUCATION

Bulletin Series: Issue 2

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; 20 men are currently enrolled as seminarians for the Diocese of Grand Rapids. We look forward to their gifts and leadership as a large group of faithful and faith-filled diocesan priests enter their well-deserved retirement.

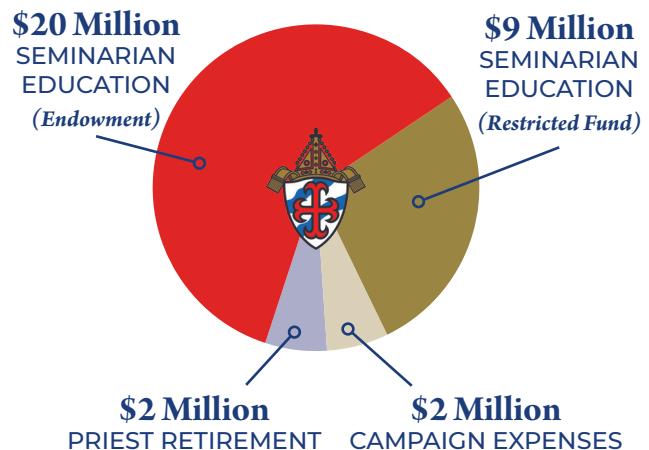
As a diocese, we are committed to ensuring these young men get the best possible formation and education so that they and we will benefit for decades to come from their priestly presence among us. It is in support of this commitment that the Diocese of Grand Rapids is undertaking the *Our Shepherds – 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 young men as they pursue their formation?

For us to successfully complete a campaign of this magnitude, we are inviting all parishioners to consider making a sacrificial gift payable over the next three years. Please know that a gift of any amount will be gratefully received and used in accordance with the initiatives of the campaign. Our young men are eager to serve, and our priests have devoted a lifetime to serving. Please prayerfully consider a gift to this campaign in support of them.

We know that you and others have questions. This insert is the second in a series of five which will answer some of the most frequently asked questions, see reverse, regarding aspects of this campaign.

CAMPAIGN GOAL: \$33 MILLION





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How much is needed for seminarian education?

The Catholic Services Appeal (CSA) annually contributes \$700,000 toward seminarian education, covering the costs of approximately 14 men. When we had fewer seminarians that was sufficient. Today, it only covers a portion of the one million dollars in costs for our seminarians (2020-21 rates). This campaign will raise \$29 million to ensure that the diocese can continue to provide for seminarian education for many years to come.

How long will these funds last? Can they be used toward any other purpose?

The money will only be used toward the initiatives of the campaign – seminarian education, priest retirement, and campaign expenses. We hope to raise an endowment of \$20 million while keeping \$9 million available to be spent as needed while the endowment grows. Because we hope to be blessed with many seminarians in the years ahead, we can't predict exactly how long these funds will last, but we are confident that parishioners throughout the diocese will experience the benefits of these sacrificial gifts for decades to come.

What is a seminarian's financial responsibility for his formation?

College seminarians at St. John Vianney pursue an undergraduate education before moving on to priestly formation. They are responsible for paying one-third of their annual tuition. Like any other undergraduate, this is with a mix of help from family, scholarships, financial aid and student loans. Once engaged in priestly formation at Mundelein Seminary, the diocese covers the entirety of the candidate's costs.

If a seminarian leaves the seminary is he required to reimburse the diocese for the cost of his formation?

A seminarian who leaves the program retains the student loans he has incurred. He will not be required to reimburse the diocese for its portion of his educational costs. The goal of entering seminary is to provide the young man with the opportunity to freely discern his vocation without being hindered by financial obligations.

Why do our seminarians attend seminaries out of state instead of Aquinas College or Sacred Heart Major Seminary?

Our experiences in recent years with both Mundelein Seminary and St. John Vianney gives us confidence in them as partners for the Grand Rapids Diocese. We have active annual reviews of both programs including direct feedback from seminarians.

Will the CSA continue to contribute to seminarian education if *Our Shepherds – Our Future* is raising funds for this same purpose?

The funds allocated to the CSA for seminarian education will remain. The money raised through this capital campaign will allow us to replenish our reserves and create a sustainable long-term funding model for seminarian education.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PRAYERS
FOR THIS CAMPAIGN AND THE
DISCERNMENT OF YOUR SUPPORT!

If you have a question that was not answered, please submit it to Annalise Laumeyer, diocesan director of communications: alaumeyer@grdiocese.org or your pastor.

Visit GRdiocese.org/our-shepherds-our-future to learn more about this campaign and its initiatives.

