

Campaign lays foundation for future

You will read in this edition of the *Catholic Courier* and in many future editions about the Partners in Faith campaign, which we announced at a press conference on Wednesday at St. Mary's Church in Rochester.

Through this endeavor we hope to raise a minimum of \$50 million dollars to help meet current and future pastoral needs and, in so doing, to strengthen our local church for today and tomorrow.

I am very much aware that the challenge of such a campaign is a substantial one, especially in today's environment. The present state of the economy, the uncertainty of war and the painful experience of scandal in our church are causes for concern.

But I am much encouraged by the positive early response we have received in the quiet stages of activity preceding Wednesday's public announcement. The gifts we have already received are most encouraging. At least as important is the readiness of our pastors, pastoral leaders and lay volunteers to offer their time, talent and treasure for



Bishop Matthew H. Clark

Along the Way

the success of Partners in Faith.

I have found their support most encouraging. The fact is I believe with all my heart that we need to achieve our campaign goals for the health and well-being of our diocese. But I am also mindful that most of us in the diocese are inexperienced in ventures of this magnitude. The last time we had a diocesan-wide campaign was in 1965 — some 38 years ago. That program benefited Nazareth College and St. John Fisher College. It also financed the construction of Becket Hall on the campus of St. John Fisher.

Because of the long interval between comprehensive diocesan campaigns — and other reasons — we have engaged the expertise of Community Counselling Service, a firm with a solid record in such campaigns. At present they are helping the dioceses of Winona, Minnesota, and Arlington, Virginia, achieve great success in campaigns that are similar in nature to our own.

In the recent past, with the help of CCS, our neighboring dioceses of Syracuse and Buffalo have also done very well in like efforts. I say this to reassure you that we are not entering uncharted waters. What we are striving for has been done in many other dioceses, and in circumstances like the ones that challenge us today.

All through this decision-making process, we have sought the advice and counsel of our Priests' Council and our Stewardship Council. They have followed this development closely and, as usual, have been thoughtful in the process and honest in their advice. Both groups have been strongly supportive of the ef-

fort. In addition, we will enjoy the ongoing guidance and support of a campaign cabinet composed of talented laity and clergy who will assist for the duration of the campaign.

In our diocesan mission statement, we salute and commit ourselves to the courage and creativity so manifest in our mothers and fathers in faith. They were part of a largely immigrant church and — by their faith, vision and sacrifice — laid foundations upon which we still build. For example, they constructed St. Bernard's Seminary and the majestic churches that dot our region. They established schools and orphanages to care for the young and the vulnerable. They did all of that and much more by generously sharing the little they had for the good of all.

Our generation looks at a set of circumstances much different from the one that challenged our forebears. We do so with a different set of resources and from a very different place in society. But we hold in common with our forebears the responsibility to be wise and generous stewards of God's abundant gifts. And, like them, we have the opportunity to do something extraordinary for those who come after us.

Please follow developing news of Partners in Faith in the *Catholic Courier*, in your parish bulletins and in the public media. I also invite you to keep in touch with Along the Way in coming weeks. I want to write about Catholic Charities, our parishes, our senior priests, a range of faith formation issues, Catholic schools, St. Bernard's School of Theology and Ministry and Sacred Heart Cathedral. They are all part of Partners in Faith. They are important to our diocese.

Above all, I ask your daily prayers for God's blessing on this effort. Peace to all.

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