



The Catholic history of South Jersey began

when a fervent missionary, Father Theodore Schneider, left the comfort of Old Saint Joseph Church in Philadelphia to plant the seeds of faith in missionary soil. The first South Jersey Catholic mission was established in 1740 for four families in Salem County who worked at the glassworks and lived nearby. Jesuits, Redemptorists, Augustinians, and diocesan clergy from Philadelphia soon followed, traveling across South Jersey on foot or horseback, crossing streams, rivers, and forests with only a sack slung over their shoulder, to bring the Catholic message to these New World colonists.

It took another 90 years before the first church was built in Pleasant Mills, Atlantic County and 19 more before the first parish was established in Gloucester City. Nearly 200 years after Father Schneider crossed into South Jersey, the Diocese of Camden was

established in 1937 for the people of the six southern-most counties of New Jersey, a region spanning almost 2,700 square miles.

The Diocese of Camden has changed tremendously over the course of its 80 years in service to the people of South Jersey. Adjusting to changes affecting the Catholic Church throughout the Northeastern United States, the diocese undertook an extensive parish restructuring process in 2008 in an effort to consolidate resources and create more dynamic parish communities.

In recent years, Bishop Sullivan has actively engaged the lay faithful and clergy in promoting the wellbeing of our parishes and the diocese. By frequently visiting parishes, schools, and other institutions, he has made clear his

vision of supporting his priests, increasing priestly vocations, encouraging youth and young adult formation, and providing a quality religious education, especially through our Catholic Schools.

Now, midway through the second decade of the 21st century, it is time for this generation of Catholics to make their mark on the history of the diocese. The Campaign for the Catholic Community of South Jersey, titled Catholic Strong, is seeking to secure a minimum of \$50 million, which will primarily benefit our local parishes. Seventy percent of the funds raised through this effort will be allocated for parish needs as determined locally and 30 percent will fund the diocese's coordination and support of various ministries.



The parish is the heart of the Church and the center of Catholic life. It is there that we are formed in the faith and encounter the mercy and love of God through the sacraments and the community. That is why the primary goal of this campaign is to provide the necessary resources that will strengthen our parishes and their ministries.

Seventy percent of the funds raised at each parish will remain at that parish in order to address local needs. These funds will provide each parish the ability to grow ministries, increase evangelization efforts, complete capital improvements, reduce debt, and focus on other critical concerns.

Because each parish is unique, parishes will determine for themselves how best to utilize their share of the funds raised. Parishioners are encouraged to take an active part in the campaign at the local level and fully support the mission of their parish.

70%
of funds will
remain at
each parish



From the Twelve Apostles to the great missionaries of our lifetime, proclaiming the joy of the Gospel remains key to our Christian life. It is the responsibility of the faithful to go beyond the church walls to share their faith in the person of Jesus Christ. This means we are called as missionary disciples to give daily witness and invite others to encounter the Living God. It is our duty to pass the faith on to our children and grandchildren, to seek those who have fallen away, and to be God's voice to those who have never heard His call.

Pope Francis reminds us, "We must carry this witness every week: Christ is with us...Christ is alive! Made not only with words but also with daily life in our homes, offices, schools, in places of entertainment, in hospitals, in prisons, in homes for the elderly, in places crowded with immigrants, in the city's peripheries" (Feast of the Ascension 2016).

Of course, this is no small undertaking. But in following Pope Francis' guidance to publicly spread the joy of the Gospel, through this campaign we will focus on:

- Promoting the public image of the Catholic Church in South Jersey. We must celebrate and share the good things that happen through the dedication of Catholics in South Jersey. We will use traditional and newer media to promote the vitality of the Catholic Church from the Jersey Shore to the Delaware River.
- We are part of a very diverse Church. There are more than a billion Catholics worldwide. Gone are the days when parishes were simply Irish, Italian, or Polish. Today, our parishes are comprised of members from all parts of the world. Multi-cultural training is a necessity for parish ministers and will help our parishes embrace the varied expressions of the Catholic faith in language, culture, and practice.
- Parish leaders must always be learning. Parish leaders have a duty to make sure their own professional and faith formation is secure and that they are utilizing all available resources to make our parishes effective. Through this campaign, we will continue the process of training parish leaders to become strong and faithful Catholic leaders.



The Diocese of Camden provides care to individuals and families in need across the six counties of South Jersey through various social service agencies, including Catholic Charities, whose mission is to serve the poor and vulnerable with dignity and respect; VITALity Catholic Healthcare Services, which works to enhance the lives of the elderly, persons with disabilities, and their families; the Camden Center for Law & Social Justice, which seeks to promote justice for the poor and marginalized throughout Southern New Jersey; and local parish ministries that address needs in their own communities.

Through these collective efforts, Christ's presence is made real. Funds from this campaign will enable the diocese to meet the growing needs of those on the peripheries and enhance our service programs to better support our parishes. Specific areas that will be funded through the campaign include:



ADDICTION HEALING SERVICES PROGRAM.

Many families throughout South Jersey have been personally affected by the current opioid epidemic and require spiritual, emotional, and medical support. Catholic Charities' Addiction Healing Services Program, which provides assistance to those struggling with addiction as well as counseling and services to their families, is in need of increased funding. Proceeds from this campaign will allow for an increased allocation of resources, both human and financial, so that this program may meet the needs of those who are suffering.



ASSISTANCE TO NEW GROUPS OF MARGINALIZED INDIVIDUALS AND FAMILIES.

The Diocese of Camden helps to support and protect struggling individuals and families through its tapestry of social service outreach and provides allied healthcare services for the elderly at home or in hospitals and nursing homes across South Jersey. The diocese also assists immigrants who face an uncertain future and victims of human trafficking, which is becoming a significant problem in the region. This campaign will fund new programs to specifically address these areas of concern.



LEGAL SUPPORT SERVICES.

Each year, the Camden Center for Law and Justice assists more than 450 families and individuals in crisis. Campaign funds will enable the Church to provide enhanced assistance to the elderly, victims of domestic violence, and others with various legal needs, and increase the volume of those served.



South Jersey Catholic Schools anchor many of our communities and are focused on achieving excellence. This campaign will provide schools the necessary funding to focus on key areas of the 2015 Bishop's Commission on Catholic Schools report, Forming Minds and Hearts in Grace: A Plan for Catholic Schools in the Diocese of Camden, that are not able to be addressed through our current operational funds: faculty and staff development; curriculum expansion and innovation; and capital improvements for the elementary schools. Capital improvements will focus on improving efficiencies and keeping our schools competitive. Other areas to be addressed through the campaign include:

A STRONG CENTRAL SCHOOLS OFFICE.

A suite of services and professionals who can support administrators with HR, budget, tuition, and other business functions will be created so that our principals are able to focus their efforts on innovative and effective school programming.

PROFESSIONAL ENRICHMENT FOR LEADING EDGE INITIATIVES.

We will invest in our school administrators so that they can be innovative and highly effective. Our administrators will be equipped to identify, fund, and execute programs and initiatives that support their school's mission and culture (e.g., STREAM curriculum and resources, technology applications and development, performing arts, student retreats, professional development; as well as innovative operational, development, and enrollment strategies).

INVESTING IN PROGRAMS THAT CHALLENGE STUDENTS.

Funds from this campaign will be used to invest in programmatic excellence by supporting new, innovative programs at the school level. This requires vision, organization, and leadership, as well as the ability to build strong partnerships with alumni, local businesses, and parishioners who can provide expertise and funding to initiate and sustain innovations. This campaign will deepen academic excellence in four key areas – STREAM, Performing and Visual Arts, forming missionary disciples, and Catholic Citizenship – with priorities for each school identified by its local leadership.

SCHOLARSHIP ASSISTANCE.

Added support to our scholarship fund will enable the diocese to help families bridge the gap when financial challenges result in an inability to meet tuition obligations. Awards of \$1,000 to \$1,500 will be available to families from any parish or Catholic school. This support reinforces the parish and family-based focus of the campaign and helps achieve the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' vision for "available, accessible, and affordable" schools.



This campaign will provide schools with necessary funding



Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ:

After my arrival in the diocese, I set forth three principal pastoral objectives that needed to be addressed: increasing vocations to the priesthood; the availability and accessibility of Catholic schools; and the financial stability of the diocese and each parish. Significant strides have been made in the areas of vocations and Catholic schools. Our next hurdle is the maximizing of the resources in each of our parishes and in the diocese to meet the growing challenges of announcing the joy of the Gospel to all men and women in South Jersey.

In Pope Francis' apostolic exhortation *EVANGELII GAUDIUM*, (The Joy of the Gospel) he encourages us to become a missionary Church that ministers even to the peripheries of society. "Pastoral ministry in a missionary key seeks to abandon the complacent attitude that says, 'we have always done it this way.' I invite everyone to be bold and creative in the task of rethinking the goals, style, structures and methods of evangelization in their respective communities. The important thing is to not walk alone, but to rely on each other as brothers and sisters." (EG #33)

To accomplish the Holy Father's mandate, we must invest our time, talent and, yes, our treasure in our parish communities. Therefore, it is time for us to come together in a diocesan-wide campaign to raise funds, something that has not happened in our diocese for more than two decades. This historic effort is not so much about bricks and mortar, but rather about the flesh and blood of our parishes, Catholic Schools and the ministries of our missionary Church.

Our theme, CATHOLIC STRONG, is not just a slogan. It is a goal that we can reach together.

To accomplish this, we must: invest in evangelization programs, particularly crafted for youth and young adults; strengthen faith formation programs for families, adults and children; encourage professional development of parish ministers and staff; and continue to expand our social service efforts. In this way we bring the truths of our Catholic faith to more people; serve our neighbors spiritually and practically; and lay the groundwork for the future of the Church in South Jersey.

Ours is a joyful faith that follows the mission of Jesus Christ. CATHOLIC STRONG is a call to make His mission more present in South Jersey by building up the ministries of our parishes through programs of evangelization.

The Sunday Mass is central to our faith lives, and every Mass concludes with the dismissal "Go," which calls us to bring our faith to serve the needs of children; families; the poor; the immigrant; the refugee; the addicted; the struggling and burdened; and all women and men who look to the Church for spiritual assistance and support.

I ask each of you to prayerfully consider how best to contribute to your parish and the entire Catholic community of South Jersey so that we may become stronger missionary disciples. I hope you will ask questions, offer solutions and act as good stewards of our Faith. May we be CATHOLIC STRONG to ensure, now and far into the future, an active, engaged Church in South Jersey.

With gratitude for the privilege to serve you as your bishop and with firm hope for the future of our Church in South Jersey, I am,

Sincerely in Christ,

Dennis J. Sullivan

Most Reverend Dennis J. Sullivan D.D.
BISHOP OF CAMDEN



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