



THE ROMAN CATHOLIC
Diocese of Helena

Executive Summary
Feasibility & Planning Study
January 2023



Diocese of Helena Feasibility & Planning Study

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the fall of 2022, the Diocese of Helena engaged CCS Fundraising to conduct a Feasibility and Planning Study to determine reactions and support for a \$35 million capital campaign. The study aimed to address the following:

- **Recommending** the best path forward for the Diocese
- **Testing** the preliminary background statement
- **Determining** fundraising capacity in parishes and major gifts
- **Isolating** a challenging yet realistic goal

CCS conducted **87 one-on-one interviews across the Diocese, meeting with 44 clergy and 43 laity.** Another **1695 households completed an e-survey**, providing valuable insights to discern a path forward for the Diocese. CCS would like to acknowledge and thank each of the study participants for their time, candid thoughts, and valuable advice.

A successful fundraising campaign is built upon four pillars: a compelling case for support, strong leadership, committed prospective donors willing to consider gifts, and an organized plan for fundraising. This report shows high-level findings and recommendations from the study.

STUDY FINDINGS

STRENGTHS	OPPORTUNITIES
Bishop Vetter, his energy, and his visits around the Diocese	Number of priests
Number of seminarians	Declining number of Catholics
Faithful parishioners	Geographic distance of the Diocese
Mission-focused priests	Bankruptcy
Legendary Lodge and Carroll College	Youth Ministry



“What are we waiting for?! If we want to be a vibrant and outgoing community, we need to be willing to put our money where our hearts are.”

PROSPECTIVE DONORS

- 97% of clergy and 91% of laity interviewed would consider a gift to a campaign



Low indication	High Indication
\$8,394,000	\$11,919,000



RESPONSE TO CASE INITIATIVES

- 90% of laity and 88% of clergy had very positive or positive reactions to the proposed campaign priorities.
- Caring for retired priests ranked as the #1 priority and growing vocations ranked #2 among both clergy and laity.
- Strengthening our Parishes and Evangelization: Helping Others Encounter Christ ranked next, and both laity and clergy indicated a desire for more clarity in these two priorities.
- Renewing our Diocesan Cathedral ranked as a high or somewhat high priority by 93% of clergy and 75% of laity.



CAMPAIGN LEADERSHIP

- Nearly all encouraged Bishop Vetter to be the leader of a campaign. Both clergy and laity recognize Bishop Vetter's energy, efforts to visit parishes throughout the Diocese, and approachability.
- 32 clergy and 72 laity were identified as potential leaders for a campaign.



CAMPAIGN TIMING

- Over 85% of clergy and over 85% of laity said now is the right time for the Diocese to move forward with a campaign.

CCS RECOMMENDS THE PATH AHEAD

1

Move forward with a campaign

- Based upon gift indications and statistical analysis, there is significant support for a campaign.

3

Engage in a planning period to create a compelling case for support and campaign tools

- The case for support is a visionary document and will include detailed project plans, timelines, and structure of funds.

4

Establish a strong leadership structure

- Leadership will identify, recruit, and train a diverse and representative group of core clergy and lay volunteers who will build campaign momentum.

5

Execute a campaign in a phased approach

- Sequenced leadership gift and parish phases will be established with stated financial goals and specific objectives, beginning in 2023 and culminating in 2024.

*Thank you for your faithful support and guidance throughout this process; we are truly grateful to you and encourage you to pray for the future of the Diocese as we discern our next steps.
Please direct questions to Dan Thies at the Foundation for the Diocese of Helena.
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