

SANTA ROSA DIOCESE COMPLETES RESTORATION OF LOST FUNDS TO DIOCESAN PARISHES AND SCHOOLS

Bishop Daniel Walsh has announced that effective today, the diocese has completed the restoration of all funds lost by parishes, schools and cemeteries of the diocese in the 1999 collapse of the consolidated fund.

This achievement is the result of a five-year Capital Campaign, still in progress, which had as its primary goal the repayment of funds deposited by parishes, schools and cemeteries in the consolidated diocesan account. In 1999, following the departure of Bishop Patrick Ziemann, it was found that the account had been depleted to support the various diocesan ministries. Upon his appointment to the diocese in 2000, Bishop Walsh pledged that all the funds would be restored to their rightful source.

The Campaign -- A New Millennium, a New Beginning -- set an overall target of \$20 million, and realized pledges totaling approximately \$18.6 million to date. With the current quarterly payment from Campaign receipts, the diocese eliminates a \$9.4 million debt to parish communities in six counties, and will now begin disbursement of campaign funds to other targeted recipients of such donations.

In addition to repayment of the \$9.4 million owed to parishes and schools, the Campaign seeks to provide much-needed funds to cover urgent or long-deferred diocesan needs. These include full funding of the Priests' Retirement Account, need-based scholarship funds for Catholic schools, a Teacher Compensation fund, and designated support for Catholic Charities.

Donors to the Campaign are able to designate specific recipients for their funds, and all such designations have been fully honored. However, it is the policy of this Campaign to disburse earmarked funds only after the parishes, schools and cemeteries are made whole. Contributions that arrive with an earmark for some particular use have been set aside in a restricted account until repayment to parishes and schools is complete. Now, with this debt fulfilled, disbursements of funds to other designated recipients can begin.

Consistent with a pledge made by Bishop Walsh, no Campaign funds have been or will be used to pay legal, settlement or other costs related to past incidents of sexual abuse.

Announcing this final payment, Bishop Walsh stated: "The repayment of this debt marks a milestone in the diocesan recovery from its past burdens, and its return to a sound fiscal foundation. The generosity of parishioners and community members has been an inspiration to me, and I am profoundly grateful to all those families whose sacrifices and hard work have made possible this achievement. I have promised parishioners that, together, we will restore the health and vigor of this diocese. With God's help, we have made great strides toward fulfilling that pledge."

For details on the management of the debt or campaign disbursements, contact Diocesan Finance Officer Mike Urick, at 707 566 3317, or mike985@comcast.net.