

# Priests give strong support to capital campaign

**By George P. Matysek Jr.**

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Before Father Erik Arnold was preparing to ask his parishioners to support the “Embracing our Mission – Shaping Our Future” capital campaign, he made a significant pledge himself.

“If anyone knows the needs out there, it would be our own priests,” said Father Arnold, pastor of Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Ellicott City. “If we are going to ask parishioners to support it, we have to really believe in it ourselves. That translates into high participation.”

Father Arnold’s philosophy seems to have been shared by many priests throughout the archdiocese.

According to the archdiocesan development office, 131 priests pledged more than \$1.6 million to the first archdiocesan capital campaign since 1997. Their average gift was \$12,200.

In total, the ongoing campaign has garnered \$140 million – far surpassing the \$100 million target goal.

More than 29,000 donors have participated, their donations designated to support Catholic education, clergy retirement, vocations, ongoing clergy care, Catholic Charities, the archdiocese’s two cathedrals, evangelization and parishes.

“The archdiocesan capital campaign is a way of supporting and acknowledging that we are one part of one large family and that the work of that family is the work of all of us,” said Monsignor Richard Cramblitt, pastor of St. John the Evangelist Church in Hydes and a contributor to the campaign. “It’s not someone else’s job.”

Monsignor Lloyd Aiken, pastor of Sacred Heart in Glyndon and St. Charles Borromeo in Pikesville, said he was happy to support the campaign. It helps the general mission of the archdiocese in addition to the local parish community, he said.

“Having a campaign spread over five years makes it a bit easier for people to contribute a bit more,” he said. “It makes it more doable.”

Father Arnold said Pope Francis indirectly played a role in winning support for the campaign.

“We were helped by his love and care in speaking out for the poor,” Father Arnold said.

Father Arnold, Monsignor Cramblitt and Monsignor Aiken were not surprised by the strong support for the campaign from priests and the general public.

“My sense is that when the Catholic people understand there is a great need, they rise up to meet it,” Monsignor Cramblitt said. “It always humbles me.”

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