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New education initiative: Lumen Christi Academies

Staff report

Seven schools in the Diocese of Oakland will become Lumen Christi Academies in fall 2018. They are Queen of All Saints, Concord; St. Anthony, Oakland; St. Catherine of Siena, Martinez; St. Cornelius, Richmond; St. Elizabeth, Oakland; St. Paul, San Pablo; and St. Peter Martyr, Pittsburg.

"Our beloved Catholic schools have always been places of hope, inspiration and success; we must ensure this gift for our future generations," Bishop Michael C. Barber, SJ, said Sept. 29 in announcing the legal incorporation of Lumen Christi Academies of the Diocese of Oakland.

"Lumen Christi Academies is a renewal of our commitment to strengthen and sustain Catholic education for our families," he said.

The creation of the network of seven schools had been announced in January. The schools were selected through a rigorous review of their strengths and resources; demographic data shows these schools are needed to make Catholic education accessible to families who desire it, the diocese said in a statement.

The Lumen Christi Academies are being modeled after similar, successful efforts in Catholic dioceses across the country. The academies are expected to attract families and major foundations interested in a robust academic setting permeated with Catholic values.

"Lumen Christi Academies are an innovative model of Catholic education," said Elizabeth Guneratne, who is serving as the project lead for Lumen Christi Academies during this transition year.

"Leveraging the resources and knowledge of our diverse network of schools, we will build upon our traditions of spiritual and academic formation for children with a renewed focus on excellence, equity, and enlightenment," she said. "We are blending the best of our Catholic school traditions with a bold new commitment to preparing ethical scholars who will illuminate a more just and joyful future. We are not just keeping the lights on — we built a new grid and we are lighting the way together for our children, families and communities."

The academies will be led by a board, approved by Bishop Barber, consisting of community leaders committed to Catholic education with diverse professional backgrounds. It will have its own dedicated management to guide its mission, collaborating with the existing Department of Catholic Schools.

"We are already engaged with our principals, pastors, professionals and interested supporters," Superintendent Kathleen Radecke said. "Teams are actively working on mission and Catholic identity, governance, curriculum, human resources, development and fundraising, marketing, and more. The enthusiasm and dedication toward ensuring the foundational success of our Lumen Christi Academies is inspiring as we work together to establish an enduring Catholic school education for our children and their families."

St. Anthony and St. Elizabeth schools, both in Oakland, are the oldest in the Diocese of Oakland. St. Anthony School was founded in 1877; St. Elizabeth was not far behind in 1893.

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Lumen Christi Academies

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