



You have started to see *Catholic Strong* lawn signs around our Church, and *Catholic Strong* banners in the back of Church. You may have also seen information about *Catholic Strong* in the *Star Herald*.

### **1. What is the *Catholic Strong* campaign?**

*Catholic Strong*, the campaign for the Catholic Community of South Jersey, is an effort to raise a minimum of \$50 million in gifts and pledges. **70% of all dollars collected up to our parish's goal** (to be announced in September) will be used to support the exclusive needs of Our Lady of Peace. Every parish in our Diocese has been assigned a financial target to reach in order to meet both the needs of the parish and specific needs of the Diocese, which will be funded with the remaining 30% raised. The needs being addressed through the campaign of both the Diocese and parish are extraordinary needs beyond those supported on an annual basis by parish offertory giving or the House of Charity.

### **2. When will we know how Our Lady of Peace plans to spend the gifts and pledges it receives?**

That information will also be announced in September.

### **3. Why do we need a major fund raising campaign?**

At the time of the mergers and consolidations of parishes in the Diocese, it was believed that the majority of our parishes, because of efficiencies of right-sizing and the sale of property, would become operationally stable and prepared to meet ongoing physical plant and maintenance needs. Unfortunately, as a result of various economic realities, many parishes in the Diocese have been struggling financially. Most are able to meet day-to-day operational expenses, but few are ready to deal with major physical plant needs.

### **4. Who will be asked to support the *Catholic Strong* Campaign?**

Each parish family will be asked to consider making a sacrificial gift to the campaign. This campaign is being conducted in a phased approach so that each parishioner/family will be reached in the appropriate time and manner.

### **5. What is the timeframe for the campaign?**

Our parish's campaign will officially begin with "Kickoff Weekend" at all masses on September 15-16.

## **6. Will the House of Charity continue?**

Yes. The House of Charity is vital to continue funding the day-to-day work of the ministries of the Diocese.

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### **Here are some additional questions about the campaign:**

#### **1. Will we hear information about the campaign, aside from the bulletin?**

Yes. At all masses on "Kickoff Weekend" (September 15-16), there will be a brief (6 minute) video from Bishop Sullivan. Father Mazz will also speak briefly at all the masses to provide additional information.

#### **2. How is this campaign different from the House of Charity?**

This campaign is a response to the extraordinary needs of our parish and the Diocese, while the House of Charity helps fund the ongoing operating expenses/programs of the Diocese.

#### **3. How will the campaign affect our offertory collection?**

Our parish, like others in the Diocese, relies on its offertory collections to address day-to-day expenses of our Church/Parish Center, School, and the many ministries we offer for our parishioners. Throughout the campaign, parishioners will be asked not to diminish their regular offertory giving or their annual gift to the House of Charity. Parishioners are encouraged to continue to embrace stewardship as a way of life.

#### **4. How is the financial target for our parish being set?**

Each parish target is being set at 1.35 times the average ordinary income from a recent 2-3 year period.

#### **5. How will our parish benefit from this campaign?**

As noted above, each parish will **receive 70%** of the funds collected up to its goal. Parishes that exceed their target will **receive 80%** of the funds collected above their target. Funds collected will be dispersed every six (6) months to both a parish's deposit and loan fund, and diocesan case components.

#### **6. How will our parish specifically use the gifts and pledges it receives, and how was that determined?**

That information will be provided at all masses on the weekend of September 29-30.

*This abridged article originally appeared in the Catholic Star Herald on May 17, 2018.*

### **Why the Catholic Strong Campaign?**

Since the arrival of Bishop Dennis Sullivan, a great deal of emphasis has been placed on the restructure and stability of the financial statement of the diocese. Under the guidance of William Murray, diocesan Chief Financial Officer, and the accounting staff, and with the mutual assistance of the Financial Council, the balance sheet of the diocese has improved dramatically.

In an effort to structure our Finance Council in a manner consistent with USCCB Guidelines, we choose to create an Institutional Advancement subcommittee for the purpose of exploring a capital campaign.

Our committee was formed in the last quarter of 2016. With the permission of Bishop Sullivan, we solicited proposals from five national recognized firms, each of whom had extensive experience in diocesan-wide campaigns.

With further permission from Bishop Sullivan, we hired fundraising firm Changing Our World to conduct a feasibility and planning study in the early part of 2017. The study took six months to complete. Pastors and clergy of each parish were interviewed, as well as most department heads within the diocese. The outcome of the study was very positive. In particular, the pastors were very pleased about the revenue sharing provided by the campaign.

Each parish will receive 70 percent of the funds raised in their parish. This would allow them to consider paying down debt, making capital improvements, and focus on the critical needs of their parish. Those needs might also include resources to strengthen their local ministries.

In addition to the study, we believe success will come from a good economic environment that will likely continue.

We pray you will join us in this very important endeavor and make a generous pledge to your parish community and support the spirit of stewardship for our diocese.

*Joseph DiFilippo is a member of the Institutional Advancement Committee, Diocese of Camden Finance Council.*

**Our Lady of Peace Parish**  
**Williamstown, New Jersey**  
**Case for Support**

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**Our Parish**

Nine years ago the parishes of St. Mary's in Williamstown and St. John Neumann in Winslow Township were merged to form Our Lady of Peace Parish. St. Mary's history in Williamstown stretches back to the early 1900's. St. Mary's became an established parish in 1909. The history of St. John Neumann parish began as an extension of St. Mary's parish to serve those in Winslow Township in the early 1970's, until it became an independent parish in 1977. Today, Our Lady of Peace Parish serves more than 5,200 families residing in the Williamstown, Franklinville and Winslow Township areas.

The Our Lady of Peace Parish faith community is one that is as vibrant as it is diverse. The celebration of Mass and the sacraments as well as the many liturgical events serve as the primary foundation in fostering our strong faith-filled parish. Alongside this spiritual front, there are more than fifty flourishing parish ministry groups, which allows us to offer something to everyone. This helps provide for many opportunities to get involved, to assist with the care of the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of our parishioners, as well as worldwide communities, to cultivate a deeper faith life.

The St. John Neumann Eucharistic Adoration Chapel, which was added in recent years, provides our parish community with the opportunity to spend more time with the Lord in prayer. Our parish is also home to St. Mary School where more than 500 students from preschool through eighth grade are "Learning and Living in Christ," and enriching our parish community with their participation in various church ministries as well as through community service projects. In addition, Our Lady of Peace Parish has established a thriving youth program, which serves four different age groups ranging from elementary school-aged children through young adults. This youth program, with close to 400 members and counting, has invigorated our parish and has brought many of our youth and young adults to a deeper appreciation of our rich Catholic faith. The Our Lady of Peace Parish family strives to bring the light of Christ to the community through evangelization and charitable works.

When we reflect on all of our blessings, we celebrate what we have inherited due to the extraordinary sacrifices of previous generations of parishioners, and we remain grateful for the community of faith, love, and joy that prospers here today. While we have been extremely fortunate, we cannot rest on what we have accomplished, but instead must continue to grow and expand to meet our future needs.

## **Our Plan**

The Catholic Community of South Jersey continues to reaffirm its commitment to promote the healing, redemptive, and teaching presence of Jesus Christ to those seeking solace, forgiveness, and instruction. We have followed Christ's invitation to love one another, to be a community of faith, and to share our gifts in a spirit of stewardship and gratitude.

As vital and active members of the Diocese of Camden wishing to make our contribution, we are beginning the *Catholic Strong* Campaign to provide the resources needed to strengthen our parishes and Catholic education, expand our outreach, and enhance our social services. A successful campaign will ensure the vitality of our faith communities and ultimately meet the evolving needs of our Diocese.

Every parish will share in these efforts with an allocated goal. Our parish target is to raise a minimum of \$1,505,000. Of which we will receive 70% of the collected amount (or a minimum of \$1,053,500) that will go toward parish needs. Additionally, we will receive 80% of all funds collected over our parish target. We will use our share of funds to address the following needs:

### **Programs and Ministries                      \$400,000**

Hire a full-time Sister as a Pastoral Associate to grow and enhance our evangelization and senior and family outreach ministries. Money raised from this campaign will provide funding for salaries and benefits for five years (\$200,000)

Establish family life and lay ministry development programs (\$100,000)

Maintain and grow youth ministry programs (\$100,000)

### **Enhancing our Parish Community        \$653,500**

Replace roofs on the Church, parish center and rectory buildings (\$100,000)

Repair and repave main parking lot and restripe lines as well as repair concrete and brick walkways and steps (\$120,000)

Provide a facelift for Marian Hall, including new walls, flooring, a new kitchen counter, and new chairs for both Assumption and Marian Hall (\$35,000)

Refurbish St. Joseph room and bathroom and purchase a new projector (\$25,000)

Refurbish piano in Church (\$10,000)

Update lighting in the Church, parish center and Marian Hall to reduce energy costs (\$75,000)

Purchase room dividers for Assumption Hall (\$30,000)

Replace air conditioner units on church roof (\$25,000)

Update computer equipment and parish server (\$10,000)

Purchase electronic sign for parish and school (\$60,000)

Upgrade fire alarm system in Assumption Hall (\$15,000)

Provide school maintenance and technology needs (\$100,000)

Upkeep and General Maintenance fund (\$48,500)

***\*Above costs are projections and require diocesan consultation and approval. All projects are considered pending until campaign funds are realized.***

We are asking our parish family to lend generous support to the campaign. As our current parishioners, we now call upon you to carry on the generosity, spirit, and sacrifice that filled the hearts of the men and women who have supported our parish and diocese throughout our history.

As we have been blessed, let us act as stewards by supporting the *Catholic Strong* campaign to preserve the essence of what we and all of the faithful within the greater Church in South Jersey are blessed to have and to ensure the Church's presence in the lives of our children and grandchildren. Let us continue to show the power which blessed the first apostles to our parish and diocese. Your prayers, generosity, and sacrifice will ensure our success.

August 2018

Dear Friend 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 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. **Catholic Strong** is a uniquely different effort from other diocesan initiatives because 70% of all funds raised will remain at the parish and 30% of the dollars raised will be returned to the Diocese where efforts in the Catholic schools office, Vitality healthcare services, addiction services, evangelization, and legal assistance will be implemented.

Several parishes have already participated in **Catholic Strong** raising more than \$14MM toward the \$50 million campaign goal. Your parish will conduct its campaign with the remaining 31 parishes across the diocese beginning this fall.

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,



Most Reverend Dennis J. Sullivan D.D.  
Bishop of Camden

**We will continue to update you on our *Catholic Strong* Campaign in the parish bulletin, our parish and school websites and Facebook pages.**

