

**A Catholic Strong Perspective:***Father Robert Sinatra, Pastor, Saint Padre Pio in Vineland*

Like many, I was skeptical of running a capital campaign, especially asking our already generous parishioners to "go to the well" one more time in order to support the work of the diocese and the needs of the parish, especially in the light of our efforts to make our House of Charity goal.

However, once we were told that 70% of all money raised would go directly to the parish, I knew that we had a fighting chance of making our goal.

One of the major case components for St. Padre Pio Parish ended up being the full replacement of the church roof, at a cost of upwards of $55,000.  However, I was concerned that so many of our Catholic Strong case components were capital expenditures and debt reduction that parishioners would be hesitant to respond.

Imagine my surprise when one of my primary Catholic Strong donors wrote me a check for $50,000 and delivered it within 24 hours of "the ask.”

I am very thankful for the hard work of my Catholic Strong parish volunteer team: our chair, Patrick McGrory, Paul Abrams, Barbara Bailey and Linda Tiemann.  Even though we're on the small side, their expertise and dedication to the campaign has been unbelievably helpful to ensure the presence of this parish and the work of the Gospel for years to come.

For other parishes that are beginning this process, what I have learned is that, ultimately, people donate based on relationships.  They give to the people that represent the institutions they place their faith.  I am extremely humbled that my parishioners believe so much in our community of faith that they trust our choices in terms of parish case components and the vision of our parish for the future.

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*To learn more about the Catholic Strong campaign, go to SouthJerseyCatholicStrong.org or speak with you pastor or Catholic Strong volunteer team.*