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## **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.*