

## Prayer, following up play important role in campaign's success

*Editor's note: St. Edward's, Minneota, parishioner Bruce Bot shares his perspective as a volunteer member of the "Christ Our Life" Capital Campaign committee. Bot has been a lifetime member of St. Edward's and attended St. Edward's Catholic School. Bot and his wife of 23 years, Juanita, have five children, all who have also attended St. Edward's School. Bot is a member of the parish council and has assisted in starting an endowment fund in the parish.*

**Minneota** – When Bruce Bot was asked by his pastor, Fr. Jeremy Kucera, to serve on the "Christ Our Life" Capital Campaign leadership committee for his parish, he was not very enthusiastic about it. "None of us like to go and ask people for money," Bot said.

"But, after looking over the promotional materials, watching the promotional video, and listening to Bishop LeVoir talk about the campaign, I became convinced of the need," he said.

Bot also realized that by serving on the committee, he was giving the people "the opportunity to be generous and contribute."

The "Christ Our Life" campaign is a major fundraising effort of the Diocese of New Ulm to raise \$15 million. The money raised will be split, with \$7.5 million going to the diocese to be used to build a new Pastoral Center, and \$7.5 million going to the 76 parishes participating in the campaign.

Bot said that prayer and a good committee are essential to being successful. Holding regular meetings to encourage and motivate committee members and discuss issues also helped. "I was surprised that once our committee committed to the process, it actually was enjoyable," he said.

When asked about the initial campaign presentation, Bot felt the diocesan representatives did a good job of introducing the campaign materials. "Their positive attitude kept everyone thinking that way," he said.

"The meetings were educational and I felt we were given the tools needed to be successful."

Bot said that in the beginning there were some differences in the way people perceived the campaign and some were not convinced that a new



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Pastoral Center was needed. However, he felt that following the presentation, most people seemed to realize the necessity.

As a member of the leadership committee, Bot's responsibility was to call and set up appointments with the people he was assigned to. He said that about 85 percent of prospects agreed to meet.

"We tried not to leave the pledge cards with the people, but in some cases we did," he said. Bot would then contact the campaign office at the diocese, which would e-mail a list of people who had returned pledge cards – not the amount – just the names. "If they didn't return their pledge card, we would call them again to see if they would like to meet to discuss the campaign," he said.

Bot explained that in his parish they really pushed pulpit announcements in August and September to go along with the weekly bulletin announcements. The committee agreed that the pulpit announcements helped a lot with the campaign promotion.

In the middle of September the parish observed Commitment Sunday, which was an opportunity for Bot to talk about stewardship and the need for a new Pastoral Center. On Oct. 2, the committee followed up with a phone-a-thon.

Throughout the last two months, Bot said, he contacted the campaign office at the diocese several times for support and advice and found them to be very helpful.

Members of St. Edward parish who also served on the campaign

leadership committee were Fr. Jeremy Kucera, Fred Rabaey, Tim Gossen, Fred and Margrit Rabaey, Juanita Bot, Omer Laleman, Jeff Claeys, Frank Swedzinski, and Margaret Doom. Each committee member agreed that God was going to have to move people's hearts to make them receptive to the campaign. If they were going to be successful in their fundraising efforts, they would have to pray, which was something each committee member did before they met with individuals or couples.

The prayers and hard work of Bot and the leadership committee paid off. St. Edward's has reached its parish goal of \$268,875. In fact, it went over its goal by \$2,500, raising a total of \$271,420 for the Capital Campaign.

Bot attributes their success to God. "Our whole committee commented on the generosity of our parishioners, so we felt God helped us," he said.

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