

SAINT BARBARA CHURCH CROSSTALK

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WE DID IT!!! "GROWING TOGETHER" CAMPAIGN A COMPLETE SUCCESS

by Pauline Baumann

Who could have imagined in 1967 when St. Barbara Parish was established that it would grow to be the large and thriving parish it is today? Then only 78 families gathered at Levi Strauss while the new church on Turkeyfoot Road was being built under the leadership of its first pastor, Rev. Al Ruschman. But those early parishioners certainly had vision! They believed that this parish would grow, and so they developed the "half church" concept that could be completed when the need was there.

Fast forward to 2009 soon after Fr. John Sterling became pastor with the request of Bishop Foys to expand the church. The first phase of our Growing Together campaign was begun with the intent of doubling the size of our worship space, adding an attractive gathering space, a new cry room, updated reconciliation room, handicapped accessible bathrooms, and a covered entrance way. The very talented Ehmet Hayes was hired as the architect, committees were formed to gather the necessary pledges, and fund-raising projects began in earnest. But Fr. Sterling always gives credit where credit is due, "When you pray and envision it, God will find a way."

With the rallying cry that enlivened the process, "Pray Down The Wall," soon the \$2 million project was complete with the addition of a Welcome Center that serves as a gathering space after Mass and for small groups. A bell tower, designed by the Verdin Company of Cincinnati, was added next that beautifully calls all to worship.

Because our parish has grown from 350 families when Phase 1 and 2 were initiated to 1250 families, the need was obvious to move on to Phase 3. The Master Plan had always envisioned a Fellowship Hall to accommodate a large crowd, much needed new C.C.D. classrooms for our constantly growing enrollment in our religious education program, and an Adoration Chapel for quiet reflection. When Marty and Sheila Zalla saw the plans for the Adoration Chapel, they immediately pledged the amount needed to build this free-standing structure in honor of their son Michael who was tragically killed in an accident when he was a junior at N.K.U. As Sheila commented, "The incorporation of nature in this design truly shows Michael's love for God's world."

So here we are in 2016 with expanded parking lots, every building that had been planned is completed, and finally the C.C.D. classes can learn about God in a quiet environment. And best of all... if everyone completes their pledges, there will be no need to borrow from the bank! Fr. Sterling quietly suggested too, "If people will continue to donate to the Building Fund, our parish should be completely debt free."

And still with all the expansion of buildings, increased numbers of parishioners, and new activities, St. Barbara remains the same charismatic and welcoming community that it always has been.

Fr. John and Steering Committee members raise a toast to the completion of the Sterling Event Center.



TIME TO GROW SPIRITUALLY

On Saturday Evening January 2nd, we dedicated our new Sterling Event Center. This was the final dedication for all of the buildings we have completed in the last six years. Thanks to all of you we now have a campus unique to any other in our diocese. Our Perpetual Adoration Chapel designed by Ehmet Hayes is the only free-standing Perpetual Adoration Chapel in the Diocese. Now that we have completed all three phases of our Building Project, it is time for us to focus on Growing Together Spiritually. On Wednesday Jan 6th. We had a brainstorming session in our new hall. Around 25 five people of every age range gathered to decide what topics we might want to address. We will begin having Adult Education every Wednesday from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. The topics will range from: "Forms of Prayer" to "Parenting" to "Dealing With Addictions." A few other smaller groups have already formed for Young Adults and Seniors. I am always amazed at how quickly everyone gets on board with a new idea. So as we enter into this new year, let's us continue to thank God for all that we have built here. And now let us focus on building our spiritual Lives. God Bless You All!

Fr. John

YOUTH GROUP REPORT

by Courtney and Meredith Mueller

With all the fun and exciting things our parishioners have come to associate with the St. Barbara's Youth Group, it's difficult to imagine our rambunctious crew settling down for a time of quiet reflection. Between feeding the homeless, volunteering at Woodcrest, planning mission trips, putting together Christmas packages for children overseas, and fueling Father Sterling's cookie dough addiction, it felt as though we were losing sight of what truly brings our group together. Because while we love when our kids have fun, we are, first and foremost, a religious group.

Ask any member of our youth group what we do each and every time we get together, and their response will always be, "We pray!" On top of all the other exciting events our youth group plans, we come together in prayer every Wednesday night. But it seemed strange that members of our youth group came to us and reported that they don't know how to pray.

We started on our mission trip to Camp Mary Hope in Tampa when Jake Vogt invited our group to join him in his routine of praying the rosary every morning while watching the sunrise. Jake led the way and sparked a discussion on our annual retreat to Red River Gorge about different ways to pray. He then led the kids in the rosary. For some of them, it was the first time they had ever heard it.

For those who were unable to make it to the retreat, we have made praying the rosary an almost weekly event for our group. Since implementing this, we have noticed an increase in youth group meeting attendance. Not only are they learning how to pray but the kids are learning an important part of our Catholic heritage.

COME TO THE TABLE

by Lynne Schrott

"I don't like what we're having." "I don't feel like eating that." As a child, I uttered those words on many occasions when, upon being summoned for dinner, I found the food offerings to be less than enticing. Mom's response was always the same... "That's fine, you may eat what you brought along". Well, that was never a viable option either.

Fast forward a few years and as I matured out of my own little world, I came to realize how blessed I was to even have food on the table, because my neighbors right up the street were probably going hungry.

This scenario is still playing out all over the U.S. and even in St. Barbara's back yard. Many of our sisters and brothers live in poverty. Decent jobs are elusive. They have difficulty feeding their families or finding adequate housing. Because of these conditions, their lives are diminished and their dignity undermined.

The Vincentians of St. Barbara are investing their time, talent, and treasure to assist those in our area who are struggling. In the fiscal year that ended Sept. 30th, our Vincentians spent 1500 hours and traveled over 7100 miles to conduct visits and provide services. Due to the incredible generosity of our parish and with help from other agencies (the Butler Foundation, etc.), our St. Vincent de Paul Society was able to disburse over \$50,000 toward assistance with rent, utility bills, food, and gasoline for their clients. These funds also aided the Beechgrove Elementary cafeteria in feeding at-risk children, and the 600+ tags on the Giving Tree this year helped 46 families have a merrier Christmas.

There are many other challenges that our country is facing, but as Christians our faith calls us to respond to poverty. Concern for the poor is echoed throughout Scripture. We know that Jesus identified himself with the downtrodden and told us that when we serve the poor, we serve Him. Conversely, when we ignore the poor, we ignore Him.

As we begin 2016, let's pray that our Vincentians can remain beacons of hope in their service to those who are struggling, and that the Society will continue to be a center of help. When we gather around the table this new year to worship and celebrate the Eucharist, let us be reminded that the Body and Blood of Christ nourishes us so that we may LIVE the Gospel. It is our Christian duty to help our less fortunate brothers and sisters to be able to "Come to the table." We'll show through our actions that, at our table, you will never hear the words "I don't like what we're having."



One of the truckloads of Christmas gifts distributed by St. V de P.

Women's CRHP Number 3

by Tina Bowen

Christ Renews His parish – often referred to as Chirp (CRHP) is happening now at St. Barbara's. The women have been team formation for Christ Renews His Parish for the past 12 months. Please pray for them and for a successful weekend... If you are a registered parishioner or live in the parish boundaries, think about making this spiritual weekend. If you have made Christ Renew His Parish in another parish, you too are invited. Applications and information can be found in the back of church and in the Welcome Center.

The Women's Weekend is January 30th and 31st. Attendees will arrive Saturday the 30th at 8:00 am and the weekend extends to around 2:00 pm the next day. You will be provided meals and there is no cost to attend. A small amount of time to get a huge spiritual awakening. The weekend is a wonderful experience to get to know other women of the parish and learn more about our Catholic faith and the connection we all have. Give some prayerful thought to attending. Call Tina Bowen for more details, 859-640-8766.

SPIRITUAL ADOPTION

by Karen Riegler, Families for Life

On the weekend of January 23/24, the anniversary of the infamous Roe vs. Wade Decision that legalized abortion, St. Barbara's Families for Life will once again begin our Spiritual Adoption Program. Through the Spiritual Adoption Program, our parish will be given an opportunity to spiritually "adopt" a child and pray each day that he or she will be carried to term and experience the fullness of life as God intended. Prayer cards will be made available after all Masses, and for the next nine months, "Little Ones" posters will be displayed in the Narthex. These posters will chronicle your "adopted" baby's development in the womb. Each month, a new poster will be displayed, and you and your family can enjoy seeing how your "adopted baby" is growing, and also have an opportunity to read a "thank you for praying for me" note from your baby that will also be displayed alongside each month's new poster. We hope you and your family will take this opportunity to participate and experience the power of prayer for God's most precious gift of life.

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Mission Statement: St. Barbara CrossTalk is dedicated to the cross-section of our Parish members. We realize it can't be all things to all people all of the time, but we hope to periodically include articles of interest for members of all ages. We invite contributions, letters to the Editor, articles etc. Ideas for articles are always welcomed. This is our Parish Newsletter and we hope it will be a true representation of what is going on in the Parish. Your contribution is important.

Joy is the Fruit of Mercy

"I felt I'd committed the unforgivable sin."

So many women with abortion in their past have said things like this. They often feel deep shame, regret, loss, or despair. They may have a hard time accepting that God loves them, and so stay away from the spiritual and psychological help offered by the Church.

Pope Francis has a message for these suffering mothers and all others who have been involved in an abortion: Great joy can be found in Christ's unfailing mercy and love for us sinners. In this Jubilee Year of Mercy called for by Pope Francis he said, "I am convinced that the whole Church will find in this jubilee the joy needed to rediscover and make fruitful the mercy of God, with which all of us are called to give consolation to every man and woman of our time."

Accepting God's mercy brought happiness to "Sophia"* in her healing journey through Project Rachel, a diocesan-based post abortion healing ministry of the Catholic Church. "As the mystery of God's way unfolded, I recovered peace. That sense of peace has brought with it for me real joy and new hope for the future," she said.

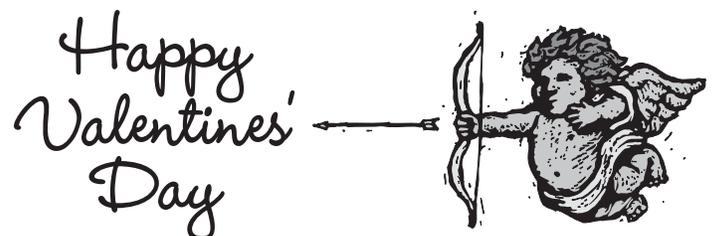
Pope Francis' focus on mercy challenges us to not only accept Christ's mercy ourselves like "Sophia" did, but also to be merciful to others. A way to answer his call is to be aware of and address the particular needs of those who suffer from abortion. Offer your attentive listening and non-judgmental attitude to someone you know who is suffering after abortion. Pray that you will see Christ in the mothers, fathers, grandparents, siblings and others who have been affected by abortion, and tell them about God's mercy with love and tenderness. Offer them hope for relief of their pain and suffering and provide information about Project Rachel, which offers confidential, non-judgmental help.

In our diocese help is only a phone call away. If you or someone you know and love has had an abortion experience, they can contact the Diocese of Covington confidential phone number and e-mail: 859-392-1547 - projectrachel@covdio.org. Or visit www.hopeafterabortion.com, which will connect you to our local Project Rachel ministry.

Throughout the Jubilee Year of Mercy, may each of us be empowered by God to be merciful ourselves, and share the hope and help that are available to those who suffer abortion's aftermath might also find joy in the great gift of mercy.

Condensed from Life Issues Forum article
Mary McClusky
Assistant Director for Project Rachel Ministry
USCCB Secretariat of Pro-Life Activities

**Name has been changed to protect confidentiality*



St. Henry Grade School News

by Julie Nelson

Happy 2016! As always St. Henry is busy doing something! St. Henry School now has a Twitter account. You can follow us at @sthenryschool and see what's happening here at school each day! You can also connect at this link <https://twitter.com/sthenryschool>.

St. Henry Grade School Fundraising Event! Tickets to attend the Crusader Royale Event on March 5th are now on sale in the school office. Don't miss out on this fun event held right in our gymnasium! We are expecting this year's event to sell out so get your tickets quickly!

Our message... St. Henry School is a place where we learn, grow, and become Disciples of Christ by embracing the Gospel message. We will work toward our full potential each day in order to demonstrate our respect for the sacrifices made by the entire St. Henry community to ensure our success. We will remain connected to God and others, gain confidence in our academic, social, and physical abilities, and contribute to the community through service and leadership.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Thu	Jan 21	Reconciliation, Year of Mercy, 5:00 - 7:00 pm
Sat	Jan 23	Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, 5:30 pm
Sat/Sun	Jan 23/24	Families for Life Talk, All Masses
Sat/Sun	Jan 30/31	Women's Christ Renews His Parish Weekend
Sat	Feb 6	Confirmation Commitment, 4:30 Mass, Dinner
Mon	Feb 8	TGIF Fundraiser
Wed	Feb 10	Ash Wednesday, Masses 10:00 am and 7:00 pm
Fridays	Feb 12, 19, 26, Mar 4, 11, 18	Fish Frys, 4:30 - 8:00 pm
Sat	Feb 13	Valentine Day Dance, 8:00 - Midnight
Thu	Feb 18	Reconciliation, Year of Mercy, 5:00 - 7:00 pm
Thu	Feb 18, 25,	Mar 3, 10, 17 - Lenten Mass, 7:00 pm
Thu-Sun	Mar 3-6	Men's Cursillo Weekend
Sat/Sun	Mar 5/6	International Needs Collection, All Masses
Sat	Mar 12	Confirmation Retreat, 9:00 am - 2:15 pm
Tue	Mar 22	Chrism Mass at Cathedral, 7:00 pm

St. Henry High School News

by Chloe Voelker, SHDHS junior

As the first semester comes to a close at St. Henry, the Crusaders are becoming joyful in the Advent season while focusing on exams, service projects, and sports. The cast, crew, and directors of the Fall play, *The Bullying Collection*, had a successful production that instilled a powerful message to all ages. In November the students and their grandparents participated in Mass together and were introduced to the annual Elves on a Mission service project. Campus Ministry has been very active this year, educating and reflecting with the whole school during All Souls Day and having the sacrament of confession.

During the busy season students have been encouraged to participate in events benefiting many organizations within our area and beyond. Everyone responded generously and the true meaning of giving was reflected through these donations of time and giving. Collections this year included the Saint Vincent de Paul Coat drive which students helped distribute at St. Henry Parish, toiletry items for the Faith Community Pharmacy in Florence, and stocking stuffers for the Children's Home of Northern Kentucky. Saint Henry also continues the Elves on a Mission program to "adopt" struggling families and provide some Christmas joy and presents. Each homeroom was also assigned a food item to donate for this collection. The generosity of the SHDHS community has allowed this program to grow and reach over 20 families this year.

Crusader Crazy Day allowed eighth graders to experience a day in the life of a Saint Henry student. Student ambassadors led groups visiting departments where students discussed courses, participated in game stations, and the whole school participated in a pep rally at the end of the day. Winter sports are also in full swing as the swimming and diving, bowling, indoor track, basketball and cheerleading teams continue to represent. You can find all of the schedules online. On behalf of the student body and everyone at SHDHS, I would like to wish all those and their families at Saint Barbara's a blessed Christmas and joyful New Year.