



HARK

Announcing the Good News at St. Michael Parish

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GETTING INVOLVED - 2011 Pastoral Council

Stewardship in Action

The members of the Pastoral Council would like to hear from YOU as they meet monthly to work with our priests and the parish staff in continuing to advance the mission of our parish. Building on the work of the previous council (thank you, Denny Snyder for your leadership), this council has revised the by-laws and reassigned its members to committee work. The new officers are united in their dedication to **SERVE** the parish. As President, **Rob Krall** hopes to be a positive catalyst for the continued growth of our parish in faith, hope and love. **Craig O'Leary**, the council's Vice-President, shares Rob's desire to serve the parish, particularly through his involvement in the Cub Scout and Boy Scout programs of the parish. **Roberta Snouffer** serves as the council's Secretary, as well as part of the RCIA team and coordinator of the Liturgical Ministries' schedules.

Additional members of the council and their committee assignments include:

Dr. Rich Mullin who is overseeing the Adult Faith Formation Committee. He finds that sharing with these adult study groups has deepened his own sense of community and enhanced his understanding of the faith.

Denny Hamm Seckman, a newcomer to the council but a life-long member of the parish, hopes to help renew the spirit of stewardship in the parish. As part of the Environmental Committee, she enjoys the opportunity to assist in enhancing our church environment for various liturgical seasons and celebrations. She welcomes anyone in the parish who would like to join her on this committee!

Mike Rempe responded to an invitation in the church bulletin for parishioners to step forward to join the council. Assigned to the Welcoming Committee, he works closely with the Ushers and the soon-to-be-organized Greeter ministry. Mike enjoys greeting parishioners at 7:30am mass - even without an organized ministry!

Dawn Dean serves the council in the area of Youth and Family Ministry. As the parish's High School Youth Director, she also represents our parish in the area's LifeTeen program. Dawn's exuberance carries over into her desire to see God's people coming together in our parish to make great things happen!

Launa Post is new to the Pastoral Council, and serves as the Council's representative on the newly-formed parish Stewardship Council. She is amazed by how many people work quietly behind the scenes to make so many wonder-



Council presentation on our new Christian Life program

ful things happen in our parish and looks forward to adding her talents to the group.

Members of the Pastoral Council can be reached by using the Contact Us feature of the parish website, or by calling the Parish Office 304.242.1560.



You are invited to participate in a
Eucharistic Mission
led by
Father Louis Guardiola, C.F.M.

**Sunday, March 20 -
Thursday, March 24 at
7pm in the church.**

Talks will be repeated following a special noon mass Monday through Thursday for those who are unable to attend in the evenings. Confessions will be available before and after all sessions. Conference topics include:

- ** Four Last Things: Death, Judgment, Heaven and Hell
- ** Confession: The Sacrament of the Prodigal Son
- ** Holy Eucharist: Sacrifice, Real Presence, and Communion
- ** Culture of Life vs. Culture of Death: The Eucharistic Solution
- ** Our Lady: Mother of God and the Church

Whether you are very devout, or very doubtful, you are welcome to come and learn what the Catholic Church teaches. Take advantage of this special Lenten opportunity. Give God the gifts of your time and open heart, and be amazed at what He will return to you through the mission.

Double Blessings



At all of the weekend masses January 29/30, Karen Gaudet, our Parish Finance Director and Lou Volpe, the Chairman of our Parish Stewardship Council, announced our exciting, new parish Double Blessings Campaign. The following is a partial text of their presentations. Please open your hearts, and prayerfully consider how you might be able to participate. The second collection at all masses on the last weekend of every month this year will be for our Double Blessings Campaign. Donations can also be sent to the Parish Office at any time.



(from Karen Gaudet) In the 12 years that I have been working with the parish finances, I've learned that some days there is good news, and some days there is bad news where the finances are concerned. Last week, for instance, we received our monthly gas bill, and it was nearly \$10,000. Now that's bad news. Some days, we are pleasantly surprised to open the mail and find checks from donors or news from an attorney saying the parish will be receiving a large bequest from a deceased parishioner. Now that's good news.

What is never a surprise to me, and as you will see when you read the annual financial statement that will be in the bulletin next month, is the fact that it takes a large amount of money to run a parish this size and parish school each month. In 2010, our collections that remain here in the parish and are not sent to the diocese average \$68,000 per month. That sounds like a lot of money, and it is, and we are extremely thankful for your gifts but, right off the top, we send almost \$32,000 to our parish school and high school to help run the schools. That's 47% of our collections going to school support. Next, we make our loan payments to WesBanco and the diocese totaling \$9,200 a month. Of the remaining \$27,000 or so, we must pay our utility bills, property insurance and maintenance on 4 buildings, payroll and health insurance for employees and priests, and so on and so forth. Most months, we pay out more than we collect in the collection basket. Often it is the bequests, special gifts and year end giving that carries us through each year. So that was the bad news.



Now let me share some good news with you. We have been presented with an amazing opportunity. A very generous donor has offered the parish up to \$500,000 (half million dollars) if we can raise the matching funds. His only stipulation is that all funds raised be used to reduce the debt being carried by the parish. Believe me when I say, our jaws dropped when he made this unsolicited offer to us. This is an offer that we cannot pass up. It is manna from heaven for the parish!

If we are successful in raising \$500,000, we can 1) wipe out most, if not all, of our parish debt, and 2) free up \$9200 a month to use for other parish needs. Specifically, we have discussed the need for improvements to our school building (which is the only building that has not been upgraded recently except for updates to a couple classrooms) and also, to provide a salary increase to our dedicated teachers. Did you know a starting teacher in our school makes less than \$23,000 per year? It's almost impossible to live on \$23,000 per year!

Here is a little history on the parish debt.

1. The oldest loan is from 1994 and was for nearly \$500,000 for the renovations to the school (asbestos removal, new

windows, AC installation), and the remaining amounts due on the Bishop Schmitt Addition. The current balance owed on this loan is \$90,000 payable to the diocese.

2. The second loan was for \$300,000 for rectory and church renovations in 2004, and the current balance of \$217,000 is owed to WesBanco.

3. The third loan was for construction of the Angelus Center in 2008 for \$1,014,000, and the current balance of \$890,000 is owed to WesBanco.

The total balance owed on these 3 loans is approximately \$1,200,000. We are fortunate that the two loans with WesBanco have low interest rates at this time, but within the next 5 years, the rates are scheduled to be adjusted which means our monthly payments are expected to increase, and it could be a significant increase. So it's important that we take advantage of this opportunity to reduce our debt NOW. Paying off this debt would have a major impact on the parish for the next 25 years.

So at this time, we are officially kicking off a campaign to raise the matching funds, and we are calling it **DOUBLE BLESSINGS**. This campaign will only be run through the end of THIS YEAR. And there's more good news... our priests and a small committee have been quietly working on this campaign for several months now, and have \$220,000 in gifts in the bank already. **All that is left to raise is \$280,000!** We are asking EVERYONE to be part of this campaign. We need all levels of participation. Every dollar is important. Your \$50 gift will become \$100, and a \$1000 gift will become \$2000. If you are financially able to give \$5000, \$10,000, or even more to this project, we would be most grateful!



(from Lou Volpe) I'd like to offer you two images that might help us move more deeply into the virtue of stewardship and encourage all of us to contribute to our Double Blessings Campaign.

The first picture deals with pizza. Imagine 16,000 pizzas carried up at the offertory procession of each mass on Saturday and Sunday for 10 months. Pizza of all kinds: sausage and pepperoni for those undaunted by the accumulation of cholesterol, mushroom and olives for the spicier folks, mundane vegetables for the vegans who care for their bodies, and anchovies for those who don't give a hoot if their breath smells after a hearty meal. A veritable wall of pizzas blocking the altar and the view of our parish priests. Now, following up on what Jim Hurley suggested to us in his Financial State of the Parish talk last year, if every parish family sacrificed the price of a pizza (about \$10) and put that money in the collection basket once a month from March to December, that's \$100 per family in 10 months. There are approximately 1600 families in this parish which gives us a

whopping total of \$160,000 - almost 1/3 of our needed donations. Now, I am aware that only about 900 families attend Sunday Liturgy regularly, so our pizza collection (given the fact that some people will put more than \$10 in the collection) will come to about \$100,000, 1/5 of our goal. Yet it's a terrific start - the finishing amount will come, and is already arriving, from those of us more able to give and more able to sacrifice. So for the next ten months there are none of us who should eat a pizza or pass a pizza parlor without thinking of our Double Blessings campaign.

For my second image I want you to imagine this sacred place we worship in today as not existing. Gone, Caput, Finito, Disappeared. As a matter of fact, imagine there is no church, no school, no parish house, no parish office, no nothing, except an empty field of brush and leaves which has, as of yet, not been asphalted into another parking lot. You walk out of your house on Sunday morning, get in your car and drive down your street onto Rt. 40. The same roads wait for you, but there's no St. Michael's Church. It doesn't exist. For that matter there are no hospitable Protestant churches either: there's a used car dealership on the site of First Presbyterian Church, a new and much needed McDonald's where First Christian Church would sit, and a gigantic exercise facility at the Lutheran Church where people can get into physical shape. And as for Temple Shalom where our Jewish brothers and sisters pray and remind us of where we come from, you guessed it - it's Volpe's Sicilian Pizza Palace! Also, there's no Wheeling Jesuit University - it's still a cornfield the way it was before 1954 and, along with our dear Mt. de Chantal, which doesn't exist either. It's all farmland. Yes, we've got houses and restaurants, and beaucoup shopping malls, lawyers' and doctors' offices (except Wheeling Hospital doesn't exist either because there's no Catholics) and lots of black & gold Pittsburgh Steelers decorations (how could we exist without them!). Secularism and football, not God, is king.

Now, continue to imagine with me two men dressed in black coming down Chicken Neck Hill. They are not driving cars, no, nor walking neither. My guess is that they are probably riding jackasses. One quietly smiling fellow, around 60, has come from County Cork in Ireland, while the other, dapperly dressed even in black and with an intense focus on his face, is from the province of Cebu in the Philippines. They call their jackasses to a halt at the field of brush and leaves at the corner of Washington Avenue and Rt. 40, set up a wooden table and put on their offertory robes. Many of us - some curious, some searching, and some hungry for food - gather around wide-eyed. These two foreigners proceed to offer the bread and wine, consecrated into - they assure us through their faith - the body and blood of Christ. They quote from the Bible, from Jesus: "I came that you might have Life and have it more abundantly." We begin to believe, we begin to hope, we have our first and most important sign of God with us, and we build a church around that table as our loving response to a God who has become one of us and will stay with us forever till the end of time.



In 1897 the first St. Michael's Church was built over on Edgington Lane. In 1930, our school next door. In 1951, all the worker families of this parish - some named Beltz, Nau, Miller, Hellstern, Stahl, Emmerth, Altmeyer, Schlag, Storch,

etc. - pooled their money and their particular expertise and built the church. They and their families stewarded it until this day, seeing in it a sign that their lives and deaths were not wasted and that this earth is not a wasteland, but the beginning of God's kingdom and God's work in the kingdom. May I suggest to you today that our stewardship of St. Michael's Parish is our gift of fidelity, our faithfulness in an increasingly faithless and secular world. Although you and I know that the church is the **people** of God, it is also the **place** that we nurture, the place that shapes our spiritual identity, for our lives here - both for those of us who are new to St. Michael's and those of us who have been here a long time - are truly valuable if we sanctify and nurture the places where we live: first our homes, then our church, then our local community with its poor and needy, then on and outward to caring for the nation and the citizens of the world and the earth itself. Truly, our Stewardship for this place, if it is to flourish and survive, will require devotion and dedication, along with some confusion and some suffering. We will need all the virtues, all our attention, all the knowledge, all the imagination, all the conscience, and all the feeling that together we can bring. **AND** a great deal of your pizza treasure!

(Final comments from Karen Gaudet) We ask that any amounts you give to this campaign be over and above what you may still be paying on your Capital Campaign pledges and over and above your regular weekly giving to the parish. We still need to cover the operating expenses of running the parish during the next 11 months.

The Bishop has kindly granted the parish an exemption from any diocesan assessments on this money. 100% of the funds raise in this campaign will remain in the parish and used only for debt reduction.

Throughout the years, many people have shared their time, talent and treasure to build up this parish; and our church and school would not be here today without all of us working together for the greater good. Let's keep it going!

Some practical notes: Green envelopes enclosed with a letter which you received a few weeks ago can be used for your *Double Blessings* contributions. You can use those throughout the year as you are able. You will also have a *Double Blessings* envelope in your envelope packets each month, as well as in the pews on the last Sunday of each month and in the vestibule of the church throughout the year. We have 11 months to raise the money, and we don't want to have to say that we left any money on the table when it's over. Donations can be made at any time in any amount.

To receive credit for your contributions in our parish records, please be sure that your name is clearly printed on the envelope if you are enclosing cash, or pay with a check. While the collection will be taken at the masses on the last Sunday of the month each month this year, contributions can be made at any time through the Parish Office.

In addition, for those who would like to insure that their monthly contributions are made, electronic giving for this campaign can be arranged with our office for the one year duration of the campaign. Please contact Karen Gaudet in our parish Finance Office if you are interested in this option.





St. Michael Parish
1225 National Road
Wheeling, WV 26003

Return Service Requested

IRISH EVENING

Saturday, MARCH 12

St. Michael Angelus Center

Dinner \$3, with additional donations accepted

Tickets available at the Parish Office

PROCEEDS BENEFIT *Double Blessings*

BRING YOUR CAMERA FOR A UNIQUE PHOTO OP!

Dinner 5:30-7pm

Irish stew, Cabbage & noodles, Cole slaw, Irish soda bread,
Desserts, Beverages Children's Menu Available

Entertainment 7-9pm

Singing, Dancing and a 'Bit o' Blarney'



If you are unable to attend, but would like to make a donation, please send your donation to the Parish Office marked for the Irish Evening.