

# THE CORNERSTONE

building the City of God

Fall 2007

Saint Ladislav Roman Catholic Church

Westlake, Ohio

## Our First "Faith In Life" Recipients

The recipients of St. Ladislav parish's first annual recognition were announced at all weekend Masses on November 3 & 4. They are Don and Arlene Spence. Could we have found a more worthy presence in our community to be a Christian witness of serving God within the broader community?



Forty years ago, the Vatican II document "Gaudium et Spes" reminded us all of a central reality of our faith: Our most fundamental call as a child of God is to be a living witness to the love and kindness of God. We are asked to live our lives in such a way that (like a candle in a dark room) the light of Christ will illuminate our family, our workplace and our

community. That vision is at the heart of the Parish Pastoral Council initiative called "Faith in Life."

For the past several weeks parishioners have been invited to submit names of fellow parishioners who have impressed them by the witness of their life – not only things done at St. Ladislav parish but especially gifts shared in the context of the broader community!

We received over 50 nomination forms. The words and phrases made up a "litany" of what it means to express our "Faith in Life."

- ... compassion that extends to the littlest of God's children.
- ...is a wonderful neighbor; always ready to lend a helping hand ...and cheerful.
- ... has never abandoned helping others.
- ... a wonderful friend stepping in when problems arise... so strong in her faith.

- ... watched me for no payment when my mom was sick.
- ... talks with the young and the old and always ends to conversation promising a prayer.
- ... faith in action!
- ... there for others facing crisis, illness or tragedy. Her strong faith is a comfort.
- These may be small acts of kindness but they meant a great deal to me!
- ... not only gives of their time but also has an enthusiasm for life.
- ... manages all with great dignity and a Christian attitude.
- ... is a very ordinary couple yet they have a "holy presence."
- ...always with a smile."

As one form stated – "There are so many parishioners who need to be recognized."

The descriptions and testimonies that were presented in the nomination forms helped the committee select Don and Arlene. Besides comments similar to those listed above, some others impression of Don and Arlene's presence included...

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Building the City of God through reaching, touching, and encouraging the parish family of Saint Ladislav.

- Don is always organizing, collecting, delivering or serving those who have less thru the St Vincent de Paul.
- No one's needs seem to go unmet.
- You learn a lot from Don and Arlene just watching them work
- They attract others to become involved
- They are always working hard, friendly to everyone and totally dedicated
- They work so quietly, lovingly, compassionately and spiritually.
- [they] see a need and fill it without seeking any acknowledgement.

One parishioner summarized it nicely, "We are blessed to know and to volunteer with them."

It is the hope and prayer of the Parish Council that this annual exercise of nominating and recognizing a parishioner of St Ladislav through this "Faith in Life" award will help us focus more clearly on our role of sharing and living our Christian Faith and of shaping the world around us ever more in light of the Gospel of Christ.

- Bob Hertl



## After 10 Years as Our Pastor and 34 Years as a Priest, Father Don Snyder Shares His Experiences and Hopes for St. Ladislav



In his journey towards priesthood, Fr. Don says God put him "in the right place." He attended St. Joseph's High School near the Euclid area of Cleveland "when it was still an all-boys school." Although he did not have an "overnight calling," the priests that taught there were from the Society

of Mary, and "were very stern but nice guys, and a good example of men who commit themselves to religious life." This influence was one of many, including devoted parents and two older brothers, one of whom became a priest before him.

With many good life experiences behind him, and encouragement from many, Fr. Don recognized he had a God-given gift for working with people. He wrote for Homiletic Journals and spoke at workshops and seminars for priests all over the country for several years, and was vice president of the National Organization for Continuing Education of Roman Catholic Clergy (NOCERCC) in Chicago. He worked with Bishop Pilla as the Diocesan Director for Continuing Education for Ministers for ten years, prior to coming to St. Lads, living at the St. Joseph Christian Life Center.

What is the hardest part of being a pastor? The huge amount of paperwork associated with being an administrator is not one of his favorite tasks, so he is grateful to Deacon Dave Kinzel and other staff members assisting him, which allows time to do the things he enjoys more: in-parish ministry and "working with *people* rather than paper. Every day is different. There's never a routine day, because unexpectedly, there are interruptions God brings into

your day." He looks forward to the liturgy every morning with our community of people at mass. "It's always new, exciting and engaging – starting the day with prayer."

He loves what he does. During one of his recent homilies, he said, "When you fashion your life according to the talents and gifts God has given you, you are the happiest. Celebrate your gifts and the One Who gave them. We are touched by the spirit and transformed by the abilities we never dreamed we had. We must let go and break that fear of 'not being good enough or not having enough talent. God always provides!'"

With the shortage of religious, some priests are working beyond normal retirement age. Fr. Don explained that when a priest becomes 70 he can *ask* to retire and submit a request. But at 75, he is *required* to submit a request for retirement, which *may or may not* be approved.

Is there anything he would like to do *before* he retires? Is there an unwritten book in him? Probably, he said. But he would rather continue with what we are doing here at St. Lads, while continuing to improve the areas of worship and religious education of children.

In view of his homiletic gifts, would he consider a lecture circuit, similar to that of Fr. Larry from Pittsburgh, and/or wider media distribution of his homilies? No, his primary responsibility and interest is to his ministry and the people of St. Lads, and that would take him away from us. (Fr. Don's recorded weekly homilies are on St. Lads' web site.)

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He turns to events in Jesus' life when confronted with challenging times in his own life, as when his middle brother, an educator and priest, tragically died at age 40 in an auto accident. "People can benefit from Bible passages to give one trust and comfort."

Does he recommend a Catholic Study Bible for families to better understand the correct or truthful interpretation? "Anything that gets people to read and study the Word of God in our Catholic tradition is good. There are many Catholic commentaries which are helpful; but the Little Rock Scripture Study Bible is richer in its meaning, fuller, broader, and deeper in its understanding."

Would he be willing to have *A Night with Fr. Don* to talk about the Catholic church and its teachings with possibly a Q and A session afterwards for those who do not attend regularly or who want more information on the Catholic religion? Fr. Don's response was "YES!" The staff has seen the need to meet with inactive Catholics and those interested in a review. In addition to the Mission days scheduled for March, they have talked about a possible Retreat for both men and women, parish-based, in the spring.

He sees many signs of hope within our own parish: the continued growth of the children's Good Shepherd program; the "amazing" number of youth who have joined the WAY group and also assist in the hunger program or help with other causes "while attending to their own spirituality"; the Generations of Faith formation where everyone is involved in a life-long learning experience (he will be an active participant in this year's topic of Prayer and Spirituality); the number of people who come to worship every weekend (and find their "spot" among the 850 chairs); registering new people in our parish on an ongoing basis; and the number of parishioners who volunteer "makes me grateful they want to be part of this parish in a very real way. These members and the staff are well-equipped and gifted, so helpful to me and essential to the people – they are all signs of hope, and I look forward to a continuation of our parish's many activities and growth."

- Mary Clemens



## What Are You Doing for Advent?

Advent is our time of preparation, a time to get ready for Christmas. Can there be a better way to "make straight a way for the Lord" than to commit ourselves to pray for a fellow parishioner during the season of Advent?

How does Advent Prayer Partners work?

1) The program begins with this invitation: Are YOU Interested in participating in the Advent Prayer Program? (If you are interested - be sure to send in your form!)

2) All the parishioners who voice an interest in participating, are matched together. A letter is sent from the parish office indicating exactly who your Prayer Partner will be along with any special intention they may have noted.

3) During the season of Advent, find your own times and manner to lift up the needs of your partner in prayer. (Note of interest: Usually your Prayer Partner has a prayer partner different from you.)

4) Finally as the season comes to a close, the parish will host a "pot luck" breakfast on Sunday December 30 (the Feast of the Holy Family) when you will have a chance to meet your Partner and exchange gifts if you wish.

If you are interested all you need to do is complete the simple form printed below and return it to the Parish office. Contact the parish office if you have any questions.

Please Note: If you have already complete a form from the Generations of Faith or from the parish bulletin you do NOT need to complete the one printed below.

### Prepare the way for the Lord with an Advent Prayer Partner!

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

# in yor household \_\_\_\_\_

Special personal intention or family need..

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## It's About Life!

I have always considered myself to be strongly pro-life and have struggled with how to best support that position. Over the years I have contributed monetarily and materially, written letters to legislatures, attended walks and prayer services. Recently I began to feel like I should do more to support the unborn. In April I responded to a notice in the bulletin from the Cleveland Pregnancy Center (CPC) requesting volunteers. For six Monday evenings I attended an intense training on how to assist and mentor young women. In June I began to volunteer at the Cleveland office as a receptionist.

My experience at the CPC has been very humbling and intensely personal. The Cleveland office is located on W29th St, and the families are very needy but extremely grateful. Although I was warned at the training that many calls to the Center are from women seeking abortions, because the CPC is listed in the phone book under "Abortion Alternatives," I was still very much unprepared to deal with immediate crisis. I can only tell you that each time the phone rings; I silently pray that the Holy Spirit will give me the right words to say. I quickly realized how the CPC and similar agencies are the front-line defenders in stopping the tide of abortion. They are the answer to the often heard question, "What are pro-lifers doing to help women who are faced with an unwanted pregnancy?"

The Center sees clients, some as young as 12 years old, and assigns them to a volunteer mentor. They meet with the mentor once or twice a month. They receive spiritual, emotional, and material support. The clients earn "baby bucks" by participating in mentoring sessions, parenting classes, bible study, nutrition classes and church attendance. They redeem the baby bucks for much needed baby supplies: diapers, wipes, clothing, formula, cribs and car seats.

I am so glad that St. Ladislav and the Respect Life Committee partner with the CPC and support the activities monetarily (loose-change drive), materially (diaper and wipes drive), and spiritually (Respect Life Sunday, and prayer). The Center is always in need of these items — in addition to more volunteers. If parishioners want to help out in between drives the Center is always willing to take donations.\* We usually need onesies and socks. But every contribution is essential to the mission of supporting women during and after their pregnancy and preventing abortions in our community.

Mary Custer (440-250-9274), CPC Volunteer



*NOTE: We are in need of a parishioner willing to secure a "Baby Bootie Barrel" (or other container) for new or gently-used items, and periodically take clothing donations to the CPC office. Please leave your name and number at the office if interested.*

## Generations of Faith 2007-08

Five years! A lot can happen in five years. It was only five years ago that the staff first made the decision to shift the structure of our Religious Program from a children-only, traditional PSR program to the Faith formation, life-long model called **Generations of Faith**.

This year our focus topic is "Catholic Prayers and Spirituality." We are in the middle of the seven year topical schedule (see inset box).

Some of the highlights this year will include Praying with the Scriptures, Music in Prayer, Traditional Catholic Prayers, Devotional Prayers and Praying with Mary. Each session will be a blend of instruction, experience and formation.

Each **Generations of Faith** session is open to all Parishioners – of all ages and stages of life. We are ALL invited to continually grow in our relationship with God

and with the Church. If you are curious about **Generations of Faith** please know that you are welcome to come as a visitor. Simply contact the Parish office to inquire.

**Generations of Faith** follows a cyclic pattern of topics—repeating every seven years. Each time through the cycle we "go deeper."

Year One	Liturgy & Church Year (2004-05)
Year Two	Sacraments (05-06)
Year Three	Catholic Social Teachings (06-07)
Year Four	Prayers and Spirituality (07-08)
Year Five	Creed (08-09)
Year Six	Church History (09-10)
Year Seven	Morality (2010-2011)

## The Cornerstone Book Review “THE WORKING POOR”

A recent Plain Dealer's business section, in the issue of September 12, trumpets the headline, “More working poor,” as it describes the loss of higher-wage jobs in Northeast Ohio. The Nation's overall wealth and stock market values continue on an inexorable upward trend. St. Lad's parishioners just finished a year of reflecting on Catholic social teaching with take-home messages on individual dignity and options for the poor. It's worth our time to engage the subject from another point-of-view in the 2004 bestseller, “The Working Poor.”

My introduction to this work was when my wife told me that all incoming Case students were being asked to read this book as a summer reading assignment. A lecture by the author was held at Amasa Stone Chapel in October. The topic must pique our interest as Christians, but what more can be said?

The author, a former NY Times reporter, should not be dismissed by the “right” as a tired liberal voice. He uses personal stories to illustrate the difficult plight the working poor have in rising above their current lot in life. He spends little time looking for answers, but does a commendable job of making the situation appear on the edge of hopelessness. The barriers to achieving the American dream are chronicled – lack of higher education, a poor work ethic, drug and alcohol abuse, depression, homelessness, limited coverage (if any) in health care, personal debt, bureaucracy in government, etc. The author spares no one of the blame, including the individual.

The story of Caroline in Chapter Two tells the heart-breaking story of a young woman struggling to hold a job as life's unfair challenges confront her. We learn how difficult it is to save money, take care of oneself, and perform well as a back-office clerk when she is burdened by the emotional destructiveness of a broken family, an ill-advised marriage which doesn't last, and a weakness for the credit card. Poverty is more than a low-wage job and no health care. It is a poverty of spirit resulting in helplessness and, even more unfortunately, hopelessness.

Jesus told us that the poor will always be among us. This is not a call to inactivity, but perhaps it does bring into question the author's thesis that “nobody who works hard should be poor in America.” The problem centers on the growing service sector where those with limited technical and personal life skills are earning low wages with limited benefits.

In the final analysis, we must confront the poor among us, and how we respond to their plight on both an individual and policy level. The book offers little in the way of enlightening answers, but it poignantly tells the stories of those whom we meet each day. Can we embrace the discussion with wisdom of the challenge and compassion for people who are our neighbors?

- John C. Alfes



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## New Faces in the Parish Office

Have you had a chance to welcome to our two new parish office staff members?

Tomasita Rivera was hired in September to coordinate the parish office. She takes over the position that Linda Pavia filled since 1999. Her responsibilities include publishing our weekly bulletin, coordinating our office personnel, and overseeing the daily operations and needs of the parish office. It is a MULTI-TASKING job!



Tomasita comes to us from a professional background, working with the City of Cleveland in their Community Relations department for five years. She and her seven year old son, Kevin, are members of Our Lady of Mt Carmel parish in Cleveland.

Joining our staff as Tomasita's assistant is Therese McGreal. After thirty three years working with ATT in their dispatch department, Therese was looking for a new working environment. The parish sounded like a great fit! She was hired in July and is filling the responsibilities formerly attended by Janet Morrison who retired this past summer. Therese primarily assists the needs of the religious education programs and of course helps with the general flow of our office affairs. Therese lives in Bay Village with the younger of her two sons and is a member of St. Raphael parish.



Be sure to stop in to greet our new staff members and welcome them to the parish community!



## The Parish Construction Project: An Update

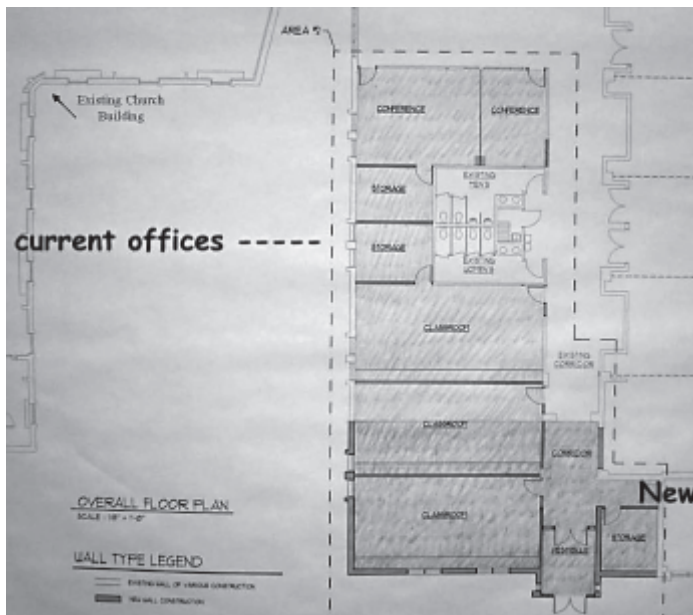
If you have driven by St Ladislav Parish during the past two months, it would have been hard not to notice the construction taking place on the parish grounds. As part of the “original” Sanctuary refurbishing project, the renovation of the parish offices and meeting spaces is finally underway. The project is fully endowed courtesy of a generous bequest from a parishioner’s estate.

Building east from the Parish Center Atrium a wing of nine office rooms is being created ( see the picture below). This area will become our parish office and will be completed first. Then as the former offices are vacated these spaces along with some new space extending off the Bassett side of the building will be converted into classrooms and conference areas. This will greatly enhance our Good Shepherd program which currently has an enrollment of 170 students, as well as Generations of Faith and other parish events.

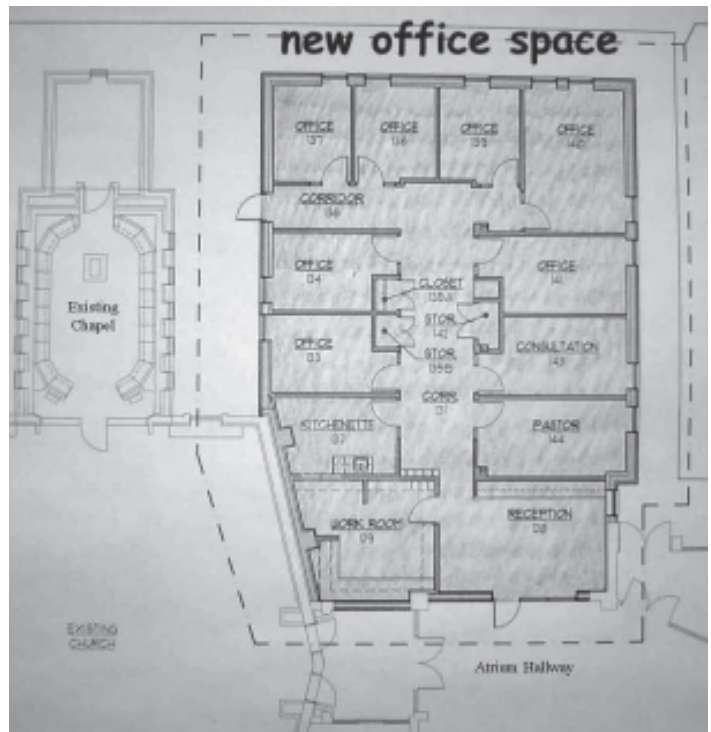
An open house for the offices will take place as soon as the move is completed. (The target date at this time is near Thanksgiving.) Similarly when the meeting areas are completed, all parishioners will be invited to tour that space as well.

If you have any questions concerning this project, feel free to contact the parish office or you may even wish to visit the parish website ([www.stlads.org](http://www.stlads.org)). Pictures of the construction are posted there every week for your benefit.

As Christmas time approaches we find ourselves again receiving many gifts – sometimes expected and sometimes unexpected. May our parish Community give thanks this Christmas for the wonderful, anonymous gift presented to the parish which has made this project possible. May it always help our parish to grow and to develop.



As It Was...



As It Will Be...

Watch for the Open House Announcement!  
See You There!





**Saint Ladislas**  
**Roman Catholic Church**  
 2345 Bassett Road  
 Westlake, OH 44145

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## Upcoming Parish Events

- |                        |   |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|------------------------|---|
| <b>Nov 25, 26 29</b>   | Generations of Faith<br>“Traditional Catholic Prayer” | <b>Dec 30</b>          | Advent Prayer Partner Breakfast                       |
| <b>Dec 2</b>           | 1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday in Advent                      | <b>Jan 20, 21, 24</b>  | Generations of Faith<br>“Catholic Devotional Prayers” |
| <b>Dec 2</b>           | Lessons in Carols                                     | <b>Jan 26 &amp; 27</b> | Parish Fair   |
| <b>Dec 16, 17, 20</b>  | Generations of Faith<br>“Praying with Music”          | <b>Feb 6</b>           | Ash Wednesday<br>(Lent begins)                        |
| <b>Dec 18</b>          | Advent Parish Penance Service                         |                        |   |
| <b>Dec 24 &amp; 25</b> | Christmas Masses                                      |                        |   |

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