

SPRING 2016

THE ASCENT

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION

ASCENSION
25
1991-2016
YEARS



CELEBRATING 25 YEARS



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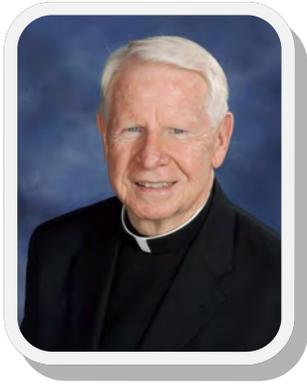
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LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

BY FR. TOM TANK



May, 2016

Dear Parishioners,

2016 is a stellar year for us as we celebrate our 25th anniversary as the Church of the Ascension! We are grateful for all those who established our parish with a strong foundation twenty-five years ago and all of you who continue to build up the Body of Christ on that foundation.

1991 really doesn't seem that long ago. That is when Father Larry Albertson, our founding pastor, and a hearty group of faith-filled pioneer parishioners began to meet for Liturgy, prayer, service and planning for the future of this community. The early days in the life of our parish were filled with a lot of wonderment and hard work as that small group of charter members joined together to establish this faith community. For five years we were nomads meeting each weekend at St. Thomas Aquinas High School, St. Thomas Episcopal Church, and a variety of other locations. Those early days brought home to everyone that a parish is not first of all buildings and facilities, but people coming together for worship, prayer, religious formation and Christian service.

Within five years we were blessed with the opening of our church and our school. While the facilities are important, the focus continued to be on building up the spiritual Body of Christ through prayer, religious education and service. Many ministries were initiated involving a large number of parishioners. The parish continued to grow requiring within a very few years with the addition of more classrooms, offices, the media center and the gymnasium. Perpetual Adoration in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel has been a mainstay of spirituality and spiritual strength for so many parishioners for almost twenty years.

Over these past twenty-five years Ascension has grown to become a flagship parish within the Archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas. We have sought not just to enjoy our blessings as a parish, but to share them with others as well. Our parish mission is to joyfully celebrate, proclaim, witness and serve JESUS CHRIST! All of our parish activities and programs are designed to help us carry out that mission ever more effectively.

We pause during this our twenty-fifth year to give thanks to God for all His blessings and to show our appreciation for all who over the years have made our parish possible through their generous stewardship as disciples of Jesus. We look forward to a bright future as we strive to become ever more fully that unique expression of the Body of Christ that we are called to be. May the Lord continue to bless our parish and all our parishioners as we now look forward to our 50th!!! God's blessings!

Fr. Tom

A GREAT TASTING EXPERIENCE

HEAVEN ON EARTH IN THE EUCHARISTIC BREAD

BY FR. ALESSANDRO

GOOD TABLE MANNERS

Why do you eat? Some times to survive, others to have strength to accomplish what you are called to do, at times to enjoy your friends' company or to be consoled... Our soul needs the same. Since **Eucharistic Adoration is an extension of the Eucharistic Presence from Holy Mass**, THE PURPOSE of Eucharistic Adoration IS LOVING JESUS BY ACKNOWLEDGING HIS REAL PRESENCE in spending time with Him in the Eucharist.

*“Jesus wants you to do more than to go to Mass on Sunday. Our communal worship at Mass must go together with our personal worship of Jesus in Eucharistic Adoration in order that **our love may be complete.**” (St. John Paul II)*



Do you want to know how to behave and how to spend fruitfully your time in Eucharistic Adoration? This is the key: always **PRESENT TO JESUS' REAL PRESENCE** and remind yourself of that.

MENU

APPETIZER: A good starter helps to *stimulate your hunger*. Recite slowly a prayer to the Holy Spirit, or one in your own words to acknowledge His Presence, or simply the prayer Jesus taught us “Our Father...”

ENTREE: what do I need to *satisfy my hungry heart*? Anything you like that **helps you to be more attentive to Your Eucharistic Lord now present in front of you**. Here are some of the favorites and most recommended dishes from the house: reading Scripture or a spiritual book; saying devotionals and other vocal prayers; reciting the Rosary; journaling*.

* These activities are like seasoning your food: too much can ruin it, too little doesn't bring out the full flavor. If at any moment, they distract you or are a deterrent to being receptive to the gift of Jesus' Real Presence, then stop and re-think what you do and how you are spending your time.

“If the heart wanders or is distracted, bring it back to the point quite gently and replace it tenderly in its Master's presence. And even if you did nothing during the whole of your hour but bring your heart back and place it again in Our Lord's presence, though it went away every time you brought it back, your hour would be very well employed.” (St. Francis of Sales)

DESSERT: There is always room for a sweet ending. Conclude your time spent with Your Eucharistic Lord with gratitude: thank Jesus for the gift of the Eucharist, for the gift of the time that you've been able to spend with Him, for the graces you received, and ask for the ability to recognize His presence in everyone and everywhere else.

A GREAT TASTING EXPERIENCE (CONTINUED) HEAVEN ON EARTH IN THE EUCHARISTIC BREAD

BY FR. ALESSANDRO

INCREASE YOUR PALATE SENSITIVITY

Grow in your knowledge of the Eucharistic Jesus. The more you know about a Person, the better you'll be able to relate to that Person and Love Him. Some great resources: Catechism of the Catholic Church, John Paul II Encyclical on the Eucharist (*Ecclesia de Eucharistia* 2003), etc.



Cultivate greater sensitivity to the Eucharistic Presence.

- a) Arrive at least 5 minutes earlier to Mass and quiet your heart from distraction and prepare to participate in Mass;
- b) Genuflect reverently acknowledging you are bowing down in front of Your King and Savior present in the tabernacle;
- c) Practice *Thanksgiving after receiving the Eucharist*, spend time thanking and loving Jesus now truly present in your heart;
- d) Practice Spiritual Communions throughout the day, going into your heart where Jesus lives in force of your Baptism.

“The Church and the world have a great need of Eucharistic worship. Jesus waits for us in this sacrament of love. Let us be generous with our time in going to meet Him in adoration and in contemplation that is full of faith and ready to make reparation for the great faults and crimes of the world by our adoration never cease.” (St. John Paul II)

Please contact Debbie Engel at:
deborasuzanne@gmail.com or 913-485-8918
to sign up for a time with Jesus.

SURPRISED BY MOTHERHOOD

BY SARAH STREITWIESER

The journey to and through motherhood has not been as I expected. At risk of further cliché, I will go ahead and add that it has been more difficult, glorious, joyful, and sorrowful than I ever would have imagined. I am surprised continually with each new stage, with my children, my circumstances, and even myself.

My doorway to motherhood was opened by unexpected infertility, with month after month of inflated want and disappointment. As a hopeful, prospective mother, I throbbed in disbelief and heartache. I began learning then as I find myself still learning today: children and family-life are born of God's will, not my own. His path always leads to purpose, fulfillment, and true happiness when I let it. However, it seems that He so rarely moves in the direction I initially would have chosen or supposed.

Over the years my hopes have blossomed into much-loved children, through the assistance of adoption and an excellent Catholic fertility doctor. With each child I have found joy beyond expression, even as I have ached with longing for another. Happiness has mixed with sorrow; fulfillment has mixed with desire, in a way I would have previously assumed contradictory. In so many ways motherhood is not singular; it is not as apparent as it is portrayed. It is better than that, and it is more difficult too.

With growing children have come more surprises: special needs, the various concerns typical to child rearing, and the should-be-obvious revelation that neither my children nor I am perfect. Each change has left me questioning my own adequacy as I search for solutions to each rising concern. In these movements I am not nearing an end or arriving at a destination, only taking one step further in my vocation, which continues to grow and evolve. With each new stride I am learning complete trust in my Lord's sufficiency, both for my circumstances and myself.



I look to Mary and find her having walked this road before me, as she now walks beside me also. I see her joyfully wrapping her Baby in swaddling clothes, foreshadowing the sorrowful grave cloths in which she will wrap Him decades later. The Son she bore in the Nativity's glory, she will also bear with beneath Calvary's cross. She is deeply happy as she follows her Son to adulthood, but her delight is tempered with the sorrows of her ever-pierced heart.

Increasingly I long to walk with Mary in her Son's birth, life, death, and resurrection. I want to accompany her in seasons of joy and sorrow, in the glorious and mundane alike. I no longer crave consolation over trial; I am learning that the two walk hand in hand.

My greatest surprise has been the happiness -- not a contrived or over-spiritualized joy, but a true, lighthearted happiness. I did not expect to *want* the choices my Lord has made for me in motherhood. I did not expect to find such genuine joy within my children or peace within myself, imperfect and incomplete as we are. Somewhere along the journey I found Christ's heart beating beneath my own, in the place I had so often longed to hear the heart of a new baby. He is both the purpose and the destination of my vocation. Truly it is He whom I long to bear in motherhood.

DADS....BE THE ICON OF GOD THE FATHER

BY KEN BILLINGER, DEACON ASPIRANT

It is said that children listen to 50% of what dads say, and watch 100% of what dads do. St. Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus, is truly the best example of how men should carry out their role as fathers. In fact, a man loves by making a gift of himself everyday to his wife and his children, just as St. Joseph did. Right now, more than any other point in history, it's time for dads to step up and fulfill their roles as the spiritual leaders of their household. Why?

By the time he turns six years old, the average boy will spend more time watching television than he will spend talking to his father over his entire earthly life! Surprisingly, those numbers are not in reference to absentee dads, meaning that simply being physically present is not enough. The importance of being involved in every aspect of a child's life is crucial, and spiritual leadership is certainly a key to the role of the father.

Numbers show that when a woman converts to Christianity, 17% of the time the whole family converts. When a man converts, 93% of the time the whole family converts! It is also no surprise that when fewer men are involved in their parishes, the pool for priestly and religious male vocations is reduced significantly. A Catholic Parish Life study shows that 70-90% of catechesis, service, and bible study activities are led by women, suggesting, "young males assume that serious religious studies are a woman's business". Men are needed for healthy, growing parishes and research shows that congregations with greater portions of men are more likely to be growing. Taking nothing away from women, it's clear to see that men are much more influential in the conversion of their families.



Malachi 4:6 says "and he will turn the hearts of fathers to their children and the hearts of children to their fathers". Fathers of St. Joseph co-founder Devin Schadt states that "God knows that when the children have their human fathers gaze, they will not only turn their gaze to the earthly father but also to their Heavenly Father". There is an inherent connection between the human father and God the Father. As human fathers, we are called to be a link between heaven and earth, likewise a link between God and his children. We are the face of the Father that our children cannot see, the touch of the Father that our children cannot feel, the voice of the Father that our children cannot hear. Schadt also goes on to say "we are an icon of God the Father to our children". He emphasizes, "fatherhood is the very foundation of society. Society goes by way of the family and the family goes by way of the father. If you want to change the world, change the father."

Want to be a better father? The Ascension Chapter of Fathers of St. Joseph meets every first and third Wednesday of the month. Come join us! Check the bulletin for more details.

REFLECTIONS ON THE GLORIOUS MYSTERIES

BY DAVE REMPEL

Following on last issue's reflections on the Sorrowful Mysteries, I discuss here a few ideas for contemplation while praying the Glorious Mysteries.



The Resurrection of Jesus from the Dead

The two dominant reactions in the gospels' accounts of Jesus's resurrection are fear and disbelief. Like the angels at the tomb, Jesus exhorted his followers to be at peace and not to feel afraid. Jesus had to show the disciples (not only Thomas) his wounds, and He rebuked them for their lack of faith. Do I truly believe without seeing, as Jesus urged? I should not feel frightened but should be at peace with the prospect of my own resurrection from the dead, made possible by Jesus's redemptive act. Like modern skeptics, the guards sought to minimize the miracle (by concocting a theft from the tomb); do I instead embrace the miraculous in my faith?

The Ascension of Jesus into Heaven

This mystery suggests two complementary themes. Jesus departed from his followers, but He first commissioned them to await the imminent empowerment by the Holy Spirit and to spread His gospel. In short, He left them (and me) work to do here on earth. At the same time, Jesus's ascension foreshadows my own possible journey to heaven. Thus, I should not prioritize earthly matters; rather, I should strive to join Jesus in paradise one day. Am I mindful of this ultimate goal in all I do?

The Descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles

After the Eleven received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, they baptized thousands, who began to meet as a true Church. I do not only worship or pray to God alone, in my own fashion, but rather I am called to do so as a part of a community. Am I serving my Church and parish as well as I can? Can I do more? The Spirit enabled the disciples to speak to the people in their own languages, so that the message of Jesus could be understood. Am I truly listening to and trying to understand God's message for me? Am I truly open to giving myself over to the Holy Spirit, to allow God to be present in every decision and every aspect of my life?

The Assumption of Mary into Heaven

The Scriptures do not contain an account of Mary's assumption, but according to the Holy Tradition of the Church, she was taken to heaven body and soul. Even more than with Jesus's Ascension, I am reminded that as a mere human, I may yet aspire, like Mary, to join God in heaven. This mystery also recalls for me Mary's *fiat* at the Annunciation and her sinlessness. I should look to Mary, holiest among us, as my example as I try to answer God's call for me and to be worthy of that call.

The Crowning of Mary as Queen of Heaven and Earth

As queen of these two realms, Mary is the ideal intercessor for me. As she has urged in multiple apparitions, I must take advantage of her unique place in Jesus's heart -- I must pray to her, especially through the rosary. Do I look to her (and to the other saints) in times of need? Can I be more like her in leading others to Jesus?

25TH ANNIVERSARY

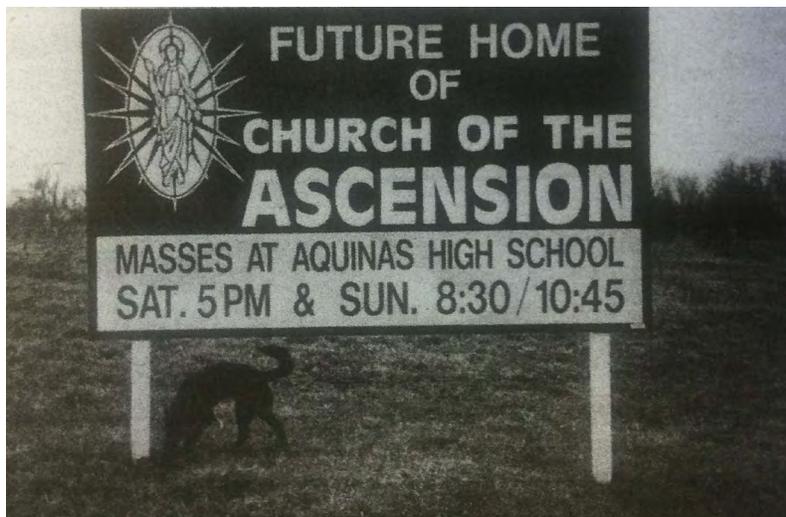
BY LIZ WILLMAN

Dear Parishioners,

On the following ten (10) pages, you will find stories and memories of current parishioners who were here in the “early days” or more commonly referred to as... the “Chair Stacking” days at Aquinas! It is our hope that these stories will give you a glimpse into the rich history of Ascension and to experience a bit of the early days for yourself! We searched the old parish directories and on some, we added their photos for a “blast from the past”!

Blessings to you all,

Liz Willman
Director of Adult Faith & RCIA



Photos submitted by John & Sally Virgo

25TH ANNIVERSARY

BY CHRISTINE SLACK

At the beginning of our Church of Ascension, we had Mass in what is now affectionately known as the catacombs of St. Thomas Aquinas, but what was in reality an honest-to-gosh, cement-floored basement. Every weekend for the first several months, we set-up folding chairs for Mass under the rafters, I-beams, and heating ducts of STA. With STA growing as quickly as Church of the Ascension, the basement was soon converted into classrooms, and Mass moved upstairs into the high school commons.



In the early days of our Church of Ascension, we hadn't yet developed the ministry structure we have today. It seemed that if you were willing, Fr. Larry Albertson considered you able. I remember driving my son up to STA for a Christmas Eve Mass because he was scheduled to be an acolyte. It was snowing heavily - we were actually in the middle of one of those blizzards the heavens gift Kansas with from time-to-time. I was a lector, though I wasn't scheduled for this particular Mass. Fr. Larry saw me walk in, and said the scheduled lector hadn't arrived, and asked if I would step in. As we prepared to walk up the aisle to the altar, Fr. Larry said that it appeared we didn't have anyone for the music, and would I please lead singing as well. After giving Fr. Larry a you've-got-to-be-kidding glance and getting no response, I told him I would try, but that he would need to tell me what songs to sing.

I was doing okay up until Communion. Fr. Larry whispered to me that I should lead "Joy to the World" during the Eucharist. Now, I was still very nervous and definitely out of my comfort zone, sort of letting my rather weak alto and the Holy Spirit guide me and the 75 other attendees who had braved the weather in song. But when Father asked me to lead "Joy to the World", I froze. My mind went absolutely blank for Christmas music. All I could think was why in the world was Father asking me to sing a Three Dog Night song at church, and what did fishies swimming in the deep blue sea have to do with Christmas. It took me several moments of profound confusion before my brain re-engaged, and I announced "Joy to the World", found on page 336. I've often wondered what that Christmas Eve Mass would have become, had we all broken out singing about Jeremiah and his bull frog.

25TH ANNIVERSARY

BY DEAN & DARCEY TENBRINK

Reflecting on the past 25 years as an Ascension parishioner brings back so many memories. My husband and I were newlyweds and beginning our faith journey as a married couple. One of our favorite memories from the early days included a very warm, sunny, summer, Sunday morning. My sister and her husband from Wichita were visiting, and we decided to attend the noon Mass. Decked out in our Sunday best, my sister and I wearing high heels, pantyhose, silk blouses and skirts and our husbands in their suit coats arrived to St.

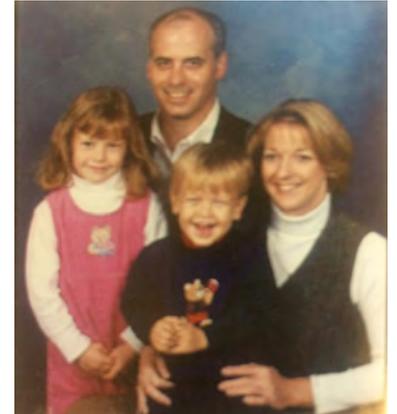


Thomas Aquinas high school. To our surprise, Mass was being held outside and we would be sitting on the metal bleachers! I remember thinking surely Mass will be shorter today! An hour later, dripping in sweat with our silk blouses sticking to us, we left the bleachers and laughed at our predicament. After that, my sister would always ask, "Is Mass going to be outside?" before packing her clothes to come visit us. This May, we are excited to not only celebrate our parish 25th anniversary, but our 25th wedding anniversary too. Church of the Ascension has been a special part of our married life, and we look forward to the next 25 years!

25TH ANNIVERSARY

BY KIM SUTTON

My husband, Dave, and I moved back to Overland Park from Philadelphia in the summer of 1991. We thought we would attend my in-laws' church, Holy Spirit, but soon learned we had moved into a brand new parish, Church of the Ascension. What a wonderful, welcoming community it was. I think meeting in the commons of St. Thomas Aquinas and stacking chairs together each Sunday morning gave us extra opportunities to chat and get to know each other. I have two special memories of these early days. It became a very special place for us when Father Larry baptized our first baby, Emily, in the chapel at Aquinas. We had a small, intimate gathering, and it was beautiful. God must have been spending quality time at Aquinas that year because this is where I decided to join the Catholic Church. I attended RCIA classes with Sister Cecilia Lenherr from Fall 1993 through Easter 1994 in the St. Thomas Aquinas classrooms. She was my mentor, my cheerleader, and my angel. What a wonderful year of my life. We met each Sunday morning at 10:00 a.m. Mass and were dismissed after the Liturgy of the Word for our meetings. Our leaders were Pat and Jim Meyer and Rita and John Laws. I will always think lovingly of these four as my godparents. What wonderful, faithful, understanding, and inspiring examples of Christ's love they were for us! On April 2, 1994 in the commons of Aquinas I was baptized, confirmed, and received my First Holy Eucharist. It was a beautiful Easter Vigil, and the commons of a high school felt like St. Peter's Basilica to me. The glowing candles lit up my new friends, family, fellow parishioners, and the Holy Spirit filled us all with His love. I love our beautiful, "new" church, but the commons of Aquinas will always hold a special place in my heart.



25TH ANNIVERSARY

BY JOHN LAWS

I served on the first parish council when the church was established in 1991, and the primary role of the council was to get the parish up and running. Father Larry moved into the current rectory, which, at that time, was 1960's vintage and had been vacant for some time. Shortly after he moved in, massive termite infestation was discovered so the parish council along with many other volunteers showed up one weekend with sledge hammers and crow bars. Most of the walls and studs were affected and some 2x4 studs were paper thin from the termite damage and the interior had to be gutted and totally remolded.

During the reconstruction, Father Larry moved into a home in Grand Oaks, at 69 Highway and College Boulevard where the parish council meetings were held. Every time I go by the rectory, I think about the contrast of its beauty and functionality today compared to its condition in 1991.

During that time, I suspect that Father Larry might have invoked a relevant scripture: Leviticus 11:20, "All the winged insects...are detestable to you."!!



25TH ANNIVERSARY

BY DEE WINTERS

For me, “stacking chairs” brings back many happy memories of the beginning of the Church of the Ascension. My husband and I took up residence in Johnson County and began attending Holy Spirit Church. At the time, Father Pflumm explained to us we would be moving to a new parish to be built in the near future south of Holy Spirit. Two years later, in 1991, as predicted, with a congregation of 500+ families, the groundbreaking for the new parish took place.

We learned Father Larry Albertson was our new pastor and the name of the parish was selected. Exciting things began to happen! Committees were forming: the Parish Council, Finance, Facility, Development, etc. were taking shape. The school was not left behind by any means. It was in the forefront from the beginning. The parish was growing. We were a young parish in many ways. Father Larry used to quip, “the average age is three years.”



Sunday Masses were held in the St. Thomas Aquinas High School Commons area where permanent seating was nonexistent. We found stacked chairs and got down to business, unstacking the chairs and making the area look more like the interior of a church. Father Larry gave direction as to how he wanted the chairs placed, where the altar would stand, and the location of the choir.

Each Sunday morning a group of us arrived early to set things in motion for the 8:30am Mass, turning the Commons into a church. It was up to those attending the last Mass to restack the chairs, thus returning the area to its former appearance.

We early birds called ourselves the “A” Team. None of us had met before and we looked forward to meeting new people plus the excitement of experiencing this new endeavor. We got acquainted, and enjoyed working together toward a common goal. Friendships developed and deepened as we became involved in numerous other parish activities, one of which was the small faith group get-togethers in our homes encouraged by Father Larry.

Over the past 25 years the parish has grown to nearly 3,000 families. The church structure has been enlarged the church interior renovated; additional parking spaces added and this only highlights a few such changes. There are five Masses on weekends, two daily Masses, one of which is a noon Mass. In addition to the Masses and Sacraments, there are a multitude of ministries and devotions for the participation of everyone, all provided for our spiritual growth. God has very much blessed us with wonderful, dedicated pastors and associated pastors. God bless them for what they do for us.

As for the “A” Team, we became dear friends. Some continue as parishioners at Ascension, other have moved to various parishes in the area or out-of-town, and some are no longer with us having passed on to their eternal reward.

This was an exciting time for many of us at the “New Parish in Overland Park” as it was commonly called at the time.



25TH ANNIVERSARY

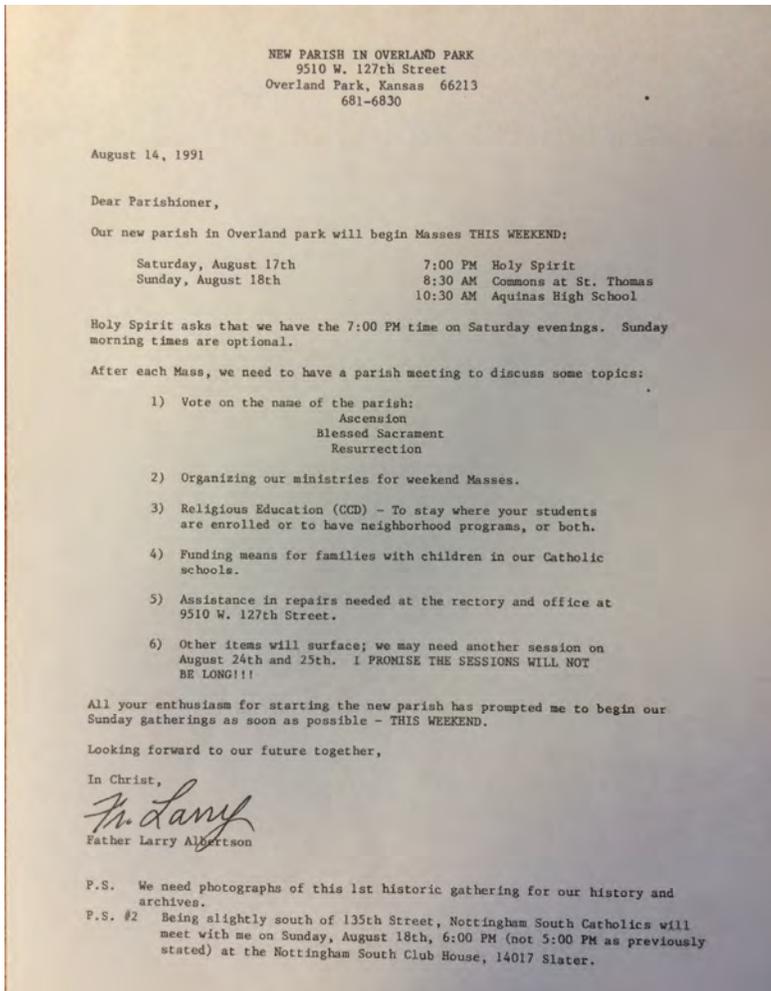
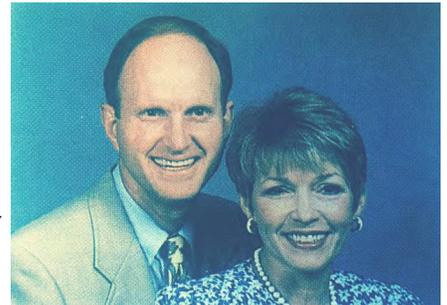
BY JOE MARTIN

The New Parish in Overland Park

That title sticks in my mind as we started with 300 families from various parishes who lived within the boundaries of the New Parish soon to be named Church of the Ascension and to be located on the present site.

Fr. Larry Albertson needed a temporary Rectory while our current Rectory was being remodeled or should we say rebuilt after the raccoons and termites did the demolition. So the parish rented a house at the corner of College Boulevard and Nieman, borrowed a box truck, and enacted our version of the “Antique Road Show”. From Holy Name rectory in Topeka to College Boulevard and Nieman, we moved antique furniture, dishes, linens, art work, a nursery worth of plants, and the railroad (yes, a miniature railroad). But wait, there’s more. Another trip to empty the garage up the alley from Holy Name and a stop to pick up furniture a parishioner was refinishing. Needless to say we filled the temporary rectory to the brim, including the garage.

We gathered for Mass in the St. Thomas Aquinas Commons where the legendary “Blue Chair Brigade” set up and took down the ever growing number of chars required as our parish grew. And we had classrooms for the SOR children which gave us a complete Sunday facility.



Not being able to use the commons for Saturday evening Mass, we discovered an unused area of the basement (it could’ve been a bomb shelter) and set up in what affectionately became known as the reverberating Mass in the Catacombs. Low concrete ceilings, solid concrete floor and wall, a real neural experience that did not last. We made the deal with St. Thomas the Apostle Episcopal Church on Antioch for the Saturday evening Mass which then became a pleasant experience and grew and grew in popularity.

The first pictorial was done at the American Family Insurance office at 87th and Quivira which folks had trouble finding so we were always behind and had to reschedule a lot, so people were upset. Somehow it worked out OK. We did the second pictorial in the Commons at St. Thomas Aquinas to make it easier to find. What a great idea, except June in the Commons, with no air conditioning, the cameras kept overheating and shutting down, so not only were we behind again, but the families got to work up a nice sweat before their photo shoot.

Although temporarily housed we were a pretty functional Church. We had Mass, SOR (Received the Mustard Seed Award), monthly food drive, social gatherings, formed a Knights of Columbus Council, completed the Rectory and the first addition to it, started the planning, fundraising and construction of our current Church and had a lot of great times.

25TH ANNIVERSARY

BY PAT HEALY

The first Ascension Church was a mail box. We built a mailbox in the shape of a Church for the Rectory. The mailbox was on 127th Street which was only two lanes at the time. Several of us had to show up at an Overland Park city council meeting to advance the expansion of 127th to four lanes. Due to city budget constraints, the Ascension section of 127th Street had been placed on a five year hold.

The rectory was the main meeting place and it did not have a garage so Father Larry asked if the Knights could build one connected to the house. Of course for those of you that know Father Larry, the garage became an extension of the house with additional meeting rooms and a second story.



Until the current Church was built we held Mass in St. Thomas Aquinas commons area. Starting around 6:00am we would set up a little over 400 chairs every Sunday morning and at the end of the last Mass we would stack the chairs 10 high and 4 deep against the back wall of the commons. That became a familiar saying 10 high and 4 deep. Most everyone knew what that meant.



One Sunday morning we knew we had to get an earlier start because the Saturday night before was St. Thomas Aquinas

Extravaganza. We arrived before the custodian and the doors to Aquinas were locked. But we were determined and by way of where the garbage was taken out we managed to find a place to get into the building. Some of us were a lot smaller then. When we got the doors unlocked we discovered a small compact car parked in the middle of the commons. The car was a grand-prize from the raffle for the Extravaganza. Apparently the winner didn't take it home that night. The car was in park and the doors locked, so the wheels did not roll. It took at least eight men to move the car from the center of the commons to the back wall. Then we continued to clean the place and set up chairs. We had the commons ready for the 8:30am Mass.



25TH ANNIVERSARY (CONTINUED)

BY PAT HEALY

We did not have an Altar or any of the necessities to host a Mass. So one Saturday Father Larry called and said he had talked with Father Charles from Cure of Ars Church. Father Charles had a few items we could use for Mass. We rented a U-Haul truck thinking we could make one quick trip and have everything moved from Cure of Ars to St. Thomas Aquinas in a couple of hours. Aquinas had not finished the basement of the school so we could store some of the furniture there and we could store the Altar in the hallway behind the stage. Again if you remember Father Larry the collector, after three U-Haul truck loads of furniture and most of Saturday, everything we needed for our first Mass and more was at Aquinas.

Remembering that the basement of Aquinas was not finished brings back another story. The first Christmas stable we built had to be mobile because we were supposed to set it up and take it apart every weekend. So the stable was built using screen door hooks as interlocking connectors to make it easy to assemble and disassemble. Fortunately we only had to do that once and school was out so we left the stable set up for the remainder of Christmas season. After Christmas we stored the stable in the basement. That summer Aquinas finished the school basement and the stable was consider just some scraps of cedar woods and was thrown away. So the following Christmas we built a second one which is still used today. It has been reinforced and the spring door locks are gone but it is the same wood.



25TH ANNIVERSARY

BY BARBARA SCHULTE

Twenty-five years ago, as we concluded the Dedication Mass, we The Church of The Ascension, sang:

“Summoned by the God who made us, rich in our diversity. Gathered in the name of Jesus, richer still in unity.

Let us bring the gifts that differ and in splendid varied ways, SING A NEW SONG INTO BEING, One in faith and love and praise.

Bring the hope of every nation, Bring the hope of every race. Weave a song of praise and peace and justice. Let it sound thru time and space.

*Draw together at one table All the human family Shape a circle ever wider And a people ever free”**

We began as a community grounded in diversity as our earliest homes were in the houses of faith and worship of our neighbor churches in Overland Park. Many of our weekend Masses were celebrated at St. Thomas the Apostle Episcopal Church. Along with that community and Holy Cross Lutheran Church, we celebrated many observances together focusing on how we are “One in faith and love and praise”. “Our gifts that differ in many and splendid ways” were the common ground of the rich experiences of Advent Evening Prayer, Celebrations of the seasons, Lenten Seder Meals and Good Friday Waiting and Watching.

IMAGINE how surprised we would have been then, to look ahead these twenty-five years to see the Pope Francis of today encouraging us to “Bring the hopes of every nation. Bring the art of every race. Weave a song of peace and justice. Let it sound through time and space”.*

As the work of planning a new home for our faith community began, we prayed at each weekend Mass:

GOD OUR FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT
BE WITH US YOUR FAITHFUL PEOPLE WHO CALL OURSELVES
CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION.
HELP US FOCUS ON AND UNDERSTAND ALL YOU CALL US TO BE.
GIVE US VISION, INSPIRE US IN LOVE, IN COOPERATION,
AND IN A TRUE SPIRIT OF STEWARDSHIP
IN OUR EFFORT TO HOUSE OUR COMMUNITY.
KEEP US MINDFUL OF WHAT IT TRULY MEANS TO BE CALLED
CHURCH.
LET US REMEMBER ALWAYS, THAT IT IS THE ASSEMBLY,
THE BODY OF CHRIST
AND IT’S ACTIONS
OF PRAYING, CELEBRATING, SHARING THE WORD AND THE TABLE OF THE LORD
THAT ARE THE INVITATION AND THE REASON
TO BUILD AND DEDICATE A HOUSE FOR OUR FAITH COMMUNITY.
LORD, LET US ALWAYS SEEK TO DO YOUR WILL AND GIVE GLORY TO YOU THROUGH THESE EFFORTS TO
GROW
AS THE CHURCH US CALL US TO BE. AMEN

Yes, 25 years of growing have us marking many reasons to celebrate being God’s people who call ourselves Church of the Ascension. We join in thanksgiving and praise for God’s many blessings and rededicate ourselves and our faith community to remembering what we prayed on Dedication Day: *“We enter into the sacred space where God dwells and find ourselves stripped of our pretenses and defenses, inextricably bound to the generations past and yet to come...In this place we come to understand our union with one another and with the very source of unending life. After each experience on this holy ground we are transformed beyond the limits of even our wildest imaginations.”***

NOW, wildly imagine a people who ourselves Church of Ascension, as we celebrate in the decades to come. Wildly imagine how we shall GROW. Wildly imagine how we sing a continually new church into being! Wildly imagine God’s continued blessings manifest in the prayers, works, and celebrations here at Church of the Ascension. Imagine the difference we shall make with God’s help and blessings! Wildly imagine.



Original key presented for Church dedication.

25TH ANNIVERSARY

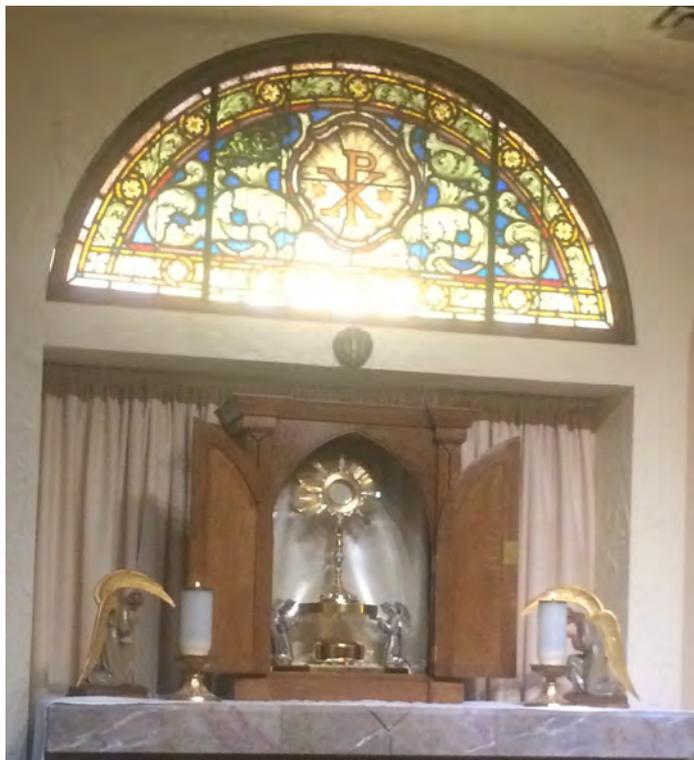
BY JOANNE ARNOLD

When we first found that there was to be a new parish in our area and our home would be in that district I was thrilled. I felt it would be a wonderful thing to have a new church to help build and be a part of establishing. I talked to Fr. Larry, the founding priest and one of the first things I asked was can we have a Perpetual Adoration Chapel. He assured me that in time we would be able to consider doing that. I asked him if we could call it "Blessed Sacrament Chapel", he said "we'll see".



Of course there was no opportunity for an Adoration Chapel as long as we were using Aquinas High School and St. Thomas Episcopal Church at 123rd and Antioch and their gathering spaces for our Masses, so we waited. When finally our beautiful new Parish was built and things were going fairly smoothly Fr. Larry invited a priest to come speak at every Mass for a weekend while he was away, about establishing Adoration at Ascension. We got a committee together to handle getting things ready and before we knew it the weekend arrived. Fr. Larry left and we were busy with signing up volunteers for 24 hours a day, seven (7) days a week adoration to see what would happen.

It was an amazing weekend, the priest was mesmerizing, he spoke eloquently about the beauty and spiritual gifts we would receive for such an undertaking. We had many people tell us they were ready to sign up for all hours of the day and night, they couldn't wait for the opportunity. As the committee came together when the weekend was over we were overwhelmed to find that we had been able to fill all 24 hours, seven (7) days a week with the exception of four spaces. Fr. Larry was shocked as he expected us to possibly start with a very limited offering of some daytime hours a few days a week.



Of course we had no place to hold adoration at that point so it was decided that we would set it up in the small room behind the statue of our Blessed Mother to the left of the altar. We had seven or eight chairs with a small monstrance and started with that. Eventually we were thrilled to learn that an anonymous donation had been made to the church for the express purpose of building a permanent Adoration Chapel on the lower level. The rest is history and our beautiful chapel continues to be a source of comfort and joy to the many parishioners who come every hour of every day to spend time in His Presence and be renewed by being there.

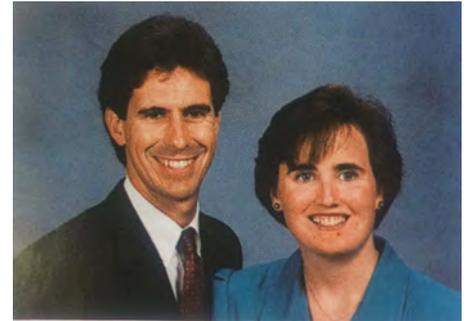
The priest who spoke that weekend turned to me as I was taking him back to the airport and said of my being the first coordinator of the chapel "this will be your purgatory on earth," but I found although it was a full-time job for a while, the experience was one of the most rewarding, beautiful things I have ever been privileged to be a part of. It would never have been possible without the overwhelming eagerness and love of all those who responded so unselfishly to the

Lord's call that weekend and in all the years that have followed.

25TH ANNIVERSARY

BY LIZ WILLMAN

Although I work on the parish staff now (this is my 14th year), that was not always the case! Twenty-five years ago, my husband Jim and I were “early parishioners”. As a young, newly married couple, we bought a lot on 131st & Switzer and built our first home. We were thrilled to hear a new Catholic Church would some day be built on 127th Street. In the meantime, Mass was being held at Aquinas High School. We have lots of great memories including Saturday night Mass in the basement of Aquinas (or as we all called it... The Catacombs!). This was before the Saturday night Mass moved to St. Thomas the Apostle on Antioch. I recall a picnic we had outside on the grounds of Aquinas after a Saturday night Mass in May of 1992. My mom had just died and my dad was visiting us from Omaha. He commented on how friendly everyone in this “new” parish was!



In the summer of 1992, Ascension wanted to have a Neighborhood Mass in each of the neighborhoods that were in the parish boundaries. The parish office (located in the Rectory) provided lists to each neighborhood of the people registered at Ascension. Jim and I volunteered to host the Mass for our neighborhood, Charleton Place. Since our neighborhood was still in the process of being built, the office did not have a list to give us. We did not know who was Catholic and who was not, so we went door to door and invited everyone to join us for Mass and a potluck dinner at our house. I guess that was our first “Evangelization” effort! Fr. Larry setup Mass in our Family Room and it was a beautiful way for a new neighborhood to come together.

In those early days, I was involved as a volunteer on the RCIA Team with Sr. Cecilia, who to this day influences the RCIA process at Ascension. I also served on the First Strategic Planning Team. I remember speaking at all the Masses one weekend at Aquinas (on behalf of our committee) and telling parishioners, “We have architect plans for the church building, but more importantly, we want to hear your ideas for the heart of the parish. What programs and ideas would you like to see?” I wonder if any of us in the Aquinas Commons that day, could have imagined the Ascension Parish we have today with the multitude of ministries, activities, and offerings.



In 1993, we welcomed our son Andrew into the world and celebrated his baptism in the Chapel at Aquinas on Father’s Day. Two years later, we celebrated Claire’s baptism during a weekend Mass in the Aquinas Commons on Mother’s Day. Although years later, my kids would graduate from Rockhurst and Sion, it always caused me to smile to think their spiritual “start” happened at Aquinas!

This past year has been a big “25th Anniversary” Year! Cottonwood Point Elementary (the neighborhood school my kids attended) celebrated theirs last spring, my husband Jim and I celebrated our 25th Wedding Anniversary last November, and now we are celebrating 25 years of Ascension! Such wonderful memories connected to them all!

A LITTLE BIT OF 1991 TRIVIA...

BY MAGGIE WRIGHT

WHERE WERE OUR PRIESTS IN 1991?

Father Tom

Was Pastor at Church of the Nativity in Leawood, Kansas and
Vocations Director and Director of Seminarians for the Archdiocese.

Father Nathan

Was a 2nd Grader at a small country school in Edwardsville, Kansas.

Father Alessandro

Was a 5th Grader at a school in Corsico (a suburb of Milan), Italy.
Father was involved in boy scouts and karate.

Religious Leaders: Pope John Paul II and Archbishop Ignatius J. Strecker



CHURCH OF THE ASCENSION FUN FACTS

- ◆ Father Larry Albertson was the first Pastor.
- ◆ Masses began the weekend of August 17-18.
7:00pm Mass at Holy Spirit
8:30am and 10:30am Masses in the Commons at St. Thomas Aquinas
- ◆ The Archbishop presented three choices in naming the new parish:
Ascension, Blessed Sacrament and Resurrection
- ◆ When the parish office opened three positions needed to be filled:
Secretary, housekeeper and bookkeeper.
- ◆ The parish office was equipped with one-line capacity on the phone system,
and a Canon 350 typewriter.

POLITICAL LEADERS

- President George H. W. Bush
- Governor Joan Finney
- Mayor Ed Eilert

1991 TOP NEWS STORIES

- World Wide Web
- Gulf War
- Recession
- AIDS
- Middle East Peace Talks

1991 TRIVIA TIDBITS

Unforgettable by Natalie Cole was most popular song
Terminator 2 most popular movie
Royals Manager was John Wathan
Chiefs Coach Marty Schottenheimer
Nintendo was very popular
Cabbage Patch Dolls were girls favorite

60 Minutes most popular TV Show
The Firm was #1 non-fiction book
Bill Snyder was K-State's Football Coach
Roy Williams was KU's Basketball Coach
Michael was #1 boy's name
Ashley was #1 girl's name

PENTECOST WORD SEARCH



ACTS

AMAZED

BIRTHDAY

BLOWING

CHURCH

FIFTY

FILLED

FIRE

FULFILLMENT

HEAR

HEAVEN

HOLY

LANGUAGE

PENTECOST

PETER

SOUND

SPEAK

SPIRIT

