

SOLEMN BLESSING OF THE ORGAN

St. Joseph Catholic Church

Strongsville, Ohio



November 17, 2019

COMMEMORATIVE PICTORIAL

“The organ expresses the beautiful feelings of the soul. There is something about an organ that reaches deep inside of us spiritually. They (the parishioners) come together as a community. And the different pipes for the organ blend together to create a sound. The organ has one purpose: to give glory to God in the service of the liturgy. Just like in our lives – we’re to give glory to God. How blessed are the souls who will hear this organ and give praise to God.” Bishop Nelson Perez

About the Organ

By Luke Massery

The journey toward this organ began approximately nine years ago. Fr. Bob Sanson had identified replacing our 1985 Allen Digital Organ as a priority. As our Rooted in Faith, Forward in Hope Campaign began, we again identified replacing the aging digital organ a priority. I began to research other digital organs. The more digital organs I saw and heard, the wearier I grew of the sound of these imitation organs and their relative costs, considering they need to be replaced every 25-30 years. We formed an Organ Replacement committee to help guide our parish's decision making, which consisted of Fr. Joe, myself and several parishioners. We all agreed that it was worth pursuing a real pipe organ due to the higher quality of sound and our belief that it expressed our parish's ongoing pursuit of excellence and pride in our building under Fr. Joe's leadership. It would be a source of inspiration that could last well into the NEXT century. After all, many of the grandest organs in the world are hundreds of years old.

I met with the owner of three nationally known organ builders. All said a pipe organ in the choir loft would be impossible. Their quotes for new organs built behind the altar ranged from \$585,000 to \$750,000. Our choir loft clearly was not designed with a pipe organ in mind. However, when I invited James Leek of Leek Pipe Organ Company in Berea, he too saw the opportunity to custom fit an organ for the loft that would compliment our space and acoustics. At \$265,000, his quote was

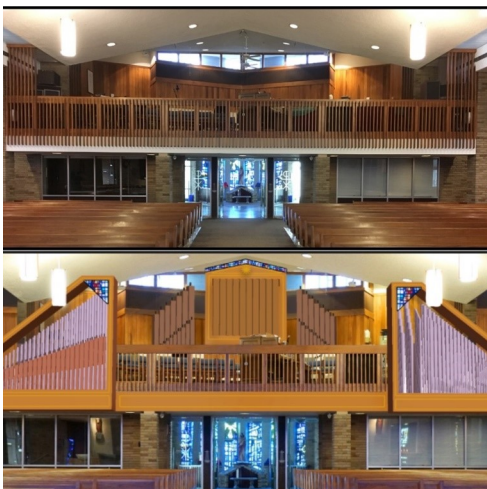
achievable a comparable to the installation of a digital organ. After a parish-wide meeting in October 2016 and the proposal was discussed, it was decided we would go forward with this plan. Most of the components of Mr. Leek's design came from an organ built by the Schantz Organ Company in 1977 and installed in First United Church of Berea, now part of the music department of Baldwin Wallace. That organ was acquired by Leek Pipe Organ Company (LPOC) and became the foundation of the St. Joseph Organ. Additional pipes came from the closed Trinity Lutheran church in Lakewood. Still more pipes were newly crafted. All of this was re-purposed and many parts components made new by LPOC. The organ also contains one set of "digital" pipes, which sound through a speaker on the wall. This is because that kind of pipe would have been up to 16 feet tall and would not have fit in our loft. Finally, while our organ represents a complete instrument, room was left for expansion and the opportunity to add four more ranks of unique pipes, if donors wish to expand the grandeur and tonal palate of our organ.

To fit it under our very low loft ceilings, Leek's creative vision was to cantilever two symmetrical portions off the front of the loft. This allowed them to sit lower than floor level and clear the ceiling, projecting sound down the nave of the church without blocking the view of the musicians. Anyone who attends our parish know this was no small feat, as the ceiling under the loft needed to be removed and steel beams place

to hold the weight. The well-designed box at the back of the loft (called a Swell Box) contains pipes that fit under the sloping ceiling and is centrally placed to project sound down the nave of the church. It contains shutters that open and close to make the music louder or softer.

Our St. Joseph Organ has 14 ranks (sets of one kind of pipe) with approximately 1,000 pipes. Organ pipes have different classifications that create different sounds. Our Pipe Organs has a range of sounds like an orchestra, from soft flutey pipes, to narrow-sounding string-like pipes, to trumpet sounds, to bells and chimes. There are large, deep bass pipes that make the ground vibrate, and tiny high pitched pipes that are no bigger than your pinkie.

The result of this creative endeavor is a beautiful new instrument to accompany our liturgies. I enjoy thinking of this instrument as a living piece of art, that breathes and sings with the same air that we breathe and sing. The craftsmanship required to build such a work of art takes a lifetime of skill and generations of tradition. There is a reason why the world was saddened by Notre Dame almost burning down this year. I believe it is because we are moved toward the Diving by beautiful (even if expensive) works of true art. It is a source of inspiration that our Parish, and you, our parishioners, helped to build this beautiful testament to our faith in God, the same way the people of France helped to build their magnificent Cathedral 800 years ago.



Grateful for all we have accomplished with God's help

Fr. Joe Mamich

Eight years ago this Tuesday [November 19], our parish community gathered with Bishop Lennon and I stood before you during my Installation as the Sixth Pastor of St. Joseph Parish. Today, we gather together again with our Bishop and celebrate another milestone in the life of our parish community. When we began this journey together eight years, I am not sure that any of us could imagine how the path would unfold in front of us, but this evening I stand before you with a grateful heart, for many things, but particularly for the life of our parish and for all that we have accomplished with God's help – all that has been, what is, and together with God's help what we can still yet accomplish...

Back eight years ago, during my initial Listening Sessions, I recall that our parish was said to be and very much wants to be “a family”. I think we have done that and are continuing to grow in that and tonight really is a family celebration of what we have achieved as a community.



So, Bishop Perez: We thank you for celebrating with us. I know today has already been a full day and it does not go unnoticed that you willingly added another event to your calendar to be with us. Thank you!

To Father Bob Sanson, my predecessor: I remain grateful for the work and community you have helped to shepherd, with God's grace, over your twenty years as

pastor. I am happy that you continue to feel welcome and a part of our community because you very much are!

In reality, being here this evening is something that you, Father Sanson, envisioned as you had the dream of a pipe organ, but not yet the ability to realize it within the context of our church space. When the Diocesan *Rooted in Faith, Forward in Hope* Campaign came knocking within the first five months of my time, the Parish Finance Council and I were able to pull out your work and identify not only the replacement of our 1985 Allen Organ, but the parking lots, boilers, and technology improvements such as phones and computer networking that could benefit from those funds. Thanks to the generosity of this community even with this “new guy” here for only a year before we completed it, we achieved 85% of our \$1.6 million goal. By the summer of 2016, work on the parking lots (remember that?!) were coming to an end, we had new phones, computers and servers, and boilers checked and good for years to come. So, we set our sights on the replacement of the organ – along with me and Luke Massery, four parishioners: Sue Haberman, Pete Cardello, Dee Downey, and Cindy Smith as representatives from both Pastoral Council and Finance Council began detailed exploration of our possibilities. After October 2016's Town Hall meeting and the Bishop's approval, we sought to get to work on this project with nearly 70% of the money already raised. Your generosity came through and raised over \$90,000 more, not only to get our base model but an expanded option that left room for future expansion plus remodeling of the loft, Cry Room and Ushers rooms. Besides getting all these projects done without assuming additional debt, we paid off our mortgage loan originally due in December 2020 over a year and a half early in April 2018. That is amazing!

It is right that today we celebrate! I am very thankful for all those who had a part in getting us to this point – to name a few: those who supported the *Rooted in Faith-Forward in Hope* Campaign, those Archangels, Seraphim, and Angel donors who contributed directly to this organ (and

are memorialized on this board), James Leek and his company for their inception, vision, and ultimate installation of this organ, Carl Fechko, one of our parishioners who perfectly stained the entire organ console, Luke Massery, our parish music director and tonight's concert organist, Dennis Crose, our facilities director and his staff, Debbie Januszewski, our office manager and her staff, Rob and Annamaria and our Art and Environment Team, our vocal choirs and greeters for their presence this evening, Mayor Tom Perciak and his wife, Debbie, for the donation and Debbie's baking of tonight's pastries and lastly, all of you for your presence this evening. Tonight would not be possible without you all.

Going forward, this organ will help support our community's prayer so that what we do here in worship and thanksgiving of God's many gifts may help us to continue growing in our love of neighbor outside these walls. Earlier, I mentioned today is a family celebration, we know that close to our parish is our extended parish family of our Sister Parish, San Jose Villanueva in El Salvador. Since 2004, we have enjoyed this partnership of prayer, support, and faith. We have gone there and they have come here. They are in the process of building their parish church and are raising funds to put in windows and doors and tile over their bare floor. Recognizing the joy that we have tonight as we have blessed this new addition to our own church, I am proud to announce that our community will contribute a gift of \$5,000 above and beyond any personal donations that our parishioners may offer to help our Sister Parish fully realize their hope of a completed church. We have been blessed to accomplish all that we have over the past decade and is a privilege to share with them from our resources to assist them in achieving their own dream!

Please stop by in the Holy Family Center after tonight's concert for some pastry and refreshments. Thank you again for all that you have done, are, and what we will continue to do together. May St. Joseph continue to guide and direct us...

