

# St. Catharine of Siena Parish Historical Anthology

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1979 – 2004

## Deacon Tom Gargan

*First Permanent Deacon of St. Catharine Church*  
1979-2002

Tom and Rose Gargan came to St. Catharine in 1950 and immediately became involved in the life of the parish. They raised two sons and were later blessed with two grandsons. During this period Tom was instrumental in founding the Dad's Club for the support of athletic activities. He also established the FRESH Fund to provide tuition aid for needy students at the parish school. Tom was the first parish DRE and first Business Manager. He served on Parish Council and played an important role in reviving the parish festival. Tom was one of fourteen men ordained to the permanent diaconate by Archbishop Bernardin on July 29, 1979. He served as parish deacon for twenty-two years before illness took his life on November 12, 2002.

Fr. Duesing, a native of Cincinnati, was ordained in 1956. That same year he began a career at Elder High School, which lasted until 1974 when he became pastor of Holy Spirit Chapel and chaplain for several area hospitals. He moved to St. Catharine's in 1981 and four years later began the church renovation project. He died unexpectedly on May 11, 1989.

## Church Renovation Project

The Church Renovation Project began in 1985. Fund Drive Phase I raised \$100,000 for the repair and cleaning of the church exterior. Fund Drive Phase II raised \$500,000 for the restoration of the church interior. Archbishop Pilarczyk presided at the blessing of the new altar and rededication of the church on November 23, 1990.

Fr. Schmitz, a native of Dayton, Ohio, assumed the role of pastor of Saint Catharine's in 1989 and completed the church renovation project a year later. In July of 1998, Fr. Robert Schmitz presided at the Mass of Thanksgiving for 75 years of worship in St. Catharine Church. Several former associate pastors of the parish concelebrated the liturgy. The church was specially decorated for the occasion. A dinner for the parish was held at Mariner's Inn after the Mass. Fr. Schmitz became pastor of St. Francis de Sales, Lebanon in 2001.

Fr. Dattilo, a native of Cincinnati, became pastor of St. Catharine's in July of 2001. A highlight for Fr. Dattilo when he was appointed pastor was experiencing the music program, which includes an adult choir, a children's choir, a contemporary ensemble, and a handbell choir.

## The Parish Painting

### *The Mystical Marriage Of St. Catharine Of Siena*

This lovely painting was a gift to St. Catharine Parish from the family of Fr. Tom Duesing. They purchased it from Mt. St. Mary's Seminary sometime around 1982. The painting's origin is unknown. It is possible that it belonged to the collection of twelve canvases given in 1823 by Cardinal Fesch, the uncle of Napoleon, to Bishop Fenwick (1822-32), founding bishop of the Cincinnati diocese. It is also possible that the painting was given to Archbishop Purcell (1833-83) during one of his frequent trips to Europe. Whatever its origin, the painting is definitely European. The proof lies in the ground layer of red paint under the oil painting itself. Italian artists used a base coat of this substance (calcium carbonate and animal glue) on a canvas before beginning their work in oil. The canvas itself is of a heavy weave with a seam down the middle, typical of those woven in eighteenth and nineteenth century Italy. The painting reflects signs of the Venetian interest in coloration and the Roman concern for accurate draftsmanship, two further indications of an Italian origin. The conservator dates the painting to the period 1750-1800.

The subject of the painting is St. Catharine's vision of her mystical union with the Lord. Christ comes from the clouds of heaven surrounded by a choir of angels while St. Catharine kneels on the firm earth emphasized by the large column to her right. She is wearing the brown robe and black veil of a Third Order Dominican. The angels bear wedding gifts. The cherub on the right holds a beautiful bouquet of lilies, the usual symbol for a virgin. Another cherub places a wedding crown of thorns on her head indicating this bride's desire to share in the suffering of her savior and spouse. A third cherub holds a sheer white wedding veil behind the mystical bride. Christ places a ring on Catharine's hand and she, in turn, presents her heart to him. The mystical marriage is now complete.

The Mystical Marriage of Saint Catharine of Siena is a unique "old masters" painting, and is probably older than the artwork found in most churches in the greater Cincinnati area.

The colors of the painting represent the pallet of the seventeenth hundreds. Manufactured paints did not exist at the time, and pigments were produced by grinding various substances by hand in the studio then mixing them with oil. In other words each artist produced his own paint with its own unique texture and shade. Of all the shades the artist mixed for this painting, the ultra marine color of Christ's robe is the most unique. At the time, it was as expensive as gold. All the colors in this painting reflect the style of artists who worked in Venice in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century.

## **Mission To Harlan, Kentucky**

Saint Catharine Parish has extended missionary support to the people of Harlan, Kentucky for several years. Each fall parishioners respond to a special appeal for school supplies, and each winter they support a collection of children's gifts at Christmas. These supplies and gifts are channeled through the local parish in Harlan, Holy Trinity. Every second or third year the parish Youth Group travels to Harlan to provide construction and clean up services for the people of the area.

## **Mission Honduras**

St. Catharine Parish has supported the missionary work of Fr. Emil Cook OFM Conv. for many years. Fr. Emil's goal is to break the cycle of poverty through prayer and education. In his words, "Give people fish and they will eat for a day; teach them to fish and they will eat for a lifetime." St. Catharine Parish has sent members of its Youth Group to Honduras in July of 2000 and 2002. These dedicated young people have helped design and install stained glass windows in St. Maximilian Kolbe High School Chapel, poured a new sidewalk for the chapel, refurbished a courtyard and worked on landscaping projects. They have also tutored the local children in English/Spanish language classes, and given catechetical instruction.

TRIUMPH (Teens relating in Unity, Mission, Prayer and Hope) is the parish's youth ministry. On a three-year rotating cycle, the young people participate in an immersion experience in Cincinnati, take a trip to Harlan, Kentucky, and travel to Honduras.

## **100 Years - 2,483 Weddings**

Frank Krollman and Magdalena Bleh were the first couple married at St. Catharine of Siena Parish. Fr. Tieken presided at their nuptial High Mass, which took place at his residence on November 11, 1903.

Henry Miller and Mary Metz were the first couple married in the original church by Fr. Tieken on February 1, 1905. This was the seventh wedding in the history of the parish. Frank Pund and Luella Hinkler were the first couple married in the new church by Fr. Tieken on July 3, 1923, two days after its dedication by Archbishop Henry Moeller. Theirs was the 143rd wedding in the history of the parish.

## **St. Catharine Pipe Organ Restoration Project**

In early March 2003 technicians from The John Paul Buzzard Organ Company of Champaign, Indiana began reinstalling the restored 1978 Schantz Pipe Organ. They manufactured and installed new solid state wiring panels for the twenty-five year old instrument. The organ console was completely updated with three new keyboards, a transposer, new pedal controls and other important items. The pipes themselves began returning later in the month. Some pipes were completely new, others had been re-voiced. The final step in the process was the installation of the new festival trumpets. The 2400+ pipes of the 44 rank instrument were heard for the first time on Easter Sunday, April 20, 2003.

## **St. Catharine Centennial Jubilee -- 2003**

The Parish Centennial Celebration began with the opening of the Jubilee Door (pictured above) on January 5, 2003, the Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord. The year-long celebration has a three fold theme: to express gratitude for the faith that has nourished our parish for the past century; to celebrate the love that sustains us as disciples in the present; and to proclaim the hope that leads us into the future as followers of Christ.

- January 5 The Epiphany of the Lord: Inauguration of the Centennial Jubilee Year with the opening of the "Jubilee Door."
- January 12 Feast of the Baptism of the Lord: recognition of all who were baptized at the parish in the past century.
- February 2 Feast of the Presentation of the Lord: Procession of children and special prayers for the Religious sisters who served the parish in the past.
- February 6 Archbishop Pilarczyk presides at Confirmation for the 8th graders.
- March 16 Three-day parish Lenten Mission with Fr. Al Bischoff SJ begins.
- April 20 Easter Sunday: Inauguration of the renovated Schantz Pipe Organ; unfurling of Centennial Jubilee Pennants on church façade.
- April 27 Refreshments on the plaza after 9:30 and 11:30 Masses.
- April 29 Feast of St. Catharine of Siena and the unveiling of the parish painting, The Mystical Marriage of St. Catharine.
- May 1 School Talent Show.
- May 4 First Communion Sunday and a pictorial display of past celebrations.

- May 16 Three-day parish festival begins.
- May 25 Refreshments on the plaza after 9:30 and 11:30 Masses.
- June 15 Trinity Sunday and farewell to Fr. Singler.
- June 22 Corpus Christi: afternoon exposition of the Blessed Sacrament and evening benediction followed by an ice cream social.
- July 4 Independence Day Mass: 100 years of religious freedom.
- July 6 The 80th Anniversary of the Dedication of St. Catharine Church, parish liturgical vessel display and parish picnic at Harvest Home Park.
- August 8 Neighborhood Block Party.
- August 10 Reunion for Religious Sisters who served St. Catharine.
- August 14 Eve of the Assumption Mass and ice cream social on the plaza.
- August 22 Opening of the 1903 cornerstone.
- September 4 St. Catharine float in Harvest Home Parade.
- September 14 Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross and the parish children receive "centennial year cross."
- September 21 Centennial Jubilee Mass of Thanksgiving, followed by a dinner/reception at The Farm, parish history displays.
- October 5 Blessing of all married couples at Sunday Mass, parish wedding history display.
- October 7 Rosary prayer service praying for the "Luminous Mysteries."
- October 12 Dedication of the parish to the protection of Mary, Marian art display throughout October.
- October 26 Music Director Rick Foegler's 25th Anniversary.
- November 2 All Souls Day: prayers for all who have been buried from St. Catharine.

- November 9 Westwood Progressive Organ Recital, including Grace Lutheran, Westwood United Methodist, St. Catharine, and Westwood First Presbyterian.
- November 12 Mass on the First Anniversary of Deacon Tom Gargan's death and blessing of the plaque commemorating his life and ministry.
- November 23 Feast of Christ the King: blessing of lay ministers and volunteers, blessing of new communion cups and plates.
- November 26 St. Catharine hosts the Westwood Community Thanksgiving Service.
- December 8 Feast of the Immaculate Conception, grade school children reseat 1903 cornerstone.
- December 25 Christmas Masses and parish Christmas tree ornament sent to all parish members.
- December 28 Feast of the Holy Family: blessing of parish families.
- January 4 The Epiphany of the Lord: The conclusion of the Parish Jubilee Year with the closing of the "Jubilee Door."