

12 July 2020

Dear St. Charles Parishioner:

Before the coronavirus-COVID 19 pandemic invaded, we had planned our 2020 Summer Carnival for Wednesday, July 8 to Sunday July 12. So, if these were healthier days, we would be wrapping up our Eighty-eighth Summer Extravaganza on this Sunday evening, after a hot and steamy week. And if the reports of the last few days are any indication, we still have a long way to go before the virus is defeated.

Thank you to all who responded to the June Raffle Mailing Number One. That was the “blue and white” sheets of tickets. So far, we have received \$51,615 in returns. The July Raffle Mailing Number Two hit the mailboxes last week. Those tickets are “ivory and pink.” If your means allow it, please purchase/sell the “ivory and pink” tickets with the money you would have spent on the Carnival grounds. Purchase/sell all four sheets and you are entered in a Spectacular Mystery Drawing in gratitude for your help and generosity.

Additional “blue and white” and “ivory and pink” tickets are available at the Parish Office. Returns can be made in the Offertory, at the Parish Office, or in the mail. The Grand Drawing will be Sunday, August 16. For each sheet sold, of any color, fill out the Seller's Appreciation Ticket and you have a chance on six more Sunday evening weekly drawings worth \$500.

June 28, Week Number One Winner: Tammy McQuillen

July 5, Week Number Two Winner: Mary Kay Kraft

True, no cotton candy, no funnel cakes, no fresh-squeezed lemonade this year, but how about some ice cream? That we can offer! Let me put in a plug for our PTU's St Charles Carnival Ice Cream Sale. It's the same Country Parlor ice cream sold on the Carnival grounds. Lots of flavors are available. Order forms can be found in the parish bulletin, at the Parish Office, or on the parish website <http://www.stcharlesonline.org>

St Charles Borromeo Parish will be one hundred years old in April 2023. We have been collecting photos and mementos from the early years. The first Carnival was held in 1932 to help pay the mortgage on the original land and buildings; it was the worst year of the Great Depression. The pastor wrote “some days we just barely made it.” It is estimated that more than one-third of the family breadwinners were out-of-work. In more than eighty years time, 1932 to 2019, the records indicate that there have been only five Carnival General Chairmen: Tom Burke, Joe Jira, Paul Phillips, Kevin Leigh, and Mike Nowak.

The first Carnivals were held on an empty lot, at the corner of Ridge and Wilber, where our church stands today. Old photos reveal that many of the booths featured home-made items: freshly-baked cakes and pies (from scratch, no doubt), afghans, and various crafts. Purchased prizes were very practical, such as lamps and kitchen cooking tools. The ladies wore “house dresses” and aprons while working the booths! From the 1930's, a home-cooked roast beef dinner was offered on Carnival Sunday. Before we had a Gym or Parish Hall, the school desks were removed from the classrooms and long tables set up, barracks-style. Mountains of mashed potatoes, fresh cooked beets and beans, plus all the fixin's, were served to an army of people. The dinners seem to have disappeared by the early 1950's.

The Carnival was canceled from 1942 to 1944, during the Second World War, because of rationing for the war effort; consumer goods were not available. By the summer of 1945, the Carnival was back. It was moved from the Wilber Avenue corner to the Charles Avenue parking lot in 1954 when construction began on our “new church.”

When I came to the parish as associate pastor in 1983, there were still a lot of Carnival veterans from the 1950's. I heard about the parakeet booth, the blanket booth, the “transistor radio” booth, and those big slabs of bacon hanging on hooks in the summer heat. One parishioner specialized in making concrete birdbaths decorated with ceramic tiles; he donated them annually for use as Carnival prizes. I saw a few of those in people's backyards many years later. I wonder if the folks living in those houses now know where their birdbath came from? In July 1969, the Carnival grounds were empty one evening; everybody stayed home to watch Neil Armstrong walk on the moon.

Carnival Grand Prize autos over the years were Chryslers, Plymouths, DeSotos, and Pontiacs. All those makes are just memories today. In 1955, an associate pastor, Father Walter Tulley, won the car and I heard he took a lot of heat about his good fortune. When Msgr Corrigan was pastor, from 1968 to 1987, he preferred a \$10,000 cash Grand Prize rather than a new car. The Carnival Committee opted to return to an automobile Grand Prize in 1987. In 1988, a

fourth-grader pulled the winner; it was her parents' ticket!

Since 1987, all Carnival proceeds have gone to the upkeep and upgrading of our parish facilities. It would take another letter, longer than this one, to detail the many projects the Carnival has paid for in the last thirty-three years. To name just a few: air conditioning in all our public places, new windows, roofs, handicap access, and conversion of neglected space to useful purposes. Carnivals 1987 to 2019 did it all. No campaigns. No special collections. Yes, a lot of hard work, but also a lot of fun and friendship while doing it.

Well, so much for our trip down Memory Lane! Here's hoping Carnival 2021 will be in better days!

Thank you for your great generosity to the parish in the July 5 Offertory: \$33,970.25 Just love those first Sundays of the month!

Josher Cadman