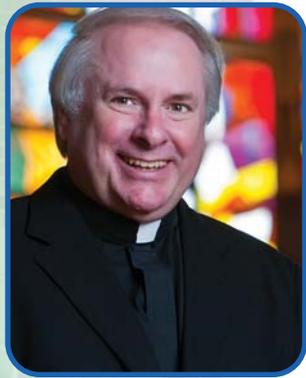


THE GIFTS OF ST. LAURENCE

Grow in Faith & Flourish in Love

My dear parish family,

We are going to build a large, beautiful Parish Life Center! After 1½ years of hard work by our Master Plan Reassessment Committee, after surveys, assessments and consultations with our Finance, Pastoral and Discipleship Councils, we are ready to move enthusiastically forward to a Capital Campaign in the Fall, and beginning of construction next June. I hope and pray that every registered family of St. Laurence will be engaged in this project through prayer and financial contributions, large or small.



We need a Parish Life Center badly, not only for our current needs but for the welfare of this parish 10, 20, 30 years from now. As we rejoiced with the new church five years ago, so when the Parish Life Center is completed in the summer of 2015, we will be so happy and grateful. It will allow us to minister effectively to our entire community from the littlest children to our senior citizens. Our 70+ ministries will have places to meet, grow in the faith, and flourish in love.

Meanwhile, we have a lot to share with you, our parishioners, about this project, as well as correcting some misinformation that may be present. For example, the project will not include a 300-seat chapel. For several reasons, that idea was not pursued, and in fact may never be. We are not in serious debt; in fact, our parish debt will be paid off in nine months. The old buildings of Williams Trace Baptist Church are woefully inadequate for our needs today. We have used them to the max for 15 years. For a long time, we knew we would need to develop this property, but other needs took precedence. Now is the time and we are ready!

We will have much more to share with you. This is a great and needed project. This facility will allow the Catholic faith to flourish in this part of the Archdiocese for years to come. Large amounts of money go out every year from this parish for every manner of charity, and will continue to do so thanks to our gracious parishioners. This Parish Life Center, which is itself a charity, will enable our Catholic faith to flourish in our turbulent times. Tens of thousands of Catholic Texans will benefit for years to come because of our vision and generosity. Please be involved and take ownership. You will be so happy you did.

Your brother in Christ,
Fr. Drew Wood, Pastor

St. Laurence Catholic Church *Centered In The Love Of Christ*

A New Evangelization

Did you know that only about 23% of U.S. Catholics attend Mass each week? The other 77% are not strangers; they are our parents, siblings, children, and friends. Blessed John Paul II and later Pope Benedict XVI called the Church to a "New Evangelization" – to proclaiming the Gospel again to those already evangelized. "We are called to invite our missing brothers and sisters **back to life in the Church** – a life in which we all experience God's love and mercy through the community of faith, nurture our spiritual lives through the sacraments and prayer, and are formed into true disciples of Christ." (*"Disciples Called to Witness – The New Evangelization," USCCB*)

Thank God someone very precious to me inspired me, through their witness, to take that next step toward Christ – a step that at the time seemed difficult, but I see now was the most important step I ever took. Now my life is so much more full of purpose, joy, and peace. I have a new family of friends in St. Laurence and in Christ. I would love to tell you my story. Stop me after Mass or call the parish office and let them know you want to get hold of me. My story is still a work in progress, but it's improving every day... and I am promised (through the grace of God) that it will never end. Perhaps you know someone who would be blessed by your story. Just think how it might change their life forever. **-By Lee Schmoe**



To read Lee's testimonial, click on the button on the home page of our parish web site at www.stlaurence.org.

Ordinary Time 2013

BETTER FOR THE EXPERIENCE

By Deanna Ennis, St. Laurence Facilities Director

One of the best experiences of my life was our last building project here at St. Laurence to expand the church. We completed that project in the summer of 2008, and I often look back on it fondly, when I think of all the wonderful people I met and had the opportunity to work with. No doubt there were hardships. Turning our school gym into a church for 52 straight weekends, including Christmas and Easter, during our "Journey to the Gym" wasn't easy. It took real commitment from many people to move chairs, set up the Altar and sound and video so our community could continue to worship together. **But I know that hard work changed us all for the better.** And we truly appreciate our expanded church.

In my nearly 10 years as a member of the parish staff, **the level of active participation by our parishioners has dramatically increased** in every facet of the life of this parish - religious education, sacrament preparation, adult education, youth ministry, and ministries of all types. There is something for everyone. Not only do we have more ministries, but more people participate in each one of them.

Several months ago I was helping the leader of a new bereavement ministry schedule a reoccurring day and place to hold meetings on our campus. We were not able to accommodate their first choice of day, and when we did settle on a day, found that we could not provide a consistent location every week. In the end, we were able to provide an assortment of rooms in Building B of the RE Center. But after several weeks, I received feedback from the leader that many of the participants were not going to be able to continue because they were physically unable to get to the second floor meeting space. **This is not the first time we have not been able to meet the facility needs of one of our parish ministries, only the most recent.** If we cannot provide a place for our ministries to provide education and fellowship, we cannot meet the needs of our parish family. It is Fr. Drew's heartfelt desire that St. Laurence be a home and safe harbor to all. Our new Parish Life Center will allow our ministries to continue to touch the lives of more people and be that safe harbor.

When we tear down the RE Center we will be going "Back to School". Although we are still working out the details, **our parish school building will serve as the home for many of our functions while our new Parish Life Center is under construction.** Once again, we will experience some hardship as a parish family and we will be called to get back to the basics for one year. We will ask every ministry to think creatively about their meeting times and spaces so we can serve as many as possible. But I do know one thing: **once again we will be better for the experience** and we will be very grateful for what we have accomplished when the project is complete. I can't wait to see what God has planned for his people here at St. Laurence!



Although our 'Journey to the Gym' is in the past, it is like the memory of a summer vacation. The parish was a big (really big!) Catholic family, piling into the family station wagon for a long road trip. (Are we there yet?) We heard great stories and sang songs along the way. We made new lifelong friends. (Are we there yet?) We took turns setting up the tent and taking it down. The simple meal with family was the best part of each week. As long as we were together, it was all an adventure. When it was over, Daddy Drew was worn out, and everyone was happy to be home again!



-Jan Bethancourt

Before the church went under construction, a call went out for ushers and set-up crew members for the "Journey to the Gym". I thought it was a good opportunity to serve in the parish, so I signed up. After we journeyed back to the church, most of us continued to serve as ushers and have formed a close-knit group of friends.

-Hal Mechler

Six years ago the people of St. Laurence, inspired by the Holy Spirit, entered into a period of patient waiting for God's plan to unfold. Week after week for one year, we set up and took down chairs, created beautiful art and environment, ran video and sound equipment, and welcomed the people of God into the humble worship space of a gymnasium. We bonded as a community by focusing on these tasks; as One Body of Christ we opened our doors for all to be fed in Word and Sacrament. The journey bore the fruit of our beautiful worship space; and the memories of the journey continue to live on in our hearts and in the new ministries of hospitality, ushers and sound.

-Laura Laine



PARISH LIFE CENTER Campaign Assessment Report

My thanks to those of you who participated in the recent campaign assessment conducted by the Steier Group, the development consulting firm we have retained to help us with the fundraising effort to construct a Parish Life Center. On June 12, they presented a Campaign Assessment Report to members of our Pastoral, Finance and Discipleship Councils; I would like to share those findings with you:

- 76% of the campaign assessment respondents are in favor of a campaign, and 79% said they would make a gift.
- Of those personally interviewed, 99% are in favor of a capital campaign and 98% said they would make a gift. Additionally, it was shared that with more information, some would consider giving even more than they had committed to the church expansion campaign in 2006.
- Ninety-six (96) respondents said they would accept a leadership position on the campaign team.
- Parish leadership is well informed of the need for a Parish Life Center; however, the balance of parishioners responding requires more details.
- Many respondents commented that more households should participate in the financial support of the parish, especially given the size of our parish.

From these statistics and additional responses to survey questions, the Steier Group recommends the following:

- Move forward with a three-year capital campaign to address the need of constructing a Parish Life Center.
- Use the next three weeks to formalize the campaign goals and acquire updated renderings to share with the parish.
- Finalize the financial plan of the project and prepare to share the information with the general parish.
- Investigate and pursue additional support through potential grants, foundations and matching gifts through employers.

What does this mean for our parish family?

- We have the solid support necessary to move forward with Phase 2 of our Facilities Master Plan to build our Parish Life Center.
- Effective immediately, we will begin to communicate the specific facilities needs of the parish, the proposed features of the new Parish Life Center, and why this effort is necessary at this particular time in our parish history.
- During the summer, we will begin to organize the structure for a campaign that will kick off in September.
- In June 2014, we will begin to build a Parish Life Center to replace the existing Religious Education Center, to meet the needs of the parish, both now and in the foreseeable future.

Once again, thank you for participating in this critical campaign preparation process. Your input is extremely valuable and will help to ensure the success of this major project for the benefit of our parish. Thank you, also, for your faith in me and the wonderful leadership of this parish working with me.

Father Drew Wood, *Pastor*



From A Religious Education Center...

1997-2000

- 6/97 Rent Wm Trace Baptist buildings
- 6/98 Purchase property for \$2.2 million
- 6/99 Weekday Children's Program opens
- 6/99 VBS moves to RE; doubles enrollment
- 10/99 Parish Bazaar moves to RE side

2000-2003

- 4/00 First Easter "overflow Masses"
- 12/00 WCP attains national accreditation
- 8/02 Fr. Drew becomes pastor
- 9/02 Tuesday Morning Bible Study begins

2003-2006

- 2/04 First Heart of Worship
- 6/04 RE Center reception area created
- 8/05 20th Anniversary Feast Day Celebration

And so we begin... in prayer, with patience and details...

In prayer – because we are centered in the love of Christ in all we do

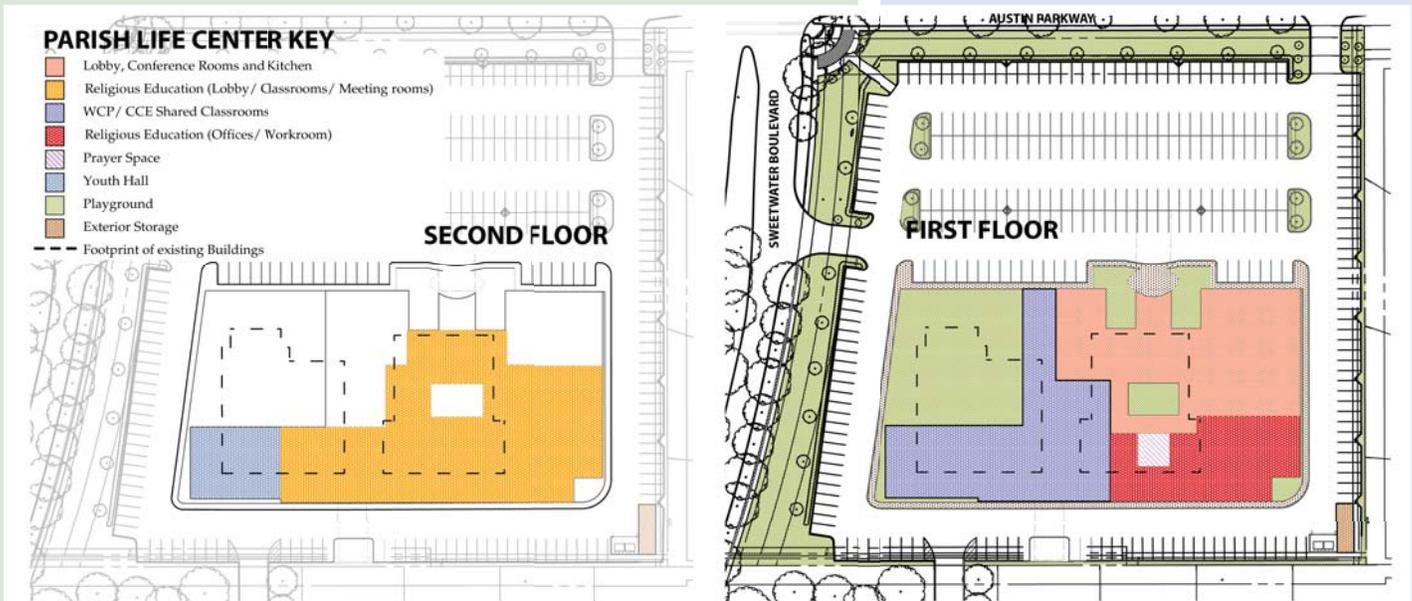
With patience – because projects this size need the understanding and support of everyone

With details – to share the facts and accurate information for informed decision making

Fifteen years ago, the property across the street from the church, currently known as the RE Center, was purchased from Williams Trace Baptist Church for the land. While the intention was always to create a center to meet our own parish's needs, we have made great use of the existing structures (Building A and Building B) which have housed not only religious education classes for children, but a wide variety of parish programs and activities.

- **Religious Education** for preschool through high school, serving 1,477
- **Weekday Children's Program** for crib through age four, serving 217
- **Youth Ministry** serving 750 in grades 6 thru 12
- **Adult Bible Studies**, serving 1,132
- **Retreats** for sacrament prep (8 retreats serving 645), high school youth (1 retreat serving 25), and adults (5 retreats serving 340)
- **Plus... numerous ministries, groups and events** that serve thousands of parishioners and visitors

What began as the RE Center has evolved into so much more for the ministry life of our parish. This is the right time in the history of our parish to move forward in creating a place for our many ministries and groups to meet, in a facility that is easily accessible for all parishioners, which allows all of us to grow in our faith and grow closer to Christ.



2006-2009

- 6/07 Clergy Office created in Bldg A
- 7/07 Reconstruction of church begins
- 10/07 First Parish Retreat held at RE Center
- 1/08 Renovated Youth Room & Kelly's Cafe
- 10/08 Learn English classes begin

2009-2012

- 1/09 First ministry leaders meeting at RE
- 1/09 RE Center adds evening reception staff
- 7/10 Created office for Spiritual Direction
- 10/11 Team formed to reassess Master Plan

2012-2015

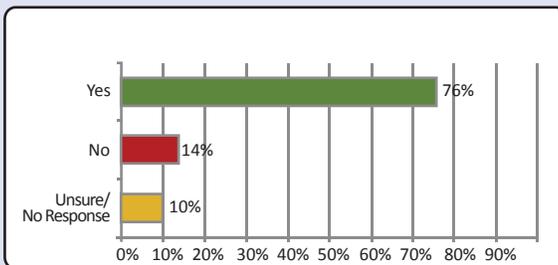
- 9/13 Parish Life Center campaign begins
- 3/14 Parish bond loan to be paid in full
- 5/14 Begin to move out of RE Center
- 6/14 Parish Life Center construction begins
- 7/15 Move into new Parish Life Center

... to a PARISH LIFE CENTER

FALL 2013: Campaign Kick-off A campaign requires strong parish support

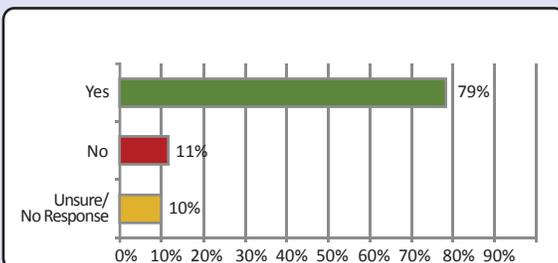
Are you personally in favor of St. Laurence Catholic Church embarking on a capital campaign?

Combined Total Responses



If a campaign is conducted by St. Laurence Catholic Church, would you make a pledge?

Combined Total Responses



A Place to Grow in Faith & Flourish in Love

Space	Existing Buildings*	Proposed Parish Life Center*
Gathering Rooms	2 - 4,800 sf	3 - 7,600 sf
Youth Room	1,100 sf	2,900 sf
Adult Meeting Rooms	4 - 1,250 sf	3 - 2,600 sf
Downstairs Classrooms & storage (WCP&CCE)	13 - 5,800 sf	15 - 9,000 sf
Upstairs Classrooms	22 - 5,000 sf	20 - 9,500 sf
Kitchen	500 sf	1,200 sf
Library	203 sf (WCP only)	2 - 1,100 sf (Parish & WCP)
Offices	11 - 1,850 sf	24 - 3,400 sf
Storage	1,200 sf	3,400 sf
Hallways, restrooms, stairs/elevator, mechanical, etc.	13,900 sf	35,100 sf
Total	35,600 sf	76,000 sf

*All square footages approximate.

LIFTING THE VEIL

By Melissa Vallejo



The predominant question that people ask me upon discovering my joining the Church is, "Why do you want to be Catholic?" There is no long or short of it. It was genuinely a natural progression. I equate it to being shown a brilliant diamond for the first time. Its luster and clarity are entrancing. They entice you to seek more diamonds, but eventually, simply possessing multiple diamonds is not enough. You seek the source, and when you find it, it's not what you imagined. The source of a diamond in its true form is dark coal. It is more organic than the superficial stone. You are touching the earth. When one probes into the history of the Church, they are led to its Catholic roots. It is organic and earthy. Just like Jesus. This is about how I lifted the veil to see the true Church. This is how I drink from the source of God's truth and not a tributary or watered down version. This is not insipid water. This is straight from the well of Jacob. I do not purport to understand all the mysteries of the Church, but I choose to accept them in the name of Jesus Christ.

Catholicism asks something of us. Not just to attend church and attempt to encounter Christ through feeling or on an emotive route through charismatic music or raucous preaching. It is beyond feeling. It is not - what can I get out of church today? It is - what can I do to serve God today? I have known many people that have left the Church with the reason of: I just didn't feel anything when I went. That is tantamount to saying: I'm not in love with my spouse anymore, so I'm going to seek a new one. The old I just don't feel it at church, let me go seek another one excuse is not feasible. You are still committed to God. You are still devoted

to His Church, just as one should be dedicated to their marriage despite the current feeling or lack thereof. To utilize the old adage love is a choice not a feeling, I choose to love God in the Church He established.

I grew up with a Protestant background, from rip-roaring Pentecostal fare to fire and brimstone Baptists to the Non-denominational open and airy vibe. I did it all, but I always felt a longing as if there had to be something more. I encountered Catholicism various times in my 33 years. They piqued my interest and roused my curiosity, but I still felt the need to follow in my family's traditions. After all, as humans we are creatures of habit and pattern. My father's death brought me closer to God, yet I still felt adrift. Then I married a cradle Catholic who could not answer my nagging questions regarding his faith, but exhibited such balance and peace and resolution, that I would look at my husband and think, "I want that." So finally after fertility issues and baptizing two beautiful babies Catholic, I came to St. Laurence. In hindsight, these moments that were life changing were all because I had to give up my concept of control. I could not command the outcome. It was up to God.

It was in that surrender that I found not only Him but His Church. It was in that submission that I joined St. Laurence. I had tried RCIA at other churches but something was not genuine about them. At St. Laurence I encountered Christ loving leaders, but they were not haughty or self righteous - just loving and patient. Thus it began. The veil slowly lifted. The questions eventually answered. I studied Church history and learned of the

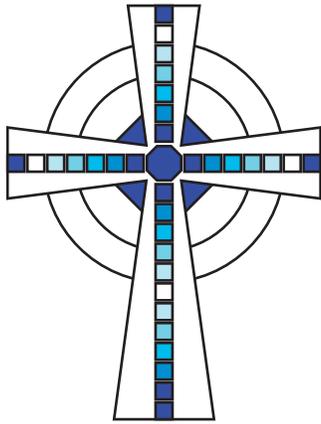
richness of our past. I examined Mary and Jesus and the apostles and how their call is also mine. I was surrounded by a loving team of leaders to direct me along the way. Yet my journey has just begun. Which gifts has God bestowed upon me to help others? How can I be a light unto this world for Christ?

After my various encounters with the Church, after my wonderful marriage to a cradle Catholic, after the miraculous births of my two beauties, did I lift the veil. I am now able to see with bright eyes the truth of the Church God established, and I am grateful to be a part of it. To this I lift the veil of ignorance and inauthenticity, so that I may love our Lord in all His glory and worship him in His almighty love and power in the Church He first established here on earth.

R.C.I.A.
Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults
BEGINS AUGUST 25

Come to an Inquiry Session!

July 14, July 21, Aug 11, Aug 18
10:30am-12:00noon
Religious Education Center,
Room A200



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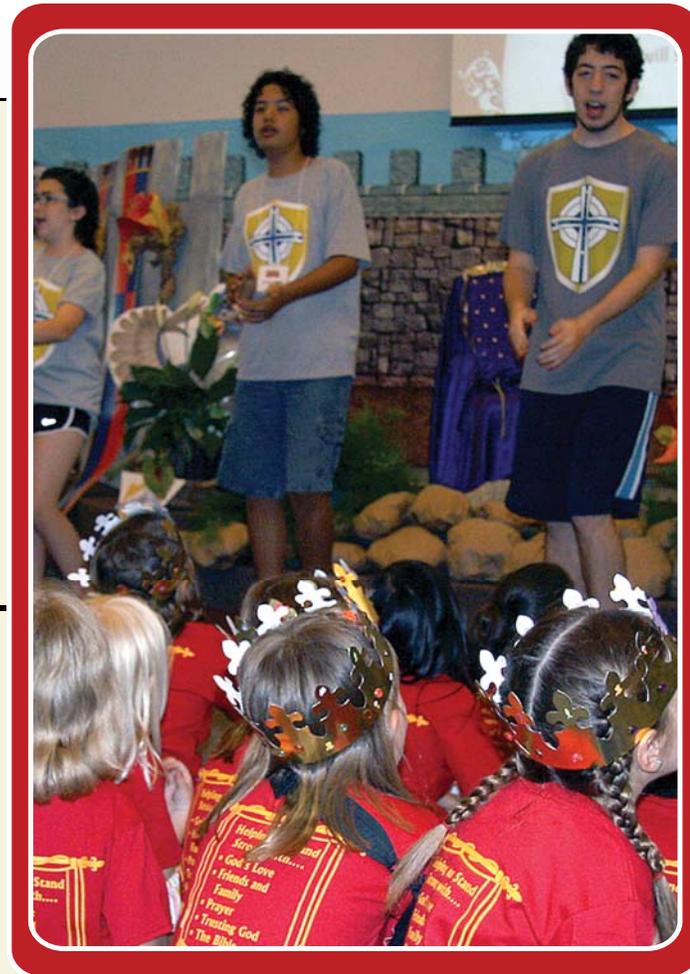
St. Laurence Catholic Church
3100 Sweetwater Blvd.
Sugar Land, TX 77479
281.980.9812
For event details see our website at www.stlaurence.org

JULY

- 3 Bible Adventure begins
- 6-7 Back-to-School Shoe Drive
- 7 July LifeNights for teens (July 7, 14, 21, 28)
- 10 Summer Salad Series for couples
- 13-14 Back-to-School Shoe Drive
- 15-17 Confirmation Retreat
- 17 Young Adult Women's Bible Study
- 17 Summer Salad Series for couples
- 19 St. Laurence Family Night
- 24 Summer Salad Series for couples
- 27 Archdiocesan Men's Day of Prayer
- 27-28 Medical Mission Drive

AUGUST

- 3-4 Medical Mission Drive
- 10 Feast Day of St. Laurence
- 19 St. Laurence Catholic School begins
- 20 Religious Education Registration deadline
- 25 RCIA begins
- 26 Financial Peace University begins
- 29 Weekday Children's Program begins
- 29 Chamber Singers Auditions for Handel's "Messiah"



MASS SCHEDULE

Daily Masses

Monday, Tuesday, Thursday
7:30 a.m. & 12:00 p.m.
Wednesday 7:30 a.m. & 6:30 p.m.
Friday 8:15 a.m. & 12:00 p.m.
Saturday 8:30 a.m.

Sunday Masses

Saturday 5:00 p.m.
Sunday 7:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m.,
11:00 a.m., 12:45 p.m., 5:00 p.m.

Misa en Español

Segundo y cuarto sábado del mes a 7:00 pm en La Capilla de la Misericordia Divina

Sacramento de Reconciliación

en Español será ofrecido antes de la misa del 6:00 pm a 6:45 pm

Reconciliation

Saturday after morning Mass
Saturday 4:00 pm to 4:45 pm
Wednesday: 5:30 pm to 6:20 pm
Mon.-Thur. after morning Mass

Archdiocese of Galveston-Houston
His Eminence Daniel Cardinal DiNardo

St. Laurence Catholic Church

Rev. Drew Wood, Pastor

Rev. Santy Kurian, M.S.F.S., Parochial Vicar
Rev. Tom Hawxhurst, Parochial Vicar

*Deacon Rey Arellano, Deacon Albert Bothe
Deacon Don Burns, Deacon Charles Plant*