

## West vestibule project slated for spring

**T**he ramp along Spring Grove Street provided a means for those in wheelchairs or who have difficulty with steps to access the church. However, decades of exposure to the rain, snow and road salt have taken their toll on the crumbling concrete.

*Vestibule continued on page 2*



The artist's rendering of the proposed west vestibule entrance.

## Estate donations help solidify parish's future

**W**eekly or monthly financial contributions to St. Francis Xavier Parish help keep the lights on, make Mass available seven days a week, and ensure priests are available to respond to those in need, among many other things.

But from time to time, large donations are made to the parish that make it possible to do a little more – from repairing the entrances to keep water from spilling into the basement to replacing crumbling steps and ramps into the church.

Over the last year, several parishioners planned ahead and left money to St. Francis Xavier Parish in their wills to be distributed when their estates were settled. These forward-thinking parishioners understood that, by including the parish in their wills, they could help ensure the continuation of the Catholic faith and tradition here in Medina long after they are gone.

This past year, for example, large donations were received from the estates of Bishop A. James Quinn, who served as pastor here from 1982 to 1984, and two parishioners.

All told, these donations amount to more than \$83,000. One bequest could distribute additional checks to the parish every year.

Edward J. Maher, a Cleveland attorney who handled Bishop Quinn's estate, says the bishop designated several gifts – “small, medium and a couple of large ones” – in his will. “That was just the kind of person he was,” Maher says. “A loving, joyful, friendly person, and giving of his heart and his soul to people.”

Bishop Quinn earned a law degree and worked in the diocesan legal affairs office. As an auxiliary bishop, he worked mostly in the western region of the diocese. After his 2008 retirement, he continued to celebrate Mass, including the St. Francis Xavier Parish 150th anniversary liturgy in May 2010.

“Your parish's sesquicentennial anniversary is a welcome window of opportunity to raise a grateful salute to the spirit of your Catholic faith that integrates the human and divine gifts that have blessed life here at St. Francis Xavier,” Bishop Quinn said then.

*Estate continued on page 2*



## Vestibule

*continued from page 1*

It didn't help when a truck accidentally backed into a corner of the base a few years ago, cracking it.

Replacing the structure would mean a future pastor would eventually be in the same boat, so Father Tony decided to explore other options. Middleburg Heights-based Zarzycki-Malik Architects Inc. has proposed – and the city's Planning Commission approved – a plan to remove the ramp and build a small addition that would include a wheelchair lift and a staircase that extends from the basement to the church.

The structure would be accessible through a door on the west end, facing the parking lot. Bob Zarzycki said the addition was designed using the original church plans so the façade would match, which the Planning Commission appreciated.

The project is in the bidding phase, with construction now planned to start right after Easter (which is April 5). "This additional time will allow us to go over the plans and drawings in more detail to make sure it's what we want," Father Tony says. "It will allow more time to create a schedule for the work that will allow the continued use of the Church for weddings, funerals, daily and weekend Masses, while the construction is progressing."

**If you would like to contribute toward this important capital improvement and repair project, please call Father Tony at 330-725-4968.**

## Estate *continued from page 1*

"May the good Lord continue to bless you and the parish abundantly. May the Son of God continue to warm your parish life so that your future remains bright, so that you continue to enfold and reach out, scattering goodness and grace like pollen that makes holy the world around you."

Bishop Quinn, 81, died in his sleep Oct. 18, 2013, the week before he was to celebrate Confirmation here at St. Francis Xavier.

Even after Bishop Quinn left our parish, he remained in close contact with several parishioners over the years. But Andrew Klimko, who died Dec. 8 at age 85, never was a "regular parishioner," according to former wife Charlene Klimko. The couple were married in 1967 and divorced 17 years later, without children, but remained friends.

"Andy did not go to church," Charlene says. "It was kind of surprising to me that he wanted to leave money to the church. He did that in honor of his parents. They, and his brother Michael who died in August, never missed going to church."

With no family members left in Medina, Andy designated a percentage of the sale of his home to be left to St. Francis Xavier, Charlene says.

Likewise, the third gentleman died at age 83 with no remaining family members. He was a lifelong Medina resident who painted houses for a living and lived modestly.

"He was a prudent investor over the years," says Medina attorney Lawrence J. Courtney, who served as trustee of the estate and asked that the deceased's name be withheld. The gentleman never married nor had any children.

All three gifts were made with no particular designation. Father Tony says the money from Bishop Quinn was used for two projects: the light poles installed this summer along the pathway in front of the school, and the seven air-conditioner units installed in second-floor classrooms in the school.

The other two gifts are helping to fund the west vestibule project (see sidebar).

"I am extremely grateful for the generosity of these people, who are helping to ensure we can continue to promote and live out the Catholic faith here in Medina," Father Tony says. "Long after they're gone, they will continue to bless future generations."



Bishop A. James Quinn was the main celebrant at our parish's 150th anniversary Mass in 2010.

Photo by Craig Webb



# If heaven is for real, what's purgatory?

## A letter from our pastor

**D**uring the days of November, as we move toward the end of the liturgical year, the scriptures for the weekend and weekday Masses turn our attention to themes of gathering in the harvest, judgment and how we will give to God an account of all that he entrusted to us in this life when we finally meet him face to face.

The month begins with the Solemnity of All Saints (not a holy day this year) and All Souls, which falls on a Sunday and takes precedence over the Mass for Ordinary time. On All Saints, we ask all our saints to pray for us. On All Souls, we pray for our beloved deceased brothers and sisters who have yet to experience the glory of heaven. Where are they? Certainly they are not in Limbo; we know where they are going – heaven, but have not yet arrived. So we pray for them to help them on their way. Purgatory is the name given that place or state for those who have died who are experiencing purification and making preparation for eternal life with God.

Some might ask that if God has forgiven us, why can't we get in right away? And that is a good question. However, being forgiven for the wrong we have done does not necessarily mean that we have been converted. Some effects of our sin remain even after we are granted the grace of forgiveness.

Imagine that you or your family members were done some sort of harm or injury by another. The hurt is something that you were not able to bear, and it resulted in harboring thoughts of vengeance, or at least a little bit of perverse joy in the suffering or ill fortune of the perpetrator. Let's say you even confessed this and were forgiven, but the well-worn habit of harboring ill will remained largely unchanged. Decades of time then passed, and the hurt faded into the deep recesses of your memory.

Then, finally, your time on Earth was complete and the Lord called you home to himself. When you meet the Lord at the pearly gates, let us say that the perpetrator stood there next to Christ to welcome you into heaven. Unfortunately, the sight of the one who did you harm causes revulsion and a refusal to enter on your part. Jesus wants to welcome you to the fullness of his Father's Kingdom, but somehow you are not ready for it because the effect of sin remains. This would be the remnant of sin that clings to us that needs to be done away with before we can experience the glory of life eternal.

The Good News is that Purgatory allows us to have this residue removed by the purifying fire of the love of God. The Catechism of the Catholic Church summarizes it this way: "All

who die in God's Grace and friendship, but still imperfectly purified, are indeed assured of their eternal salvation; but after death they undergo purification, so as to achieve the holiness necessary to enter the joy of heaven." CCC 1030

The Catechism continues, "The Church gives the name Purgatory to this final purification of the elect, which is entirely different from the punishment of the damned. The Church formulated her doctrine of the faith on Purgatory especially at the Councils of Florence and Trent. The tradition of the Church, by reference to certain texts of Scripture, speaks of a cleansing fire. "



Photo by Jennifer Webb

One of the scriptural texts that calls for praying for our beloved deceased is found in 2 Maccabees 12:46. Also in the liturgical Prayer of the Church we have always prayed for the dead in the Eucharistic Prayer of the Mass. The practice of praying for them may also be accompanied by charity to the poor, indulgences and penitential practices that would assist them in this time of purification.

So especially during this month of November, pray for your beloved who have passed on. I will be praying for not only my own family and friends, but also those who I have buried here at Church, and especially for those who helped me since I became a priest.

Peace,

*F. Tony*





# Parents roll out the red carpet for students' education

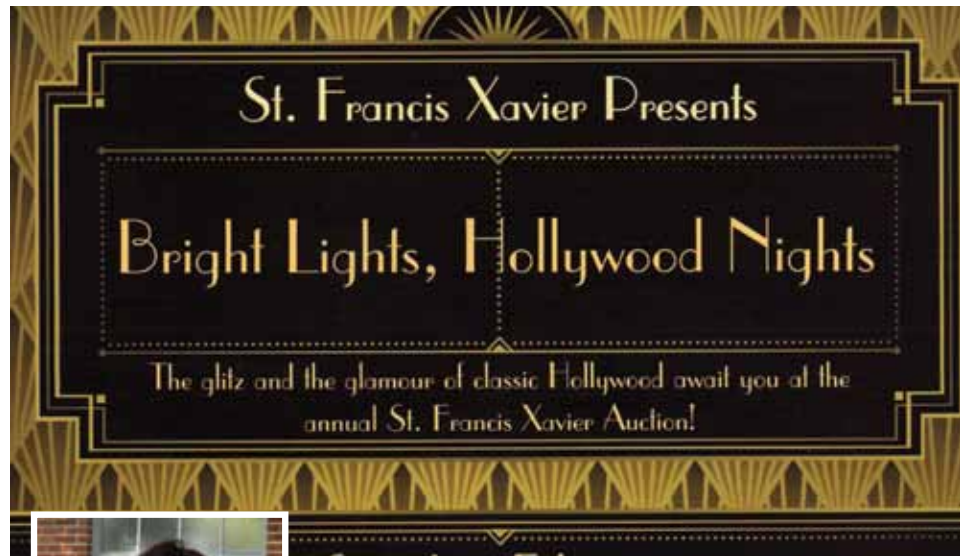
The spotlight will be on the glitz and glamour of “old Hollywood” this year for the annual St. Francis Xavier School auction.

Laura Crawford, mother of second-grader Sophia, has been busy directing this year's auction – beginning almost as soon as last year's ended. Last year she co-chaired, with Sarah Troschinetz, the Mardi Gras-themed auction that raised more than \$26,000 for the school.

Sarah stepped back to a supporting role this year to coordinate the class baskets and projects, but Laura decided to take charge. “I knew what I wanted to do for a theme, so I got started on it right away,” Laura says.

“Bright Lights, Hollywood Nights” will debut Saturday, Feb. 21, at Weymouth Country Club, 3946 Weymouth Road in Medina Township. Doors will open at 5 p.m., with chicken, fish or vegetarian options for the 6 p.m. dinner. The \$50-per-person ticket includes soft drinks, coffee and tea, a dessert bar and a photo booth. A cash bar will be available for alcohol, although a \$20 wristband entitles the wearer to unlimited beer until the keg runs out, and four wine tokens cost \$20. The wristband and tokens can be charged that night along with classroom baskets and many items available for a silent auction.

Drawing on her experience as an interior designer, Laura created the “old Hollywood”-themed materials and sent out packets for donations and sponsorships to 185 businesses this summer. She already has secured \$4,700 in sponsorships and has prepared several baskets from more than 35 donations received.



Laura Crawford, left, hopes to see you at this year's auction, which raises funds for cutting-edge programs at our parish day school.

Table decorations are nearly ready, too. She's painted

96 votive candle holders gold and tall vases will hold red flowers. “I want the whole overall look to be very glamorous,” Laura says. Thirty open-seating tables are named for Hollywood stars like Elizabeth Taylor, James Dean, Audrey Hepburn and Lucille Ball, whose images will grace the centerpieces. Movie trivia will scroll on a screen like credits.

The evening's entertainment will feature the real stars – our most talented middle school students performing in a curated, 30-minute show directed by school librarian Mindy Woll.

Other parents are helping with publicity, including Lindsay Vanover managing the auction's Facebook page (SFX Auction), Jill Clouse with program

design, Pat Kennedy in a return engagement as emcee, and Terri Lika working on the flowers. Amy Krahe also is helping in many roles, “all while she had her own auction she was finishing up,” Laura notes.

Laura, who has lived in Medina with her daughter and husband, Ben, for five years, says she has enjoyed volunteering with the auction.

“I think it's important to be involved, even for a little bit. It's my way of making a contribution,” Laura says. “I like my daughter to know I'm helping her school out. I want to give back.”

PTC president Becky Scheiman says she hopes all parents will attend the auction, as it is the organization's biggest fundraiser, now that it no longer prepares and sells the school lunches. With the money raised, the PTC grants a portion to the school, designates a portion to the endowment fund, and reserves a portion



Silver, gold and the silver screen

to fund such things as school parties, the annual COSI science-education day, distance learning programs such as the fifth-graders' popular Monserrat day, St. Nicholas Day treats, field day, playground balls and more.

"Without the auction, these things don't happen," Becky says. "The other fundraisers just don't raise enough to pay for them. We need everyone from the school and parish community, especially those whose children and grandchildren attend or graduated from the school, to support the auction through their attendance, donations and sponsorships."

Principal Bibiana Seislove says she and Father Tony will decide how to spend the \$8,000 gifted by the PTC from last year's auction. She says she is grateful to the PTC for funding the other initiatives, including a special push to promote STEM

(science, technology, engineering and math) activities in all grades.

"The auction is a great opportunity to come and support the school," she says. "It directly supports the school. All of the funds go back into the PTC's operating budget, which, through a long list of programs, comes back the school."

Many more volunteers are needed in a variety of small and bigger ways to make the auction run smoothly. Contact Laura Crawford at [lkpctoast@yahoo.com](mailto:lkpctoast@yahoo.com) or 440-724-0070 to help or make a donation.

'Like' us on Facebook – SFX Auction – for the latest auction news!

## Pets blessed on feast of St. Francis of Assisi

It was a day that went to the dogs.

The weather, which had been warm and sunny, turned cold and blustery the morning of Oct. 4, the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals and ecology. But that didn't deter about 35 people from attending the parish's annual Blessing of the Animals with their furry – and not furry – friends.

By far, dogs outnumbered the other animals blessed by Father Thom Kowatch, but there were a few hermit crabs and one chubby cat.

Wearing a stole over his fleece jacket, Father Thom blessed all the animals and their human companions and sprinkled them with holy water. Then he invited each to come forward for an individual blessing, spending a little time with each to learn the animal's name and share treats with the pets and their owners.

Maddie, Elise and Mary K. Rakytiak brought their Chihuahuas, Misty and Pumpkin. "We feel it's important they get blessed because they're special to us," Mary K. says. "They're part of our family."

Julio Esis and his 9-year-old son brought Rocky, a boxer mix puppy they rescued from a shelter in July. "We wanted him to be blessed by God," Julio says.

Father Thom says he enjoys spending time with the animals because, living at the rectory and with the demands on his time, "unfortunately, I'm not able to have any pets myself."



Tom Bush (top left), Lisa Hohman and the Rakytiak family brought their furry friends for a blessing.





# Stewardship renewal continues

By Jennifer Webb, director of ministry and communication

**T**hank you to the hundreds of parishioners who took time to discern where God is calling them to give of themselves and completed commitment cards this fall. The Matthew West song “Do Something” that ended our stewardship video is still ringing in my ears!

We received more than 600 cards on Commitment Weekend, Sept. 20-21, and more have been delivered to the parish office since then. Our staff members are busy entering the data and soon will get lists of newly interested and active members out to our ministry leaders.

The number returned is slightly higher than in years past – thank you for your participation and cooperation in this important endeavor.

The next step is for our ministry leaders to contact all of those who indicated their “interest” in a ministry.



Father Tony discusses the importance of a stewardship lifestyle.

He or she can answer questions and invite them to their next meeting. If you do NOT hear from a ministry leader,

please contact me at the parish office (330-764-8946 or [jwebb@stfrancisxavier.info](mailto:jwebb@stfrancisxavier.info)) and I will be glad to help.

You might be wondering why we go to this trouble every year. After all, if you’ve been involved in a ministry for a while, you might presume that the ministry leader “knows” your intentions.

Well, there are a few reasons. First, and most importantly, we think it’s a valuable spiritual exercise that each parishioner evaluates how he or she returns a portion of his or her gifts and talents to the Lord. We pause and reflect on where God is calling us to do a little bit more – or, perhaps in some cases, less – or redirect our journey.

Second, on a practical level, it’s helpful for the parish office to know who’s active in which ministry. This way, we can track the reach and effectiveness of ministries and look for ways to help. And, if there’s a question or need, or when inclement weather forces buildings to close, we know whom to contact. Once a bad winter storm got steadily worse through the night of a First Friday adoration, and Father Tony decided to close the church lest



Father Thom lifts the basket of commitment cards in prayer on Commitment Weekend.

anyone get stuck coming out to pray. He was able to consult the roster in our parish database to notify worshippers of the change.

Third, the exercise not only is a great way to sign up for a ministry but could also signal a graceful exit. Perhaps after years of assisting with Children’s Liturgy of the Word you’d like to become a reader at Mass instead. If you don’t check the box that you’re active with CLOW, the leader should contact you to see whether you plan to switch gears.

Keep in mind that it’s never too late to return a commitment card and join a ministry! We gratefully receive them all year long, and you needn’t feel embarrassed to be “late.” You can find them online, at [sfxmedina.com/parish/about/stewardship](http://sfxmedina.com/parish/about/stewardship), or stop by the parish offices.

You have a unique set of gifts and talents to share that are exactly what your parish family needs! Is it time for you to “do something”?



# X marked the spot for fun



**S**t. Francis Xavier School was transformed into a pirate's cove Oct. 11 for the fifth-annual parish Halloween party.

About 100 children in costume plus their parents and grandparents followed treasure maps around the school to enjoy more than a dozen games and activities with a pirate theme. One popular activity had the children – and a few parents – walking the plank over “water,” while another favorite station required participants to stick their hand into a covered, dark box of slimy, wet ... well, let's say it was spaghetti ... to pull out a rubber mouse or two.

Seniors Club members Joanne and Vic Steirer read pirate stories at another station, while Pat Taylor supervised the frosting of pumpkin-shaped cookies, complete with sprinkles. More than a dozen teenagers, including several preparing for their Oct. 24 confirmation, helped set up the event and ran stations on the school's first and second floors.

The event concluded with a hearty trick-or-treat around the Xavier Room. Ay, it be a grand afternoon for merry-makin'!



Father Thom and Seniors Club president John White confer at the registration table.



# St. Francis Xavier

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# Calendar of Events

### Nov. 7-9

Life Teen Retreat:  
“Let’s Do Something”  
Camp Cheerful, Strongsville

### Nov. 10

Veterans Day Concert  
7 p.m., Church  
(No evening Mass)

### Nov. 15

Second-grade  
First Reconciliation retreat  
11 a.m., School and Church

### Nov. 21 & 22

First Reconciliation  
7 p.m. and 11 a.m., Church

### Nov. 22

Thanksgiving Food Basket  
pickups & delivery

### Nov. 23

Knights of Columbus  
Pancake Breakfast  
9 a.m. to noon,  
Church Basement

### Nov. 27

Happy Thanksgiving!  
9 a.m. Mass,  
Church

### Nov. 28-30

SFX Thanksgiving Invitational  
basketball tournament  
Gym



## Christmas Mass Schedule:

### Christmas Eve:

4, 6:30 & 10:30 p.m. – Church  
4:30 p.m. – Medina Performing  
Arts Center

### Christmas Day:

9 & 11 a.m. – Church

### Dec. 13

Cookie Walk  
11 a.m. to 4 p.m.,  
Xavier Room

### Dec. 14

Knights of Columbus  
Pancakes with Santa  
9 a.m. to noon,  
Church Basement

### Dec. 16

Employment Network  
7 p.m., Knights of Columbus hall