

Dear Parishioners,

4/4/2024

With Spring upon us it's not hard to look around and see the good that this season is bringing our parish family. With our recent Easter bag drive for St. Vincent de Paul each church donated 300+ bags resulting in over 4,000 pounds (about 2 tons) of food and supplies! This will help nourish and fill the needs of many families in our local community. On the soccer fields at St. Vincent Ferrer our children are starting practices and gearing up for a fun season ahead with teams comprised of both AS and SVF families. These "baby steps" show what we can accomplish when we work together and share our resources.

As Archbishop Schnurr states, "Beacons of Light is a process of pastoral planning to best arrange our many resources – human, financial, physical – to pursue the God-given mission of sharing the Gospel throughout our archdiocese" (catholicaoc.org). The next big step is to determine our new name for our parish family. This replaces our temporary S-11 (family of parishes) designation from the Archdiocese. **As a reminder, the titles of each of our churches do not change. All Saints Church will remain All Saints Church and St. Vincent Ferrer Church will remain St. Vincent Ferrer Church. Both schools retain their names as well.** This new parish name will reflect our joined parish family, and give us an additional patron to pray to, look over us and help guide us on this journey of unification. A name we can use and easily refer to both churches – without preference for one or the other, or having to say both church names at every turn – quite a mouthful!

As you may have seen around town, some parish families have elected an interim name such as Uptown Catholic or Tri County Catholics. Eventually, however, all families will need to decide on a canonical parish name. This is a title named after a heavenly patron or patroness and will need to be approved by the Archbishop. This involves following strict naming parameters set by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati as well as avoiding names that have already been chosen by other parish families. To best utilize our resources, we have decided to move forward with selecting a canonical parish name and bypass selecting an interim name. After much discussion and discerning, the AS/SVF administrative team has selected four names which we would like the parish family to narrow down to one, via vote. How did we arrive at these four names? Through a series of workshops, we thoughtfully discussed all of the qualities and characteristics of our 2 churches, with the thought that in order to find a name that speaks to who we are, we need to define who we are. We then selected patrons who symbolize us while also inspiring us. The selections are:

Our Lady of Bethlehem (OLB)      St. Nicholas (SN)  
Our Lady of Nazareth (OLN)      St. Paul the Apostle (SPA)

Please see below for descriptions and rationale as to why we selected each particular patron. We hope that this will help you discern the name that best resonates with you. Once you have made your decision please vote! You can easily click on the button below to cast your ballot or, if you are more comfortable with a paper ballot, they will be available at the back of church and at both All Saints and St. Vincent Ferrer church offices. Paper ballots can be dropped in the ballot box at the back of church, deposited in the collection baskets or returned to either church's office. We ask that only the 2 head adults of each family vote, so 2 votes per household. We also ask that you vote no later than Thursday, April 18th, by midnight.

This will also be addressed at the pulpit at all masses this coming weekend, 4.6 and 4.7. This is an important step in coming together as one faith community and I ask for your participation and prayers as we move through this process together. I'm looking forward to everything that we will be able to celebrate and accomplish together in the years ahead!

In Jesus,  
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**Our Lady of Bethlehem** pays homage to Mary, mother of the Church. With this particular title we focus on the significance of Bethlehem and its meaning: House of Bread. The word Bethlehem is old Hebrew and comes from bêth (house) and lehem (bread). Bethlehem is also where Jesus Christ entered the world on that first Christmas morning. But how does Jesus describe himself later on in his ministry? “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me will never hunger, and whoever believes in me will never thirst” (John 6:35). In this passage, Jesus emphasizes that he is the nourishment, the food that we as believers need to strengthen us as we make our pilgrimage through this land of exile (Rottman, 2020). Then adding “Our Lady” to the title brings all of this full circle, paying homage to the woman who said “yes” to God. As stated by Augustin Cardinal Mayer, “She is revered as the faithful companion of the Redeemer, who, as God had planned, devoted herself with selfless generosity to her son’s mission” (*Collection of Masses*).

**Our Lady of Nazareth** also pays homage to Mary, mother of the Church. This title celebrates, in particular, the role of our Lady at Nazareth in the service of her Son and his work of salvation. As the first disciple of Jesus, our Lady “receives the message of the Gospel, treasures it in her heart, and reflects on it in her mind” (*Collection of Masses*). In saying “yes” to God she proclaimed, “All generations shall call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me” (Luke). For 2,000 years, all generations have indeed called her blessed. We call upon her for help, healing and guidance, petitioning her ceaselessly to be our mother, too, to accompany us and nurture us as she had her son (Gray, J.A.). Mary would be a wonderful role model for our new parish family. Who better than Mary to exemplify the Church and someone our parish family can look to for inspiration, as the true first disciple of her son.

**St. Nicholas** lived during the 3rd century and dedicated his life to serving God. His wealthy parents died while Nicholas was still young. Obeying Jesus’ words to “sell what you own and give the money to the poor,” Nicholas used his whole inheritance to assist the needy, the sick, and the suffering (stnicholascenter.org). He was made Bishop of Myra (now part of Turkey) while still a young man. Upon becoming bishop he is credited with saying “this dignity and this office demand different usage, in order that one should live no longer for oneself but for others” (Brockhaus, 2023). Known for his charity, he is sometimes called the “saint of generosity,” which propelled his image to popularize the modern idea of Santa Claus. St. Nicholas is also the patron saint of children. Many stories and legends have been told of St. Nicholas which help us understand his extraordinary character and why he is so beloved and revered. St. Nicholas aligns with our parish family as we are unfailingly generous and full of families with children.

**St. Paul the Apostle** • As St. Paul wrote in Galatians, “I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me” (Galatians, 2:20). Paul was the Church’s first great missionary and theologian. His letters developed and expounded Christian theology (Paul, 2023). While traveling along the road to Damascus, Paul was suddenly blinded by a great light and overcome by the presence of Jesus. He fell to the ground and heard a voice saying to him, “Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?” Obeying the voice and overall message, Saul experienced a dramatic conversion. He began to preach about Jesus and took the name of Paul as a mark of his change. Originally one of the greatest persecutors of the Church, Paul became one of her greatest defenders (Beutner, 2020). We can all relate to Paul as he was not a perfect person – far from it! His dramatic conversion proves that it’s never too late to change. He also serves as an inspiration for how we can better listen to Jesus and call others to Him as well.

Questions? Please contact Laura Martin, Director of Communications:  
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### References:

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