

The Benedictine

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Choir Loft Restoration

Although many of us do not remember it, Saint Benedict Church at one time had a choir loft. According to Mary and Anna Gavalier, long-time Parishioners, it was called the gallery. The choir was in the middle of the loft and Parishioners sat on either side. A picture of the loft was included in the Church's Centennial Book of 1950. The loft's width extended to the stained glass windows. Pipes for the organ were in the center and the facing of the woodwork was painted white.



Choir loft in Saint Benedict Church prior to removal.

According to the Church's archives researched and written by the late Cyril Stevens, the gallery was removed in 1965 by then Pastor Father Boniface Buerhle, O.S.B. At that time serious structural decay necessitated its removal.

In 2004 discussions concerning rebuilding the choir loft took place. Father Vincent learned

that Saint Emerich Church in Johnstown was to be demolished. Father Vincent spoke to our choir members, the Parish Liturgy Committee, and the Parish and Finance Councils about their interest in obtaining this loft for our Church. Everyone seemed to favor the idea. Father Vincent then took the next needed step of approaching Bishop Joseph for permission to proceed. Bishop Joseph liked the idea and consented. Father Vincent and several members of the various Parish organizations involved then went to see the loft at Saint Emerich's. After seeing the stately loft for themselves, it was decided to obtain the loft. A donation was given to Saint Emerich's for the acquisition.

The loft was carefully disassembled by the company contracted to demolish the building. Pieces of it were taken apart and labeled A, AB, BC, CD, etc. so that they could be reassembled in order. The loft was eventually transported to St. Marys, PA, to the shop of Howard Robertson. Mr. Robertson is a carpenter who specializes in restoration and woodworking. The loft was stored there until our Parish was ready to begin work on our loft.



Choir loft in the former Saint Emerich Church

Before a final design for our new loft was chosen, visits were made to several area churches to study the various layouts that we could utilize. All ideas were taken by Father Vincent to Joseph Oricko, an architect from Hollidaysburg. *(Continued on page 4)*

Holy Name Society's Parish Breakfast



Since its inception in 1922, the Holy Name Society has been a faithful contributor, financially and spiritually, to Saint Benedict Parish. The members have worked tirelessly through the years raising money for major projects and smaller ones.

One of the on-going fundraisers that the Holy Name Society sponsors is the Holy Name Society breakfast. It was started over 20 years ago and continues with a dedicated staff of volunteers. The profits through the years have been donated to the Church as various needs arose. Currently, the new Sacred Heart Annex, kitchen and choir loft have been major recipients.

The breakfast staff of volunteers work under the direction of Eugene Cunningham. Mr. Cunningham is in charge of ordering supplies, assigning tasks, keeping things organized, and overseeing the general operation. He said the workers all know what needs to be done and everybody pitches in. Some of the long-time regular workers include Charlie McGlynn, Pat Regan, Jim Kline, and George Kirsch. Other volunteers come in on various Sundays. They are always warmly welcomed. They also get help from the boys in the current Confirmation class. The boys enjoy it and come back to help even when they are not scheduled.

The breakfasts are held once a month, usually on the fourth Sunday of the month. A very good breakfast is served, featuring sausage, ham, potatoes, scrambled eggs, pancakes, coffee, toast, and orange juice. The current prices are \$5.50 for adults, \$3 for children under 12, and

free for children under five.

The breakfasts are well attended, both by Parishioners and out-of-town guests. Everyone speaks of the breakfasts very favorably and all comments are complimentary.

The volunteers are happy to be working in the new kitchen. They appreciate having much more space in which to work and, with the latest equipment, their work can be done much more quickly and efficiently.

Mr. Cunningham was happy to say the Society has very good support from both the Parish and neighboring communities. "The Parish has been really great. When you serve a good breakfast, people will come."

The Parishioners appreciate the effort and work of the Holy Name Society in helping to sustain and improve our Parish.

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BENEDICTINES

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Saint Benedict Church presents. . .

Southern Italian Odyssey plus Apulia

On May 1st a very lucky group will have departed by bus from our Saint Benedict Parish Community for one of the best selections of fully inclusive 10-day luxury tours of Italy, in conjunction with Celtic Tours of New York.

The itinerary for Day 1: USA to Italy, leaving Pittsburgh Airport via Newark for an overnight flight to Rome, Italy. Guests enjoy dinner, cocktails and breakfast on board Continental Airlines.

Of all European countries, Southern Italy is very family-oriented with an emphasis on the traditions and rituals of the Catholic Church. Tourists are witnesses to a country embracing life to the fullest. Festivals take place on any given day to celebrate a saint or the local harvest, with an emphasis on good food, clothes, art, and domestic rituals of sociability.

Upon Day 2 of their excursion, they will arrive in Rome and travel south to the stunning Riviera Ulysses and check-in at the Hotel Serapo in Gaeta. After unpacking and a welcoming orientation they will enjoy an evening dinner tasting the Latium dishes. Day 3 begins with a tour of Sperlonga — a fortress protecting the local population against invaders. Local homes are built into massive rock, which sits on a spur of land jutting out into the Tyrrhenian Sea. The group will also visit the National Museum and site of the villa of the emperor Tiberius. Taste testing at a Mozzarella Cheese Factory and a guided tour of the picturesque town of Gaeta are followed with sightseeing. Included will be a stop at the baroque church of Santissima Annunziata, dating from 1320, and the cathedral of Saint Erasmo with its Romanesque style dating from 1180. The Sanctuary of Montagna Spaccata will also be viewed. Destination for Day 4 includes a full-day excursion to Sorrento and a beautiful drive along the Amalfi Coast. The peninsula takes in the wild and rocky coastline, caves and seashore grottos toward the Bay of Naples. The breathtaking views of Positano lead to the beautiful town of Amalfi.

Day 5 begins with an early start to Puglia, formerly known as Apulia. It is the sun-drenched heel of the Italian boot regarded by northern visitors as the most rewarding part of Southern Italy and even “Italy’s best kept secret.” Travel via Alberobello, meaning “beautiful tree,” is the Capitale dei Trulli and the most beautiful and famous trulli town. On to the Grotte Di Castellana with its exciting series of caverns and brilliant crystalline formations. Accommodations for the evening will be the Hotel Federiciano in Puglia.

Already Day 6, breakfast at the hotel and then departure to the wonderful town of San Giovanni Rotondo with hopes of celebrating Mass at the tomb of holy Saint Padre Pio. A guided tour of the sanctuary follows, narrated by the fathers who knew the proclaimed saint Pio personally. Visitors will enjoy a breathtaking view and ascend Monte Sant’Angelo, which overlooks the Gargano peninsula and the Grotto of the Archangel Michael. After dinner out, tonight’s accommodations will be at the hotel Serapo in Gaeta.

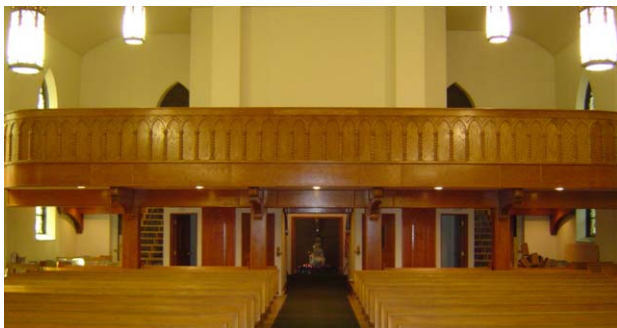
Here we are Day 7, free to relax around the hotel, visit a local market and enjoy a guided excursion to the lovely Abbey of Fossanova, famous for its unique Gothic-Cistercian architecture. Winding narrow mountainous roads lead the group to the city of Terracina to visit the Temple of Jupiter, a complex dating to 4 B.C.

After a sumptuous breakfast at the hotel, Day 8 begins with a full day guided visit to Naples and Pompeii with a visit to the archaeological excavations. Driving south, the road to Naples is lined with shops selling local specialties like Buffalo mozzarella and Neapolitan Pizza. Sitting in the shadow of

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Mr. Oricko drew up the blueprints for the carpenters and installers to follow. Like many building projects, all did not go smoothly. Problems came up and modifications had to be



Refurbished and installed woodwork on choir loft.

made. All drafts of blueprints were taken by Father Vincent to the choir, Liturgy Committee, and Parish and Finance Councils for approval.

Our Church is Gothic in design and so this style of architecture is carried out in the design of the new loft as much as possible. The loft from Saint Emerich was rather plain and dark. The embellishment of the rope columns was added and the old wood was sanded and re-stained a light red oak. The width of our Church is larger so additional new wood had to be added and integrated to match the old. The four main decorative supports, called corbels, are original. They are composed almost entirely of the antique wood from Saint Emerich.

Since our Parish had recently undertaken the costly project of restoring our stained-glass windows, the new loft was designed in such a way that it does not interfere with the windows. The new loft, unlike the original one, has rounded, front corners so that the integrity of the stained-glass windows would be maintained.

The loft is spacious. Upon completion it will be accessible from two staircases (to meet fire codes) that will be finished in wood to match the rest of the loft. The center portion of the upper-level of the loft is laid out in four tiers. The tiered design allows the voices of choir members to be projected out into the main body of the Church

with only a limited need for microphones. On the sides of the tiers, there is space for musicians and guest instrumentalists that are sometimes utilized on special occasions.

One note of interest is the ventilation. When the stained-glass windows were originally installed they opened from the bottom and the top. The windows near the choir loft, however, open only from the top to provide those cool Carrolltown breezes to the choir.

Our Parish is blessed to have one of its own members working as a contractor for this project. Dan Karlheim and fellow worker Steve Lidwell did a beautiful job with the installation of the loft. They had to carefully assemble the parts brought down from the St. Marys shop. Dan feels the loft is structurally sound and well built.

Since we are eventually going to have an organ in the loft, we needed façade organ pipes to match those in the front of the Church. The new façade pipes were from an old organ that had been replaced at Saint Vincent Archabbey in Latrobe. The pipes were in storage and were graciously donated to our Parish by Archabbot Douglas.

The pipes are merely decorative and not functional. With a lot of hard work they have been refurbished and repainted a beautiful gold color by Joseph Marana, owner of Cambria Collision, to match the existing pipes near the sanctuary. The pipes will eventually be hung along the back wall of the loft. They will serve to conceal the speakers for the new digital organ once it is purchased. Welding for the framework on which the pipes will be hung is being done by Dick and Bob Illig. These three Parishioners have donated their time and expertise to this project. The pipes will be mounted separately so that they can be removed in case there is need for repair.

To compliment the Gothic design of the Church, the pipes will be laid out in a cathedral style, similar to the style that is depicted on the top of one of our Church's stained-glass windows. A wooden base will be constructed to match the bases on which the pipes set in the front of the Church.

The flooring in the loft will be carpeting and will be the same *(Continued on page 7)*

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Mount Vesuvius, and beyond Naples, is the city of Pompeii. An after dinner a drive treats them to a panoramic view of the magnificent sweep of the Bay of Naples and, in the distance, Capri.

An early breakfast and the start of Day 9 includes a day trip to Rome to attend the Papal Audience. After lunch, a guided tour to visit Saint Peter's Basilica to see the "Pieta" by Michelangelo. The day also includes a transfer back to the hotel in Rome, with free time for shopping or enjoying a walking tour of the Roman Square, Pantheon and Trevi Fountain. Too soon, an authentic farewell dinner has ended at a local restaurant and our tired but happy group spends the night at the Hotel Mercure Piazza Bologna in Rome.

The last day of this fabulous vacation, May 10, Day 10, includes a transfer to Rome's Leonardo da Vinci airport for the return flight home, all in the same day!

This awesome trip and the many others enjoyed by our Parishioners are open to others as well. Once someone has traveled with Saint Benedict's Parish and has realized the value of these trips, word spreads quickly to extended family and friends. We have had travel guests from as far away as New Jersey, Ohio and Florida joining in on the fun and sharing in the camaraderie of the various adventures.

Beginning with our first trip in the year 2000 to Europe, followed by a Caribbean cruise, an Alaskan cruise, trip to the Mexican Riviera, Ireland, and now Italy, they are advertised in our Church bulletin. Open first to our Parishioners and then others, as seats are limited, all ages, teen through eighty years young, can enjoy the benefits of traveling in a group. All trips are customized by Celtic Tours to meet our needs, and are spiritually lead by Father Vincent. They often include a religious aspect, Basilicas, Monasteries and daily Mass. (How fitting that the first trip followed the steps of Saint Benedict throughout Europe.) The flexible relaxed atmosphere inspired by Celtic Tours does an excellent job of providing everyone a common ground on which to share their experiences and grow relationships of friendship that last throughout the years. Through the added security of traveling with a group of trained, talented and experienced personnel, you can enjoy the scenic pleasures with organized activities and yet embrace solitary moments of solace. The attraction of bargain priced vacationing adds to the allure for many. Guests can unwind knowing they are in good hands. The exhilarating trips of Saint Benedict encourage future fantastic journeys with friends and family.

At a cost of \$2799 per person (double occupancy), this Italy trip included round trip bus

from Carrolltown to Pittsburgh, round trip airfare from Pittsburgh to Rome, 8 nights accommodations at first class hotels, breakfast daily, and 8 dinners. The savings are many, as the cost of the trip has been determined by negotiating group rates for everything from the cuisine, to shuttle services, to airfare, to hotel accommodations, to English speaking tour guides, and to the entrance fees for various stops along the way.

Proceeds from the trips benefit the Parish by providing income for our Handicapped Accessibility Fund. As more people sign-up for the tours, the Celtic company contributes money back to Saint Benedict Parish. It is the perfect way to experience the best of affordable vacations and countless ways to remember money well spent time and time again.

Parishioners who have traveled in the past include: Mrs. Pauline Bender, Mrs. Carol Bell, Mrs. Elaine Vescovi, Mr. and Mrs. Leroy Hoover, Mrs. Bernadine Lauer, Mrs. Bernadette Himmel, and Mr. and Mrs. Harry Vargo. Ask them and they will tell you of their recommendations and experiences while traveling with the Parish. Through the capable hands of Nancy Vargo, tour co-coordinator, our Parish has opened a door for people who may be limited in their travel options and now can journey to distant lands hassle free.

Saint Benedict Church Bingo



For over 40 years, Saint Benedict Church has had bingo on Tuesday evenings. Early bird games start at 6:30, the regular games follow.

Tom and Regina Kline took over managing the bingo in June of 2000 after Mary Jane Westrick and Ida Pecenak retired. Mary Jane and Ida had volunteered their time for 25 years. The bingo committee consists of Tom, Regina, Betty Glass, Charlie McGlynn, and Mary Fabert. Charlies McGlynn and Justine Kaelin are the current bingo callers. There are two paid workers each week who sell specials, call back the bingos, give out door prizes, and help clean up when bingo is over. In 2003 we switched from hardboard cards and chips to all paper and ink dabbers. It was much easier and players did not have to worry about knocking their chips off.

We have a \$12 and \$15 admission package with 20 regular games. There are early bird games, Circle 7, Inside Edge, Block of 9, Super Straight, Coverall, Jackpot, and 'Winner Take All Specials.' The Circle 7 and Coverall are based on winning within a specified number. If no one wins, then one number and more money are added for the following week. The other three specials pay 75% of that special sold. A kitty stamp is also available. Our motto is "The more that play the more we pay." Our regular games usually pay \$30. Many times we paid \$35 or \$40 per game because we have had a bigger crowd. If we could get 70 players each week we could pay \$50 a game. That would be nice.

Regina thinks the players favorite game is

the coverall, especially when the numbers and the money are high. Many like the Super Straight, too.

Pull tab tickets are also available. Tom and Betty sell those. There are small packs that pay a qualifying winner \$50, some that pay two \$50 winners and a few that pay \$100 with many instant winners. There are many players who enjoy the pull tab tickets.

The improvements in the hall are liked by everyone. It is cleaner, brighter and seems to be very relaxing. The air conditioning is greatly appreciated by all. They really appreciate the free coffee.

Steve Kline oversees the kitchen cooking, although he makes Regina do the shopping. He has two helpers. Hamburgers, hot dogs, chicken patties, chicken strips, nachos and cheese, soda, chips, candy bars, and crackers are available.

The Tuesdays before a holiday (Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Thanksgiving, etc.) a candy treat with a paper attached is included. The players can pick a treat and win a free special or door prize. Some holidays as many as 15 to 20 door prizes donated by local businesses and private donations are given out.

Our regular door prizes every week are a free admission ticket, and \$10 and \$5 coupons. We also have an end-of-the-month drawing from all the admission tickets. This prize is valued at \$30.

The players seem to enjoy our bingo because it is quiet, they have plenty of room for papers, etc., and everyone seems to know or be related to someone there. It is a very friendly crowd and there is never any trouble. This feeling was echoed by a regular patron who said, "I wouldn't miss it. It's quiet, friendly, and I enjoy the extra touches like the holiday prizes and treats."

About half of our players are from our Parish and the others are from surrounding communities. We really appreciate their patronage and are happy they enjoy our bingo.

Parish Finance Committee

The Finance Committee of Saint Benedict Parish is comprised of four members of the Church. The Parishioners that currently sit on the Committee are: Elaine Vescovi, Bernadine Lauer, Jeannine Cymbor, and Daniel Kline. Since its formation, the Committee has been composed of Parishioners appointed to the seat by the Pastor. The primary role of this Committee is to serve the Parish as an advisory board regarding the financial operations of the Parish. When the Parish Council considers any repairs, additions or large purchases, it requests the Finance Council to secure the funds if they are available or investigate the options to obtain the revenue. Along with handling the finances for Parish projects, the Council also prepares the annual budget of the Parish according to the Diocesan guidelines. The Council initiates fund drives as needed, as well as sponsors the tickets for the Easter and Thanksgiving Lottery. The group meets as needed throughout the year. The volunteer service they provide to the Parish Council, Pastor and Parish is vital to the growth of Saint Benedict Church.

New Altar Servers Installed



On February 4, Father Vincent installed a new group of Altar Servers. They are (left to right above): Amber Koegler, Gregory Veneskey, Christian Bills, and Jonathan Schall. The Knights of Columbus presented each new Server with a certificate in gratitude for their undertaking this liturgical ministry.

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as that which will be placed in the Annex. Recessed lighting will also be added. All decisions and designs for the new loft were made to compliment the Annex and Church. As a result, in moving from one building to the other, you will notice similarities in styles, colors and materials.

Choir members are anxious to get to their new home. Construction and finishing work is always slow, so a time table for the date of completion is not available. The choir hopes the larger area will help attract new members. Many people enjoyed the singing when the choir sang from the loft at the Midnight Mass on Christmas. Emily Cymbor and her family felt the choir had a better sound and that people throughout the Church could hear it.

We are thankful for the Parishioners who use their choir loft collection envelopes. Much of the financing for the loft has come from this source of revenue. The next time you are at Mass, take the time to admire our beautiful, new loft.

New Kitchen Cupboards Installed



Last fall our Church hall renovation received a long anticipated improvement — 24 feet of new kitchen cupboards. For those who work in the kitchen, it was a significant change. Formerly most of our serving pieces were stored in the pantry, and our dishes were stored in a single cupboard outside the kitchen doors. It was a very awkward arrangement for our festival dinner and other major events. Approximately a dozen people arrived after the cupboards were installed to help sort through what we had and to decide what was worth keeping. Everything was washed in our new dishwasher and decisions were made on where to put things. Each placement was carefully noted so that a card could be placed on



each door denoting the contents of each cupboard or drawer. Most of those helping were people who use the kitchen regularly. Their input was very important.

Carrie Waksmunski, who does the school lunch program, said, “It’s nice to have a place for everything and have more workspace.” Anna Mae Kelly, one of our chief bakers, said, “It took awhile to know where everything was but it’s great. It’s nice to have this kitchen to work in.” Sue Krouse said, “There’s lots of room and still a little hard to remember where everything is.”

We who work there thank all of you who donated to this important project. Thanks to Ken Miller of Homestyle Kitchen and Bath for his great design and installation and to the Altar Rosary Society for their financial contributions.

Saint Benedict Church

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