

Annual Report

A yearly update for our parish members

Father Jim reports on the "State of the Parish"

"It was the best of times it was the worst of times," Charles Dickens wrote in the late 19th century. Certainly this phrase applies to our last year. Our parish has seen so much spiritual growth and yet the clouds of September 11th, the Church's sex scandal, and the economy have left many of us searching for answers to questions we never knew we had.

When Dickens wrote that line, the story that followed offered a glimpse of what was so wrong and so right about his times. We too have an opportunity to find hope and renewal while reflecting about all that has occurred in our times. Personally, I believe that these tragedies, our questions and fears can only help us deepen our relationship with God. Over the last year I have seen the light of Christ shine brightly through our parish's actions, discussions and determination to build a more

compassionate community.

For an example, as a result of September 11, we reached out to other faiths in Ann Arbor by sponsoring an interfaith prayer service. Leaders from the Jewish, Islam, and Protestant communities joined us to pray for peace. Beyond the profound spiritual momentum this service gave to all of us, we had an opportunity to experience how each group understands and worships God.

We also began to address the Church's scandal by holding our own forum to discuss our concerns and fears. Bishop Mengeling also held a regional panel discussion at our parish. Both sessions, plus our many prayers and willingness to accept what has happened, have given us a foundation for healing.

Despite the uncertain economy, physical improvements for our buildings are proceeding. We are grateful that so many of you are

helping make our worship space more user-friendly for families and the handicapped by providing financial support. We are also remodeling the school's music room, replacing carpet, and adding a new heating and cooling component for both it and the art room. The school continues to move forward on their window replacement plan.

Spiritually, we've been growing in leaps and bounds. Some of our accomplishments include:

- ⚙ Expanding of our senior citizens' gathering group
 - ⚙ Creating a parish School of Spirituality
 - ⚙ Offering a Spiritual Director Program
 - ⚙ Deepening our relationship with St. Benedict's in Highland Park
 - ⚙ Creating a Job Bank for recently unemployed
 - ⚙ Beginning RENEW
 - ⚙ Holding Theology on Tap
 - ⚙ Helping Catholic Habitat for Humanity
- I am so grateful to have



Our senior citizens' gathering group offers participants a chance to have fun, share games and activities, volunteer and discuss the issues that are important to them

served as your pastor over this last year.

Please take time to read the rest of this report. We are excited about next year's strategic planning and hope this information will help determine where we want to go in the future.

P. S. Visit our website www.stfrancisa2.com. It is truly an evolving piece of art!