



St. Sebastian Parish

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May 15, 2017

Greetings,

There is something striking about St. Sebastian Parish Church. The moment a person enters into it, they are struck by the spaciousness, the light, and the art. It is also well built. A number of years ago during Mass, a large amount of snow had fallen off of the upper roof onto the lower, flat roof. It made a terrible noise, and I made a quip about it feeling as though the roof was going to cave in. The architect's son, Mr. Robert Krause, who also worked on the building, pulled me aside later and took me to task, declaring authoritatively, "Father, this building was constructed so that you could drop a tank on it and nothing would happen!"

And it is true. Structurally it *is* solid and sound. But after almost 60 years, the shine has worn off. The woodwork is in poor condition and needs attention before the problem worsens. Marble in the sanctuary floor is loose. Doors have been repaired so many times that there is little left to do for them. The pews are scratched; the kneelers are worn out. The time has come to bring this grand structure back to its original dignity.

The house I grew up in Barberton was built by my father. That house too, after half a century, began having problems. We adjusted by lifting a certain door slightly to close it properly, for example, or by opening a particular drawer in the bathroom to keep the door closed since the lock was broken. We were so accustomed to compensating for a 60 year old house that we were blind to the amount of work it actually needed.

"This is the House of the Lord" is prominently engraved above the entrance to our church. As we approach our parish's 90th anniversary, it is time to look to our spiritual home with new eyes and to notice the wear. We have the opportunity now to restore our home to a cleaner, safer, more welcoming and beautiful state.

I am pleased to announce the launch of The Cornerstone of Our Faith, a campaign to raise money for the restoration of St. Sebastian Church.

This campaign is called the Cornerstone of Our Faith because that is exactly what our parish is: the cornerstone of our community. It is what holds our neighborhood together. Since 1928, our parish church has been a place of beauty and stability, and to this day, it is a strong, vital force in West Akron.

I hope you will join me and your fellow parish family members in supporting this campaign. And I ask you to please always keep your parish in your prayers. You are the parish. You are her future.

God bless,

Rev. John A. Valencheck
Pastor
St. Sebastian Parish



CORNERSTONE
— OF OUR FAITH —
ST. SEBASTIAN CHURCH RESTORATION