

A Contextual Study of the People of St. Anthony's Church, in Madisonville, Ohio

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(Editor's Note: parishioner Dave Kappesser wrote this paper as a part of his Masters program at the College of Mount St. Joseph)

The Parish of St. Anthony's in Madisonville, Ohio, an urban neighborhood a part of the City of Cincinnati, is currently preparing for its one hundredth and fiftieth anniversary for the year 2008-2009. In looking at the broad view of the preparations, it faces an historical irony which is common of many Roman Catholic parishes today in the United States. In the not too distant future, the parish community faces the reality of having a non-resident pastor which is precisely the same condition that existed when the parish first came into being one hundred and fifty years ago. Within five years of the parish's inception, a full time pastor was assigned to the parish and life with a resident pastor became the focal point of the church community's recorded history. Based on current projections within five years the parish will cease to have a resident pastor and hopefully the history of the St. Anthony's parish community will continue.

In May of 1858, a group of Catholic farmers led by a man named Michael Buckel gathered in the home of Charles Naegel for a Mass celebrated by Father Michael Sullivan. Living in the same community of Madisonville about eight miles northeast of the city of Cincinnati, these farmers shared a common German heritage and they were tired of having to travel six miles by horse and wagon on Sunday morning to get to the closest Catholic church, St. Frances de Sales Church in the community of Walnut Hills in Cincinnati. The men called themselves the Catholic Society and they and their families were a very close knit group. (1)

One of the members, Mr. L. Cornuelle sold a portion of his property for the construction of a church. In present day Madisonville, that church would be located at the intersection of Madison Road and Roanoke Street. Due to the personal sacrifice of the group's leader, the first church was named St. Michael's Church. A one room school house was also built to teach the children of those founding families about their faith. (Bange 9).

Without having direct access to Michael Buckel's memoirs or diary, certain general historical characteristics can be projected about this group of German farmers. To say that they were German Catholics means that they were probably among the massive German influx to Cincinnati between 1830 and 1900. By 1840, the German immigrants made up about 30% of the population of Cincinnati or about 14,000 people. By the mid-1890's the German-immigrant families would increase to be about 57% of the population of the City of Cincinnati. Compared to their native Germany, Cincinnati was a boomtown with fertile land for farming, and it was a major river port which made it a source for commerce and industry. (2)

As a demographic group, the German Catholic immigrants did not assimilate immediately into the new American culture. Many of the Cincinnati German Catholics still spoke and wrote in German after they were settled in Cincinnati and its surrounding Ohio territories. This fact created a particular pastoral challenge for Bishop John Baptist Purcell, a young Irish cleric who had become the second bishop for the Diocese of Cincinnati, a diocese which included the whole State of Ohio. Bishop Purcell was constantly soliciting his European contacts for priests who spoke German to come to America to help him. At the same time, Bishop Purcell supported the lay leadership of the German immigrants. In 1837, Bishop Purcell authorized the publication of the German Catholic newspaper called "Der Wahrheits Freund." This German newspaper ran for 70 years instructing Catholics about their faith, religious practices, news about their church, and offered advice on how to assimilate into their new surrounding community and its culture. (Hussey 20)

Unlike his fellow bishops in other parts of this young country, Bishop Purcell also supported the practice called "Trusteeism." This meant that the German lay leaders of the church community would handle the temporal affairs of the parish and the priest handled the spiritual needs of the people. As a system, "Trusteeism" specifically meant that each church congregation would elect six men from their midst who were supposed to be exemplary Catholics. These men were called wardens, and the wardens took care of practical and business needs of the parish. There is no historical evidence that Bishop Purcell ever had any problems with any of these German Trustee parishes. The autonomy given by Purcell in letting German Catholic immigrants manage their own church affairs came with its rewards too. (Hussey 24)

In the 1840s, Father Martin Henni, one of the new German-speaking priests to join Purcell's young diocese, devised a plan with the Catholic trustees of Holy Trinity Parish in the Over-the-Rhine area of Cincinnati for the purchase and the construction of a new church. The trustees purchased a large piece of property using the Bishop's name. Then, trustees proceeded to subdivide the property and sell off smaller lots of land at a price to make a profit. Part of the land was set aside for the church and any other parish buildings. The trustees would then apply the profits accumulated from selling off the smaller portions of the property to the foundation monies needed to build the church or other parish structures. (Hussey 21-22)

The number of these Catholic parishes increased quite quickly as parishes in the heart of Cincinnati divided up about every two to three years and built new churches. It was not long before the number of German-speaking Catholic churches outnumbered the English-speaking Irish Catholic churches. (Hussey 22)

Another historical reality which made the German immigrants a close knit community among themselves was their social survival. The English Anti-Catholicism of the 1700's reared its head in the Cincinnati Area. In 1837 Bishop Purcell challenged a local protestant leader to a public debate to belay Anti-Catholic sentiments. The local newspapers declared Purcell the winner of the debate, but the anti-papist sentiment of the general population did not dissipate. In the early 1850's, Anti-Catholic riots broke out

in Cincinnati when Bishop Purcell invited Italian Bishop Bedini, the Pope's emissary, to stay in Cincinnati. (Hussey 16-17, 36-37)

Again, without an insider's view of Michael's Buckel's Catholic Society, the question arises of "...Why Madisonville?" What attracted this small group of Catholics to move to a village eight miles northeast of downtown Cincinnati? Without knowing the particular motivations of these individuals, it is a good probability that some of the pluses of this small village attracted many outsiders to come to this very unique community.

The first settler to this area later to become known as Madisonville was Joseph Ward, a revolutionary war veteran with his two sons from New Jersey. They had traveled to this area by way of flatboats, but they arrived during a time when the Ohio River overflowed its banks. Ward and his family traveled inland to be far away from the river and its flooding. They built their first log cabin at the base of a hill several miles from the river. By today's geography, that site would be near the intersection of Whetzel Avenue and Monning Avenue and the hill would be called the Whetzel Hill. (3)

The first Christian Church in Madisonville was the Methodist Church in 1801 near the intersection of Red Bank Road and Brotherton Road as it would be called today. In 1809 the village was formally incorporated and in 1810 the village built its first public school. However, it was the documentation of African Americans in 1811 that was to make Madisonville stand out compared to other small communities elsewhere in the young United States. Near the intersection of what is now called Stewart and Madison Roads, there was a small community of twenty houses that were occupied by freed Black slaves. Madisonville was named for the fourth president of the United States, James Madison. It was a community established in the Christian faith; it was a community that prized public education as a first priority; and it was a group of people who obviously had a spirit of toleration for it hosted one of the first sub-communities of African Americans in American History. (4)

In the next fifty years leading up to the time when Michael Buckel's Catholic Society would settle onto farms on the east side of Madisonville, the Christian people of Madisonville continued to grow and flourish. The Methodist community would build a large new church with a cemetery surrounding it. It was located on Madison Road; and it is a beautiful edifice which still stands today. The village of Madison built another school building made of brick to last longer at Ward Street and Madison Road. They set up a Post Office, voting locations, and worked to get a railroad station set up to connect Madisonville with the rest of the Cincinnati (*The rail connection was finally completed in 1866 after progress was held up by the Civil War*). Another development was the erection of the International Order of Odd Fellows Hall. This group became the official sponsor of Laurel Cemetery on Roe Street, which was at that time the biggest public cemetery on the eastern side of Cincinnati. This was a secret society of men who were known for their good deeds, aid to the poor and other similar projects. (Busald Time Line Panel 1)

In 1864 Archbishop Purcell (*he was promoted to archbishop in 1850*) ordained the first Cincinnati-born, German seminarian and sent him to Madisonville for his first

assignment. This was Anton Walberg. (Hussey 30) Father Anthony Walburg soon discovered that St. Michael's Church and its schoolhouse building were too small to meet the needs of this budding new parish. At this point, Father Walburg brought in the Trustee method of Church development used elsewhere in the diocese for setting up German parishes. He bought a piece of land in the Archbishop's name for the church and parish school and then proceeded in selling off the remaining subplots to provide monies for the church and parish school. Father Walburg was a real entrepreneur when it came to fundraising and he was able to find enough sponsors to put up the rest of the money for the church's construction not covered by the sales of the sub-plots. During his tenure St. Michael's parish also bought a plot of land in 1865 on Settle Road near a brook called Duck Creek for the church cemetery. In 1874 a new church was dedicated at its present site at the intersection of Desmond and Chapman Streets in Madisonville. To honor Father Walburg for all his hard work, the parish leaders voted to change the church name from St. Michael's to St. Anthony's Parish. (Bange 6-9, 26)

As mentioned previously, once a Catholic pastor was assigned to a parish, the happenings of the people of the parish fell into the background behind the stories of the priests. The History of St. Anthony's is no exception, events in the lives of the parishioners is only seen as descriptive parts of what the pastor accomplished. For instance, the parish notes that the present rectory was first built in 1882. This building's main significance to the people was that it gave permanence to the priest as a resident pastor.

Between 1888 and 1889, the parish decided to replace the school building built in 1874 with a new building and the pastor was able to prevail upon the Sisters of Charity in Delhi, Ohio to send some sisters to St. Anthony's to run the school for the parish. Four sisters came at that time to take over teaching functions at the school. While it was a new school in a community that prized education, it was a new school for the German Catholics of Madisonville. (Busald Timeline Panel 3)

While Christianity continued to grow in Madisonville, like the Germans of St. Anthony's, each congregation stayed with its own. This was true for the new church of Lutherans at St. Paul's Church, the Madisonville Baptist Church, the Madisonville Christian Church, and the first all African American congregation of Gaines United Methodist Church, whose first Madisonville building was just down the street from St. Anthony's.

The village of Madisonville continued to prosper. The village built its first high school. New businesses came. The present library building was actually the site of the first town hall. However, the spirit of a separated people began to creep into the public minds of the people. The Census between 1880 and 1890 showed that the population of Madisonville had grown to 2214 people. In the public documentation of this number, it announced that 240 of these people were Black or African Americans. (Busald Timeline Panel 3)

On the morning of January 24, 1891, Father Charles Hahne, then pastor of St. Anthony's, discovered the church on fire. Before the fire department could get the fire out, the church had burned to the ground. The damage to the original church was about \$25,000.00. The parish received \$15,000.00 from insurance. Father Hahne and the parish community were able to come up with an additional \$16,000.00 which was used to expand the existing structure using three of the original brick walls. The amazing feat was that the church was rebuilt within nine months of the fire and rededicated by Archbishop Elder on October 4, 1891. In subsequent years two large bells and a clock were added to the church's new 147 foot steeple tower. Many community leaders from the Village of Madisonville took part in the rededication which made it a community-wide event. Not only was the new church a great architectural accomplishment, but it was a monument to the devotion of St. Anthony people to their place of worship. Seven years later, when the Archdiocese of Cincinnati was transferring Father Hahne to a new parish, the community leaders put together a going away banquet for Father Hahne for his leadership in putting the church back together. It was one of the few historically documented events that blended the German Catholics of St. Anthony's with their surrounding neighbors. (Busald Timeline Panel 3)

The parish celebrated its fiftieth anniversary in 1909. Many parishioners were delighted to see Father Walburg at their celebration. Michael Buckel was honored for his efforts in getting the parish started. Two years later in 1911, Michael Buckel died and there was a memorial service to mark his passing. About the same time, the parish built a permanent convent for the Sisters of Charity; about eighty years later the same structure would become the St. Anthony Parish Center.

It was at this same time that the Village of Madisonville was formally annexed by the City of Cincinnati. The village continued with a lot of autonomy, but as time passed on, the City of Cincinnati would eventually take over more and more of the lives of the people of Madisonville. Finally, with the exception of the Madisonville Community Council and Business Association, all other governmental bodies concerning the community of Madisonville have been regulated to the City of Cincinnati and its various departments of community management. While the village of Madisonville has definitely benefited by the city services, it could be the subject of long independent study as to whether or not the long terms effects have been beneficial to the village community of Madisonville and its social development.

In 1917, the call to arms was sounded and many men of Madisonville enlisted in the Armed Forces to respond to World War I. At St. Anthony's seventy-six men went off to war, and at least four did not return. A plaque was set near the entrance of the church to honor those who had fallen. Similar commemorations were likewise observed at the Madisonville local Masonic Lodge. (Busald TimeLine Panel 4)

In the 1920's and 1930's the history of the parish became somewhat anecdotal as some of the pastors were known for their antics as well as their industry. There was a very popular story about Father Joseph Meyer, a very tough old character who was disdained by the St. Anthony school children because he used snuff (*chewing tobacco*)

and would spit. One warm Sunday morning with the church windows open, Father Meyer began his weekly sermon by blowing his nose into a large red handkerchief. It was so loud that the noise startled a nearby flock of geese who cackled all throughout the rest of his sermon. At the end of Father Meyer's pastorship, the parish began building a new school which was finished in 1924. This large brick structure with a gymnasium and auditorium in the middle of the first floor of the building is still on the parish grounds today. (Bange 13)

In the 1930's St. Anthony parish was directed by Father Martin Molloy. Father Molloy was remembered for his cigar smoking and stern personality with his novel approaches to fundraising. Since most of the people of the parish were racked with hardships of the harsh economic conditions, Father Molloy sold raffle chances for a special monthly dinner that he would host. Father Molloy would prepare a special beef dinner, and raffle winners would win an opportunity to bring their family to Father's Special Beef Dinner. Father Molloy would go to great lengths to make these celebrations as fancy as possible to get others to buy the chances for the next month's dinner event. Another of Father Molloy's schemes was designed to cover the heating costs of the church in the winter. Father Molloy needed coal to burn in the boiler and to pay for the coal, each family who wanted to attend church each Sunday were assessed one dollar per week. Most families told him to put it on their tabs, but it is documented in the history logs of the parish that very few families ever paid for their coal tabs. (Bange 14-16)

In 1937, the parish historians make a special note that the parish school had its first Black Student. (Bange 16) When talked about in informal gatherings today, several of the older African American ladies of the parish question this historical accuracy as it was otherwise documented that there were already Black Catholic families attending the church. It was also true that some pastors tried to send them to other Black Catholic churches in other parts of the city. This event was a very telling, social comment to be made about this parish still dominated by the traditional German mentality of its founding fathers. Back in the 1800's, German dominated parishes tended to be very close knit communities that obviously did little evangelization or assimilation into their host demographic communities. Exploration into this historic phenomenon could be the subject of another whole separate study. The present mix of the parish population would show that this is no longer the case. According to the current parish rolls, there are 528 families, 6% (32) of these families are African American. However, changing social conditions that have prompted the parish to offer diversity training at various times over last ten years indicate that perhaps the roots of the past still have a subtle hold on the present community of the parish.

In 1946 Stratford Manor north of Duck Creek Road was built and it was designed to provide housing for the returning veterans from World War II. Other nearby low-end housing developments were developed along the corridor which became Interstate 71. Many of these housing communities existed into the late 1970's before they were torn down to make room for new industrial developments.

Four years later a community census indicated that Madisonville had grown to a population of 12,800 with roughly one fourth of the population being African American. A dominant number of the African Americans moved into the housing opportunities east of Stewart Road and north of Madison Road, building out from the base communities that goes back to 1811 with the freed Black slave homes mentioned previously. (Busald Timeline Panel 8)

Race riots in the late 1960's near the intersection of Madison and Whetzel and a period of discontent signaled a downfall for the business community of Madisonville. While industrial development has blossomed along the Red Bank Expressway, very few economic development ventures have succeeded in the heart of Madisonville, the traditional business center along Madison Road. Others blamed the economic decline on the emergence of the shopping centers in other parts of Cincinnati. (Busald Timeline Panel 9)

By 1960, St. Anthony's found itself located in a neighborhood predominantly African American. This demographic change going on around the church called for new ways of being church in Madisonville. First in 1961, Pastor Father James Byrne had a chapel added in the Sister's Convent and it was dedicated by Archbishop Leibold as the Blessed Sacrament Chapel. This smaller facility began to host a daily Mass for a regular smaller group of parishioners. The main church was to be used primarily on Sunday and special occasions thereby saving on fuel costs. Father John Campbell, pastor during the 1960's and 70's, made other precedent-setting changes. First, he had a garage built for the Sister's convent. In 1963 Father Campbell joined several other Madisonville Christian churches in the building and funding of a senior citizens residence on Madison Road called Madison Villa. In 1964 due to the changes from Vatican II, Father Campbell turned the altar around to face the people. In the same year the parish celebrated its first Mass in English by associate pastor Father James Shappelle. Father Campbell continue to reach out to the Madisonville community by inviting various civic and community groups to come to St. Anthony's to take advantage of the parish's facilities for meetings and other events. (Bange 29)

This was a time of change for Madisonville as well. Bramble School was opened on Homer Avenue, but Madisonville High School on Ward was closed and the building became the Madisonville Day Care Center. The parsonage at the United Methodist Church became the office for Neighborhood Housing Services. Community leadership in Madisonville went through a time of determining which direction should be taken to improve the future of Madisonville. One group split off and began calling itself the Madisonville Community Council. Another group became the Eastwood Community Urban Redevelopment Corporation. Lack of customers and vandalism caused lots of the little businesses to close and board up their windows in the very heart of the old Madisonville business center at Madison and Whetzel. The Community Council got the Urban Homesteading program to come to Madisonville as an incentive to welcome low income home ownership. The other group, Eastwood Urban Redevelopment Corporation, got commitments from Coca Cola and US Shoe to build factories in the new Eastwood Industrial Park as a lot of the low income housing was torn down to

make way for the new industrial development. One minor point that also showed a major change of attitude was in the publication of the community census report. There was a marked decline in the population growth, but the population was listed as a single total and the census office stopped the practice of publishing the numbers of Whites verses Blacks. (Busald Timeline Panel 10)

In 1977 St. Anthony School closed its doors. Sister Mary Collette Hart SC was the last principal of the school. Father Campbell lost his fight to keep the school open, and Father Patrick Bascio took over as pastor. Father Bascio turns to the Madisonville Community Council to help him turn the old school into a community center. (Bange 33)

One year later Father Bascio was transferred, and Father John Civile came to St. Anthony. Father Civile was a progressive priest to say the least and he is probably to be credited in moving St. Anthony into its current growth paradigm. Over the next six years he started a Parish Council program following a consensus model according to new Archdiocesan guidelines that were approved by the Archdiocesan Sixth Synod Meeting in 1971. (5) When a group of people who had been the choir at St. John Vianney church approached Father Civile about coming to St. Anthony, he welcomed them and began a new era for Sunday liturgies with Masses noted for their singing and upbeat music. In 1980, he hired the first parish part-time DRE and asked her to organize a parish religious education program to be in session between the two Sunday morning liturgies each week. Finally, Father Civile's homilies were known for their sound theological base, but delivered in such way that new listeners were drawn to his messages. (Bange 34)

In 1984 Father George Jacquemin came to St. Anthony and stayed for the next 13 years, building upon the models set in place by the three previous pastors of Fathers Campbell, Bascio and Civile. With no school to run, the sisters moved out of the convent to other assignments and in 1989 the convent became the parish center for parish offices and meetings. In following Father Campbell's example, Father George joined an organization of Christian Pastors from the other Christian churches of Madisonville, Fairfax, and Mariemont, the zip code area of 45227. It was an organization of 21 different congregations, plus some pastors from other communities who decided to join. From this group came the formation of the Madisonville Emergency Assistance Center or MEAC. This organization took over property owned by the United Methodist Church and set up a food pantry and used clothing store for the poor of the area. MEAC also did GED counseling for adults who had dropped out of school and wanted to finish high school to better themselves. (Bange 35) (Busald Timeline panel 11)

Father George worked with various parish and community leaders over the disposition the old school building. The City of Cincinnati did a joint lease for ten years with the Greater Cincinnati YMCA who started an afternoon program for local children and a summer youth program. The YMCA hosted a weight lifting program and various basketball and volleyball intramural programs that were aimed to try to draw in some of the local population. (Bange 35)

Father George came from a large farming family near Hamilton, Ohio. He too, became famous by word of mouth for his simple homespun wisdom and inviting homiletic style. At a time when other nearby churches were declining in numbers, St. Anthony's was growing as people were coming from all over Cincinnati to be a part of the parish. While in the past some people did come from Indian Hill and Madeira, St. Anthony was becoming a multi-zip code parish. At present time there are over 25 different zip codes on the parish registered members' mailing list.

Father George's preaching on justice was backed by his personal example of being involved with MEAC. The liturgical enhancements started by Father Civile continued with Father George. Since his previous pastoral assignment had him working in a predominantly African American cultural experience, Father George was sensitive to the local African American experience. African dancing, drums, and gospel singing was woven into the Sunday liturgies with special commemorations during February Black Catholic Month and in November Black Americans month. Father George had St. Anthony share in the hosting of the annual Black Catholic Revival along with other PMAAC (*Pastoral Ministries to African American Catholics*) parishes in greater Cincinnati. (Bange 36)

Other groups started during this time included an adoption support group, the men's Bible study group, and various other support programs were set up as long as St. Anthony parishioners were involved.

Parish Council would meet on Sunday afternoons and Council worked in the consensus model for decision making. Outside consultants were brought to St. Anthony to help out. There were parish flowcharts and decision-making profiles that reached out to every part of the parish life.

Under Father George the parish went through a community wide renewal program called RENEW. This program started a number of small group meetings throughout the parish and in several geographic locations other than 45227 zip code parishioners. Several of these small groups still continue to meet today.

In 1988 when the finance committee of parish counsel proposed a fund drive to cover the costs of a church renovation, over 75% of the initial pledges were collected in the first six months of a three year campaign.

During Father George's time, there was discussion about starting a parish festival. He was convinced that a festival in parishes like St. Anthony was a fleecing of the poor through games of chance for money that they did not have in the first place. He was also supportive of Parish Council's decision to no longer serve beer or alcohol at parish community events, unless they were adult only, and that certain guidelines were followed. Despite some unpopularity with these moves, the increased revenue through the collection basket and through private donations confirmed that parishioners had ratified these developments with their wallets. (Bange 36) In 1997 Parish council approved new guidelines which include the mission statement of St. Anthony's Parish:

“Growing people closer to God through the work of the Spirit.” (6) Their vision statement further elaborated that:

- We respect and value the great diversity of St. Anthony’s [...] gifts.
- Celebrate the sacraments and life occasions.
- Educate our members throughout the stages of life.
- Extend care and support for all areas in a holistic fashion.
- Take an active interest in the Madisonville community.
- Invite and Welcome others into our community
- Respond and Support the Church of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. (Parish Guidelines 202)

Within two months of the ratification of these guidelines, in July of 1997 Father George was reassigned, and Father Len Wenke, the current pastor, took over the parish. The parish had been given advanced notice of this change and the new guidelines help to set the course for the new parish administration. Father Len had been previously assigned to the National Catholic Youth Ministry Office in Washington, DC. He brought a completely different style of leadership and administration to St. Anthony. He hired Sister Jeannie Masterson as pastoral associate in 1999. While he maintained Father George’s example by continued involvement with MEAC, the Christian Pastors Association and Madison Villa, he also helped the parish to get involved with Habitat For Humanity. In 2003, the parish also initiated a twinning relationship with Our Lady of Health Parish on the island nation of Dominica. (7)

Among the other changes which Father Len has overseen, RENEW 2000 was enacted to act as a revival of the previous parish renewal program. He continued the development of the choir and has brought in on occasion Dr. James Moore, an African American contemporary church music composer and personal friend, to help with music and liturgy development.

During this same time Madisonville has seen a rash of new housing developments. A new recreational community center was dedicated in 2002. More new businesses moved to Madisonville with new construction along Red Bank Road. Some of the old business center has been renovated and some of the eyesore buildings have been razed. The Madisonville United Methodist Church opened its doors to a Korean Methodist congregation, and it was so successful that in 1995 the two congregations merged together. Now, the Koreans are the group with the dominant numbers. In an effort to take back the neighborhoods, Madisonville became a part of the Department of Justice’s Weed N Seed program:

Weed & Seed is a strategy that consists of four major areas: Law Enforcement, Community Policing, Neighborhood Restoration and Prevention, Intervention and Treatment. [...] (Busald, “Weed N Seed)

Despite rising crime statistics in terms of violent crimes throughout the City of Cincinnati, including Madisonville, in 2005 there were no homicides reported for the 45227 zip code. Despite these efforts, the population of Madisonville continues to shrink and in 2000 it was barely above 10,000 people. (Busald Timeline Panel 12)

The shrinkage in the Catholic community of St. Anthony's has to do with the availability of ongoing priestly ministry. With retirement of older priests and low rate of priestly vocations, parishes are being forced to share ministry and services. With the close proximity of St. Anthony's, St. John Vianney, and St. Margaret of Cortona parishes, it was decided that Father Len of St. Anthony and Father David Lemkuhl of St. Margaret of Cortona would share the pastoral responsibilities of the three parishes in the 45227 zip code, and help out with St. Cecilia's in nearby Oakley.

A lay committee called For the Harvest in the late 90's and the early years of the 21st Century has evolved to become the St. Anthony Leaven Team or SALT. In the fall of 2005 they conducted a series of parish wide small group discussions focusing projections for lay involvement in St. Anthony in the future. SALT noted that the needs of the church and the process of matching people to those needs has a very narrow focus primarily through the pastoral staff. SALT discussions recommended that there be investigations into a broader organizational model which would include more lay volunteers. SALT also recommended that a process be developed to match individual gifts with the needs of the parishes. (8)

There is also a Pastoral Region Planning Report that is currently looking at organizational ministry models which would combine St. Anthony, St. John Vianney, St. Margaret of Cortona, and St. Cecilia church using only two priests for all four parishes. (Kappesser, M, Minutes attachment)

Internally, at St. Anthony's, in conjunction with Parish Council, Father Len Wenke revised the Vision statement for the parish for 2002-2008:

- St. Anthony Parish's vision is built upon solid Catholic tradition, blended with current community characteristics, and consistent with our mission of growing people closer to God through the work of the Spirit.
- Parish life will continue to focus on Christ-centered quality worship [...]
- St. Anthony Parish will continue to be a justice-oriented people [...]
- The Parish will grow in viability and strength [...]
- St. Anthony will continue to center all that we strive to be and do in celebration of the Eucharist and our commitment to grow as disciples of Jesus Christ. (Wenke "Vision Statement")

All of these goals are to be accomplished through the broad diversity of committees and organizations.

Finally, within the last year the parish initiated a new ministry program for evaluation and planning with the help of an outside consultant. It was called the Focus Area program. In this new program members of the various ministries would meet three times a year. In the fall, small groups meet to evaluate various activities from the past year in light of the parish vision statement and the individual ministry vision statements to determine needs and accomplishments. In a winter planning session, the small groups meet to build on the Fall Evaluations and set the goals of the next one to three years depending on the program. In the spring, small groups gather to take the goals and

evaluation and determine what resource allocations need to be set up in terms of staff, volunteers, facilities, and funding and submit a budget to Council. Areas included for Focus gatherings include: Worship, Faith Formation, Justice, Outreach, and Ownership.

In 2006 the parish is about to embark on its second series of Focus gathering. Already this year at least two major changes have been enacted based on last year's Focus Discussions. The Faith Formation group made the recommendation for a full time DRE and Adult Education coordinator. The previous DRE turned down the expanded position so Sister Rosemary Klosterman was hired in June. Within the last month, the Outreach committee has taken over the first floor of the rectory and made it the Saints Café between Masses on Sunday. Offering coffee and beverages and breakfast snacks, it is a place for people to casually get together between the Mass celebrations and for parents to come while their children are in the Faith Formation classes. (Kappesser, M, May 2006 Council Minutes – Focus Attachment)

As mentioned in the beginning, it is generally assumed that St. Anthony will very soon be facing continued pastoral ministry without a resident pastor. As seen above many planning contingencies are in the works. However, in recent years, there have been signs of a slow decay of the parish's person-to-person bonding. The disappearance of the large group social events seems to be an increasing phenomenon. In 1981 various groups of men from the parish hosted an annual Summer Pig Roast and Dinner. The Last Pig Roast was held in 2004. For years the parish sponsored a parish-wide picnic event for the whole parish. It has been three years since the last parish picnic event. Summer meetings highlighting special individual ministry stories were sparsely attended. Last winter, the annual Christmas Caroling event had the lowest turnout that has ever been recorded. Other large social events are quickly becoming a thing of the past. The Mission statement of 'Growing People Closer to God Through the Spirit' might be missing the God in "each other."

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5. Leibold, Paul F. Archbishop, Sixth Synod of the Archdiocese of Cincinnati, Ohio, Promulgated 16 May 1971, Paragraph 26
6. St. Anthony's Parish Pastoral Council Guidelines, Ratified 4 May 1997, Section I: 202
7. Wenke, Len "Twinning@St. Anthony", St. Anthony Church Parish Web Site . Sept. 2006 <<http://stanthonychurch.net>>.
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