

# The Parish in the New Millennium: Jumping in

Part 11 in our 12 part series about our parish history which we are running to celebrate our 50th anniversary.

"Like all little parishes, you have to jump in," Father Carley said of building a new church. And, jump in was just what the parish did. There were so many things to consider, not least of which was how on earth could our little parish pay for this?

With the approval of the majority of parishioners and the Parish Council to move forward on the building project, Father Carley kicked it off with a series of classes in early 2007 based on the book **God's House is Our House** by Richard Vosko.

The book included such topics as the design of the principal spaces and functions required in a Catholic church. One of the key points of the book was that a new church would be much more than a physical structure. It would shape us and future generations in powerful and profound ways. Anyone entering the church, whether Catholic or not, would understand that the Baptismal Font was a place of washing; the altar a place for a community meal; the Tabernacle a separate and distinct place for the reservation of the sacrament. One thing that was stressed over and over was that the space should encourage "full, active, conscious participation" in the liturgy. Ideas from the book were discussed at great length and were carried into many features of the new church—the curved pews, the location of the tabernacle, a large gathering space, a courtyard.



In 2007 a busload of parishioners went to a newly constructed church in Idaho for ideas and inspiration. One of the key things they learned was that it would take *sacrificial giving*, not just spare change, to build a new church. Many reached down deep and made and paid off pledges beyond what they initially thought possible.



Architects, Sparano + Mooney, chosen in July of 2007, are pictured above with one of several awards they won for our new church.

On February 5, 2007 a New Church Steering Committee was formed consisting of: Ron White, Tricia Johnson, Mike Burns, Tina Aikin, Anne Kurek, Sister Fabian, John Vigil, John Allen and Father Carley. Father Carley named relative newcomer Ron White, a retired military man, to be chair of the building committee with Tricia Johnson, a long time and very active parishioner as co-chair. But over the years of the project just about everyone in the parish got involved in one way or another. Giselle Airiess led the Hospitality & Special Events committee, Terri Booth was named head of Spiritual Direction Committee, Anne Kurek was in charge of communications, Mike Burns was in charge of Creative Giving. We tapped the skills of Bob Bader, John Curtice, John & Laurie Allen. Tina Lovato helped with interior design.

One of the first things the committee decided to do was to hire professional fundraisers Walsh & Associates. This turned out to be of great benefit. Walsh helped us to put shape to the project—forming committees, making schedules and proposing timelines. The company did a feasibility & planning study in the summer of 2007. A campaign logo and motto was chosen—Building for our Future something Beautiful for God. A Kickoff Celebration was set for Oct 28, 2007 and the capital campaign began. It officially ended at the end of 2007 with \$1,608,000 in place.



Our campaign motto, "Something Beautiful for God" came from the title of a book about Mother Theresa.

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The parish had *many* fundraisers, both low brow and high brow.



there were several town hall style meetings with the architects. Parishioners got to see models of the new church and gave their input on what they wanted to see in the new church. One message that went out loud and clear was that parishioners wanted their very special history and personality preserved in the new structure.

There were all kinds of decisions to be made—where would we hold Mass and where would people park during construction. Flooring, and paint colors, fabrics and lighting were all things that needed to be decided on. These decisions were not made without controversy and disagreements, but somehow compromises were reached and there was an openness and spirit of cooperation that moved the project along.

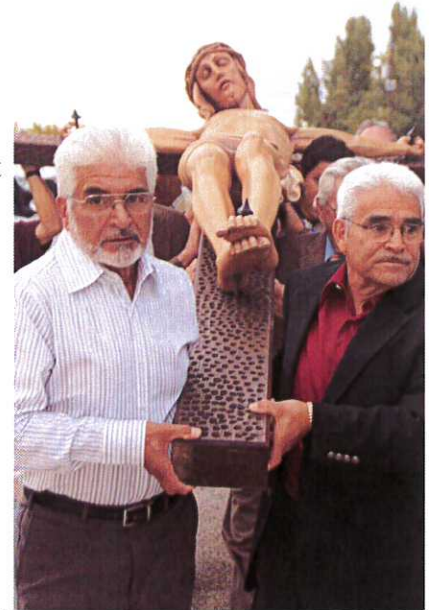
It was with both joy and sadness that the Decommissioning Mass was scheduled for Oct 18, 2009. This was the very last Mass held in the old church. There was not a dry eye in the entire building when the crucifix was carried out.

After an awkward experience with a temporary service secretary, parishioner Anne Kurek was hired as Parish Administrator in January 2008 replacing both the temp as well as long time secretary Kathie Miller. “This was one of the most difficult jobs I’ve ever had in terms of quantity and scope of work -endless fundraisers and events, new accounting systems, and meeting after meeting after meeting.” said Anne, “But I loved being right in the thick of things during this very exciting time for St. Joseph’s.”

The parish needed to raise more funds and began all sorts of fundraisers— Phil Am *Something Beautiful for God* concert, bulletin ads, pro-wrestling events, a matching funds program, a Quick Wits comedy show, sales of Easter eggs and decorated plaques. Parishioners who were once accustomed to hearing “proceeds will go to the development of the sports field” were now told that proceeds would go to the new church. This phrase continues to be heard to this day.

Parishioners once again responded very generously. Even when the economy tanked in 2008, most parishioners were able to meet the pledges which they had made before the crash. In fact, the poor economy proved to be helpful to the project in many ways. Originally the new church was going to be built in phases. When it came time to choose a contractor in the summer of 2009 (we chose R&O), there was stiff competition and record low construction costs. We were able to do all of the construction at one time. When it came time to start paying off the mortgage we benefited from the lowest interest rates in over 30 years. At the time of this printing we have paid off over 3/5’s of our mortgage!

Throughout 2008 and 2009



The crucifix is carried out of the old church by Willie and James Romero, two of the original founders who brought it into the old church for the first time back in 1965.



Above: Less than 3 weeks after the parish held the last Mass in the old church, they said good-bye to Sister Fabian.  
 Below: On two frigid days in December, 2009, the old church was torn down.



Parishioners slowly got used to going to Mass in the Hall. Everything else took place there as well - parties and office work, classes and meetings. The men of the parish had made a parking lot in a neighboring field that was working out very well.

In the midst of all this, Sister Fabian became ill. Her Mother House asked her to return to New York so that they could care for her there. The parish threw her a tearful farewell party on November 4, 2009. Tentative plans were made for her return to West Jordan for the dedication of the new church.

Soon after she left, on two brutally cold days in December 2009, the old church came down. Seeing the beloved old structure ripped open and in shreds, it was hard not to wonder - What have we done? What if the economy takes a turn for the worse? What if parishioners will not be able to meet their pledges? There was no turning back at this point.

Fortunately, we know now what we did not know then. Things *did* work out. Read all about it in next weekend's 12th and final article, *We DID it!*