

2021-2022

# ANNUAL REPORT



*Saint Alphonsus*

ROMAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

1429 West Wellington Ave., Chicago, IL 60657

773-525-0709 [www.stalphonsuschicago.org](http://www.stalphonsuschicago.org)

*from the Pastor*

# IT'S THAT TIME OF THE FISCAL YEAR



Find it oddly amusing that our lives are built upon overlapping calendars. In the Catholic Church mid to late November is approaching the end of the liturgical year, with the new church year beginning on the first Sunday of Advent, which means it is staggered over the calendar year. But this is the time of year when non-profit organizations typically publish their Annual Reports – as do we.

The fiscal year in the Archdiocese of Chicago runs from July 1st through June 30th, but it takes those responsible for the finances and accounting some time to compile all the data so we can report on revenues, expenses, and other financial items like fundraising, capital expenses, maintenance, etc. Rather than merely reporting revenue/expense numbers or providing raw statistics, through this Annual Report I hope to provide a broader story about what's been going on in the parish. So you will also find impact quotes from various people in our school and church community, as well as read about the capital projects that were completed and a few more we hope to do soon. There's also news from the Athenaeum and the success of Oktoberfest... and a lot more.

St. Alphonsus Parish is a thriving and dynamic place

with many wonderful people, but there are many moving parts and a lot of work to keep things not just operational, but able to provide for the spiritual needs and intellectual growth of our parishioners, families and neighbors. Through reading a little more comprehensive report, I hope you feel as blessed about being here as I do.

Please note, it doesn't mean that we don't have work to do; we certainly do! On a large campus such as this managing the temporal goods of the church – not to mention the spiritual and pastoral ministries – is a significant task requiring the assistance of many. In all things, and with the oversight of the Parish Finance Council, we use wisely and responsibly the funds and resources entrusted to our care, especially since the church-side budget is tight and the weekly collections infrequently meet the target. But the beauty of the church and the parishioners continue to inspire us. It is through the generosity, faith, support, and love of so many parishioners, lifelong ones as well as ones new to the neighborhood, that make St. Alphonsus the special place that it is!

– Fr. Steven Bauer

***The parish was founded in 1882 by the Congregation of the Most Holy Redeemer, a.k.a. the Redemptorist Fathers. The first church (bottom left) sat on the corner of Oakdale and Southport where the Athenaeum Theater now stands. The church we now have was built in 1889, and is shown in a photo from 1913 (bottom center), and as we now know it today (bottom right).***





# THE PARISH STAFF

**Fr. Steven Bauer**

**Pastor**

[sbauer@stalphonsuschicago.church](mailto:sbauer@stalphonsuschicago.church)



**Brooks Robinson**

**Lay Pastoral Associate**

[brobinson@stalphonsuschicago.church](mailto:brobinson@stalphonsuschicago.church)



**Erica Cook**

**Religious Education Coordinator**

[ecook@stalphonsuschicago.church](mailto:ecook@stalphonsuschicago.church)



**Mario Serrano**

**Office Manager**

[mserrano@stalphonsuschicago.church](mailto:mserrano@stalphonsuschicago.church)



**Mike Roach**

**Maintenance Manager**

[mroach@stalphonsuschicago.church](mailto:mroach@stalphonsuschicago.church)



**Angela Kladis**

**Assistant Principal  
& Athletic Director**

[akladis@alphonsusacademy.org](mailto:akladis@alphonsusacademy.org)



**Mary Bodlak**

**Director of Admissions**

[mbodlak@alphonsusacademy.org](mailto:mbodlak@alphonsusacademy.org)



**Fr. Patrick Gorman**

**Associate Pastor**

[pgorman@stalphonsuschicago.church](mailto:pgorman@stalphonsuschicago.church)



**Brian Bloye**

**Music Director**

[bbloye@stalphonsuschicago.church](mailto:bbloye@stalphonsuschicago.church)



**Daniel Szymanski**

**Parish Operations Director**

[dszymanski@stalphonsuschicago.church](mailto:dszymanski@stalphonsuschicago.church)



**Kaitlin Holyk**

**Secretary, Marketing,  
and Wedding Coordinator**

[kholyk@stalphonsuschicago.church](mailto:kholyk@stalphonsuschicago.church)



**Gerit McAllister**

**AACA Principal**

[gmcallister@alphonsusacademy.org](mailto:gmcallister@alphonsusacademy.org)



**Kim Wallett**

**School Secretary**

[kwallett@alphonsusacademy.org](mailto:kwallett@alphonsusacademy.org)



*from the Pastor*

# A JOURNEY TOWARDS RENEWAL

**T**hrough the past several years the Archdiocese has been going through the process called Renew My Church. Intended to posture the diocese and parishes for the future in a way that tried to balance several factors, including the declining number of priests, the number of parishes, Mass attendance, material resources, the spiritual needs of Catholics, and cultivating a vibrant experience in parishes. In the process of Renew My Church, parishes were put into “groupings” for the groupings themselves, together with a specialized team from the Archdiocese, to thoughtfully discern what parochial structure would best serve their people – and cultivate fertile ground for spiritual renewal. For that is the ultimate goal: to make disciples, to build vibrant communities, and to inspire witness.

Every parish in the Archdiocese went through this process, no matter their profile or status, for even stand-alone parishes cooperate in the larger mission of the Church and the obligation of evangelization.

As a result of the Renew My Church process, some parishes experienced a merger with another, some churches were closed, and others remained as-is. Just like all other parishes, St. Alphonsus completed the process this year, and because of our vibrancy was recognized as a stand-alone parish. The focus of Renew My Church now shifts to spiritual growth and evangelization. Especially after the pandemic, there are many Catholics who haven't returned to regular attendance at Sunday Mass,

those on the fringes who have drifted away for whatever reason, and many more friends and neighbors in our community who do not have a relationship with Christ or the Church. Many of those people – our brothers and sisters, really – are either open to an experience of faith, or are searching for it on their journey in life. Ultimately every human person is on a journey. People of faith know the end, the goal, of that journey is Heaven.

Heaven can be described in a variety of ways, and while every description is inadequate, two descriptions seem to bubble to the top in many conversations I have had with people in a wide variety of contexts: Heaven as the family of God, and the Beatific Vision.

## **Heaven as the Family of God**

I think the notion of Heaven as a big, happy family may be so attractive today is that many individuals are yearning for a sense of connectedness. Even if a person's family experience growing up was dysfunctional, the human person is hard-wired to be in relationship – to be in a relationship that is loving, safe, free, and fruitful. People of faith know that the human person is created in the image and likeness of God, therefore He alone can satisfy that yearning, and relationship with Christ is the end or goal of that journey. The challenge is to create opportunities for seekers to have an experience of an authentic relationship with God that opens their hearts to this mystery, the way a flower opens to the sun.

## **Heaven as Beatific Vision**

Many saints, scholars, poets and composers have attempted to communicate the beauty of Heaven through art. The human person is drawn to beauty, because hidden within anything that is beautiful is the Author of Beauty itself. Beauty pulls us out of ourselves and makes the human person want to journey towards something mysterious yet true, meaningful, and fulfilling. Again, this is a desire written in the human heart. In a world so often stained by ugliness, the human soul longs for beauty. And again, the same challenge remains: to create opportunities to invite seekers into an experience of beauty that opens their minds and hearts to God.



from Brooks Robinson, Pastoral Associate

# STEWARDSHIP & EVANGELIZATION

The annual report affords us the occasion to ponder and notice the movements of God in our parish community over the course of a year. Part of this pondering includes noticing what we have been doing and how we have been doing it. The finances, the building projects, and most importantly, the ministry.

A number of years ago, Simon Sinek challenged us all to think about the *why* of our organizations. Many organizations had the *what* and *how* down – they knew what they were doing and how they were doing it– just as the annual report reflects. However, what many organizations tended to lack in was the “why” piece of whatever it was that they were doing. This lacking, according to Sinek, leads to organizational confusion and stagnation. The same is true for once successful and innovative organizations that lose sight of their why, their *raison d’être*. Failures to understand the why leads to failures in mission, and eventually failures in the what and how. Taking stock then of the why is life giving and purpose driving – and we are purpose driven beings.

So take a moment and ask yourself about our parish why. What is the Church’s why? Why does our community exist? How does our why drive our parish community? Does our why and what we do and how we do it align?

These fundamental questions are more important than ever. Especially as we move into a post-pandemic world. According to recent data put out just before the pandemic, from the University of Chicago’s General Social Survey, Catholicism dropped from around 27% of the US population to about 23%. While self-identifying Catholics that never attend Mass went from 7% in 1973 to about 14%. These numbers may be disheartening, but they challenge us to discover where God is already at work amidst the changing religious landscape.

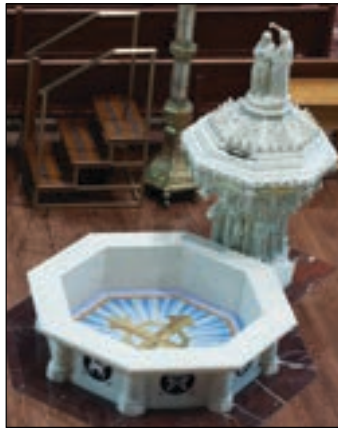
This discovery is our mission. To be more precise, the Church’s why we discover is God’s mission. Fr. James Mallon in his book *Divine Renovation* (also a key book behind the Arch-

diocese’s renewal journey) speaks of not the Church having a mission, but the mission having a Church. The Triune God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit– is a God of mission, and has graciously invited us to participate and co-mission through his Son and in the power of the Holy Spirit. If you are baptized, you are CO-missioned for mission – specifically God’s mission. Pope Francis expresses this in *Evangelium Gaudium*, “in virtue of their baptism, all the members of the People of God have become missionary disciples” (EG, §120). Once more, **if you are baptized, you are CO-missioned for God’s mission.**

The mission that is God’s mission is to “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19). Notice, we must go. Not stay put and hope our buildings, bells, and billboards attract – *but go*. In our cooperating with God, in responding to our baptismal call, the Church becomes an instrument God uses to proclaim God’s mercy, God’s drawing us to make us his children (EG, §111-112).

However, to carry out this mission that God has graciously invited us to participate in, we must be stewards of the temporal goods. By giving up our **time, talent, and treasure**, we are able to respond to the call of our why in our “whats” and “hows.” This means, we baptize, we see others face-to-face, we draw in, we invite in, we create spaces of deep hospitality that we are able to accompany others as they seek to discover how God has been already present to them. In other words, as Henri J.M. Nouwen reminds us in, *A Spirituality of Fundraising*, stewardship, fundraising, and generosity are all concrete ways we help the Kingdom of God come about.

I invite you to join me in responding to the vocational call of our shared baptism. To consider the ways in which you may be generous with your **time, talent, and treasure** for the sake of the Kingdom of God and the mission with a Church.



Share the gift of your **Time & Talent**:



[www.tinyurl.com/stalphonsusTTT](http://www.tinyurl.com/stalphonsusTTT)

**“The human person can only fully discover the true self through a sincere gift of himself.”**

– *Gaudium et Spes*, §24,  
Vatican Council II, 1965

Share the gift of your **Treasure** here:

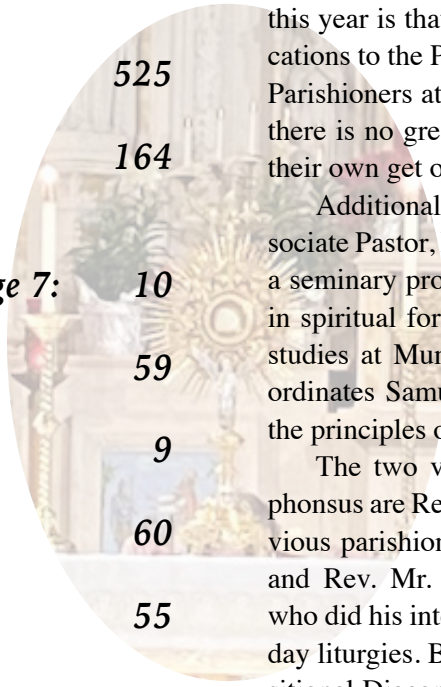


[www.givecentral.org/location/39/event/180](http://www.givecentral.org/location/39/event/180)

# OUR PARISH FAMILY: STATS & NUMBERS



<i>Registered Families:</i>	<b>2090</b>
<i>Total Parishioners:</i>	<b>5257</b>
<i>AACA Enrollment for school year 2021-22</i>	<b>525</b>
<i>Children Baptized:</i>	<b>164</b>
<i>Baptisms of Adults and Children over age 7:</i>	<b>10</b>
<i>Students Confirmed:</i>	<b>59</b>
<i>Adults Confirmed:</i>	<b>9</b>
<i>First Communions:</i>	<b>60</b>
<i>Weddings celebrated:</i>	<b>55</b>
<i>Couples celebrating Marriage elsewhere:</i>	<b>22</b>
<i>Funeral Masses offered:</i>	<b>26</b>
<i>Ordinations to the Diaconate:</i>	<b>2</b>



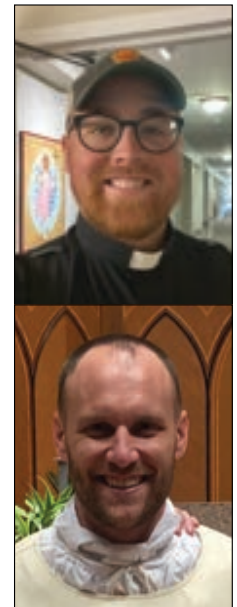
## VOCATIONS, THE GREATEST STAT... x 2

There are many sources of pride and joy for a parish. Those causes of joy can run the gamut of spiritual, pastoral, service, academic or evangelization programs. The most significant statistic this year is that our parish has very strong connections to *two* vocations to the Priesthood this year for the Archdiocese of Chicago. Parishioners at Fr. Bauer’s home parish would readily testify that there is no greater moment of joy for a parish than to see one of their own get ordained as a priest.

Additionally, we are very proud of our Associate Pastor, Fr. Pat Gorman, who teaches in a seminary program for men spending a year in spiritual formation before being academic studies at Mundelein Seminary. He also coordinates Samuel Group, a program to teach the principles of discernment to young adults.

The two vocations connected to St. Alphonsus are Rev. Mr. Kevin Gregus (top), previous parishioner and Men’s Group member, and Rev. Mr. Michael Mehringer (bottom), who did his internship here and assists at Sunday liturgies. Both were ordained to the Transitional Diaconate in May of 2022. They will be ordained to the Priesthood for the Archdiocese of Chicago on May 20, 2023.

The soon-to-be Father Michael Mehringer will celebrate his Solemn Mass of Thanksgiving as a priest at St. Alphonsus on May 21, 2023 at 9 a.m. All parishioners are invited to attend the glorious celebration of the First Mass of a newly-ordained priest!



## SEEING, KNOWING & LOVING GOD – THROUGH SERVICE & FRIENDSHIP

*Thoughts by Priyanka Gowala, Young Adult Ministry*

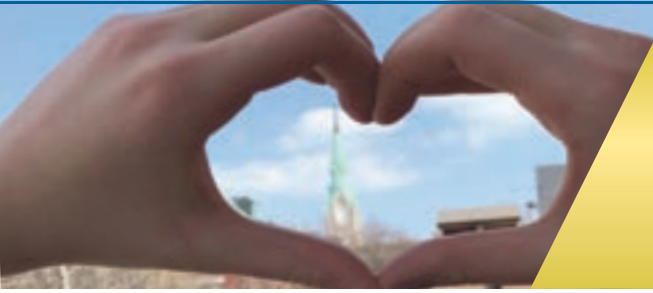
Our community is so vibrant and is wonderfully led by priests with a deep desire to serve, which sets a great example to parishioners and reflects the true beauty and nature of the Catholic Church.

Being a St. Alphonsus parishioner has allowed me to be of service to a community in various ways: as a leader in Young Adult

Ministry, coordinating weddings, and lecturing. I have found lifelong friends who have inspired a deeper relationship with the Lord.

Throughout my time at St. Alphonsus, I have grown in my faith, deepened my relationship with Christ, and with the help of this community and Fr. Pat Gorman and Fr. Steve Bauer. St. Alphonsus feels like home; it is my spiritual home.





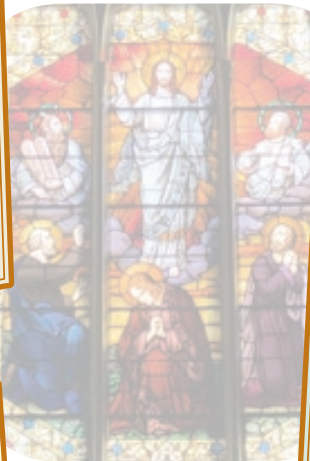
# HIGHLIGHTS THRU THE YEAR



The Boy Scouts of St. Alphonsus Parish celebrated an historic milestone of 100 years of scouting.



After the pandemic, AACA rebooted the school children's choir in the church under the direction of Brian Bloye and Sami Dubiel. By the third practice, 50 students were coming to sing for school Masses. They join the church choir on select Sundays, and have also become a regular feature at the Lakeview tree lighting ceremony near the start of the Christmas season.



The parish began a new annual fund- and fundraiser celebrating National Star Wars Day with a showing of the movie at the Athenaeum on May the Fourth with a trivia contests, photo booth, costumes, and more! Stay tuned for info on the 2023 event featuring Episode V.



On the Feast of Corpus Christi, and with the help of the Knights of Columbus, the Men's Group, and a number of other individuals, the parish held a Eucharistic Procession around the block with liturgical chant, incense, and a large troop of candle-bearing altar servers

## SEEING, KNOWING & LOVING GOD... IN SCOUTS & SERVICE

*Reflections from Tom, Sue and Sam Brusstar*

St. Alphonsus is the focus of our community life as a family, most importantly with the gift of Sacraments and spiritual formation. We love helping St. Alphonsus to be a source of continuity and peace for our neighbors, pitching in with background work as altar server, lector, and Eucharistic minister to let the priests' work shine. It is humbling to serve small roles in the presence of God.

Scouting is an opportunity to share fun and adventure with other families, continuing a Scouting tradition here since 1922.

It was an honor for Sam to complete an Eagle Scout project, creating a prayerful meeting space in the rectory courtyard.

St. Alphonsus offers a harbor of peace and inspiration for the neighborhood. We rejoice together in public celebrations like Oktoberfest, we grow in youthful adventure like Scouting, and we return always to the anchor of the liturgy and the sacraments offered in such a beautiful setting.



from the Pastor

# OKTOBERFEST!

**G**emütlichkeit – a fancy term that, in German, describes the spirit, fun and atmosphere of Oktoberfest in a single word that makes a whole lot more sense in its native language. In English it takes a whole phrase or an entire sentence to capture its meaning – or simply an enjoyable experience of the Fest itself. And this year's celebration of Oktoberfest was no exception.

One of the really odd things about an Oktoberfest article in the Annual Report is that this report covers the previous fiscal year, that is from July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. But our *most recent* experience of the Fest, in late September of 2022, did not fall in the fiscal year covered by the Annual Report you are currently reading. Fortunately, both this year's Fest and the Oktoberfest of 2021 were great success stories – very important since the Fest is the church's biggest fundraiser.

After a pandemic-induced hiatus in 2020, Oktoberfest returned in 2021, but in a somewhat reduced capacity due to lingering health concerns. We were not able to hold the Kinderfest or the craft beer tasting because it was an indoor event. Thankfully those returned with appropriate fanfare for this year's Fest.

Both last year and this year enjoyed ideal weather to draw big crowds, which came for the great lineup of music, beer, fun, friendship, our unique traditional bratwurst, and, of course, Gemütlichkeit! Many people were eager to come out and celebrate, especially after a year of feeling cooped up at home. As a result, those factors combined to make a very successful Oktoberfest in which the church netted \$113,000. That profit



significantly helped the church with operating expenses and ever-increasing maintenance expenses on a campus with aging buildings and infrastructure.

A successful Fest is only possible because of the *hundreds* of volunteers needed to host a street party that in 2021 welcomed more than 10,000 people through its gates. We are super thankful for all the parishioners and neighbors who pitched in to help the parish meet our goal. To them, we say a very heartfelt *Dankeschön!*

For Oktoberfest 2021 we welcomed a new beer sponsor, Sam Adams, who also supplied us this year. A few critical voices lamented the lack of a Munich-based beer company. But in 2021, no German beer companies were willing to supply Fests abroad due to ongoing supply chain struggles and shipping delays. To those critics, Our German pastor explains that Sam Adams' Oktoberfest recipe is brewed according to the strict *Rheinheitsgebot* (the German beer purity law) and is the only American beer that is allowed to be served on the official festival grounds in Munich. To that explanation, the only appropriate response is *Prost* – the German word for Cheers!



**This year's Oktoberfest, the 20th Anniversary, featured the sale of commemorative merchandise, some of which was included in the Brewmaster package.**



**COMING NEXT YEAR:** The 2023 Fest will sell two private parties on the rectory's newly renovated rooftop. On Friday and Saturday evenings, you can purchase and host a party for up to 40 people on the rooftop, which overlooks the parking lot stage, and offers a great view of the city skyline. Beer, brats and other perks included; some restrictions apply. Contact Fr. Bauer for more info.



# SUPPORTING THE PARISH FINANCIALLY

## REGISTER FOR ELECTRONIC GIVING

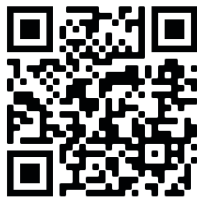
As our world gets more technological and more financial transactions are done with a credit card number through the internet or an app, fewer people are carrying cash in their wallets. This phenomenon only accelerated during the pandemic when some stores or restaurants decided to go cashless and only accepted payments with a debit or credit card.

This new normal has hit churches hard. In the past when the usher was carrying the collection basket down the aisles, people would open their purses or wallets and grab some cash for their offering to God and the church. But if worshippers do not have as much physical currency with them, collections shrink, putting additional pressure on what is too often an already thin budget.

Electronic giving is a simple and effective solution. A number of our parishioners already support St. Alphonsus electronically – and for that we are extremely grateful! Nevertheless, it is beneficial to our ministries and operations to grow that number. And so we would like to invite parishioners who have not done so before to sign up for electronic giving. It is easy to set up, reliable, and secure. Scan the QR Code below or go online to:

[www.givecentral.org/location/39/event/180](http://www.givecentral.org/location/39/event/180)

Thank you for supporting us and our ministries.



### What if...?

**1 hour...** If every parishioner could contribute the equivalent of only **one hour** worth of their wages to the church each week, we would easily be able to balance the budget.

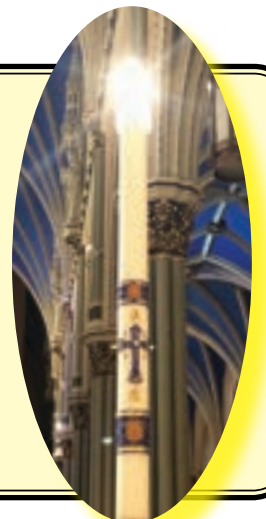
**2 hours...** If every parishioner would contribute **two hours** worth of wages to the church each week (which is still only half of the Biblical concept of tithing 10%), we would never have to ask for money again.

**4 hours...** If every parishioner tithed according to the Biblical standard of **10%**, we could air condition the church!

**The Math:** Simply divide your annual salary by 2,000 to approximate your hourly wage. Then multiply that amount by four or two, and sign up for electronic giving.

## Honor the Memory of a Loved One

Even though our Catholic faith can offer us comfort and consolation, losing a loved one is never easy. Memorial bequests – or remembering St. Alphonsus Parish in your will – can be a very spiritually meaningful way to honor the life of a loved one who has gone to be with the Lord. To make a bequest, you may visit our parish's Give Central page at [www.givecentral.org/location/39/event/28307](http://www.givecentral.org/location/39/event/28307) or contact our Parish Operations Director, Daniel Szymanski, via email at [dszymanski@stalphonsuschicago.church](mailto:dszymanski@stalphonsuschicago.church) or by calling 773-525-0709 ext. 2110.



# PARISH CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS



## INTERIOR COURTYARD

The interior courtyard of the rectory a stunning facelift from Sam Bruster, who did the work as his Eagle Scout project. After cleaning out the debris, he built a solid picnic table, hung lighting, and led a team of scouts to install Astroturf. An icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help was mounted on the wall, providing a peaceful atmosphere.

What had been a ignorable drab space has been completely transformed into a warm and welcoming outdoor venue, perfect for picnics, meetings or any gatherings where people simply desire to outside when the weather is nice.

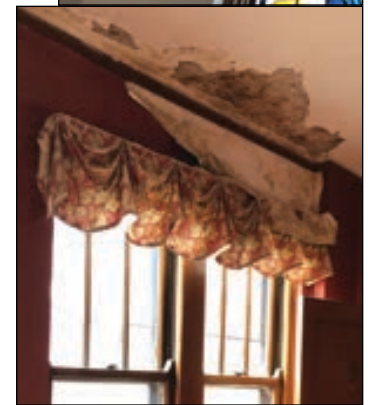
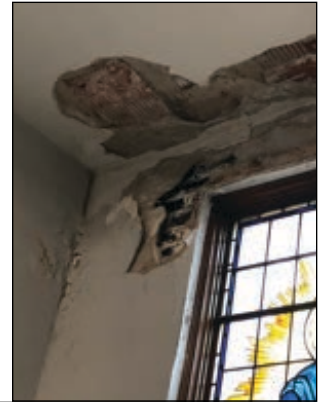


## RECTORY WALLS & ROOFTOP

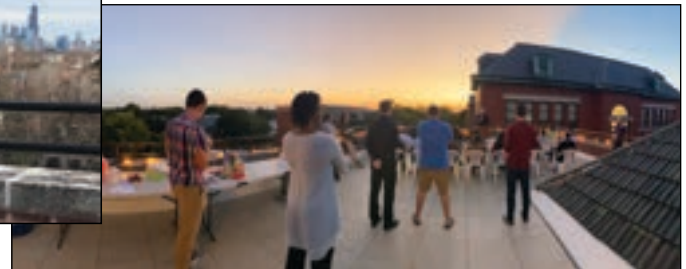
The Rectory rooftop has two sections, a pitched roof and a flat roof section on the south half of the building. In the summer of 2020 the entire flat roof had to be rebuilt, along with some masonry and a number of window lintels. Deterioration of the mortar, bricks, and roofing material was causing efflorescence in the attic, water leaking from the ceiling, and significant plaster damage on walls, ceilings, and stairwells of the rectory’s third floor – including in one of the priest rooms. Much of the exterior work was completed in 2020, but the extensive interior plaster repairs had to be deferred.

Now in 2022, two years later, the restoration of the crumbling plaster in the stairwell and throughout the priest’s residential floor was finally addressed.

Additionally there was one significant upgrade: the addition of a broad rooftop patio, suitable for events and gatherings of parish or school groups. The new rooftop deck offers a spectacular view of the city’s skyline!



**New rooftop deck!**



## SEEING, KNOWING & LOVING GOD... THROUGH MUSIC & SONG

*Reflections from Sami Dubiel: cantor, teacher, mom.*

I love to come to Mass because it is the most powerful prayer. Here I find a community of people with a mindset of hope, a heart of love, and a commitment to serving others.

For me, music has always been a bridge to my faith formation. I grew up enveloped in a musical family, and music has been ingrained in my being at church for as far back as I can remem-

ber. I find a deeper appreciation for the liturgy through the music at St. Alphonsus. It is not lost on me how lucky I am to be given the opportunity to sing under the direction of Brian Bloye and with the outstanding people in the St. Alphonsus choir. St. Augustine tells us that when we sing, we pray twice. I hope every time a note is sung, I’m helping others to connect to their faith the way the music helps me connect to mine.



# TWO UPCOMING CAP-EX PROJECTS: “PILLARS & PIPES”

## Views of the Veranda

In August of 2022, as a result of decades of erosion plus vibrations from road construction on Southport Avenue, a few limestone blocks of the veranda wall washed out onto the sidewalk.

The church’s veranda is as historic as it is iconic, adding to the architectural beauty of St. Alphonsus. The cornerstone of the church was laid in 1889, and the veranda, adorned with her limestone pillars and railing, stands proudly in the earliest photos of the church, even though it was not present in the original blueprints.

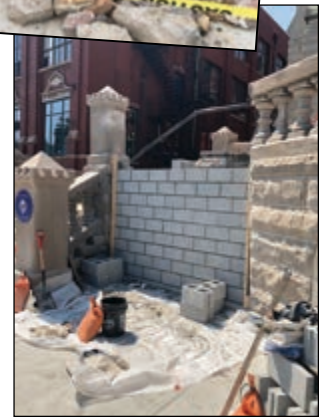
In the spring of this year, the parish, with the assistance of the Archdiocese, had consulted with architects and engineers about the gradual erosion around the staircases and the mortar in the veranda’s façade. They all advised us we had a range of at least 3-5 years before needing to address the erosion. However, the vibrations caused by the roadwork’s heavy construction equipment accelerated the timeline.

The veranda actually has two walls: the external limestone façade plus an internal brick wall with steel supports. The deck of the veranda is structurally sound and very stable, with a bevy of concrete support columns beneath it. The decorative limestone wall, especially surrounding the staircases, is where the erosion has been happening, and the area that has to be restored.

The architect we hired has since drawn up blueprints for the veranda’s restoration, from which options will be discussed and estimates on costs will be issued. Exact bids on the job will take a few more months to acquire, but the total cost will be substantial: in excess of half a million dollars.

Repair work of this magnitude will require a special appeal or campaign. But if you’d like to donate now to this restoration work, go online to

[www.givecentral.com/location/39/event/35738](http://www.givecentral.com/location/39/event/35738)

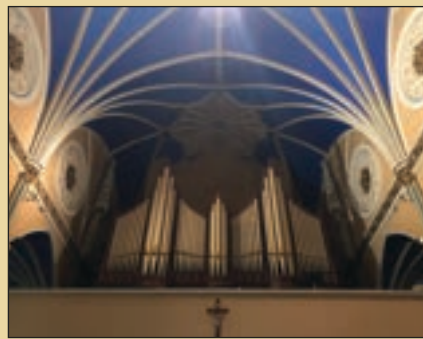


## Making Organ Pipes Sing

– by Brian Bloye, Music Director

Toward the end of the 1980s, the parishioners of St. Alphonsus acquired a *Casavant Frères* organ from a church that was closing in Bay City, Michigan. The Casavant company, out of Quebec, is known for the sonic and visual beauty of its instruments. This was no small victory for the parish, and was due to the hard work of music director Jim Ramseth. Our original organ was destroyed in the church fire of 1950.

Unfortunately, the parish at the time did not have sufficient funds to complete a worthy façade for the instrument. In Bay City, the organ had been hidden behind a grated screen, and so didn’t need to be presentable to the public. At St. Alphonsus, lacking such a front, the “guts” of the organ were all exposed, and not in an intentional or aesthetically pleasing way. This is, in fact, what I encountered when I arrived on the scene in 2002: the organ sounded fantastic, but was neither visually



appealing nor mechanically reliable.

As part of the 2008 restoration of the church, we contracted with the Berghaus company of Bellwood, IL to update the console, and to build a proper case for the organ. It matched and complemented the space, and also featured a new row of “façade” pipes, which are the painted pipes that today face outward. Languids (or “tongues”) were installed in the front-facing rank of pipes. But because of budgetary constraints at that time, those pipes were not mechanically connected, leaving that job for another day. So today, when you look up at the organ, the visible rank of pipes you that see *are all mute!*

On the organ, the deep and low pedal stop (Principal 16’) has never before sung out; its unique voice has never been heard.

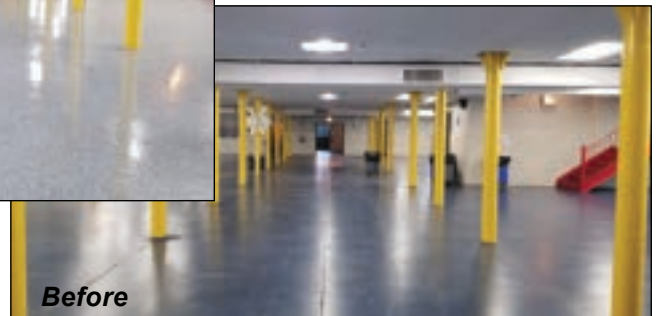
As the parish reviews upcoming capital expense projects and fundraising options, we hope to empower these visually stunning pipes to actually sing into the church, and for the first time ever, to add their power, depth, and richness to the full ensemble!

# AACA'S CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

## THE CAFETERIA

Our cafeteria is one of the most used areas of our building, with all students in our school using the space, it was in need of upgrading. Using a grant, we were able to completely renovate the flooring, covering the area with a beautiful and durable epoxy. In addition, we

created new uniform storage throughout the space allowing better function in the space. Finally, new furniture was purchased for the aftercare area of the cafeteria.



## THE HEATING SYSTEM

In one of the kindergarten rooms, all of the pipes were replaced with fin tube.

In addition, thermostats were installed on the radiators in all of the classrooms (*inset*), allowing teachers to set a specific temperature for the room.



## EXTERIOR

The exterior of the building also had many improvements. The gutters on parts of the building were replaced with copper gutters. Some ground floor windows were replaced. Masonry work was done on one side of the building, and part of the brick fence was rebuilt.



## BATHROOM UPGRADES

The girls' bathroom on the first, second, and third floors received a few much needed upgrades. A new drainage system in the floors was created, drop ceilings were added for ease if repairs are needed.

All toilets and valves in the entire building were replaced.

## THE SCHOOL BOILER ROOM

The boilers for the school are housed in a small room just south of the back parking lot entrance. To improve ventilation and operational efficiency, the wall between the boiler room and an adjacent janitor storage room was knocked down. Additional tune-ups were made to help the boilers running smoothly.



# AACA'S CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS

## RENOVATED PARKING LOT ENTRANCE MAKES BIG IMPACT

**T**his year, the Fund in Need fundraiser focused on the back entrance. This entrance, located off of the parking lot, is the most used entrance in the building. Not only was the area unattractive, it also included our boiler room, which needed renovations to function properly. When our students enter their school, we want them to feel like it is a second home. We want them to feel safe and happy to be here. The goal with this fundraiser was to make the back entrance a warmer and more inviting space for our students, staff, families, and visitors.

In order to accomplish this, the first step was dismantling the room that held the boilers, taking down a wall and raising the ceiling to make it a bigger space. This allowed the boilers to function properly and not overheat. A new wall was built surrounding the entrance and a new roof was installed.

AACA worked with an artist to design a mural to cover the new wall and entrance area. It was important that the mural depicted the pillars of the school, showcasing arts integration, academics, citizenship, and Catholic Identity, and muralist Mia Larson, made that vision a reality in her beautiful work. Finally, a new "Rockets" bike rack was installed in the front of the entrance.

The second phase of the project will continue in the next fiscal year, as we grow the outdoor space making the entrance even more attractive.



*The finished product (above) compared to the entrance before work began.*

***This pair of before (right) and after (below) photos both taken from the same vantage point above the back entrance clearly show the condition of the old roof as compared to the new TPO roof with energy-saving material.***



Reflections from Parishioners

# SEEING, KNOWING, AND LOVING GOD...



## ...IN LITURGY & IN OUR NEIGHBOR

Reflections from Paul Gillespie, Knights of Columbus.

My family has felt so welcomed at Sunday Masses, and also other liturgies and spiritual activities: daily Mass, Eucharistic Adoration, vespers and novenas. It has helped me not to worry, give it all to Jesus, and say “Jesus, I trust in You.”

The work of the Knights gathers parishioners for parish gatherings, blood drives, novenas, food pantry collections, Mission OLA service outings, parish fish fries, and much more – all things I love about the parish!



St. Alphonsus helps people move beyond Sunday Mass and respond to God’s immeasurable love as we love God and His people, not as an island, but as a wonderful parish community.

## ...IN HOLY FRIENDSHIPS AND FUN

Reflections from Ephrem & Maeve Shaffer

The young adult community at St. Alphonsus is so vibrant because friendships are rooted in the mutual pursuit of holiness. We have lots of fun together as a community, but the bonds run much deeper than simply fun. Because everyone is intentional about their faith, it’s easy to have meaningful discussions about how we want to lead our lives. We found many holy couples at St. Alphonsus who have been mentors to us as we progressed from dating to married life.



The faith community at St. Alphonsus is the perfect combination of fun and virtuous. The friendships run deep because they are rooted in Christ, and will last a lifetime. And we have a ton of laughs along the way!

## ...IN SCRIPTURE & BEAUTY of SPIRIT

Reflections from Pegeen, Walking with Purpose Bible Study.

I feel good being a member of our faith family and happy to share about our beautiful church and school with others.

The women’s Bible study, Walking With Purpose, has been a

game changer, providing me with insight, inspiration and self-help. WWP is an opportunity to read the Scriptures, develop lasting friendships and get to know the importance of going to church and having faith in my life.

St. Alphonsus is a loving community of caring priests and religious friends providing enjoyment, satisfaction and meaning of God in our lives. Our church is a safe place in our busy city, to feel the Light of World and spend time with Mary & Jesus and grow spiritually!



## ...IN CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING

Reflections from Madelyn Nelson & Timothy Kennedy, an engaged couple, running Safe Families for Children.

We were both drawn to St. Alphonsus by the rich history, strength of the faith community, and welcoming nature of the parish staff and parishioners. St. Alphonsus is a place to ask honest questions, learn from each other, and grow in relationship with Christ one step at a time.

We are both strong believers in the example set by Dorothy Day and others who champion Catholic social



teaching. Loving the poor begins by challenging ourselves to serve those around us, and then by forming genuine relationships with them. In our ministry, we see Christ in the faces of the parents we serve, the children that we host, and the compassion of our strong volunteer network.

# CHURCH-SIDE FINANCIAL REPORT

## Bullet Point Takeaways:

- 1** – Sunday Collections improved \$44k versus FY2021, which is about a 50% recovery back toward the FY2020 level of \$794k that was mostly pre-pandemic.
- 2** – The Christmas collection last year was down by \$26k compared to 2020
- 3** – All Collections totaled improved just \$15k or 2%.
- 4** – The Fundraising Net Income increase of \$90k or 490% was due to the successful return of a fuller Oktoberfest with excellent weather. Oktoberfest 2021 net income was closer to the historical average.
- 5** – Overall expenses increased about 8% primarily due to increased Personnel costs.
- 6** – Personnel costs increased back to FY2020 levels, but are still significantly less than the three years previous to that (FY2017-FY2019) when these costs were on average 25% (or \$175k) higher when there were three more employees.
- 7** – Altar & Liturgical Supplies increased about 47% or \$7,800 and Miscellaneous increased as the parish was able to return to full liturgical and other pastoral activity schedules.
- 8** – Generally otherwise, expense categories were fairly flat.

	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22
<b>ORDINARY INCOME</b>		
Sunday and Holy Day Collections	\$700,870	\$745,354 <sup>1</sup>
Christmas Collection	\$76,249	\$59,794 <sup>2</sup>
Easter Collection	\$34,956	\$35,733
Other Collections	\$22,739	\$8,961
Tuition (for Religious Education)	\$17,943	\$18,645
Fees	\$4,263	\$5,470
Lease & Rental Income	\$131,776	\$131,782
Fund Raising Net Income	\$23,035	\$112,879 <sup>4</sup>
Interest & Investment Income	\$2,918	\$1,568
Auxiliary Groups	\$0	-\$556
Miscellaneous Income	\$154,996	\$171,183
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$1,169,744</b>	<b>\$1,290,812</b>
<b>ORDINARY EXPENSES</b>		
Salaries	\$498,227	\$540,603 <sup>5</sup>
Employee Benefits	\$120,755	\$150,670
Books & Supplies, Non-Liturgical	\$8,873	\$10,709
Administrative Expenses	\$53,314	\$57,185
Food Service & Meals	\$14,070	\$17,445
Utilities	\$109,659	\$99,134
Maintenance & Building Repairs	\$108,419	\$111,861
Interest Expense	\$43	\$0
Altar and Liturgical Supplies	\$16,418	\$24,181 <sup>7</sup>
Furniture & Equipment	\$56	\$324
Archdiocesan Assessment	\$138,545	\$139,062
PRMAA Assessment	\$44,272	\$44,272
Property & Casualty Insurance	\$104,396	\$107,308
Auto Ins-Priest Owned Vehicle	\$2,570	\$2,690
Miscellaneous	\$10,457	\$22,892
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$1,230,075</b>	<b>\$1,328,337</b>
<b>Net Ordinary Income/(Loss)</b>	<b>(\$60,331)</b>	<b>(\$37,524)</b>



# WHY WE LOVE OUR SCHOOL...



## ...BECAUSE OF THE ARTS PROGRAM

by Sam & Mark, 7<sup>th</sup> grade

There are so many options in our arts program. We don't just have art, we have collaborative art making, doodling, paper mache, sewing, graphic design, so you can choose what interests you. Our teachers are great, they really know what they are doing. They are so talented.



## ...BECAUSE OF CATHOLIC IDENTITY

by Nora, 4<sup>th</sup> grade

When I go to church at St. Alphonsus, my favorite part is the songs about Jesus. I love hearing Bible stories. We get to learn about him in school and Religion class and it is so cool to hear about his teachings and what he did. I enjoy praying and knowing that you get that chance to be with God.



## ...IT'S A GREAT PLACE TO TEACH

by Kathy Roberts, 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Math Teacher

I love the spirit, passion, camaraderie and synergy of the community at Alphonsus Academy and Center for the Arts. It's a unique place where I can continue to grow as an educator and person, thanks to my students, families, and the incredibly talented faculty and staff.



## ...BECAUSE OF SERVICE TO OTHERS

by Liliana, 7<sup>th</sup> grade

At Alphonsus Academy we recognize it is important to be of service to others because we want to help people in need. It makes us better people. It also makes us feel good about ourselves. We love to help!



## ...BECAUSE IT'S ALPHONSUS ACADEMY & CENTER FOR THE ARTS!

*Reflections from the Diesfeld Family:*

*Yolz, Catalina, Mona Mia & Jives*

What I love the most about AACA are the students, teachers and families. As a parent volunteer, I have had the pleasure and honor to engage with the students and our incredible teachers. I love how the students are eager to lead, help and participate in projects, and surround our children with positive influences. I love to see our AACA teachers in action; how they command a room filled with vibrant energy is simply magical.

Our AACA families rock! From car pools, to school sports, school art productions, events & community

service – our AACA families are there! It is the essence of community. To know that the spirit of love, compassion, acceptance, creativity, and the pursuit of excellent education surrounds all our children at AACA is a profound gift.







# SCHOOL-SIDE FINANCIAL REPORT

## Bullet Point Takeaways:

**1** – Sharp increase of \$532k in Tuition income due to 44 more students in FY2022 versus FY2021.

**2** – Sharp 270% increase (\$231k) in Fees income due to more students & post-pandemic activity increase.

**3** – Outside Funding of \$47k accounts for Empower Illinois TCS scholarships separately from Tuition.

**4** – The 70% increase in Net Fund-raising (\$227k) is due almost entirely to the Art & Soul event switching back from virtual to in-person.

**5** – Personnel costs increased as expected (about 7.5%) since we were able to return to full activities post-pandemic and correspondingly fuller staffing.

**6** – AACA heavily invested extra in Books & Supplies for multiple-year instructional materials in FY2022 and will be doing the same in FY2023.

**7** – Maintenance & Building Repair expenditures increased 98% (\$285K), as the School completed numerous building improvement projects as well as some deferred maintenance.

**8** – Bookkeeping change accounts for large (matching) decreases in Misc. Income & Misc. Expenses.

**9** – Budget surplus due to initially planning for 500 students and having a total enrollment of 525 students.

### ORDINARY INCOME

	FY 2020-21	FY 2021-22
Tuition	\$4,352,738	\$4,884,924 <sup>1</sup>
Fees	\$135,960	\$366,959 <sup>2</sup>
Outside Funding Sources	0	\$46,975 <sup>3</sup>
Fund Raising Net Income	\$323,259	\$550,216 <sup>4</sup>
Interest & Investment Income	\$15	\$25
Auxiliary Groups	0	-\$2,360
Miscellaneous Income	\$199,126	\$22,141 <sup>8</sup>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>\$5,011,098</b>	<b>\$5,868,879</b>

### ORDINARY EXPENSES

Salaries	\$2,884,434	\$3,036,839 <sup>5</sup>
Employee Benefits	\$772,712	\$896,279 <sup>5</sup>
Books & Supplies	\$63,560	\$198,083 <sup>6</sup>
Administrative Expenses	\$204,619	\$212,041
Food Service & Meals	\$98	\$4,047
Utilities	\$76,963	\$118,374
Maintenance & Building Repairs	\$288,939	\$573,442 <sup>7</sup>
Furniture & Equipment	0	\$6,438
Interest Expense	\$261	\$0
OCS Assessment	\$22,845	\$24,984
Property & Casualty Insurance	\$93,474	\$109,039
Miscellaneous	\$231,555	\$41,008 <sup>8</sup>
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$4,639,460</b>	<b>\$5,220,574</b>

<b>Net Ordinary Income/(Loss)</b>	<b>\$371,639</b>	<b>\$648,305 <sup>9</sup></b>
-----------------------------------	------------------	-------------------------------

In 2019 Alphonsus Academy & Center for the Arts was recognized by the U.S. Department of Education and awarded a Blue Ribbon for Excellence in Education. It is an extraordinarily high honor, one that testifies to the wonderful character of our school faculty, students, families, and administration.

We were very excited to learn that AACA has once again exceeded the benchmarks and standards required for the Blue Ribbon, but even though a particular school may again meet qualifying standards, it must wait five years before reapplying. Nevertheless, we are very proud of our whole school community and applaud them for all their success!



# THE ATHENAEUM CENTER FOR THOUGHT & CULTURE



**R**ight next door to St. Alphonsus Church, you will find the Athenaeum Theater, which was built as part of our campus in 1911 by the Redemptorist Fathers who founded the parish. For many decades the Athenaeum served as an important extension of the parish – providing a home for the artistic and creative development of both St. Alphonsus parishioners and the broader Lakeview community.

However, in recent decades as the Redemptorist order shrunk and the neighborhood shifted, upkeep of the building and mission became increasingly difficult for the Redemptorists and then the Archdiocese to manage; the Athenaeum drifted from its original mission and the parish faced some difficult decisions regarding the future of the historic building.

However, with the pastor's blessing and the generous support of private donors, the Athenaeum Center for Thought & Culture (ACTC) was established in 2020 by parishioners Lawrence & Katie Joy Daufenbach, with the goal of bringing the Athenaeum back to its original roots and re-establishing the Athenaeum as the epicenter of the cultural life of the neighborhood. With the knowledge that the transcendentals, Truth, Goodness, and Beauty always accompany one another, the mission of ACTC is to invite people into encounters with Beauty and to revitalize the great Catholic tradition of the arts from our location in one of Chicago's most unique religious, artistic, and civic buildings.

There are a few additional ways we are revitalizing the Athenaeum:

- Restore the building, slowly but surely. Places matter, history matters and we know it's important to save this historic pillar of the community.
- Produce our own work and support artists who are doing the work of bringing beauty into the world. Help them reach a broader audience and positively impact the world with what they're creating. This includes plans to create gallery & studio spaces for visual artists; and renovation of the existing convent space also on the St. Alphonsus campus to be the future home of a competitive artist in residency program.
- Continue to curate content that aligns with our mission of bringing more beauty and goodness to the world.
- Building/Developing ways for a variety of artists to remain part of their hometown arts scene, and to give other promising artists beautiful venues to hone their talents.

St. John Paul II tells us, "In order to communicate the message entrusted to her by Christ, the Church needs art." And that, "Humanity in every age... looks to works of art to shed light upon its path and its destiny." And indeed, for centuries, the Catholic Church was *the* driving force behind social and cultural life, shaping the moral imagination of the world and supporting the production of great art. The cathedrals of Europe, the paintings of Michelangelo, the tradition of orchestral and choral music, all of these are the product of a



Church deeply engaged in public life and human expression.

In recent decades, the Church has lost its leading voice in arts and culture. Yet, the documents of Vatican II make a fervent appeal to artists: "this world in which we live needs beauty in order not to sink into despair. Beauty, like truth, brings joy to the human heart and is that precious fruit which resists the erosion of time, which unites generations and enables them to be one in admiration. Remember that you are the guardians of beauty in the word."

Through the work of the Athenaeum Center for Thought and Culture and our strong partnership with St. Alphonsus parish, we hope to lead others to encounter Truth through beauty and goodness.

For more info on ACTC and its mission, visit [www.athenaeumcenter.org](http://www.athenaeumcenter.org)

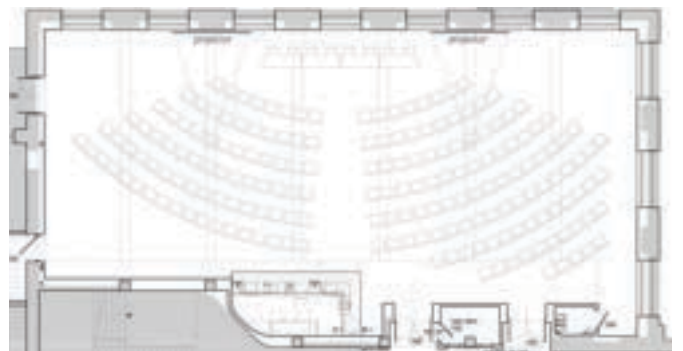
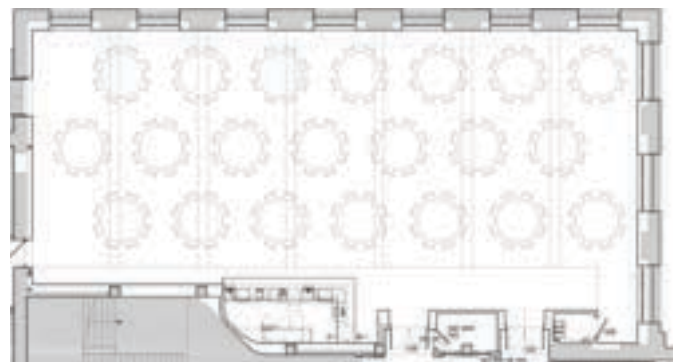
*from the Author*

# THE BRAND NEW PARADISO HALL

**A**s part of the renovation and restoration of the Athenaeum Center on the campus of St. Alphonsus parish is a brand new, state of the art, gathering and event space, *the Paradiso* Designed by Architect John Ronan, the space has been tastefully reimagined with wooden parquet floors and large glass windows overlooking the beautiful St. Alphonsus parish. From baptism and first communion celebrations to wedding receptions, rehearsal dinners, corporate events, presentations & lectures, to conferences and banquets, there is now a beautiful space right in the heart of Lakeview for our community to enjoy.

With 4,000 square feet of open space, seating up to 250, our on-site event/production managers will work with you to configure the room according to your event needs. As a full-service facility, we have an event staff to work with you to create the perfect experience for your guests or business partners. Our services include full event-staffing, a bar with local beers and hand-selected wine list, and we work with a list of vetted catering partners who can provide everything from passed appetizers to sit-down dinners that will be sure to delight and impress. We hope this stunning new space will serve our parish community in countless ways for many years to come.

*For info on the Paradiso and for rental inquiries, visit [www.athenaeumcenter.org](http://www.athenaeumcenter.org)*





# *Saint Alphonsus*

R O M A N C A T H O L I C C H U R C H

[www.stalphonsuschicago.org](http://www.stalphonsuschicago.org) • 773-525-0709  
1429 W. Wellington Ave.; Chicago, IL 60657

## SUNDAY MASS SCHEDULE

- 9:00 a.m. English (1st Sun of each month  
bilingual in English & German)  
11:00 a.m. English  
12:30 p.m. Spanish  
5:00 p.m. English

## WEEKDAY MASS SCHEDULE

- 8:30 a.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday  
6:00 p.m. Wednesday

## EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION

6:30 - 7:30 p.m. on Wednesdays  
(after the 6 p.m. Mass)

## CONFESSION

6:30 - 7:30 p.m. Wednesdays  
11:00 a.m. – Noon Saturdays  
or by appointment at the rectory

## BAPTISMS

Most Sundays at 2 p.m.  
Call the rectory to schedule.

## WEDDINGS

Scheduled at least 6 months in advance.  
Please call the rectory for more info.

Share the gift of your  
**Time & Talent** here:



Thank you for supporting our parish by sharing  
the gifts of your time, talent, and treasure.  
Please know of our prayers for increased blessings  
and spiritual growth for you and your family.

Share the gift of your  
**Treasure** here:

