

Carm Kelly's Story

When asked to write a special memory as a parishioner at St. Clement, many came to mind. One of the most memorable ones was a conversation I had with Fr. Winters. As a faculty member of St. Clement School, several faculty members discussed the possibility of painting the school walls, which hadn't been done in many years. After coming up with a plan, I was to schedule a meeting with Father Winters, present "our plan", and ask permission to move forward with it.

The meeting went as I expected. He looked at me, gave me the "hum" he was good at giving me, and said he didn't think that it would be something that could be accomplished and the parish didn't have the funds to paint the school. The plan we presented was, we would get volunteers to come into the school on a Friday evening and paint the entire school. All the paint and supplies would be donated, and this would be completed before the bell rang on Monday morning. We received Father's permission and moved forward with "the plan".

The donated supplies and paint arrived, the scaffolding was set up, and a great number of volunteers worked tirelessly to reach our goal of painting the school over the weekend. The entire project showed the love and dedication the parishioners have for the parish and the school. It was an achievement that not only the volunteers would be talking about for years to come, but everyone who stepped into the school. It was great to hear the excitement as the students came to school Monday morning.

Lastly, before we finished on Sunday evening, Father Winters walked into the school, shook his head and smiled at all the volunteers. We all knew we had gotten his "stamp of approval" on accomplishing a great parish project.

A memory from Pat Cichowicz

I taught for one year in the 1980s. I was in the new section, teaching 7th and 8th grade science.

What a great experience that was! They were very focused on their projects, and they were fun. We could not use the hall for science projects, so we showed them in the library as mini science fairs.

What smart kids! The projects were very well done. I was impressed. The parents of those kids can be very proud. They were great kids to teach.

Memory From Richard Caja

Holy hour is no sacrifice.

I wonder how many people realize one of St. Clement's strongest assets? Anyone has the opportunity to visit the chapel at any time. At first, I thought, "I will try this out; I'll sacrifice some of my valuable time". After all, it may look good on my resume to get into heaven. I soon realized this is no sacrifice at all.

One of the amazing things about my holy hour is the realization of how desperately God wants me to be there. Isn't that ironic? It is I who desperately needs Him, and He...well, He is God; how can the creator of all things have even the slightest interest in a person as non-important as me? But then again, I have learned that God's ways are not always what I think is obvious. One of mankind's dangerous pitfalls is pride: pride in thinking that we know how things should be, what is best, etc.

The presence of God at the chapel is so tangible. After a while, you feel His presence in that room so strongly that it would be quite intimidating if not for his unbelievable compassion and love. I really do not mean to sound so religiously charismatic, but I can't talk about my holy hour experience without mentioning the tangible feeling of His presence.

On the surface, it may seem like we get very little out of just a one-hour visit, but God tenaciously works to make us better persons. Perhaps just a little at a time. I find my hatreds lessened, my tolerance increased.

In today's world, security is an illusion. Jobs are lost. Marriages dissolve. Loved ones die. The only sure thing is God's love for us, whether we deserve it or not. If you have your doubts, take a visit to the chapel, just around the corner of Lincoln and Madison.

Memory From Patrick & Mary Tabeling

The year was 1984 when I took a new job, necessitating moving my wife Mary and two (small at that time) children from Toledo to Lakewood. We finally moved into a double on Warren Road, just north of Madison, where we lived until 1991, moving into a house where we could continue attending St. Clement Church.

It was shortly after we moved in when we discovered that St. Clement was the closest Catholic Church. At that time, we gave our children the choice of attending Lakewood public schools or St. Clement. Neither of them was interested in having to wear a uniform to school, so the decision was Grant School. When it came to selecting a Catholic Church to attend, we were overwhelmed to learn about all the choices at that time. The deciding factor when selecting a church came when we discovered that Father John Wessel was assigned at St. Clement.

You see, we have a long history with Father Wessel dating back to when my wife's family knew him in Akron when he first came out of the seminary and was stationed at St. Bernard's on Main St. near the university. My wife Mary tells stories of days when Father Wessel would come to her family picnics, playing frisbee while still wearing his Roman collar! It was rare, if ever, that you saw Father Wessel not wearing his cassock, gold cufflinks and Roman collar.

It was Father Wessel who presided over our wedding, which was held at St. Bernard's on June 4, 1977. Since that time, Father Wessel has baptized our children, presided over their weddings, and come to our house for dinner on Thanksgiving and Easter whenever he "didn't have better fish to fry".

We attended the Mass celebrating Father Wessel's retirement as a priest. I fondly recall him always starting his homily with, "My dear friends in Christ". Every year when the weather turned warmer, you could count on a homily about how the church is air conditioned, so shorts, shower thongs, and swimwear are not appropriate Mass attire. There were times when Father Wessel would try to make jokes during his homily by mentioning how the church smelled like moth balls when the seasons changed, necessitating parishioners to bring out their overcoats. He was always so serious, nobody knew if they were "allowed" to laugh.

We have many good memories as parishioners at St. Clement that include being an instructor with the PSR program, where I got to work with such good people as Donna Fiening, Lois Vejdovec, and Becky Zufall. Bob Zufall and I were in charge of the Youth Group, where we held car washes at the Shell gas station on the corner of Warren and Madison to raise funds so the students could socialize and participate in fun activities like a trip to King's Island. When our children went off to college, we handed instruction of the Youth Group over to Kathy and Max Sidley. It was Virginia O'Brien who encouraged me to consider being a lector. I've served at funeral Masses with Joe and Ron, and am a member of the Liturgy committee, first with Dick and Pat Geib, when we met at their home, and now with Karen, Bob, Katie, Mike and Bernie. It is here at St. Clement that I joined the Knights of Columbus so I could work with others to serve those in need. Last, credit goes to Father Osilka and the Cluster committee for saving St. Clement from closing. It was their efforts that are allowing us the opportunity to celebrate 100 years!



Sarah Reinwald's Memory

When I was in college, we would all gather at Mom and Dad's house on Christmas Eve. You see, it, too, is the day of my brother's birthday. In the evening we would have a big dinner celebrating Aaron's day. Then, when it was around 10pm, we would get ready to all walk down our luminary-lit street to celebrate another birthday: Jesus's at St. Clement.

Jeremy Vinluan's Memory

I moved to Cleveland from Virginia Beach, Virginia, back in September 2019. I eventually found Saint Clement and made this my home parish.

A few weeks later, I went to a vigil Mass one Saturday. I had been reading my Bible before Mass; I saw a woman walking into the pew in front of me and sit near me.

After Mass, the same woman turned her head toward me and told me that I would make a good priest.

A few months later, the beginning of the pandemic hit Ohio, and I had already forgotten what she looked like; however, I did not forget the kind words she said to me.

And now, two years later, I am still processing the great recent news that Bishop Edward Malesic has accepted me as a seminarian for the Diocese of Cleveland and asked me to start my formation at Saint Mary Seminary this coming August.

I told the same story of one of the holy women of Jerusalem to Father Mark Latcovich during my admission interviews last month. Father Latcovich told me that same woman might show up on my ordination day. Only God knows!

Thank you, Saint Clement parish.

Kay Hayton's Story

Larry and I joined St. Clement Parish in September 1964, when we purchased our first home in Lakewood. Of our six children, three were married at St. Clement and Larry and I renewed our vows twice, on our 40th and 50th wedding anniversaries. We were planning our 60th, but, unfortunately, he was in a rehab hospital at the time of our anniversary and died shortly after.

During our years at St. Clement, we have been blessed with three wonderful pastors. Each inspired different ideals. Fr. Sweeney always spoke of "be anxious", Fr. Winters of "mystery", and Fr. Workman "be not afraid".

We have enjoyed an active life in the parish. In the early years, as a family, we were involved in the Cub Scouts. Later, I joined the Ladies' Guild. As a couple, we were involved with the renewals through participation and helping with their presentation. In our later years, Larry was on the Finance Council, we became Eucharistic Ministers, worked with a team of weekly collection counters and as members of our choir for several years. The choir was Larry's passion. I had to give it up because of other responsibilities, but he continued on until the pandemic.

All in all, St. Clement has been a very spiritually fulfilling parish with some great leaders, fellow parishioners, and fun activities. Whenever I attend Mass, it always feels like I have come home.

A Memory From Jackie Ronan

Eighteen years ago, I made a big decision to convert to Catholicism and leave my church family at Lakewood Methodist. I began my journey at St Luke's and planned to attend their RCIA program. I believe that the Holy Spirit had a different plan for me.

One Monday night, as I attempted to attend my first RCIA class at St Luke's, I was directed by one of the Sisters at their convent to go over to St. Clement Church, as the classes were going to be combined (It turned out that wasn't the case).

I found my way to St. Clement and down to the basement classroom in the old school, where I was greeted by Father Winters, Sister Mary Jane and the support team: Kim, Bonnie, Jack and Sean. That was it. I had found my new home, my new church family, and the rest is history.

I knew that this welcoming parish and the prayerful RCIA group was the right path for me. I was happy to become part of the RCIA support team for 10 years so that I could welcome and support others on their journey.

I pray that St Clement's will remain a prayerful, welcoming parish for another 100 years!