



We Are St. A's

2009 All-Class Reunion Mass and Luncheon

April 26, 2009:

To quote Psalm 118:24 from the Old Testament: "This is the 'Day' the Lord has made; Let us rejoice in it and be glad." Hallelujah! Hallelujah! It was a picture perfect day in all ways! All of us were called to a place so near and dear to our hearts... our wonderful parish and school community of St. Athanasius. A diverse array of proud alumni from the 1930's all the way through to the 2000's were in attendance. All classes were well represented. It was an indescribable feeling to be reunited with old friends, classmates, neighbors, and teachers from back in our childhood years. Everyone looked marvelous and "young" as could be.

The Mass was just beautiful. The celebrant was none other than Father Joseph Okonski, a fellow alumnus and fearless leader of the St. A's tender flock. He is known lovingly as Father Joe. He gave a wonderful homily with a special tribute to a very nice "young" woman who graduated in 1936 from St. A's. Of course, that would be "Mary Hogan Curtin." She was touched deeply and so were all of us who were present. She had five great children who attended the school, too.

How could one forget to pay homage to the magnificent

St. A's Alumni Website

If you remember those days of long hot May Processions or walking home from school (in either of the North or the South lines) each day for lunch, you need to visit the Alumni Website. The Alumni Association has created this website to try and recapture some of those memories. The website is located at "stasforever.com" and was created as a link back to the past for those many parishioners and graduates who have passed through St. A's since 1928. It is also intended as a means to raise funds for both the St. Athanasius Church and School, as well as provide a way to promote reunion and alumni activities.

The website contains information on noteworthy achievements of St. A's Alumni, videos of past St. A's events, class pictures, church information and a whole lot more. We have tributes to our fallen heroes from Vietnam, the dedicated Priests and Sisters of St. Joseph who have served our parish, as well as a page dedicated to the May Procession and our May Queens.

The site has some pretty neat features including links to the Parish school website, the Vietnam Wall Memorial, as well as you-tube music videos providing a somewhat nostalgic feel of the many decades that have passed since St. A's first opened its doors.

In addition, we have begun to archive the Alumni Newsletters and will be looking to create a "memory lane" for those interested in sharing their thoughts. There is also a guestbook just waiting for your signature so you can say that you were there.

We are always in need of information, so if you have any pictures, news or fun memories of the parish, please provide those to Tim Allen (toolman_146@yahoo.com) or through contact information provided on the website.

-Tim Allen

"St. A's Choral Ensemble" under the direction of their amazing musical conductor, Jesse Vinson! Their rendition of the beautiful song, "How Great Thou Art" filled everyone with inspiring wonderment! Sister Ann Jose, S.S.J., one of St. A's former choir directors, would have been in her glory.

Last but not least, the grand luncheon where we shared delicious food and desserts with all of our favorite people. The school auditorium was decorated so nicely. The blue and gold drapes (so neatly pressed) were a big hit. Yes! as we all know, our school colors. It made you want to belt out a few old cheers that we remember so fondly. We were reminiscing about the good old days with our treasured friends. One memory after another and all special with lots of smiles and tons of giggling. Happiness beyond happiness on this day. For those of you who were unable to join us; you were there with us in spirit.

Now my friends, ending on a prayerful note, all of us "rejoiced" with many blessings beyond Psalm 118, Verse 24 on this unforgettable occasion with our St. A's family. Thank you to one and all and especially to the "St. A's Alumni Association" for their efforts in raising funds to the tune of \$5,000.00.

-Judy Graves Lauria

SAVE THE DATE

This year's All-Class Reunion Mass will be held on April 25, 2010 at the 11:00 Mass. Look for more details in the spring.

Did you know you can make a donation to St. Athanasius through your United Way contribution? Enter the following information on your application form:

St. Athanasius
Social Services
Administration
1906553.

The Alumni Association Committee is looking for new members. If you would like to volunteer to help keep the wonderful spirit of St. Athanasius Parrish alive, please contact Jackie Blee Ferry at jackiebleeferry@comcast.net. We are especially seeking class representatives and an "Information Manager" who will help with technology.

Take Me Back...

Welcome to the first "Take Me Back" article. "Take Me Back" is a hymn, which St. A's Choir sings from time to time. The first lines are: Take me back to the place where I first received Him; Take me back to the place where I first believed." So it's our hope that we can all go back for a short time by sharing our memories. This month I will take you back to the May Procession. For future newsletters please feel free to send your memories to any email address listed in the body of this letter."

"Salve Regina" – "Hail Holy Queen"

Of all the fond memories of St. A's most of you will remember and perhaps cherish the Annual May Processions. Remember the practices – (at least it got us out of class work). Turn a right angle corner; don't talk; hands folded upright in a prayerful manner (so the angel won't fall off). Then there was the music rehearsal with our St. Joseph's Hymnal. We rehearsed and rehearsed hymns such as; "On This Day O Beautiful Mother", "Mother Dearest, Mother Fairest", and "Immaculate Mary".

The girls were always excited to find out what headband we would be wearing; wondered what kind of flowers we would carry, if any. The boys tolerated the rehearsals and the actual procession; but somehow, I believe they liked it better than they acted. The big year was 8th grade – who was going to be the May Queen? What would she wear – in the early history, she wore a white dress and veil. Usually, some children from the Communion Class were chosen to walk with her. The entire 8th grade class would form an honor guard as she would walk up to crown our Lady. We would then join her around Mary's altar and say the Act of Consecration ending with a special hymn to our Lady that only the 8th grade were to sing.

Things change all the time – it's a part of life; but some things are a constant. The tradition of May Procession continues still at St. A's/Immaculate Conception School. On May 26th the school held their May Procession. The strains of "Salve Regina" (sung in Latin) and Tantum Ergo were heard. The Act of Consecration, Crowning and honor guard were still part of the ceremony; but there were a few differences. This year a 2nd grade boy did the crowning; the 1st Communion class still dressed in their finery and the students were very spiritual and attentive to this great event honoring our heavenly Mother.

On Mother's Day, May 10, the parish held a May Procession following the 11 a.m. Mass. The statue of Mary, as the Black Madonna was carried around the block to recitation of the rosary and the singing of "Immaculate Mary."

In this world of so many changes, isn't it reassuring to know that there are some things we valued in our growing years that are still the same today. Please share some of them with us.

- Mary Ann Holtz



St. A's Alumni War Memorial


One of the main areas of interest to the Alumni Association has been the promotion of St. A's alumni heroes that served and died for our country in the Armed Services. The 2009 All-Class Reunion Mass was dedicated to the memories of three Alumni who died serving in Vietnam: William Behan, Michael Crescenz, and John Murphy. The three are honored on the St. A's website stasforever.com, and their names are also posted on the Vietnam Memorial in Washington D.C. You can actually post a comment on the Wall website by visiting our website <http://stasforever.com/History.html> and clicking on the individual's name. It takes just a couple of minutes of time so let's not

forget these brave sons of St. Athanasius parish by providing a large number of comments out there!

We are also looking for the names of any other parishioners/ graduates (men and women) who may have served and died in any of the other wars – World War II, Korea, Gulf, Iraq or Afghanistan. We don't want to miss anyone that may have provided the ultimate sacrifice.

The intent of the Alumni is to create a permanent memorial on the parish grounds, so any ideas or donations will be welcome.

-Tim Allen



St. A's Christmas Bazaar

Looking for that perfect Christmas present? The annual Christmas Bazaar will be held on Dec. 5, 10-5, and Dec. 6, 9:30—1:30 in the gym. The Bazaar will include crafts, food, baked goods, gifts, as well as auction items, wheels and prizes. If you would like to help with the Bazaar, please contact Father Joe at 215-548-2700.



Proceeds From Reunion Mass Help St. Athanasius School

Due to the generosity of the St. A's Alumni members, \$5000 was raised during the Annual Reunion Mass and Luncheon drive. Of these funds, \$2,600 was used to upgrade the computers in the school with Windows XP. The additional \$2,400 was used to create a Scholarship Fund which was used to award eight Catholic students in St. Athanasius School, who demonstrate strong academic and spiritual qualities, a scholarship of \$300 each towards tuition for the 2009-2010 school year. The President of the Alumni Association, Tom Corcoran, awarded the scholarships to the worthy students on the last day of school in June.

Why not continue this generous spirit of giving, by donating to the St. A's Alumni Association or by contacting some of your classmates and establish a Class-Sponsored project in which your graduating class makes a donation to the school in the form of technology or scholarships? What a wonderful way to give back! Contact Tom Corcoran at irishcork4@cerizon.net or call the rectory for more information on how you and your classmates can make a difference in the lives of St. A's students.