

Transformed!

Good News at St. Hilary Parish

December 2016 | January 2017

Baking cookies strengthens family bond

It was an overcast Wednesday and the faintly sweet scent of baking cookies hung in the air. Mike Andy and his sister Kay DeBolt worked in the kitchen of her condo on the second day of their cookie operation. A plate of unfrosted oval and heart-shaped cookies awaited generous dabs of vanilla frosting. To the side was a small basket with a rainbow of containers of sugar crystals. Just off the center of the table sat a lit white candle beside an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

On the counter, the surface was floured, ready for a mound of dough to be rolled flat and cut into shapes. It's a small kitchen with most of the space used for making sour cream cookies that will soon grace the brown-bagged lunches served from St. Bernard Church.

Sharing memories

For Mike, being part of the Cookie Ministry is a means of honoring his

mother while serving others. Not only that, this is the place and activity Mike uses to share the family recipe and treasured memories of their mother's life—the mother Kay never knew. As late morning shifted to early afternoon their story unfolded.

Mike related, "My mother grew up on a farm and was an only child. The most horrific incident happened when she was 11—she was raped and she had the baby when she was 12. That baby was Kay and was immediately given up for adoption."

Secret revealed

"Fast forward to 2012," Mike continued. "I was divorced and moved back home with my folks in Stow to help take care of my mother who had severe Alzheimer's Disease. A couple weeks prior to her death, my dad said I might run into someone I didn't know at the wake." Mike's mother had confided in

her daughter Brenda about the rape and baby she gave up for adoption, and her daughter faithfully kept her secret.

"We had the funeral at Holy Family parish," Mike said. "Roughly a week after, I received a call from Fr. Holland who said, 'Mike, I got the strangest call from this gal who wanted to get medical information about your mother.'"

That call was from Kay who had noticed the obituary of Barbara Andy, nee Oran, from the previous day's newspaper and decided to follow up since Oran was the last name on her birth certificate. Having been diagnosed with an autoimmune disorder, she was hoping for medical information and to fill in the missing spaces of her life. It was the only day the obituary had appeared in the paper.

continued on page 2



At left, Barbara Andy with her Aunt Millie Kodes who taught her how to bake sour cream cookies. On the right is Barbara's oldest daughter Kay DeBolt who bears an uncanny likeness to her mother. Kay and Mike bake cookies to honor their mother.

Family resemblance

The obituary included a wedding picture. Their likenesses were uncanny. Kay added, "I can't explain to you what it was like to always wonder, who, where, why. The minute I saw that obituary I knew a door had opened. When I saw her picture, I just had a feeling. I called my daughters first and then I called my cousin (relatives of her step-mother). I said, 'Ann, look at the newspaper.' She got it up on the computer. I said, 'Do you think there's any resemblance there?' And she said, 'Oh my gosh! I have to call my daughters.'"

Mike continued, "I lost the paper with her contact information, but I have a great memory. About two weeks later I started dialing 411 and on the seventh call I said, "Is this Kathleen DeBolt?" Kay chimed in, "I said, 'Wait a minute—stop. This is my 64th birthday!'"

Meeting at last

When they finally met a couple weeks later, Mike said, "I saw her coming up the drive, fumbling with her purse. I knew she was trying to get out her birth certificate. I could see my mother in her."

Since then, the two have been practically inseparable. Kay no longer drives due to her condition, so Mike takes her shopping and helps her with finances and medications. They talk on the phone three times a day and often go to the movies together.

"I have my crucifix above my sink. When I get up in the morning I go to my kitchen sink, and I say, 'Dear God thank you for allowing me to wake up today' and then I say three Our Fathers. I say the first one looking at the cross. I say the next one with my eyes closed and I can still see that cross in my mind. And it makes me feel so good. I say I'm sorry for my sins and I look forward that day to being a better Christian today than I was yesterday. Kay has been a big part of that," said Mike.



Mike prepares dough before cutting out cookies.

Honoring his mother

"I joined the cookie ministry with my mom and Kay in mind and this operation—and we enjoy doing it!" He remembers his mother as "kind and sweet and not at all materialistic. She asked for nothing throughout her life. Those who knew her said she never had an unkind thing to say about anybody."

In Kay, Mike sees not only the likeness of his mother, but many of her traits as well. "This person is a reflection of her mother. This is the person our mother created and she is a continuation of her on earth. Everyone says how wonderful and sweet she was. The cookies bring us together, and the conversation, like the cookie dough, rolls on and on and on and the cookies are good!"



A batch of Mike and Kay's heart-shaped sour cream cookies.

Barbara Andy's Sour Cream Cookies

4 cups sugar
2 cups butter
6 eggs
2 cups sour cream
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon baking powder
2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract
12 cups flour
Icing
Assorted sprinkles

Bake for 10-12 minutes at 360 degrees
Yield 14 dozen

1. Mix dough and refrigerate overnight.
2. Clean hands thoroughly. Mix ingredients by hand because it is too stiff to use utensils.
3. Melt butter in the microwave.
4. When mixing ingredients mix everything slowly in small amounts, adding wet ingredients after the dry ingredients.
5. Keep counter, rolling pin and cookie cutters sprinkled with flour.
6. Roll out the dough one small batch at a time and return unused dough to the refrigerator. (Dough that's room temperature becomes unmanageable.)
7. Cut out cookies and place on ungreased cookie sheets.
8. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes.
9. Add plenty of love and enjoy!

Is the Church still relevant?

By Dan Samide, Seminarian Intern

Many people think that the Church should and will change her teachings as Western values continue to drift further away from their Christian roots. *Pew Forum* and the *National Study on Youth and Religion* have shown that more and more Americans are abandoning their faith, and that Catholicism is losing adherents most rapidly. Even among those who still identify as Catholics, there are many, especially young adults, who do not agree with Church teaching on a variety of important moral issues.

To explain how we got here I turn to Alasdair MacIntyre. In *After Virtue*, MacIntyre describes a theoretical world that has spurned science, blaming it for several environmental disasters. Deciding that they would be better off without science, labs are burned, scientists are executed, and books, scientific and technological instruments are destroyed. Generations later, an effort is made to reclaim science. All that remains are charred bits of textbooks and the like. Even though the recovered bits of scientific information allow people to sound scientific, we would quickly detect that they don't have the same depth of understanding that a scientist should. It is important to know facts, but it is more important to understand how those facts are connected and why they are true. If no one really understands what a neutrino is, its definition becomes a point of contention and there is no way to logically resolve any resulting dispute. What is scientifically true becomes a matter of opinion rather than fact.

MacIntyre asserts that this type of catastrophe has happened in the realm of moral thinking, and that we are now living in a world that lacks the proper contexts to make sense of moral statements. Centuries ago, the system of virtue ethics provided an arena for moral discussion, and now that this system has been compromised rational

discourse rarely reaches a satisfying conclusion. Eighteenth century philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau contributed a new way of thinking: Human beings exert their own will and this becomes reality for that person, rather than observing reality and conforming one's will to what is actually real and true. Moral conversation has been removed from its proper context, so there is no way to settle the score between rival arguments.

'As long as the Church stands for genuine truth and transcendent love, She will continue to have a unique ability . . . to fulfill the greatest longings of the human heart.'

What we are left with is moral relativism. If we get into a moral discussion with someone, our dialogue partner might say, "That might be true for you, but it isn't true for me," effectively ending the discussion. Pope Benedict has called this the dictatorship of relativism. Like a corrupt dictator, relativism can't be reasoned with or convinced. It simply asserts its will and defines its reality. Even some Christian churches have abandoned their traditional teachings on major moral issues. Many secularists applaud these "enlightened" Christians, and think that the only people who haven't consented to the relativist worldview are fundamentalist Protestants who they quickly dismiss.

But here we are. We are often stereotyped and ignored, because we don't fit any of the categories society has created. We are not permissive

of every thought and behavior. We challenge people because we know that truth matters in the lives of real people. If we do not approve of every choice of every person, society tells us that we must be ignorant, bigoted, and hateful. This is why getting to know a vibrant Catholic is so dangerous for a secular relativist—because in reality we are the farthest thing from ignorant, bigoted, and hateful. We are the one piece that doesn't fit into the relativist's puzzle.

Some people seem to think that for the Church to regain relevance She needs to acquiesce on some of Her beliefs and teachings, but if this happened, the Church would actually lose all relevance. It is the Church's insistence that the truth has not and will not change that makes it compelling, unique and relevant. The Church's influence is undeniable. When the Pope makes a statement about an important issue, it becomes worldwide news. Even if people don't agree with or like Catholicism, they are still talking about it. The Church has never made decisions of faith and morals based on what is the most popular, because the mission of the Catholic Church has never been primarily about getting people into the pews and their money in the collection basket, but getting sinners to heaven.

Everyone is looking for truth, happiness, and love. Modern culture has done its best to provide for these desires, but it came up with opinion, pleasure, and tolerance. That's the best it could do, because truth, happiness, and love are transcendental realities that can be found in the world but never originate in the world. As long as the Catholic Church stands for genuine truth and transcendent love she will continue to have a unique ability, through the working of the Holy Spirit, to fulfill the greatest longings of the human heart – and that will always be relevant.

St. Hilary School: The Difference is in the Details

The greater Akron area is fortunate to have a variety of educational options for families. While there is friendly competition among schools for the available pool of students, all schools are driven by a common goal: to offer the best possible education for students. So what makes one school different from another? What sets St. Hilary School apart from the many other elementary schools in the area? The difference is in the details.

Faith Comes First

The Catholic faith is infused into all aspects of a St. Hilary School education. Students participate in daily prayer, weekly Masses, and other special prayer services and religious observances. Sacramental preparation is incorporated into the religion curriculum. Faith in God and service to others are key concepts that drive the entire formative experience. Solid morals, values and character are as important as any curricular subject.



Dedicated, Caring Staff

Faculty and staff exemplify a love for children and a passion for education every day. Administrators are visible and involved. Seasoned and novice teachers collaborate to share time-tested and new ideas that blend tradition and innovation for the benefit of students. Teachers demonstrate a genuine, personal interest in each student. Individualized instruction is available for students needing additional assistance or enrichment. Faculty and staff dedication goes beyond the classroom, with many extracurricular opportunities available for students.



Engaging Programs and Teaching Methods

Experiential learning allows students to fully immerse themselves in lessons. The school's science lab is a hub of inquiry and exploration. Cutting edge technology, including 1:1 iPads, enables students to truly be 21st century learners. Students also have the ability to challenge themselves with projects and to develop presentation and speaking skills by sharing their knowledge with schoolmates. Class discussions and Socratic seminars foster critical thinking.



Top-Notch Facilities and Amenities

While the original school building may be approaching 60 years of age, ongoing maintenance, repairs and updates keep the facility in premium form. Air conditioning facilitates learning in a comfortable environment. A recent makeover gave the school's Multi-Purpose Room, which served as the original St. Hilary Church, a new, modern look. An outdoor classroom is just one use for the pavilion constructed near the school's playground area.



Involved, Supportive Parents

Parental support and involvement are vital to the success of St. Hilary School. From the parent volunteers who staff the hot lunch kitchen daily to room parents, to those who volunteer from home, each parent makes an important contribution to the school community. Parents assist with special projects, lessons and much more. Funds raised by parents support school needs and provide programming and amenities that enrich the students' educational experience.



If you would like your child to enjoy the benefits of a St. Hilary School education, now is the perfect time to begin exploring all that the school has to offer. Prospective 2017-2018 kindergarten students and parents are invited to attend Kindergarten Kaleidoscope on January 12 from 9 to 11 am. RSVP by December 29 to reserve a space for your child. Families of all grade levels are welcome to drop in at the school's open house from 12 to 2 pm on January 29. Or, call 330-867-8720, ext. 343 to schedule a personal tour or shadow day. The faculty and staff of St. Hilary School look forward to making a difference for your family, simply by paying attention to the details.

Flock of birds inspires heart of service to poor

When Gay Bisheimer was seeking new direction in her life, she found it at the beach. Experiences with nature often fill her with wonder and awe. In this case, a trip to Naples, Florida in 2014, inspired her to become a member of St. Vincent de Paul Society (SVDP) which provides for the needy in the Greater Akron area.

“I felt I was called to this ministry through discernment and prayer,” said Gay. “We were on vacation and I was walking along the beach saying the rosary, totally in the presence of God. I was taking pictures of this breathtaking beauty, and there were birds. Standing at the water’s edge I was asking God, ‘What do you have in store for me? What would you like me to do?’”

“As I was walking, I saw this flock of birds, and of course I took this picture. As I approached this flock, they surrounded me, flying around me in a circle. I could feel their wings, and all of a sudden they flew out over the ocean.



Gay Bisheimer took these photos as part of her prayer time at the beach. The flock of birds at right encircled her then flew out to sea.



“The message was as clear as a bell. ‘You need to serve the poor.’ And that was my mission. It was so profound, and I was called into this ministry.” She is quick to point out that it was not a ministry she would have chosen for herself.

Gay had always seen herself feeding others—organizing and cooking. She helped start the funeral ministry which provides a catered meal and the teams to serve it. She said she thinks nothing of making breakfast for 130 at Gennesaret, a nonprofit organization which provides hot meals two days a week. She still uses her gift for organization, but now she feeds others’ souls by giving them hope.

Gay is one of two women in St. Hilary’s SVDP conference, which has 24 members. The group is not exclusively for men, Past President David George said. Membership is open to anyone.

Three elements characterize SVDP: spirituality, friendship, and service. “We start every meeting with prayer and spiritual reflection, and there is a bond of friendship among the 24 members of our conference. We all have a heart of service to hear the cry of the poor,” she said.

“Our members strive to grow spiritually by offering person-to-person service through home visits to individuals in need. Our ministry often calls us to provide food, furniture, and monetary assistance for rent and utilities,” she added.



Canned goods donated by parishioners are delivered to the poor through home visits by SVDP members like Gay.

“It is with love, respect, and compassion without judgment that a contact with Christ is made through these home visits,” Gay continued. “That contact with Christ is what separates SVDP from just another charitable social agency. We are blessed with an awareness of our gifts which are to be shared with individuals in need while maintaining confidentiality and dignity of those we serve.”

Encountering Christ

While the conditions and background of the poor can be unsettling for Gay, each visit is an encounter with Christ. Recalling one incident, she said, “I was on a visit one time and I could see the woman was upset, embarrassed to have called us. Her wall of defense was up. I reached out and touched her hand and assured her that we were missionaries of God, that we were volunteers who came with love and without judgment to help her with her needs.

“With that I could see that wall come down one brick at a time. Tears welled up in her eyes and with a hug and reassurance from us she knew she was safe to tell us her story. We essentially extended our hands to her, listened, and walked with her on her journey,

relieving the stress she was feeling. We were able to keep her utilities from being shut off and assisted her with getting a lower monthly rate that she could afford,” Gay recounted.

Along the way, Gay has discovered other talents. “I found I can sit and listen to their stories and walk their journey with them. The tears often flow when they feel desperate. We try to untangle the knots in their lives. We evangelize them a bit and take care of their immediate needs.” she said.

Help brings hope

“When we come away from our visit, we have a sense that we’ve helped them, and it’s a good feeling that we’ve given them some hope.”

As a result of her involvement with SVDP, Gay said, “I’ve become more aware of the plight of the poor. I’m kinder and gentler in my thoughts and words. It has humbled me. I am so blessed. It is easy to dismiss the poor, to not see them, but their lives are real.” Gay has found that serving the less fortunate often disturbs her sense of comfort. It’s not easy work, but she embraces it anyway, knowing she is embracing Christ.

SVDP Score Card

All funds donated go directly to the poor. Here’s a breakdown of the needs St. Vincent de Paul Society has met this year.

Case Data

Cases handled	795
Family members impacted	1,937

Items Distributions

Books	1,709
Food bags	1,619
Furniture	720
Appliances	56
Computers	24

Money Distributed or Spent

Rent	\$115,480
Utilities	63,047
Food Gift Certificates, Food Bank	13,702
Furniture	11,488
Appliances	11,756
Bed/Mattresses	10,014
Auto/Transportation	6,626
Computers	5,540
Back-to-School Program	510
TOTAL	\$238,163

“We are all children of God here to help one another. It is through these generous acts of St. Hilary parishioners that we are able to reach out.” Last year, parishioners gave over \$238,000 to SVDP, all of which went to meeting the needs of the poor in the Greater Akron area (See Score Card above.).

Interested in supporting their work? Consider joining the St. Hilary Conference of SVDP, giving a donation through your green collection envelope or Faith Direct, or by dropping off nonperishable food and personal care items the first weekend of the month at the doors of the church or in the Donation Hallway across from the parish office anytime.

St. Hilary Parish
2750 West Market Street
Fairlawn, OH 44333-4236

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Christmas Mass Schedule

Christmas Eve Vigil

4 p.m. at St. Hilary and Faith Lutheran
6 p.m. and 10 p.m.

Christmas Day

9 a.m. and 11 a.m.

Are you ready for Christmas?

How are you preparing the way for Christ? St. Hilary Parish offers a number of activities and suggestions for enriching your Advent. All events are held in the church.



Advent Evening Prayer, Wednesdays, Dec. 7 and 21 at 7 p.m.

Join us on the Wednesdays of Advent to close our day of Adoration with the short, prayerful service of Vespers from the Liturgy of the Hours.

Lessons and Carols, Sunday, Dec. 11 at 7 p.m.

An evening of sacred music and scripture featuring our liturgical choirs, instrumentalists and lectors.

Communal Penance Service, Wednesday, Dec. 14 at 7 p.m.

Individual Confessions, Saturdays from 3 to 3:45 p.m.

XLT! (Exalt) Sunday, Dec. 18 at 7 p.m.

Praise, worship and Eucharistic adoration featuring St. Hilary Seminarians Michael Garvin on keyboard and James Parisi as the guest speaker.

Traditional devotions also provide excellent preparation for Christmas. These include Adoration on Wednesdays, personal prayer, especially the rosary, bible studies, family prayer around the Advent wreath, and charitable giving such as the Giving Tree and the St. Vincent de Paul Society.



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The newsletter of St. Hilary Parish

2750 West Market Street
Fairlawn, OH 44333-4236
Phone: 330-867-1055
Fax: 330-869-2312

Email: church@sthilarychurch.org
Web: www.sthilarychurch.org

We welcome your feedback!
Contact Anna G. Hall, writer
a462h@hotmail.com

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