



WEEKLY LETTER FROM MONSIGNOR KEN

I arrived as pastor of St. Mary's in April 1992, not knowing what to do! One piece of advice that I was given was to not make any big changes for one year. Instead, get to know the parish and the people. Well, I learned very quickly that this is a good parish with nice people! I also learned that St. Mary's used to have a carnival. I also learned that the reason they no longer had one was because it didn't make a lot of money. Some people encouraged me to bring it back.

I knew that I had to learn a lot about being a pastor, but I also had to admit that I knew nothing about running a carnival. I decided to call a meeting and invite anyone who was interested. Fearful of the prospect of a carnival and losing money, I suggested, and I actually used these words! "a carnival without rides!" After everyone stopped laughing, we got down to the business of planning. Out of that initial meeting, and follow ups, we, truly by the grace of God, created a wonderful committee, a few of which remain on the core committee to this day. And, so we began in 1993. We held it at the old parish center (now, the Southern Ocean Resource Center), with its small lot and grass parking. Somehow, we did it! We didn't make a lot of money, but we had our first revised carnival and a beautiful tradition began. Over the years, we have made some changes, the biggest being moving the dates from August to July. That brought a big jump in profit. Then, finally after years of surviving on route 9, we were able to move to our current beautiful location by our new parish center. That brought even more success.

From not knowing what to do, our annual carnival has become a beautiful tradition, and has left me a ton of lasting smiles and memories. Yes, it has been, and always will be a lot of work, but it is worth it.

The carnival is not just our biggest parish fundraiser, but it is really our only. Outside of our weekly collections, which are amazing, pretty much all of our fundraising is on behalf of ministries, service to the community, and benefits to those in need. We are, and always have been a very generous parish. That being said, we also have our own needs and financial stresses. The carnival helps provide a cushion to fund our active and busy parish.

All that being said, I invite you to support this great event that raises both funds and fun! You can volunteer this week, you can help by buying or selling our raffle tickets (which is a large portion of our profit), or simply attend. The atmosphere is great, the food delicious, and we literally have something for everyone. So, come on out and support St. Mary's "Nights of Summer" Carnival. Help create and discover your own precious memories! See you there.

"I give thanks to my God always on your account..." (1 Corinthians 4a)