

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

St. Paul Apostle Church Project

Parishioner Experience

O. H. 506

JACK COMERFORD

Interviewed

by

Jerry Hiznay

on

December 6, 1984

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INTERVIEWEE: JACK COMERFORD

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SUBJECT: Vatican II, Pastors, Church Council, Church Organizations, Community

DATE: December 6, 1984

H: This is an interview with Jack Comerford for the Youngstown State University Oral History Project on the St. Paul the Apostle Parish, by Jerry Hiznay at the Comerford Residence, at 46 Ohlin Drive, New Middletown, Ohio on December 6, 1984 at 3:00 p.m.

First of all, Jack, could you tell me a little bit about your family, background, where you were born?

C: I was born in Youngstown, Ohio in 1925. I was born on the west side of Youngstown. I was a twin. I came from a family of five children. My father died when I was about three years old. My mother raised the rest of us. She worked at the county courthouse under quite a few of the judges, like Judge Lyons and two justees before Judge Lyons. I can't even remember all of their names. Judge Ford was the latest. She died in 1963. We moved here to New Middletown in 1957 from Boardman. I met my wife in September of 1947. We were married in September of 1948 which was a short courtship, but we are still together. We just celebrated our thirty-sixth anniversary. We have three children. The oldest is Robert then Donna Jean and Kathy. Bob went to Mooney. Donna Jean and Kathy graduated from Springfield Local. I enjoy New Middletown very much. In fact, we wouldn't even consider moving from New Middletown. When we first moved here, it was very rough. It was new and found it pretty hard to get adjusted. In fact, we tried to move I don't know how many times the first five years we were here. We even went so far as to contact our real estate agent, but for some reason, we just didn't do it. We stayed. After the first five years, everything started to change the other way. We got to like it so much that we couldn't move from New Middletown. We

became members of St. Paul's in 1957. It was only about three years old. The parish here started in 1954.

H: 1954 was their first full year here. The first mass was the Christmas mass of 1953.

C: After the first five years, we became acquainted with the people. We became quite active in the church. We were members of the Jomar Club. It was one of the clubs that Father Haidet started. We also belonged to the Bus Club. When we started sending our children to Holy Family, we had to buy our own bus transportation for the children to go to Holy Family. We formed a club among the parents of the children for the church. We bought our own bus and even took turns driving it to take the children to school and to pick them up. We were quite successful in that until things started changing around after that. The laws changed where they provided transportation for the children. I was quite and still am active with the parish myself as a council member, as a lector, eucharistic minister. I sing with the choir when they have a choir. I work with the different organizations with the parish.

H: You are a Navy veteran? What area did you partake in?

C: I was drafted in 1943. I went into the Navy. I was fortunate to get into the Navy. I served six weeks in boot camp in Green Bay. After we got mustered out of boot camp, we were sent right to Brooklyn Navy Yards in New York and put directly on U.S.S. Burke Destroyer. I was on that same destroyer all through the war until I got discharged in 1946. I was in the European North Atlantic Theatre. I served in Africa and along the Mediterranean area for a few months. The rest of the time was in the South Pacific of Japan and a lot of the islands in the South Pacific. We ended up on Okinawa ready to be one of the first groups to hear the Japanese mainland when they dropped the atomic bomb. I always say that if was a heck of a thing that they had to drop the atomic bomb to cause the end of the war. I still feel and I think my other fellows who served with me on our ship that we wouldn't be here if they hadn't dropped that atomic bomb. We were going to be the first ones on the Japanese mainland.

H: Did you have any idea of the bomb being dropped?

C: No, not until after it had been. This was twenty-four hours later. We already had orders to pull out with our task force that we were with, the Frog men. They are the ones that you take into the shore and blow up all obstacles. We already had orders to move out. Twenty-four hours later we had word that the bomb had been dropped. There was no definite surrender yet, but we were told to hold back. Then they dropped the second bomb. That is when we came in. We did go on in with

the Missouri. We were in the third fleet. Our ship was the destroyer, U.S.S. Burke A.P.D. 65. It went in along with the Missouri. It was a matter of one hundred and fifty yards or so away when MacArthur and them signed a surrender treaty.

H: Could you see anything from that distance?

C: Through glasses, yes. You could see the Japanese officials there. I think the part that sticks in my mind the most was not so much that. I do remember that quite a bit. The part that sticks in my mind the most is our destroyer was one of the first to pull right into and tie up to the Japanese docks right inside of Yokohama Bay. This was after the treaty was signed. No ships were tied up; we just anchored in the bay. I was s/lc in the Navy. I was in charge of the Boatsmen Locker. The crew I worked with was on what we call the folksell, the bow of the ship. As we pulled in, you are supposed to throw a line to the dock. Naturally, an unfriendly dock, where you have foreign people, there are none of our people to grab your line. You normally throw what we call the monkey fist first to drag the heavier line across. Someone is supposed to grab that and pull the heavy line across. These soldiers were all sitting on the dock with their rifles, but just sitting and doing nothing. It was funny to see that monkey fist fly over and roll down that dock clean off of the pier and go into the water; you have to fish it out. We had to throw it again because nobody was grabbing it. Our captain was trying to keep the ship from running into the dock. We had to back off again and come in again. I think that happened two times. Our chief boatsmate was a very gruff person, but a very likeable person. He got on the bullhorn standing there with a rifle in his hand. He said, in English naturally, "If they don't grab that first this time, I am going to start shooting." When I threw it the next time, someone did grab it and they pulled the line in. That is the thing that sticks in my mind the most about the Japanese and the end of the war with Japan.

H: Were you in Japan long?

C: We stayed in Yokohama Bay there for not quite a month. It may have been three weeks or so. We did have liberty, but not too much. It was strange being in a place like that.

H: My father-in-law was in the military police right in 1946. He was stationed in Japan. He tells me how he was 6'5". He said he dwarfed the Japanese.

C: It is one thing when you run across a short person, but when you run across everyone who is shorter than you, it seems strange being in a crowd of people like that. They are very small people.

H: Getting to when you worked in the mill, what did you do when you were in the steel industry?

C: I was a crane operator. First, I had worked with Republic Steel. I started with them in 1946 after I came out of the service. I worked there. Work wasn't too good then. In fact, I was lucky if I worked six months out of the year. I got laid off and laid off. That is when I met my wife Mary. After I got married, I had more responsibilities and I had to try to find another income source. I also worked part-time with Sohio. I worked with them off and on when I wasn't working in the mill. Finally, I got tired of being laid off so much at Republic. I quit working for Republic and went full-time with Sohio. I worked with them for a number of years. I ended up with a station of my own with Humble Oil until business got bad and I couldn't take that anymore. I went back to the mill with Sheet & Tube in 1963. I worked there until 1980 when they shut it down. I was a charge machine operator in the open hearth. I was active with the local union. I was recording secretary for our local for six years. I was shop chairman for a number of years and previous representative.

H: Did Black Monday catch you by surprise?

C: Black Monday caught most of the people in Campbell by surprise. We were surprised in a way, but Black Monday didn't affect us right then. We were fortunate that we were still working at Briar Hill. As far as being discouraged and disgusted with losing a job, we were just as bad off as those in Campbell. We knew ours was coming. You could see the handwriting on the wall. A lot of people just didn't want to believe it. When it did happen, it hit us in December of 1979 and shut us down. I worked on until January of 1980. Black Monday really surprised a lot of us. It was something that you couldn't perceive that would ever happen.

H: That is one of the things that they want to go out and talk to steelworkers because it has been four or five years now. If you would have gone out right away, you would have had a lot of anger and vehement against talking. Now I think you will be able to get some stuff.

Getting to the St. Paul's and your involvement, when you moved into the community in the 1950's what was Springfield Township or New Middletown like at that time?

C: As I said before, to us maybe because we were strangers and new, we didn't feel welcome. Maybe a lot of that was our own fault. I don't know. It might have been. It seems though later on we found out that a lot of people weren't as unfriendly as we thought they were.

H: There was no welcome wagon committee back then?

C: No.

We don't have the stores here that they have now. The plaza wasn't here. This was all open field. The Bauns lived up here on the corner then. It was their old house that they burnt down. I thought that was a shame. That was really an historical sight that used to sit on the corner. In fact, I was told that it used to be a stage-coach stop in the early days.

H: It is called New Middletown because it is halfway between Pittsburgh and Cleveland on the stagecoach at that time.

C: It has changed quite a bit as far as the number of people. It has increased in New Middletown quite a bit.

H: What did a majority of the people do if you had to categorize occupations out here at that time? What did most of the people do out here for a living?

C: You could categorize that in probably three categories: farmers, steelworkers, and construction workers in New Middletown. That is the way I feel. I feel that the majority of the people that I knew personally here, that was their occupation.

H: That is what I am getting from a lot of people. There were very few professionals.

C: There were very few professionals other than maybe a doctor or a dentist here. Our doctor was Dr. Finley. His office was right across the way here first over where the Tiger Table is right now. He was in that area at the end of the road. Now he is in Poland.

H: What were the people of St. Paul's like then?

C: I think that was one of the reasons that we decided to stay here after becoming acquainted with the people of St. Paul's parish and getting acquainted with them and finding out that they were very likeable and friendly people. They seemed as though they were kind of people that we wanted to associate with. I think that is really one of the reasons that we changed our minds and didn't sell our house and move out.

H: Father Pawlewicz was pastor then. Was he doing anything special to greet new members to the parish that you can recall?

C: No, not that I can recall other than you just went down to the parish and signed up as a new member. I don't know of any pastor that we had that did anything special as far as having these special programs, as far as greeting new members, except our present pastor, Father Brobst. I think that most

of them tried to encourage the parishioners to take this on and welcome new members into the parish and not just the pastor.

H: What was Father Pawlewicz like? You came in after the parish was started. What type of pastor did you find him to be?

C: I found Father Pawlewicz to be very much a priest. He was very dedicated to his vocation as a priest. He didn't have as much assistance as he would have liked to have had. Actually, they wouldn't let another assistant here from the diocese. I think maybe in a little bit of a way it was his own fault. He didn't like to delegate authority to anybody. Father Pawlewicz was from the old school just like other pastors that tried to hold the rings themselves. I served on the council under Father Pawlewicz. He appointed me to council then. That type of church council was more or less a rubber stamp. You were just appointed to say that there was someone who pointed you to council. As far as authority goes, maybe this was what created a few of the arguments among some of the other parishioners and Father Pawlewicz. It was more or less a rubber stamp and they wanted to have a little more say-so of the parish and how it should be run and what you should do. Father Pawlewicz, as far as a person goes and a priest and a confessor, I thought that he was a very, very nice person. I liked Father Pawlewicz a lot. I gave him a lot of credit for what he did to hold the parish together and helping the parish get started.

H: When you joined in 1957, about how many families were there?

C: I think there were 200 families in the parish then.

H: Really? I have heard from about 50 to 90 families when it got started. It grew. That is the post World War II boom.

C: Yes. I think it is roughly around that area. The only reason why I say that is because being on council I have seen some of the figures. We used to put out once a year a book itemizing what each family gave.

H: How did the community respond to that? Since I have belonged here, we haven't done that.

C: No.

H: St. Mathias, where I belonged before with my wife, has done that a couple of times a year.

C: They didn't like it too well. A majority of the people preferred not to have it. It seemed that Father Pawlewicz came from an older school as a priest. It seems as though this

was the thing to do. This was done when I was a child at St. Brendan's on the west side. They used to publish what each family gave for the year. This is how I know. I roughly figured there was about 200 families because of that book that was put out every year. It is kind of embarrassing to have that published. I am glad it isn't being done now. I wouldn't care if you gave \$5,000 a year or \$2 a year. I don't think it should be published.

H: Since you have been on the council at different times, when you were on the council in the 1950's with Father Pawlewicz, what were the meetings like?

C: They were more or less pre-planned. There wasn't too much discussion other than Father Pawlewicz would tell you what he was going to do and what he had done. It wasn't should we or will we. It was either done or it wasn't done. That is all it was.

H: How often did you meet?

C: I think we only met three or four times a year. We didn't meet monthly.

H: Where did you hold the meetings at?

C: At the rectory.

H: When you and your wife joined, what organizations besides council and you mentioned choir . . .

C: I was in men's choir. We had an all men's choir back then. Johnny Brentin was the choir director. I was in all men's choir for a number of years as long as it lasted. I belonged to the Bus Club which we had then when we started to send the children to Holy Family.

H: How many families back then were involved with it?

C: I think between 60 or 70 for the Bus Club. I served as president of our Bus Club one year back in those days with prior organizations that I belonged in the church.

H: You said you had one bus?

C: Yes, just one bus. It was a used bus that we bought. We used to hold dances and any kind of a money raising thing that we could have. Paul Tkacik and a few of the other fellows got together and started holding these \$100 dinners once a year. You paid \$100 and went to this dinner. They gave away a Cadillac as first prize and then on down. You had to sell 100 tickets. One hundred names were drawn out. For every five names, the first and the fifth name on up to



twenty-five got like a \$25 bond or something like that. The twenty-fifth name got a larger prize. Then every fifth name up to fifty got \$25 bond and so on up to twenty-five, fifty, and seventy-five. The hundredth got the Cadillac or the money. We had two or three of those to raise money for the Bus Club. Things like that with other dances that we held helped buy this used bus. We had two of them. The first one we bought was a little older. It was an old Rio. It was really an antique. It served the purpose.

H: When you came to St. Paul's what kind of impression did the church have with its physical structure itself when you went into it for the first time?

C: I think we were very impressed with it. We really were impressed. To me, it really looked like a church. It had that old-style appeal of a church.

H: Were the murals still up?

C: Yes. They were up above the altar in the sanctuary.

H: What was your impression of the murals? What were the murals about? Did it deal with St. Paul's life? That is what Mickey said.

C: Yes, you are right. It seems to me the thing that sticks in my mind is the dove of the Holy Spirit. It is the right in the center light coming down into the tabernacle. On each side was St. Paul the Apostle.

H: How about the eye?

C: It was above or below the dove. I can't remember now which one it was. I remember the eye too.

H: A lot of the people I talked to said that their kids were . . .

C: Impressed with that?

H: Afraid to move.

C: Because the eye was watching them?

H: Because that eye was watching them. Of course, they were as quiet as could be as they knew that the Lord was there and no matter where you were at in the church positionwise, it was looking at you.

C: I think that is carried over from the old country.

H: From what I found out, the people who were involved with

the formation of the church were your ethnic groups, especially your Eastern Europeans like the Yasechkos, Hutchkos, and a lot of Slovaks. A lot of the families moved in here right around World War I as the Pennsylvania-Dutch moved westward to farms. A lot of the farms that were here were established by the Pennsylvania-Dutch in the 1800's. They moved because I guess they felt like they were being crowded in by society. They moved westward. A lot of the farmers back there had a chance to get the farm and work in the steel mill at the same time.

- C: St. Paul's itself from what I understand was predominantly Slovak at the very formation.
- H: If you look at the picture in the book and go through the original membership and look at the names there is a dominance of Blaskos, Baskey, Broschaks, Bondovich, Borciks, Cedars, Chezakas, Dubecks, Felicks, Boors, Hutchkos. I was looking at this list to see if a lot are Polish or Slovaks.
- C: We used to have the all men's choir at Christmas Eve at midnight mass. We would be there about a half hour or 45 minutes before mass singing Christmas hymns in Slovak. I couldn't speak Slovak or anything like that. I would go along with the fellows and pick up the words as I went along, when we used to sing the Slovak hymns.
- H: Here is something that I . . . I was talking with John Markotan and he didn't mention anything like that. That is something that I wanted to ask and I forgot.
- C: For the fact that there were so many of the Slovak speaking people in our parish, a lot of them didn't speak that much English yet. We used to sing . . . more or less it was a nostalgic thing that they wanted to do for them because of nationalities. We used to sing quite a few hymns in Slovak and English every Christmas Eve.
- H: Do you recall when the murals were painted over? When did that take place and why?
- C: I think when Father Haidet came that took place. I don't really know why. I do know the fact that they said the church needed painted. My only assumption that the reason the murals were painted over was the fact that they could not have them repainted again due to cost or something like that and to paint around them probably wouldn't have looked so well. I do know that it was done during Father Haidet's . . .
- H: This was also the Vatican II time right?
- C: I think that was done before Vatican II. I really think it was done before Vatican II. Vatican II didn't come in until

the early 1960's. That was when it was started. It really didn't become a practice until . . .

H: . . . the later 1960's.

C: I think that was done before. The church did need painted. As far as cost factor, they just wanted to save money. They just painted it white.

H: How did the parish respond to it when it took place?

C: I, myself, don't remember hearing too much about that. I don't know it might have been among the original parishioners.

H: The people I talk to can't tell me why. A few of them said they were upset. A lot of the parents said they were relieved when the eye was painted over. Their kids were relieved and it didn't bother them. Mickey said that the murals were very beautiful.

C: They were. They weren't sloppy. They were very good. It is something that if they aren't taken care of, they have to be touched up. I personally think that is why there was a cost. They were getting faded out. To keep them, they would have had to be repainted.

H: That probably would have been expensive.

C: You couldn't get the same artist whoever put them up there originally. I think he felt . . .

H: It was too bad that they couldn't have put some type of sealer over it. That would have kept it from fading. Like today, you could put a mural up and a sealer over and you could still have it.

The Jomar Club that you mentioned, what was its purpose?

C: The Jomar Club was really strictly a social club. It was founded under Father Haidet. He felt to bring the people together a little more they should have some type of a social club. He felt that everything should be strictly church business. There should be some socializing. They wanted to have it as a married couples club, but they didn't want to call it a married couples club. They were going to call it Joseph and Mary, so instead of saying Joseph and Mary, they called it Jomar which stands for Joseph and Mary. That is what it was. It was strictly a social club. There were dances. They assisted the Altar Guild as far as finances.

H: Where were the dances held, at the church?

C: In the basement. At one dance we had one hundred couples.

That was the biggest dance that we had there.

H: That was a pretty good amount of people for down there.

C: The rest of them were usually down around 50 or 60 couples. We used to hold other doings. We would get together and go dancing somewhere. We might go out to dinner and shows. We had roller skating parties. In the fall of the year we would have scavenger hunts. We didn't go just to the church, we would go all over the whole village.

H: When did the Jomar Club cease to exist?

C: The Jomar Club ceased to exist when Father Haidet left our parish and Father Bissler came in. It wasn't because of Father Bissler; it was because other people in the parish were very much against the Jomar Club. There is a reason why it finally broke up. We tried to hold onto it by holding meetings at houses. In fact, our last president was Pete Loding. We were holding our meetings at his house. Some of the people of the parish felt that it was scandalous to have dances and parties in the basement of the church. They thought we were going against the Catholic teaching that it taught us. We enjoyed it very much. I see the Booster Club is trying to come around but they aren't being very successful. I told Father I think that if they tried to put a little effort in trying to have some kind of social doings for the parish, they would be successful at it. It takes a lot of work. It does take an awful lot of work. We were involved in putting on a couple of dances and doings. We used to have Halloween parties at the Jomar Club. We would have a little Halloween dance and masquerade dance. People would come dressed up. It was very nice.

H: Do you think things like that have decreased because of how the social changes like dances . . . One thing, I see the day when St. Paul, even though it is a parish and there are 600 families, there are certain amount of people who are involved in things and a tremendous amount of people who you see occasionally at mass, but when you have activities, they don't participate. Is that a reflection of how the times have been?

C: I would say that is what it really is. It is a reflection of how time is going and how things changed as far as society goes. I don't think it is a reflection on the church itself. I think people tend to live their lives the way society changes them. Our children come up with a different style of living. People today I feel tend to be more loners as far as their family is concerned. They don't want to reach out and combine with other families and be parts of other families like we used to do. I have to say that times have caused that. I know that Mary and me get that feeling. The fact that we were

born and raised during the Depression time . . . The only way to survive then was to live with your neighbors as if they were part of your family. You had to get along with one another, not to get along with one another, but to survive. I think each one held everybody else up. That isn't needed today. People are more independent today. They tend to find that they would rather do things the way they want to do them and they don't want to be involved with other people. They just don't want to get involved. I don't think it is any reflection on the church itself.

H: That is basic from what I have got. This is a very tight community, but I think that you definitely have that Depression carry-over. A lot of the original families that were here had been here and helped each other through thick and thin. From what I have seen and how quickly the church went up once it was given the okay and how much money at that time the people came forward with, even though it cost about \$90,000 to \$150,000 to build the church back then, the people definitely came out with money. They were involved with a lot of things. Today because of the jet-age or space-age society, we are always on the go and don't take time out to communicate with our fellow man.

C: Right.

H: Looking at Father Haidet, what was he like?

C: Father Haidet was strictly a business priest. I am not saying that he didn't perform his duties as a pastor of the parish or as a spiritual guider. He was that. He was strictly a business type of priest. He was all business. In other words, he . . . I liked Father Haidet in a way, but found him a little colder than Father Pawlewicz or any of the other priests. Father Haidet was one that when he came here he removed myself and a couple of others from the council. We all got the impression that he wanted strictly businessmen on council. He didn't want just ordinary people that had no function of business or how business operated. That is the impression that we got.

H: What about Father Bissler?

C: Father Bissler was just the completely opposite. He was very friendly, a likeable person. He got along with everybody. It didn't matter if you were in business or a laborer, you got along well with him. He wasn't liked by certain people of the parish, but all pastors are never liked 100% by the people. There is always someone.

H: I know. I am from St. Brendan's. My wife taught there. I had a chance to meet him. He is a personable fellow.

- C: Father Bissler was the one really who got me started as being active in the parish as far as electors and assistants.
- H: Father O'Neill?
- C: Father O'Neill was to me just as a number priests that usually preach priests. He knew his duties as a priest. He fulfilled his spiritual guiding. He was very strong on that. He might have been a little lax as far as some things go with . . . I used to remember during midnight mass or Easter vigil mass, Father O'Neill would try to do everything himself. He knew how to do it but he would try to do so much that certain things would get mixed up. He was a very likeable person. I can say the same thing for him. There are some people who didn't like Father O'Neill either.
- H: Just from my connection with him, he is a likeable person if you know him on a one-to-one basis. He was a very intelligent man. A lot of people just sat back there and never had a chance to meet him. He was pastor when I joined the parish.
- C: Father O'Neill was very firm. To him, a spade was a spade. He let you know it. He hid nothing from you. He told you exactly what he felt.
- H: Looking at Vatican II changes, which of course had a tremendous impact on the Catholic church, first of all, what was your impresssion of the initial changes going from the Latin to the English vernacular and making the basic changes of turning the altar to face the congregation?
- C: That didn't bother me so much. The original change at first didn't bother me that much. In a way, I kind of enjoyed going to the vernacular. I guess when you really stop and think, down the line when they started making the whole mass in English, when they took out . . . Originally they kept some parts still in Latin and you still had some semblance of the old style of mass left there. As far as changing the altar around, I found that very enjoyable. Even when I was an altar boy all through grade school at St. Brendan's, I never did understand why our backs were facing the congregation. I felt that you should be facing each other. As far as changing that around, that didn't bother me. In fact, I enjoyed it.
- H: How did the people of the parish out here respond? You had a lot of the old traditionalists.
- C: A lot of them took it very hard. In fact, some of them took it so hard as different priests came in as pastor, certain numbers of families would leave the church and not attend mass here. They wouldn't leave the area, but they would attend mass at other churches. What they found, I don't know. I know that happened. Whether it was personality

of the pastor or because of Vatican II, I don't know. I do know a lot of people suffer yet today because of Vatican II and the different changes and functions and the way mass is being run.

H: I have gotten some complaints such as use of the lay ministers.

C: Yes. Back when Father Bissler was here, he asked me if I would become a lector. We called it commentator then. I told him I didn't know whether I could, but I would try. Myself and John Sauldo both went on at the same time. After I got on to it, I liked it very much as a commentator. When the time came in Vatican II where they brought in the eucharistic ministers, this was one of the biggest jumps in Vatican II as far as involving the lay people which was essentially the eucharistic ministry. I think myself, Mickery Burke, Paul Simon, John Sauldo, and John Krebs are the ones who had to go to Mooney for instruction on eucharistic ministers. Father asked us to. I said I would go, but I couldn't guarantee that I could do it. I don't think I am worthy to do that. It was something that was never even thought of. I was raised under the old school where you didn't let the Host touch your teeth let alone put it in your hand. I went to that meeting. I can't remember which priest gave the talk at first. When he said . . . He gave us a story about the little boy who served mass for the old country where he used to bring the Host to the prisoners. It was against the law to do that and he had to sneak it in until one day he was almost caught. To avoid having desecrating the Host, he ate it all himself. In other words, what he was getting to was, "What makes people feel that their tongue is holier than their hands? Why do you feel that your tongue is much closer to God than your hands?" There is no reason for it. It isn't.

H: In all reality, yes.

C: This has really changed my outlook on that part of it. Since then and studying a lot of it and participating in a lot of it, I have come a long way in understanding different aspects of my faith.

H: Do you think that when the changes took place throughout the 1960's and 1970's, did the church do a good job of educating the people before changes?

C: No. I think they could have done a much better job. That is probably one of the greatest reasons for the disruption that we had and the people leaving the church. I think that is one of the greatest reasons for it because of the lack of a better way of educating. I think that was one little item as far as myself goes as far as the Host goes and the eucharistic ministers. Things like this were expressed to the people all along in

different ways. That is to help them get a picture in their mind of why. I think it would have been a lot easier on a lot of people had they educated them better. It is just like today. We are having a lot of problems with people understanding different things in the mass. The reason is people tend to still use the old style of attending mass that they are just at mass for themselves. This is their own private little mass in their own mind. They can't picture themselves celebrating the liturgy and eucharist with the rest of the people that are there. This they can't conceive or understand, and maybe that's because they still want to hold onto that tradition.

H: My grandfather was one that when the change took place he stopped going.

C: Yes, there was a lot of it.

H: He was in his seventies and he felt offended because of the lack of education process.

C: That was it. I really think that is still today too. How you can overcome that, I don't know. It is hard to educate people who don't want to be educated. You can't cram things down people's throats. Until we find some way, we are going to have this misunderstanding.

H: On the history of St. Paul's, do you have something in general that you would like to add about its history as a parishioner? That is community, et cetera. How has it changed and how has it remained the same?

C: I think St. Paul's has become more a part of the community of New Middletown and Springfield Township since Vatican II. Because of some of the changes it allows the priests and the parishioners to function in conjunction with a lot of the other faiths around here.

H: Ecumenical?

C: Yes, ecumenical. I, myself, am not into that a lot or very heavy although I think it is needed. A lot of people still don't believe in such a thing. They don't go along with that. They believe you celebrate your faith and I will celebrate my faith. It is not a matter of celebrating faith. It is a matter of understanding each other's right to celebrate their faith and to get along with one another and to co-exist and serve in things that involve the community with all faiths regardless of what faith you are. To me, that is what the ecumenical is about. I think that is where St. Paul's has become greater in the area because of that. Bingo might have a little bit to do with that.



- H: That is something that brings the non-Catholic with the Catholic together. Even back then, the people that I asked who were involved like John Markotan and Rich Billock, they said they had ninety to one hundred or so people there usually with no problem. Of course, a majority of them were parishioners, but you still had a lot of people from the community. That was one way at least to get them together.
- C: In fact, today I would say at St. Paul bingo a majority of them are nonparishioners. If we would have the majority of the parishioners today come today as they came back then with the others, we would probably have twice as much as we did, which is an average of seventy-five to eighty people on Tuesday night. The majority that I see are outside of the parish.
- H: I wonder if that is because the non-Catholic enjoys gambling more and the Catholics are . . .
- C: I don't know. I really don't know. I always thought that the Catholics were gamblers. I do know that my own nationality, Irish, are much for that. They don't have any qualms about gambling or drinking.
- H: I think that is good to mention. There are some that . . .
- C: I think that in relation to St. Paul's involvement in the community and how it's perceived in the community, I think that even though a lot of people were against building the CCD center, a lot of us called it a white elephant; it could have been done differently. It is not that I don't think it was needed or functional; I think it has created a means by bringing the outside community involved with St. Paul because of allowing people to hold things at the CCD center. The Lions hold meetings there, the Boy Scouts do too.
- H: The Optimists?
- C: Yes. It is things like that and we have the day care center there now.
- H: In the last two interviews I have heard the white elephant. How would you like it to be different as opposed to making it a hall opposed to . . .
- C: I don't think it is a fact of how it is being used as to I think . . . I was against the type of construction myself and so were a number of others.
- H: Do you mean the flat roof and that stuff?

C: Yes. I think it was in the long run more costly to maintain something like that than a pitched roof.

H: It would be cheaper to put the trusses and have the pitch to the roof. A lot of places are going to that today. They had original flat roof structures. They come in and throw a slight pitch on top.

C: I think that for what it was tentatively used for I was all for it. I just didn't like the style of the construction.

H: I thank you, Jack.

C: You are welcome and thank you, Jerry.

. END OF INTERVIEW