

# Your Gift Can Inspire Future Generations

*From the Desk of Fr. Mike Meany*

*April 23, 2019*

Imagine it is a bright, sunny, perfect Sunday morning 50 or so years from now. Our beloved St. John Brebeuf church is filled to the brim with families, young and old, celebrating Mass, singing, and eager to enjoy this beautiful day together.

Among the worshippers is a little girl. She is about five years old. She has on a pink dress, her very best shoes, and her curly hair is in a ponytail. She is trying her best to sit still and be good, but she really, really wants to explore.

This is the first time the little girl has ever been to St. John Brebeuf church. She has heard her parents talk about the church and about growing up in Niles many times. She is captivated by the huge open space in the middle of the church. She wants nothing more than just to be able to gaze upwards and count the windows as the sun pours in.

As the little girl comes out of Mass, hand-in-hand with her parents, she spies a big wooden plaque hanging on the wall, with the outline of the church tower carved into it. "Look," she says, and pulls her parents over to it. "What does it say?"

"It says these are the names of the people who restored the church tower," her mother tells her, lifting her up to see all the names on the plaque. The little girl reaches out to trace her finger along the engraving in the middle, the tower and its cross.

"It says this happened in 2019. That would have been when..." her mother's voice trails off as she locates the name.

"Look," she says to the little girl. She points to a name, maybe with a little catch in her voice. She says the name quietly, remembering you and how special you were to her. "They loved this church so much that they paid for one of the big windows in the tower to be replaced."

The little girl runs her soft finger over your name as it is engraved on the plaque. "Can I see it?" she asks. Patiently, her mother leads her back into the church, now quiet and nearly empty. Together they figure out the exact window that was replaced thanks to you.

"There, I see it!" the little girl says.

## ***Our Tower, and why it is so special***

The tower means so much to all of us at St. John Brebeuf. We get excited when we see the cross up above the trees as we drive down Harlem Avenue. On cold winter nights we see the glow from inside the church and know that the warmth of friendships and of God's love awaits us underneath.

***It is hard to imagine St. John Brebeuf without its tower. Yet the entire tower is in danger and we must act now.***

The windows are worn out from all the heat, cold, snow, and wind. The frames need to be replaced. Perhaps from your seat you have seen the cracks in the windows.

From what the architects and experts tell us, the situation is getting worse. Rain is starting to leak in.

Our tower structure must be replaced. This is not something that can wait -- we can't put it off. The Archdiocese is helping us come up with a plan for its repair, which we hope can be done later this year.

The financial support of all our parishioners is needed as we prepare for this huge project. Each window and wooden panel must be replaced, along with all the framing. This will be an extraordinary undertaking.

Each window and panel faces a different direction, and we intend to allow donors to let us know which direction they prefer their window or panel to face. We will record all of this so that, just like the little girl, you and your family will be able to find your gift for generations to come. The names of all donors will be listed in a special commemorative publication as well as on a permanent plaque that will be placed in the church.

If you are able to donate an entire window, I encourage you to do so. Or, if you are able to join others by donating \$1,000 or even \$100, we have a place for you, too.

Along with the repairs to the tower, the funds raised will be used to refresh the church in other ways -- the organ, bathrooms, and parking lot. These are all important repairs so that our church can continue to be a safe, welcoming space for all who visit.

For the little girl, visiting St. John Brebeuf, experiencing the wonder of our soaring tower, and finding your name as a donor who cared enough to restore the tower is something she will never forget.

Many years from now, in this simple Sunday visit to our church, ***your window becomes her window***. From that moment forward, she will know in her heart that no matter where her life leads her, there is a part of her that will always be at St. John Brebeuf and in the Catholic Church.

You are people of great faith, an inspiration to our entire community. I hope that you will make a pledge today so that we can "Restore Our Tower - Refresh Our Church."

Thank you, and God Bless.

*Fr. Mike Meany*