



*Saint Gianna Catholic Church
"The Beginning" 2006*



ARCHDIOCESE OF ST. LOUIS
Office of the Archbishop

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April 28, 2006
Feast of Saint Gianna Beretta Molla

TO THE PRESBYTERATE OF THE ARCHDIOCESE OF SAINT LOUIS

**ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW PARISH
IN THE SAINT CHARLES DEANERY**

Dear brother in Christ,

It is with great joy that I inform you of the establishment today, in the St. Charles Deanery, of a new parish under the patronage of Saint Gianna Beretta Molla. Saint Gianna Parish, as it will be known, is located in Wentzville, Missouri, and comprises territory that is currently served by Saint Patrick Parish in Wentzville and Immaculate Conception Parish in Durden. It is also cause for joy that we are able to honor this contemporary saint — wife, mother, physician, youth minister, and true apostle of the Gospel of Life — on the occasion of her feast day with what may be the first parish in the United States to be named for her.

I am also pleased to announce the appointment of the Rev. Timothy P. Elliott as pastor of Saint Gianna Parish. I am most grateful to Father Elliott, not only for his willingness to undertake the challenge of founding a new parish, but also for the extraordinary enthusiasm and zeal that he has already shown for this new assignment. I ask your prayers for Father Elliott as he begins this important work, and for the new parish and the faithful who will find a spiritual home there. We ask especially the intercession of our Blessed Mother and of Saint Gianna.

For more information regarding the establishment of Saint Gianna Parish, I refer you to the attached news release, which will be issued today to media in the St. Louis region, and to the article about the new parish that appears in today's edition of the *St. Louis Review*.

Asking God's continued blessing on you and your ministry, I remain

Sincerely yours,

(Most Rev.) Raymond J. Burke
Archbishop of St. Louis



IT IS OFFICIAL

Finally, on April 28, 2006, the word was out—St. Gianna Catholic Church was officially established in the St. Charles Deanery and Father Timothy Elliott was announced as the new Pastor. A press release went out from the Archdiocese of St. Louis Office of Communications. Parish boundaries were delineated in the St. Louis Review. All people of the affected parishes were sent letters from the Office of the Archbishop of St. Louis with notice and welcome for a parish change.

Then things really got busy!!!

Along with the Director of the Archdiocesan Building and Real Estate Committee, Father Elliott found a building, two partitions of a strip mall which was in the process of being built, across the street from Our Lady's Catholic Cemetery in Lake St. Louis. The building was within the eastern portion of the church boundaries and proved to be THE place for the Temporary Church and offices. The address was 8676 Orf Road, Lake St. Louis, MO, 63367. St. Gianna's Rectory was nearby and the new land for the permanent church only three miles away.

The Archdiocese sought a three-year lease agreement, pending approval by the city (Lake St. Louis.) After arrangements were concluded on a lease for the property, the next step was to acquire an architect to draw up plans for the new temporary church layout (which did happen in about the middle of June, 2006.)

St. Patrick Church and ICD Church Pastors, and eventually the "on-the-list-of transferees" people from those neighboring parishes, also met with Father Elliott to hear about the new parish. Official meetings were set up at St. Patrick's Parish on Wednesday, May 10th and at Immaculate Conception on Thursday, May 11th, 2006.

Phone calling began in earnest. People were needed to commit to St. Gianna Parish. Father Elliott had brought his Right-Hand Lady, Rita Schulte, with him from St. Joseph Parish, so there were officially two people in the congregation!!! Welcoming letters from Father Elliott went out to transferees and meetings were conducted in people's homes. Lists and lists of lists of family names were made and corrected. "Church" was summoned.

St. Patrick Parish
405 S. Church Street
Wentzville, MO 63385
636-332-9225

April 27, 2006

John and Kim Kainady
13 Silver Birch Court
Wentzville, MO 63385

Dear John and Kim,

In the April 28th edition of the St. Louis Review, there will be a major announcement that a new parish is being established in western St. Charles County. Our Catholic population needs additional worship space and expanded facilities to best serve parishioners. This past Easter our church was overflowing. The new parish will be formed from former territory of St. Patrick Wentzville and Immaculate Conception Dardenne. The establishment of this new parish was a key recommendation of the 2003 St. Charles Deanery Strategic Plan for Growth and Organization of Parishes and Schools. This study was more than a year long in its formulation with input from clergy, laity, and planning experts. Property has been purchased across from the Wentzville elementary, middle school and high school on Highway N and it is time to formally begin the new parish.

The new parish, whose precise information is being published in the Review, will be located along Highway N from Highway 40-61 to Highway T. Your address places your home within the new parish boundaries. You are asked to affiliate with the new parish as an active founding family. While it will take some time for the newly appointed pastor and parish leadership to plan for the new parish, there are some things that we know already. They plan to have an active PSR program beginning in the fall and will be planning for an elementary school in the next few years. Plans for a temporary worship space are still being finalized. I wanted to specifically share this important information with you.

Over the next several weeks, the St. Louis Review and our own parish bulletin will provide more practical information about the new parish especially to the families of our parish who will be asked to affiliate with the new parish. The new parish will be under the heavenly patronage of St. Gianna, a newly canonized contemporary woman who was wife, mother and doctor. St. Gianna risked her life in order to save her unborn child. St. Gianna did give birth to the child, Gianna Emanuela, but succumbed to an infection in 1962. Her husband and three surviving children were present at her canonization in May 2004. Her feast day is April 28th, which is the formal date of the establishment of the new parish. The new pastor of St. Gianna Parish will be Rev. Timothy Elliott, ordained in 1982. One of his early pastoral assignments was to assist in the establishment of St. Alban Roe parish in St. Louis County. Most recently he has been pastor of St. Joseph parish in Josephville nearby. Our parish family will host a "Meet the New Pastor" gathering for Fr. Elliott on Wednesday May 10 at 7:30 p.m. in our social hall. Please make plans to attend, meet Fr. Elliott, and find out more of the plans for our newest parish and your opportunities in it.

My hope is that you will enthusiastically embrace this new opportunity for parish membership. Most of the people in this new parish are relatively new to the area, and this will hopefully be a fairly easy transition from St. Patrick to St. Gianna. For others who have been a part of St. Patrick for a lifetime, or for nearly all your married life, this transition might be a challenge. I encourage you to take this step with faith and trust in God and in God's plan. If the new pastor or I can be of assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us. I would ask you to pray for St. Gianna and all those who will become an active part of it. I would ask you to pray for St. Gianna parish and all those who will become an active part of it.

Very truly yours,

Rev. Patrick J. O'Laughlin, Pastor

St. Gianna Catholic Church
P.O. Box 924
Wentzville, Mo 63385

May 2, 2006

John and Kim Kainady
13 Silver Birch Court
Wentzville, MO 63385

Dear John and Kim,

By now you have heard the exciting news of the establishment of the new parish in St. Charles County under the patronage of St. Gianna. As the Pastor appointed by Archbishop Burke to serve the people of the parish, I am writing to welcome you and ask for your active participation.

The beginning of a new parish is a blessing and a challenge. It is a blessing because God is calling us to form a new parish family in which we can celebrate the Sacraments, pray and support one another in our Catholic faith. I believe that the heart of the parish is the Blessed Sacrament in which the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus beats with love for us. As we gather around His Eucharistic Presence we are able to form a community of love and service. A new parish is also a challenge that takes the efforts of all of the parishioners. I am very conscious of the fact that I need your help and support; it is only by working together, with the prayers and example of St. Gianna, that we can accomplish this task.

One of the most important priorities is the religious education of our children and I intend to begin religion classes this fall for those who attend public schools.

I am looking forward to meeting you either at St. Patrick's Parish on Wednesday, May 10 at 7:30 p.m. (after the PSR Mass) or at Immaculate Conception on Thursday, May 11 at 7:00 p.m.

Let us rely on the intercession of St. Gianna as we begin this new parish for the glory of God.

Sincerely,

Father Timothy P. Elliott
Founding Pastor

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New parish bears modern saint's name

By Joseph Kenny
 Review Staff Writer
 and James Rygelski
 Review Editor

A new parish in St. Charles County will be named St. Gianna, and the new pastor is Father Timothy Elliott.

Archbishop Raymond L. Burke

announced the formation of the new parish and its boundaries today, April 28. It will include part of Immaculate Conception Parish in Dardenne and St. Patrick Parish in Wentzville.

Other than parishes formed from mergers, it is the first new parish in the archdiocese since the early

1980s. St. Alban's Rect. Parish in Wildwood was formed in 1980 and St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in St. Charles in 1981.

Today is the feast day of the patron saint of the new parish, an Italian physician who died in 1962 and was canonized in 2004. It is considered the first parish in the

United States under her patronage.

Archbishop Burke said the creation of the new parish means that a significant and stable growth in Catholic population has taken place in the St. Charles Deanery.

"The growth in the number of Catholic households in the area is certainly a sign of the vitality of the Church in the archdiocese and in the St. Charles Deanery, in particular," he said.

The new parish will help Immaculate Conception and St. Patrick parishes because they are in an area of such growth that they are no longer able to serve effectively all of the parishioners, he said. "The parishes have simply grown to be too large."

It is estimated that around 700 families will be part of the initial parish. Families who have children currently enrolled in the day schools at Immaculate Conception or St. Patrick will not be asked to change parishes. Catholics within the boundaries of the new parish who are registered in Immaculate Conception, St. Patrick or another parish will receive letters informing

Boundaries of St. Gianna Parish



See PARISH, Page 7



ized on a building in Lake St. Louis that, pending approval by the city, will serve temporarily as a church and offices with meeting space. That building, near a Catholic cemetery, is west of Highway 40/Interstate 64. Property has been purchased elsewhere for a permanent church and school. The permanent site will be on land off Highway N near Highway Z between Dardenne and Wentzville.

The new pastor, Father Elliott, has been pastor of St. Joseph Parish in the St. Charles County community of Josephville since 1997. Ordained in 1982, he served at St. Alban when it was new.

For the new parishioners, Father Elliott said, "it is exciting and an honor to be among the founding families. It is a chance to form a new community centered around the Holy Eucharist and our faith in Christ."

He noted that Catholics will find prayer, the sacraments and educational programs at the new parish. "We need that to help us know our faith, love it and spread it," he said.

Archbishop Burke said the parishioners and pastor "embark on the apostolic work of forming a new community of faith. The parishioners will bring with them, from their former parishes, the richness of the Catholic faith and practice. The new pastor will bring with him the grace of his ordination and the experience of priestly ministry."

Forming a new parish can seem daunting, he said, "but we know that the work belongs to Christ and that he accompanies us all along the way, as we strive to build up his Mystical Body, the Church."

"In the eyes of the world, being called to form a new parish instead of continuing to enjoy life in a long-established parish may seem a deprivation. Catholic faith, on the contrary, sees the challenge of forming a new parish as the occasion to grow and deepen in the knowledge and love of Christ in the Church. Forming

Hermann, whose duties include overseeing parishes of the deanery, said "the new parish will provide the Catholic Church with an excellent opportunity for evangelization and new evangelization in an area that is currently underserved because of the overcrowding of neighboring Catholic parishes."

It is expected that the new parish will have a Parish School of Religion in operation in the fall. Plans are to

The patron saint is 'someone who is a great model for ordinary Catholics who want to live their faith and become saints in their ordinary lives as she was as a wife, mother and doctor.'

rent classrooms from the Wentzville School District.

The 25 acres that will be the permanent site of the parish are across from Timberland High School, Wentzville South Middle School and Boone Elementary School, where the PSR classes will be held.

The land off Highway N was purchased for \$1.5 million from a farm family. The sellers had agreed to provide sewer connections. The new parish will borrow the money for the purchase from the archdiocese and make payments.

The land is about in the center of the parish boundaries, which extend from Highway 40 to the Warren County border at Highway T.

About 20 percent of St.

The parish is in an area of rapid development, with the county's population expected to grow 35 percent by 2020. Fifty-six subdivisions are built or in the planning stages. About 1,500 homes could be built in the near future in those subdivisions being planned. The parish is expected to have 1,400 families within five years. The two parishes whose boundaries are being changed also are projected to have continued growth. The Forstell area is expected to be another area of strong growth.

The archdiocese's Office of Pastoral Planning has been involved in many aspects of the plans for the new parish. The establishment of the new parish was a key recommendation of the 2003 strategic plan for the county with a yearlong input from clergy, laity and planning experts.

Father Elliott said he was grateful to the archbishop for the assignment. The patron saint is "someone who is a great model for ordinary Catholics who want to live their faith and become saints in their ordinary lives as she was as a wife, mother and doctor. There are many powerful lessons in her life, and she will be an inspiration for the parish," he said.

The new parishioners need to put a lot of faith in God's guidance, he said. "There will probably be some difficulties for people starting a new parish and leaving their old parishes. I can understand it. It's not going to be easy for me to leave Josephville, either."

The pastors of the two parishes affected by the creation of St. Gianna — Father Robert Reiker of Immaculate Conception and Father Patrick O'Laughlin of St. Patrick — saw the move as the best way for the archdiocese to serve a growing population.

They've both stressed this in letters they sent this week to families of their parishes who will be asked to join St. Gianna. Even after the move of parishioners to the new parish, that still would leave Immaculate Conception with about 3,600 families and St.



Patrick with about 1,800, the pastors said.

Father Reiker said he drew on the themes of Easter and the approaching Pentecost in his letter to affected parishioners. "It's a time of new life, new birth; the Catholic Church is still growing in our area as we give birth to another parish. That's exciting, we look on it as a positive thing," Father Reiker said.

Father O'Laughlin, pastor for the past seven years, said his letter stressed how "the archdiocese in its wisdom is planning for the future, to meet all the needs of the people moving out here."

Father Reiker said many of the ones affected from his parish have recently moved there and wouldn't feel disrupted by joining a new parish. Pastor at Immaculate Conception for the past 11 years, he said that as a younger priest he was an associate at two then-recently created parishes, St. Justin Martyr in Sunset Hills and Our Lady of Mercy in Hazelwood. "People felt privileged to be part of a new parish," he said.

Both St. Justin Martyr and Our Lady of Mercy began in 1964, because of declining membership. Our Lady of Mercy was merged with St. Martin de Porres last year.

Both Fathers Reiker and O'Laughlin expected their parishes to continue to grow over the next few years.

Archbishop Burke said he understood the feelings of those who might be upset at having had their parish close in recent years because of a shift of population and now see a new one being started.

"In closing and unifying parishes, I have urged parishioners to make a commitment to form strong neighborhoods which are the foundation of strong parishes," he said.

"At the same time, I cannot tell people where they may or may not live. On the contrary, I am shepherd of the whole flock and must provide a fitting number of parishes, according to the places in which the faithful choose to live."

He said the Church is sensitive to the attachment of the faithful to a particular parish yet is conscious of the need to make changes to better serve all of the faithful.



NEW PASTOR, NEW LOCALE — Father Timothy Elliott stands amid the undeveloped area along Highway N near Wentzville that soon will be the site of the new St. Gianna Parish. He will be the parish's first pastor.

Archbishop sees St. Gianna as inspiration for families

The saint for whom the new St. Charles parish is named has a special place in the heart of Archbishop Raymond L. Burke.

"In forming a new parish, it is important to place the parish under the heavenly care of a saint or a blessed. After much consultation, I chose to place the parish under the spiritual protection of St. Gianna Beretta Molla, who is a model of the faithful wife and mother and a true apostle of the Gospel of Life," Archbishop Burke said.

The archbishop dedicated his entire May 21, 2004, column in the Review to the life and faith expression of then-Blessed Gianna, the weekend of her canonization.

In it, he described not just her life but how during his years as bishop of LaCrosse, Wis., he'd suggested to young parents having difficulty in conceiving that they pray through the intercession of then-Blessed Gianna Molla.

In his column, the archbishop noted her background — birth in northern Italy in 1922, the second-youngest of 13 children and how in her teens she began to live her Catholic faith more fully.

The archbishop, in his column, noted that the woman carried that devotion into the

ston. "Gianna was a beloved physician who cared especially for the poor," the archbishop wrote. "...she urged priests to preach and teach about the respect for human life, and the evil of abortion and the abandonment of the seriously ill and elderly," he wrote.

"St. Gianna was a medical doctor, faithful wife of Pietro Molla, who is still living, mother of six children, four of whom were born and two who were lost through miscarriage, active worker in youth ministry, especially among young women, and devoted supporter of the Church's missions," the archbishop said this past week.

He said she declined medical treatment for herself so that her last child, Emanuela, who is today a physician and cares for her elderly father, could be born. "She (St. Gianna) died in Christ on Easter Saturday, April 28, 1962," the archbishop noted.

Pope John Paul II canonized her a saint of the Church on May 24, 2004.

"I know that St. Gianna will look with special love upon all of the parishioners of the parish named in her honor. She will be an example of holiness of life for all parishioners. She will ceaselessly pray for them and their intentions," Archbishop

May 7, 2006 Fourth Sunday of Easter

FATHER BOB'S COLUMN

NEW PARISH WILL BE A NEIGHBOR TO ICD

A week ago we heard the exciting news that the Archdiocese of St. Louis would establish a new parish west of ICD – along the Highway N corridor from Highway 40 west to Highway T.

The name of the new parish would be ST. GIANNA PARISH, with Father Timothy Elliott as the new pastor. The first gathering of the new parish would probably be in June at a temporary site.

The impact on ICD is that about 200 families from our ICD Parish Family would become a part of St. Gianna Parish. About 20 ICD School families would continue to keep their children in our school and remain a part of our parish. St. Gianna Parish would begin a PSR program in September for all the Catholic children who are in the public schools in the area.

So our Parish Family of ICD would decrease from about 3800 families to about 3600. But I expect that with some of the construction on this side of Highway 40 we will gradually grow again and eventually level off at about 4000 families. Our new church and new school with the planned addition were designed for a parish of about 3500 families. So in one way our facilities are barely large enough for the number of families that we will probably end up with. However, what the new parish does for us is to keep ICD from becoming a 5000+ family parish where we would have a crisis of severe overcrowding, as the area west of us blossoms with many new larger subdivisions.

St. Patrick Parish in Wentzville has about 500 families (about 20% of their parish) that should be a part of the new parish; so this has a greater impact on St. Pat's than ICD.

Two "MEET THE NEW PASTOR" Meetings will be held for the new members of St. Gianna Parish:

+ Wednesday, May 10th, 7pm, at St. Patrick's Church, Parish Hall,

+ Thursday, May 11th, 7pm at ICD, Parish Hall.

I hope that all ICD members who are to be a part of the new parish will take this wonderful opportunity to attend either one of these two meetings and get in on the ground floor of the founding of St. Gianna Parish, the first new parish in the Archdiocese for 25 years. We offer God's blessing upon all who will be involved in St. Gianna Parish and that their formative years as a parish family will be exciting and Spirit-filled!



Who is St. Gianna?

Her full name was Gianna Beretta Molla. She was born in 1922 in Italy, and died in 1962. She was canonized by Pope John Paul II in 2004, and her feast day is on April 28th, the same day that Archbishop Burke established the new parish dedicated to her.



In declaring Gianna a saint the Church officially recognized the extraordinary sanctity of a woman who chose to live a normal life – first as a doctor, and then as a wife and mother. She received her medical degree in 1949 with a specialty in pediatrics.

After dedicating her life to her patients, Dr. Gianna Beretta felt called by God to enter into marriage and did so at age 33 with Pietro Molla. They had a son and two daughters from 1956 to 1959. After a couple of miscarriages, they conceived again in 1961 and early in the pregnancy it was discovered that she had a tumor on her uterine wall. It was suggested that the baby be aborted and then remove the uterus, but the Mollas both firmly rejected this idea and chose delicate surgery to only remove the tumor and not harm the baby. After the baby was born, Gianna developed a fatal infection – septic peritonitis. After a week of painful agony, Gianna died on April 28, 1962.

Her husband who was 91 and three of her children attended the canonization ceremony in Rome in 2004. St. Gianna is quickly becoming known as a patron of young mothers and Catholic families, and a true apostle for the Gospel message of the sacredness of all human life.

ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL

Today is your last chance to make your annual pledge in the Gathering Area of the church to support the many charitable and pastoral ministries offered to the people of the St. Louis area by the Archdiocese of St. Louis. It is critical for ICD to reach its goal of \$160,000 so that the Archdiocese can reach its goal. This would be about \$100 for each active family in our parish. At the moment we have about \$60,400 pledged. Please do your part.



ICD ADOPT-A-FLOWER-BED PROGRAM

We still have some important spots around the church and plaza that are crying out for someone to beautify them with some flowers. Contact me or call the P.O.C. for more info.



Getting to know you...

AND THEN THEY CAME

People rose to the occasion and began registering to become a part of St. Gianna Church, not in droves as hoped, but they came. Father Elliott had been having daily Mass at the Rectory and other people began to attend the Mass, too. The first services were in the Rectory living room with a blessed desk alternating as the altar. Confessions were heard in a spare room in the house.

Some of the first people to attend Mass at the Rectory were Mary Henze, Allene Wernle, John and Renee O'Brien, John and Kim Kainady, Richard and Bobbie Applebaum, Cherie and Don Hoerber and family, to name a few. Other people joined until the living room was filled with new parishioners!

It was about mid-June at this point and Father Elliott called an acquaintance, Nancy Burian, an accomplished religious educator, and asked her if she would consider becoming the new Parish School of Religion (PSR) Coordinator. Establishing the PSR Program was one of the main priorities in getting the parish up and running in proper order. Gratefully, Ms. Burian accepted the position. But where and how would the PSR operate—another situation to ponder!

Another need for the parish was liturgical music. Father Elliott asked Paula Brown, ICD's Music Coordinator, to be the Music Director for St. Gianna Parish. Paula agreed to be Music Director. Michael and Paula Brown switched parishes from ICD to St. Gianna. The Parish would have many beautiful liturgical services with musical accompaniment because of Paula's efforts.

And speaking of musical accompaniment, Paula eventually coaxed a friend from ICD, a retired organist, Selma Boschert, to play the organ for St. Gianna's Masses when the Temporary Church was first opened.

The first Parish Council was established with John Kainady as President, and members John O'Brien, Pat Hiatt, Rick Applebaum, Bobbie Applebaum, Terry Taul, Michael Brown and Lee Ann Juge.

St. Gianna Parish was getting populated and organized!





CHURCH NECESSITIES


Church ministrations continued including such things as getting an envelope system set up, a church bulletin in place and acquiring ALL of the necessary church and office furnishings-- from furniture to office supplies to altar candles, linens and vestments. Father Elliott borrowed and acquired by donation or economically much of the contents for the new parish during the summer months of 2006.

Orders were placed for some things, but at least Father Elliott knew the church would have pews and some basics. For Archbishop Burke had promised Father Elliott, during the spring of 2006, that all the furnishings of the Church of St. Phillip Neri, which had been previously closed, would be available for St. Gianna Parish use.

However, one incident of note occurred during the summer of 2006, causing some immediate concern for Father Elliott. Somewhere along the way, lines of communication broke down in the Archdiocese offices, and during that summer the old St. Phillip Neri Church building **with its contents** was **sold AS IS** to another congregation. That sale included all the church pews and stained glass windows which were still sitting in the church building.

Well, Father Elliott happened to find out about the sale **when it happened** ("divine coincidence?") and called the Archbishop **right away** to pass along the information. Swiftly, Archbishop Burke was able to get the sale contract voided. St. Phillip Neri Church was off the sale market (though later sold by the Archdiocese without the aforementioned prized possessions.) St. Gianna's ownership of the pews and stained glass windows was firmed up and the articles were whisked off to the Reclamation Center for storage. Whew!! A close one!!!

Other articles that Father Elliott acquired for the church included some altar candlesticks; an altar (the first one used in the Temporary Church); pictures used in the church, cry room and offices; tables for the sanctuary; some Stations Of The Cross; some of the office furniture and a couple of statues--from the Reclamation Center, and other sources, and all to be used in the Temporary Church (and some even later on in the Foundational Church.) These weren't free, but most things only cost pennies on the dollar.



Many of the articles that Father Elliott picked up were stored in the Rectory basement until used by the Temporary and/or, eventually, the Foundational Church. Father Elliott said that he felt like a "Liturgical Junk Collector" since he made so many trips down to the Reclamation Center looking through all the old items that were stored there.

Father Elliott discovered that St. Norbert Church in Florissant had an organ in storage they weren't using and St. Norbert's agreed to loan the organ to St. Gianna (later, rescinding the loan to a "you can have.")

The initial crucifix for the Temporary Church was a loaner from a priest friend, Father Ray Hager. In fact, Father Hager also loaned the first Statue of Mary and the two angel statues set on either side of the tabernacle with their pedestals.

The Monstrance and Adoration Candles were donated by Mrs. Marge Tochtrop.

Father Elliott personally owned a beautiful tabernacle. The people of St. Joseph Church in Josephville gave Father Elliott an ambo as a going away present. And bells and patens were a gift from the servers at St. Joseph Church, also, to Father. All of these items were used in the Temporary St. Gianna Church.

Because of Father Elliott's efforts, the acquisitions, among other things, helped make St. Gianna's Temporary Church a REAL CHURCH... in a strip mall.





*Father Elliott with some members of the parish
standing outside the Rectory/Church
at 331 Charity, Lake St. Louis, MO.
September 10, 2006*



ARCHITECTURAL FAUX PAS

Meanwhile, the architectural design for the Temporary Church layout was produced by a group that the Archdiocese regularly used. There wasn't a lot of time for discussion since by now it was hoped that Father Elliott could begin having Mass in the Temporary Church beginning in September of 2006. It was already mid-June and carpenters, electricians and plumbers needed to be selected and gotten to work on the construction of the church rooms.

The architectural firm finally produced the blue prints for Father Elliott to view in about mid-July. But when Father saw the design he was not pleased. The tabernacle was shown to be resting in a separate room off to the right side of the church. That wouldn't do at all. The tabernacle needed to be placed in the church proper at the front of the church.

Other considerations were deliberated and finally a design was approved. The workers could get going on the church construction without a moment to waste.

The resulting church layout design was generally as originally drawn by the architect with the exception that the area, over to the right side of the church where the tabernacle was perceived, was changed to a walled "conference room" coming off of the foyer instead of being connected to the church proper.

As it proved to be, the conference room was definitely needed for a private conversation. The only other place on the church property for any private counseling or discussion was the confessional/cry room.



IN THE BEGINNING...

There was a building boom in St. Charles County, Missouri, and the western portion of the county grew more populated and more developed. It was around the year 2003, and local Catholic parishes of St. Patrick's in Wentzville and ICD (Immaculate Conception of Dardenne) exploded with parishioners. The Archdiocesan Office of Pastoral Planning knew it had to relieve the load to the current parishes by opening a new Catholic presence in the overcrowded area. The neighboring parish pastors all liked that concept, for sure.

Finally, in the early days of 2006, the reality of a new parish, with church boundaries and a new name, St. Gianna Catholic Church of Wentzville was born. The Archdiocese of St. Louis already had a tract of land in the Wentzville area for possible future parish use. The land was on Highway N, across from some Wentzville schools, at 450 East Highway N, Wentzville, MO. to be exact. Thus that land was marked as the future home of St. Gianna Catholic Church. Use of that land would not be seen for a few years down the road. However, the cost of the land became the first debt for the future Wentzville parish.

Well, actually, the new parish started out in Lake St. Louis, but that's getting ahead of the story.

SAINT GIANNA BERETTA MOLLA

The new parish was placed "under the spiritual protection of Saint Gianna Beretta Molla, who is a model of the faithful wife and mother and true apostle of the Gospel of Life," said Archbishop Raymond Burke. St. Gianna was a wife, mother and physician who died in 1962, and was canonized by Pope John Paul II in 2004. Saint Gianna's feast day is celebrated on April 28. April 28th, 2006, became the official date of the founding of this new parish. This parish is believed to be the first parish in the United States to be named for Saint Gianna.

Gianna was a doctor who worked especially with mothers, babies, the elderly and the poor. She married Pietro Molla in 1955, and went on to have six children. With her last pregnancy, Gianna developed a large ovarian cyst. Doctors wanted Gianna to have an abortion to save her own life but she refused. Gianna died a week after childbirth but her baby daughter, Emmanuela Gianna Molla, lived and eventually became a physician herself.

Archbishop Burke is a personal friend of the Molla family and is especially excited about St. Gianna Catholic Church and its success.



A decorative border at the top of the page, featuring intricate white floral and scrollwork patterns on a black background.

A NEW LEADER

So there was a new Parish in the area, at least on paper. There was a new "kid on the block," for the first time in 25 years for the Archdiocese of St. Louis.

Next on the agenda, His Excellency Archbishop Raymond Burke had to find a priest to head the new parish-to-be. The new pastor would have to be a spiritual man, of course, as pastor, but also someone who works well on his own, a practical person who can form "the church" from the ground up, handling "the details," someone who already has an idea of the area, someone who can work with little instruction and with lots of imagination! A tactful, persuasive and strong man of faith would need to lead, from practically nothing but a "list of names," a full fledged Catholic congregation into the fray of Capital Campaigns, Altar Sodalties, Men and Ladies Groups, a Parish School of Religion, Baptisms, RCIA and Bible studies, and so forth, meetings ad nauseam.

This is where a "status check" and a friendly chat with the Archbishop and the unsuspecting Reverend Timothy Elliott, then pastor of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Josephville, Missouri, comes in. Father Elliott was in a neighboring parish at the time, and seemed a good "fit" for the job as Pastor of the new St. Gianna Church, according to Archbishop Burke. Well, after the initial shock, when offered the position as St. Gianna's Pastor, Father Elliott readily picked up the challenge offered to him by Archbishop Burke. Despite the daunting task ahead, Father Elliott said that "a peace washed over me," a sure sign that Father Elliott was meant for the "job!"

The only condition upon acceptance of the honor of being the new pastor was that Father Elliott had to keep the whole idea a SECRET for a couple of months!! Oh, yes, Father Elliott had to get moving with "the details"... like finding a place to live that could also be a Rectory, then finding a place to have a temporary church... without letting anyone know what he was about. No problem?!?!?!?

But that IS what happened.

First, Father Elliott searched for a home to be a Rectory. He found a home; the Archdiocese bought it for his use, and applied the cost to the debt of St. Gianna Catholic Church-to-be. The residence at 331 Charity, Lake St. Louis, MO, 63367, became the initial point of reference for St. Gianna Parish. (That home is still the Rectory at this writing, though plans are in the making for a new Rectory on the permanent church property.)

Next Father Elliott began scouring the area for some place to call home for a Temporary St. Gianna Church—maybe a local Equestrian Center, or a local school building? Office buildings were going up all over the area in question. Could one of them be suitable temporary accommodations for a small church? In between times, Father Elliott began perusing Resale Shops to find items for the rectory. He made many trips to the Archdiocesan Reclamation Center to look at possible rectory and church furnishings.

So, there was now a Rectory, some land for future church development and a Pastor for a new church. The SECRET had grown and was taking shape!!

