

Pipe Organ Memorial

St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church

To those who have and who will continue to invest themselves in the St. Mark Pipe Organ Memorial, thank you.

As you are aware, St. Mark the Evangelist Church is preparing to enter a new stage in its Pipe Organ Memorial. The following is a “nutshell synopsis” of the pipe organ memorial history in our parish.



Artist conception of the new pipe organ placement in St. Mark the Evangelist Church

Over 14 years ago, our parish was in the process of discernment and design for a major building campaign that would include a greatly needed new church. As a part of that plan, information on a possible pipe organ builder was sought for our parish. (Note: a pipe organ installation for the original sanctuary had also been a desire. But as the community grew, it soon became evident that it would not be wise to install a new pipe organ in a sanctuary that would soon be outgrown.)

As plans were developing for our present sanctuary, there were the usual monetary constraints, which ultimately caused the building to be scaled down. An organ task force (OTF) was formed. After much discussion and research, the Building Committee/Core Team renewed its commitment to install a pipe organ in the new church. It would be a delayed installation due to financial constraints. Core Team determined it was prudent to hire an organ consultant to help guide the process of preparing the new sanctuary for a pipe organ.

The new sanctuary was dedicated on January 16, 2000. The “faithful for many years, but now failing” Rodgers electronic organ was moved to the new church and modified to function through the sound system in order to work in the new space. Purchased for our 700 seat original sanctuary, the Rodgers organ had a difficult time serving the new 1500 seat sanctuary. It is now a non-functional instrument.

The OTF was joined by Fr. Jim Brobst around the time of our new church’s dedication. Fr. Jim, in addition to being a fine organist, has been (and still is) a wealth of knowledge. The parish needed to identify the builder for our pipe organ. Because our new space had to be downsized, the size of the music ministry area had decreased. The area was now more recessed, and was actually “behind the altar” to some degree. As such, it was difficult to see the altar area, as well as to hear and see the presider at the altar and ambo. In addition, it was difficult for the choir to hear the organ because the speakers had to be located in front of the recessed area to benefit as much of the main body of the church as possible.

COMPLETION COSTS
\$1,200,000

Includes: **Engineering**
 Sound Upgrade
 Architectural Construction
 Pipe Organ

Here are some rough amounts for the costs of various items;

The Console itself	\$100,000
A 16' Pipe	\$10,000
An 8' Pipe	\$2,000
A 4' Pipe	\$500
A 2' Pipe	\$100
An Individual key in the console	\$350

After much time and research, the OTF selected John-Paul Buzard of Champaign, IL to be the builder of our pipe organ. Mr. Buzard penned several tonal

No matter how small and unimportant what we are doing may seem, if we do it well, it may soon become the step that will lead us to better things.

specification proposals (basically, the sound character of the organ) for our needs and space availability. The specifications of the instrument were developed through collaborative meetings and correspondence between our OTF and Mr. Buzard. Two years later we entered into a Design Contract with the company. The process of fleshing out the dream of what the organ would look like in our sanctuary began. The Design Contract did not bind St. Mark's or Buzard Pipe Organ Builders to build the organ, nor did it stop price escalation. (Note: Funds for the design are committed and go toward the price of the organ when the parish enters into a Building Contract.)

Several months ago, because of a new and very generous donation, Msgr. Kevin was able to bring a formal proposal, containing all financial and contractual matters between builder and parish, to Archbishop Gomez and the Archdiocesan Building Board. The proposal received approval from the Archdiocese. This allowed us to enter into a Building Contract with Buzard Pipe Organ Builders. Signing of the contract stopped any further price escalation.

It will be necessary to modify the structure of the sanctuary in order to accommodate the new pipe organ. The installation process will be a perfect time to update and improve the sound system of St. Mark. This is a project that has been needed for some time. The organ's magnificent reverberation will benefit from an improved sound system and so will all of the services directed to our faith community. Mr. Buzard currently has seven (7) organs ahead of our project. Our projected installation date is Fall of 2009.

So here we are in May 2007. As you can see, this process did not come about quickly or lightly. Obviously, it is a major project. We hope that all of St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Community will take this opportunity

CURIOUS ORGAN FACTS FROM HISTORY

The concept of the organ appears to have been created in 246 BCE by Ctesibius of Alexandria. He invented a mechanical flute-playing instrument with wind pressure regulated by means of water pressure, called a hydraulis. The pan flute (sometimes called panpipes and often associated with the pagan god, Pan) is considered the ancestor of the pipe organ. It utilizes the principle of the "stopped pipe" with 10 or more pipes of increasing length connected together. Each pipe speaks a different pitch. Some of the same principles are utilized on the pipe organ to this day.

The organ began making its way into churches around 900 CE. Exactly how and why remains an enigma, but it appears that the organ was first used for ceremonial purposes. By the 1400s, the use of organs was well established in monastic churches and cathedrals throughout Europe. Large and small organs were in use on festival occasions and in alternation with church choirs for liturgical purposes. While most Americans may link the organ to the church, the instrument was around for more than 1100 years before it made its way into a church setting. In fact, because of its very secular beginnings and its likening to the "pipes of Pan," the organ was actually considered inappropriate for Christian worship and viewed as a pagan instrument until about the Middle Ages.

According to Sir George Grove in his famous Dictionary of Music and Musicians, 1889: "The organ is, together with the clock, the most complex of all mechanical instruments developed before the Industrial Revolution. Among musical instruments its history is the most involved and wide-ranging, and its extant repertory the oldest and largest...No other instrument has inspired such avowed respect as the organ."

Pipe organs became big business in America. In just one year, 1927, 2,400 pipe organs were made (compared to 1,200 in 1909). In the early 20th century organs reached an unprecedented popularity as instruments for concerts, entertainment and education. Organs were built in concert halls, municipal buildings, universities, homes and even public schools.

In 1961 Charles Fisk built an organ for a church in Baltimore, Maryland, the first of many organs inspired by historical European models to be built by his firm. Today many American organ building firms, located in every region of the country, emulate historical methods and techniques and create instruments which are a unique American blend of the old and the new. In 1992, the C.B. Fisk Organ Company installed its opus 100 in Meyerson Symphony Center, home of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra. This remains one of the largest mechanical action organs ever built for a concert hall.

to participate by donating or praying for this wonderful addition to our worship. It is the completion of a dream for this community. For those who may be opposed, we pray that you will allow each person to prayerfully discern their commitment to the project, and that you will continue to direct your vital energies to areas that will benefit the community.

Currently you will find information on the organ posted on our parish website: www.stmarkevangelist.com. Here you will find a link for the Organ Fund Drive; there is also a link to Mr. Buzard's website under the TOUR OUR CHURCH icon on our website. As of April 2007, Mr. Buzard's website currently lists the specifications of our organ.