

What St Rose of Lima parish means to me

By Angelo Giambattista

When I enter any space the first thing I do is look up. I look at the beams and the walls and try to decipher the construction of the building. As an architect, I need to understand how things are built.

The first time I entered the church at St. Rose of Lima almost 17 years ago I did precisely that. How is this place built I asked myself. So I took notice of the beautiful wooden trestles, the wonderful windows and of course the alter. I was impressed by its beauty and sturdy craftsmanship. As I continued to grow as a parishioner, academy parent and active volunteer the structure started to take on a much deeper meaning.

As an architect, I learned a very valuable lesson. There is only so much that I can do to create an inspiring space. I can't design people. I can't design family. And I absolutely can't design love. Our parish taught me that very special things can happen within a space like our beloved church. In my 17 years at St. Rose, I have met friends who have blurred the line between friends and family. I have watched my children grow up within our pews while learning about and embracing their faith. Our parish has been a partner in raising our children. And through God's wisdom, I know how fortunate I am to be married to the love of my life.

But perhaps the most profound impact by St. Rose has been on me. I have always loved my faith and attended church all my life. I have had all my sacraments and considered myself well versed in my Catholic faith. Only when I entered St. Rose did I realize I did not really know how to pray. And thus not really know how to talk to God. Of course the catalyst to this realization was Father Owen. I remember the day he mentioned in mass that song is a form of prayer. I had always struggled to find a meaningful way to reach God. And now I had one. Thankfully for the congregation, I sing quietly as I am no Frank Sinatra. St. Rose has made me a better man in every possible way.

When I tell friends that our parish fosters and supports the development of priests they are impressed. They are almost shaken when I tell them how many there have been. This accomplishment is something we can all take pride and ownership in. The love and commitment we have for our faith is why those young men come to St. Rose.

So when I enter our church I still look up. I can't help it. I still see the strong structure of our building and all the materials beautifully coming together to make our space. But I've learned that the true strength of our parish comes from its people, its family and most importantly, its love.