

First Annual Ss. Robert & William Festival, a Weekend of Fun and Blessings

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August 25, 2011 -- Parishioners of the recently combined Saints Robert and William Catholic Church can add another check to their growing list of accomplishments -- a successful first annual festival.

Blessed with good weather and hard working volunteers, the first annual International Family Festival welcomed parishioners, families, neighbors and community leaders to the church grounds located on 260th street to enjoy a weekend of live bands, ethnic foods, gambling, Euclid Beach Rocket Car rides, pony rides, games and prizes.

As if the festival couldn't get any better, the grand prize raffle winner generously donated the entire \$10,000 prize back to the church.

"The Festival was a spectacular event that allowed the parish, school and community at large to come and celebrate and enjoy each other with good old fashioned family fun," said Father John Betters, pastor for almost two years of the newly formed parish.

The festival kicked off Thursday with an after-hours celebration with community leaders including Euclid Chamber of Commerce Members and Mayor Cervenik, who issued a proclamation stating that the Parish of Ss. Robert & William is proud to be host of a celebration that showcases the spirit, diversity, talents and unity of the residents of the City of Euclid.

On Friday, opening night, the popular Euclid band Pieces of Eight played classic rock and Motown hits while crowds excitedly poured on to the festival grounds. The smell of funnel cakes and grilled burgers wafted through the warm summer breeze and children whizzed through the crowd anxious to ride the Euclid Beach Rocket Ship and play games.

As people enjoyed the festival foods, lemon shake-ups, ice cream and music, the faces on many Festival volunteers smiled in relief as if to say, "The festival is here. We made it. And it's not raining!"

Saturday evening's festivities had a slightly different flavor. Along with the customary festival attractions, the parishioners of Ss. Robert and William also hosted the *Avenue of Nations* celebration, a feast of carefully prepared homemade ethnic dishes, imported beers and wines and scrumptious desserts from countries all over the world.

Festival goers filled their plates with homemade stuffed cabbage, pierogies, wiener schnitzel, sausage and kraut, cavatellis, enchiladas, corned beef and Asian dishes. More festival fun ensued with the band Phil 'n the Blanks playing hits from the '50's through the '90's.

On Sunday, the final day of the festival started with a polka mass led by the Don Wojtila Band followed by a hearty chicken dinner. Giant rain clouds passed over leaving another beautiful summer day with people enjoying more live music from the Wojtila Band, Father McNeil's Country Hour and DJ Rich Smith. Children gathered around popular animal enthusiast Jungle Terry to pet exotic animals like white skunks, chinchillas, turtles and even a giant boa constrictor!

At the end of the day, Father Betters announced the winners of the raffle prizes and gift baskets. With the grand prize winner generously donating the money back to the parish, the festival planners and attendees felt truly blessed to not only be a part of the first annual festival, but the thriving Ss. Robert and William parish community.