

More About Us

SUMMER



Super 8

Do you know what Super 8 is?

Each summer our youth in grades 6-12 are invited to join us for a summer program of mission and ministry for our parish. They have to write an essay, pay a registration fee, pack their lunch, come to mass and work. I mean these kids really work hard! They weed, they pick up trash, they move furniture, they help set-up/clean up the festival and anything else that comes our way. I have described this program, I invented, to adults in this community and across the country for the past 5 years. Most adults, especially the ones who help out, think I am crazy. No one thought it would work. This year we had 40+ youth register for Super 8. Each youth had to write a 500 word essay. Here are a few of the reasons why they do it-listed in their own words:

"I wish to participate in this super eight program because it will help me grow in my faith. This experience will help me be a

better Christian. Doing super eight will help me make new friends. It will help our parish look good and put a good impression on our church. Super eight will help me become more of a believer in God. It will be a pleasure helping out my community by doing yard work and helping out in school. I hope this experience will help me become a better person. I hope it will help me see how to be more helpful. Most of all I hope I will shine brighter in God's eyes." **Kendall Powers grade 7 age 13 STM School**

"I want to participate in Super eight because I heard it was fun. I also want to participate to be with my friends and to get service hours and help the community. I think it is fun helping the community. I hope super eight will help me in all the things I do. In my parish life I want to do good, and I think super eight will help me do good. Doing good will make others do good, even though it is work, I will probably still have a good time. Right this second, I am looking forward to doing it." **Mitch Gentile grade 6 age 12 STM School**

"I wish to participate in the Super 8 program because I need more service hours for future high school and boy scouts. I also

believe this program will give me something useful to do this summer rather than being bored after the first few weeks. I still need many more service hours for my Life and Eagle ranks of boy scouts and this is the perfect place to earn it. I would also enjoy being with my friends, who I often do not see for weeks on end. As a Catholic Youth, I believe this will allow me to understand many of the lessons God is teaching me. I believe this work will be good for my well-being and should make me feel better about myself and others."

Brian Keefe grade 8 age 14 Glen Este Middle School

If you think our parish looks good today it is because the maintenance staff and Super 8 have worked hard all summer long making that happen. Stop and say a prayer for our youth. They are the future of STM and it is looking very bright indeed! I am most proud of all they have done for our community.

*Submitted by Diane Brennan,
Youth Minister*



The first day of school always feels like New Years Day. For the life-cycle of the parish, it *is* a new year in a practical way. What will be the same and what will be different?

Most activities are predictable. The various organizations, often headed by a new team of officers, are putting their calendars of activities in order. Scouts are planning for the progression of the kids through the program of merit badges and levels of achievement. Boosters are putting team rosters together and planning the practice sessions. PSR is busy assigning students to classrooms and hoping all the materials have arrived. The bible study will be starting a new book. The school teachers are getting classrooms together.

What might be different? The parish office will be open Sundays from 9:00 AM to Noon. The school day will start fifteen minutes earlier and so the Friday Mass will remain at 8:30 AM all year long. Currently, we form a pastoral region with Holy Trinity Parish in Batavia but changes could possibly be in the making. It seems that the region formed by the parishes in Amelia, New Richmond, and Bethel just isn't going to work with just one priest and so that region has requested we go back to the drawing board and start all over and draw new lines. It wasn't easy the first time around and I suspect it is going to be even harder to solve the second time around.

We have worked out an agreement with the privately owned gym next door so that we can coexist without unnecessary turmoil. They agreed to put a gate in their back fence and we agreed to let their patrons use our back parking lot when not in use by the parish. The parking places are clearly marked with an "E8" painted in each slot. This should keep gym traffic away from the church entrances.

Our staff have formed a team led by Deacon John Convery to find ways to engage more parishioners in the life of the parish. I'm sure you will be hearing more on this as the year progresses. The new Music Director, Terry Wenninger, will be trying to engage more people in the music ministry. Surely there is some yet to be discovered talent in the parish.

The largest difference in parish life this year is the budget. For the first time, we are budgeting a deficit. The school census has been like a roller-coaster all summer and it became very difficult to finalize a workable budget. We have investigated, and ALL the parochial schools are starting with fewer students than last year. Only one school which is smaller than ours has yet to release this information and so I suspect the picture is the same all over. I am guessing that tuition NEXT YEAR is going to increase far more than what has been the norm. On the bright side, our school can offer a smaller teacher to student ratio than the other schools. Maybe this will help our recruiting efforts next year.

This budget deficit can be overcome by using some of our savings and by dedicating the out of collection donations to make up the difference. I do not yet have exact numbers but suffice it to say we will have to turn this around in the next two years.

Let's all pray for a good year for the whole parish. ***Fr. Bill Wagner, Pastor***

St. Thomas More Church

To: All St. Thomas More Parishioners

August 2008

From: The Parish Finance Committee

Our parish operating results for 2007-8 are included in this document. We had a surplus for the year of \$5,672.08. Our goal was to break even and we accomplished our goal despite numerous challenges. A few highlights include:

1. We continued to pay on our debt and interest due the Archdiocese. Our principal debt fell to \$973,216.68 as of June 30th or \$80,161.71 in the past year. The amount of interest charged on our debt fell by \$5,459.00 from the previous year. Our debt and interest is not scheduled to be paid off until April 2020. We continue to address this very important issue.
2. We saved \$50,000 during the year and transferred the funds to the 2008-9 fiscal year to help pay for operating and capital projects including the parking lot repairs underway in August 2008.
3. We did not embark on any major capital projects during the actual fiscal year. However, we spent \$8,967.76 on fees for the Connector project design and the feasibility study.
4. Our Sunday collections increased over the previous year which is a very significant result. Most parishes can not make that claim! We did not make plan because we deposited the June 29th collection on July 1 in the new fiscal year.
5. All the school tuition due was paid in full. We continue to work to ensure all school tuition is paid to ensure the long term success of our school.
6. We added a full time Music Director allowing us to grow a quality music program as a part of our liturgies and in our school.
7. The staff did an outstanding job of controlling their budgets. Most notably, our Cafeteria and School Latch Key program again had an outstanding year. The school had 319 student enrolled.

We met all our payroll and non-payroll obligations including all required payments to the Archdiocese. We had no unpaid bills on June 30th. The parish assumed no additional debt during the year.

All of our special collections for needs beyond our parish totaled \$67,181.87. This is not included in the total numbers on page 2 and 3. The largest amount, \$23,906.95, was donated to our St. Vincent de Paul Society.

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ST. THOMAS MORE PARISH OPERATING RESULTS *
FISCAL 2007-8

Account	Jul '07 - Jun '08	Jul '07 - Jun '08	\$ Over or Under
	Actual	Budget	Budget
<u>PARISH INCOME:</u>			
Sunday & Holyday	\$ 791,563.38	\$ 795,000.00	\$ (3,436.62)
Votive Lights	\$ 5,429.32	\$ 5,500.00	\$ (70.68)
Mass Stipends	\$ 4,518.12	\$ 3,400.00	\$ 1,118.12
Total Contributions	\$ 801,510.82	\$ 803,900.00	\$ (2,389.18)
Vision 2000 & Debt Reduction (applied to parish debt payments)	\$ 48,197.02	\$ 41,000.00	\$ 7,197.02
Total Parish Fundraising Activities	\$ 56,572.03	\$ 76,000.00	\$ (19,427.97)
<i>Designated Collections- Outside of Parish--Not in Totals</i>	\$ 67,181.87	\$ -	\$ 67,181.87
Catholic Telegraph	\$ 2,680.00	\$ 2,800.00	\$ (120.00)
Interest, Dividends, Fees	\$ 35,027.21	\$ 31,600.00	\$ 3,427.21
Rental Fees, Book Racks	\$ 3,218.80	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 218.80
Withdrawal from Savings	\$ 3,000.00	\$ -	\$ -
Religious Education Fees	\$ 11,163.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 1,163.00
Exempt Interest	\$ 1,503.00	\$ -	\$ 1,503.00
Total Other Revenues	\$ 56,592.01	\$ 47,400.00	\$ 9,192.01
TOTAL PARISH INCOME: <i>(Does not include design collections)</i>	\$ 962,871.88	\$ 968,300.00	\$ (5,428.12)
<u>SCHOOL INCOME:</u>			
Total Student Tuition, State Aide	\$ 927,426.71	\$ 883,102.49	\$ 44,324.22
Total Cafeteria Income, Latch Key	\$ 103,233.22	\$ 81,000.00	\$ 22,233.22
TOTAL SCHOOL INCOME:	\$ 1,030,659.93	\$ 964,102.49	\$ 66,557.44
TOTAL PARISH & SCHOOL INCOME:	\$ 1,993,531.81	\$ 1,932,402.49	\$ 61,129.32

*This is a condensed operating statement that just highlights parish income and expenditures.
A detailed operating statement was certified by the Parish Finance Committee on August 12, 2008.

ST. THOMAS MORE PARISH OPERATING RESULTS *
FISCAL 2007-8

Account	Jul '07 - Jun '08 Actual	Jul '07 - Jun '08 Budget	\$ Over or Under Budget
<u>PARISH EXPENSES:</u>			
Priests, Visitors	\$ 38,782.64	\$ 39,908.00	\$ (1,125.36)
Lay Parish Salaries	\$ 242,581.71	\$ 231,002.50	\$ 11,579.21
Rectory Expenditures	\$ 15,102.55	\$ 14,250.00	\$ 852.55
Parish Office Expenses, Bank Fees	\$ 52,575.78	\$ 44,900.00	\$ 7,675.78
Parish Benefits	\$ 97,942.45	\$ 119,547.61	\$ (21,605.16)
Parish Transportation & Seminars	\$ 8,784.20	\$ 5,600.00	\$ 3,184.20
Parish Social Activities, Bingo Exp	\$ 14,390.56	\$ 1,600.00	\$ 12,790.56
Altar, Sanctuary, & Liturgical	\$ 10,915.23	\$ 9,400.00	\$ 1,515.23
Parish School of Religion	\$ 9,901.76	\$ 12,200.00	\$ (2,298.24)
Adult Faith Formation	\$ 2,810.21	\$ 5,405.00	\$ (2,594.79)
Youth Ministry	\$ (102.57)	\$ 775.00	\$ (877.57)
Pastoral Ministry	\$ 2,917.87	\$ 4,000.00	\$ (1,082.13)
Catholic Telegraph Subscriptions	\$ 15,600.00	\$ 16,500.00	\$ (900.00)
Misc. Admin Exp, Fingerprinting	\$ 1,982.93	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 482.93
Parish Utilities Only	\$ 28,238.86	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 3,238.86
Parish Maintenance Expenses	\$ 63,361.45	\$ 58,450.00	\$ 4,911.45
Payments to Archdiocese	\$ 90,504.96	\$ 87,000.00	\$ 3,504.96
Interest Payments on Parish Debt	\$ 19,999.92	\$ 20,000.00	\$ (0.08)
Capital Projects-Connector Addition			
Costs	\$ 8,967.76	\$ -	\$ 8,967.76
Payments on Parish Debt	\$ 80,166.71	\$ 80,000.00	\$ 166.71
Misc	\$ 755.59	\$ 1,000.00	\$ (244.41)
TOTAL PARISH EXPENSES:	\$ 806,180.57	\$ 778,038.11	\$ 28,142.46
<u>SCHOOL EXPENSES:</u>			
School Admin Salaries	\$ 123,003.33	\$ 132,250.00	\$ (9,246.67)
School Office Expenses & Equipment	\$ 47,312.25	\$ 45,200.00	\$ 2,112.25
School & Cafeteria Benefits	\$ 189,489.67	\$ 166,940.22	\$ 22,549.45
Teacher Salaries	\$ 531,575.98	\$ 538,930.00	\$ (7,354.02)
Instructional Expense	\$ 12,912.28	\$ 11,100.00	\$ 1,812.28
Religion Expenditures	\$ 5,760.17	\$ 6,700.00	\$ (939.83)
Library Expenses	\$ 103.11	\$ 800.00	\$ (696.89)
School Technology Expenses	\$ 7,785.01	\$ 4,400.00	\$ 3,385.01
Booster Gym Exp Reimbursement	\$ (2,297.34)	\$ (1,400.00)	\$ (897.34)
Extra Clergy-School, Misc	\$ 275.00	\$ 400.00	\$ (125.00)
Cafeteria Salaries & Expenses	\$ 67,327.48	\$ 50,376.13	\$ 16,951.35
School Utilities Only	\$ 66,256.70	\$ 55,000.00	\$ 11,256.70
School Maintenance Expenses	\$ 132,409.39	\$ 137,675.00	\$ (5,265.61)
Misc Capital-School	\$ 6,458.77	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 4,958.77
School Fundraisers	\$ (6,692.64)	\$ -	\$ (6,692.64)
TOTAL SCHOOL EXPENSES:	\$ 1,181,679.16	\$ 1,149,871.35	\$ 31,807.81
TOTAL PARISH & SCHOOL EXPENSE:	\$ 1,987,859.73	\$ 1,927,909.46	\$ 59,950.27
GRAND TOTALS-Surplus	\$ 5,672.08	\$ 4,493.03	\$ 1,179.05

We also had some issues during the year:

1. Our Bingo was closed in November 2007 after a very strong attempt by our Bingo team to make it work. Bingo lost \$12,312.55. New state regulations and the state-wide smoking ban hurt our Bingo.
2. The 2007 Festival profit was \$66,329.27. Because our Festival is at the beginning of a fiscal year, we did pay some of the 2008 expenses in June. The Grand Raffle deposits were not made until early July 2008 instead of during June last year. State mandated accounting regulations and the timing of our Festival impact our reporting.
3. Our 2008-9 school enrollments are down from last year. We are experiencing extensive delays from our families in turning in their registrations which impacts our ability to properly plan for the next school year. We base our staff levels on the actual numbers enrolled. A change to our registration process will be planned to ensure better planning.
4. Our assessment costs to the diocese rose from 7.2% of income to 8.7%. This increase cost us \$15,973.49 over the previous year. We also paid the mandatory Catholic Telegraph subscription program which cost \$15,600.00. Parishioners only paid \$2,680.00 of the costs. Please consider helping to offset this mandated expense.
5. Our employee health care costs will exceed \$200,000.00 this year.
6. Our school's entire operations are now regulated by the State of Ohio or "Jarrod's Law". We are now faced with these additional costs to ensure our school meets the state standards.
7. Energy remains the "wild card". We have seen our energy costs rise despite conservation. Even though we have planned an increase in our budget, the actual costs could be a lot higher.

Of course we continue to face challenges in our future. The costs of operating the parish and school continue to rise faster than our income. **We are now projecting a deficit for 2008-9 that we collectively need to reduce.** We are faced with more oversight requirements from the diocese and the government. Our goal continues to be threefold: reduce our debt, improve our existing facilities as funds allow, and plan for our future growth with the "connector" project. There is no financial leeway in our environment. Our goal is to continue to operate the parish in a sound, financial manner. Your patience and understanding is appreciated.

Lastly, we can not successfully offer a full service parish without you: our parishioners. In addition to your financial support, we need volunteers to assist in the various ministries. Please give some consideration as to what you can do to support your parish.

We thank all those who support us financially and through volunteering.

May God Continue to Bless our Parish!

PREACHING INTERNSHIP

Submitted by Deacon John Convery



Starting in September, Deacon John will be participating in a preaching internship which, when successfully completed, will provide him with the required faculties to preach at Sunday Liturgy. Deacons in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati are given, at ordination, preaching faculties for baptisms, weddings, funerals, weekday communion service, children's liturgies and special occasions. To receive preaching faculties for Sunday Liturgy deacons must wait one year following ordination and complete a preaching internship that lasts nine months. During this internship period the deacon is required to participate in two types of homily reflection sessions with parishioners.

One session, occurs prior to the preparation of the homily with the deacon present. The readings for the future Sunday are read and discussed. The deacon is free to use or not use these discussions as input to his homily preparation. These sessions will be held at a mutually convenient time possibly on Sunday night, Monday night or Wednesday morning as part of Bible Study.

The second type of homily reflection session occurs immediately after the Sunday Mass that the homily is preached; without the deacon being present. These sessions last no longer than 30 minutes. Each session is recorded on audio tape and made available to the deacon as valuable feedback. These sessions are designed to answer three questions:

- * **WHAT DID YOU HEAR**
- * **WHAT DIFFERENCE DOES WHAT YOU HEARD MAKE IN YOUR LIFE**
- * **ARE THERE WAYS IN WHICH THE DEACON MIGHT HAVE IMPROVED IN COMMUNICATING THE MESSAGE**

Parishioners with various lifestyles, gender and age are needed to participate in these homily reflection sessions. Six to eight people are needed for each session. You are being asked to make a commitment of just four (4) weeks.

Participants will be rotated on and off the sessions to keep them fresh.

If you would be willing to participate in these homily reflection sessions please call Deacon John at (513) 753-2568 (O), or (513) 947-9779 (H). Thank you for your consideration.

WHO BECOMES A CATHOLIC TODAY?

Submitted by Becky Ready, DRE



With the media reporting stories of how the major Christian religions are experiencing great "slippage" in the numbers in their memberships, it is worth repeating that the Catholic church in the United States still gains more new members every year than any other religion. Who are the people who join the Church today? Here at St. Thomas More our recent converts reflect the trends across the entire country.

- † **Young people who are engaged to marry Catholics.** At this important time in their lives, young couples want to share their faith lives and values.
- † **Young parents** who are expecting their first born baby or have children starting school often find that this is the time to join a faith community that will help them find God in their lives and establish moral values in their families.
- † **People who were baptized** either in the Catholic faith or another Christian religion but were not brought up or educated in that religion. As the years go by they may seek to return to their Christian roots.
- † **People who are not baptized...**both American and increasingly, people from other parts of the world. As they live with their Christian neighbors, they are attracted to the Catholic Church with its ancient traditions and colorful liturgies.
- † **People who have experienced grief and tragedy** in their lives and are seeking to make sense of it. So often we hear people say, "I had Catholic friends or neighbors who had great suffering in their lives and their faith seemed to sustain them and comfort them. I want to find a faith like that".
- † **People from all backgrounds who are seeking God** in their lives...looking for the answers to life and death questions. The Catholic Church offers great opportunities of Scripture study, the prayerful worship of God, intellectual studies in theology, joyful celebrations through the sacraments, fun filled social events, respect for traditions, care and love for the sick and dying as well as for the poor.

So you can see that the people who join our Church are people who are very involved in life as it is lived today.

HOW DOES A PERSON BECOME A CATHOLIC THROUGH RCIA?

The RCIA, *Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults*, is the process by which the Catholic Church welcomes new members into its communal life. It is for non-Christian men and women, for Christians who are not Catholics, and for Catholics who are baptized, but have no religious training and are not fully initiated. If you or someone you know fits this description and may be interested in joining our RCIA process here at St. Thomas More, contact Becky Ready at 753-2548 or email her at bready@sttm.org. We promise it will be an exciting journey like no other!

PARISH PICNIC

Photos submitted by Deacon Michael Thomas



A GOOD TIME WAS HAD BY ALL!!



School starts on August 26...with a variety of new programs and students as well as familiar faces and events.

With our continued emphasis on health and wellness, our girls in grades four and five will be able to learn basic running principles and train for a 5K run through the new Girls on the Run program. Program coordinator Dena Desrosiers will be joined by teachers Susan Arbogast and Jamie Eveler along with parent Maggie O'Brien as GOTR premiers this year.

As our accreditation renewal process continues, our steering committee has identified two areas

for focused improvement. Our Catholic Identity goal will address character development to help students become persons of integrity and compassion. We're delighted to have Deacon Convery working with us to help develop learning opportunities and meaningful service projects. Fr. Bill will support this goal with classroom visits in addition to his great homilies at our weekly school Mass.

Our student performance goal will target reading comprehension with an emphasis on higher level thinking skills. The reading series adopted last year has brought considerable resources to this area. Teachers will be researching best practices in reading as we continue the accreditation process.

Terry Wenninger, Parish Music Director, is stepping into the role of music teacher for grades 4-8. Ms. Wenninger is eager to continue

and expand on her work with our Children's Choir. Their performance at last year's closing liturgy was spectacular! OMEA (Ohio Music Educators Association) competitions are on her agenda.

Our full day kindergarten filled up early this year. We are hoping for increased numbers at the primary grade levels to maintain our two classes per grade level. Call the school office at 753-2540 to see how you can bring MORE to your child's life by enrollment in St. Thomas More School.



Peg Fischer, Principal
St. Thomas More School

07-08 SCHOOL YEAR



A highlight of the year for seventh graders is the dissection of a frog during their life science class.



8th graders Sarah Lindsey and Lindsey Shepherd explain a math game to a younger student.



Lauren Lamping & Brian Roberts - 2008 cornhole tournament



Jenn Foltz, Grace Hermanns & Abby Simpson savor their last days as an 8th grader at STM.



Math is fun! Gracie Tribble moves her marker while Suzie Beattie watches the game.



Abbie Wittmeyer watches while Abby Pour and Casey Ready play a math game.

7th grade
verses 8th
grade in annual
tug of war.

The annual Penny Party for K-5 students was a fun end of the year math review hosted by the junior high students.



Hannah Taylor marks Allison's Penny Party Passport during her visit to her math station.

3
+
2
=
5



Maria Kling and Danielle Lynd host a math game.

Everyone LOVED Carly Dugan's fly-swatter math facts game!



8



Brandon Bagley and Kyle Blaha play a math game.

7



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