

MORE ABOUT US St. Thomas More Parish

JULYFEST 2006

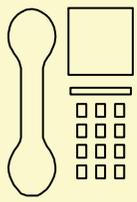
From the desk of Fr. Bill Wagner, Pastor

Summer is around the corner and once again it's JULYFEST time. I cannot help but reminisce about the many church festivals I've attended over the years. I would often ride with my mother and father into southern Indiana on a Sunday afternoon for a festival and a country-style dinner. Of course, this experience pales when confronted with the memory of Father Heider's "Bear Meat and Chicken Dinners" offered by the St. Thomas More Festival in the 1950's. Who could ever forget that?

When I lived in Germany, during an army assignment, I attended many townfests and couldn't help but compare them to our parish festivals. These events are part of our culture and help us define who we are. That's a deep enough thought, but it really is true. Events like festivals are community celebrations of our history. Almost in the same manner, the Mass is not only the unbloody sacrifice of the cross, but also helps define who we are. Festivals, liturgies, anniversaries, holidays and holidays are, in a real sense, living history. It's a history we all share together and proclaim who we are.



Blessings and congratulations to
Leo and Lucille Wenstrup
on their
70th Wedding Anniversary!



From the desk of Mike Gennett, Business Manager

New Telephone System Installed.....The parish installed a new state of the art telephone system on April 20th. Our old phone system was failing and would not have lasted much longer. The new phone system was paid for by private donors.

Our new phone system will do a lot of new things that we have never had the capability to do in the past. We have installed telephones in many locations where there were no phones before. Each classroom, for example, now has a telephone. We also installed phones in a number of areas that have always needed phones. This includes the Parish Hall, 804 Ohio Pike, and the Fr. Wack Library to name a few. A fax machine has been added to the Finance Office.

One of the best new features of our system is that almost every area and most of the staff now have their own direct telephone number. Instead of dialing the main telephone number and the extension (which you can still do), you can dial each office or classroom directly. (Classrooms will not accept outside calls. Please leave a voicemail message for the teacher.) We bought a large block of local 7 digit numbers. This will make it a lot easier to call the party you are looking for without going through a series of steps in the phone system. If you need a copy of the new directory, you can find it on our home page at <http://www.sttm.org/Misc/Phone%20Directory.pdf>. This directory lists both the extension and the new direct telephone number.

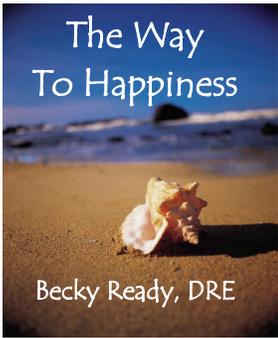
The staff is learning how to use the new phones. Once we master the basics, we will be adding some new features. One feature we plan to start is an outbound call system that can alert parishioners when a meeting is canceled or there is a last minute change. For example, we could have our Bible Study group receive a call from either Fr. Bill or Deacon Jerry that the class has been canceled due to inclement weather. The call is made just once to all those listed in the group. Our school uses a similar program that has been very successful.

The sky is really the limit with the new system. We intend to put it to the best use possible to more effectively help serve our parishioners.

Electronic Contributions....The Cincinnati Enquirer recently ran an article about the growing trend of donating one's church contributions electronically. St. Thomas More has been accepting electronic contributions for the past four years. In fact, it has become so popular that 25% of our first Sunday of the month donations are now donated electronically.

Parishioners can choose to donate electronically through their checking or savings account, or with their Visa, MasterCard or American Express credit card. There is no charge for this service. You can donate either the first Monday of the month or every week. A copy of the application is enclosed. Please complete either side and return it in a sealed envelope to the Finance Office or drop it in the collection basket. Please note on the envelope: Attn: Finance Office.

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Believe it or not, God was perfectly happy before you and I existed, for God is perfect love. He did not need anything, did not need anyone. But perhaps what is most remarkable about love is that genuine love wants to give, to share, to communicate. And if you love perfectly, you yearn to give your whole self, clutch nothing the other dare not touch. So what did God do? Listen to John's gospel: "God so loved the world that he gave his only son, so that everyone who believes in him....may have eternal life (John 4:16).

God still gives himself today in the Eucharist where we gather as the People of God, where we are nourished by his real presence, and are sent to be the Body of Christ in the world. His real presence in the Eucharist is as real and transforming today as it was in the first-century Palestine.

Jesus promises that we can have his joy, the joy of God in heaven. We receive this joy by keeping God's commandments, living the Beatitudes to the best of our ability and receiving the Eucharist especially at Sunday Mass every week, and everyday if we so desire and are able.

This may come as a surprise to many because we think joy depends on doing our own thing rather than God's thing. However, let the facts speak for themselves. Possibly never before has a culture been so preoccupied with feeling good, pleasure-seeking and selfish pursuits. Yet, we are very discontent. Alienated youth, depression, drug and alcohol abuse, broken family relationships, violence and apathy are telltale signs something's very wrong. We're trying to gain our lives, but just as Jesus said, "we're losing them."

Isn't it time to try God's way? Jesus' way is the only way to happiness, contentment and joy. Let's all make a better effort to celebrate Mass weekly and watch the mystery and joy begin to unfold in our lives.

This past April, all the first communicants and their parents discovered the joys of this most remarkable sacrament. We gathered together all morning and participated in five fun learning activities, parent and child together. We baked bread, decorated wooden crosses with beautiful gems, learned about how to experience the "living rosary," played a Catholic trivia game between parents and children (by the way, the children won!) and had a scavenger hunt in the church learning about all the special elements in our sanctuary. After lunch, Fr. Bill led us in an explanation of the Mass. Truly, the day was one of joy. Please take advantage every week of the privilege God has given us: receive his body and blood in the Eucharist for your spiritual good and true lasting joy.

Some comments from the parents and children are as follows:

- *I came into this with a very bad attitude for having to give up a Saturday, but the retreat was very fulfilling, fun and worthwhile. It helped me reconnect with the meaning of our faith and of the sacrament.*
- *Beyond my expectations! This was a fun, informative and meaningful experience! It instilled a sense of community & reinforced previous learning.*
- *We are all part of Christ and it was good to get to know each other, very well done.*

Electronic Contributions continued.....\$\$\$\$\$

Your account information is secure. Our Finance Office is safeguarded with an outside alarm system that routes directly to the Union Township Police. Your information is not shared with anyone. Plus, you can place your contribution on hold or cancel it with an email or phone call. It's that simple and safe. You don't need to remember your envelope, or you can choose to check the "I give electronically" box on the envelope and deposit it during the Offertory.

We've been processing all our monthly school tuition payments electronically since 2001. Electronic banking is alive and well at St. Thomas More! We hope you feel comfortable to enroll. It's so easy!

Welcome Deacon Fred Haas

"My name is Fred Haas. My wife, Linda, and I have been married for 38 years and have four children. I grew up in the western side of Cincinnati and moved into the area to be closer to our two grandchildren. I have taught in Catholic schools for 24 years, including Mother of Mercy HS, McAuley HS, and currently, Bishop Fenwick HS in Middletown, Ohio. I was ordained a deacon in September of 1976 and have served on several parishes including St. Catherine's in Westwood, St. Ignatius in Monfort Heights, St. Michael's in lower Price Hill, and most recently, at St. Leo the Great in Fairmount. In addition to teaching, I also volunteer as a police chaplain in Cincinnati. We are very happy to be part of this faith community and look forward to serving St. Thomas More Parish."



Many thanks and blessings to Rosemary Weimer and the Art & Environment Ministry for their devotion to the beautification of our worship space and liturgical celebrations and to the Music Ministry, Contemporary Group and choir as they unify those gathered to worship and set the tone for each celebration. These ministries create for our faith community an awareness of God's presence and holiness. Their dedication is a true expression of their love for God.



STM Cookbooks

The parish cookbook is now available with about 450 recipes submitted by parishioners. The cost is \$15.00 each and can be purchased at the parish office or email the Elizabeth Ministry at elizabethministry@stm.org. Proceeds benefit the Elizabeth Ministry and STM School.

From Peg Fischer, STM School Principal

Students and staff at STM School are winding down one academic year and eagerly planning for 2006-07! Our goals for the school year are directed by our School Improvement Plan, which was developed during our accreditation process. Our first goal: to help students learn and apply Gospel values on a daily basis, has been woven throughout the school day, emphasized visually through the buildings and discussed monthly in our communication with families. Father Bill addressed our selected monthly values in his school Mass homily each week, and teachers implemented a variety of activities in the classroom to help students develop sensitivity to others. "Differentiated Instruction" was the year-long focus for faculty in-service during the year, to help teachers develop understanding of the principles and specific techniques for meeting the varied needs of students in their classrooms.

Our second goal addressed improvement of student learning through integration of technology in the curriculum. Improvements were made in the school facilities, including a wireless network, and acquisition of interactive whiteboards. Teachers in kindergarten through grade five expanded their use of the DIBELS reading assessment (with online reporting) to identify and support students who needed a little extra boost to improve reading skills. The PTO and school shared the cost of an internet phone dialing service, "One Call Now" to contact parents for reminders or in the event of emergency. The system paid for itself early one morning when a freak storm closed school at 6:25a.m. All parents were able to be contacted in minutes, helping to insure the safety of our students. Edline continues to be a tremendous tool for school communication, allowing parents to access student grades and reports, view school calendars, download lunch forms and sign up for volunteer activities. A BIG thanks to our Technology Committee (Duane Bradley, Mike Wilson, Larry Bush, Jolene Esz, John Burns and Gail Stultz) who are always willing to share their ideas, expertise and TIME to help us develop and maintain a cutting-edge network and infrastructure. Thanks as well to our technology staffers: Rob Pairan and Tasha Ayers for their dedication and efforts!

The past year saw enrollment stabilize with a little more than three hundred students and two hundred families. Increases in staff at the junior high level allowed us to maintain the lowest student-teacher ratio found among Catholic schools in the area. Not surprisingly, our graduation awards at the end of this year will again recognize a significant number of scholarships and admissions of which we are proud. The next time you see these students in church, you might give them a pat on the back!

McNicholas HS - Scholarship - Emily Bradley, Joe Schoettelkotte
Admission with Distinction - Connor Bechtol
Purcell Marian HS - Scholarship - Alison Rebelo
St. Xavier HS - Acceptance - Connor Bechtol, Beau Bockenstette
School of Creative & Performing Arts- Acceptance - Allix Harrington

Enrollment for 2006-07 is well underway. Openings are still available at most grade levels, and tours are offered weekly or by appointment. For more information, or just to visit your parish school, call the school office at 753-2540.

St. Vincent de Paul Society

by Bob Guenther (SVDP)

The St. Thomas More SVDP Society is a member of the St. Martin Deanery. The Deanery consists of 14 parish conferences which serve Clermont, Brown, Adams, Highland and Clinton Counties. The Deanery provides direction and especially monetary funds to those parishes who are in need. St. Thomas More's Conference is blessed with the most generous parishioners and we are most grateful for your generosity. Some of the rural parishes are overwhelmed with requests for assistance and that is when the Deanery steps in to help.

To help satisfy those needs, the 14th Annual SVDP Run for the Poor will take place on Saturday, June 17th at 9:00 AM, starting and finishing at St. Elizabeth Seton Church located at 5900 Buckwheat Road in Mt. Repose (near Live Oaks Vocational Center). The run is a 5k (3miles) run and fitness walk. This year, in addition to the competitive runners and walkers, we are inviting families to walk on a non-competitive basis for the benefit of the poor. The majority of the course includes Miami Meadows Park and would enhance the participation of families to enjoy a leisurely walk and also help the poor. More information will be available in the Sunday bulletin and on the church bulletin boards.

Please note the new direct telephone line for the SVDP Society is 753-2561. This is a message only line. Calls are retrieved generally in the evenings Monday through Friday. We can also be reached at 752-2080 ext 501. If you have questions or are interested in volunteering with SVDP, please leave a message on the voicemail and we will return your call. Once again, thank you for your generosity.



STM 8th grade class in Washington D.C.



**PSR
PARISH SCHOOL OF RELIGION
REGISTRATION 2006-07**

Registrations for Fall Religious Education classes for students—Preschool (ages 3-5 years old) and grades 1-8 are now being processed. Current students have already received their forms and new student forms will be available in the back of church, the parish office, in

the Faith Formation Room and can be accessed through the parish website at www.sttm.org and go to the Children's Faith Formation link. **All registrations must be returned and paid by August 1, 2006.** Please call Diane McMullin at 753-2550 or email at psr@sttm.org if you have any questions.

The Chancellors Club - Senior News

You are cordially invited to come to lunch the first Tuesday of each month (with a few exceptions). Yes, our St. Thomas More SENIORS are most cordially invited, gently urged, and kindly reminded to come and join in the Chancellor's Club camaraderie. Share in a happy time with parishioner friends or come and make new friends.

Our next luncheon date is Tuesday, June 6th at 11:30A.M. at the Olive Garden Restaurant in Cherry Grove. We will not meet in July and hope that some of our member/chefs will create some of their dessert specialties for the JulyFest cake booth.

The Chancellor's Club membership is growing and would like you to join us. A larger, active group can make for a more ambitious and varied agenda. Members still recall the pleasure of the daytrip last October to Gethsemane Abbey and Bardstown, Kentucky and earlier this year, a Lenten day of prayer and reflection at the Comboni Mission Center with a luncheon. Future plans include a picnic luncheon in a nearby park, another daytrip and a prayerful day scheduled for the Advent season.

Come, bring your own ideas and join the club! If you have any questions call Michael Thomas at 753-2549.

STM Vacation Bible School 2006

Set sail for an amazing adventure with St. Patrick.

Date: July 31st – August 4th

Time: 9am – 12pm

Location: St. Thomas More Campus

Ages: 4 years (by 7/31/06) and up to entering 4th grade

Cost: \$30 per child if registered by July 9th (includes VBS t-shirt!)

\$35 per child after July 9th (t-shirt not included) each additional child \$25 (with t-shirt if registered by July 9th)

Parent/Caregiver/Grandparent must volunteer 1 day during the week! Childcare provided for volunteers!

Forms can be picked up in the back of church or parish office. Please call Julie Beattie at 753-3073 with questions.



JULYFEST 2006



JULYFEST 2006 will be held on July 7, 8, and 9th. This year we are celebrating the 65th Anniversary of the Parish. **JulyFest** is always a wonderful time to meet your family, friends, neighbors and fellow parishioners and have a great time. **Beechmont Ford** is once again our Major Corporate Sponsor; **Nine Mile Storage** and **Noday McDonald's** have currently committed to being an area sponsor. Booth sponsorships are available for \$100 each.

We are excited about our entertainment this year, on Friday evening **Last-n-Line** will be performing, Saturday will find the Beatle's tribute band **Back Seat** and on Sunday evening, the **JulyFest** favorite **Saffire Express** will close out the festival. On Sunday, which we are featuring as "**Family Day**" will find our famous Chicken Dinner being served immediately following noon Mass in air-conditioned Heider Hall. We will once again have reduced ride prices from 2pm-5pm on Sunday, and will offer a **Christian Juggling Show** for the family at 3pm. Walking entertainment will be seen on the grounds including jugglers and stilt walkers.

Papa John's Pizza and **Dippin Dots** will be available this year. The specialty food booth will feature jambalaya, pork skewers, and tacos along with our famous Italian Sausage, corn and potatoes, dessert booth and the STM burger booth.

For our children and teens.....**Scallywag Tag** will be on the premises and will be offering Laser Tag.

Donations are currently being solicited for Bid N Buy; so, if you have sporting event tickets, items you no longer want around the house and are gently used or new, please consider donating them to the Bid N Buy booth.

JulyFest doesn't exist without our volunteers...just log on to the parish website www.sttmparish/julyfest and sign up for your favorite area. You may also call our volunteer hotline at 753-2564.

Please call the General Co-Chairs, Rhonda and Jeff Roberts at 257-9261 or Dave McCarthy at 252-8134 if you have any questions or suggestions.

Grand Raffle

Grand Prize: Choice of 2006 Ford Fusion, Focus or Ranger or \$16,000.00 toward purchase of new car at **Beechmont Ford.** (may not be exchanged for cash option. Winner must pay tax and title).

2nd Prize: \$1,000.00 Cash

Tickets \$5 each or 6 for \$25.00- Drawing Sunday Night (transaction must be completed by 7/24/06)