

MORE ABOUT US St. Thomas More Parish

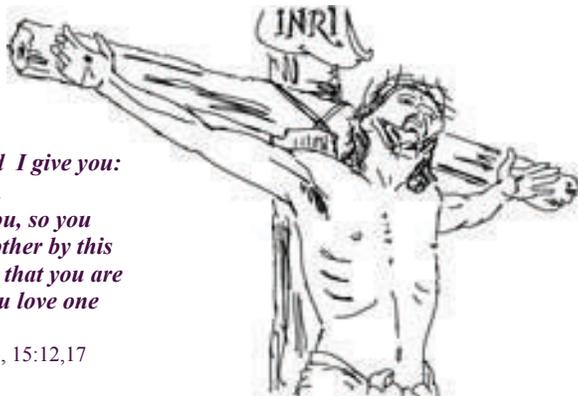
From the desk of Fr. Bill Wagner,

our parish. We have seen a slow, but steady, increase in registered parishioners. This is good news and it is also troubling news for us. We are running out of classroom space and soon will have to make some important decisions for our future. Our Parish Council, which helps develop a vision for our parish, the Finance Commission, which advises the pastor on all fiscal and material matters, and the School Education Committee, which helps develop policies for the operation of our School, will all be developing strategies for our future. It will be difficult and certainly challenging work.

As you observe in the weekly bulletin, we have a large debt that we are paying off at a rate of \$100,000 per year. The plan approved by the Archdiocese includes an increase in monthly payments in a few years. So far, we are meeting all of our obligations and some parishioners are donating money in addition to what they donate in the Sunday collection that makes it possible for us to do all the "extras". For example, the extras have included improvements to the windows and brickwork of the main building, refurbishing the Reconciliation Room (Confessional), a new phone system (literally in the nick of time), a new server for our e-mail system, major parking lot improvements, and even modular classrooms. Soon, we hope to improve the lighting in the Church with enhanced lights for the sanctuary and the area of the first five or six pews, which is rather dark on overcast days.

The issue of a growing congregation using a finite amount of meeting room and classroom space is a bit more serious. I have no idea what will finally be decided, but any decision will have to have the support of a solid majority of the parish. When a decision is finally proposed, I will give the parishioners an opportunity for input, suggestions and criticisms. This could be in a town hall meeting, or perhaps in several meetings with larger parish groups already active such as the PTO, Boosters, organization members, etc. I am not yet ready to make that decision.

One disturbing fact in all of this is the large number of people we have "on the books" but are not coming to Mass, are not active in parish activities and clearly do not support the parish in any noticeable way. Perhaps each of you reading this could help. Many of you know who these inactive parishioners are. It might be up to you to re-invite them to the parish and let them know that God has given them a place in the kingdom He has given to us. They just have to claim the Kingdom for themselves; only they can reject it and lose it.



*"A new command I give you:
Love one another.
As I have loved you, so you
must love one another by this
all men will know that you are
my disciples, if you love one
another."*

John 13:34,35, 15:12,17

The Seven Words

Jesus spoke seven times while on the Cross. We call them the Seven Words of Jesus on the Cross, and they are a glorious part of the Testament of Christ at Calvary.

- 1st Word: Forgiveness** "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they have done." Luke 23:34
- 2nd Word: Prayer & Paradise** "Truly, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise." Luke 23:43
- 3rd Word: The Blessed Mother** "Jesus said to his mother: "Woman, this is your son". Then he said to the disciple: "this is your mother". John 19:26-27
- 4th Word: Hell** "And about 3 o'clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice: "Eli, Eli, lema sabackthani?" which means "My God, my God why have you forsaken me?" Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34
- 5th Word: Evangelization** "I thirst" John 19:28
- 6th Word: The Will of God** "It is finished", "it is accomplished" John 19:30
- 7th Word: Heaven** "Jesus, cried out in a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commend my spirit" Luke 23:46

From the desk of Deacon Jerry Cain

In the last issue of More About Us, Fr. Bill emphasized the importance of Sunday Mass attendance. The following is a message from Pope Benedict XVI on this subject.

Sunday: Primordial Nucleus of the Liturgical Year
Vatican City, Dec 1, 2006 (VIS) - Made public today was a Message from Benedict XVI to Cardinal Francis Arinze, prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, for a study day organized by that dicastery, which takes place today and is dedicated to the theme of: "Sunday Mass for the sanctification of Christian people."

In the text which is dated November 27, the Pope recalls how the study day falls on the anniversary of the promulgation of the Constitution "Sacrosanctum Concilium," and is the third of its kind following one dedicated to the Roman Martyrology and another to sacred music.

"Sundays," writes the Pope, "remain the fundamental seedbed and the primordial nucleus of the liturgical year;... a fragment of time pervaded by eternity, because its dawn saw the Risen Christ enter victoriously into eternal life."

Continued page 3

Our Catholic Truth Matters

By: Becky Ready, DRE

What if you were able to have a closed-door meeting with the world's leading authority on the single-most important question humanity has ever faced? Would you walk away from him? That's exactly what Pilate did.

Jesus told Pilate, "For this reason, I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth" (John 18:37). Mockingly, Pilate retorts, "What is truth?" and then turns his back on Jesus to hand him over to the mob.

Clearly, for Jesus, truth matters. And unlike Pilate, we had better pay attention.

I've been reading a lot lately about worldviews. What is that? A worldview is a framework through which we view life and live life. It's like a set of spectacles through which we see our world. In our age, we are bombarded by competing worldviews: relativism, secular humanism, naturalism, materialism, and others. We don't often realize how these messages infect our own thinking. Our decisions should be shaped by our Catholic worldview founded on Sacred Scripture and Sacred Tradition. Our gracious God give us *this lens* from which to view all of life. But how tuned in are we to this lens? Do we really believe what we believe is really real?

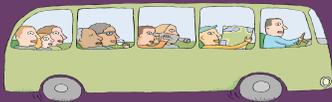
The apostle Paul warns us in 2 Timothy 3:2-5 that..."in the last days....people will be self-centered and lovers

of money, proud, haughty, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, irreligious, callous, implacable, slanderous, licentious, brutal, hating what is good, traitors, reckless, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God as they make a pretense of religion but deny its power." When our lives are held captive by any of these behaviors, we have turned away from truth. We have turned away from Christ. We have chosen to not view or live life as our Sacred Scripture and tradition inform us.



Here at STM, we value our Catholic truths. We consider them of great importance. Before we can encourage and support one another to be witnesses of our great truths, we need to know and live them ourselves. And why is this important? Not only for our own personal salvation, but for our mission: the transformation of our communities and of our culture! This cannot happen unless we ourselves are first transformed by the truth of the Gospel, a transformation that begins when we first come to Jesus, but continues for the rest of our lives and is nourished by the community with which we worship.

There are many opportunities to come to know and live our Catholic truths more fully in our community of believers. This Lent we are going to offer more adult faith formation opportunities. I encourage you to take some time to reflect on those highlighted in this newsletter. Pray and ask our powerful and merciful God were he most would like you to spend some time with him and with the Community tuning in to the lens of our Catholic faith. Don't walk away like Pilate, but, pay attention like Paul.



The Chancellors Club

By: Mary F. Walter

The good news! A count of about thirty-five Club members and Parish seniors turned out for the Advent Day of Recollection on last December 5th. It was a very good day.

Invited guest speaker, Mr. Madz Lim, gave two excellent talks. Well-versed in his topic, "The Eucharist in Scripture," Mr. Lim drew out historical parallel and dramatic detail matched within the Old and New Testament. Highly instructive and inspiring, his presentations were impressive. Comboni, Fr. Paul Donohue, MCCJ offered Mass. Luncheon and a special preview visit to the Mission Center's traditional Christmas Crib display filled a memorable day.

With the New Year, the Chancellor's Club resumes its monthly "first Tuesday" luncheons in February. Anticipated in late spring, is a day trip to the Maria Stein Spiritual Center in northern Ohio; a day of Prayer and Reflection to be scheduled in Lent; plus other events to be announced.

The Chancellor's Club is open to all St. Thomas More seniors, men and women. Moderated by Michael Thomas, Pastoral Associate, this parish resource provides social, spiritual, and educational opportunity for good comradeship, and for positive personal enrichment. For additional information on this ministry, please call Michael Thomas at 753-2549.

Youth Ministry 2007 Dates To Mark Your Calendars:

March 23-25: Cincinnati 2000, **May 5-6:** Countryside Youth Ministry Multi-Parish Lock-in, **July 13-15:** Franciscan University Retreat (tentative), **August 5-10:** Bible Camp (tentative)

We continue to meet on a weekly basis, and to host Sewing ministry and Rosary makers and you can always check out the parish web page for more details on these regular events.

Super 8 will be a part of our summer again! This year we will definitely be on the move outside our own parking lot so be looking for the expansion of this program!

We are planning Bible Camp for the summer 2007 tentatively on August 5-10 and are looking to double our numbers with a night Camp for working families! If you would be interested in being a co-coordinator for this night bible camp please contact the youth office. Our day coordinators will work with you since the program is completely laid out for you and we can reach even more of our youth with this expansion! Please prayerfully consider if God is calling you to this leadership position and keep an eye on the bulletin for a meeting in February.

With so much going on, shouldn't you be a part of it all? Contact the Youth Office at 753-2551 and join us!

STM SCHOOL NEWS...From Peg Fischer, School Principal



More than twenty families participated in the school's first *Beautification Day*. Its goal was to do some of the tasks that might fall between the cracks in the hectic last weeks before the start of school: wash the windows, wipe down lockers, shelves and desks, clean shelves and materials in the library, paper the classroom bulletin boards, etc. Several junior high students pitched in to provide childcare for the younger children. The Boosters were also busy in the baseball field area putting in some drainpipes to provide better drainage for the baseball field and next to the playground equipment. The families and students worked from 9:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m. then gathered for lunch provided by Mrs. Fischer. Fr. Wagner stopped over to lead the group in a mealtime prayer. What a great way for parents and students to get to know one another, get some work completed, and gather together as members of God's family.



Deacon Jerry Cain
as St. Nick

Students, parents and guests filled the gym for both morning and evening performances of our annual Christmas musical on December 20 as we wrapped up 2006 and prepared for a few days of celebration with family and friends. Advent at STM was a time of shared prayer and scripture in a way that one can only experience in a Catholic school, with a faith-filled community. In a culture that starts pushing the season in October with the "spend your way to happiness" message it is wonderful to see children enthusiastically sharing scripture readings and songs in prayerful rituals in the classrooms and across grade levels.

We will "hit the ground running" in January! Discipline with Purpose^â skills to be presented will include *leadership* and *communication*. Both of these skills are considered as "constructive" skills because they help to build our community. Strong communities depend on individuals making good choices and setting good examples regardless of the circumstances. Leadership involves doing the right thing in spite of peer pressure-or even if no one is watching. The second half of the year brings more new material into the curriculum and more accountability for students, who are now well oriented to routines and expectations. Communication lessons focus on "say what you mean, and mean what you say." Younger students will see activities to help model appropriate communication. Older students work on organizing their thoughts, communicating clearly and considerately. Information on DWP

January closes with our annual celebration of "Catholic Schools Week" and the kick off of registration for new students. The Open House which was such a success last year will be held again on Tuesday evening, January 30 from 6:30-8:00 p.m. Families with school age children and friends of STM are invited to visit our classrooms, meet the administration and staff and learn what our school has to offer. Other highlights will include the naming of the 2007 Distinguished Graduate at the 10:00 a.m. Mass on Sunday, January 28, the annual Student-Faculty volleyball game, and a spirited assembly! For more information, watch our school website at www.sttmschool.org or call the school office at 753-2540.

STM PTO News... This year the PTO will focus their fundraising activities on improving the STM playground for all parish children to enjoy. We are making the PTO a parish organization so everyone can share in our activities and rewards. Also, we have added a communication link to the school website, http://www.sttmschool.org/cardinal_knows_more.htm. Ideas about PTO activities, events, and volunteer opportunities can also be submitted through this link.



I LIVE MY FAITH

The St. Thomas More 5th Grade Junior Girl Scout Troop 6638 has been working on their *I Live My Faith* medal. They will be receiving their medal at the scout Mass in February 2007. As one of their service projects, they made no-sew fleece blankets for the parish to be given as a gift for the newly baptized.

Members of the troop are: Catherine Adams, Carly Dugan, Carsen Gerome, Becky Kellerman, Marissa Miller, Maggie Mulloney, Lacey O'Connell, Monique Osterman, Maria Perez, Megan Schaefer, Ashley Taylor, Hannah Taylor, and Maddie Tribble. The leaders are: Lisa Marcinko Miller and Melissa Kellerman.

From the desk of Deacon Jerry Cain continued...

For the first Christians, participation in Sunday celebration was the natural expression of their belonging to Christ, of their communion with His mystical Body, in joyous expectation of His glorious return."

"Today," the Holy Father continues, "it is more than ever necessary to reiterate the sacred nature of the Lord's day and the need to participate in Sunday Mass. The cultural context in which we live, often marked by religious indifference and secularism that obscure the horizon of transcendence, must not cause us to forget that the People of God who came into being with the events of Easter must return [to those events] as an inexhaustible spring, in order to better understand...their own identity and the reasons for their existence."

"Sunday was not chosen by the Christian community," he writes, "rather by the Apostles, indeed by Christ Himself Who on that day, "the first day of the week," arose and appeared before the disciples...Each Sunday celebration of the Eucharist enacts the sanctification of Christian people, until that Sunday without end, the day of the definitive encounter of God with His creatures."

Benedict XVI closes his message by expressing the hope that the study day "may help to recover the Christian meaning of Sunday in...the life of all believers."

Parish Mission

March 4-7 @ 7pm in Church
reception following in the Dining Hall
(Babysitting available in Fr. Heider Hall)
Look for upcoming information in the bulletin.



2007 Golden Wedding Anniversary Mass

For couples celebrating their 50th Wedding Anniversary in 2007, a Mass will be held on Sat., May 5 at 2:00 p.m. at St. Peter in Chains Cathedral. Please call Diane McMullin at

753-2550 by March 2nd for reservations to attend this Mass. For those celebrating their 25th, 50th, 60th, 70th and 75th Anniversary, the Archdiocese will send out a special acknowledgement, so please call Diane in the parish office with your information.

PSR- Parish School of Religion Registration 2007-2008

Registration for religious education classes starting in September for Pre-School (3-5yrs) and Grades 1-8, will begin on April 22nd. Forms for returning students will be handed out in their classrooms and should be returned by May 6th. Forms for new students will be available in the back of church, the parish office, the Faith Formation Room and can be printed off the parish website at www.sttm.org under the Children's Faith Formation link. Please return all completed forms to the parish office.

If you have any questions regarding this program, please call Becky Ready @ 753-2548 or email at brady@sttm.org or Diane McMullin @ 753-2550 or email: dmcullin@sttm.org.

St. Vincent de Paul Society

by: Bob Guenther

There seems to be some confusion regarding the intended use of the Thomas More House. It is owned by STM Parish (Archdiocese of Cincinnati) and managed by our St. Vincent de Paul Conference. It is not an emergency shelter but a transitional residence for homeless families working toward a permanent solution to their housing problem. The goal is to supply people, without permanent housing, with a shelter unburdened with rent or mortgage payments for a period of time in which they can accumulate savings toward a rent deposit or a down payment, thus advancing them toward self-sufficiency in the housing need.

Tenants must be a viable family unit with two parents, preferably. Two parent families must have a valid marriage license. While single parents are accepted, single individuals and unmarried couples are not.

Tenants are screened to determine their desire to own or rent permanent housing and must sign a tenancy agreement which spells out the house rules. Breaking the rules is grounds for eviction.

Hopefully, this explanation will clear up any misunderstandings regarding the purpose of the house.

We would like to thank those parishioners who have supported our ministry. Over the past eight months we have encountered a significant increase in the number of requests for help. Through your generosity, we have been able to meet those needs. From October 1, 2006 through Dec. 11, 2006, we have assisted fifty-eight families with various services.

May God bless you all abundantly.

Bob Guenther - SVDP



One Light, One Journey, One Human Family

Operation Rice Bowl is the official Lenten program of the Catholic Relief Services where faith communities can participate and learn more about the work of CRS and how to put their faith to work.

All parishioners are asked to participate in this program beginning on Wednesday 2/21/07 and ending on April 15th. Join us in the dining hall at the Simple Supper for a presentation of this program and to pick up your bowl. A container will be available in the church to receive your donations. Additional information will be posted in the parish bulletin.

We ask each person to be generous in their prayers, fasting, and giving. You can visit the Catholic Relief website at: www.crs.org.

St. Thomas More Parish
800 Ohio Pike
Cincinnati, Ohio 45245

Non-Profit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Cincinnati, Ohio
Permit No. 2396