

**ST. THOMAS MORE PARISH  
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
Monday, November 16, 2009**

**Council Members in Attendance:** Fr. Bill Wagner, Vic Ivers, Kathy Hornschmeier, Larry Bush, Jim Conrady, John Duncan, and Neil Kamphaus, Jr.

**Council Members Absent:** Janet Tate

**Others in Attendance:** Mike Gennett.

The St. Thomas More Parish Council meeting was called to order by Vic Ivers at 7:10 PM EST. Fr. Bill Wagner opened with a prayer.

**Business Manager Report:** Mike Gennett gave the report.

**The 2009-10 Guidebooks** are off the press and will be mailed in the next week or two.

We have recently announced two minor security modifications. Effective December 1, we will only open the north Parish Hall door in the Parish Hall-Church building and south Heider Hall door during the evenings for meetings. These doors will be locked at 8 PM but exit can happen at any time from any door. We will also begin to lock the undercroft and the Fr. Wack Library once the wedding ceremony begins.

We are going to open up applications for **additional benches and bricks in the Marian Grotto**. We have room for additional benches and have a limited number of bricks available. The application for benches (\$5,000) and bricks (\$100) will be in the November More About Us Mailing and is also on the parish web site. This would make an excellent Christmas gift and the proceeds will be used to help reduce our budget deficit.

We had an **Archdiocese risk assessment audit** on October 29<sup>th</sup>. This audit measures our compliance to such issues as the Child Protection Decree, state licensing, accident reports, financial procedures, counter signatures on checks, computer management, key logs, maintenance procedures, roof inspections, fire safety standards, HVAC maintenance, employee benefit management, etc. We have yet to receive the written report but only a few infractions were found and have already been corrected.

There was a concern that if Issue 3 passed church gambling may be prohibited. However, **our 2010 gambling license (Type III) application** is underway. The Ohio Attorney General's web site is now accepting applications. We do not believe there is any issue at this time for 2010. However, we need to have a "Plan B" in mind if non-profit gambling becomes illegal. The legislature is required to write the law governing the casinos within the next six months. Festivals might have a very different look and result if 501.3© institutions can no longer have limited gambling events. Let's hope this was just election hype.

We have entered into an **agreement with Energy Alliances** regarding shifting our electric utility services through 2011. They work closely with a number of parishes in the diocese. We currently have a similar program with them for natural gas. There have been some lower rates incurred in the market due to reduced capacity that Duke Energy is not going to pass on since all their rates were approved by PUCO in 2007. We will continue to pay Duke for the distribution charges and Energy Alliance for all the other charges. The monthly savings have been estimated to be around \$400 a month and apply only to the Church-Parish Hall and Heider Hall buildings. The other meters on the property have different rates and do not apply to this program. Our goal continues to be to reduce behind the scenes costs where they make sense.

We have not started to work on the 2010-11 budget but will do so soon. We have learned our **health care costs will rise 4.5% next year** but the increase will be **offset with employee contributions** toward the premiums. The employees have been notified of this policy change effective July 1, 2010. Annual health costs will rise about \$600 with the current mix of employees enrolled in the plan for next year.

The PTO has donated \$2,500 to the parish to help fund the parish debt, the tuition assistance program, and playground maintenance. This donation is greatly appreciated.

We have issued the 2010 collection envelopes. Here are some stats regarding this process:

- We have 1,550 active households listed in our database
- We also have another 163 households that do not belong to the parish, but occasionally attend Mass here and donate. We do not order envelopes for them
- We ordered 941 boxed envelope sets for those registered households who contributed at least \$1 or more in a 12 month period from late September 2008 through September 2009
- 509 households were not ordered envelopes. They did not contribute at any time, to any collection, in the selected 12 month period
  - Of these 509 households, we show the families still living at these addresses according to our CASS and NCOA updates
  - We automatically mark households inactive that are reported by CASS and NCOA as moved out of our area as well as those who notify us
- This past weekend, 455 envelope sets were picked up or 48.3% of the total printed. 486 boxed sets remain and are available for pickup under the front of the church outside the Fr. Wack Library. We utilized this distribution process because the postage costs are high to mail them.
- The 8<sup>th</sup> grade breakfast and bake sale had a 26% increase in sales this year over 2008. Expenses have yet to be submitted for payment.

**The Sunday contribution program** results have been steady so far. We left it open as to how households might like to assist. Some have just put more money in the collection while others have made one time donations and enrolled or increased their current offering in the electronic contribution program. The results through November 15 are:

- Through September 27, the Sunday the drive kicked off, we were \$13,601.13 behind plan and \$3,666.22 behind last year. Through November 15, we were \$4,057.56 ahead of plan and \$17,207.81 over last year. This is a \$20,000 positive swing in 7 weeks. (Yesterday's collection was \$14,571.73 and was also over plan.)

We have yet to realize all the commitments made during the campaign:

A total of \$42,628.93 was pledged or paid by 65 identified households or 4.2%. This does not include those who just increased their donation and put it in the collection. This breaks down as:

- One time payment - \$11,220 or 26.3%
- 2-3 Payments - \$1,200 or 2.8%
- Electronic Contributions – new or additional amounts - \$23,276.00 or 54.6 %
- Offertory increase - \$6,932.93 or 16.3%

The electronic piece is significant because that generates increased revenues over a period of time.

The deficit for this year remains a concern. It could rise or fall depending on contributions, levels of spending, and maintenance emergencies (the heating repairs have been made). Even though the Sunday contributions are now over plan, the deficit is attributed to the cost of running the school with fewer students. We have too many students for one class and need to support having two classes with the numbers enrolled. School staffing levels are consistent to last year with a smaller enrollment this year. We should have an enrollment increase next year after the small 8<sup>th</sup> grade graduates.

**Organizations Reports** – Council asked that the parish organizations file a status report for the next council meeting on December 21. The standard report will be used with a section devoted to their goals, objectives, and any problems they may be having. Some of the organizations may be invited to the January meeting to give a report.

**Pastor's Report** – Fr. Bill gave his update.

Fr. Bill stated he has two tickets to Archbishop Pilarczyk's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration as a priest and his 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary as a Bishop on December 20<sup>th</sup>. The event will take place at the Cathedral with a reception afterwards at the convention center.

No one knows when the Archbishop change will take place.

Two new storage areas are being built in the main entrance area of the church. They are to the right and left of the holy water fountains. The maintenance staff has done a wonderful job with this project. Their quality of work is excellent!

St. Bernadette will dedicate their church this Sunday, November 22. Fr. Bill said he is attending as the Dean.

The Archdiocese is going to have an annual giving stewardship program for every parish in 2010 and 2011. The Cunneen Company has been hired to manage the program.

Our parish Mass attendance during October was up over 2008.

Eastside Sports is for sale. If the property is sold, we will handle the parking issue same manner as we did with the current owner. That is, an agreement will be signed with the Archdiocese and a certificate of insurance will be required to protect the parish and the gym in the event of any issues. It was stated that interest has been expressed in buying Eastside Sports and converting the building into classrooms. Fr. Bill stated we still plan to build brick classrooms once the economic situation subsides. There are also no loans available at this time from the diocese.

Our H1N1 clinic went well. 800 were inoculated. We have a second round coming in December.

Neil Kamphaus asked how it was perceived regarding the changes when the announcements are being read at Mass by the presider. Many comments were favorable. Jim Conrady said it feels distracting to him.

The Parish Mission during Lent 2010 will be conducted by Fr. Norm Langenbrunner. He celebrated Mass here a couple of weekends ago.

**Recognition** – There was a discussion about doing more regarding the recognition of volunteers. It was discussed using a planned expansion of the bulletin beginning next year to take the opportunity to acknowledge those who consistently work to make the parish what it is. Fr. Bill suggested making this a part of the staff meeting where the Pastoral Staff submit candidate names for special recognition.

**Other** – John Duncan brought up a concern he has regarding the quality of the articles in the Catholic Telegraph. Fr. Bill said he would pass on the concerns at a future Presbyteral Council meeting.

Vic Ivers made a motion to adjourn. Larry Bush seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM. Fr. Bill led the group in a prayer.

The next meeting is December 21<sup>st</sup>. The January meeting has been moved to January 25<sup>th</sup>.