

**ST. THOMAS MORE PARISH  
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
Monday, September 20, 2010**

**Council Members in Attendance:** Fr. Bill Wagner, Vic Ivers, Kathy Hornschemeier, Larry Bush, and Neil Kamphaus, Jr.

**Council Members Absent:** Janet Tate, Jim Conrady & John Duncan.

**Others in Attendance:** Mike Gennett.

The St. Thomas More Parish Council meeting was called to order by Vic Ivers at 7:00 PM EDT. Fr. Bill Wagner opened with a prayer.

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

The Finance Committee met on August 11th and certified the 2009-2010 operating statement. The annual report has been released to the parish. The budget for this year has a deficit of \$11,199.65 and with the current shortfall to plan on the Sunday collection, the deficit estimate is currently \$19,181.07. We just can't continue to run deficits each year because the shortfall is coming out of reserve funds. The good news is this is a smaller deficit than in the past few years. Finance has suggested a meeting with the school board prior to registration next year to discuss that we cannot continue to keep tuition where it is and maintain small class sizes. That formula no longer works from a cost standpoint. And....We just can't turn students away. Class size has to be revisited.

The school opened with 289 students. There is one less teacher in the school this year.

The Sunday collection is running ahead of last year but behind plan. We had the weakest July in five years. The collection since early August has been good and has exceeded plan. We are about to anniversary the stewardship letter from a year ago. The Sunday collection plan for this year is flat minus one less Holyday

of Obligation or down .4%. Our diocese-wide stewardship program will be in September of 2011.

**State Fund restoration** – We did receive a partial state fund restoration in early August. This was applied to this year’s budget which helped to reduce the deficit.

**Bio-Screening & HRA** – We just completed our employee Bio-Screening and Health Risk Assessment audits. 32 diocese employees (20 from St. Thomas More) participated in the Bio-Screening and 9 of our employees took the Anthem risk assessment audit. Each employee that participated received \$50 for each program (\$100 if they did both). We are disappointed with the number of our employees that participated despite a personal letter from Fr. Bill and numerous email reminders.

The lay **diocese pension plan** will close on December 31. Employees will be able to enroll in a **401K benefit plan** that will start in 2011. Employees will retain their pension benefit if vested, but it will no longer grow due to longevity.

The parish **Guidebook** has been updated and sent to the printers. The copy for the updated Guidebook has been posted on the parish web site. It took two weeks to sell the ads this year due to the slow economy. In the end, more advertising was sold than in 2009.

We had a note in the bulletin about **the Boy Scout thefts and vandalism**. We found some of the stolen property last week and the Union Township Police had enough information to issue a warrant. Hopefully this is behind us. The scouts need help to replenish their camping items. We have exhausted all we can do with the insurance claims. The parish paid for the trailer repairs.

### Pastor’s Report

Fr. Bill gave his update.

We are going to have our **first Italian dinner** on Sunday, October 17<sup>th</sup>. Ray Conti has volunteered to do it for the parish. We don’t expect a lot the first year and hope the tradition builds over the years. Fried dough is going to be made! A discussion took place about how to communicate the dinner. We have numerous

email addresses on file in PDS and we can send emails with flyers to those households.

The **regions in our Deanery** have been revised. There are 100 pastoral regions in the diocese. That means one Pastor per region. Each region shares a Pastor as the priest shortage becomes more critical. Our original structure was set with the assistance of an arbitration board. Many of the priests in the region felt that structure would not work. A new plan has been put forth: St. Thomas More would be in a region with St. Bernadette instead of us being with Holy Trinity in Batavia. This would mean we would one day share a Pastor with St. Bernadette Parish. It does not necessarily mean a merger when that day arrives. Elsewhere, St. Mary's in Bethel and St. Peter's in New Richmond would remain a region. Holy Trinity and St. Louis in Owensville would become a region. St. Ann's and St. Philomena would become chapels and would not have Sunday obligation Masses. They would be open for special occasions such as weddings and funerals. Fr. Bill asked the council members present if they had any objections to our region with St. Bernadette. None were expressed.

On **schools**, we are not working on any plans for the future on our own. The reason is Archbishop Schnurr and Dr. Jim Rigg, the new diocese School Superintendent, are working on a plan for all our schools. This plan will keep moving forward and will not be one of "just talk". Teeth will be needed to make the plan work. Everyone in the diocese will be expected to make the plan work. So, that is why there is no current planning underway here. We need to see where the diocese is going first. Also, schools with less than 200 students are now being looked at and watched very closely.

The **priest shortage** is very real. The shortage will be evident to everyone by 2015. Our diocese was able to pick up order priests for some locations this summer. This helped in the short term.

**Boosters & Football** – The Boosters are doing a great job with the installation of the football field. They have worked hard to raise the funds and are paying for everything including the water. Scheduling issues have arisen. The game schedule is done by a third party and some games are being scheduled on Sunday mornings. Our Boosters are not at fault on this matter. Their hands are tied. The league sets the schedules. The diocese was already aware of this issue and hearings are going to be held in October to get all the issues on the table about the organizations that schedule the sports games. These sport

organizations are not part of the diocese. The diocese needs to take control of the schedules so no games are scheduled on Sunday mornings. A onetime game exception has been approved for Sunday September 26<sup>th</sup> with a game on our new field at 11:30 AM.

**Sconces in the church** – We have added 18 candle sconces in the church. They will be used for special liturgical occasions such as Christmas and Easter. The first lighting will be Dec 8 for the feast of the Immaculate Conception. We do not want to push brides to use these for their weddings. Brides are going to be charged extra anywhere from \$250-\$300 to use the sconces. Plus, this must be planned in advance so we can properly light them prior to a wedding. It could take up to an hour to do so. There will be no “freebies” on this.

Fr. Bill stated he went to a **church closing property** sale last Saturday. Two green vestments were bought for \$50 each. Normally, they would be \$1,500 each. More church closing property sales are forthcoming.

The Archbishop has asked all parishes to join **the Fenwick Club**. Annual membership is \$1,000 a year. Larry Bush suggested maybe we could ask some parishioners to assist with the cost. Mike Gennett said he would try to get an envelope added for 2011. The list has already gone in to the printers but will try. Fr. Bill suggested staying away from other collections. (*Sun Jan 16 is the target date and we can still get an envelope!*) It was also reported that the Catholic Telegraph envelope for Sept 12 was the St. Vincent de Paul envelope. Mike stated he had not seen that but would notify the printer. We have a stack of the right envelopes for the Telegraph that had been returned. A sample was provided.

Our **St. Vincent de Paul Society** has big needs these days. Our last collection was a record \$4,100.51. They had to borrow money from the parish in July because their May collection was down a \$1,000. It was Memorial Day weekend and our attendance was down. They do an excellent job of helping those in need. An individual has suggested we start offering immediate help on site. This is not a good way to go because it attracts more of these types of requests and we have to be concerned about the security impact of such a process. The majority of the staff does not want to do this.

Fr. Bill asked Mike Gennett about additional **changes to our website**. Mike stated software downloads recently took place that will allow us to do MP3 files.

We are going to replace the cd rack in the back of church with selected talks on our web site. The program we use is DotNetNuke. We continue to add pages and information as items are submitted.

Fr. Bill asked everyone to submit recommendations to him to **add new members to Parish Council**. We need good volunteers that can see the parish on a global basis.

Kathy Hornschemeier made a motion to adjourn. Vic Ivers seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:17 PM.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, October 18, 2010 at 7 PM.