

**ST. THOMAS MORE PARISH  
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
Monday, October 15, 2012**

**Council Members in Attendance:** Fr. Bill Wagner, Vic Ivers, Larry Bush, and Janet Tate.

**Council Members Absent:** Kathy Hornschemeier, Sam DeBonis, Jim Conrady, and 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 **new handicap ramp is under construction.** The old ramp has been removed and the foundation and walls for the new ramp are in. There is no completion date known as of today and that will depend on the weather and availability of materials. Handicap ramp entry to the church is temporarily not available. Fr. Bill pointed out we had a funeral today and one this Friday. This will put the project behind since work cannot take place.

**School booster and parent teacher organizations** are about to come under increased scrutiny from the Ohio Attorney General's Office.

The Other Attorney General's office was authorized in August by Ohio lawmakers to begin requiring all boosters and PTOs who handle more than \$25,000 annually to provide annual reports including financial records. Our Boosters and PTO each handle more than \$25,000 each year.

The law was enacted because booster club officials around the state have been charged with embezzlement, theft or misuse of funds intended to benefit kids in their school district. Combined, booster clubs and PTOs around the state manage millions of dollars in assets. Assets include money that flows in and out of the club coffers. It's become a serious enough issue that the Ohio Attorney General's office pressed to expand their oversight of these two groups. We do not believe we have any issues in either of our parish organizations.

We are waiting for direction from the diocese on the matter. Both our Booster and PTO organizations have been notified of the change. The Business Manager will work with them to file the proper reports when it becomes required. These volunteers will not be left out there on their own because of the seriousness of this filing. More on this as information develops.

Since the last Parish Council meeting, **Virtus class certifications** have gotten underway. Larry Bush has conducted five classes so far. 87 registered for the five classes and 80 were certified. There have been 7 who registered but did not show up. We now have access to the diocese's database that lists everyone that has taken the Virtus class either here or elsewhere. The grand total that are Virtus certified to date is 124. This is a nice start! Most of the regular employees are now certified. Sub teachers will need to take the class. This is one area we need to concentrate on.

There are a couple of issues that are emerging. We are not getting a lot of registrations for future classes. This issue is not just here but throughout the diocese. One can scroll through all the scheduled classes throughout the diocese coming up in the next month and most don't have a lot of registrations. Saturday mornings do not seem to be very popular. There could be a crunch at the end of the grandfathered period which ends on June 30, 2014. At that point, anyone wishing to volunteer with children that have not been certified in Virtus will not be able to volunteer until they do so.

We have 1,100 names on our child protection log but not everyone will need to take the Virtus class. Some have left the parish, are no longer

employed, died, or are neighboring parishioners participating in the football program, etc.

It is important to point out that when anyone takes the class anywhere in the diocese, they must do the following to receive credit for the Virtus certification at our parish:

- The sign in sheet from the class must have been transmitted to the diocese by the location conducting the class
- The individual taking the class noted during their registration process that they wanted their Virtus class results sent to St. Thomas More
- The location the class took place must have completed their parish Virtus registration
- Class information must contain all the following information: person's name, date, location of the class, and the name of the facilitator

It is also required the class participant registers on line at <http://www.virtus.org/virtus/> prior to the class start date. This is important for three reasons:

- An email account and password must be established so the individual can complete their monthly bulletins.
- Their name is placed on the class sign in log that is transmitted to the diocese to process their certification.
- The class participant receives a certificate of completion. These are prepared in advance of the class and handed out to those who finished the class.

We have also just been informed that anyone who took the class in another diocese must have taken that class two years ago or less in order to transfer the file to Cincinnati. Virtus certification transfers to Cincinnati also might vary from diocese to diocese.

Anything council can do to encourage our parishioners to get this done long before June 30, 2014 would be appreciated.

Council suggested email files be set up to remind employees and volunteers they have to complete their monthly bulletin. There was a brief discussion about how to enforce the monthly bulletin compliance. Employees can be held far more accountable than volunteers. Volunteers would just be suspended from volunteering with children and the consequences for employees would be far more serious.

It was also suggested that Mike Gennett reach out to large organizations such as the Boosters, Scouts, and Catechists to try to schedule a convenient time to get as many of them certified in one class at one time.

Last Friday, **we ordered the 2013 collection envelopes**. There is one change starting next year: we will combine the Debt Reduction and Vision 2000 envelope in to one envelope. Both collections are being applied to the parish debt payments.

There is one interesting statistic we wish to point out:

STAT	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013 YTD
No of households donating \$0 during the year	679 +4.6% increase	846 +24.6%increase	899 +6.3% increase  +38.5 2013 compared to 2010

For the first time, we have more parishioners NOT giving than those that do give. This number is rising each year. A fewer number of registered parishioners continue to donate more and more each year. We had a 7.9% increase last year in the collection and are running ahead again this year.

The number of registered households has remained flat at 1,566. There are another 200 households that regularly or semi-regularly attend Mass at our parish. We reached out to these household during the stewardship campaign last fall and each year during the Catholic Ministries appeal.

We keep our database of households up to date. We regularly run our file through the CASS-IT and NCOA systems. When our file is returned, we automatically mark households that are reported as moved away from the area as “inactive”. Parishioners rarely don’t call the office and say they are moving away. All the household addresses that don’t contribute are returned and reported as still living at the same address. This is a growing number and probably reflects the increase everywhere by those that don’t attend church on a regular basis. Some may have changed parishes. However the number of active households as reported by the Catholic Ministries Appeal for neighboring parishes has not increased. Our average weekend donations for both electronic and the offertory are 477 households or 30.4% of the registered total.

Mike Gennett is one of nine individuals on **the Archdiocese Cooperative Purchasing Committee**. The goal of this task force is to combine buying opportunities to save money. For now, individual parish participation is optional. There are a lot of issues that have to be resolved and worked out before this really gets off the ground. Look for nothing major in the long haul.

On the **diocese centralized accounting program**, about 60 locations are in “one state or another” in getting the program implemented. We have completed the transition and continue to run smoothly.

**Pastor’s Update:** Fr. Bill gave his update.

**Bob Brazier graduates** this Sunday, October 21, from the LPM program. He will soon start his diaconate training. Bob is now more involved in various pastoral aspects of the parish including communion services.

**RCIA** is off to a good start. There are ten enrolled and the number is fluctuating each week.

The **Penance Services with St. Veronica Parish** are continuing for now. There might be some changes in the future based upon overall planning within the Pastoral region concepts.

The 2013 **Catholic Ministries Appeal** will include an in-pew solicitation. The overall goal is going up another \$1,000,000. Members of Parish Council, the Finance Commission, and the School Board will be appointed as cheerleaders to go out and raise the level of giving.

**Catholics Come Home** has raised \$171,000 so far of the \$200,000 goal. They are going to reach out to close the gap and meet the goal.

Some of the parish staff attended the **Archdiocese Family Summit** in Dayton. It was a series of workshops and information to help support family life in the diocese. Many prominent speakers were there. One of the things that was stressed was this is the digitalized age. Many parishes now have a Facebook page. Fr. Bill asked council about having a **parish Facebook page** and they had no objections. The issue is finding someone to do it and keep it up to date. Volunteers don't always keep web sites and other social media pages current. It is been an issue in other parishes. People only gravitate to social media that is relevant and current. That is the challenge.

Fr. Bill made a motion to adjourn and Vic Ivers seconded. The meeting ended at 7:47 PM. Fr. Bill led the group in a prayer.

NEXT SCHEDULED MEETING IS MONDAY, NOVEMBER 19<sup>TH</sup>.