

**ST. THOMAS MORE PARISH
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, March 22, 2004**

Council Members in Attendance: Fr. Bill Wagner, Matt Malott, Michelle Stultz, Denise Dyer, Duane Bradley, Bob Brennan, Vic Ivers, and Ray Neltner.

Others in Attendance: Mike Gennett, Jerry Cain, Carl Lamping, and Dee Archer. Tom Bockenstette also attended.

The St. Thomas More Parish Council meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM EST by President Ray Neltner. Fr. Bill opened the meeting with a prayer.

Reports were received in advance of the meeting from the Education Commission, Worship, DRE, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, Festival, PTO, St. Vincent de Paul, and Julyfest.

Reports were not filed by the Youth Ministry, Senior's, and Singles.

(If a report was filed by a group in advance and no issues were discussed during the meeting, there is no mention of that organization's report in the minutes.)

Minutes of the Previous Meeting: The last meeting was held on Monday, February 9th. Ray asked if there were any questions regarding the minutes. Mike Gennett reported he had not received any feedback. No one offered any changes.

Michelle Stultz made a motion to accept the minutes as originally written. Bob Brennan seconded the motion. The motion carried 7 to 0.

Business Manager Report: Mike Gennett gave the report.

2004-5 Budget Highlights – Next year’s budget has been approved by the Finance Committee. The budget is one of the most challenging ones we have had in a number of years. Key highlights include:

- A consulting firm, John McCarthy & Associates was hired to address the Sunday collection shortfall
- School tuition was raised by 10.6%
- School registration fees were raised by \$25
- CCD Fees were raised by \$5 a child
- All non-payroll costs were cut by 15% across the board regardless of the ministry
- Parish and school office supplies were cut 20%
- All capital spending including technology was eliminated from the budget. If a maintenance emergency arises, we will have to borrow from our savings
- School copier overruns will be addressed
- Salary increases will be limited to COLA
- The Boosters will pay 50% of all energy costs for the gym beginning July 1
- All staff and parishioners have been asked to eliminate or postpone expenditures even if there is funding in the budget

The decision was made to spread the issue to every section of the parish rather than just raise school tuition. Everyone is to share in the reduction.

Mike stated a couple of points regarding the budget:

- We can not go for long without major capital work on our buildings. Without additional funding in the longer term for capital repairs and maintenance is not a good situation to be in.
- We no longer can fund the parish and school as it now is structured, make major repairs to our facilities, and make any type of meaningful payment on our debt. The unpaid interest on our debt is growing at the rate of \$85,000 as year.
- Our school is growing and we will not have the financial ability to borrow to expand classroom space because of the size of our debt and interest owed to the Archdiocese.

Sunday Stewardship Program - Consulting firm John V. McCarthy and Associates was hired to address our Sunday collections. Fr. Bill stated he has worked with them in the past and they get a 20% increase in the collections through this program. The first letter was mailed to the homes on March 15 and the second letter is scheduled to be in the homes on April 5 (samples were passed out to council members). The end result is the third letter which includes a pledge card that is to be returned asking each household how they can help with the Sunday collections. A series of follow up thank you notes is the final stage.

Carl Lamping asked if there was a call back program for those who do not respond. The answer was "No" there is not. We did request that the first letters be returned if not deliverable. These families would probably be deleted from our active household file. 23 letters have been returned as undeliverable at addresses we have on file.

Fingerprinting & Child Protection Decree update – Mike stated that all the information has been compiled on a spread sheet that lists every employee and volunteer’s status as to who has been certified in the new Child Protection Class and been Fingerprinted. June 30th is the deadline and after that date no one will be allowed to work with children or book parish/school facilities.

Michelle Stultz stated this needs to be strongly emphasized in the bulletin that the deadline is approaching. (*This has been since turned in for semi-regular insertion.*)

Denise Dyer was concerned about the new families and how they will be able to be certified in the program. Mike responded there is both a short term and longer term response to this:

- Child Protection Certification classes will be offered at the parish on a periodic basis. The next one is April 25 at 9 am. Watch the bulletin and Wednesday school newsletter for times and dates.
- Fingerprinting must currently take place wherever the Archdiocese units are located. Upcoming sessions at neighboring parishes are scheduled at:

Sat. Apr 3, 10am-1pm, St. Peter's/New Richmond

Thurs, Jun 3, IHM, 6-9pm

Sat, Jun 19, St. Columban/Loveland, 9-3 pm

One is not limited just to area parishes. You can check the Archdiocese schedule at:

<http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/admin/fingerprint%20calendar.htm>

- Or...one can go downtown to the Archdiocese on the 8th floor from 8:30 to 4:30, Monday thru Friday.
- After the units have been to every parish, 10 regional sites will be established. Since there are so many large parishes in our area, we

can probably expect a site someone around here. Once we know the details about this location, the information will be passed on.

Deacon's Report: Jerry Cain gave the report.

Ministry Fair signups were passed out. 164 entries were made through the mail or at the recent Parish Mission.

Worship Aides have been re-established and seem to be well received. (The expense was brought up but was determined to be negligible. Many are turning them in when they leave the church rather than leave them in the pews as in the past. The Greeter program seems to really help.)

The Greeter program is now underway.

Duane Bradley asked when Council was going to receive feedback from the recent music evaluation. Fr. Bill stated he was meeting with the Music Director on the following day and after they have discussed it, it would be presented to Council.

Matt Malott reported that he spoke with a member of the choir and was told that many in the choir were ready to walk out. Matt felt that the choirs were not getting the correct information about what was going on and what the problem really was about, but it was really the first time he has spoken with anyone on the other side of the discussion.

Duane Bradley challenged why the school was holding "Spring Fling" during a CHRP weekend. He understood that when CHRP was held there were to be no other events. The school office had been reported as stating that the CHRP weekend in May was their only open weekend. Jerry responded that CHRP can't be an "only event". Other facilities that are unused may be booked. Fr. Bill stated we are too big of a parish to block all facilities out when others may need them.

IHM Marketing Campaign: Fr. Bill stated this was an appropriate time during the meeting to discuss the recent IHM Marketing campaign.

IHM recently launched a marketing campaign at their six neighboring parishes: Guardian Angeles, St. Veronica, St. Thomas More, St. John Fisher, St. Andrews (Milford), and St. Bernadette. Post cards were mailed to parishioner homes inviting them to an open house at IHM. The postcard also had some incorrect information such as the teacher student ratio advertised as 14:1 when in fact it was somewhere closer to 30:1 when you add in auxiliary and other staff. In addition to the post cards, IHM ran advertisements in their neighboring suburban parishes' area newspapers.

The Pastor's at the neighboring parishes contacted the Pastor at IHM to lodge their concerns. The diocese was also contacted and is also involved.

This marketing campaign continues to be closely monitored.

Boosters: Carl Lamping gave the report.

The first and second grade clinic is wrapping up. The gym divider will be installed over spring break, the week of April 12. The annual Booster banquet will be held on Friday, April 30th.

Matt Malott asked about football at St. Thomas More. Carl responded the football team is really a joint effort with IHM.

Scouts: Dee Archer reported the Fish Fry is doing very well this year.

804 Ohio Pike: Fr. Bill stated the contract work has been released. The electrician is now on site making all the electrical upgrades. The plumber is due in soon to do his work. All the money to upgrade the house into good, livable condition has all been donated.

Parish Council Fundraising Committee: The group was not ready to report. They have been holding meetings and have decided to contact every organization to list all their fundraisers and vendors they contact on a spread sheet. The information needs to be tabulated to see how much is

really involved. Hopefully this will be completed and a recommendation will be ready for the next meeting in April.

There was not a lot of response to the request for a coordinator for the fund raising position. Fr. Bill stated who ever is appointed will have to work with all the staff as well as himself. This just can't be anybody without the skill set to be successful. He also pointed out that the Festival is our number one event and must continue to be so.

Volunteer Recruiting Committee: The group has not met and will plan to meet in the near future.

Pastor's Report: Fr. Bill gave his update.

The **Social Justice** committee will hold their first meeting on Friday, March 26th. John Convery has done a nice job getting this program underway.

The parish staff has proposed making **More About Us** a "theme" communication piece rather than just a newsletter. Fr. Bill asked Council their thoughts. The group generally thought leaving the document as a newsletter was fine, but council is open to trying a "themed newsletter" as a trial if the marketing committee wants to try it.

Our recent activity as a parish has been good. The parish mission was very successful. We had about 200 attend each evening.

For the next meeting, Fr. Bill asked Council to report regarding the idea of having a Parish Photo Album. The last one was done a long time ago. This takes quite a bit of work and coordination.

Fr. Bill also reported that the Finance Committee disagreed with Parish Council's decision to end Bingo. They asked that if someone came forward, Bingo be brought back.

Denise Dyer stated it sounds as though the Finance Committee and Parish Council were "disjointed". Others suggested that maybe one member of

each committee should start to attend the others meeting. Fr. Bill stated that Finance's role is really budget and money. Mike Gennett stated the Finance Meeting meets during the day and the next meeting is Wednesday, April 21, at 9 AM to finalize the school budget for next year. Michelle Stultz said she could attend if she knew far enough in advance.

Michelle Stultz asked how far out can the parish schedule be posted on the Internet? Mike Gennett responded that he usually puts two months of information on, updated each week. Mike saw no reason why a further time frame could be accommodated on the web. Fr. Bill cautioned about looking too far ahead because we are not always certain when some events are or even if all events are indeed posted. Mike stated that what is on the Internet is pulled from the program we use to post all of our schedules. *(The schedule time frame has been expanded and all known events through June 30th are now on the web.)*

Mike Gennett stated a "Photo Gallery" page has been added to the web site. If everyone has not seen it, to be sure to visit the page the next time they are on the web.

The next meeting was set for Monday, April 19, at 7:00 PM in the Library.

The meeting adjourned at 8:25 PM. Fr. Bill led the group in a prayer.