

**ST. THOMAS MORE PARISH
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING**

Monday, November 11, 2002

In Attendance: Fr. Bill Wagner, David Lees, Linda Young, Diane Brennan, Rhonda Roberts, Michelle Stultz, Vic Ivers, Duane Bradley, Darline Foltz, Carl Lamping, Gene Miller, Bob Guenther, Barb Schmidt and Mike Gennett.

Absent: Ray Neltner (called in), Peggy Fangman, Dee Archer (in Veterans Day parade with the Scouts)

This is the first set of Parish Council minutes that have been transferred electronically.

Handouts from the meeting are not attached.

The St. Thomas More Parish Council meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM EST by President David Lees. Fr. Bill opened the meeting with a prayer.

Minutes of Previous Meeting: David Lees briefly reviewed the minutes of the October 14th meeting. No comments were made regarding the minutes. Effective with the minutes of this meeting, they will be transmitted electronically to all the members.

Finance Report: Mike Gennett presented the financial results for the first four months of the year. Parish and school spending is not running over plan. The biggest issue facing the parish this year is the shortfall in the Sunday collections. Based upon current trends, there will be a \$77,275.00 shortfall this year. Unless this turns around in the near term, it could have an impact on operations in the future. There was lengthy discussion about the issue. Darline Foltz recommended that the "smiley" faces ☺ be eliminated from the bulletin. The consensus was that Mike Gennett would

prepare a general non-threatening statement for the November 17th bulletin. The insert prepared is:

“Our Sunday collection dollars have been continually falling short to plan. The budget for the collection is planned based upon the previous year's actual results. Thus, we are down to plan and to last year. When the budget was prepared, we wanted to fund a number of exciting new and expanded programs that include Christ Renews His Parish, a Youth Ministry, as well as vastly expanding our Religious Formation programs (CCD, RICA). In order to maintain and grow our ministries, we count on our Sunday collection for these programs as well as to pay our normal on going bills such as payroll, maintenance, and utilities. It is very important we maintain and grow our parish as well as meet our financial obligations!

We are very much aware that the economy is down. The number of unemployed families has increased and the stock market continues to fall. However, we do ask that every household pray to see if there is anything you can do to help increase our actual dollars contributed. No amount you can offer to assist is too small. Thank you in advance for your consideration!”

David Lees concluded the conversation by stating that the situation requires very close watching. (Fr. Bill has since stated a special meeting of the Finance Committee will be called to address the matter.)

Education Report: Peg Fischer gave the report. She a brief update that included:

- Report cards are now being printed on the computer.
- Grade 4 and 5 will be moving to the modular buildings.
- The computer lab is in the process of being upgraded.
- The Terra Nova Testing has been completed.
- There will be a St. Vincent de Paul food drive for Thanksgiving.
- There will be a St. Vincent de Paul Christmas project for the folks in Adams County.
- The OSCAA Board will not meet until February to review our certification. The chairman will review the report and make any recommendations in the meantime.

Worship Commission: Fr. Bill gave the update. Servers Training is scheduled for November 13th at 2:00 PM. A new handbook has been

prepared. The Sanctuary environment volunteer issue has been resolved. The November 18th meeting will discuss Christmas set up. There is an issue as to where the Crib will go considering the changes in the Sanctuary. Fr. Fritz's funeral went very well. The Commission and the staff were very busy getting everything into place last week.

There was a lengthy discussion regarding the Eucharistic Ministers. The number of scheduled Ministers that are 'no shows' is a concern. Barbara Schmidt suggested putting weekly reminders in the bulletin as to who is scheduled the following week. The month end bulletins with the calendar and the schedule are not being picked up and read. Scheduling is also reported as an issue. There is no consistency. Some are scheduled for six weeks and in a row and then not again for two months. Diane Brennan suggested the parish office secretaries' call or email to remind those scheduled to be sure to come. David Lees suggested that the ministers need to be brought together on occasion.

It was concluded that Parish Council will take these issues to the Worship Commission for a plan of action to resolve.

Deacon's Report: Deacon Miller gave an update on the Christ Renews His Parish (CHRP) programs which are designed to give a parish a renewal movement. The Women's weekend was October 12 and 13 and the Men's weekend was November 9 and 10. The spirituality and renewal were terrific. There was a nurturing that was emotionally satisfying. More parish involvement will be asked for future events. These two groups have been identified as Team 1. They will assist with the next group which is scheduled for May (May 3-4, 17-18). As a contrast, IHM is on Team 49.

The Deacon is also looking at adding a Mother's Bible Study. This would be held before school is out on a selected day around 2:00 PM

The Deacon is also working on a new marriage prep program.

DRE Report: Becky Ready was not present, but filed a report. CCD has grown to 316 students. The altar server training process for fifth graders was a big success.

72 second graders are being prepared to receive their first reconciliation which will take place on Thursday, November 21. The First grade families will sponsor the reception.

There are 10 catechumens and 7 candidates seeking full initiation into the Church. There are 12 youth in RCIY: 8 catechumens and 4 candidates. March 9 is the Rite of Election.

On November 22, Katrina Zeno will be in the church speaking about "Women in the Third Millennium." On Sunday, November 24, Parish Parents in Partnership will be sponsoring an advent wreath making celebration in the Parish Hall.

There is a new literature center with brochures at the bottom of the stairs in the church vestibule.

Becky also said that everyone is welcome to come to Deacon Gene's Bible Study. Call ext 25 to register.

Youth Ministry: Diane Brennan gave the update. For Jr. and Sr. High, there are 16 Jr. High enrollees. For High School, there are 6 enrollees and 6 regrets. 45 apps were submitted.

There will be a conference in Steubenville and we plan on sending 4 students.

A "Lock-In" is also being planned. Father Bill suggested using a Y since they have a pool and other facilities. Enough parents would be needed for this type of an event.

Boosters: Carl Lamping reported that Charlie Randolph was in transition of stepping down as President. Carl would be representing the Boosters in the future and all correspondence should go to him.

Carl reported that 166 kids have enrolled in the Booster sports programs that include Girls CYO, Volleyball, and boys and girls basketball. The Fall Classic Tournament is later this month.

Carl reported that the concession area in the gym was broken into and their start up money was missing.

Security: Carl's report regarding the gym opened up a discussion regarding our ongoing security issues. Many people felt the portering system is not working. Facilities do not get opened and locked in a timely manner. Gene Miller recommended that everyone come to the Parish Office to pick up keys each evening. Others felt the keys would be duplicated or not returned at all. "No Shows", "Cancellations" and "Early departures" were discussed as big reasons why facilities are not locked up. Those who cancel events do not report it to the Parish Office. Peg Fischer reported she came at 5:30 today and all the school doors were unlocked. They were not scheduled to be unlocked until 7:00 PM for Parish Council. David Lees reminded everyone that Mike Gennett did a study over a year ago on security improvements and Council voted the proposals down.

Barb Schmidt motioned that the whole portering/security issue be reopened for review. Vic Ivers seconded the motion. Matt Mallot, Duane Bradley, Carl Lamping, and Mike Gennett were appointed as a task force to review the matter and report to council. Mike Gennett would locate the old file and forward it to the rest of the committee. Mike will be responsible for getting the task force together to discuss the matter.

St. Vincent de Paul: Bob Guenther reported that the giving tree would be up on November 23. There would also be a Thanksgiving Food Drive. The membership drive was on hold. They now have 10 members.

Scouts: The following report was submitted through Vic Ivers by Dee Archer after the meeting. It is reproduced as submitted:

"CUB SCOUTS - American Legion Post #72 (Mt. Carmel) has once again invited our Cub Scout Pack #452 to participate in the Batavia Veterans Day parade this evening. The BSA annual Popcorn sale is now going on until

November 17; this is our biggest fundraiser of the year. The Pack campout in September and our Halloween event were very successful. Many gracious thanks to Michael & Mary Kay Thomas who honored us with their attendance at the evening campfire in September; the prayer service by Mr. Thomas was most inspiring. Vic Ivers, our Cub master, continues to keep our Scouts, parents, and leaders active and involved in a great program. Membership is currently up to 59 this year.

BOY SCOUTS - Randy Longbottom will submit his application this week for the position of Scoutmaster. Randy is now about 34, and is an Eagle Scout from our Troop; he and his family are parishioners here at STM.

Many thanks to Fred Schoolfield, who fulfilled his promise to serve as Scoutmaster for the past year and whose family keeps growing. Fred is to be congratulated for all of his hard work with the Troop - and also his 6th child born last month. Fred will begin serving as Assistant Scoutmaster once Randy's application has been reviewed and approved by Father Bill.

Troop #452 participated in the Peterloon 2002 event at the Dan Beard Scout Reservation in October with over 4,000 other Boy Scouts from all over the U.S. and a few other countries. The Troop's membership at present is 26. The Scouts are looking forward to working with Mrs. Diane Brennan, the new Youth Minister. As discussed with Mike Thomas, the District

Executive from our Council office has approached me about starting a Venture Crew here at the parish for older Scouts in the Troop. In light of the fact that our Youth Ministry is just beginning to flourish, and we have a new Scoutmaster, we thought it best to put this consideration off for 6 months to a year. I have spoken with both Mrs. Brennan and Mr. Longbottom, and have advised our District Executive of this decision. I would like to see the Scouts involved in more ministries to the parish, so if you have a special project they can help with, please let me know. “

It was also discussed why the Girl Scouts do not give a report. It was stated they are not a charter organization. Fr. Bill reported they are a part of the parish and should be reporting.

PTO: The PTO reported they have sponsored a number of field trips and events already this year.

Fundraisers to date include the Skating Party, Thriftway Cards, Boxtops for Education, the Schoolwear Fundraiser, and Scripts. Even though Scripts sales are up, profits are down because the Biggs scripts only yield a 2% profit. They have been very profitable. Thriftway scripts have exceeded \$25,000 and a \$500 bonus is expected.

Seniors: No report was filed.

Bingo: Darline Foltz report that revenue is up this year. Darline requested that Bingo be held two nights a week in January and February. Darline is interested in testing if Thursday night might be a better night than Tuesday. Mike Gennett reported that the Parish Hall had already been booked for a number of Thursday nights, most importantly for a

Confirmation meeting on January 9. Diane Brennan thought there was a series of Confirmation meetings set for Thursday evenings. Becky Ready's input would be needed if Bingo was held on Thursday this winter.

David Lees recommended that a survey be first completed regarding changing Bingo to Thursday night. Approval was given to change the Bingo license application from Sunday and Tuesday to Tuesday and Thursday. Darline was asked to submit her survey results to the next meeting and find out more what Becky Ready's plans are for the Parish Hall on Thursday night.

Julyfest: An overview of the Julyfest 2003 was given by Michelle Stultz and Rhonda Roberts. Items being discussed are an overview of the things that worked and didn't work, getting upfront on Bid'n Buy, getting involved with the Eastside Festival Alliance, retaining Happy H Amusements, and looking to see if making Sunday "Family Day" makes sense.

Meetings are held monthly on the last Monday of the month. All are welcome.

David Lees stated he was pleased we were now getting regular reports on Julyfest. In the past, we had to wait until a week before the event as the only way to find out what was planned.

STM Personnel Policies and Benefits: Duane Bradley made the presentation. A task force that consisted of Ray Neltner, Duane Bradley, and Mike Gennett were asked to review all the employee policies and benefits. A review was made of our existing policies as well as a thorough review of Guardian Angel's, IHM's, St. Veronica's, and the Archdiocese of Cincinnati.

The committee recommended that Parish Council adopt the policies and they be equally enforced for all employees. It was felt our policies were very generous when compared to neighboring parishes and private industry. The committee strongly recommended that each employee sign an acknowledgement that they have received the policy and it is their

responsibility to read and understand it. This acknowledgement is to be filed in each employee's personnel file.

Barb Schmidt motioned to accept the policy as written, Vic Ivers seconded the motion. All council members present voted 5 to 0, to accept the policy. The policy will be issue with the paychecks this Friday, November 15.

Parish Census: Vic Ivers made a presentation regarding the Parish Community Questionnaire. Vic stated his goals were to get the census prepared and ready to be handed out by Thanksgiving, November 28. He proposed issuing 1,000 questionnaires and also having it available on the web site for downloading. Vic's goal was to have the questionnaire completed during Christmas when church attendance was up.

David Lees felt that the questionnaire would not work as currently designed. He proposed starting again since he felt the questionnaire was more of a complete statistical profile rather than what council was looking for. The questionnaire needed to develop a vision.

Linda Young, Duane Bradley, and Barbara Schmidt all stated they wanted time to review the questionnaire before agreeing to move on it.

In conclusion, it was agreed to ignore the time scale involved and put this on the agenda for the next meeting. More work needed to be done regarding the preparation of the questionnaire.

Web Site: Mike Gennett gave a brief update on the new parish web site. The new web site went live on October 25. It is four times bigger than the old site. Organizations and schedules have been expanded. The site was planned after extensive review of a number of parish web sites that are linked to the Archdiocese site. (See the following web site if you want to look at all the various Archdiocese parish web sites):

<http://www.catholiccincinnati.org/schdir/parishdir.htm>

Kevin Race, school technology teacher, handled all the logistics of bringing up the site. He designed 8 options which were reviewed with Fr. Bill. The plans are to publicize the new web site once it is completed.

Duane Bradley still needs to get photos of Ray Neltner and Peggy Fangman for the Internet. We still plan to add the photos of all Parish Council members to the web.

Communication Proposal: Due to the late hour, the item was not discussed.

Pastor's Report: Fr. Bill reported on a number of issues.

In the future, Fr. Bill said would not have Parish Council meetings on holidays.

He discussed the reasoning why he feels the Pastor does not have to make all the decisions. He felt this Council meeting was a good one because Council acted and made decisions on a number of things. Parish Council must take responsibility. The reality is the day is coming when there is no full time Pastor at this parish. Council must take charge and set policies.

Regarding the number of priests, Fr. Bill stated we are now looking at a worse case scenario. That is, by 2020-2025, we might have 75 or fewer priests to serve 231 parishes. Therefore, Parish Council must make the decisions in the future.

St. Bernadette and St. Peter's in New Richmond are now a planning cluster...possibly including St. Mary's in Bethel. This could mean we might have a full time priest at this parish for another 10 years. It is best we remain in our current Deanery and not be clustered with Guardian Angels, IHM, and St. Veronica. We are like them in most ways, but it is better we remain a real big fish in our current structure. We would more than likely loose if we were clustered with our neighboring parishes to the west.

Modulars: The modulars are moving along. Construction should be completed by early December. Carl Lamping has been a big help in clearing all the issues regarding costs, etc. that have arisen.

The 4th and 5th grades are going to be moved to the modulars mid-year.

10:30 Sunday Mass: It was stated that the Sunday 10:30 Mass is now running over an hour which is resulting in traffic issues as people come to the Noon Mass. This past Sunday the visiting priest spoke a long time and Fr. Joe's Mass took longer than usual. Getting out at 11:45 AM is causing problems.

Closing: The next Parish Council meeting is scheduled for Monday, December 9, at 7:00 PM in the Library. David Lees closed the meeting at 9:47 PM by asking Fr. Bill to say a prayer.