

“Our Journey Into The Future...Together”

In the last nine months, since my arrival at St. Thomas More, the Parish Leadership has been busy looking at our future and creating a plan that will move us into the future together.

The Pastoral Council, the Finance Council, and the Development Council have held two joint meetings. The Chairs of these Councils – Linda Brault (Pastoral), Don Eppich (Finance), and Randy Reznicek (Development), along with Chris Smith (Stewardship Coordinator), and myself – have had several meetings to “sift” through the input from these joint Council meetings.

In all of these meetings, we have looked at our future, and have created a plan to move our Parish into the future together. We now are at the point of preparing a process by which we will share with and recommend to the entire Parish this vision, in the hope that a majority of parishioners will “come aboard” and support ***“Our Journey into the Future...Together.”***

The three elements of ***“Our Journey Into The Future... Together”*** are *“Eucharistic Adoration,”* the *“Parish Build-out”* and *“Tithing”*:

Eucharistic Adoration

All of our efforts must be built on a spiritual foundation of faith. As Catholic Christians, the center of our lives is the Eucharist. The Eucharist must be the foundation upon which we build. That is why the first goal of our Parish Leadership was to begin Eucharistic Adoration.

Presently we have parishioners present in the Blessed Sacrament Chapel every day, Monday through Friday, from 9:30AM to 8:30PM, praying for the needs of the Church, especially of our own faith community of St. Thomas More.

All that we do must be built on this faith foundation of prayer. Unless the Lord builds the House...the House is built in vain.

The eventual goal is to have Eucharistic Adoration, with Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament, on a 24/7 basis. In order to accomplish this, we will need more people to come forward to become a part of this prayer movement that is creating the foundation on which we build our future together. Please watch for further announcements encouraging the expansion of this prayer foundation!

“The Parish Build-out”

The next phase of our building project will be the Church Sanctuary, the Youth Center, and the Administrative Offices. We will not build one building until we can build all the buildings! We will move into the future together, the entire Parish committing itself to the entire build-out.

What does this mean in terms of cost? It means retiring our projected \$1 million debt (as of 06/30/04), purchasing the adjacent five acres of land to our Parish Campus at \$500,000, and raising the necessary funds to build our Church Sanctuary,

the Youth Center, and the Administrative Offices at a cost of about \$10,500,000.

This total cost of \$12,000,000 becomes the goal of our next Capital Campaign that will begin this summer.

This effort will, hopefully, bring us all together behind one common purpose.

At the same time, the Parish is pursuing the possibilities of creating a Parish Preschool on an off-campus site near the Parish. This site would lay the foundations for the St. Thomas More Academy (Grades K – 8) that would begin off-campus and would then be transferred to our Parish site into buildings that would be built after the Church Sanctuary, the Youth Center, and the Administrative Offices are built. (The cost of temporary “portable modules” on Campus that could house the Preschool and future Academy is also being pursued.)

“Tithing”

We will begin an alternative and second “track of giving” and invite people to consider the faith arena of tithing. Tithing is a biblical concept that encourages that a tenth of all that we produce should be returned to the Lord as an act of faith:

“Jacob then made this vow: ‘If God remains with me, to protect me on this journey I am making and to give me enough bread to eat and clothing to wear, and I come back safe to my father’s house, the Lord shall be my God. This stone that I have set up as a memorial stone shall be God’s abode. Of everything you give me, I will faithfully return a tenth part to you.’”

-Genesis 28: 20-22

We will invite our parishioners to consider the tithe – to give 10% (of gross household income) to the Lord – 8% to St. Thomas More and 2% to other charities. If the tithe were given, then there would be no other Parish requests for donations, stipends, or fees. Your tithe will fulfill your donation to all “Second Collections”, “The Annual Catholic Appeal (ACA),” the Building Capital Campaign, Religious Education Fees, stipends for Sacraments, and any and all other fundraising activities. One gift covers all!

The tithe will be an option to the “traditional” way in which parishioners have supported the Parish. The hope is that the “tithe” will become, over time, an attractive way in which parishioners will support the Parish.

All of this will be presented to the Parish in detail in the near future in a variety of ways. You are encouraged to participate in the discussions that will take place as the details of this plan are fleshed out and presented.

Please continue to pray for the Parish and for all of our efforts as we create ***“Our Journey Into The Future...Together!”***

F. Mike