

## “We Begin the Building of Our Church!”

Last weekend was a special moment in the history of our Faith Community, as it was announced that we are now focused upon the building of our Church. This building will be our Worship Space, our Sanctuary. It will be the permanent “House” of the Church of St. Thomas More. This sacred space is the sacred ground on which, and in which, we, the Church, gather to pray, to celebrate, and to receive the Sacraments that give us meaning, purpose, strength, and life, and that lead us from this earthly life to the next life, with God on high.



It has taken us 20 years to reach this point. Let us take comfort in the fact that the Israelites wandered in the desert for 40 years before they reached the Promised Land. We are doing it in half the time!! Always remember that good things take time. Also remember that so many of the Churches and Cathedrals around the world, both humble and grand, that were built before us, were generations in the making.

We now begin to do all the necessary preliminary steps essential to the building of any building. We will interview and retain an architect, various contractors, a liturgical consultant, be in constant consultation with our own Parish Committees, with the Diocesan Committees, and with the City of Oceanside obtaining all the necessary permits and approvals. The road ahead is long and arduous. But the journey will be joy-filled because we are aware of, and we can already get a foretaste, of what is to come.

My first plea to you today is that you continue to be as supportive and generous as you have been in the past. Please continue to be faithful to your pledges to the Capital Campaign, and please be willing to renew them when they are fulfilled. All of our financial projections in order to secure our Diocesan Loan depend upon your fidelity to your pledges.

My second plea to you today is that you continue to be as supportive as you can to the Operating Budget of our Parish. It is essential that we continue the ministries of our Church as we reach out to those in need, those who are in our Parish, and beyond.

Our Parish Leadership is not willing to compromise on the ministries that we now have established that truly allow us to continue the ministry of Jesus. We are already a Church! Church is people reaching out to one another in the name of Christ. We can do this in a “gymnasium” or in a “cathedral.”

We will not sacrifice ministries for buildings. It is ministries that make us a Church, not a Building. The buildings help us in our ministries and they are needed, but, ultimately, they are a means to an end, not an end in themselves.

Please be mindful that our Operating Budget has increased in the last two years, as our staffing needs have been adjusted so that the necessary ministries may take place. The staffing adjustments are as follows:

Sr. Maureen is our part-time Pastoral Associate who oversees the Bereavement/Funeral Ministry and is a liaison to several groups who help us to be involved in a variety of justice issues.

Karen Oshinski is our full-time Parish Secretary/ Receptionist who is available to the needs of all our parishioners and who oversees the calendaring of all our Parish Events and Spaces.

Natalie Provinse has become our Bookkeeper. This is the first time in our history that we have a staff person who is solely responsible for “keeping the books.” Natalie is part-time and as the Parish grows, her position too, will need to become full-time.

Lorraine Doering, our Parish Technician, is still part-time, but her hours have increased as the workload of our office has increased due to the addition of staff and expanded ministries. Lorraine is behind the scenes making sure that all the equipment is “up and running.” Also, whenever you see anything printed, you can be pretty sure that Lorraine has printed it.

Chris Smith is now our full-time Director of Stewardship and Development. She not only oversees the stewardship component of our Parish, but also, in the last year, has overseen our “Our Journey Into The Future... Together” that has raised over \$4.3 million in new money for our build-out. Janice Treat who has done so much of the secretarial work that has made our Capital Campaign such a success has assisted her in this past year and is available as the needs arise.

Douglas Lynn, who came to us in March of 2005, is not only our Director of Music, but also our Coordinator of Liturgical Ministries. Anyone who participates in any of the liturgical ministries knows how valuable his presence is among us.

Joe Garcia, our newest staff person, is our first full-time maintenance person. He is so needed in taking care of our multi-purpose building that is now four years old and in need of ever-greater maintenance and care as the years pass.

The staff that we have is the minimum that we need at this present time. We cannot sacrifice these positions, or the ministries of our Parish, in order to build a building.

We must, and we can, do both! We have done both in the past, and I know that we will rise to the challenges of this present moment.

What I ask is that every household make a pledge, if you have not yet done so, to the Capital Campaign, and that you be faithful to that pledge.

And I also ask that you continue to be as generous as you can to the Operational Expenses of the Parish. Please continue to support the Parish through the regular use of your envelopes. If you can increase your weekly donation, that would mean much to our Operational Budget this year as we continue to support the many ministries that make us the Church of St. Thomas More. We must meet the challenges of growth as they come to us each year!

Please know that I am grateful for all that you are and all that you do. You are a generous people. You are a faith-filled people.

May God who began this good work in us bring it to fulfillment!

*F. Mike*