

Pastor's Column

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“St. Thomas More Rises to the Occasion Again”

This weekend at all the Masses, Bill Ipsen is speaking briefly at Announcement Time. Bill is the Chairperson of our Capital Campaign, *“Our Journey Into The Future . . . Together.”* He is giving us an update on our Capital Campaign, and on behalf of the Finance and Development Councils, is giving an update on the Parish response to this year's Annual Catholic Appeal (ACA).

In keeping with, and because of, the overall St. Thomas More “parish attitude,” (which rates as great), there is good news to report!

“Capital Campaign Update”

The Capital Campaign now stands at \$5.5 million in pledges/donations. We are continuing to grow this amount, and we now have Bishop Brom's preliminary approval to begin construction of our Church. Shovel hits the ground in early 2008.

The New Construction Committee and the Interior Design Committee are now meeting, coordinating, and doing all the necessary things so that shovel will hit the ground in 2008! The Parish will be kept informed of the activities of these two committees on a timely and regular basis.

“Annual Catholic Appeal (ACA) Update”

The ACA is now underway. The \$2.5 million raised by the Diocese is directed to “Instruction in the Faith, Priestly Ministries, and Catholic Charities.” Our fair share amount, this year, is \$26,000.

All money raised over and above this \$26,000 is returned to the Parish. In past years, our overage was directed to the Building Fund and to creating a Parish Reserve Account.

This year our Parish is contending with a shortfall in revenue. The amount is 7% less than what we received last year and 10% less than what we have budgeted for this year.

The Finance and Development Councils are aggressively addressing this situation. It has been made abundantly clear to us by Diocesan Officials that no matter how much money we may have raised in the Capital Campaign, if we are not meeting the day to day challenges of operating our Parish, we will not be given permission to proceed with our building plans. How can we “grow” the Parish when we are not balancing the budget for what we presently have?

With all of this in mind, it was decided that the overage of the ACA would be directed to the Operating Budget and that an appeal would be made to make parishioners aware of this situation, and to encourage them to rise to the occasion.

That has been done, and the Parish is rising to the challenge! Bill Ipsen's report indicates that 322 households or 31.5% of the Parish households have already responded to the ACA. As of this weekend we stand at \$41,825. This means that \$15,825 will be directed to the Operating Budget at this time. This is a great beginning, and it is my prayer that many more families will respond to this year's ACA as a way to be supportive of this effort.

Also, besides making a pledge/gift to the ACA, a number of households have increased their weekly offertory donation. If all households in the Parish would raise their weekly or monthly offering by just a few dollars, we would be in good stead!

A few designated gifts have also arrived. These gifts from parishioners were specifically designated for the Operating Budget. These gifts total \$7,260.

Finally, the Seventh Annual St. Thomas More Golf Classic will take place on Friday, June 16. Hopefully, many of our golfers will be a part of this day and will invite family and friends to join in the fun. The evening will close with an Auction/Dinner Dance right here in our Parish Center. So, even if you are not a golfer, you can join in the evening's festivities. You are encouraged to think about reserving a table of 8 or 10 people. All proceeds from the day will be directed to the Operating Budget. Check page 3 of this weekend's bulletin for more details.

My gratitude goes to the Finance Council and the Development Council that have aggressively addressed our shortfall, and brought it to the attention of our parishioners, sooner rather than later. A very special word of gratitude is extended to you, the very generous and supportive STM Parishioners who are, once again, rising to the occasion.

If we all enter into a spirit of cooperation and do our part, we will easily maintain our mission and ministries, and continue, with confidence, to move into the future together.

St. Thomas More once again rises to the occasion! I am grateful!

F. Mike