

Pastor's Column

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Ten Signs of a Vibrant Parish

Denise Simeone is a writer and consultant skilled at group facilitation, long-range planning, and mission development.

She has written an article entitled, "Ten Signs of a Vibrant Parish," which appeared recently in the *National Catholic Reporter*.

She begins her article by saying:

Stand on the platform of an incoming subway train and you can feel the train get closer. Stop alongside a car with a blaring stereo and your car shakes with the sound. Listen to the summer cicada; the air pulsates with their deafening noise. Feel the pulsing of a roller coaster under your feet as it whips around the track. Vibrations that beat and pulsate imply a pulse, and a pulse means life.

What makes a vibrant parish, one with vitality and a healthy life people recognize? A vibrant parish is alive with a pulse that is felt and seen from within by its members and externally by those who know it by its works, ministries and reputation.

The following are ten signs of a vibrant parish:

- 1. All who enter experience welcome and hospitality*
- 2. Liturgy inspires active participation and offers an experience of God*

- 3. Parishioners recognize their parish mission*
- 4. Collegial leadership is practiced*
- 5. Members are recognized as gifted and called forth to use their gifts*
- 6. Faith is nurtured*
- 7. Outreach to the Body of Christ is practiced*
- 8. There is a plan for a sustainable and responsible future*
- 9. Communal life abounds*
- 10. Baptism's vocational call is cultivated*

In her article, each of these ten signs is expounded upon in detail. I would encourage you to read the full article by logging on to www.ncronline.org/news/10-signs-vibrant-parish.

I believe that St. Thomas More is faithful to her ten signs of a vibrant parish, and, according to her criteria, we are, indeed, a vibrant parish!

We recognize, though, that there is always room for improvement. I encourage you to reflect upon these ten signs and ask where we may be able to do better. Let me know what I, or the Parish Staff, can do better and, just importantly, what are you willing to do to make it better!

F. Mike