

Pastor's Column

**For All That Has Been – Thank you!
For All That Will Be – Yes!**

July 1 is my ninth anniversary as the Pastor of the Church of St. Thomas More. I share with you, once again, my first Pastor's Column dated July 6, 2003.

It is my desire each year to give you my first Pastor's Column in which I shared with you the words of Archbishop Daniel Pilarczyk, as he talks about the meaning and purpose of a parish. His words have become over the years of my ministry, in the various Parishes in which I have served, my pastoral motivation and direction. May our yearly reflection upon these words help all of us in deepening our relationship with the Lord Jesus.

Over these nine years, I have thanked God constantly for your overwhelming positive response in your willingness to work together as we continue to witness to the Kingdom of God and move into our future.

In my over thirty-seven years of ministry, I have been in many faith-filled Parishes, but I must admit that St. Thomas More has strengthened me the most in my pastoral responsibilities. This Parish helps me so much to be a faithful pastor!

As I begin my journey with the Church of St. Thomas More and become a member of this Faith Community, I share with you the words of The Most Reverend Daniel Pilarczyk, the Archbishop of Cincinnati, taken from his book, *The Parish: Where God's People Live*:

A Parish, then, is a moment, a chapter in God's love affair with us human beings. And being a member of a Parish does not mean just "belonging to something," but rather, being involved in a loving association with God in Christ Jesus and with each other in Him, and with all the world for Him.

Parish is therefore concerned with relationships—our relationship with Christ and our relationship with each other in Him.

Consequently, the main participant in every Parish is the Lord Himself. It is He around whom the people gather in worship. It is He whose word the Parishioners hear there. It is His work the Parishioners carry out in the context of the Parish's life and in their activity in the world, activity for which they are enlightened and strengthened in the Parish.

It is for the strengthening and expression of His Body, the Church, that the Parishioners build buildings and carry out programs.

It is in response to His love that the Parish engages in care for the poor and in outreach to those who have forgotten Christ or have never known Him.

I now have the privilege of joining you, the Church of St. Thomas More, on its Faith Journey, its Love Affair with God, in and through the Lord Jesus Christ. I pray that, because our paths now become one, we will continue to deepen our relationship with the Lord Jesus, and that we will continue to center our lives more completely on Him.

As I begin my ministry as your Pastor, I commit all of my time, talent, treasure, and energy in building on the strong foundation that has already been set, that is, the ongoing creation of a climate and an environment of hospitality that says: "The Church of St. Thomas More is holy ground. The Church of St. Thomas More is a people and a place where God is revered, and all God's People are treated with dignity, respect, and offered the opportunity to be challenged by the Gospel. The Church of St. Thomas More is the home of brothers and sisters in Christ who take time to support each other in deepening their relationship with Jesus the Christ for the purpose of making our world a better and safer place for all people.

I promise all of you that I will do all that I can, during this time of transition, that as a Faith Community, we do not experience "a loss of momentum," but rather, that we experience a "surge of energy."

As we pilgrimage through life, as individuals and as a community of Faith, our book of Life is being written. Some chapters we write. Other chapters are written for us. Chapters end. New chapters begin. Today we begin a new chapter in the Faith Life of the Church of St. Thomas More. With me, I ask that you "look forward to opportunities for growth that change affords."

As we begin to walk together, may our prayer be: "For all that has been - Thank you. For all that will be - Yes!"

F. Mike