

St. Thomas More

Roman Catholic Church – Parish Newsletter

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THE TOWER

Slow and Steady Won the Race

— Rev. Michael Ratajczak

As we continue to move forward with the build-out of our Parish campus and focus upon our new sanctuary, Aesop and one of his tales comes to mind:

There once was a speedy hare who bragged about how fast he could run. Tired of hearing him boast, Slow and Steady, the tortoise, challenged him to a race. All the animals in the forest gathered to watch.

Hare ran down the road for a while and then paused to rest. He looked back at Slow and Steady and cried out, "How do you expect to win this race when you are walking along at your slow, slow pace?"

Hare stretched himself out alongside the road and fell asleep, thinking, "There is plenty of time to relax."

Slow and Steady walked and walked. He never, ever stopped until he came to the finish line.

The animals who were watching cheered so loudly for Tortoise, they woke up Hare.

Hare stretched, yawned, and began to run again, but it was too late. Tortoise was over the line.

After that, Hare reminded himself, "Don't brag about your lightning pace, for Slow and Steady won the race!"



The finish line, the beginning of construction is approaching, and like the tortoise, we are slow and steady. We are deliberate, and cautious, making sure that all the pieces of the puzzle fit into place.

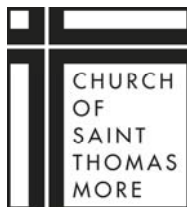
When we begin to build, we want to be confident that we have the resources and elements in place to build the sanctuary we have desired for so long.

It is my hope that we build a Church that will be with us for at least the next century, and that it will become a religious landmark for those of us who will worship in it, as well as for those in our community who may only witness it from its exterior.

The cost of the Church is estimated at \$9.3 million. In order to obtain a loan from the Diocese, we need to have one-third of the cost of the project on deposit with the Diocese.

That means we will need a loan of \$6.2 million. This loan needs to be repaid in 25 years or less. Also the debt service cannot exceed 25% of the annual total income of the Parish (excluding building fund contributions).

(Continued on page 2)



THE TOWER

In naming our Parish newsletter, we remember the Tower of London where St. Thomas More spent his last days and suffered a martyr's death.



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Parish Mission Statement

To worship God, teach and live the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and serve God's people in word and deed.

Slow and Steady Won the Race — continued

(Continued from page 1)



As of July 2009, we have the necessary \$3.1 million on deposit.



A \$6.2 million loan, repaid in 25 years at present interest rates, would mean a monthly mortgage payment of \$55,000.

From January 1, 2008 to May 30, 2009, we collected \$840,000 in Building Fund money, an average of \$49,400 per month.

In order for us to manage a new mortgage, we need not only to sustain, but we also need to increase the amount of Building Fund revenue by almost \$6,000 a month or \$72,000 a year. But, we must also remember the requirement that debt service can not exceed 25% of the annual total Parish income (excluding building fund contributions).

Our present Parish operational income would limit us to a loan of just over \$2 million with a monthly payment of \$13,000 over the 25 year term. This loan amount would not be enough to begin the project.



We presently have a mortgage on the building we now occupy. Our debt stands at \$344,000. Our monthly payment is \$11,000. Our last payment will be in December

2011. Without an immediate and profound increase in our Building Funds and an increase in our Offertory Income, there is no way that we could manage a new monthly loan payment which would be significantly more than what we are presently paying.



Our present economy also causes concern. We are working very hard to maintain our present Operations Budget. Funds from the "Did You Know?" campaign, the Golf Classic,

overage from the Annual Catholic Appeal, and the Vehicle Donation program are all channeled into the Operations Budget in order to keep us "healthy."

Ideally, all these funds should be going into the Building Fund, and the Operations Budget should be supported and maintained only by your Offertory Donations and Tithes. The economy needs to "turn-around," and hopefully we will see an increase in offertory donations.



Our Liturgical Program for the Church created by the Interior Design Team and our Liturgical Consultant, Robert Habiger, is almost complete.



Renzo Zecchetto, our architect, is ready to create the detailed schematic plan and draw up the construction documents. All he needs is our "ready, set, go."

Three of the six puzzle pieces do not yet fit!

So we have taken the advice of Aesop. We are not sleeping on the job. We are awake and persevering.

Slow and steady will win the race!

Golf Classic Anniversary—Ten Years in the Making

The First Years

LARRY DORSA

Eleven years ago, I told our pastor, Fr. Peter McGuine, about my participation on the Tri-City Hospital Foundation's annual 'Golf Fore Your Heart' tournament committee, noting how profitable golf tournaments could be. The next day, Fr. Peter told me that the Parish had decided we should have a golf tournament and that I should chair it. Randy Reznicek joined me, and we went to work forming the first golf committee.

The golf tournament proved to be financially successful, netting \$108,000 for the Church in the first two years. I then turned the helm over to Skip Wilson who took over for the next two years. Though the economic environment was not as good as it had been in the first two years, the tournament continued to be a money maker for St. Thomas More.

Much planning, time, and effort goes into making this tournament a fun-filled and financially successful event. In its fifth year though, the Parish could not find anyone willing to chair the event and the decision was made to cancel the tournament, for that year. I could not envision the Parish giving up on a continuing source of considerable income. I spoke with our new pastor, Fr. Mike, who agreed that it was worth a shot if we could find a chairperson. After I reluctantly volunteered to take the job again, Fr. Mike gave his blessing!



The last few years particularly have proved the value of the decision not to give up. Much of the credit for the leaps made in the last three years

goes to Chairman John Murphy, his dedicated team, and the support of the Parish staff, primarily of liaison, Chris Smith. John and his team perceived and took advantage of opportunities afforded, such as hosting the

dinner and the bar in the Parish Center as well as the advent of the auctions for Fr. Mike's dinners which turn a tidy profit. Fr. Peter was at one of the recent auctions for Fr. Mike's dinner and we discussed the live auction dinner results. I told him, "See



Father, if you could cook, we could have made \$10,000

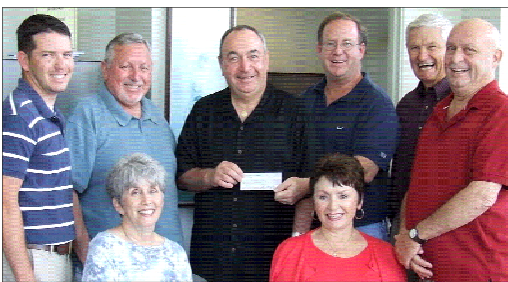
more every year from the beginning."

A Joint Effort

SKIP WILSON

When Kathy and I were first involved with the golf tournament, we had four small children and were preparing to wean ourselves away from regular golf activity due to time constraints. We were good golfers which made giving up the game even harder, but working on the committee allowed us to remain connected while slowing down our hunger for the game.

We started within the tournament committee and eventually were asked to take over the chair responsibilities. It was a joint effort, and teamwork in this event, like teamwork raising the kids, has been an excellent way to get the job



done. The great thing about this event has been the Parish growth in terms of financial contributions and how the event evolved to include all of the Parish, especially the non-golfers. We are very glad to have been part of it and will continue to support the effort in the future.

Our Tenth Anniversary Golf Classic

JOHN MURPHY

GOING ONCE...Going twice...Sold! The 1955 Ford truck sold for \$11,500 at this year's STM Golf Classic Live Auction—an exciting climax to our tenth anniversary event!

The 34 miniature golfers at Boomers! Vista, 104 golfers at Fallbrook Golf Club, and 340 people at the dinner and evening festivities this year joined with sponsors, friends, and other Parishioners to raise \$54,000. We couldn't have done it without your generous support! The efforts of volunteers, both day and night, and the dedication of the Golf Team made the Classic run like a Swiss clock. This tenth anniversary marks how it has grown into a celebration of our



community, Parish, and faith. We thank all who supported us during the first ten years, helping raise \$396,000 for St. Thomas More Parish!

Mark your calendar for the Eleventh Annual Golf Classic on Friday, April 30, 2010. You won't want to miss it! ♦

Bereavement Ministry — by Natasha Bukovchik-Jaksch

A walk through Ralph's supermarket can be a comforting experience for some of St. Thomas More's widows and widowers. When they run into a volunteer who helped them after their spouse's death, they are reminded of all the help and support they received from our very special bereavement ministry. As our Parish's Pastoral Associate, Sr. Maureen Brown leads a core team of seven and another 170 volunteers who help Parish families when a loved one dies. "Ultimately our goal is to be with God in heaven," she says, so it makes sense that we "take a significant amount of time in the Parish to help people celebrate that transition and to honor that person's life and faith."

When a family notifies the Parish that a family member has died, a member of the core team contacts them within a few hours to set up a meeting to learn about the person who has died and to work with the family to plan the Funeral Mass and reception. They discuss liturgy details and how the family wishes to participate in the Mass. Sr. Maureen notes that they try "to make the Mass a celebration that honors both the person's life and the faith that we share in common."

After the Funeral Mass and reception, the team follows up with the family. One unique Catholic tradition STM practices is Month's Mind, whereby the Parish remembers the deceased in a special prayer at Mass one month after the person has died. It helps the family realize that they are not

forgotten. Month's Mind is a very healing thing for them.

The Bereavement Core Team consists of Sr. Maureen, Joan Jones, Elaine Weiler, Charlene Belprez, Karen Carrothers, Diane Morgan, Joyce Frink, and Marcy Bernier. At their monthly meetings they review details of the ministry and read and discuss a piece of professional literature about the bereavement ministry. "I think it is important in any ministry that we stay focused through study and prayer," says Sr. Maureen.

The bereavement ministers review the diocesan guidelines annually. "We are both spokesperson for the Church and an advocate for the family," says Charlene Belprez. Two members are on call every week and one of those people rotates into the next week. This enables at least one minister to stay with the family through the planning and the Funeral Mass.

People are quick to recognize the phenomenal job the bereavement ministry is doing when they attend an STM Funeral Mass and reception. Time and again the team receives words of praise from members outside the Parish. It's common to hear remarks like: "I have never been to a funeral like this before," and "I can't believe you've done all of this."

Many features make this ministry so distinctive and memorable, including the personal worship aid at Mass and the number of Parishioners who participate in the reception.



Honoring our beloved dead

Whereas most churches have a simple Funeral Mass handout, staff member Lorraine Doering creates a personalized booklet that includes the person's photo, birth and death dates, songs, readings, prayers, and a message to the family. This booklet is valuable because it both is a memento and helps anyone who comes to our Church to feel welcome and able to participate fully in the liturgy.

At any given Funeral Mass and reception there are easily over 100 people involved. Core team members are assisted by callers asking people to bring food, people making the food, those serving at the Mass (ushers, greeters, altar servers, and Eucharistic ministers), singers in the Paschal Choir, a kitchen crew who sets up and serves, a clean-up crew, and gift basket makers.

The use of an Ossuary is distinctive for our Parish as well. The Ossuary is a beautiful wooden container in which the urn containing the remains of the body that has been cremated is placed. The use of the Ossuary provides a dignified, consistent presentation of the Remains and serves as an outward sign that whether rich or poor, God loves and receives us all equally.

The memory table and gift basket at a Funeral Mass are also significant. The memory table gives a personal touch and serves as a wonderful celebration of life. Items belonging to the deceased, along with photos chosen by the family, are displayed on a table



St. Thomas More's Bereavement Ministry Core Team

(Continued on page 5)

at the back of the Church. The family becomes “enlivened thinking about what they want on that memory table. This is so beautiful because it helps them recapture who the person was to them,” says Sr. Maureen. Marcy Bernier agrees. “One thing that always touches me is the photos the family brings,” she says. “It is so touching to realize that every person has a journey and a story.”

This table also holds a gift basket for the family that contains “easy to eat food items” to encourage the grieving family to remember to eat. These baskets are created by Parishioner Jennifer Mosca and her two girls, Gianna age



Memory tables are created with love

four and Abigail age two, and they are a wonderful way to teach children about Christian stewardship.

Another aspect of this ministry is that the Parish offers a reception after the Funeral Mass at the Church on the lower level. This allows many the chance to participate in the ministry by dropping off a salad or dessert. Not all families choose to have the reception at STM, but those who do often experience something more than just a helping hand. Not having to pour coffee and do dishes has its practical advantages: “What’s most important is that often it’s a time that the family reconnects with each other and healings take place. They can

relax and be together. They can really attend to each other and that is so important. It very often really changes the pattern of the family following the death of a loved one,” says Sr. Maureen.

The greatest challenge the team faces is helping the family slow down and take time to plan the Funeral Mass. If it has been a long illness, families are frequently exhausted and just want the Funeral Mass to be over. “What they don’t realize is the opportunity

that is lost if they don’t take the necessary preparation time. It’s not disrespectful to the person who died to wait a week or two. Wait for a long enough time for the family to be rested and to really decide what a celebration of life and faith they want to have for their loved one,” says Sr. Maureen. This is also important for the team which needs five to seven days of preparation time.

The team’s greatest gifts are the relief the family receives when they assist in such a great time of need. Elaine Weiler explains that families “are overwhelmed with their own sad situation of grief, and going beyond at that time seems incomprehensible for them.” Getting assistance with the Mass and reception is “an immense load off their shoulders. They’re so grateful and it’s just delightful for me to help,” adds Karen Carrothers. Joan Jones puts it in a similar way: “The looks on their faces when they’re all done, and when they say, ‘I couldn’t have gotten through this without you. What would we have done?’ I really love that part of it.”



Many hands produce lovely receptions

Both Karen Carrothers and Charlene Belprez agree that what they find very rewarding is serving the people they know and becoming friends with those they do not. “I’ve gotten to know so many more people in the Parish. It is very rewarding,” says Charlene. New to the team is Joyce Frink who herself was a recipient of the bereavement ministry’s help when her husband died last year. “The whole experience was so beautiful, so helpful, and so much appreciated. I felt this would be a good way to give back, and I’m glad I did,” says Joyce. Finally, Diane Morgan adds, “Our commitment is to assure that no member of our community grieves alone; to provide love, compassion and support to the families at the time of loss. It is a privilege and a gift to be able to serve in this ministry.”

When there is a death in the family, know that you can always call on this group of devoted and compassionate people who are waiting and ready to help you on your journey. ♦

Preplanning and You!

- † It’s the greatest gift of love you can leave your spouse/children. They will breathe a huge sigh of relief and truly thank you for it in their grief!
- † There’s no guess work—you get to choose your favorite songs and readings—it’s exactly how you want it.
- † It’s free!

Call the Bereavement Team at 760-758-4100.

The Tintinnabulation of the Bells — by Douglas Lynn

Keeping time, time, time,
In a sort of Runic rhyme,
To the tintinnabulation
that so musically wells
From the bells, bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells —
From the jingling
and the tinkling of the bells.

FROM "THE BELLS" BY EDGAR ALLAN POE

In late 2006, two St. Thomas More Parishioners asked to donate a set of English handbells to the Parish. Manufactured by hand at Schulmerich Bells, Inc., sixty one handbells arrived during Holy Week a few months later, and a Handbell Choir was recruited to play the four-octave set. The choir was formed in May and presented their first songs to the Parish in July 2007.

Originally, tuned sets of handbells were used by tower ringers in England to rehearse the complicated algorithms of tower bell change ringing in a softer manner so as not to inflict most of the learning process on the neighboring community. Early apocryphal stories hint at visits to pubs and the involvement of foamy beverages, but given the complexity of the patterns, this is unlikely.

It was a small step from handbells being used as practice instruments to the creation and use of tonally complete sets of handbells in social and religious performance settings. The first recorded instance of handbells in America, in 1847, has entrepreneur P.T. Barnum sponsoring a group of men from Lancashire, England, billing them as "The Swiss Bell Ringers" who toured the United States.

English handbells were brought to America for regular use in 1902 by Margaret Shurcliff, who was the first American woman to ring a complete peal on tower bells in England.

In the modern handbell choir, each ringer is assigned two or more handbells—two primary bells and a number of accidentals, the flats and sharps associated with the two primary bells. A typical handbell choir is comprised of three to five octaves of bells with eleven to thirteen ringers, with advanced choirs having up to seven octaves.

Only one ringer is responsible for the ringing of any given note—one can think of it as having twelve people playing a piano with each person solely responsible for three or four keys—so much of the choir's practice deals with the synchronization of the twelve ringers—seven copies of



Festival of Christmas 2009

music, twelve brains, twenty-four hands—so that every note is rung and every chord is complete.

Early music for English handbell choir evolved from hymnals and song sheets of the day, but in the 1970s and 1980s, a concerted effort to delve into the full range of expression of this bronze instrument began. No

(See HANDBELLS on page 7)



Early Days — Advent 2007

From left: Penny Johnson, Betty Nelson, Lorraine Doering, Pat McWilliams, Glory Hartdegen, Natalie Provinse, Alba Garcia, George Jones, Judy Mitchell, Harvey Raiman, Douglas Lynn (director), Craig Castle, and Rachel Hartdegen

Feet Don't Fail Me Now! — by Douglas Lynn



Mentioned in the June 5, 2009 issue of the *North County Times*:

VISTA—The Palomar Chapter of the American Guild of Organists held scholarship auditions recently at the United Methodist Church, 490 S. Melrose Drive... Receiving awards for continuing their studies as organists were Sally Fay...

Yes, St. Thomas More's Sally Fay.

In the two years since Sally added organ playing to her skill on the piano, she has become quite the organist. Her journey officially began with her 2007 attendance at the American Guild of Organists' Pipe

Organ Encounter (POE), a week-long intensive "organ camp" for pianists and organists of all skill levels.

She has been taking lessons from Chris Cook, organist and director of music at Rancho Bernardo Presbyterian Church during her lunch hours, and she continues to hone her craft each year at the POE. Hers are the low tones wafting through the ceiling in the Parish office on many a late afternoon.

As one of the Parish's many musical volunteers, Sally adds to the complexity and depth of this faith community's musical commitment as she shares with us her passion for this King of Instruments. ♦

Sally Fay playing the Drayton McLane Organ in Jones Concert Hall at Baylor University as part of the American Guild of Organists' Pipe Organ Encounter, June 5, 2009

➤ Handbells

(Continued from page 6)

longer satisfied with arranging preexisting music for the bells, composers began experimenting with the various sounds these percussion instruments could produce. Stopped sounds created by muffling the bell in the hand or on the table pad, swinging the bells to mimic tower bell sounds, and the use of mallets are only some of the dozens of techniques available to a modern handbell choir.

In 2008, their director suggested that the choir should participate in the American Guild of English Handbell Ringers' (AGEHR) conference in Riverside, California. Every two years, this region of the AGEHR brings hundreds of ringers in dozens of choirs together to ring under the direction of a master conductor and to learn from expert handbell ringers. There was understandable trepidation about hauling all our equipment (and

ourselves) for this three-day event, but the experience of learning assorted new techniques and ringing with all of these choirs was truly spectacular.

Last fall, two of our original ringers left us, and we welcomed Jen Frost and Mike Sterling to the tables.

In December 2008, our Handbell Choir visited North Coast Church in Vista to play for their holiday breakfast in support of their military families. Although our repertoire was limited at the time to a couple of Christmas songs for bells, some carols, and anything else we were able to prepare in our first solo foray into the world, the audience was truly appreciative of our efforts to spread Christmas cheer among the spouses and children of those deployed and in harm's way.

In February 2009, we were able to purchase a low F bell, the first of



Easter 2008

twelve bells (seven below and five above our current set) in what will become our fifth octave of handbells.

It has been two years since the Handbell Choir began its ministry at St. Thomas More, and we look forward with great excitement to the next two, and beyond. ♦

Our Tiniest Treasures

Catechist for Tiny Treasures

NICOLE NOIVO

Teaching the Faith Formation class for our three and four year olds has been very spiritually uplifting for me. Not only have I been able to strengthen my knowledge of God's word by becoming a catechist, but I also have been able to see how God's word enriches the lives of children.

When RE.A.CH (Religious Education for Adolescents and Children) classes began last September, some of the 19 children in our class were ready to share their experiences and prayers with their friends, while others preferred to sit and listen. Christmas time found more children taking the initiative to talk about Jesus and what we learned in the Gospel.

By May, all were comfortable sharing their knowledge of Jesus. They had learned virtues that Jesus taught which they could live out every day. With three and four year olds, there are many instances where "forgiving their friends and others" is easily demonstrated in class! The children also learned to demonstrate Jesus' love by being a friend, smiling at others, listening to their parents, and praying for those in need.

It was wonderful to see the children learn the importance of prayer. They learned to begin each prayer with the Sign of the Cross and to use prayer as a way to talk to God. The children

expressed their appreciation for the God's blessings by thanking God for the world, the beauty of nature, friends, and family (pets included)!

These children absorbed Jesus' word in a way that was inspirational and made it such a pleasure to come back and teach them each session.

As catechists, we try to create an environment where children can experience the joy of learning the Gospel with their community, with their friends, and on their terms. We incorporate various types of fun learning activities like songs, dramatization, and artwork that emphasize God's message to us for that week.

The children also learn from one another. As they become more comfortable with sharing what they understand from each lesson, they share it with their friends. It is a great way for them to learn.

Assistant for Tiny Treasures

GINGER HOWARD

For the past two years I have loved being an assistant teacher for this age group! It is amazing to see how much the children grow and change over the school year. Some of the children



we had will now go to the five year old class. They grow up so fast!

I will always remember one little girl and our discussions about her tomato plants and how they were doing versus my husband's tomato plants. Many children were awesome helpers and would always volunteer to help clean up at the end of class.

At the end of the year the children do a summary of what they learned about Jesus by drawing a picture; such as Jesus always loves us or He gave us the earth or our families. There were two children who decided to draw Star Wars. I suggested, "So Jesus gave us the stars?" And they responded with a "Yes!" Many kids like to draw pictures of their pets, mommies and daddies, and nature.

The one-hour class goes by so fast; it always feels like there is not enough time for everything, but we always do. I go home with a big smile on my face after helping out with the kids and look forward to continuing to assist. I hope to see many children return, along with many new faces. ♦

*Register now for next year's classes!
Kathleen Bell, 760-758-4100x110
kathleenb@stmoside.org*

Upcoming Events at St. Thomas More Parish

Missa Romantica



Sunday, November 8 • 2:00pm

The Adult Choir

with our friends from Napa, California
**First United Methodist Church and
St. John the Baptist Catholic Church**

In concert to benefit Interfaith Community Services
Bring a canned good or three!

Stewardship Appreciation

Sunday, November 22 • 3:00pm to 6:00pm

In joyful appreciation of all of our Christian Stewards, we celebrate and give thanks!

Upper level of the Parish Center

Details to be announced in September...

Save the date!