

St. Thomas More

Roman Catholic Church – Parish Newsletter

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THE TOWER

“Our Journey Into The Future . . . Together” Continues to Move Forward!

— by Rev. Michael Ratajczak



In 2005, St. Thomas More celebrated its 20th Anniversary of being a Community faithful to Jesus, continuing His mission and ministry for this time and this place.

From its humble beginning in 1985 with Fr. Bob White celebrating Masses in private homes and at Eternal Hills Mortuary, the parish moved forward by engaging an architect to assist with a design concept for the original property at the corner

In the beginning ... circa 1999

of Cannon Road and Mystra Drive, along with establishing a temporary home in a storefront of a strip mall on Shadowridge Drive in 1993.

With the arrival of Fr. Peter McGuine in 1995, the community had grown large enough that Christmas Masses had to be celebrated at the Rancho Buena Vista High School gym, and Easter Masses required setting up tents in the storefront parking lot. The original property was sold in order to acquire a larger piece of land at the corner of Melrose Drive and Cannon Road. The original master plan was adapted and expanded for the new property, and the present Parish Center was built.

Then, in 2003, I, your third Pastor, arrived, and we are now moving forward to build our Church, Bell Tower, Daily Chapel, Parish Administration Center, and eventually, our Parish Academy as we continue, as the Church of St. Thomas More, on **“Our Journey Into The Future... Together.”**

These are exciting and challenging times! We will break ground in early 2008 for the Church. In the meantime, we are busy with all the “necessary preliminaries” to be ready for the shovel to hit the dirt in 2008.

We have formed a *New Construction Committee* and an *Interior Design Committee*.



Let the earth bring forth vegetation ... June 2006

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“Our Journey Into The Future . . . Together” Continues to Move Forward!

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And God said, “Let there be bulldozers.”

Each committee is composed of 16-18 parishioners who have been invited and willingly come forward to share time, talent and treasure in moving us into the future.

In this edition of **The Tower**, we focus upon the *Interior Design Committee* whose task it is to make sure that the interior of our worship space is esthetically pleasing and in keeping with the present liturgical guidelines of the Diocese.

I am very grateful for Phil and Pat Goscienski, who agreed to co-chair this committee, and I am grateful for all the members of this committee who will ensure that our interior space is Catholic and gracious. Please take time to read, “Holy Ground Is

Moving and Shaking” by Phil and Pat, found on page 2 below!

The next issue of **The Tower** will highlight our *New Construction Committee*, co-chaired by Brian Leahey and Phil Hermsmeyer, and fill you in on the details of their work.

Just think: In 2010, as we celebrate our 25th Anniversary, Bishop Brom will be with us to consecrate our altar and to bless our Church, our permanent home! The day will be here “in the twinkling of an eye!”

Know that I am eternally grateful for each and every one of you who, in any way, is helping to bring this good work to fulfillment!



Into the future ... Site of construction in 2008

Holy Ground Is Moving and Shaking! — by Phil Goscienski, M.D.

The dreams of two decades are approaching reality as the St. Thomas More Interior Design Committee wrestles with the wide-ranging ideas put forth by the members of this faith community about what the interior of our ultimate worship space will look like. In two forums that were open to the entire parish, Pastor Michael Ratajczak drew out the desires, preferences and concerns of those who attended. It is now the task of this committee to pull together these preferences in a manner that will place the Eucharist in a beautiful, uplifting, spiritual setting.

The 18 members of our Interior Design Committee have coalesced into an enthusiastic team that embraces a wide range of talents and interests and has taken the first steps in the selection of an expert in liturgical design.

Following guidelines that have been firmly established by the Diocese of San Diego, our committee has been screening and interviewing individuals or firms that can help us choose the theme, the artwork and the liturgical symbolism that will surround us. The advisor will ensure that every component of the new structure is consistent with the teachings and the recommendations of the Church. All the furnishings must also conform to the mundane demands of the structure itself: lighting,

acoustics and structural integrity, among others.

In the course of visits to several recently-designed area churches, committee members have observed what works and what should have worked, but doesn't. We have noted minor errors and costly ones and have filed away inspiring ideas and innovative styles.

Our faith community embraces infants and the aged and those in between; all have needs for space, seating, safety, access and comfort. These too are considerations that the Interior Design Committee are keeping uppermost in our collective mind.

As the Interior Design Committee reaches significant milestones, we will share our progress with all parishioners. The first parish bulletin update has already been published. Digital data will soon appear on the parish

website, www.stmoside.org. There will be more open forums that all parishioners are encouraged to attend. We hope to be able to introduce our liturgical consultant to the congregation at the next forum. Finally, all members of this committee encourage every parishioner to inquire about the progress of the project and to ask questions. When the first *Gloria* rings out from our new sanctuary, it will not only be the voice of the celebrant, but it will be the voice of our entire community!



Pat & Phil Goscienski

When I was growing up, my sister and I had jobs at mealtime; hers was to set the table and mine was to clear the table and clean the kitchen. For most every dinner, my family gathered around our dining room table to eat. It didn't matter what we were to eat, a



Preparing to Venerate the Cross

knife, fork, and spoon had to be in the correct place, and if something exotic was on the menu, additional eating utensils appeared from drawers to be placed in their proper places.

It wasn't until many years later that I made the connection between the table at home and the table at church. It seems so obvious now, "a

place for everything and everything in its place." As we come to the table each week for Mass, we can forget that there are many people who minister to us by setting the table, by making sure there are enough of the proper vessels and linens, and by ensuring that everything is, in fact, in its place. These are the people who minister as servers, our Altar Servers.

I wanted to become an Altar Server because I wanted to help the church. This allows me to do my part to help people celebrate the Eucharist. My favorite part is carrying the cross at the beginning and end of Mass. —Conor Hamill

Servers have many jobs within the Mass: they carry the cross and candles in the procession, they act as the thurifer, incensing the congregation and celebrant, and they assist the priest celebrant or deacon with the Sacramentary (the big red book the celebrant reads from), the wine, and the water. They set and clear the table.



Ready for the Processional

When you are serving, you get to know the priest you are serving with better, and other people that help with the Mass; for example readers, Eucharistic ministers, and sacristans. All of them are great role models for me and for everyone that knows them. —Eleanor Rudolph



We pray...

In 1994, the Congregation for Divine Worship opened this ministry to all lay people—women, men, girls, and boys—reflecting a better understanding of the various roles and ministries of all people.

I had always wanted to be an Altar Server, and I was very excited when my sisters found out how you could sign up to become one. I thought it would be a great way to serve the church. —Randi Rudolph

For younger ministers, serving offers an involvement in liturgy not otherwise available, as this is a ministry open to those not yet fully initiated in the church.

The most enjoyable part of being an Altar Server is being part of the Mass. I feel very important assisting the priest and the deacon in this special ceremony. Even though it is sometimes very nerve-racking, Fr. Mike and Fr. Ken have always made me feel very comfortable, making it easy for me to enjoy my ministry. It is a wonderful way of serving our church and God.



—Matilda Rudolph Setting the Table of the Lord

Youth and adults, age 10 and above (fifth grade), may become Altar Servers by contacting Douglas Lynn, Coordinator of Liturgical Ministries, in the parish office. Each server is trained either individually or in a group by Katie Jocelyn. Generally youth serve at weekend Masses, and adult servers minister at daily Mass and at funeral and wedding liturgies.

It is commonly stated that the youth of our church are the future of our church. These youth who minister to the parish by serving at the table make a difference in the liturgy, mission, and ministry of the church. They are to be applauded, "Well done, good and faithful servants."

The Second Annual Benefit Breakfast for the ICWJ was held at Shelter Island, San Diego on December 7, 2005. Fr. Mike was one of four honorees attending this event. The ICWJ is composed of religious and business leaders that strive, in accordance with the Word of God, to work together as one community of faith for the betterment of all God's children.

In his acceptance speech, Fr. Mike stated that his motivation for doing this work stems from his own life experience, and his desire to reach out to the marginalized. He expressed the sincere belief that the quality of our society can be judged by how we treat the poorest of the poor. His speech, summarized below, reveals how strongly he feels about the importance of this ministerial work.

As I prepared for today, my thoughts centered on my father, Herman. I would like to tell you about him, because I know that he is my motivation for my involvement in the Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice, and I believe that Herman is a symbol for the people to whom we minister today.

Herman was born in 1902 in a small, self-contained farming village north of Detroit, Michigan. One of 13 children, he was allowed to attend school only until the second grade. He was needed, along with his brothers and sisters, to work the farm.

When he was 21, he left the family and the farm and went to Detroit. It was only then that he began to learn English, for in his first 21 years, everything in his world was spoken in Polish. He was born in the United States, but with only a second-grade education and with English picked up along the way on his own, he was always mistaken for a recent immigrant.

He came to Detroit to seek a better way of life and got a job at a car factory in Hamtramck, Michigan. He worked on the line at Dodge Main, a big factory owned by Chrysler Corporation.



Mayor Jerry Sanders and Fr. Mike Ratajczak

He worked there for 40 years. It was not a job he enjoyed, but a job he found necessary in order to support his wife and growing family that would ultimately number six children.

During those 40 years his salary became decent, and then there was also the creation of benefits—health insurance, a retirement plan, paid vacations, sick day benefits. This happened because of unions, because of people who cared about low wage earners, who cared about the poor people who were making the rich people richer.

I do not believe that it is a coincidence that along with the unionization of the factory in which Herman worked that we saw the betterment of our family.

My first three siblings attended public high schools, but none graduated. The fourth attended Catholic High School, and did not graduate, but his presence in a Catholic School marked the first time that our family had the ability to pay for tuition to a parochial school.

The fifth sibling went to a Catholic High School, and he was the first in our family to get a high school diploma. I too went to a Catholic High School, Catholic College, and then went on to the Seminary. I was the first in our family to get a college degree and then received two Master's Degrees.

My mother was able to get necessary heart surgery because we had health insurance, and it prolonged her life by 20 years. My father had several surgeries that helped him not just live, but thrive until 87. His 22 years of retirement were the first time, since he was about seven years old, that he was able to enjoy life on his own terms. He had a grand time!

All this would never have happened if there were not people and organizations like unions, like the ICWJ. I am neither a pessimist nor an optimist, but a realist and believe that the head honchos at Chrysler would never have woken up one day and said, "Let's spend money on the workers to help them to be fulfilled and happy, so that they will want to work for us."

It took people who were willing to be "pains in the butt" to make it happen and insist that the little person is an important piece of the puzzle to create and maintain a healthy community and society.

I am the son of one of the little guys in our society and am very grateful for the people who came before me who cared about my father, and, thus, cared about my family and cared about me.

The little guy and the little gal come in all colors and religions here in San Diego, but in them, I see my family. Many families may speak Spanish instead of Polish. They may pray to Our Lady of Guadalupe instead of Our Lady of Czestochowa and may eat burritos instead of pierogis, but we are the same.

What was needed then is still needed today—people who care about the little guy. That is what ICWJ is all about and why I am involved. What has been given to me, I want to pass on to others.

Michael Moore, the filmmaker, and a real "pain in the butt," is a practicing Catholic. But more than that he is a compassionate

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individual who cares about the little guy and gal. He was raised in St. John Parish in Davison, Michigan. He recently returned to Davison to receive an award. In his acceptance speech, he quoted the Gospel of the Day proclaimed during the Mass he attended at his home parish.

He referred to Matthew 25: 31-46: “Whatever you do for the least ones, (Jesus says), you do to me. Whatever you neglect to do to the least ones, (Jesus says again), you neglect to do to me.” Moore ended his speech reminding all that if we want to get into heaven, we need a permission slip from the poor!



Recently the logo “America’s Finest City” has been placed back on the city

website. Credit goes to our new mayor, Jerry Sanders. He should be saluted for reclaiming the vision and accepting the challenge to make it a reality once again.

We can turn that vision into reality if we properly set our priorities and help the least ones in our midst. If we do that, everything else will fall into place. ICWJ has many permission slips from the poor to get into heaven, and Rabbi Laurie Coskey (Executive Director of ICWJ) will be more than happy to issue you one! Thank you for recognizing and remembering the little guy and the little gal. They are the least ones who are the foundation on which is built America’s

La Posada de Guadalupe Shelter— by Sr. Maureen Brown, CSJ

In October 2005, Sr. Maureen Brown was one of three honorees at an evening function in support of the La Posada de Guadalupe Men’s Shelter in Carlsbad. This shelter was founded nearly 18 years ago, and Sr. Maureen has dedicated much of her energy over the last 16 years to making the shelter a success.

Sr. Maureen serves on staff at St. Thomas More as Pastoral Assistant and is involved in many ministries concerned with those in need. The story below explains why she has been so passionate about the La Posada shelter all this time!

They say, “You are what you eat.” I say “You are who you ‘hang’ with!” Almost 16 years ago, I was in ministry at St. Patrick Parish in Carlsbad, “hanging” with parishioners and a pastor who had a particular concern for the poor, especially the men who were working in our fields and had no place to live. Along with others, they formed a Commission called “The Caring Residents of Carlsbad” and, after a tremendous amount of work with city commissions, neighborhood coalitions and potential donors, found a site and convinced Catholic Charities to run a men’s shelter.

It was my great joy to be engaged with folks who took seriously the command of Jesus to feed the hungry and to shelter the homeless. It struck a deep chord in me, because the sisters of St. Joseph were known as women who met the needs of the people, especially the poor.

It was my privilege to work alongside many parishioners, to collect needed funds, household items and food to help the shelter

get up and running and then to help sustain it over the years. I was inspired by these generous people and by the residents who took great pride in developing the La Posada Gardens. What also kept me coming back to help was the men themselves who came in need from referrals to walk-ins, and then ended up on the staff or in other sustainable positions of work.

La Posada is a wonderful place for homeless men who are trying to improve their lives. Residents are required to have proper identification and must sign a contract agreeing to abide by the rules. They can stay at the shelter for 90 days during which time they are offered counseling and must look for work and set goals. Each man must contribute to the operation of the facility by performing assigned chores that



Sr. Maureen Brown, CSJ

are rotated daily. The day begins for the residents at 4:30 in the morning when the lights go on. They shower, and at 4:45 a.m. they come to breakfast. Morning chores, such as cleaning bathrooms, floors, buildings and helping with kitchen clean-up are performed. Then the men prepare to leave and look for work. The Carlsbad City Hiring Hall is within walking distance, and many of the men go there in search of work. Another resource used is Labor Finders, a private corporation that hires long and short term construction workers and other skilled labor. The residents may return to La Posada anytime after 3:00 p.m., usually spending the time before dinner doing chores, reading, watching TV, playing basketball, etc. After dinner, which is served at 5:30 p.m., the residents assigned to evening chores complete those tasks. There is free time until 9:00 p.m. when the lights go out.

La Posada has served 7,000 men since its opening. Today it is a vital part of the community as a working shelter located on Impala Drive in Carlsbad.



Honoring our friend and colleague

Just the other day, I had the occasion, thanks to the generosity of Bishop Brom through the offices of Chancellor Valdivia and the services of Deacon John Ellis, to deliver ten computers with monitors, printers and accoutrements, to the St. Bonaventure Mission School in Thoreau, New Mexico. In a fifteen hundred mile, thirty-six hour round trip (proving once more that I am no longer 18 years old and should quit acting like it), my co-driver, Tom Balestreri of the Knights of Columbus at St. Thomas More, and I got to visit the campus and meet a few of the people who work there.



Tom and Tom visit in support of the Navajo Nation

The Mission School is located about 35 miles east of Gallup, New Mexico on the big reservation of the Navajo Indians. The reservation is, by treaty with the United States, a separate nation about the size of West Virginia, and one of the poorest places within the borders of the United States. Many of the people still live in native huts with no running water or electricity. Most of the people are poor with a per capita income of less than \$1,000 per year. There are few jobs. Alcoholism is a major problem.

The donation of computers was met with enthusiasm and warm smiles. They will be used in the classrooms, pre-school through eighth grade—the high school having been closed for lack of funding—for the school’s 220 students, all of whom graduate

and go on to various high schools. The administration and faculty consist of the Mission Director, Bob O’Connell, four nuns of various orders, a brother and lay teachers who are paid \$13,000 per year, up substantially from the \$300 per month they used to receive. They have a visiting priest who comes in on Fridays to say Mass. On Sundays they must travel 35 miles to Mass. The mission and the school are funded entirely from donations. In addition to the school, the mission provides low cost housing for the poor when the funds are available to purchase a used trailer or two, assistance with

prescriptions, clothing from used clothing drives, food assistance, and the like.

Will the mission and its staff make a big difference in conditions on the Reservation? Probably not. The unique politics of the Reservation and its status as a sovereign nation make it unlikely that it will emerge from its cycle of poverty any time in the foreseeable future. Still they labor on, with short pay, but a twinkle in their eyes and a bright smile on their faces. You can see from their expressions that their labor is one of love, love of God and love of the individuals that are their and our neighbors. And as they labor on, they touch a few lives here and there, letting them feel that love and know that they are cared about. Please keep the mission and its workers in your thoughts and prayers.

Our Parish Mission — by George Jones

When we were planning the Parish Mission to be held last December, we never dreamed we would be able to have Simon Peter and Saint Joseph talk to us. But that’s what happened. Well, almost. Actually, Mark Price, who makes Bible-based theatrical presentations that make these key figures in history come alive and speak to us about their lives and experiences with Jesus, conducted the Mission. Presented on the upper level of the Parish Center, the Mission was held on Sunday, Monday and Tuesday evenings, and an effort was made to invite children to attend along with their parents. As a result, large crowds attended all three evenings.

In preparation for the Mission, Mark Price presented the homily at the three Masses on the preceding weekend. Then on Sunday evening, December 4, 2005, he appeared in costume as Simon Peter and followed his life from John the Baptist, to meeting Jesus, to carrying out the great commandment. He even told a little about the role Peter’s wife must have played in his life.

On Monday evening, December 5, 2005, Mark appeared as Saint Joseph, the father of Jesus and husband to Mary, a just man, a man of God, a man of dreams, a man who said yes to God; next to Mary, the one who knew Jesus best.

At the end of each of those presentations and also for the whole program on Tuesday evening, December 6, 2005, Mark appeared as himself. He directed a good deal of his remarks and questions to the children present and received heartwarming responses. On the third evening, Mark lead us on a theological reflection, “If Not You, Then Who?—Assuming Personal Responsibility”.



Mark Price portrays Simon Peter

Each evening’s program was followed by refreshments of cookies, juice and coffee. Judging by the large number of attendees who returned each night and by the enthusiastic response Mark Price received, it is safe to say the Parish Mission of 2005 was a great success. There was also great interest in the CDs of Mark’s portrayals and his book, which were for sale during the Mission. Please join us again as Mark portrays Doubting Thomas at St. Thomas More on April 17, 2007. It is sure to be another wonderful experience.

Take a trip down memory lane and try to remember your First Reconciliation. For many of us it is a memory back to the days of confession. Finally you got the chance to confess all of your sins and hoped you would be forgiven. Along with this new-found opportunity, you sat nervously outside the small confessional waiting your turn to go in and kneel behind the black screen. If you were lucky enough to make it this far, you prayed you could remember your list of sins and all the words to the Act of Contrition...a lot of pressure for a seven or eight year old.

I will tell you that times have changed. The First Reconciliation program at St. Thomas More is designed with both the parent and child in mind and offers leadership and support for parents in this home centered program. Each year at STM an average of 40 children receive this sacrament with the support of their families and the parish.

Both the First Reconciliation and First Eucharist programs require a two-year period of preparation with both sacraments being celebrated in the second year. For the sacrament of Reconciliation there are two parent meetings that are both faith and information filled. The classes, that are facilitated by Kathleen Bell and Fr. Mike Ratajczak, give parents an opportunity to listen, reflect and share their own experiences with the sacrament in an open and communal setting. The first meeting shares with the parents some of the history of confession throughout time beginning with the early Hebrews taking us through the centuries of the church into today's times. The parents also have an opportunity for self-reflection being asked to think back to their own First Reconciliation, what their memories were and why it is important to them to have their own child receive this sacrament. The second meeting, that is facilitated by Fr. Mike, gives us some thoughts on what sin truly is and where it comes from. A wonderful analogy that is given is that of an iceberg where only the tip is visible. We are challenged to think beyond our laundry list of sins to the deeper reality that lies at the base of our behaviors. With this, one is brought to the thought of, "What could my 7 or 8 year old have done that is so sinful?" Fr. Mike puts it into perspective for us and says that, "Hearing the confessions of children is like being pelted with popcorn."

The children and parents' preparation focuses their attention first on the fact that God loves them and their family and wants them to be happy, next on what sin is and finally the focus turns to the celebration of Reconciliation and how wonderful a feeling it is to deepen our friendship with our Lord. The children's first celebration of this sacrament is with the rest of the parish during the Advent Parish Reconciliation Service. This is a very open and forgiving environment. It truly is a celebration.

Whether you're 8 or 80, and even though your sins may be a little heavier than



**First steps toward
First Communion**

popcorn, take the time to make peace with God by telling God you're sorry and asking for help to do better. You'll be happy you did.

The celebration of one's First Holy Communion usually brings back memories of a lovely new white dress and gloves or a new suit and tie and family and friends gathering to attend Mass together. It truly is a joyous time and a great cause for celebration! Our program, *Preparing Your Child for First Eucharist*, is a continuation of the partnership between the church and the home that began when preparing for his/her First Reconciliation.

There are also required parent meetings that help enrich the families in their faith so they may in turn share with their child. The children and their parents use a home workbook that helps guide them in their preparation for this sacrament. "Being a Catholic Christian is great!" it reads, "It means belonging to Jesus...and trying to live as he did." "Love one another as I have loved you." As a parent, it was truly a privilege to help guide my son through this very important step in his Catholic life. What better way do parents have to help their child learn about the Eucharist than to show them that it is a family experience...for their own family and their church family?

Kathleen Bell, who is with these children from the beginning, has this to say about their journey, "To see the growth in faith and maturity during these two years of sacramental journey truly strengthens my faith. I see this happening in parents and parishioners as well. The children call us to renew our appreciation and deepen our belief in Jesus' presence in forgiveness and Eucharist."

After months of preparation, the children and their parents gather for a 'rehearsal' where each child is assigned a special ministry for the Mass. This includes everything from proclaiming the first and second readings to bringing up the gifts to the Altar.

Finally the special day comes and there is great excitement in the house. A final bit of practice and then the Mass begins. The children are filled with excitement and are a little nervous but rise to the occasion by prayerfully participating in their special Mass.

As the children walk up to Fr. Mike for their First Eucharist in both forms of the Body and Blood of Christ, it is not an ending to their two year preparation, but a beginning to their life long relationship with the Eucharist. Happy are those who are called to His Supper!

For information on this program or any of the Sacramental Preparation Programs at St. Thomas More, please contact Kathleen Bell 758-4100 ext. 110 or kathleenb@stmoside.org.



June 16 marked the 7th Annual St. Thomas More Golf Classic. The response of our parish, guests and all of our volunteers was terrific and everyone had a most enjoyable time!



Blessing of the golf carts with a putter.

Thanks to the very positive response of all those involved, the STM Golf Classic Committee was able to present the parish with a check for \$32,000!

Many thanks to all who supported this event, including 82 golfers and over 325 parishioners and guests who joined us for the evening dinner/dance and auctions. We extend special thanks and recognition to our Oceanside Councilmember, Jack Feller, who played golf and also joined us for the evening festivities! We are also most grateful to Steve Laaperi, the newly appointed Director of the Office of Schools for the Diocese of San Diego,



2006 Golf Classic Committee thanks you!

who was our guest auctioneer for the evening. Oh, what a night!

John Murphy steps up to Chair the 2007 Golf Classic and Dinner/Dance. For more information, call him at 760-945-9935 or email John at murphy8801@cox.net.

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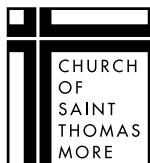
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Save the date of June 22, 2007 for our 8th Annual St. Thomas More Golf Classic & Dinner/Dance! Details to follow!

CHURCH OF ST. THOMAS MORE—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.



Parish Mission Statement:
 "To worship God,
 teach and live the Gospel of Jesus Christ
 and serve His people in word and deed."

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