

# St. Thomas More

Roman Catholic Church – Parish Newsletter

## IN THIS ISSUE

Our Permanent Church — Another Step Closer	1
Our More's Workers	4
More's Workers' Most Current Project	5
Easter Food Blessing	6
Holy Thursday Traditions	7
Oh! What a Night & Day!	8

# THE TOWER

## Our Permanent Church — Another Step Closer!

— Rev. Michael Ratajczak

**W**e continue to make steady progress and, step by step, we are getting closer to seeing our dreams becoming reality in regard to the building of our permanent Church!

For some the progress may seem slow, but this is a major undertaking, and many pieces of the puzzle must come together before “spade hits the dirt.”

Where are we on this journey? What is the progress that we have made and continue to make?

We have selected an Architect and a Liturgical Consultant for the Church's design and build-out!

The *New Construction Committee (NCC)* is chaired by Brian Leahey and presently consists of members: Rev. Michael Ratajczak, Ron Briseno, Todd Cadieux, Doug Crimaldi, Tom Dean, Pat Goscienski, Phil Goscienski, George Gritt, Phil Hermesmeyer, Mike Jocelyn, Wil Pinaroc, Randy Reznicek, Charles Salter, Jim Treat, Catherine Wilson, Bob Wojcik, and Michael Yambrach.

The *NCC* has met several times and is preparing itself for the intense work it will do in the next few years as the Construction Documents are drawn up and, then, as the Church is built.

The first task of the *NCC* was to create an *Architect Interview Committee (AIC)*, which is a sub-committee of the *NCC*.

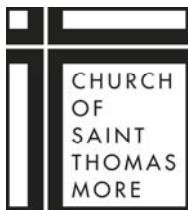
The purpose of this committee was to interview architectural firms and to select an Architect.

The *AIC* consists of members: Rev. Michael Ratajczak, Doug Crimaldi, Pat Goscienski, Phil Goscienski, George Gritt, Brian Leahey, Catherine Wilson, and Michael Yambrach.



Flag pole in front of Parish Center marks  
a corner of our new church

(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.



The Tower is published semi-annually by the **Church of St. Thomas More**  
1450 S. Melrose Drive  
Oceanside, CA 92056  
(760) 758-4100  
(760) 758-4165 fax  
[www.stmoside.org](http://www.stmoside.org)  
[parishoffice@stmoside.org](mailto:parishoffice@stmoside.org)



For further information, please contact:  
**Gloria Larson**  
Publicity/Public Relations Chair  
(760) 295-7834  
[gloria\\_larson@cox.net](mailto:gloria_larson@cox.net)



### Parish Mission Statement

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

## Our Permanent Church — Another Step Closer! — continued

(Continued from page 1)



Various signs mark key features of future church

The *AIC* interviewed four architectural firms from February through April of 2008. The initial interview with each firm was very detailed, each interview lasting two to three hours in length.

Following the initial interviews, there were follow-up questions to the firms that were answered by e-mail. The *AIC* also met several times to assess the interviews and discuss the firms and their ability to carry out the project.

This committee was blessed with four excellent firms from which to choose, and the choice was not easy.

After much thought and consideration, *Renzo Zecchetto Architects* of Santa Monica, California was selected to carry out the creation of our construction documents. This firm created our original master plan, designed our present Parish Center, and modified our master plan for the Conformance Review of our Conditional Use Permit (CUP), which was approved in February 2007.

In *Renzo Zecchetto Architects*, we have an old friend who knows us, is truly “in synch” with our past, and will

keep us “in synch” as we move into the future. Once again retaining *Renzo Zecchetto Architects* will assure us of continuity in theme and design of our Parish Campus.

The interview process, although lengthy, detailed, and intense, and the knowledgeable input of the members of the *AIC* provided me with the needed information and background to confidently make the selection of *Renzo Zecchetto Architects*.

The Delivery Model will be “Design/Assist.” The contractor who will assist in the creation of the Construction Documents has not yet been selected.

The *AIC*, from May to July 2008, has been meeting with *Renzo Zecchetto Architects* in helping to create a much more detailed design of the Church which will be necessary before the construction documents are created.

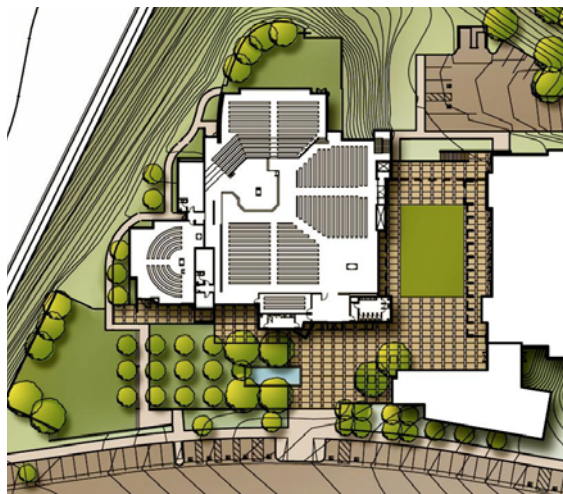
The *Interior Design Team (IDT)* is chaired by Phil and Pat Goscienski. The team consists of members: Rev. Michael Ratajczak, Charlene Buhler, Mary Castle, Diana Diaz, Mario Diaz, Lorraine Doering, Ann Eriksson, Douglas Lynn, Sondra Parks, Kathy Quinn and Chris Smith.

The *IDT* has been meeting for the last several years and has visited more than 12 recently built churches in preparation for its work.

The *IDT* has been, and is, preparing itself by reading all the necessary Church documents that relate to the proper liturgical environment that is to be created within the Church for a

worthy celebration of the Eucharist and all the Sacraments, in accord with present Diocese-approved pastoral practice.

The *IDT* also was charged with interviewing and selecting a Liturgical Consultant that would assist the *IDT* in creating the necessary interior environment within the Church.



Preliminary footprint of our new Church

Over a period of time, four liturgical consultants were interviewed. Each of the interviews was lengthy and detailed, lasting two to three hours.

There was much discussion that took place at a number of meetings in regard to the liturgical consultants who were interviewed.

Once again, all of this valuable input from the *IDT* allowed me to confidently make the selection of *Robert Habiger of Dekker/Perich/Sabatini* in Albuquerque, New Mexico as our Liturgical Consultant.

The *IDT* continues to meet in consultation with *Robert Habiger*. A day-long workshop was held in June, as the *IDT* with the direction of *Robert Habiger*, continues to move forward to create the schematic design of the liturgical space and its furniture.

With the selection of *Renzo Zecchetto Architects* and *Robert Habiger of Dekker/Perich/Sabatini*, we confidently have taken another step in turning our dreams into reality. Since their selections, in the last few months, we continue to move forward step by step!

My heartfelt gratitude is extended to all the members of the *New Construction Committee* and the *Interior Design Team*. Much has already been done, and more awaits us.

Regarding the financial support of this endeavor, it must be said that the entire Parish has been extremely supportive of the Capital Campaign. It is because of this support that we are where we are. Please know that I am very grateful for this support!

The Finance Council continues to oversee our Operational Budget which must be “healthy” in order for us to move forward and add a new building to our Parish Campus. We cannot build more if we cannot properly maintain what we presently have. The offertory income must remain steady and must, realistically, increase.

The Capital Campaign income also must continue to be strong. We need to have 1/3 of the total amount of our project on deposit with the Diocese in order to secure our Diocesan loan. We are close, but not yet at that projected amount.

We also need to be mindful that we are still paying down our present debt for the building which we now occupy. This payment is \$11,000 per month. Our last payment will be in December 2011.



Brian Leahey,  
New Construction



Pat & Phil Goscinski,  
Interior Design Team

In light of our present economy, all of this is very challenging indeed! I cannot emphasize strongly enough that we are operating under a “fund line” not a “time line.” We move forward as we can in light of the funds we have on hand. There is no artificial “time line,” just a realistic “fund line.”

The people of St. Thomas More have always risen to the occasion, and I know that you will continue to do so. We are making steady progress.

You are encouraged to continue your patterns of giving, and, if you are able to do so, to increase your giving, to help “cover” those households who may need to give less because of our present economic conditions.

Our dreams are becoming a reality!

This last Christmas, Larry and Betty Dorsa reminded me that we already have a

Church, and that the buildings will come in time. That thought is significant!

We always need to keep focused that the Church, ultimately, is a gathering of people in faith not a building. We are the living stones of which the Church is built. We already have a consecrated Temple that is built with the members of this Parish, the living stones.

Buildings can help us in continuing the mission and ministry of Jesus for this time and place. However, they are a means to an end, not an end in themselves.

Let us be mindful that St. Thomas More is built of the living stones that are this community’s members.

We already have a Church! The buildings will come!

For all that has been, Thank You! For all that will be, Yes! ♦



St. Thomas More at South Melrose Drive and Cannon Road



## Our More's Workers — by Nathan McWeeney

After five of our St. Thomas More Parishioners returned from laboring in New Orleans in 2007 and 2008, they decided to keep their skills honed and continue the work here in North County. These five people, having just spent two weeks gutting and repairing homes, saw that their surrounding community could benefit from a few helping hands.



Skilled crew gets ready to tackle cabinets

The crew joined with Interfaith Community Services (ICS), a well established non-profit organization in Escondido. With ICS providing a venue for the workers' services, the crew could begin their first project, the Indian Summer House. This was a dilapidated old mansion in San Marcos, which had been purchased with the aim to house rehabilitating mentally ill people.

The crew's work was cut out for them. Their many restoration tasks included everything from painting and patching to re-hanging doors and drywall. The whole project lasted three weeks and took about 250 man/woman hours. When they finished, the condemned property had become a livable home.

Dick Belprez, a key project organizer says the ministry is "still in its infancy stage." However, this infant ministry, which has grown to over 40 workers, has completed eight restoration projects since October 2007. Several of these projects became homes for battered women, seniors, disabled veterans, and the mentally ill.

When I sat down to interview Mr. Belprez, he filled me in on the More's Workers' current project which was repairing an ICS apartment complex in Escondido. As I hustled to write down all the details about the project, I realized it would be best for me to join them at the job site.



More's Workers busy unloading supplies for day of work

The next morning I arrived at the apartment wearing old work jeans and a t-shirt. I shook hands with Carolyn Orscheln, one of the project leaders. She walked from room to room writing the day's tasks on a legal tablet. I followed Carolyn and took notes on what we needed to do: put new grout in the tile, clean the bathroom vanity, replace floor boards, fix water damage, and the list continued.

Because I didn't know how to do a lot of these jobs, Carolyn introduced me to Glen Smith. Glen showed me how to remove old molding without cracking and ruining the panels. He hummed a tune while we both pulled off the old wood strips. As I tugged away my third plank of molding, I realized how much I was enjoying the work. After we removed each piece, we swept up the small room and broke open a bucket of wall putty to patch the walls.



Hard work and pride

While pushing a glob of white putty into a dent above the window, I stopped to think: this room will become a comfortable place for a tired mother, or maybe a Vietnam veteran whose income has dried up. It felt good to know that the bare apartment with no carpeting was becoming a cozy home. And I'm sure the rest of the More's Workers felt the same.

Working with the group was refreshing. Everyone took joy in their work. Their attitude differed from what I've seen in my past work environments. At the restaurant where I wait tables, for example, it's common to hear a server complain about a lousy tip or a picky customer. I've done it myself. But our More's Workers took straight to their projects and nobody complained about spending their entire Friday working for no money at all. They worked diligently, told jokes, smiled and sometimes someone even would hum a tune. ♦



Paint, paint, paint!

## July 2008 — More's Workers' Most Current Project — by Dick Belprez

In July 2008, Interfaith Community Services (ICS) prepared ten apartments for renovation and painting and asked More's Workers to schedule a "paint party" for Saturday, July 26. ICS had a commitment to have all ten apartments ready for occupancy on August 1. This project was larger than what the normal contingent of More's Workers could handle because each apartment needs about six workers. We got the word out and then the volunteers came out! Over 40 volunteers from St. Thomas More, including the Knights of Columbus, joined with ICS clients to meet the goal.

The work was straightforward: one color of semi-gloss paint on the ceiling, walls, and trim. After patching small holes and doing some other prep work we broke out the paint brushes and rollers and went after it. By the end of the afternoon on Saturday, we had completed all the major painting tasks. A small crew returned on Monday to finish some caulking, touch-up painting and window washing. Four of the apartments, scheduled to be occupied by homeless seniors, were ready for a Wednesday house blessing ceremony.

Our painting volunteers were joined by several ICS resident clients. During lunch some of these mothers introduced their children and shared the stories of how they came to be in the ICS system. It was very moving to hear their tragic tales of homelessness, alcoholism, and drug abuse. Their accomplishments, including successful rehab programs and college attendance, made us all proud. Our pride, however, was insignificant compared to the pride these women had in themselves for turning their lives around. Most of them had never painted before but wanted to "give back" to ICS for helping them start over.



And still more painting!

At the end of the day everybody was tired and stained with paint, yet we were all very satisfied at being able to reach out to our local community and move ICS forward in their ministry to the needy.

Over the past year More's Workers have worked on about eight projects at ICS performing renovation and painting tasks. ICS is acquiring more apartments as funds allow and the apartments they currently own require periodic maintenance as they are vacated.

Some of our initial projects included:

- † Major renovation and painting of a seven-bedroom house in San Marcos to be used for independent living by mentally ill clients. (October 2007)
- † Dismantling kitchen cabinets in a builder's design center. The salvaged cabinets and furnishings were used later in one of the ICS apartment renovations. (December 2007)
- † Plaster repair and painting in two apartments. (April 2008)
- † Install a full set of kitchen cabinets including countertops, paint and install baseboards, and patch and paint wall areas. (May 2008)
- † Painting walls, ceilings, closets, and bathrooms in one apartment. (May 2008)

As Nathan pointed out in his article on More's Workers, we started out as a splinter group (pun intended) of those who traveled to New Orleans in 2007 and 2008. We are blessed to now have 40+ dedicated workers assisting us! ♦

*For information or to volunteer, please contact:  
Dick Belprez at 760-295-1431 or [rbelp@cox.net](mailto:rbelp@cox.net)*



July 26, 2008 — More's Workers are ready to make things happen in Escondido



## Easter Food Blessing — by Natasha Bukovchik-Jaksch

Imagine it is Holy Saturday morning and you are in a Polish neighborhood. You see people streaming into the local Catholic Church, many holding delightfully adorned wicker baskets filled with scrumptious bits of food covered by a white, crisp linen cloth. You settle down at the end of a pew and wait for the priest while you take in the delicious smells of garlic, kielbasa, and freshly baked bread. Father arrives, says a few prayers and then proceeds down the aisle and individually blesses each basket with holy water. As he draws near, the linen cloths are lifted to expose ham, kielbasa, colored hard boiled eggs, salt, freshly grated beet horseradish, butter shaped into lambs and crosses, and a small loaf of pumpnickel bread. The priest is on his third ceremony of blessings today and has a few more to do. This is a real scene from Fr. Mike's childhood and continues to be a practiced tradition in Poland and Polish communities in America and the United Kingdom every year.

*Swieconka* is the Polish word for the blessing of the Easter food on Holy Saturday. Traditionally the food is brought to the church in a basket which is decorated with a colorful ribbon and sprigs of boxwood, with a white lace or linen cover over the top and blessed by the parish priest on Holy Saturday morning. Observing the creativity of other parishioners is one of the special joys of the event.



Fr. Mike blessing food prepared for Easter Sunday

Customs vary from village to village and family to family. As with any deeply rooted tradition, the specific practices of *Swieconka* have evolved with each passing generation. Certain Polish families in America bring in large laundry baskets full of food instead of small hand baskets.

The blessing addresses the various contents of the baskets which fall into three categories: 1) Easter bread and cakes, particularly a yeasty cake called *babka*; 2) meat products like ham, veal, suckling pig, sausage, and bacon; 3) dairy products such as butter, cheese and eggs (decorated and without shells). Other items are salt and pepper, horseradish with grated red beets, pig's fat, and cheese. Each of the foods has a deep and symbolic meaning. For example, horseradish with grated red beets symbolizes the Passion of Christ, still in our minds but sweetened with sugar because of the Resurrection. Pig's fat signifies the overabundance of God's mercy and generosity. The priest sprinkles each basket with holy water. More traditional churches use a straw brush for sprinkling.

Fr. Mike introduced this tradition to St. Thomas More three years ago with hopes of bringing Catholic culture to life in the home. "We've lost a lot of those kinds of very simple traditions. We need to bring more of them back," says Fr. Mike. "It was always very meaningful for me

growing up. It was a special moment in church seeing all those people with the baskets and the smells, in anticipation of the next day." The blessing at STM takes place downstairs and you are sure to get a generous portion of holy water on yourself and your basket. Someday Fr. Mike hopes to add music to the festive occasion and move the service to the upper level to accommodate a large crowd.

When asking those at this year's Easter food blessing why they attended, the answers varied. Eric Williams and his family came because "as Fr. Mike says, 'It's a connection between home and church' that we can do together as a family. It's a special experience and a nice way to anticipate Easter."



Some made a special trip for this food blessing

Not everyone who attends the blessing at STM are members. Chris, a Polish man originally from the same area of Poland as Fr. Mike's family, drove up from San Diego to have his food blessed. His basket was lined with a white lace cloth, fresh garden greenery and small flowers. His decorated eggs were gorgeous next to the small bowls of salt and pepper. The delightful smell of his fresh smoked sausages made one hungry for breakfast again. Chris believes the Easter food blessing "is a way to give a more sanctified meaning to your family breakfast on Easter. You don't just eat food—you eat food that has been blessed and prayed over. People would appreciate it because it will taste better," he joked.



A very memorable experience for children

(Continued on page 7)

## Holy Thursday Traditions at St. Thomas More — by Patricia Goeltz

**H**oly Thursday begins the Triduum, the three days which precede the most important celebration of the liturgical year, Easter. The Holy Thursday liturgy is packed with powerful symbolism—the celebrant washes the feet of 12 Parishioners in imitation of Jesus' washing the feet of the 12 apostles, signifying that all followers of Christ must be servants. Having his/her feet washed by the celebrant during this liturgy is an emotional experience for those selected.

Nicole Rhoades who had her feet washed on Holy Thursday said, "It is truly a wonderful experience. It is so awesome to take part in this special tradition of the church. It was very emotional and I loved it. I believe everyone should get a chance to experience it."

Holy Thursday and Good Friday constitute one, continuous liturgy. Therefore, the celebrant processes with the Eucharist to an altar of repose. Many Parishioners maintain a vigil with their Lord in the chapel. Parishioner Judy Smith comments

that she remained in the chapel with "Jesus at His time of need. I share with Him, though I know He already knows how His love and sacrifice have changed my life. I love Him and know that He is always there for me, so I am there for Him."

Other Parishioners participate in a unique Parish tradition—Holy Thursday dinners. This year 10 families hosted 103 adults and 29 children in their homes. Each host family is provided with blessed bread and wine by the Parish. Betty Nelson, one of this year's hostesses, stated, "We all drank the wine and ate the bread—just like Jesus did at the Last Supper."

The host family supplies the main course for the meal, many electing to put dinner in the oven on time-bake so that it will be ready when they and their guests arrive at their home. Guests bring side dishes, salads, and desserts. As the guests are assigned to each host family randomly, this is a wonderful opportunity to meet new people, many whom you might have seen at Mass during the year, but did not have a chance to meet. Many friendships have begun at a Holy Thursday dinner. As Kathy Quinn noted, "There is seldom time to have a good conversation with people we meet at church for worship and social functions. At this dinner we had time to share stories and get to know one another



Holy Thursday liturgy marks the start of the Triduum

in a more meaningful way than is possible at Church."

This year's Holy Thursday Gospel concluded with Christ's words: "I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do." (*John 13:15*) What better way for followers of Christ to imitate Christ than by praying with Him in the chapel or by sharing our food, thoughts, and good wishes with fellow Parishioners.

Special thanks go to Lisa Reaves for handling all the details to coordinate the dinners each year! We look forward to seeing you at the Holy Thursday celebrations next year! ♦



Foot washing is an integral part of this liturgy



12 Parishioners have their feet washed

### Easter Food Blessing — (Continued from page 6)

Fr. Mike believes, "We should look into all the various traditional cultures, and pick out things that would be applicable to the whole church year that would be of interest for families to do. It brings faith alive." If you have any suggestions of traditions you think our Parish family would enjoy and that connect church and home, please speak to Fr. Mike. He warmly invites you and your family to join in the spiritually rich custom of the Easter food basket blessing next Holy Saturday. If you need a very good reason to go next year, it would be because it really **does** make the food taste better. ♦



## Oh! What a Night (and Day)! — by John Murphy



Congratulations are in order for all who participated in the 2008 St. Thomas More Golf Classic. The dinner was a very successful end to a very enjoyable day. After the miniature golf at BOOMERS! and the championship golf at Meadow Lake Golf Club, over 350 Parishioners and friends of St. Thomas More converged on the upper level for an evening of fun, food, and fellowship with a purpose.

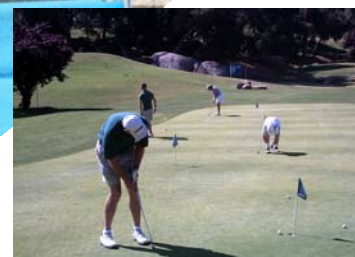
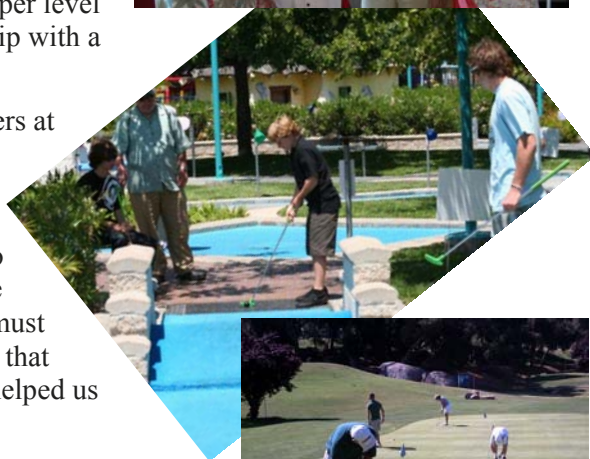


Thanks are due to the wonderful volunteers at both courses and those at the dinner who helped make the event flow as smooth as silk. I'd also like to thank the fantastic team on the golf committee who used their God-given talents and gave selflessly of their time. Most of all I must say thanks to everyone who joined us that night, who along with our sponsors, helped us to raise \$51,000 for our Parish.



We have changed our date for next year in the hopes of avoiding the heat we have experienced the last two years. Please mark your calendars for Friday, May 1, 2009, as we celebrate the tenth anniversary of this wonderful event!

We'll see you there! ♦



To see more photos, go to [www.stmoside.org](http://www.stmoside.org) and click on Event Pictures.