

**ST. THOMAS MORE PARISH  
PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
Monday, November 7, 2005**

**Council Members in Attendance:** Fr. Bill Wagner, Duane Bradley, Doug Young, Kathy Hornschemeier, Ralph Bedel, and Janet Tate.

**Council Members Absent:** Vic Ivers, Michelle Stultz, Jim Conrady, John Duncan.

**Others in Attendance:** Mike Gennett.

The St. Thomas More Parish Council meeting was called to order by Vice-President Kathy Hornschemeier at 7:06 PM EST. Fr. Bill Wagner opened the meeting with a prayer.

**Minutes of the Previous Meeting:** The last meeting was held on Monday, October 17th. Kathy asked if there were any questions regarding the minutes. Mike Gennett stated that Vic Ivers requested one change. He asked that the sentence on page 3, "Vic said he saw no reason why they *could work* out a date with the parish and do a coffee and donuts in the future" be changed to "*could not work*". Mike reported no one else had responded regarding any concerns to the minutes.

Duane Bradley made a motion that the correction be made to the minutes. Kathy Hornschemeier seconded the motion. Council voted 5 to 0 to accept the change.

Kathy then made a motion that the minutes be accepted as written with the change. Duane Bradley made the motion and Ralph Bedel seconded it. The minutes were approved 5 to 0.

**Business Manager Report:** Mike Gennett gave the report.

**November 19-20** – During this weekend we will release the parish photo directory and have available for pick up the 2006 collection envelopes. The parish photo directory was on the press on November 2 and is scheduled to be shipped November 9. Everyone who had their picture taken will be asked to sign a log for their complementary book and free photo if they did not receive it with an order. Additional directory copies will be available for sale at \$10 each. Neighboring parishes charged \$10 and when you compare our book to theirs, ours clearly is a quality product. After that weekend, the book and photos may be picked up at the Parish Office during business hours.

The Sunday 2006 boxed envelope sets and church calendars will also be available for pickup. We found out last week that the printer had accidentally printed another church's address file on our envelopes. The printer worked over the weekend to redo our envelopes and they are scheduled to be shipped Monday or Tuesday of this week. We would have mailed them to all the homes at the printer's expense if this had not been corrected.

There will be a number of other things going on that weekend. Wine and cheese will be served after the 4:30 Mass and the 8<sup>th</sup> grade will be serving their Washington trip fundraiser breakfast on Sunday after all the Masses. The Youth Ministry will be selling their Zone Books and the Elizabeth Ministry will have a Bengals blanket raffle. Butter braid orders will also be available for pick up.

Kathy Hornschmeier said she would still like to come and take some of the old parish photos and burn them onto a cd for playing on the video system in the Parish Hall for this weekend.

**Bingo** – Bingo got off to a roaring start in September. However, in the past five weeks, the Bingo profits have been very low. This was being pointed out at this time that this could be an issue 6 months or more down the road. One of the problems for example, last week, Bingo was short a number of volunteers. When this happens you don't have enough people to sell the pull tabs to offset the Bingo losses. Fr. Bill stated he wanted to give this a run for a year to see how it does.

**Financial** – Mike stated the same financial issues continue as stated last month. We continue to receive pressure from the diocese for more money on our debt and interest; we are facing the unknown factor about the energy costs this winter, and the drop in the Sunday collections. Mike said Fr. Bill would talk about the issues with the diocese and the energy costs. Mike then passed out a recap regarding our Sunday collections. The report stated:

For the first 19 Sundays of this fiscal year:

- We are down 8.9% to plan and 6.9% to last year.
- The number of envelopes returned is averaging 417 or is down 8.8%. The number of households in our active household file returning an envelope is down to 28.4% from 31.2% last year.
- The average donation per envelope has increased by 2.1% to \$30.11.
- The number participating in the ach/credit card contribution program has increased by 21.7%. 11.3% of our total dollars collected is now generated electronically. 14.9% of the households who contribute are giving electronically. This is a positive trend.

The bottom line is we are losing the “casual” Catholic. The loose money and checks in the collection is down considerably as well.

Fr. Bill stated that when he was at the Priest Convocation a number of Pastors’ reported their collections were down. It is a trend that is being experienced everywhere.

A conversation began regarding Mass attendance. Duane Bradley stated he felt overall Mass attendance was down. Fr. Bill stated he saw Mothers dropping their kids off on All Saints and not coming to Mass at 8:30 AM. All Saints attendance at 11:30 AM and 7:30 PM was not good either. He asked if the 11:30 Mass should be moved to 12:00 or 12:15? Mike Gennett stated he went to St. Veronica at 7:30 AM and the church was half full of adults and he saw a number of our parishioners. Fr. Bill stated he felt we do not have an early Mass for our working parishioners. He might

consider a 7 AM Mass without Music. Duane Bradley and Janet Tate both said the bottom line was people just don't care anymore and coming to Mass is not a priority. Changing any Mass times around probably would do very little to help.

**Pastor's Report** – Fr. Bill gave his report.

We need to begin to work with Holy Trinity of Batavia to put together a plan to share a Pastor some day. We need to appoint a representative to join Fr. Bill in meeting with them. We need to plan to someday operate the two parishes with one priest. No doubt both parishes will have to drop a Sunday Mass. A plan needs to be submitted to diocese by next summer. The Archbishop will implement the plan at his discretion. Kathy Hornschemeier asked about the structure. Fr. Bill said it was all open. Everything would have to be decided as to where the Easter Vigil, Christmas Midnight Mass, and the like would be held. He stated he felt we were fortunate to be able to work with Holy Trinity. Duane Bradley said he might be able to volunteer to do this since this was his last year on Parish Council.

Larry Bush had emailed Fr. Bill about doing a K of C blood drive through the Hoxwood Blood Center. Fr. Bill asked if there were any objections and none were expressed.

The school has issued a timing and action plan for marketing the school. This will be important to grow our school in light of everything that is going on. A major marketing campaign beginning in January for new 2006-7 registrations would be a big benefit to keep our school structure in place.

Fr. Bill stated our financial situation is very serious. The Sunday collections continue to drop. Our annual interest on the debt is now over \$82,000 and the diocese wants it paid plus all the back interest of \$363,000. Finance is meeting on Thursday to discuss a potential Capital Campaign. It would be held in January or next fall. We want to put the capital funds on our principal. If the diocese continues to say no to paying anything on our principal, we will do nothing. Ralph Bedel asked why the diocese was

doing this and not willing to work with us. Fr. Bill stated they need money. The last two Archbishop Fund Drives have failed.

Fr. Bill stated he has been elected to the Archdiocese Priest Presbyteral Council until 2011. This is a council of priests that advises the Archbishop.

Also, Fr. Bill has been asked to join the board at McNicholas High School. However, they meet the second Monday of each month. This conflicts with our Parish Council meeting times. He would like to be on the board to help our parish representation at McNicholas High School. For now, he would like to accept the position, but would state he can not make their December meeting since Parish Council meets that evening here. We would then plan alternative meeting dates in December for 2006. Everyone should plan to bring their calendars at the December meeting.

Fr. Bill stated he was not sure if anyone had contact Parish Council about serving one evening at the Parish Mission. Everyone would need to bring a tray of finger food. Three council members said they could help. The others said they had a commitment that night. Kathy Hornschemeier said she would contact everyone who was not there and try to organize it.

Regarding the energy situation, we find more issues when we discuss the program. One example is that poinsettias during Christmas time in the church need at least 60 degrees or higher in order to survive. We would probably keep the temperature up above 60 during the two weeks after Christmas. Worship also wants to cut back the amount of Christmas decorations this year considering our financial situation. They still want to do the poinsettia trees because it takes smaller poinsettias to make the impact which in turn costs less. (Even though no vote was taken, everyone thought a scaled back Christmas display was appropriate).

Ralph Bedel asked if Cinergy had been asked to review our buildings for potential additional savings. He also asked about cutting the outdoor lights out at night. Fr. Bill responded that the Business Managers were looking into a long term concept about buying energy as a group. This would not be able to happen this year. Mike Gennett stated turning off the outdoor lights would be a safety issue. Someone had shut off the outdoor light switch in the gym a couple of weeks ago and we got a number of complaints. Doug Young suggested that all the windows in Heider Hall

have plastic sheeting put over them. Mike Gennett stated the temperature in the Heider classrooms vary. Some teachers want to have their windows open while others say they are cold. Fr. Bill added we have a variety of personalities we have to deal with and not everyone is ever happy. Ralph Bedel added the people are just spoiled.

**Old & New Business** – Kathy Hornschemeier stated she is receiving complaints about the number of second collections on Sunday. Fr. Bill stated we participate in all the national collections and there are more coming including the Campaign for Human Development (Nov 20) and the Religious Retirement (Dec 11). Mike Gennett added the only new collection this year have been the Hurricane Katrina collection which was a one time exception. Ralph Bedel stated St. Vincent de Paul use to be at the door, but was now a second new collection. Mike Gennett stated having a second collection has resulted in more than double the money. Fr. Bill added their needs are growing.

The next meeting will be as scheduled on Monday, December 12, at 7 PM. Kathy Hornschemeier made a motion to adjourn. Doug Young seconded it.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:05 PM. Fr. Bill led with a brief prayer.