



HALLOWED GROUND: Bishop Robert Brom blesses the land and people of St. Thomas More Parish Dec. 12.

New Home at Hand for St. Thomas More Parish

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The Southern Cross

There's patience, and then there's Holy Patience. It has taken a good deal of the latter for parishioners at St. Thomas More Parish in Oceanside to get from their 1985 beginnings as a community celebrating Mass in the Carlsbad High School gym to the groundbreaking of their new church on Melrose Avenue in Oceanside.

But get there they did. And in a spirit of palpable joy, they gathered with their pastor, Father Peter McGuine, and with San Diego Bishop Robert H. Brom Dec. 12 on the land that will one day be their completed parish campus.

"As you make space for God here on this land, don't forget to make room for Him in your hearts," Bishop Brom told the assembled faithful.

"The Lord's timing is better than our own," Father McGuine said — under a perfect blue sky, a sky which had been raining just 48 hours earlier.

During the groundbreaking ceremonies, Bishop Brom processed around the entire property blessing both land and people.

Long-time parishioner and former parish historian Mary McNay seemed to sum up the joy of many when she said, "We've waited so long for this day. From the first Mass of St. Thomas More Parish, sitting on the bleachers of Carlsbad High School, to the bleachers at Rancho Buena Vista

High School in Vista, we've traveled a long way.

"We've grown as a parish in size but never lost sight that this day would come. We've matured in our love of God and man. Today we rejoice, for this is what many, many loving parishioners have worked for. The foundation is being laid today; tomorrow will bring other buildings and other parishioners."

Father McGuine heaped praise upon the faithful who contributed so much to the growth of the parish. "Many years of hard work and sacrifice on the part of the parishioners and many others have brought us to this historic moment," he said. "Their willingness to share time, talent and treasure for the common good is an inspiration to so many others and to me. It is truly a blessing to be assigned to such a faith-filled, vibrant parish."

For the past several years, the parish has operated out of a storefront but hopes to be celebrating Mass in its new parish hall by October 2000. In coming years, the parish hopes to build a 1,000 seat-church, administrative offices, rectory, grade school and day care.

Currently, the parish serves 2,400 individuals in 785 households. Parish boundaries encompass parts of Carlsbad, Oceanside and Vista.

Father McGuine says the storefront location has not held the parish back, noting that members support a full range of ministries.