



December 25, 2005

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

It is a pleasure for me to write you this Christmas with the good news that our efforts over the past year have made a positive difference in the future of the Church of St. Thomas More!

As you know, periodically we provide campaign updates in an effort to inform our parishioners of the latest developments in our campus build out. I addressed all the Masses regarding our current campaign status on the weekend of October 30, 2005. This letter highlights that address, along with some recent updates.

First of all, THANK YOU to all who have made pledges and gifts to bring us to \$5.3 million at this point! Since our Stewardship booklet mailing in October, we have already seen an increase in support of our building fund, memorial gifts, and operational donations, all of which are essential to our success.

Recently a decision was made to pay off the five acre adjacent land parcel so as not to pay interest on that loan from the Diocese. That payment was made the end of August for approximately \$600,000, and now the land is ours! Of significant importance to the parish, the land will provide much needed additional parking for worship services, as well as larger playing fields for our future school.

Our projections, based on pledges and gifts, indicate that we will be able to break ground and build the new Church, Bell Tower, and foundation for the Daily Chapel early in 2008. That is just two years from now! Much planning is already in progress to make that a reality.

It is important to remember, and I want to stress again, that we are in the *first phase of this campaign*. We also have the Daily Chapel and Memorial Area, Parish Offices/Youth Center, prior debt and the Secondary Education Initiative to complete in this campaign.

The good news is that our debt from the previous campaign is still part of an interest free loan. A portion of the previous campaign encompassed the related infrastructure costs of our Parish Campus, which saves us from higher costs now on the getting perimeter grading, slopes, streets, sewers and city permits for those items. That has all been done.

When we visited the Diocese a year ago to discuss our plans, some thought \$8.5 million was too high a figure for the Church portion of our campaign. This year, due to escalating building costs, they thought it might be too low. Several neighboring Church's are building now and find their costs in line with us, in addition to the extra start up costs associated with infrastructure issues. Our projections, purposely made for build out in the future, are right on target.

Our parish of slightly over 1,000 registered households has done an incredible job in the last year of raising \$4.1 million in new money. When combined with \$1.2 million from previous donations to this effort, our total is at \$5.3 million!

We have 77% of our parish responding to help make this campaign a success! We are thankful to all who have already responded, and also for your continued support. I encourage anyone who has not stepped forward to please consider a pledge at this time and help us get to 100% parish participation. Now is the time!

Momentum is key. We need to keep moving forward and to renew our pledges at the timeline we selected. All of our projections are based on this continued support. Also, many thanks to all of the new parishioners who have already come forward to support this campaign! We are blessed to be part of such a dedicated Faith Community.

History has shown that as soon as the Church building begins construction, we will begin to see an increase in parish registrations. New members will be joining the ranks of current members and help us complete the build out of the Parish Campus and to continue our most important ministerial work!

With God's help and the continued support of this vibrant community, we can and we will fulfill the Mission of St. Thomas More:

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

On behalf of our Pastor, Fr. Mike Ratajczak and all the dedicated people involved with this Capital Campaign, we thank you again for your prayers and support.

God's Blessings and Merry Christmas!

Bill Ipsen
Capital Campaign Chairperson