

## Pastor's Column

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### What a Celebration!!!!!!!

The celebration of our 25th Anniversary as St. Thomas More Parish this past Sunday was a grand success!

Even the weather cooperated and we had the feel of an English Countryside Autumn Day in honor of St. Thomas More. (We are a people of faith. Is the glass half empty or half full? For me, it is always half full!)

The Liturgy was prayerful, holy, and full of life and faith. After Mass, Bishop Brom commented how pleased he was with the Liturgy, saying that everything fit together so well, and the participation of the Faithful was very admirable.

The reception afterwards was comfortable with a down-home feeling. The food was great. The entertainment was perfect. The Reception Committee had many last minute changes to make due to the weather. But they handled it so well, and everybody just got a little cozier under the tent. Again Bishop Brom commented how pleased he was with the reception, and the proof of that, from my perspective, was the length of time that he spent with us, visiting every table under the tent at least once. He had a great smile on his face when he left and again commented on what a wonderful Faith Community the Parish of St. Thomas More is.

I want to personally thank each and everyone one you who made this 25th Anniversary celebration such a very special event, from beginning to end. It took a huge amount of thought, organization, and hard labor by many, many people. You know who you are and what you have done. And I know that all your efforts were for the greater glory of God. Thank You!

The highlight of the day was, of course, the Bishop's announcement that we have his blessing to begin the construction of our Permanent Church AND our Parish Offices. This is a major feat! With these two new buildings, in a sense, we will have a complete "build-out" until we are in a position to build our school. Also this "build-out" with both buildings will give us much, much more space for the Youth of our Parish and will help us to create a Youth Center. I know that Marc Raymundo, our Parish Youth Advocate, is dancing in the streets about this reality!

Already on Monday, the day after the Bishop's announcement, I began to make a few phone calls and send a few e-mails to a variety of people so that we can begin this very major project.

The first step will be to have discussions with our Finance Council, Development Council, and Pastoral Council to make sure that we are all "on the same page." This will take place in the next few weeks.

Once this is complete, and when we have major agreement to move forward, the New Construction Committee and the Interior Design Team will reconvene, and work will begin. This will mean creating all the necessary construction documents, before ground breaking. This should take about eight to ten months. After ground breaking, construction of two buildings will also take about twelve to fifteen months. The next two years will be very exciting for us as a Parish. How blessed we are to be a part of this very special and major undertaking on behalf of our Faith!

**In the meantime, what to do? First and foremost, we need to make Phase II of our Capital Campaign, "Our Journey Into The Future . . . Together" a success. We are still \$500,000 short of our \$2 million dollar goal. If you have not yet made a pledge or given a gift, please do so now. If you are able to add more to your pledge or give another gift, it would be so appreciated. The \$2 million goal for Phase II is crucial to our success as we move forward.**

After the successful completion of Phase II at the end of 2011, we will begin to talk about our "mortgage." You all know what a mortgage is! To build the church and the Parish Offices, we will receive a LOAN from the Diocese for \$5.6 million dollars that we will need to repay within 25 years. We are taking on a mortgage with a monthly payment for which we are responsible.

You, the People of St. Thomas More, have been faith-filled and generous with your time, talent, and treasure. You are real stewards! Now is the time, once again, to step up and be counted. As Bishop Brom said in his homily last Sunday, the love that Jesus proclaimed is a sacrificial love. We give of our time, talent, and treasure until it hurts. Ultimately, it means the cost of our very lives in a variety of ways.

We have come a long way. We still have a long way to go. I have no doubt that we can do this and we will do this...together.

Happy 25th! We have so much to celebrate and for which to praise God.

We look forward to a future filled with hope!

*Fr. Mike*