



Our dear Parishioners,

NEW ENERGIES! STEWARDSHIP! EVANGELIZATION!

Perhaps some or all of these words are familiar to you as they are becoming more common terms of usage among the pastors and parishes of the Archdiocese of Newark.

The New Energies Transition Project has already been underway in some of the parishes of the Archdiocese and, according to schedule, Saint Thomas will be participating in this process in September 2006. This project contains 28 guiding principles,

addresses the realities of shifting Catholic demographics in urban and suburban communities, evaluates the sustain ability of aging facilities, and makes tough choices regarding financial resources and rising costs throughout the archdiocese. As we get closer to our entrance into the project we will keep you informed of the involvement that will be required of us. In the meantime, I will be asking the Parish Pastoral, Finance and Stewardship Councils and the Staff to review the 28 principles to see where we stand right now as a single parish entity.

Some of the guiding principles are: (1) Liturgy is a priority in parish life and responds to the riches of the culture and heritage of the parish; (5) Evangelization is recognized as an essential aspect of the life and mission of the parish; (6) Parishioners give of their time, talent and treasure to support the Church mission; (8) The parish supports and nurtures the spiritual life of the parish community; (9) The parish implements a comprehensive plan for the religious formation and education of the entire faith community; (10) An essential ministry is to nurture the faith of families through parochial schools - either in a parish school or a co-sponsored or a neighboring school; (11) All catechists have appropriate preparation as well as practical experience; (14) The ministry of the parish reflects political and public dimensions of our faith, encouraging the faithful to work for justice in their own public lives; (18) There is a comprehensive pastoral ministry for youth; (21) There is a comprehensive pastoral outreach to the families who are part of the parish community; (24) The parish is able to support its ministerial outreach and maintain the parish facilities.

At first glance it would appear that we are measuring up quite well to these principles. However, the current trends might indicate some weaknesses in certain areas that we will need to strengthen as we prepare to enter into conversation with our neighboring parishes.

Evangelization will be one source of our strength. The Pastoral Council is studying the programs of Evangelization and will make a recommendation of which pro-

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Caller ID?

If you see a call on your Caller ID from (Msgr) William Hatcher it would mean that someone using the parish phone line called you (not always the pastor calling).

Also, the phone line used was for outgoing calls only. If you call back on that number you will not be able to reach the parish.

Always use the parish line (973) 338-9190 or the School, CCD or Convent lines. Thank you.

THE COUNCIL CORNER

Our new chairperson of the Pastoral Council

BY BERNADETTE LIPOMA

Council Chairperson

Q: Tell us a bit about yourself?

A: My family and I have been parishioners here at St. Thomas since 1990. My husband Vincent is a dentist here in Bloomfield. We have been married for 21 years and lived in town for 19 years. We have two children, Lauren 19 who attends Seton Hall and Vincent, 17, who attends DePaul Catholic. Both of them attended CCD, and received their Communion and Confirmation here at St. Thomas.

Q: Tell us about your involvement here at St. Thomas.

A: Well, currently I am the Parish Council Chairperson. I am also a Eucharistic Minister and facilitator for the parish book club. I have taught CCD and am currently involved with the Women's Cornerstone and I recently joined one of the small Christian communities. I also hope to start a Shawl Ministry here quite soon.

Q: Why did you decide to serve on the council?

A: That is a very good question. To be honest, when I was first approached to become a member of the Parish Council, I was quite honestly, hesitant. I thought, what can I possibly contribute to the Council? I discussed my hesitancy with Rosalie Mescall who was at that time the chairperson. She was very forthcoming and made me see that I could contribute something of value from my involvement within the different ministries that I was a part of.

Q: What does the Council do?

A: The Parish Council provides support and consultation to Msgr. Bill regarding the activities of the parish. We look for ways to make our parish the very best that it can be. As you may

know, last year the council sent out a survey to see what some of the concerns were here at St. Thomas. With the information we collected from the survey, we hope that we were able to make some positive changes and to help make everyone's experience here at St. Thomas a better one.

Q: What is your vision for the coming year?

A: My hope for the coming year is that the council be more visible and available to the parish community. We want to know what you are thinking about, what your concerns are. To help the parish recognize our council members we will be introducing them here in the ParishLink throughout the coming year, we will also have a picture of the council located by the front doors as soon as we can arrange to have everyone together. Please feel free to stop any of us and let us know what concerns you might have and if we can not answer your question we will bring the subject up at the next council meeting and get back to you.

Q: Any last thoughts?

A: I would like to say that I feel it is a privilege to serve my parish. The people here at St. Thomas are wonderful, caring and generous. Many give their time, talent and treasure freely, this really is a blessing. I would like to see more parishioners become involved with the different ministries. There are so many wonderful opportunities available here, don't be afraid to try something new, attend an adult education class, join a small Christian community, stop in at a lecture. Our parish directory should be out soon...take a look through it, see what might interest you and call the contact person. I don't think you will be disappointed. God bless you.

Thank you

I would like to express my sincere thank you to so many parishioners and friends here at St. Thomas.

I recently, and totally unexpectedly, had an aneurysm break in my brain. Through the grace of God, a wonderful surgeon, and all your prayers I survived.

I have gone for months of extensive physical and occupational therapy, and I can now walk and talk again.

Msgr. Bill and Father Peter visited me in the hospital and in rehab several times. Each time they visited, it lifted my spirits considerably.

When you have a catastrophic injury such as this, it's very difficult to know what is going on. It's very difficult to understand the scope of your injury and it's very difficult to live with the uncertainty of knowing if you will be the same as you were before the injury.

I don't know the answers to any of these questions yet, but I know I feel much better now...and I always believed in the power of prayer, but now I am doubly sure of it. So many people have told me they were praying for me, I am truly touched by their kindness and blessed to have such thoughtful and kind friends.

I thank you,
Bob and Claudia thank you too.

Paula Blackman

**To submit an article
call (973) 661-2922**

SPIRITUAL DIRECTION

A prayer by Archbishop Oscar Romero

It helps, now and then, to step back,
And take the long view.
The kingdom is not only beyond
our efforts,
It is even beyond our vision.

We accomplish in our lifetime
Only a tiny fraction of the
magnificent enterprise
That is God's work.

Nothing we do is complete,
Which is another way of saying
That the kingdom always lies
beyond us.

No statement says all that could be said.
No prayer fully expresses our faith.
No confession brings perfection,
No pastoral visit brings wholeness,
No program accomplishes the
church's mission.
No set of goals and objectives
includes everything.

That is what we are about.
We plant seeds that one day will grow.
We water seeds already planted,
Knowing that they hold future promise.

We lay foundations that will need fur-
ther development.
We provide yeast that produces effects
Far beyond our capabilities.

We cannot do everything.
And there is a sense of liberation
in realizing that.

This enables us to do something.
And do it very well.

It may be incomplete, but it is
a beginning.
A step along the way.
An opportunity for the Lord's grace
to enter,
And do the rest.

We may never see the end results,
But that is the difference
Between the master builder and
the worker.

We are workers, not master builders,
Ministers, not messiahs.
We are prophets
Of a future not our own.
Amen.

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gram we should adopt. All parishes are required to adopt an Evangelization program in the Spring of 2006.

Another source of strength is our Stewardship effort of evaluating our Time, Talent and Treasure. All parishes are required to submit a Stewardship Plan with measurable goals. Our Stewardship Council will be working on that plan along with our Pastoral and Finance Councils.

As you can see our work is cut out for us in the months ahead. Together we can meet the challenge. It will require EVERYONE who is a parishioner of Saint Thomas to do his/her share.

God bless you.

Love,



Rev. Msgr. William C. Hatcher, Pastor

Upcoming Events

BY ANNA GRAZIANO
Certified Spiritual Director

Advent Day of Reflection Mary & Elizabeth: Remembering the Promise

Sat., December 3
9:00 am - 2:30 pm

New Beginnings - One Day Directed retreat

Sat., January 21
8:30 am - 4:00 pm

Lenten Spirituality Day

Sat., February 25
Fr. Martin Padovani, D.W.M.

Author of
*Healing Wounded Emotions
& Healing Wounded
Relationships*

9:30 am - 3:30 pm

Lent: Lenten Retreat based on The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius

Every Wednesday from
March 8-29

7:30 pm - 9:30 pm

Pentecost Conference Encountering the Gift of the Holy Spirit

Sat., May 20
9:00 am - 4:00 pm

For further information call
Anna at (973) 338-9538.

DEANERY COUNCIL

Deanery Council

BY MARY PAT BOGART
Deanery Representative

St. Thomas the Apostle Parish Community is a member of North Essex Deanery 16 which consists of twelve parishes in Bloomfield, Montclair, Upper Montclair, Nutley and Belleville. These parishes are:

St. Thomas the Apostle, Sacred Heart and St. Valentine, Bloomfield.

St. Peter and St. Anthony both of Belleville.

St. Mary, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and Holy Family of Nutley.

St. Cassian of Upper Montclair and Immaculate Conception, Our Lady of Mt. Carmel and St. Peter Claver of Montclair.

The Council was formed on January 20, 1977, and is probably the longest continual and most active Council in the Archdiocese. Since the Archdiocesan Pastoral Council was placed on a hiatus at the time of the Synod, many of the Deanery Councils have ceased to exist. However, our

Council feels that we are a viable ministry and will continue to carry on our mission.

The Deanery Council acts as liaison between the parishes and as a communication vehicle for the members. We share ideas and problems, and hopefully further the mission of the individual parishes. The Council has also put together a Resource Booklet which has been given to all the parishes. This booklet lists all of the ministries in each of the member parishes.

Meetings are held in September, November, January, March, May and June in one of the parishes. A delegate for each parish is appointed by the Pastor in cooperation with the Pastoral Council. Some of the parishes also have an alternate. The delegates then select a President, Secretary and Treasurer. Each Deanery has a Dean, who is selected by the Archbishop. The present Dean is Rev. David Hubba from St. Mary Parish, Nutley.

The meetings consist of a short busi-

ness session, parish reports and a speaker. We have presentations on the various offices of and services offered by the Archdiocese as well as other relevant topics each might be of interest to the parishes.

Non-perishable food donations may be left at the Parish Center, for distribution to local homeless and the hungry.

Please don't forget baby food, formula and pet food.

*As always,
thank you all for your generosity.*

The **ParishLink** welcomes your comments and suggestions. Send them to Paula Blackman at the Parish Center.

Saint Thomas

the Apostle

Church/School/Parish Center
60 Byrd Avenue/Bloomfield, New Jersey 07003

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