

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS PARISH

HOPE *&* Gratitude



Annual Report 2021

A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR



So much has happened and is happening as I reflect over the past fiscal year (July 2020-June 2021).

Two words: **GRATITUDE** and **HOPE** are expressed in the reports and pictures in this year's Annual Report.

GRATITUDE

I and many others have so much for which to be **grateful**. Despite the personal, professional and spiritual challenges raised by Covid 19 over the past year our parishioners came together in different and varied ways in order to celebrate our faith and stay connected with each other.

Over this past year we restored weekday and weekend Masses in the chapel/church with the help of many volunteers and a dedicated staff in a safe environment. We initiated a well-attended weekly outdoor parking lot Mass which benefited not only our own parishioners but many from neighboring towns. Additionally, many took advantage of the Saturday "drive through" confessions in the parking lot. Despite initial challenges with our virtual Faith Formation Programs we succeeded because of the support of our parents and Grade level leaders. Socially distanced First Holy Communion Masses and Confirmation ceremonies were celebrated with great joy, enthusiasm, faith and gratitude. The St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry received extra food in order to assist anyone who needed help. Although the number of our social activities were limited we found ways come together such as our Holiday Bazaar and blessing of the animals. I have a great deal of **gratitude** for the ingenuity, creativity, faith and commitment of both staff and parishioners.

I'm very **grateful** for the generosity of the parishioners during the past year. Understanding our financial challenges many people continued to support our parish financially, a number increased their financial contributions and some offered their stimulus checks to support those less fortunate. Because of your financial generosity and the PPP loan

we were able to make our operating costs. We were also able to plan and begin to execute some upgrades in our physical buildings that are ongoing.

HOPE

This past year has taught me how much we are connected to each other, care for one another and need each other. It's taught me that no matter what challenges or differences we have, be it political, medical, social or economic we stand together and will get through it. It's made me optimistic and given me hope that our connectedness to each other is far greater than those ideas that separate us.



More importantly this past year has reaffirmed my belief in the importance of our faith. Faith is often tested but as St. Peter states "faith, more precious than gold, is tested by fire and may be found to result in praise, glory and honor in Jesus Christ." God's immeasurable love for us as seen in Jesus gives us **hope** that God is with us to give us the strength and the guidance to face any and all challenges. Jesus, working in and through His Church, will continue to nourish us with the Eucharist, hear our prayers, strengthen the bond we have with each other and give us **hope** that all things will work out. "Hope will not disappoint us, because the love of God has been poured out within our hearts through the Holy Spirit." Romans 5:5.

As the parish staff and I plan for the new fiscal year, I have **hope** that we, in and through the Church, will continue to strengthen the faith and commitment of our parishioners, bring the Lord's compassion and love to those in need and continue to grow. In a world filled with uncertainty, Jesus is the light shining through the darkness offering us **hope**.

- Fr. Devine, Pastor

AN UPDATE ON CAMPUS MINISTRY FROM FR. GIOMBETTI



Thanks be to God, Campus Ministry continues to grow!

This past July, we welcomed back Jon and Zach, our returning FOCUS missionaries and welcomed Deisy and Ireland to our

parish family as they begin their service to our campus ministry program.

Over the past several years we've grown Adoration on campus, with an average of 14 hours (prior to the pandemic) entirely covered by students. Gatherings on Thursdays have grown to an average of 25 students each week. Those nights are a balance between "formation" (a talk by me or a guest speaker) and fraternity....just having fun. FOCUS has a yearly national conference. We've grown from 6 students in 2019 when we first attended to over 20 who attended in Phoenix AZ in 2020. The entire campus ministry is centered around our (late!) Sunday evening Mass which, even in the midst of the pandemic, drew students, many whom had to drive 30 minutes or more to attend.

On the service front, we had students go almost every week to volunteer with our missionaries to My Brother's Keeper and we've brought several groups to Planned Parenthood to peacefully pray the rosary outside.

I'm very proud of our students. One of our students recently returned from a mission trip to Peru, another served this summer as a missionary with Totos Tuos and another, a recent graduate, is serving next year in Wisconsin with SPIRITUS as a missionary who will help lead parish retreats. Fr. Devine and I are very

happy to see several of the students get involved with parish life....we've had students teach Faith Formation, get involved as lectors, Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion, visitors to the homebound, cleaners of the Church (altar guild) and, before COVID, we hired 2 of them to run our "Youth Room" at the parish center for high school students.

We're beginning to see the long-term fruit of campus ministry as I attended the wedding of a graduate of BSU to another faithful Catholic last summer. This year, we're seeing our first young woman enter religious life (becoming a nun!), with two others actively discerning. They are a source of pride for our parish family.

I tell you all this to thank you for your kind support of the parish. Without the help of your prayers and



Members of campus ministry with the newly ordained Father David Campo

financial support, none of this would be possible. Please, as you read this, stop and say a prayer for our campus ministry program.

May God bless you abundantly,

- Fr. Giombetti

SING A NEW SONG



When I embarked on this journey that brought me here as Music Director, I could never have imagined the unprecedented challenges the church would face due to the pandemic, particularly the restrictions placed on music ministry.

Having the voices of the faithful prohibited from singing this past year was a reminder of how precious and vital this ministry is!

There have been many firsts for me as a music minister this past year. I remember observing my first outdoor Mass last summer in the blazing sun and reminding myself that I'd have to wear sunscreen if I was to play outside. As the fall approached and the weather started getting cooler, I thought to myself that it wouldn't be long before we'd have to move inside. We couldn't possibly continue having an outdoor Mass past October, right? The weekly routine of setting up and breaking down for the 9 am parking lot Mass throughout the coldest months showed me how resilient and ingenious this staff and community is and how wrong I was! From a marathon

of Confirmations and First Holy Communion Masses my first week on the job to Zoom meetings, researching what type of masks work best for singing, live-streaming liturgies, and yes, playing in really cold conditions, I've witnessed God's grace and blessings through the actions of those people whom I've met here. No grumbling or complaining. Only problem-solving, positivity and faith that we could overcome any adversity as long as our trust was in the Lord.

I'm incredibly proud of the singers and musicians that make up our music ministry. They have been inspiring and truly helpful! Despite the COVID restrictions placed on us we were able to sing during Christmas, Holy Week and Easter to enhance the beauty and worship of those sacred days.

As we approach this fall season I'm excited to begin a new choir program. My hope is that in the coming weeks you will let me know of your interest or questions you may have about the music program. I for one can't wait to see (and hear) what we can do together!

- Paul Hoffman, Music Director



Two views of the Sunday 9 am parking lot Mass: summer and winter.



Fatima Rosary Procession. May 13th 2021



Halloween Party



Blessing of Animals on Saint Francis' Feast Day



The Christmas Giving Tree

A LOOK BACK



distancing and lockdowns.

Some within the Church felt it best to shut down for extended periods of time and eliminate any in-person sacraments such as: reception of the Holy Eucharist, Confession, Marriages, Baptisms, and even Anointing of the Sick. However, St. Thomas Aquinas Parish took a different approach. As soon as the Cardinal gave permission, in-person Masses were resumed, Confessions were heard outside in the parking lot, Marriages and Baptisms were offered with social distancing, and anointings were given.

The sacraments were resumed with urgency because they are essential elements that unite us to Jesus

This past year presented a great challenge to the world. While doctors and politicians struggled with how to handle Covid-19, the church struggled with how to address the spiritual needs of its faithful given the imposed social

Christ in this life so that we can be with Him eternally in the life to come. Without Jesus, His Church and His sacraments, there is no hope.

This courageous attitude adopted by our priests and staff spoke volumes to me, and to many parishioners who were thirsting for spiritual nourishment. The parishioners, who prioritized God during the most challenging moments of the Covid restrictions, were exceptionally inspiring. Their witness and their support of our parish has been instrumental.

The reopening of the church was, and continues to be, the perfect antidote to any fear, anxiety, or confusion that the evil one tries to impose on us. I am very grateful and blessed to work for a parish that understand this and strives to fulfill the needs of its parishioners, regardless of what is transpiring in the world.

Saint Thomas Aquinas and St. Basil, pray for us!

- Aaron Durocher, Pastoral Assistant

A NOTE FROM THE FINANCE COUNCIL

Continuing with Fr. Bill's expression of gratitude and hope, we as a finance council are extremely grateful for our parish support during these unprecedented times. We embarked on a path of uncertainty and navigated through these challenges with caution and care in our role as financial stewards of our parish. We ended the year in a positive financial position, due to the generosity of our parishioners and the fiscal responsibility carried out by all involved in financial decision making.

From a financial perspective, overall revenue decreased slightly under 2% in comparison to the prior fiscal year and exceeded budgeted amounts by 26%. These gains were driven primarily by the generosity of our parishioners during our grand annual appeal which exceeded all prior historical levels as we united to support our parish. We focused on cost containment, while continuing to invest in expanding ministries including our new music director and relaunching our choir programs among other investments. We look forward to fiscal 2022 with renewed hope as we continue to navigate through the uncertainty of the pandemic with the knowledge that we have accomplished a great many of our needed capital improvements and will continue to invest in various ministry programs, including our youth and campus ministries. We are united in our hope for the future and are so grateful for the tremendous support of our parishioners and the terrific work of our parish staff.

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS PARISH SUMMARY	2020 (LY)	2021 (TY)	FY '21	FY22
	ACTUAL	ACTUAL	BUDGET (\$)	BUDGET (\$)
INCOME				
OFFERTORY (WEEKLY & MONTHLY)	\$ 463,547	\$ 462,579	\$ 330,000	\$ 400,000
GRAND ANNUAL	\$ 152,906	\$ 172,203	\$ 75,000	\$ 125,000
SACRAMENTAL/FLOWERS	\$ 31,170	\$ 38,477	\$ 24,000	\$ 33,500
GIFTS/BEQUESTS/DONATIONS	\$ 84,116	\$ 38,330	\$ 15,000	\$ 15,000
CATHOLIC APPEAL REBATE	\$ 9,117	\$ 5,295	\$ -	\$ -
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	\$ 50,601	\$ 47,071	\$ 40,000	\$ 45,000
RENTAL/LEASE	\$ 45,358	\$ 54,714	\$ 32,360	\$ 32,360
INT/DIV/MKT GAIN(LOSS)	\$ 3,574	\$ 25,641	\$ -	\$ 10,000
MINISTRY FUNDRAISING/OTHER	\$ 68,790	\$ 46,935	\$ 50,000	\$ 10,650
PPP FORGIVENESS LOAN	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 97,500	\$ 97,500
INCOME TOTAL	\$ 909,179	\$ 891,245	\$ 663,860	\$ 769,010
EXPENSES				
SALARIES/BENEFITS(EXCL. REL. ED.)	\$ 445,863	\$ 543,889	\$ 483,182	\$ 578,541
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION EXP.	\$ 90,936	\$ 19,124	\$ 102,303	\$ 35,000
PASTORAL/LITURGICAL	\$ 24,712	\$ 52,687	\$ 58,800	\$ 51,900
OFFICE/ADMIN/HOUSEHOLD	\$ 68,247	\$ 58,428	\$ 75,650	\$ 50,250
UTILITIES/HEAT/ELEC/W&S	\$ 58,552	\$ 51,020	\$ 61,200	\$ 51,500
PROPERTY/LIABILITY INSURANCE	\$ 29,911	\$ 40,120	\$ 33,500	\$ 37,000
MAINTENANCE	\$ 71,022	\$ 41,114	\$ 47,300	\$ 34,350
MINISTRY CENTRAL TITHE	\$ 58,062	\$ 61,657	\$ 57,000	\$ 62,000
OTHER	\$ 29,346	\$ 8,403	\$ 29,220	\$ 21,570
EXPENSES TOTAL	\$ 876,651	\$ 876,442	\$ 948,155	\$ 922,111
NET OPERATING INCOME(LOSS)	\$ 32,528	\$ 14,803	\$ (284,295)	\$ (153,101)
NON-OPERATING INC./EXP.				
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT INCOME	\$ 32,554	\$ 30,032	\$ 12,000	\$ 20,000
CAP ACQ/IMPROVEMENT EXP.	\$ 97,634	\$ 77,371	\$ 35,000	\$ -
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT NET	\$ (65,080)	\$ (47,339)	\$ (23,000)	\$ 20,000
NET INCOME(LOSS)	\$ (32,552)	\$ (32,536)	\$ (307,295)	\$ (133,101)

PARISH REVIEW FROM FINANCE & OPERATIONS



Over the past year, our parish has been faced with unprecedented challenges at many levels. Remaining transparent and being the most effective stewards of your generosity was paramount to our ability to accomplish so much in the face of these challenges. As a staff we did everything in our power to save wherever possible, and yet still provide the best experience in faith for our entire parish family. In conjunction with your amazing generosity, we were able to obtain a PPP loan to maintain our staff payroll and also cover some of our regular operating costs such as utilities and Covid supplies to keep the parish properties open and available. Even in the darkness of these past unknowns, your generosity shone through brilliantly and allowed us to not only serve you, but grow even stronger in faith with you. Your support has bolstered us through these past months and I am truly humbled by it. The message from Father Bill cannot be more accurate as we move forward together into our evolving future as a parish. We cannot express our gratitude enough to all of you, and knowing how strong our foundation of faith truly is, we can look forward with hope.



Chapel Doors (Before)



Chapel Doors (After)



Installation of new AC units at St. Basil's Chapel

CEMETERY IN REVIEW

Maintaining our two cemeteries has been a major focus over this past year, and we worked constantly to keep them clean, landscaped and beautiful. Andy Kovacks, our maintenance manager, along with Jack Papasodoro and Raj Chandra our maintenance team, have done an amazing job with the upkeep of both of our cemeteries. We have also had multiple trees removed and cut back on many old and overhanging branches to keep the cemeteries clear and all of the roads accessible. With the new cemetery lighting, we also replaced the underground cabling that powers it, and also replaced the cemetery parking lot light fixture making the rear cemetery road much brighter. We are proud of our cemeteries and are here to serve you and answer any questions you may have. Please contact the parish office for assistance with the cemeteries at (508)-697-9528.

- Peter Vitagliano, Finance and Operations Officer

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS CEMETERY SUMMARY	2020 (LY)	2021 (TY)	FY '21	FY '22
	ACTUAL	ACTUAL	BUDGET (\$)	BUDGET (\$)
INCOME				
INCOME TOTAL	\$ 109,579	\$ 213,232	\$ 96,600	\$ 106,100
EXPENSES				
EXPENSES TOTAL	\$ 58,784	\$ 67,204	\$ 50,798	\$ 70,842
NET OPERATING INCOME	\$ 50,795	\$ 146,028	\$ 45,802	\$ 35,258
NON-OPERATING INCOME & EXPENSES				
RECEIPTS FOR PERPETUAL CARE	\$ 3,520	\$ 5,960	\$ 3,000	\$ 5,000
CAP ACQ/IMPROVEMENT EXPENSE	\$ 3,639	\$ 14,727	\$ -	\$ -
NET INCOME (LOSS)	\$ 50,676	\$ 137,261	\$ 48,802	\$ 40,258





The parking lot Mass on Easter Sunday



One of eight Confirmation Masses



The filming of our "Welcome Back" video



Members of campus ministry enjoying dinner at Barrett's Alehouse



Vocation Night at Faith Formation



One of eight First Communion Masses



The Christmas Bazaar



Members of campus ministry meeting and getting the autograph of internationally known speaker Jason Evert