

**St. Thomas Aquinas Parish  
Facility Ministry Quarterly Report to PSC  
November 11, 2009**



**MISSION STATEMENT**

*“To coordinate and integrate three existing facilities related sub-committee’ efforts: (Building and Equipment Maintenance Committee; Facilities Use or Operations Committee, and Safety Committee). The Facilities committee serves as a communication link to the Pastor, the Parish Stewardship Council, and other parish strategic planning committees on all issues dealing with or affecting the parish’s real property”.*

**COMMITTEE QUARTERLY REPORT**

Identifying further, these committees are chaired by the following: Building and Equipment Maintenance Committee, Bud McKenna; Safety Committee, James McLaughlin; and the Facilities Use and Operations Committee by Chuck Tully, Parish Business Manager. Further, the Building and Equipment Maintenance committee established a working sub-committee with the title of the Thomas House Project Team, which was formed to develop plans for the upgrading of the Thomas House. This working team, chaired by James McLaughlin, was to include members from the St. Thomas Aquinas Site Committee and members from the Building and Equipment Maintenance group. This team was to report its findings to the Building and Equipment Maintenance Committee.

Needless to say, this project has taken a good share of the available time of the St. Thomas Aquinas site committee and the Thomas House Project Committee members. The Project team first established specific goals to achieve in this project. They were as follows:

1. Making the building safe for parish and site use as well as the rental space on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor by upgrading the electrical and heating facilities for the building.
2. Develop a way to make the first floor and basement areas available for site and parish use and making them Handicapped accessible.
3. Providing secured separation for tenant and parish use.
4. Obtaining a City of Palo Alto Historical classification so that savings could be realized as construction plans were developed.
5. Obtaining a clear lot line for both the Thomas House and Church.

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6. Develop a Fund Raising program to provide the anticipated costs for the project beyond what the parish finance committee can provide for this project.

Several of the goals were achieved thus far. We were granted the City of Palo Alto Historical classification, the lot lines were adjusted to meet legal requirements, and considerable time devoted with the architect by both the STA Site Committee and the Thomas House Project Team to develop what appeared to be working drawings of the improvements outlined.

These drawings were then used by the Architect to develop estimated costs for the project. These costs exceeded what the Finance committee had previously provided to the Team as limits on spending. The original figure was \$300,000.00, which was more recently verbally extended to \$400,000.00. The projected upgrading costs appear to be in the \$700,000.00 range at this time.

The project team and Building and Maintenance Committee have reviewed these projected costs and have attempted to reduce the overall expenditures, taking in a previously obtained donation to a handicap ramp accessing the first floor. The cost reduction included removing the improvements to the basement, not making the handicapped accessible nor upgrading the basement bathrooms or cooking area. Additionally, not including a brides room bathroom and not improving the kitchen on the first floor. This reduction limits the upgrading for parish and site use of the building as originally proposed. It does improve heating and electrical upgrades making the building safe for parish and tenant use, as well as providing the first floor use to the site and parish as planned. Additionally it permits separation between parish and site usage and tenant spaces.

The report is to be reviewed by the parish finance committee, whose meeting was planned for the 19<sup>th</sup> of this month. A request was forwarded to that committee for an early special meeting so that the architect can continue with final drawings for the purpose of obtaining building permits and getting contractor bids. This would keep the time line for completion of the project at an estimated 9 months and on target. This meeting was granted and was scheduled for Monday afternoon, 11-9-09.

Essentially, at their early meeting, the finance committee agreed to move ahead with the project as submitted, has agreed to dip further into the parish reserves to assist in its funding, and agrees that a parish wide fund raising event will be undertaken to help provide the funds for the project. Concerns over upcoming fund raising events was evident and the Building and Equipment Maintenance Committee will address this at their next meeting on November 19<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 a.m. at the Pastoral Center.

The use of this building, close to downtown Palo Alto offers many advantages to the parish and community. Community outreach as well as holding parish functions plus the opportunities the site will have for its activities. Whatever limitations the finance committee places on this project will be real and necessary due to parish economics. However, fund raising for this project is essential to cover excess construction costs and for furnishings needed to complete the project,

The parish has 11 buildings and associated grounds to operate and maintain. Some have rental capabilities that are important to the financial operation of the parish. We have two workers employed as staff and reporting to Chuck Tully, parish Business Manager. Our committee has established a

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priority list of various projects and immediate work orders so that our buildings remain operational, clean and safe. Some of these most recent efforts are outlined below.

**Parish Summer Work Completed:**

- Asphalt sealed for entire St. Albert site, including SESS playground.
- New gutters for the old St. Albert convent building.
- Replaced concrete exit driveway on rectory side of site.
- Painting window trim convent and rectory buildings.

**Painting at Pastoral Center:** Godofredo and Santiago painted the main reception room and the counseling room by the front entrance. Upstairs they painted the hallway and will paint the Youth Office and large Conference Room.

**Main Water Valve and Meter St. Albert Site:**

The City of Palo Alto Utilities department fixed the main valve and meter for the entire St. Albert Site, including the church and school. It could not be completely shut off at the street location so it was very important to get fixed. Other valves for each building further inside the property will need to be replaced in the future as well. Godofredo also would like to replace in the future one valve at Our Lady of the Rosary and one at ISP.

**Boiler at Our Lady of the Rosary:**

The boiler for Our Lady of the Rosary and ISP had a hard time starting up when the weather started to turn cold due to low gas flow. The plumbing company that installed the boiler came out and adjusted the flow so the boiler is now working fine.

**New Emergency Exit Signs at Pastoral Center:** (Safety)

Two new emergency exit signs were installed at the Pastoral Center by Godofredo and Santiago. One is at the top of the stairs and the other at the bottom of the stairs above the doorway. Small emergency lights were used before but some did not work prompting a more permanent solution. These more visible LED exit signs with two lights have also been installed at St. Elizabeth Seton School.

**Soap Dispensers:** (Safety)

In the process of installing touch-free soap dispensers on the outside walls of the church restrooms. Posters are up encouraging hand washing. Still more dispensers need to be installed, but due to high demand are on backorder.

**St. Thomas Aquinas Fire Alarm Panel:** (Safety)

STA fire alarm system had a final inspection by the Fire Marshall on Friday, Nov. 6<sup>th</sup> and passed.

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**St. Thomas Aquinas Church Interior Committee:**

Judy Foley and the STA Interior Committee have been to many Facilities Committee meetings to inform the group of current topics being discussed by the committee. So far the majority of the updates have been on the altar step renovation. Current priority issues also include the electrical panel and upgrading, sound system, lighting, and carpet. Important but secondary items include: painting, furniture, refinish pews, and side altar embellishments.

**St. Thomas Aquinas Hall Refrigerator:**

The refrigerator in the basement of the Thomas House used by the site was leaking pretty badly and could further damage the wood floors so it was replaced with a new energy efficient refrigerator.

**SUMMARY**

There is more work yet to be done. Fund raising events, yet to come, and preparations of our buildings for the Christmas Season, to mention just a few. Upcoming progress on the interior painting of St. Thomas Aquinas Church is also on the Maintenance Committee horizon. The planning for this is underway, and has been for some time by the STA Site Committee. We will hear more of those plans in the near future.

Respectfully Submitted:

James H. McLaughlin  
PSC Representative  
Facilities Ministry



Our Maintenance Personnel: Godofredo Alfaro and Santiago Aguilar