

Steeple Talk

Volume 4, No. 5

June 20, 2010

News from the STA Mass communities:

7:15 Daily Mass: Look for Fr. Jerry Brown., former rector of St. Patrick's Seminary, to be presiding now and then.

7:30 Sunday Mass: Fr. John Hester presides every Sunday. He is Associate Director of Stanford Hospital's Spiritual Care Service.

8:45 Sunday Mass: Today is Fr. George Aranha's last Mass at this time and place as pastor of the parish. He is going to St. Clare Parish in Santa Clara as of July 1.

10:30 Sunday Mass: Communion minister Jennifer Kloke successfully defended her dissertation in math at Stanford to earn her Ph.D.

12:00 Sunday Mass: Gregorian chant by the St. Ann Choir animates this Mass for people who come from miles around to hear it.

12:15 Daily Mass: Sacristans are needed to help set up for this Mass. Contact the Parish Office at 494-2496.

STA Site Committee plans:

Monthly Meeting:
4th Wednesday in Thomas House,
745 Waverley Street (adjacent to
Memorial Garden)

NEXT MEETING:
Wednesday, June 23, 2010
7:30—9:00 p.m.

Tentative agenda:

- De-brief on June 19 dinner
- Bike rack & garden

Monthly newsletter:
Sunday before 4th Wednesday

Editor: Kay Williams, 650-328-2781, kaywill@pacbell.net

Get to know Fr. Gene Konkel, S.S.:



Fr. Gene Konkel

Fr. Gene Konkel, S.S., celebrates the 7:15 a.m. Mass a couple of times a week.

From 1975 till 2001, Fr. Gene was director of the Vatican II Institute, located at St. Patrick's Seminary. When priests "graduate" from the three-month program, they have experienced an intensive 24-hour-a-day, seven days a week experience which is, as Fr. Konkel puts it, "heavily spiritual but also importantly provides priests a chance to address their human needs, namely their health (through nutrition and exercise) and their intellectual stimulation (by providing time for reading). Most priests just need time to read, rest and reflect."

"They learn as much from each other during the three-month period as they do from us," Fr. Konkel said. "Each session has its own character and personality because of the diversity of its participants, but all of the sessions result in the establishment of lifelong friendships."

Since its inception the program has enrolled more than 2,000 priests from 35 countries and 25 religious orders. It is

the only sabbatical program in the country which restricts its enrollment to priests only. It is a "true-adult" program, meaning it has a seminar approach and does not require writing, although many priests use their free time to write. It is *not* a "therapy" program, although counseling and spiritual direction are offered as instruments toward continuing priestly and personal growth.

A wonderful by-product of the Institute's presence at St. Patrick's Seminary is the interaction between experienced priests and exuberant seminarians. They share meals daily, share weekly Masses and have joint social occasions.

"Vatican II priests learn from seminarians and seminarians learn from the priests," Fr. Konkel says. He claims that priests, without the daily pressures of their parish or ministry, are able to draw upon the enthusiasm and spirit as exhibited by seminarians. In turn, seminarians hear real life experiences and get an appreciation that their priesthood will be one of continual learning and rededication.

"I probably know more priests than anyone in the country," Fr. Konkel matter-of-factly states. "I can travel anywhere in the country and be within driving distance of



St. Thomas Aquinas Church

a priest that has been through our program. I know from having worked with so many priests over so many years that the priesthood is amazingly blessed with so many quality priests. But priests need to be affirmed just like everybody else. The Vatican II Institute affirms them in many ways, and they leave feeling good about themselves and their priestly lives."

Currently Fr. Konkel is on the Adjunct Faculty as a Spiritual Director at St. Patrick's Seminary. Born in Milwaukee in 1931, Fr. Konkel served in Hawaii as rector of a seminary and vocation director of the Honolulu Diocese. He earned his B.A., M.A., and S.T.L. at Catholic University in Washington, DC, and M.A. at Marquette University in Milwaukee. His only sister died last year; other family includes nieces in Buffalo, NY.

**NEWSLETTER OF THE ST. THOMAS
AQUINAS CHURCH SITE COMMITTEE**

751 Waverley Street
Palo Alto, CA 94301

St. Thomas Aquinas Site Committee:

Helen Baumann	Anna Jaklitsch	Lorraine Dabney
Bill Mahrt	Bob March	Kieran McCarty
Mike McMahon	Bea Peterson	Patti Robison
Mario Veloro	Kay Williams	and occasional others

Mission Statement: The Site Committee for St. Thomas Aquinas Church works to encourage community-building within our six individual Mass communities, among our Mass communities, and within the larger parish community. We do this by enhancing our liturgies, exercising responsible stewardship of our facilities, and working to improve communications at all levels of our parish community.

Site committee meetings are held the 4th Wednesday of the month in the basement hall of the Thomas House. All are welcome, but if you cannot attend, send questions or suggestions to Kay Williams, 328-2781, kaywill@pacbell.net.

Parish news:

Fr. George Aranha, in his last PSC meeting (June 9) before leaving for St. Clare Parish, urged the PSC to continue producing the Annual Parish Report as a symbol of lay leadership and accountability. He reminded us that the role of the PSC rep is to be a bridge for communication between the work of each ministry and the whole parish community represented by the PSC, and that the position of volunteer coordinator for each ministry is vital. Finally, he encouraged the PSC to take the lead in coordinating awards for recognition of outstanding stewardship by individuals at each site.

Fr. Thierry Geris reported that the first celebration of a French-language Mass occurred on June 6 at 5 p.m. at STA, with 100 people from many parishes in attendance. He did this outreach on his own time and hopes a second such Mass will occur in the fall.

STA Interior update:

The next meeting of the STA Interior Committee is July 21 at 7:00 PM, either at St Thomas Aquinas Church or the SAG Hospitality Center. Contact July Foley (see below) to find out where the meeting will be held. All are welcome.

We would like to find someone with Photoshop experience who would be willing to volunteer in assisting us in portraying possible color choices for the carpet in the church. If you have this ability or know someone who does, please get in touch with Judy Foley.

Share your ideas for the church interior with committee chair Judy Foley, 322-8650, judybertchfoley@yahoo.com—or come to the July meeting and share in person.

From the church steps:

Drivers needed this summer:

The St. Francis St. Vincent de Paul has arranged for 67 children to have scholarships at Hidden Villa Summer Camp this summer. A total of 27 1st to 4th graders will explore wilderness trails, work face to face with farm animals, and enjoy the usual camp activities of swimming, arts and crafts etc. Forty more children from 4th to 10th grade will have 1 week or 2 week overnight scholarships at the camp.

In order to make this happen, drivers are needed. The three day campers need to be picked up at their homes in East Palo Alto to arrive at Hidden Villa at 8:30 – 8:45 am. The pickup for the return is at 4 pm. The children stay overnight on Thursday so there is no Thursday evening nor Friday morning pickup. The Friday return pickup is at 11:45 a.m.

The hope is that the three evening or 4 morning pickups for a particular week will be by one driver, but adjustments can be made.

The 40 overnight campers will need rides on Mondays and Fridays during the same 9 week period. These times are quite varied.

For more information call George Chippendale at 856-6350.

More drivers needed:

There is a great need for members of our parish at Lytton Gardens to get rides to go to mass at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, especially the 10:30 am mass. It's just about 5 blocks -- and would take a few minutes out of your Sunday morning -- and make a world of difference.

Anyone who can help please contact Mary Fong at fongmt@hotmail.com or call her at 650-494-1660.

Thomas House remodel:

Chuck Tully, parish business manager, reported at the June PSC meeting that the STA Thomas House Task Force will meet in the week of June 14 with SC Construction to go over the revised plans for the remodel of the old rectory. The revised plans are just now (June 9) being submitted by architect Lee Lippert to the City for review and approval.

“Torture is wrong”:

Throughout June our churches are displaying banners with the above wording. Our parish is participating in the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, sponsored by Pax Christi U.S.A. June is “Torture Awareness Month”. Such a public display is rare for our parish.

During this month we ask ourselves what message faith communities might send to world leaders about employing torture as a principle of government policy. And, very importantly, to pray. In the words of the “Catechism of the Catholic Church” (#2298) “It is necessary to work for their [use of cruel practices] abolition. We must pray for the victims and their tormentors.” Let us pray.