

Steeple Talk

Volume 3, No. 5

June 21, 2009

News from the STA Mass communities:

7:15 Daily Mass: Thanks to Msgr. Gene Boyle and Rev. Gene Konkel of St. Patrick's Seminary, this Mass is celebrated every day.

7:30 Sunday Mass: Fr. John Hester, who serves in the Stanford Hospital chaplaincy, is the primary celebrant at this Mass.

8:45 Sunday Mass: Msgr. Boyle celebrated 63 years as a priest on June 15; chocolate cake after Mass on June 14 was enjoyed by all.

10:30 Sunday Mass: Music minister Paul Prochaska invites any musicians who have an interest in participating as singers or instrumentalists to come forward and speak to him at Mass.

12:00 Sunday Mass: This Mass is accompanied by the St. Ann Choir, which leads the congregation in Gregorian chant.—a wonderful venue for refreshing your Latin.

12:15 Daily Mass: A good place to spend the lunch hour.

Let's look at the altar:

The STA Interior Task Force met June 17 inside the church, in order to have the chance to pace out and measure the distances of the four altar step platforms.

There is concern for the safety of presiders, communion ministers, altar decorators, and others who walk around the altar. The configuration of the four differently shaped platforms which make up the altar environment is being reviewed to make the area safer for all users, as well as liturgically correct and aesthetically pleasing.

Brainstorming suggestions included lowering the altar 7 inches to eliminate the fourth level of steps; building the first altar platform

level out to the sides of the sanctuary, which would necessitate alterations to the small doors to the sacristy but would give more room for the music ministers; increase the size of the second platform to accommodate the altar table, ambo and presider's chair on one level, etc.

It was particularly helpful to have Jan Dedek present. He is a master craftsman in woodworking and had several ideas for meeting the safety and liturgical needs expressed by the rest of the committee in attendance. He had, at the time of this writing, conferred with planners at the Palo Alto Building Department about code issues which might apply if the sacristy doors were remodeled.

Jan is also trying to locate ar-



St. Thomas Aquinas Church architect's plans for the work that created the current altar, presumably done around 1986.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, July 15, 2009, 7:30 p.m. at the St. Albert the Great Hospitality Center. If you have an interest in this project, please come. Contact judybertchfoley@yahoo.com or call 322-8650 with questions.

STA Site Committee plans:

Monthly Meeting:
4th Wednesday in Thomas House basement. hall.

NEXT MEETING:
Wednesday, June 24, 2009
7:30—9:00 pm

Tentative agenda:
Thomas House update and usage ideas.
Interior Task Force report

Monthly newsletter:
Sunday before 4th Wednesday

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Fr. Thierry Geris, new parochial vicar:



St. Thomas Aquinas Parish welcomes newly ordained parochial vicar, Fr. Thierry Geris, on July 1 to his first assignment as a priest.

Thierry Geris was born Dec. 3, 1950 in Uccle, Belgium. Educated in Brussels and Paris, he achieved the equivalent of a Master of Science degree in Engineering. He has worked as CAD Engineering Manager at Lattice Semiconductor, San Jose; Vantis Corp., Sunnyvale; Advanced Micro Devices, Sunnyvale; and as Sr. CAD Engineer at Schlumberger Well Services, Houston, Texas.

Additional academic pursuits include Santa Clara University (2001-2006) where he received a Master's Degree in Pastoral Ministry and an M. Div. from St. Patrick Seminary and University. He was ordained a permanent deacon in 2005 with a dual assignment of jail chaplain at Elmwood county jail and liturgical ministry at St. Lawrence Parish which he did until entering St. Patrick Seminary in 2006. He is also a first degree Knight of Columbus. He attended the Institute for Leadership in Ministry of the Diocese of San Jose where he was a member of the first graduation class in 2000. He entered the Advanced Lay Leadership program of the ILM and then pursued deacon formation.

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

751 Waverley Street
Palo Alto, CA 94301

St. Thomas Aquinas Site Committee:

Jane Bahr	Helen Baumann	Phil Coates
Lorraine Dabney	Bill Mahrt	Bob March
Kieran McCarty	Mike McMahon	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.

Thomas House progress:

It was reported by the Parish Facilities Committee at the June Pastoral Stewardship Council meeting that the architect for the work on the Thomas House, Lee Lippert, is holding regular meetings with parish business manager Chuck Tully.

Steps being taken by Mr. Lippert include 1) getting the application for the designation of the Thomas House as a registered historic building before the City Council for approval; 2) clarifying with the City the necessity for adjusting the property line between the church and the Thomas House, and 3) anticipating his role in the selection of a general contractor for the construction phase of the work. This last step will be important, as the costs for the proposed renovations will not be determined un-

til a contractor is chosen.

In the meantime, the communities which will be using the Thomas House are encouraged to communicate with the Site Committee so that all possible uses of the building are considered as decisions are made by the architect and the Thomas House Project Team. With the desired improvements clarified, the architect will be able to proceed with the first working drawings. This step is eagerly anticipated by the Site Committee and Project Team.

The Facilities Committee reported that the projected completion date of January 2010 seems achievable.

From the church steps:

♦ **Rev. Tim Meier, S.J., will celebrate Mass at 8:45 a.m. on July 19 at St. Thomas Aquinas Church.** Fr. Tim has been serving as a chaplain in Iraq since last September. He will spend some of his leave in Palo Alto. In the fall he will be going to Kosovo for another tour of duty.

In addition to celebrating Mass on July 19, Fr. Tim will stay on after Mass for a Q&A session with members of the community who might like to hear first hand about his experience in Iraq. The location of that talking time will be announced later.



♦ **Torture is a moral issue** and is the topic of a weekend of panels and workshops June 26-27, sponsored by the Santa Clara County Council of Churches and

others. Friday night is at First Presbyterian Church, 1140 Cowper, Palo Alto, and Saturday is at First United Methodist Church, 625 Hamilton Ave., Palo Alto. (See the Homer St. side of STA for a closer view of the banner.)

Thomas Merton Center Annual Meeting report:

Members of the Thomas Merton Center of Palo Alto* held their annual meeting on May 31. The non-profit 501(c)(3) organization was founded in 1995 by a group of Roman Catholic lay persons to offer Catholic liturgy in the spirit of Vatican II; to augment, support and lead the development of ecumenical spirituality; and to foster new ways for Catholics and other Christians to develop a deeper relationship with Christ. Based in Palo Alto and sponsor of the 8:45 Sunday Mass at St. Thomas Aquinas, members are local as well as drawn from the greater Bay Area.

A discussion at the meeting of the "call to active membership" yielded many interesting

suggestions:

- ♦ Provide a forum for Catholics who have left the Church where they can air their questions and complaints.
- ♦ Connect with the other 3 Mass communities at STA and with the other two churches in the parish.
- ♦ Take care of the people who come to the 8:45 Mass, extending hospitality to newcomers especially.
- ♦ Think about how the renovated Thomas House can be used to promote the goals and values of the Merton Center.
- ♦ Sponsor more spiritual and social justice programs.
- ♦ Publicize the Merton Center programs and liturgies more widely.

*The name of the Thomas Merton Center was chosen in honor of Trappist monk and writer Thomas Merton. The center is a member of the International Merton Society but does not participate in any official activities of that group.