

# Steeple Talk

Volume 2, No. 12

January 25, 2009

## News from the Mass communities:

- **7:15 daily Mass:** Msgr. Gene Boyle presides several times a week; Deacon Carl Bunje delivers the homily sometimes.
- **7:30 Sunday Mass:** The early Sunday morning crowd numbers approximately 150 persons.
- **8:45 Sunday Mass:** On Jan 18 the TMC/8:45 Mass community remembered Martin Luther King Jr. and celebrated the beginning of the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. Presider, Msgr. Gene Boyle, spoke movingly of his experience as a participant in the Civil Rights March at Selma, in the company of Rev. Robert McAfee-Brown and Rabbi Sidney Axelrod.
- On Ash Wednesday, February 25, this Mass community will sponsor a Mass at 6:00 p.m. celebrated by Msgr. Boyle.
- **10:30 Sunday Mass:** Fr. Tim Meier, US Army chaplain home on leave from Iraq, celebrated this Mass earlier in the month.
- **12:00 Sunday Mass:** The St. Ann Choir has a full schedule of festival Masses planned for the coming month. See article on page 2.
- **12:15 Daily Mass:** A good place to spend the lunch hour.

## STA Site Committee plans:

### Monthly Meeting:

4th (or 5th) Wednesday in Thomas House basement

### NEXT MEETING:

Wed. Jan. 28 7:30-9:00 p. m.

### Agenda (tentative):

Interior of church

Report from Thomas House Task Force

### Monthly newsletter:

Sunday before 4th (or 5th) Wednesday

**Editors:** Kay Williams, 650-328-

2781, [kaywill@pacbell.net](mailto:kaywill@pacbell.net)

Jane Bahr, 650-967-8246,

[Bahrjunior@comcast.net](mailto:Bahrjunior@comcast.net)

## Spotlight on the Church Interior

The new year finds the STA Interior Remodel Committee *up and ready, and raring to go!* Its goal is to have an overall plan, divided into short term and long term goals. Areas on which the members would like to work have been highlighted:

- Acoustics
- Lighting
- The Altar area-making it safe for all of its occupants
- Painting of the interior
- Carpet
- Choir loft area
- Front of the church
- Misc. repairs and updates

Under the leadership of chairperson, Judy Foley, the committee is taking time to focus carefully on each of these items. At its most recent meeting, January 21, they took time to look at pictures of Bob Foley's childhood church in Boston. It is older than our church and in remarkable condition. They saw things that could be translated to our church. The church in Boston has handrails on both sides of the altar, painted white so that they are useful but hardly noticeable. There are speakers throughout the church painted

to match the wall to which they are attached. Though big, they are not terribly noticeable. The side altars of the Boston church gave our committee inspiration on how to enhance our rather plain altars.

Judy Foley will set up a meeting with Fr. George to get his ideas and reaction to the committee's thinking so far. Meantime various members of the committee have accepted investigative assignments. John Arnold will meet with an electrical consultant. He and Bill Voorhees will assess the Sanctuary area to see how it could be made safer. Bill Mahrt will be asked for input on the choir loft area, since his Gregorian group is the primary user of that space. Bill also knows of an acoustic expert, whom we could hire and pay on a one-time basis. Bob Foley will assess the entry way where the tiles are mismatched, the steps patched, and one of the railings perhaps loose. Helen Baumann has drawings for an altar designed to coordinate with our original altar.



And as the committee raises its collective head above these ground-level ideas, it looks up to the steeple. The members are interested in getting a quote for a system that will ring the church bell at designated times. Judy has checked with the city of Palo Alto and there is no problem with having the bell ring, but it must be in an acceptable decibel range. Judy is checking with a Midwest company that can give us a quote to install such a system.

Of course, we can always ring the bell the old-fashioned way. Bell Pullers should speak up!

*Everybody who worships at St. Thomas Aquinas is welcome to join this exciting committee. The next meeting will be February 18 at 7:30 PM at the home of Judy and Bob Foley, 1927 Emerson St. Palo Alto, 650-322-8650.*

## Tree Planting on Homer Avenue

The city of Palo Alto is preparing to plant trees along the Homer Avenue side of our church. To preserve the light inside the church, we have requested that they not be planted in front of the stained glass windows. You will see three circles spray-painted on the curb, indicating the possible placement of three trees. These would be medium to large shade trees, 40-50 ft. tall. Appropriate for our site would be sycamore, red oak, ash, or hackberry, a European tree. There are code regulations with respect to spacing between trees and concrete. so the team needs to give more thought to getting the right balance between walking area and greenery.

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

751 Waverley Street  
Palo Alto, CA 9430

### St. Thomas Aquinas Site Committee:

Jane Bahr	Helen Baumann	Lorraine Dabney
Judy Foley	Bill Mahrt	Bob March
Kieran McCarty	Tom McKay	Mike McMahon
Mario Veloro	Kay Williams	

and occasional others.

The Site Committee for St. Thomas Aquinas Church is charged with the responsibility to represent the needs of this site to the Pastoral Stewardship Council of St. Thomas Aquinas Parish. These responsibilities generally include issues of building and grounds maintenance, use of the buildings and grounds, and site specific liturgies and celebrations. Site committee meetings are held the 4th Wednesday of the month in the basement hall of the Thomas House.

Contact: Helen Baumann, 327-9236  
hbbaumann@aol.com

### Upcoming feasts with the St. Ann Choir

**Sunday, January 25, 12:00 noon**, will be the Conversion of St. Paul, celebrated on the Sunday because of the Year of St. Paul; the choir and congregation will sing a Gregorian Mass with Renaissance motets. The celebrant will be Fr. Kevin Joyce, director of Spirit Site, a spirituality center for the Diocese of San Jose.

**Sunday, February 1, 12:00 noon**, will be the Patronal Feast of our Church, St. Thomas Aquinas; the choir and congregation will sing a Gregorian mass with Renaissance motets. The celebrant will be Fr. Anselm Ramelow, O.P., chair of the philosophy department at the Dominican School of Philosophy and Theology in Berkeley.

**Monday, February 2, 8:00 p. m.** will be the Feast of Candlemas, The Presentation of the Lord and the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary. There will be a candlelight procession and Mass. The choir will sing William Byrd's Mass for Three Voices. The celebrant will be Fr. Michael Barber, S.J., professor of theology at St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park.

**Wednesday, February 25, 8:00 p. m.** will be Ash Wednesday, with a Mass with the distribution of ashes. The choir and congregation will sing a Gregorian Mass with Renaissance motets. The celebrant will be Fr. Michael Barber, S.J., professor of theology at St. Patrick's Seminary in Menlo Park.

### STA Site Committee continues to seek suggestions, requests, and correspondence:

Helen Baumann (327-9236) hbbaumann@aol.com  
Kay Williams (328-2781) kaywill@pacbell.net

## Your talent needed:

**Needlepoint** for the wedding kneelers is needed. Is there a needle-pointer out here in the congregation who would volunteer to advise the STA Interior Task Force on replacing the needle-pointed upholstery of these kneelers? We would like to commission, or design ourselves, a needlepoint pattern for the kneelers that pick up colors and shapes from the church windows. And then we'd like a needle pointer or two to execute the design.

**Electrical consultation** is needed to help us understand the scope of the problem we face in re-doing the lighting in the church and updating the electrical panel. Is there an electrician out there in the congregation who would share expertise with the Interior Task Force in this investigatory phase? It would mean looking at the electrical panel and the current lighting in the church with one of our hardy Task Force members and then reporting back to the Task Force at a meeting.

Volunteers should contact Judy Foley at [judybertchfoley@yahoo.com](mailto:judybertchfoley@yahoo.com), 650-322-8850. Please help us plan well for the upgrading of our lovely old church building!

## Thomas House renovation:

The design contract for the planned renovation of Thomas House was signed by architect Lee Lippert of Lippert & Lippert during the week of January 5, and was forwarded to the Diocese for final approval. Mr. Lippert has met with an historical architect for an initial walk-through, the beginning of an analysis of the prospects of securing historic-building status for the house. If such a status is obtained from the the City of Palo Alto, it may make a significant (and beneficial) difference in the cost and difficulty of renovation, though it will make the project take a little longer to reach the construction phase.

Chuck Tully, our parish business manager, has scheduled weekly progress review meetings with the architect to begin this coming Tuesday, January 27. The most recent schedule revision looks to construction beginning in November of 2009. Unfortunately this revised schedule means that another set of winter months will pass before we can have our hospitality gatherings indoors. However, the possibility exists that, if the current tenants vacate the house a few months before November, we may be allowed to make limited use of the first floor while it is unoccupied and awaiting the start of construction. We are waiting and hoping!

*~submitted by Bob March, Thomas House Project*

## Pastoral Stewardship Council:

The PSC met on January 14. In the absence of Fr. George, who is in Cuernavaca, Mexico taking a three-week Spanish immersion course, PSC chairperson, Jerry Lucha, conducted the meeting. Fr. Jeronimo urged members to inform their ministry teams about the Annual Volunteer Celebration, prepared by the parish staff to honor all parish volunteers. It is scheduled for Saturday, February 7 at 6:00 p.m. Dinner, refreshments and fellowship. RSVPs to the Parish Center are requested: 494-2496 or [admin@paloaltocatholic.org](mailto:admin@paloaltocatholic.org). Quarterly reports from three ministries were presented: Adult Spiritual Development, Human Concerns, and Communications. This last committee proudly reported that the parish bulletin has increased its subscription list from 125 families in January 2008 to 205 in January 2009. (To subscribe to this fast-breaking news bulletin that arrives in your email box each Friday morning, email to [ebulletin@paloaltocatholic.org](mailto:ebulletin@paloaltocatholic.org).)

A report on the plans for the renovation of the Thomas House was given by parish business manager, Chuck Tully. (see article above)) Other discussion centered around Communications Committee member Marguerite Purcell's suggestion to the Bishop that the diocese adopt a "Clear Speech" program for priests joining parishes in the diocese, and around planning for the PSC retreat to be held in May. Gerard McGuire concluded with a brief reflection on spiritual development from Rev. Richard Rohr's book *Why Be A Catholic?*

*~submitted by Kay Williams*