

St. Thomas of Villanova Parish

2006 – 2007 Annual Report • (July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007)

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that he may grant you in accord with the riches of his glory to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner self, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith....

— Ephesians 3: 14–17

*Dear Brothers and Sisters
in Christ,*



*St. Paul's Letter to
the Ephesians is a
prayer for all of us,
and we at St.*

*Thomas of
Villanova Parish
have indeed been
the beneficiaries
of that prayer.*

*Christ dwells in
our hearts through
faith. Our life as
community helps us
to live that faith,
through worship, which
brings us closer to God;
through formation, which
grows our understanding of His*

Word; and through service to others, as we follow in His footsteps.

Our Annual Report shows the many ways in which we have been strengthened by the power of His Spirit during 2006 – 2007

Phillip Stanley

Our Ministries

Through Worship We Were Strengthened

Whether we were worshiping with words, music or drama, we felt Christ's presence throughout the year. Here are a few highlights:

- We continued with the Children's Liturgy during the school year. Not only did children hear the Word of God in a way they could understand, but they also connected with community. Our staff and volunteers worked hard to impress upon children that Mass is not an isolated event. There is a connection between the celebration on Sunday

and what we do the rest of the week. Throughout the year, the candidates for First Holy Communion and Confirmation attended Mass together. Father Earley presented the candidates to the rest of the congregation, asking the congregation to support our young people on their faith journeys.

- Even when we know a story by heart, seeing it brought to life on stage gives it a new dimension. During Advent and Lent, we were delighted by one-woman shows depicting scenes from Scripture. Olivia Woodford, a professional actress from Belmont who is dedicated to bringing the sacred into people's lives, gave the presentations. The subject for Advent was *Faith, a Mother's Story*, which focused on Mary and the women who surrounded her while she was preparing for the birth of Jesus. In Lent, the presentation focused on the Passion as seen through the eyes of the women who knew Jesus at the time of His death.
- Our annual Christmas Concert took place Friday evening, December 15. The Trinity Singers from Our Lady of Nazareth Academy in Wakefield joined the St. Thomas choirs. Program highlights included traditional carols; the Hara Garacci Band; a Christmas Cantata called, *The Advent of Hope, The Birth of Peace*; and Father Earley's traditional reading of *The Night Before Christmas*.
- We were delighted to welcome once again Catherine Joanne of St. Joseph's Dwelling Place, a retreat house in Vermont, to lead our parish retreat. Approximately 200 people attended the program, which took place March 3 through March 7. The discussions focused on the three Theresas: St. Theresa Lisieux, St. Theresa of Avila and Mother Theresa of Calcutta.
- Holy Week began with the somber-but-beautiful Tenebrae service on Sunday. Olivia Woodford gave her performance on the Passion on Monday Night. And on Good Friday afternoon we participated in an ecumenical service held at the First Baptist Church of Wilmington.
- During this past fiscal year we had 104 Baptisms, 121 First Communions, 115 Confirmations, 15 Marriages and 62 Funerals.

In Faith Formation We Grew in Understanding

Children, teens and adults continued to grow in their understanding of faith. Here are some examples:

- Close to 1,100 children participated in the parish Religious Education Program. Our thanks to the more than 70 volunteers who made the 2006 – 2007 program possible.
- Confirmation candidates attended a one-day retreat at the parish in January. Father Paul Flammia led the event, assisted by Marilyn Mandosa, Director of Religious Education, and a group of volunteers. The students heard Father Paul speak about the importance of Confirmation and the nature of the Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit: Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Fortitude, Knowledge, Piety, and Awe of the Lord.
- In May, 11 engaged couples participated in our Marriage Preparation Day. The day-long event included a series of presentations given by married couples in the parish who volunteered their time and shared their wisdom.
- In December we launched our new web site, stthomasvillanova.com. The site contains information about parish ministries and services. We update the site monthly with messages from the pastor and the latest news. On the site you will find a number of links to educational materials.
- We began the process to create another picture directory for the parish. The current directory is several years old. We put out the call for those who had not been in the last directory to get a picture taken for this one.

By Serving Others We Followed in His Footsteps

Our parishioners continued their commitment to help others. Just a few examples follow:

- Throughout the year, the Charities Committee held food and clothing collections to support shelters in the area. In May the committee collected household items for Mission of Deeds. The Fourth of July Pie Booth project raised \$1,400 for local charities.



- Whether collecting blankets for area shelters or singing Christmas carols at Demming Way Senior Housing, the Outreach Committee continued its active ministry. The group arranged visits every two months to My Brother's Table in Lynn, where parishioners cooked and served meals. The committee also helped cook and serve meals at the St. Francis House in Boston, Cor Unum and Lazarus House in Lawrence, and Lowell Transitional House in Lowell.
- The Outreach Committee set up the Giving Tree the first week in Advent. The more than 350 ornaments, each listing a gift item from the wish lists of local charities, were gone within two weeks. It was wonderful to watch families go to the tree and decide which items they would purchase for those in need. Gifts were given to Catholic Charities, the Wilmington Senior Center and various shelters.
- Once again the St. Thomas Appalachian Mountain Project (S.T.A.M.P.) went to Biloxi, Mississippi, in July to help rebuild houses damaged by Hurricane Katrina. Participants made up a diverse group, including construction professionals, nurses, a lawyer and a police lieutenant. They worked on three houses, one of which had been flooded to the ceiling.
- During the spring and fall, the Women's Club sponsored senior luncheons. They also raised funds to buy a refrigerator for Villanova Hall.
- A welcoming atmosphere greeted parishioners as the Hospitality Committee hosted monthly coffees after the Children's Liturgy.
- Everyone had a good time at the St. Thomas Family Fun Day in September. It was a wonderful opportunity for whole families to gather in a social setting, further strengthening our parish community. Activities included a moon bounce, games, face painting, hot dogs, drinks, cotton candy and entertainment.
- We continued saying Mass at Woodbriar Nursing Home and Wilmington Health Care. Additionally, once a week our Eucharistic Ministers brought the Eucharist to residents at both facilities. We also were asked to reinstate the monthly Mass at Demming Way Senior Housing, which we gladly have done.

In Caring for Our Home, We Built Community

Managing our parish home is a joint responsibility as well as a great joy. Here are some of the tasks we took on last year:

- Spring storms caused some damage both to Villanova Hall and the parish rectory. At the hall, flooding created three feet of mold up the walls. We had the affected area ripped up, but we will need to put walls back up during the next fiscal year.
- At the rectory, we made repairs where shingles and siding had blown off during a storm.

- Our thanks to the wonderful staff and volunteer committees who served last year. Many people contributed to our celebration of the Liturgy: Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors, Altar Servers, Greeters, Sacristans, members of the Music Ministry and all of you who attend Mass. Our Charities, Outreach and Hospitality committees did wonderful work. The Pastoral and Finance Councils provided great support. Thank you for building our community here at St. Thomas of Villanova Parish.



Financial Report

This section discusses our parish finances from July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007. Overall, we took a step back, as income declined slightly from fiscal 2006, a banner year for our parish. However, expenses were lower than budgeted, enabling us to end fiscal 2007 with net income of \$16,400. What follows is some background to the numbers presented in the accompanying graphs and table.

Income

Parish income for the year totaled \$479,200 compared to \$488,900 the prior fiscal year. Offertory, which represents more than two-thirds of our income, was \$339,200, an increase of 1% over fiscal 2006. Our third Grand Annual appeal totaled \$36,100, a decrease of 27% compared to the prior year and considerably less than the \$55,000 we had budgeted. It is possible that we are experiencing some "donor fatigue" here at St. Thomas. We are also aware that many families are struggling with rising costs and the eroding purchasing power of the dollar.

Donations, Gifts and Bequests totaled \$9,000. These gestures of extraordinary personal generosity play a major role in enabling us to expand St. Thomas' ministry. The other major revenue category, Religious Education Tuition, totaled \$69,000. However, that was offset by corresponding program expenses. Tuition covers only books and materials. Program salaries are covered by offertory.

Income Statement for the Fiscal Years 2004 – 2006 (July 1st – June 30th)

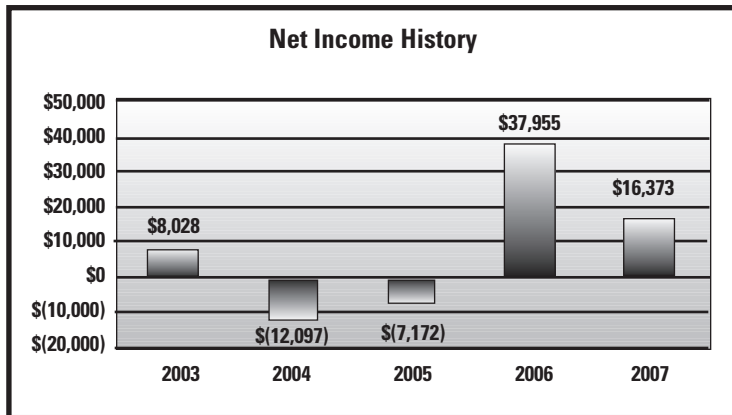
	2005 Actual	2006 Actual	2007 Actual
INCOME			
Offertory	\$283,478	\$335,533	\$339,218
Grand Annual	46,180	49,476	36,105
Religious Education	58,919	66,341	69,009
Sacramental Offerings	15,033	14,176	22,185
Donations	11,688	3,128	8,952
Gifts and Bequests	3,200	5,000	0
Rental Income	651	150	100
Other	5,713	15,142	3,628
Total Income	\$424,862	\$488,946	\$479,197
EXPENSES			
Compensation Clerical	\$40,389	\$153,995	\$42,516
Compensation Non-Clerical	151,994	39,167	164,269
Benefits and Payroll Taxes	30,633	28,300	31,673
Liturgical Supplies and Parish Community Expenditures	58,713	37,449	40,043
Telephone and Utilities	35,466	38,896	39,593
Maintenance and Repairs	23,466	39,917	33,938
Capital Improvements	1,715	1,787	750
Office Supplies and Professional Fees	3,033	31,912	13,083
Household Expenses	7,886	6,373	7,909
Postage and Printing	13,157	10,319	1,899
Pamphlets and Religious Education Books	29,575	16,116	15,564
School Tax	12,540	7,000	20,756
Property and Liability Insurance	4,471	15,521	14,361
Envelope Mailing and Contribution Processing	8,242	10,278	10,684
Other	10,752	13,960	25,785
Total Expenses	\$432,033	\$450,991	\$462,824
NET INCOME			
Total Income	\$424,862	\$488,946	\$479,197
Total Expenses	\$432,033	\$450,991	\$462,824
Total Income (Loss)	\$(7,172)	\$37,955	\$16,373

Expenses

Operating expenses in fiscal 2007 totaled \$462,800 compared to \$451,000 in fiscal 2006. Due to an accounting change, certain salaries have been properly shifted from the Clerical to the Non-Clerical Compensation category. Compensation, Benefits and Payroll Taxes totaled \$238,500 in fiscal 2007, an increase of 8% over fiscal 2006. It is because of our wonderful lay staff, who maintain our parish buildings, staff our offices and manage the Religious Education Program and other ministries, that St. Thomas is a vibrant parish.

Many other expense categories were roughly the same as the prior year. Liturgical Supplies and Parish Community Expenditures were \$40,000; Pamphlets and Religious Education Books totaled \$15,600; Telephone and Utilities expenses were \$39,600. The largest declines were in Office Supplies and Professional Fees, which were \$13,100, and Postage and Printing expenses, which totaled \$1,900. Collectively, these categories declined \$27,300 as we discontinued the services of several consultants.

The largest single increase was in the School Tax, which was \$20,800 compared to \$7,000 last year. We are obligated to remit a school tax to the Archdiocese of 6% of our offertory. For several years we did not have the funds to remit the full tax or did not remit any of this tax at all. In fiscal 2007, we submitted our full obligation. The Archdiocese has determined that we will not be liable for past-years' arrears.

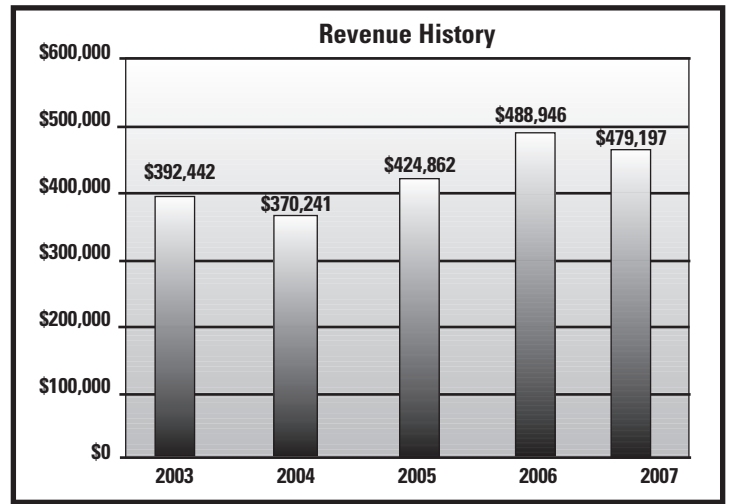


The greatest unknown in projecting our expenses is the variable cost related to the upkeep of our parish properties. Maintenance and Repair expenditures in fiscal 2007 were \$33,900 as we continued to make repairs to Villanova Hall following rain damage and to keep up with the general maintenance of parish properties. We will need to conduct several infrastructure projects related to the church building. It is our hope and prayer that we will be able to replenish the capital fund, discussed below, in order to undertake a short-but-expensive laundry list of needed repairs before neglect leads to further damage.

Parish Savings

As of June 30, 2007, St. Thomas had approximately \$114,600 in savings, down from \$116,300 at the end of fiscal 2006 and \$139,700 at the end of fiscal 2005. Of our current savings, \$28,500 is restricted to the capital fund, which must be used for improvements or repairs to the buildings; \$14,900 was collected for our St. Thomas Appalachian Mountain Project (S.T.A.M.P.); and the balance of \$71,200 is available for operations.

As you can see, our savings have declined considerably over the past three years. Also, with expenses of approximately \$39,000 a month, our \$71,200 operating cushion does not provide the three-month cushion that is recommended for parishes.



Looking Toward the Future

As always, we look forward to continuing our work over the next year. Here are some of the items on the agenda:

- We are excited about participating in the Renew program through the Archdiocese. Entitled, *ARISE: Together in Christ*, this is a comprehensive process of renewal through prayer and sharing of our faith. It has been created by Renew International, a well respected Catholic organization, and will be offered in the fall of 2008. We will keep you posted as we receive more details.
- During the next year we will need to make additional repairs to the roof.

- We plan to purchase a new copier for the Religious Education Program.

In fiscal 2008 we will continue to face financial challenges. While we ended fiscal 2007 with a modest surplus and avoided incurring a deficit, we are once again precariously close to living beyond our means. This puts us in the situation of having to delay expanding our ministries.

Together, we will meet these challenges. With the support and generosity of our parish family we will conduct our Father's work, strengthened by His Spirit, that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith.

St. Thomas of Villanova Parish

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Pastor: Rev. Phillip B. Earley