



St. Thomas of Villanova Parish

2009–2010 Annual Report

(July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010)

“Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”

—Matthew 28: 19–20

the Gospel. It is for each of us to recognize our call to holiness, to share our faith with others, and to help bring social justice to the world.

Over this past year, the members of our St. Thomas family have lived the words of this Scripture. Through our prayer life, faith formation and community-outreach programs, we have been Christ’s disciples, observing all that He has commanded us. It gives me great joy to present just a few examples of this work in the following report.

I am truly grateful for all of you, the loving, committed parishioners and staff who make St. Thomas of Villanova the vital parish it is.

May God bless,

Phillip Staley

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Before His ascension, Jesus spoke to the apostles, telling them to make disciples of all nations. His message, given to us in Matthew 28, was not only for the appointed ones but for all who follow Christ. The mission of the Catholic Church is evangelization, to spread the Word of

Our Ministries

Living an Active Prayer Life

- We held our annual **Memorial Prayer Service** on Sunday, November 8. The service remembered parishioners who had died from October 1, 2008, through November 1, 2009. After the service in the church, family members gathered in the chapel for refreshments.
- The annual **Christmas Concert** was held on December 18 in the church. Our adult and children’s choirs, joined by students from Nazareth Academy in Wakefield, performed a variety of Christmas music. A sing-along, visit from Santa and reading of *The Night Before Christmas* were all part of the celebration.
- The **Senior Anointing Mass and Luncheon** took place in April. Approximately 50 parishioners attended. Rides were provided for those who needed them.
- Our new children’s ministry, **Angels**, ran from June through August. The purpose of the program was to help children between the ages of 6 and 9 enhance their spirituality over the summer months, and we were delighted that we had an

excellent response. Children participated in arts and crafts, field trips and service projects. Angels is a non-profit ministry organized and operated by several volunteer religious-education teachers from St. Thomas Parish.

- St. Thomas was the host of the annual **Good Friday Ecumenical Service**, which brings the various Christian churches together on this most solemn day. Clergy from the various denominations spoke on the seven phrases Christ uttered from the cross, including, “Father, forgive them for they know not what they do,” and “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”
- **The Feast of Pentecost** in May is the birthday of the Church. Parishioners marked the occasion by wearing red to Mass that weekend to symbolize the flame of the Holy Spirit. During the Liturgy, parishioners read scripture in various languages, highlighting how those gathered at the first Pentecost heard the Word of God in their own tongues. The celebration continued after the 9:30 Mass with a birthday cake.
- **During this past fiscal year** we had 81 Baptisms, 109 First Communions, 112 Confirmations, 9 Marriages and 73 Funerals.

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Developing Our Faith

- Our **Religious Education Program** helped parents pass on the faith to 1,022 students. Approximately 100 volunteers worked as teachers and helpers, giving of their time and talent to guide our young people.
- In February, our **Confirmation candidates** took part in a one-day retreat to prepare them to receive the sacrament. The students heard presentations on the Gift of the Holy Spirit and Why You Are Confirmed.
- Throughout the year we held three **safety/awareness programs** for our religious-education students. In January, 7th- and 8th-graders took part in the “Created for Love Program,” which we ran in collaboration with St. Dorothy Parish in Wilmington and St. William Parish in Tewksbury. St. William’s also worked with us on the Stay Safe Program for grades one through four and the Keeping Children Safe Program for grades five through eight. The sessions were offered in November and March.



- Seasons three and four of **ARISE! Together in Christ** took place over the past fiscal year. Season three, In the Footsteps of Christ, ran during the fall of 2009, and Season four, A New Heart and A New Spirit, began in February of 2010. Each season consisted of six, 90-minute, weekly sessions.

- Approximately 20 couples from different parishes participated in our **Marriage Preparation Program** in March. The program covered the topics of spirituality, communication, parenting, finances, and sex and sexuality. Our thanks to the married couples who volunteer to facilitate this program.



Altar cloth created by religious-education students.

Reaching Out to Those in Need

Throughout the year, our Charities Committee, Outreach Ministry, Women’s Club, the St. Thomas Apostolic Mission Project (S.T.A.M.P.) and other ministries continued their work of serving those among us who are less fortunate.

- An activity that requires little effort but brings big results is cooking and serving meals at **My Brother’s Table** in Lynn. Over the past year, there were opportunities every few months for parishioners to volunteer their time to brighten the days of others. Two of the themes that made the events even more enjoyable were Halloween and “Picnic in the Park.”



Children collect items for the Lenten Gospel program.

- **Advent** is not only one of our most spiritual seasons but also a time when reaching out to others is even more appreciated. We began the season with a wreath sale the last weekend in November to benefit Parish Outreach. Our Giving Tree was set up at the same time. Catholic Charities, House of Hope, Millie’s Place, the Home for Little Wanderers, and the Lowell Middlesex Shelter all had a very merry and blessed Christmas thanks to our parishioners.
- As always, our parishioners were generous in supporting **collections for those in need**. Food collections throughout the year benefitted the Wilmington Food Pantry. In the summer of 2009 we raised \$700 for Project Rachel and Bridget Crossing through the “Baby \$ents” project. In the fall, parishioners brought clothing for St. Francis House in Boston. During the winter we collected blankets for local shelters, including Bridge

Over Troubled Water and Lowell Women’s Shelter, as well as layette items for newborn babies of unwed mothers in the Framingham area. In spring, we held our collection of household items for Mission of Deeds. We also sent more than 16 boxes of new and gently worn shoes to Soles4Souls, which distributed them to



Parishioners help rebuild homes in Pass Christian, Mississippi.

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Financial Report

This section discusses our parish finances from July 1, 2009 to June 30, 2010.

Income

Parish income for the year totaled \$576,600, compared to \$559,700 in fiscal 2009, a 3% increase. Several income categories such as Religious Education Tuition, Sacramental Offerings and Rental Income showed little change from the prior 12-month fiscal period. Total Donations and Gifts and Bequests vary significantly from year to year. These loving gestures to our parish are always unexpected blessings, and we prayerfully ask that you consider a bequest to your parish as you do your estate planning.

The big news is that our combined Offertory and Grand Annual donations, which provide more than four-fifths of our operating budget, rose a combined 18%. Most of this phenomenal increase came from Offertory collections, which jumped 24% to \$432,900 from \$348,800 in fiscal 2009. This leap reflects your response to the challenge we put before you: help put us on a sound footing by increasing your weekly giving. Your generosity, particularly in these times of economic hardship, could only have been inspired by the Holy Spirit.

The RCAB Collective Investment Partnership, a diversified investment fund offered to parishes through the Archdiocese, holds the proceeds from the sale of the North Wilmington property. The fund provides a short-term rate of return that is higher than that offered by other local financial institutions. The incremental return, coupled with the principal that we received from the property sale, provides much-needed capital for repaving our parking lot. We intend to restrict the use of the monies in the RCAB account to capital projects that will maintain our parish's assets.

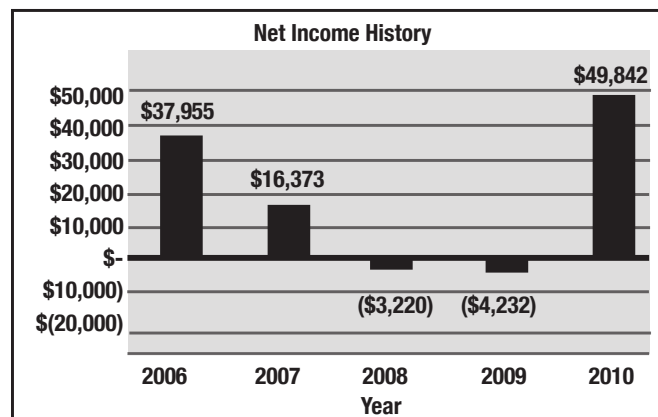
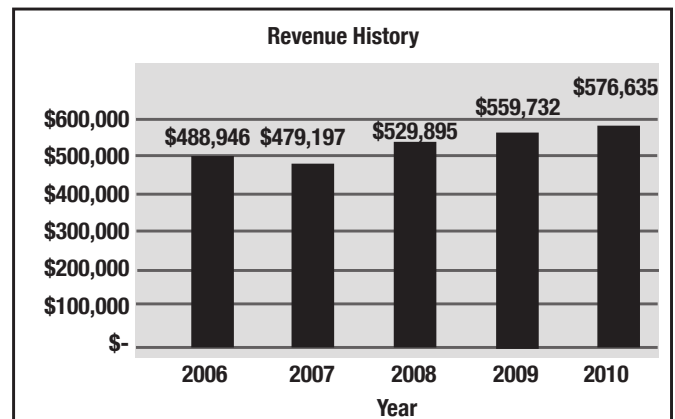
Expenses

Operating expenses in fiscal 2010 totaled \$526,800 compared to \$564,000 in fiscal 2009, a 7% decline. Our largest expense category—Compensation, Benefits and Payroll Taxes for the clergy and other members of our parish staff—fell 3% compared to the prior fiscal year. Most of the other expense categories

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St. Thomas of Villanova Fiscal Year 2010

	2007–2008 Actual	2008–2009 Actual	2009–2010 Actual
INCOME			
Offertory	\$346,128	\$348,777	\$432,895
Grand Annual	39,355	49,546	38,944
Religious Education	67,565	67,082	63,976
Sacramental Offerings	10,664	14,112	12,873
Donations	19,400	47,830	9,082
Gifts and Bequests	4,500	2,316	7,213
Rental Income	1,225	1,925	3,273
Other	41,058	28,145	8,379
TOTAL INCOME	\$529,895	\$559,732	\$576,635
EXPENSES			
Compensation - Clerical	\$62,151	\$61,775	\$55,400
Compensation - Non-Clerical	194,752	201,526	195,786
Benefits and Payroll Taxes	34,163	42,343	45,406
Liturgical Supplies and Parish Community Expenditures	37,244	37,070	34,189
Telephone and Utilities	40,264	45,818	41,442
Maintenance and Repair	37,658	32,541	36,335
Capital Improvements	23,932	250	2,069
Office Supplies and Professional Fees	18,379	30,632	29,905
Household	5,105	5,848	5,646
Postage and Printing	2,662	3,850	4,739
Pamphlets and Religious ED Books	11,153	15,908	15,289
School Tax	20,190	32,078	15,979
Property and Liability Insurance	14,305	14,472	14,824
Envelope Mailing & Contributions Processing	9,130	10,136	12,568
Other	22,027	29,718	17,215
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$533,115	\$563,965	\$526,792
NET INCOME			
Total Income	\$529,895	\$559,732	\$576,635
Total Expenses	\$533,115	\$563,965	\$526,792
Net Income (Loss)	\$(3,220)	\$(4,232)	\$49,842



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the victims of the Haitian earthquake and people in third-world countries. In response to our Lenten Gospel Giving program, parishioners donated various items that reflected the Gospel during Lent.

- Our annual trip to help those affected by **Hurricane Katrina** took us to Pass Christian in Mississippi. More than 20 parishioners and staff members provided carpentry, plumbing, electrical and other services to help the community rebuild. The trip was made possible by funds raised through S.T.A.M.P.

Taking Care of Our Parish

- St. Thomas Parish **Family Fun Day** took place on September 27, 2009, and the St. Thomas Women's Club's annual Craft Fair on November 21. Both these events continue to be wonderful ways to build community.
- We are grateful for the response to our **Increased Offertory Campaign**. Our parishioners listened as we detailed what would be required to care for our buildings and grounds and reacted with great generosity.

- We reserved part of the proceeds from the sale of the North Wilmington property to dig up the base of and **repave our parking lot**. At a cost of \$135,000, this is a significant project. (We completed the project in October of the 2011 fiscal year.)

- In January our **Pastoral Council and Finance Council** began working with consultant Dr. Jim Gorman to develop a strategic plan. This will be a long-range project designed to strengthen our future parish operations. We will provide you with more information as we move forward.



Family Fun Day.



Repaving the parking lot.



Family Fun Day.

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were essentially unchanged from fiscal 2009 except for the School Tax, which fell from \$32,100 in fiscal 2009 to \$16,000. We are now fully caught up with our School Tax underpayment from fiscal year 2006.

Instead of finishing the 2010 fiscal year at a net loss, as we have over the past two years, we arrived at June 30, 2010, with a net gain of \$49,800. We are pleased with the progress we have made in keeping our expenses close to budget.

Parish Savings

As of June 30, 2010, St. Thomas had approximately \$308,300 in savings compared to \$72,400 at the end of fiscal 2009. Of our current savings, \$20,600 is restricted to the capital fund, which

must be used for improvements or repairs to the buildings, and \$10,000 was collected for our St Thomas Apostolic Mission Project (S.T.A.M.P.). Our general checking account, which is available for operating expenses, rose to \$92,500 from \$22,000, giving us breathing room as we catch up on our bills. The balance of our savings, \$185,000, has been allocated to the RCAB Collective Investment Partnership.

We now have sufficient funds in our checking account to cover two months of operating expenses. Although this is less than the Archdiocese's requirement of three months of coverage, we are heading in the right direction. Also, for the first time, we were able to set aside the Grand Annual proceeds for capital expenditure and emergency purposes.

Moving Forward

This has been a very positive year for St. Thomas of Villanova Parish. As a result of your generosity to our Increased Offertory Campaign, we have been able to stabilize our financial position. We still have work to do to create the cushion needed, but we've made great progress. We ask you to stay the course by continuing your Offertory at the present levels.

This will enable us to build up the capital reserves we need to maintain our parish in a condition that we can be proud of.

While we continued our efforts to be responsible stewards of today's assets, we also began to plan for the future. Our Pastoral Council and Finance Council have taken the first steps toward creating a long-range strategic plan. We are not alone

in doing so. Parishes across the country are taking similar steps because parish life has changed significantly over the past 50 years. We look forward to telling you more about this process as it moves forward.

Together, as we move into the next year, we will continue our work as Christ's disciples.