

St. Thomas More Catholic Church
Long Range Plan
2011 - 2015

“I am the vine, you are the branches” [John 15:1-7]

Reflection and Prayer

Lord Jesus, you are the vine and we are the branches. You are a vine that will never wither; the kind of vine our life must be grafted to. In conversion of heart, may we seek to take up residence in you Lord Jesus! For the pruning that we must do, help us Lord Jesus, so that in the tapestry of our life, you become the unseen woven thread, the vine unto which our life is grafted.

Gracious Savior, as we strive for communion with God, in response to His outpouring love for us, may we be grafted to you in prayer, living your words as revealed in the Scripture, loving one another in the body of Christ, standing uncompromisingly for the truth of the gospel, and reaching out in loving compassion to our neighbors. Jesus the vine of our life, in our quest for conversion, may we endeavor to build a welcoming community, holy families, strong leaders and a community of faith where young people are grafted in you, who is life forever and ever.

The purpose of the St. Thomas More Long Range Plan is to document a vision for the parish over the next five years. St. Thomas More is an active parish dedicated to living out the teachings of Christ. The Long Range Plan envisions that the parish will not only maintain its vibrant, high level of involvement and activism, but deepen and broaden its dedication to living out the teachings of Christ.

To achieve this vision the primary focus will be on creating an atmosphere of lifelong formation and ongoing conversion to Christ. Through deepening and broadening faith we will work to nurture more holy families, to foster a faith commitment in teens and young adults, to build strong leadership and to create a more open and welcoming parish for all.

The St Thomas More Long Range Plan for the next five years is the result of input from a variety of sources. From March 2010 to November 2010, a committee met at the request of the Pastoral Advisory Council and the Pastor. The goal of the Long-Range Planning Committee was to propose a set of goals to be achieved by the parish over the next five years.

The committee studied the St Thomas More existing five year plan, it considered the results of a parish survey conducted in 2007 and it reviewed the recently released Diocesan Pastoral Plan 2009-2013, along with feedback on key strategies within that plan from staff and ministry leaders in the summer of 2009.

The Committee elected to prepare this plan using the framework laid out in the vision and five key strategies of the Diocesan Plan (Conversion to Christ, Welcoming Communities, Young People, Holy Families and Strong Leaders). It refined those strategies specifically for St. Thomas More. The five strategies of the Long-Range Plan like the Diocesan Plan follow a natural progression from the individual call to holiness, to the family and to the parish community.

Conversion to Christ –

“This is the time of fulfillment. The kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.” (Mk. 1:15)

Vision Statement: *Promote an environment that challenges each parishioner to live out their faith in all aspects of their lives and that will call them to a deeper conversion to Christ. This call to conversion is at the heart of the objectives related to Families, Young People, Welcoming Communities and Strong Leaders.*

To accomplish this vision:

- ❖ Define and implement a process that provides individualized guidance and flexible programs for parishioners to advance and grow their faith
- ❖ Enrich and promote curriculum, programs and service opportunities that enable a lifelong process of conversion and formation
- ❖ Call parishioners to spiritual growth through service to others
- ❖ Grow an existing ministry or establish a new ministry to provide guidance, mentorship and sponsorship for this faith journey

Welcoming Community –

“As a body is one though it has many parts, and all the parts of the body, though many, are one body, so also Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, slaves or free persons, and we were all given to drink of one Spirit. Now the body is not a single part, but many” (1 Cor. 12:12-15)

Vision Statement: *Work to assure that everyone in the community feels welcomed, included and involved at St. Thomas More. Reach out and evangelize newcomers, inactive parishioners, non-practicing Catholics and those in need in the community. Gain an understanding of their needs and support them in meeting those needs.*

To accomplish this vision:

- ❖ Create a Welcoming Ministry leadership position for helping define and oversee the Welcoming Ministry and its activities
- ❖ Recruit people to the Welcoming Ministry and provide training and formation
- ❖ Establish a process to monitor the needs of people in our parish, to help them feel welcome and involved in the community
- ❖ Identify newcomers to the parish, take action to help them feel welcome and encourage them to become actively involved in the programs offered by the parish
- ❖ Identify registered parishioners who are not currently “active” at St Thomas More and determine what needs to be done to encourage greater involvement
- ❖ Determine the demographic makeup within the boundaries of St Thomas More parish to create an action plan to meet diverse needs

Young People – Teens and Young Adults

“Remember now your Creator in the days of your youth” (Ecc. 12:1)

Vision Statement for Teens: *Effectively involve teens in all aspects of parish life. Increase emphasis on theology and catechesis in youth programs, strengthen and develop leadership skills and engage teens in the practice of their faith by providing adult leadership and direction to involve them in service opportunities in the parish.*

To accomplish this vision:

- ❖ Expand young people’s knowledge of “what it means to be a Catholic Christian” as it relates to teen issues
- ❖ Provide diversified activities to keep young people and their parents interested and involved in the programs available to them
- ❖ Participate with teens in service opportunities within the parish as a living example of our faith
- ❖ Grow the Core Team and provide education and training to help them lead teens in an ongoing Conversion to Christ

Vision Statement for Young Adults: *Build an active, vibrant community of young adults. Establish programs that minister to their spiritual and social needs.*

To accomplish this vision:

- ❖ Identify and form a leadership team to reach out to this community of young adults
- ❖ Expand and develop programs that welcome and involve young adults in parish life, by addressing their spiritual and social needs
- ❖ Coordinate activities with other parishes in the deanery and diocese to create momentum and encourage involvement

Holy Families –

“Observe, my son, your father’s bidding, and reject not your mother’s teaching; Keep them fastened over your heart always, put them around your neck; for the bidding is a lamp, and the teaching a light... (Prov. 6:20-22)

Vision Statement: *Foster and develop a parish of Christ-centered families rooted in the practice of the Catholic faith. Advocate healthy marriages, effective parenting, active stewardship, and lifelong faith formation through catechesis, resources and a support system.*

To accomplish this vision:

- ❖ Provide support for families in their marriages, parenting and basic (physical, spiritual and emotional) needs.
- ❖ Identify a contact person and structure to coordinate parish support for those needs
- ❖ Provide formation and catechesis on the Catholic Church’s teachings on family and family life.
- ❖ Encourage family participation in St Thomas More ministries and service opportunities

Strong Leaders –

“As each one has received a gift, use it to serve one another as good stewards of God’s varied grace.”

Vision Statement: *Build a solid foundation for the future of our Catholic faith at St Thomas More and in the broader society by training and forming effective leaders. Promote and encourage ministry and community leadership through a discernment program that will help individuals to identify their gifts for leadership.*

To accomplish this vision:

- ❖ Provide a process to help parishioners discern leadership gifts and talents, then recruit them to leadership roles
- ❖ Provide access to leadership classes and training programs, at either the parish or diocesan level, to enrich ministry leaders’ skills
- ❖ Provide a support structure for ministry leaders including succession planning and transition assistance
- ❖ Promote and foster vocations to the priesthood, the diaconate and to religious life for both men and women
- ❖ Encourage advocacy and civic engagement in society to promote Catholic teachings

The visions in this plan offer a means for all Catholics to participate in their communal call by strengthening the parish to be truly Christ-centered. In doing this, we will not only serve Catholics but all people in the community as a sign of Christ’s much-needed presence in our world.

The pastor, Staff and Ministry leaders are charged with executing the plan. The Pastoral Advisory Council is charged with reviewing, on at least an annual basis, the implementation of the Long Range Plan goals and objectives and working with the pastor to make sure the plan is being implemented. Special thanks goes to the Long Range Planning Committee that developed this plan in 2010. The members of that committee were:

Bill Connors (Chairperson)
Fr. James Ekeocha (Associate Pastor)
Deacon Tom Mallinger
Steve Kliman
Randy McFadden
Judy O’Rourke

Fr. Larry Stehling (STM Pastor)
Fr. Mike Sis (STM Pastor from 2009 to 2010)
Jason Elizondo
Chris Lambert
Tami Mena
Kevin Walker