



Pastor's Vision of St. Thomas More Capital Campaign

Rev. J. Patrick Reynolds, JCL

Envision the Future

Homily October 10, 2010



Prior to the Confirmation Mass last November, Bishop McRaith was in our church gathering space and he asked me, "Are you all ever going to build a fitting chapel for the Blessed Sacrament?" I replied that we had been talking about it for several years. He then said, "It's the only piece of this beautiful church that is missing."

I agree with him wholeheartedly. A Eucharistic chapel was an original part of our church plan but cost overruns excluded it from being built. As you know, the tabernacle holding the Blessed Sacrament is located in our bell tower. Oftentimes, visitors to our church will ask me where the tabernacle is located - as they cannot see it. Canon law states that the tabernacle "should be placed in a part of the church that is prominent, conspicuous, beautifully decorated and suitable for prayer." The *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* speaks of the tabernacle being placed in a chapel "suitable for the faithful's private adoration and prayer and organically connected to the church and readily visible to the Christian faithful." The United States Bishops have also given directions about church architecture and worship.¹

The proposed chapel would allow the tabernacle to be readily seen by all those entering the church by being set deep within one of the large wall niches on the right side of church. Behind the tabernacle would be the Eucharistic chapel which would be open twenty-four hours a day for adoration. Pope John Paul II proposed perpetual adoration of the Blessed Sacrament on a parish level. Many parishes have begun this practice. My home parish in Bowling Green has a Eucharistic Chapel. Members of the parish pray in front of the Eucharist 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. I was home several months ago and said something to my 85 year old mom about having a late lunch on Monday. She replied, "Sorry, I have Eucharistic adoration every Monday from 1-2 pm." My brother-in-law mentioned that he took an early morning hour of prayer in their chapel once a week. It made me realize what a great blessing perpetual Eucharistic adoration would be for St. Thomas More Parish. A Baptist minister I know constantly challenged his congregation to spend at least one hour a week in prayer, one hour in faith/Bible study, and one hour in service to those in need. What good advice that is. There is no doubt in my mind that each person/family in our parish could sign up for one hour

¹ From the document "Built of Living Stones"

The Chapel of Reservation

§ 77 § The diocesan bishop may direct the parish to reserve the Blessed Sacrament in a chapel separate from the nave and sanctuary but "integrally connected with the church" and "conspicuous to the faithful."¹⁰⁰ The placement and design of the chapel can foster reverence and can provide the quiet and focus needed for personal prayer, and it should provide kneelers and chairs for those who come to pray.

§ 78 § Some parishes have inaugurated the practice of continuous adoration of the Eucharist. If, for some good reason, perpetual exposition must take place in a parish church, the Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments has directed that this take place in a separate chapel that is "distinct from the body of the church so as not to interfere with the normal activities of the parish or its daily liturgical celebration."¹⁰¹

weekly in quiet prayer before the Eucharist so that there would be parishioners constantly in the Lord's real presence praying for the sick and dying in our midst, for religious and priestly vocations, for missionaries, for our men and women in uniform, the success of our Catholic schools, for those who have wandered away from the faith, and for the grace to accept and do God's will every day.

Some ask, "Are we wasting our money?"... or "Why aren't we building something for our children?"... or "Why aren't we giving this money to the poor?" The answers are – we put money into those things in which we believe. And if we don't teach our children a love for the Eucharist, they will not remain Catholic. Both the old and the young are hungry for silence in this noisy world – the healing silence of the Lord's presence. We can help the poor most effectively only after we pray. Mother Teresa, whose 100th birthday we celebrate this year, tells us we can do what she did, not by going to Calcutta, but by serving the poor at home which includes "those in need of love, companionship, care and understanding." Mother Teresa emphasized that "service to the poor needs to be more than social work; it has to be grounded in a love for Jesus Christ, in the Eucharist, in prayer." Her daily hour before the Eucharist and her reception of Christ's Body at daily Mass allowed her to see the Body of Christ, which she received under the form of bread, to become incarnate in the flesh and faces of the poor she served. Mother Teresa says, "our lives are woven with Jesus in the Eucharist."

I believe we all want to live good lives. But many of us are constantly busy with the activities of our children and grandchildren, busy at work and meetings, busy at the gym, busy on the computer, and sometimes being busybodies. But are we busy at prayer? A wise priest once told me, if you are too busy to pray – then you are too busy! He was right.

Our parish campaign, *Envision the Future*, will be a building block for the growth of our faith and that of our children. You might have noticed that the symbol on our campaign materials and prayer card is the parish cross which is pictured as a monstrance. The monstrance is the sacred vessel that holds the consecrated bread, the Body of Christ, before which we kneel in Eucharistic adoration. It is celebration of the Eucharist that keeps us Catholic. Eucharistic adoration is a transforming spirituality – not just for those in convents or monasteries – but especially for the laity in the midst of their ever-busy lives.

The other facets of our campaign will also help us practice the faith. Our 'fair share' in the diocesan campaign - to which every parish contributes - will help us take care of our retired priests, fund our diocesan camp (which many of our parish children have already attended), repair the Cathedral, and support Catholic education. We remain Catholic when we are in union with the Bishop of the diocese.

When our parish endowment is fully funded, then the annual interest can be used for continuing capital repairs to our campus and for service outreach. We also want to update our meeting rooms to make them more amenable for Bible study, education and youth group activities.

I want to thank you ahead of time for your prayerful reflection and consideration of our parish needs. Please think about a sacrificial gift - as we all help our parish to grow in the fruits of the Spirit. God has richly blessed all of us. How grateful we are to Him. Please continue to be generous stewards in the days ahead. God bless you all.