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Identify and promote ways and means for parishioners to better connect with God, with one another, and with creation

A. Provide meaningful sacramental and prayer experiences

- ▶ Continuously improve music and message at Sunday Masses and other worship occasions by encouraging more active congregational participation in singing, adding ensemble groups, continuing to engage youth in liturgical ministries, and creating opportunities for homilists to discuss scriptural messages with members.
- ▶ Provide enhanced spiritual sacramental preparation to parents of newborns (Baptism), to second graders and others receiving First Reconciliation and First Holy Communion, to eighth graders and others preparing for Confirmation, to engaged couples (Holy Matrimony) and to the infirm (Anointing of the Sick)
- ▶ Foster and promote vocations to the priesthood and religious life through prayer, awareness, affirmation, and support
- ▶ Offer meaningful para-liturgical devotions
- ▶ Provide worship experiences that target those in their 20s and 30s to encourage them to live and promote their Catholic faith
- ▶ Be mindful of, and respond to, Spanish-speaking parishioners to ensure worship experiences that are inclusive

B. Provide faith formation for adults, youth, and children

- ▶ Continue to provide and promote periodic large group presentations, annual parish-wide dinner/discussion, biennial mission, and other sessions to assist adults with faith development and develop a program of regular adult small-group discussion or study

- ▶ Prepare our elementary, intermediate, and middle school students with a solid foundation for higher learning
- ▶ Prepare youth and young adults for a holy and wholesome adulthood
- ▶ Prepare all members for eternal life
- ▶ Strengthen relations and programs between STM middle school and local Catholic high schools
- ▶ Provide faith-education experiences targeted at those in their 20s and 30s to encourage them to live and promote their Catholic faith
- ▶ Broaden our faith formation offerings to be mindful of, and respond to, Spanish-speaking parishioners

C. Promote STM charitable outreach and social justice

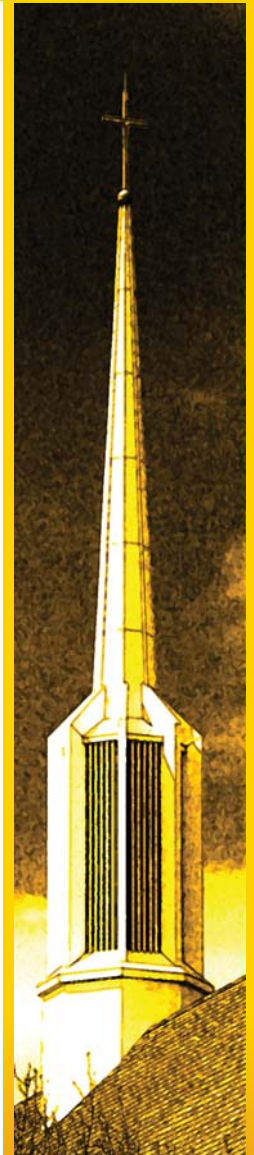
- ▶ Continue to advance issues of biblical peace and justice under the leadership of the STM Faith in Action Team
- ▶ Continue to encourage every parishioner to put faith into action through service, taking advantage of the numerous opportunities provided by the parish, the diocese and the larger community
- ▶ Respond to non-parishioners who seek our assistance
- ▶ Support diocesan activities

D. Strengthen and expand pastoral care

- ▶ Match shut-ins, bereaved, and other parishioners in need with spiritual caregivers as overseen by the STM Care Ministry Team
- ▶ Provide services to those in nursing homes and other care-giving institutions
- ▶ Identify and implement ways to honor our elder members

E. Strengthen and expand youth ministries

- ▶ Provide safe and consistent offerings for young people to practice outreach to those who are less fortunate



Our Mission

The mission of Saint Thomas More Parish is to provide a welcoming, inclusive, and loving community by proclaiming and living God's Word through worship, education, and social justice.

- ▶ Continue to provide leadership in diocesan efforts for the protection of children and youth
- ▶ Continue to encourage youth opportunities in spiritual, service, and social arenas
- ▶ Encourage opportunities for our teens to connect with those in neighboring parishes as well as in national youth organizations

F. Promote important environmental issues

- ▶ Educate parishioners to participate in programs and processes that practice Pope Francis' challenge to be environmentally conscious and globally responsible
- ▶ Reflect healthy environmental attitudes in property decisions, e.g., solar panels, eco-gardens, porous parking lots, lighting, recycling, etc.
- ▶ Adopt "green" principles and promote ideas for daily environmental acts through creation and support of a parish Green Team
- ▶ Suggest opportunities for involvement in relief efforts in areas of unrest and natural disaster
- ▶ Advocate for environmental issues that affect our community and that impact the poor and those without a voice

2

Develop and promote an understanding of stewardship as a way of living, serving, and loving that includes use of our time, talents, and treasure as our Christian duty and way of life

A. Assist every parishioner in finding their place in the parish structure

- ▶ Assist parishioners in identifying what they love most about STM so they can serve and advance that specific element
- ▶ Assist parishioners to match their gifts/talents with what STM and the larger community needs most and/or desires to accomplish in order to build up of the reign of God
- ▶ Maintain the expectation for every parishioner to actively participate in Sunday worship, to offer outreach to the less fortunate, and to tithe, i.e., give at least a tenth portion of our time, talent and treasure to God's work

B. Activate a Development Council as a key component in the structure of operation of parish management

- ▶ Educate parishioners about our parish business structure and the roles of the Development Council, Pastoral Council, Finance Council, School Board, and Pastoral Staff in oversight of other parish groups and organizations
- ▶ Through the leadership of our Director of Operations, conduct exit interviews with those departing STM, and recruit new members to participate in Development projects

C. Advance non-traditional funding sources for school ministries and to grow scholarships and endowment

- ▶ Recruit host families (or individuals) to assist new parishioners and new school families for a one-year period
- ▶ Develop and enhance school alumni association, increase enrollment, search out matching gifts, submit grant proposals, and develop opportunities for grandparents, godparents, and other student associates

D. Expand parishioner contributions

- ▶ Provide easy opportunities for parishioners to use wills, bequests, memorials, and other gifts to mark anniversaries or to honor persons, families, or events to support the parish financially
- ▶ Continue to develop online giving and other ways to assist parishioners, visitors, and associates to better facilitate contributions
- ▶ Support diocesan appeals

3

Enhance communication to parishioners and among parishioners vis-à-vis technological advancements and, at the same time, communicate the Word of God in our communal acts

A. Enhance communications to parishioners

- ▶ Use STM's website for faith-based messaging

- ▶ Model respectful online communicating, as well as healthy communication of all kinds to parishioners and others

B. Enhance communications to others

- ▶ Offer welcoming programs and processes for non-Catholics and returning Catholics
- ▶ Strengthen relations with Avila University and other neighboring institutions to enhance our shared missions and to benefit our constituents

C. Promote and model positive communications

- ▶ Remain mindful that communication refers to, and reflects, our common action, just as communion illustrates our common union and community shows our common unity—always promote our common goal
- ▶ Monitor and enhance written, spoken, graphic, electronic, and all other communications produced and/or associated with STM church and school

4

Manage all property that has been entrusted to our care as stewards of God's blessings

A. Judiciously manage our finances and all that has been entrusted to our care

- ▶ Demonstrate openness and transparency by responding to every inquiry regarding finances and management
- ▶ Conduct regular needs assessments vis-à-vis ongoing capital improvements and self-evaluation of stewardship
- ▶ Maintain parish policy of tithing, i.e., giving one tenth of parish income to care for those in need, e.g., social agencies, sister parishes, neighborhood needy, diocesan efforts, and other charitable organizations

B. Maintain, respect, and enhance parish property

- ▶ Provide regular building maintenance and cleaning

- ▶ Continually prioritize, and respond to, capital needs

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Promote adult and continuing education

A. Make STM a better community through self-knowledge, self-awareness, and empathy

- ▶ Respect and celebrate our diversity
- ▶ Assist Bishop Johnston to unify the priests of the diocese and to help parishioners work together to imitate God's mercy and love
- ▶ Embrace the graces of the Year of Mercy

B. Diminish polarization and religious extremism

- ▶ Be mindful of ways in which we, as individuals, contribute to unhealthy attitudes that polarize and work to transform them by efforts that unify
- ▶ Combat extremist notions that tear at Christ's prayer for unity by turning to sacred scripture, the Gospel message, and Catholic Social Teachings

C. Follow models of healthy faith development

- ▶ Imitate our patron, Thomas More—a man for all seasons—in his challenge to welcome grace and model faithfulness at every stage and situation of life
- ▶ Encourage older adults to embrace the second-half-of-life spirituality that passes along wisdom and acts for the benefit of future generations

D. Educate beyond classrooms

- ▶ Give attention, especially in our school, to those with special learning needs at either end of the academic and economic spectrum
- ▶ Promote emotional intelligence (in addition to academic intelligence) i.e., empathy, self-awareness, healthy relationships, good morals, strong work ethic, wholesome habits, unifying attitudes, Christian behaviors, etc.