

Steeple Talk

Volume 10, No. 9

December 4, 2016

News from the STA Mass communities:

7:15 Daily Mass: Rev. Jerry Brown, S.S., will be visiting in December and will celebrate this Mass once or twice in the week before Christmas.

7:30 Sunday Mass: Bea Peterson and Gerard Wen do sacristan duties at this Mass; Gerard handles the music and is a lector and Eucharistic minister as well.

8:45 Sunday Mass: Pictures from the Altar of Remembrance are in the box in the back of the church for retrieval by their owners.

10:30 Sunday Mass: Charlotte Gross, sacristan, is sincerely inviting potential lectors or sacristans to step forward to help at this Mass. Don't be shy!

12:00 Sunday Mass: Enjoy hearing and singing Gregorian chant each week.

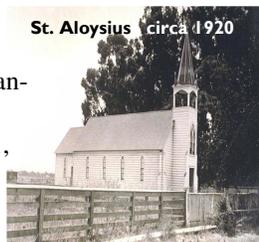
12:15 Daily Mass: The church is open all morning before this noon Mass, except on Saturdays.

A bit of history about St. Thomas Aquinas:

What was the first Catholic church built in Palo Alto? Most people would answer that our St. Thomas Aquinas, dating from 1901, must be it. After all, it's right downtown where Palo Alto first began to spring up at the end of the 1800's, near Senator Stanford's new university.

But it's a bit of a trick question. St. Thomas was indeed the first Catholic church built in what was Palo Alto at that time. But in 1901, Palo Alto barely went as far south as Embarcadero Road. There it petered out in fields and meadows—until you came to an already-thriving town that called itself Mayfield.

And it was in Mayfield in 1868, not in Palo Alto in 1901, that the first Catholic church went up in our area. It was a humble affair, built quickly on a little donated land on Page Mill



St. Aloysius circa 1920

Road, with a bare wooden floor and canvas windows. It wouldn't get a bell tower or steeple for another

forty years. But none of that dampened the locals' pride when Bishop Alemany made the long trip down from San Francisco in November of 1868 to consecrate their modest mission church of St. Aloysius.

Very well, you say, St. Aloysius may have been the oldest Catholic church in Mayfield; but how could it be the oldest in Palo Alto, too? Well, in 1925 Palo Alto simply gobbled up Mayfield through annexation. What had been two towns became one, and what had been Mayfield's firsts also became Palo Alto's.



St. Thomas Aquinas Church

Sadly, the little wooden church that had stood since the year Ulysses S. Grant was elected President lasted only until 1939, when winter storms damaged it beyond repair. Within a year, a new St. Aloysius would rise along El Camino and serve Palo Alto's Catholics for another fifty years. But that's a story for another day.

—Bob March

STA Site Committee plans:

Monthly Meeting:

1st Wednesday of the month

Next regular Site meeting:

Wednesday, December 4, 2016, 7:30 pm, Thomas House Library

Agenda (tentative):

- Mission statement
- Seton Community event
- Christmas prep
- Church maintenance

Monthly newsletter:

Sunday before first Wednesday

Editor: Kay Williams, 650-270-4188, kaywill@pacbell.net

STA Site activities:

Newcomers:

On the first Sunday of the month, a parish volunteer stands by a table on the curb outside of church, welcoming newcomers at each Mass and inviting them to sign up as a parishioner.

Recent newcomers are:

7:30: Paul Nunes, Palo Alto
10:30: Tina Ubogagu, Palo Alto
12:00: Roe Ana & Bennett Kalafut, San Jose

Thomas House Library: Volunteer to keep the library open a couple of hours a week. Contact

Ted Baer at 650-690-6732, tabaer@sbcglobal.net.

Shoes for Opportunity Center:

If you have any gently-used sturdy shoes in your closet that need a new home, the Opportunity Center really needs them! Comfortable sturdy walking shoes are most appreciated. Men's, women's and children's shoes welcome. To help alleviate this need, the parish Human Concerns Commit-

tee has placed a collection box at each parish church site in November through December. We thank you and are most grateful for your donations. To date, 40+ pairs of shoes have been donated and brought to the Opportunity Center. The collection continues.

Immaculate Conception - December 8 Mass times:

Here at STA: Thursday, December 8th at 7:15 am, 12:15 pm, 8:00 pm.

**NEWSLETTER OF THE ST. THOMAS
AQUINAS CHURCH SITE COMMITTEE**

751 Waverley Street
Palo Alto, CA 94301

St. Thomas Aquinas Site Committee:

Ted Baer	Bob Barron	Helen Baumann
Jan Dedek	Judy Foley	Anna Jaklitsch
Nora Lundin	Bill Mahrt	Bob March
Vicki Sullivan	Kay Williams	and occasional others

Mission Statement: The Site Committee for St. Thomas Aquinas Church works to encourage community-building within our six individual Mass communities, among our Mass communities, and within the larger parish community. We do this by enhancing our liturgies, exercising responsible stewardship of our facilities, and working to improve communications at all levels of our parish community.

Site committee meetings are (usually) held the 1st Wednesday of the month in the Library of the Thomas House. All are welcome, but if you cannot attend, send questions or suggestions to Kay Williams, (650) 270-4188, kaywill@pacbell.net.

Parish pathways:

St. Albert the Great Flooring Campaign:

This weekend marks the end of publicizing the St. Albert the Great Flooring Fundraising Campaign. We are thrilled and very grateful for the over \$37,000 in donations to date, enough to replace all the carpeting and accomplish other improvements in the church and its flooring.

Our goal remains to replace the old linoleum flooring under the pews, not just the carpet.

For those who are still planning to support this restoration effort, we look forward to your contributions. Envelopes and flyers are in the back of all the churches, and tax-deductible contributions can be made until December 31. Pledges may be made by contacting Chuck Tully at the Pastoral Center, (650) 424-2496, #20, ctully@dsj.org.

Christmas Poinsettias:

We need your help in making our churches look beautiful for the holidays. Won't you consider donating toward a poinsettia plant in remembrance of a loved one or just as a gift from you? Special Christmas Flower Envelopes are available in the pews and vestibules. All your gifts will be greatly appreciated.

Penance services in Advent:

St. Thomas Aquinas Church:–
Saturday, December 17 at 2:00 pm

Our Lady of the Rosary Church –
Monday, December 19 at 7:00pm
(Bilingual)

Taizé at Saint Albert the Great Church December 13:

Taize Prayer uses the psalms, scripture, songs, candles and silence for a meditative prayer service. This is an opportunity to take a few moments for yourself and for your soul. Please join us! It is only an hour at Saint Albert the Great Church from 7:00 until 8:00 pm.

From the church steps:

Seton School community thank-you December 11:

Next Sunday, December 11, a choir of Seton School students will be singing in the garden after Mass (or in the Thomas House if it is raining) for those of us who attend the 8:45 and 10:30 Sunday Masses. In addition, Seton parents will be selling homemade tamales during the hospitality times after those Masses. Several Seton teachers and principal Evelyn Rosa will be present, too. The Seton community really appreciates the support received from STA parishioners and wants to show their gratitude with food and song. Come prepared with a little cash for a tamale purchase and open ears to hear the children singing.

Kenyan crafts December 18: After the 8:45 Mass on Sunday, December 18, look for a last opportunity to select a

handmade item from the trove of Kenyan treasures on display in the garden (or the Thomas House Bride's Room) when you donate to Kenya Help, the non-profit organization which supports scholarships for girls attending St. Francis Xavier Secondary School for Girls in Naivasha, Kenya. Wooden bowls, cloth shopping bags, jewelry, carved tree ornaments are still available. That last-minute gift is waiting for your donation.

Woman with baby begging on church steps:

Many of us have been concerned about the young woman with the baby who has been begging outside church on Sundays, fearing that she is homeless or being trafficked. Thanks to outreach from the Palo Alto Community Service officers, we now know that she is a member of an ethnic group called Roma, more commonly called gypsies. We learned that there are

about a million Roma living in the United States, and about 10% of them live in California (and some of them in Palo Alto). This young mother actually lives in Hayward and is not homeless or alone or being trafficked. Efforts are being made to connect her with Social Services in Fremont, should she be amenable to that.

However, in general, Roma people keep to themselves, relying on family and close clan members for support. Her "work" is begging; she has said she comes to Palo Alto because there are many rich people here. As long as she realizes a profit from her begging here, she will likely remain. [Ed note: There are interesting articles online about the Roma people in the U.S and in the Bay Area. They are well known to law enforcement in areas where they live.]