

Stewards of the Vision

2008 St. Norbert Parish Report

This year the universal Church celebrates the year of St. Paul and recalls his extraordinary role in the history of our faith. Our parish theme for the year is “One Body, Many Parts,” reflecting Paul’s teaching that through Baptism we are members of the Body of Christ, each with a unique part to play in building up the Church. May we emulate St. Paul’s example of glorifying God by being good stewards of our many gifts as we strive to achieve our parish vision.

St. Norbert Parish aspires to become:

+one in Christ

+as a community of fervent disciples

+who listen attentively for the guidance of the Holy Spirit

+and who lovingly embrace Jesus present in the poor, the alienated and the spiritually hungry.

This year saw many changes in our parish leadership, with our pastor Father Domenic Rossi embarking on a one year sabbatical and Father Maurice Avicelli leaving for St. Gabriel’s Parish in Philadelphia. Our school principal Theresa Garvin moved on to take a new position and Director of Religious Education Pete Radice retired after 10 years of serving our community. Our love and prayers go with all of them. At the same time we warmly welcome Father John Joseph Novielli as Parochial Administrator, Father Jim Rodia as Parochial Vicar, Myra DiNicola as school principal, Kay McDonald as Coordinator of Religious Education and Kerry Puia as her assistant.

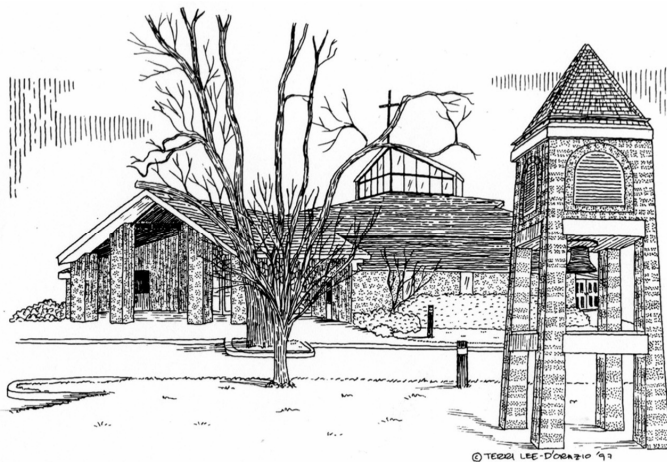
In order to achieve our parish vision it is our individual and collective responsibility to assist our new leaders in caring for the Church that has been entrusted to us by Christ. The following are highlights of our progress.

One in Christ

“Complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing.”

Philippians 2:2.

Paul’s words echo Jesus’ prayer for unity at the Last Supper, a prayer that is at the foundation of our parish vision statement: “I pray not only for [the apostles],



but also for those who will believe in me through their word, so that they may all be one...” (John 17:20-21). Over the past year we have advanced our parish aspiration to become one in Christ in these ways:

Unity in Worship and Sacraments

Music Ministry—One in voice as well as in heart, our parish marked the 40th anniversary of the St. Norbert Choir with a special celebration. Mark Griswold and the St. Norbert Youth Choir released “Draw Us Near,” a professionally-produced CD of praise and worship music.

All Souls—In union with the mystical Body of Christ across time and place, we remembered the souls of the faithful departed throughout the month of November. We inscribed the names of deceased loved ones in a book of remembrance, commemorated by name at a Sunday Mass the parishioners who died over the past year and sent personalized notes inviting their family members to join us in prayer.

Reconciliation—The unity of the Body of Christ can be wounded through sin, but God offers us healing. In addition to our regular schedule, we offered the Sacrament of Reconciliation every Wednesday evening in Lent as part of a special Archdiocesan program.

Unity in Diversity—One Body, Many Parts

Parish Census—We conducted a parish census to identify all of our members and we are now starting to respond to their questions and needs, including bringing the Eucharist and providing other outreach to the additional 80 shut-ins identified by the census.

Sign Language—To facilitate the full participation of hearing-impaired members in our worship, the 11:30 Mass on the 3rd Sunday of every month is now interpreted in American Sign Language.

Low Gluten Hosts—We offer special low-gluten hosts to allow members with allergies to wheat gluten to partake of the Body of Christ.

Stewardship—Building the Body of Christ

Stewardship Report and Ministry Brochure—Our annual parish report now includes not only financial information, but also contributions of time and talent. We also publish a ministry brochure listing ways for members to become more engaged in parish life.

Ministry Leaders Meeting—We convened a meeting of parish ministry leaders and gave them a handbook to facilitate coordination among ministries.

Stewardship Wall—Urgent parish needs of time, talent and treasure are now regularly communicated by postings on the stewardship wall in the Church narthex.

How You Can Help

Eucharistic Ministers—To distribute both the Precious Body and Blood at all Sunday Masses and at some weekday Masses, and to bring the Eucharist more regularly to our homebound parishioners, we need more Eucharistic ministers.

Lectors—Join this ministry to proclaim the Word of God at Mass on Sundays or weekdays.

Eucharistic Adoration—Sign up to spend an hour in quiet prayer before the Eucharistic Lord, Thursdays in the Oratory between 8:30 am and 7:00 pm.

Community of Fervent Disciples

“Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervor, serving the Lord.” Romans 12:11

Our parish vision calls us to emulate St. Paul, to become ardent disciples and witnesses to Jesus, to follow and serve Him with passion. Over the past year we have advanced our parish aspiration to become a community of fervent disciples in these ways:

Forming Our Children

We strive to instill a zeal for discipleship in the growing numbers of students in our parish elementary School (200), Religious Education program (453) and Youth Ministry (100).

St. Norbert School Pre-Kindergarten—This fall we welcomed 17 four year-olds to a new half-day pre-kindergarten program.

School Re-accreditation—The school re-accreditation process included a comprehensive self-study and hosting a team of evaluators from the Middle States Association of Colleges & Schools.

EDGE—The Youth Ministry finished the first full year of “The EDGE” program, designed to meet the catechetical, spiritual and social needs of the over 50 7th and 8th grade students regularly attending.

Growing in Discipleship—Adult Formation

Alpha—The dedicated efforts of a team of 35 parish volunteers allowed over 100 people to attend our inaugural Alpha program in 2007 and an additional 150 people this fall. Each week participants gather for dinner, a video presentation and small group discussion exploring the fundamentals of the Christian faith.

Bible Study—A 24-week study of the book of Revelation brought members to a deeper understanding of Jesus as the divine Bridegroom, and the Church as His Bride, while the early morning group studied the book of Hebrews. The 8-week “Quick Journey Through the Bible” series provided newcomers to Bible study with a framework to facilitate their continued Scripture reading.

Book Study—Adult faith formation continued during the summer months with group discussion of the book Treasures Uncovered: The Parables of Jesus.

Building Our Community

Festa Bethesda—The hard work of 65 volunteers brought together over 300 people and helped raise more than \$50,000 at our annual fundraiser for Bethesda Project and St. Gabriel’s Parish.

January Funfest—The Knights of Columbus sponsored an evening of food, dance and casino games to benefit the St. Norbert Scholarship Fund and other charities.

Hospitality Ministry—Several people responded to our request for volunteers for the Hospitality Ministry, allowing us to offer refreshments in the narthex after all Masses on the third Sunday of every month. They also coordinated a beautiful farewell reception for Father Domenic and Father Maurice.

Gardening and Landscaping—The combined efforts of the Gardening Committee and the new Landscaping Committee beautified the Church and School gardens and grounds through planting, watering, weeding, trimming and mulching.

How You Can Help

Hospitality Ministry—Additional volunteers are needed to provide hospitality after Sunday Masses and for special parish events such as the reception following the Easter Vigil.

Welcoming Ministry—We wish to expand our outreach to newly-registered parishioners through social events and personal contacts by current parishioners.

Support for Faith Formation Events—Behind-the-scenes help is always needed to assure that our faith formation programs run smoothly. One-time and ongoing help for such tasks as clean up following the weekly Alpha dinner would be appreciated!

Listen Attentively for the Guidance of the Holy Spirit

“Those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.” Romans 8:14

God speaks to us all the time, sometimes in dramatic ways, such as the apparition of Jesus to Saul on the road to Damascus, and sometimes in subtle ways. Spending time in prayer quietly listening for God’s voice is the most important way that we learn to hear Him. The Holy Spirit also guides us through Scripture, personal reflection and the people and circumstances we encounter in our everyday lives. Our parish aspires to grow more attentive in listening for this guidance of the Holy Spirit, as individuals and as a community. In the last year we did this in the following ways:

Sharing Our Faith

Lenten Groups—This year the number of participants in our Lenten small faith sharing groups again increased by half, with over 200 people meeting in 20 groups to reflect on the upcoming Sunday Gospel reading and share how the passage speaks to them.

Affinity Groups—Members who share a common language or life situation formed other ongoing faith sharing groups to help them discern God’s call. These include groups for young adults, separated and divorced individuals, and those who speak Spanish.

Listening to Our People

School Board of Advisors—Last year the parish established a School Board of Advisors to give support, guidance and advice to the pastor and principal in fulfilling the mission of St. Norbert School. Parishioners are encouraged to provide feedback and raise issues with the Board, and also to assist with the work of the Board’s many committees.

School Marketing Survey—Parents of current and former St. Norbert School students and current Religious Education students participated in an online marketing survey to help St. Norbert School understand its strengths and areas for improvement.

Discerning as Individuals and as a Community

Father Domenic’s Sabbatical—Father Domenic is using this sabbatical year from July 1, 2008 to June 30, 2009 to write down and reflect on the experiences of grace that have guided his ministry and to discern how the Holy Spirit is calling him to focus his remaining years in ministry at St. Norbert’s and beyond.

Pastoral Planning—The Parish Pastoral Council began the process of revising the Parish Pastoral Plan by spending several meetings prayerfully reflecting on

each aspect of the parish vision statement. In 2008-2009 the Council will build on this foundation and formulate specific strategies to achieve our parish vision.

How You Can Help

School Board Committees—The School Board of Advisors asks parishioners to consider offering their expertise in support of one of the Board committees such as marketing, technology and grants/development.

Communications—We hope to enhance all aspects of internal and external parish communications. If you have time, a heart for communications as a ministry and experience in writing, advertising, marketing or design, please consider sharing your talents with us.

Lovingly Embrace Jesus Present in the Poor, the Alienated and the Spiritually Hungry

“Serve one another through love.” Galatians 5:13

God calls us to recognize His face amidst the brokenness of the poor, the alienated and the spiritually hungry, to see Him and love Him where we find Him. We grew in our ability to do this by:

Loving Jesus Present in Our Midst

Help in Tragedy—Our community came together for a “Giving Gathering” to benefit the continued education of the children of a parishioner who died of cancer. We also assisted a member of the school community whose home was destroyed by fire.

Aid for Friends—St. Norbert volunteers prepared and delivered 84 meals each week to 12 Chester County shut-ins.

Pajama Buddy Project—Through this recent addition to our Outreach Ministry 280 children arriving at emergency shelters in Chester County received “Buddy Bags” with new pajamas and a book.

Loving Jesus in the Urban Poor

Bethesda Project—Our parish continues its special relationship with this ministry to the homeless in Philadelphia founded by Father Domenic. Parish volunteers prepare and deliver casseroles, collect new underwear and travel-sized toiletries and visit with residents.

Thanksgiving at St. Gabriel’s—In addition to our donations of student backpacks, refurbished computers and monthly food collections, our parish joined St. Monica’s in Berwyn in providing over 800 families of our sister parish in Gray’s Ferry with Thanksgiving

dinner. An overwhelming number of parishioners responded to our request to help deliver these meals.

Loving Jesus in a Foreign Land

Mexico Mission Trip—In July 29 teens and 7 adults participated in a life-transforming one week mission trip to General Cepeda, Mexico. Our missionaries prayed for and with the residents of nearby villages and performed service projects such as painting and repairing roofs of adobe houses.

How You Can Help

Many opportunities exist to grow in our love of Jesus in the poor, alienated and spiritually hungry. Here are just a few of the needs described on the Outreach page of the St. Norbert parish website:

Casseroles—Make and/or deliver casseroles for those served by the Bethesda project residences and shelter.

Aid for Friends—Invite Jesus into your home by preparing an extra portion of a home-cooked meal for delivery to needy, isolated local shut-ins.

Looking ahead

Our parish continues to grow in numbers and vitality. Since our last report we have 1773 families, up from 1724, 87 parishioners received First Eucharist and 106 were confirmed. Stewardship of our growing Church means fostering the gifts of all, so that we may carry out our baptismal call to build the Body of Christ. We are called to return to God the “first fruits” of our gifts, and the rich tradition of tithing is an expression of this practice. Our stewardship takes many forms, from the parishioner who prays daily for our parish community, to the leaders who make our many ministries possible, to those who provide financial support. We extend a heartfelt thanks to all who have given so generously of their time, talent and treasure this year.

We invite everyone to consider how the Lord might be calling you to share your gifts of time and talent by consulting the “**Opportunities for Growth and Service**” brochure and the stewardship wall in the Church narthex. While we have many ministries in place we also recognize that there are other unmet needs and other ministries waiting to come to life to address them. If you have insights and energy to share around these additional needs, we encourage you to come forward so that we might discern them together.

We also ask you to consider increasing your financial support, perhaps using our E-Z Offering direct debit program. We are concerned as the economic scene changes and parish financial needs continue. Last year the parish had a \$35,690 loss and this year we face the additional challenge of expensive repairs to air

conditioning and roofing, higher utility costs, the need to bring a full-time paid business manager on board, and the continuing high subsidy for school operations. We must also prepare for the Fall 2009 Archdiocesan “Heritage of Faith-Vision of Hope” campaign, which will raise funds for parish priorities, Catholic education, the Cathedral, the Seminary, clergy retirement and Catholic Charities.

Thank you again for all that you have already done and for all that we can accomplish together in the months ahead with God’s grace. The parish is in your hands.

Parish Financial Report

ST. NORBERT PARISH STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSE FISCAL YEARS ENDING JUNE 30TH

	2006	2007	2008
Church & Rectory Income			
Collections	\$933,694	\$1,074,858	\$1,138,705
Religious Education Programs	52,108	76,504	116,820
Special Donations, Other Income	61,705	69,747	33,628
Total Church & Rectory Income	\$1,047,507	\$1,221,109	\$1,289,153
Church & Rectory Expense			
Diocesan Assessment	\$103,300	\$96,800	\$99,000
Payroll, Taxes & Benefits	327,522	377,063	398,435
Utilities & Maintenance	67,606	72,446	116,677
Church Publications, Altar Supplies	25,265	20,888	22,009
Auto, Insurance, Real Estate Taxes	22,918	20,343	29,182
Religious Education Programs	51,399	56,056	100,650
Pastoral Administration, Charities	29,359	23,305	41,502
Professional Fees, Contracted Services	23,328	20,906	18,647
Rectory Operating Expenses	12,304	32,677	42,633
Office Supplies & Equipment	13,115	16,228	15,724
Total Church & Rectory Expense	\$676,116	\$736,712	\$884,459
Church & Rectory Net Income	\$371,391	\$484,397	\$404,694
School Income			
Tuition	\$383,291	\$405,554	\$411,159
Donations & Socials	97,161	105,814	70,313
Other Income & Fees	92,066	89,326	44,449
Total School Income	\$572,518	\$600,694	\$525,921
School Expense			
Payroll, Taxes, Benefits	\$718,108	\$755,769	\$753,191
Maintenance, Utilities, Insurance	113,687	112,269	109,245
Instructional Supplies	139,330	118,897	103,869
Total School Expense	\$971,125	\$986,935	\$966,305
School Subsidy	\$398,607	\$386,241	\$440,384
School Subsidy as % of Total Expense	41.0%	39.1%	45.6%
Net Parish Income (Loss)	(\$27,216)	\$98,156	(\$35,690)
Capital Expenditures	\$1,362,000	\$358,657	

On June 30, 2008, the Parish's working capital stood at \$430,320 hence our financial condition is sound and we feel confident that we will be able to meet our present maintenance and capital needs, estimated to be approximately \$100,000. Expenditures arising out of the Capital Campaign have been paid. Collections improved by almost 6% but expenses increased by 20%. School income declined 12.4% despite an increase in school tuition; school enrollment, up in the '08-'09 year, continues to need growth. The school required a \$440,384 subsidy. Registered parishioners are welcome to request a look at the fuller financial report by contacting the business manager.

Parish Pastoral Council: Father John Joseph Novielli, Father Jim Rodia, Deacon Bill Masapollo, Deacon John Lozano, Myra DiNicola, Ceil Frack, Mark Griswold, Larry Kirwin, Kay McDonald, Kerry Puia, Sharyn Tehrani, Pat Conroy, Lisa Corcoran, Michele Desjardins, Diane Kunberger, Steve Martino, Frank McLaughlin, Frank Merenda, Maria Morales, Moira Murphy

Parish Finance Council: Father John Joseph Novielli, Deacon Bill Masapollo, Ceil Frack, Larry Kirwin, Guy Ciarocchi, Cody Gabriel, Chuck Kerrigan, Moira Murphy, John Ziegler

Parish Stewardship Committee: Diane Kunberger, Dave Makowicz, Marie Martino, Jeannine McCullough, Moira Murphy

St. Norbert School Advisory Board: Jim Buysse, Tom Cancelmo, Chris Carlini, Mary Ann Carlisle, Kristina Christman, Guy Ciarocchi, John Eggleton, Cody Gabriel, Jim Gabriele, Maria Gatto, Fran Grey, Asha Kovalovich, John Ziegler, Brian Zwaan