

Our Sunday Visitor

Centennial Celebration 1912-2012

Enriching Parishes...Enhancing Community

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ST. THOMAS MORE USES OUR SUNDAY VISITOR SERVICES

Total solution results in sustained increase in giving



It was taking months for the staff at St. Thomas More Catholic Church in Pittsburgh, PA to place envelopes into the hands of new parishioners. So when Our Sunday Visitor reviewed their complete solution, St. Thomas More was ready to make a change.

Administrative assistant, Lorraine Smith knew Our Sunday Visitor (OSV) was more responsive than any other provider, and they had several proven solutions in place to help the church with its financial objectives and work toward becoming a stewardship parish.

Pastor Mark chose to use OSV's Offertory Enhancement process, envelope mail service and Online Giving as components that work together to sustain offertory. The Offertory Enhancement process provides the steps necessary for churches to develop financial stability. The process includes consulting, a State of the Parish Report, letters from the pastor and a summary of results. It works because OSV can adapt the message to foster greater giving from a spiritual perspective.

St. Thomas More has approximately 2,700 families and 40 ministries that serve the congregation and the surrounding community. Most recently, the church added a 72,000 square foot building to its grounds. The majority of the new space is being used for the parish school, grades pre-k-8,

complete with smart boards and computers in every classroom. It also serves as the family life center, featuring much-needed meeting room spaces, a library, as well as a new cafeteria and kitchen. In an era when many Catholic schools are closing, the enrollment at St. Thomas More is already at 425 students and counting for the 2011-2012 year.

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The cost for the new building was \$15 million. The parish raised more than half the money up front, and has financed the remaining \$7 million. Smith says that the generosity of the parishioners is overwhelming, even during difficult financial times.

Nancy Burke, finance manager, explains that OSV's Offertory Enhancement process included a letter from Fr. Mark. "Our Sunday Visitor handled the letter and pledge cards for us and everything went smoothly," she says. More than a third of the pledge cards have been returned and the response from parishioners has been amazing. Within the first two months of implementing OSV's Offertory Enhancement process, St. Thomas More has seen a 34% increase in stewardship pledges.

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We've definitely seen an increase in giving," she says. "Stewardship is about time, talent and treasure," she adds. "We will be introducing the time and talent part this fall."



In the meantime, the parish continues to add to the number of parishioners using Online Giving, OSV's electronic offertory application. "I love the flexibility of Online Giving," Burke says. "Parishioners love the control. It's definitely a secure system."

Smith and Burke both say they are pleased with the church's decision to entrust OSV with its offertory needs. "Our Sunday Visitor offered us the best choices and the best prices," Smith says.

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