

Strategic Plan
St. Thomas Aquinas Center

*(Approved: September 25, 2005,
Revised: April 30, 2006
St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Pastoral Council)*

St. Thomas Aquinas Center
A Strategic Plan: Who we are, what we do, and what we want to be

PREAMBLE

Brief History

The first Catholic Club at Purdue was founded by student Ray Achatz in 1906. Until the late 1940's the needs of the Newman Club and the Catholic students at Purdue University were met by the Catholic parishes in Lafayette. In 1948, Fr. Thomas Heilman of the Diocese of Lafayette, IN was given the task of finding property and building a church on the west side of the Wabash River for the Catholic students at Purdue University. The St. Thomas Aquinas Chapel was dedicated at the present site of the St. Thomas Aquinas Center in April 1951.

Currently

The growth of Purdue University, the support of the Diocese of Lafayette, and the outstanding leadership of the St. Thomas pastors, clergy, and staff, enhanced by strong lay leadership and support, has resulted in significant growth and evolution of both the size and mission of the St. Thomas Aquinas Center. Weekly participation in liturgy now typically exceeds 3500 people.

St. Thomas Aquinas is formally classified in the Roman Catholic Church as a *University Parish* with both student and resident parishioner members. The parish is active in social ministry programs in the Greater Lafayette community, such as Lafayette Urban Ministry and Hunger Hike, mission programs in the USA and Haiti, and religious education programs.

The Plan for the Future

The previous plan for the St. Thomas Aquinas Center was developed in 1991 in a period of growth when the needs of the parish strained the physical facilities and constrained the programs of the parish. The successful response to that plan was a new facility that opened in spring, 1997. The current plan recognizes the challenges facing the Catholic Church in general, and St. Thomas Aquinas in particular, as well as the evolving changes within Purdue University and the Greater Lafayette community. St. Thomas Aquinas, like most Catholic parishes in the U.S. today, faces the need for laity to play an increasing role in the parish. The goal of this plan is to set priorities for future direction and prepare the parish to adapt to these challenges and to the future needs of the community.

This Strategic Plan is intended to be a living document. The writers recommend that it be reviewed and updated every year and that it be reevaluated and revised approximately every three years.

THE PLAN

VISION

St. Thomas Aquinas is the Roman Catholic presence at Purdue University. We are a vibrant and diverse community of students and resident parishioners. We are welcoming to all, a beacon of peace and God's love, and a model of Jesus Christ to the local community at Purdue University, the Greater Lafayette area, and the world. We value spiritual and intellectual formation and take action to be a source of church leadership.

MISSION

We seek to promote the reign of God within and beyond our faith community as living testimony of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. We joyfully celebrate the liturgy, faithfully foster spiritual and intellectual formation, actively encourage stewardship, and passionately promote social justice.

GOALS

Liturgy St. Thomas Aquinas will continue its tradition of lively liturgy. In the words of the Second Vatican Council, our goal is "full and active participation of the people."

1. **Participation:** St. Thomas Aquinas will continue to encourage joyful participation at the Sunday and weekday liturgies.
2. **Liturgical Education:** St. Thomas Aquinas will have educational materials available to ensure that participants in the liturgy at St. Thomas Aquinas understand the liturgy.
3. **Ministry Training:** St. Thomas Aquinas will have an active process of education of the ministers of the liturgy.
4. **Evangelization:** St. Thomas Aquinas will seek to share the celebration of the Good News with those outside of the St. Thomas Aquinas community.
5. **Church decoration:** The decoration of the church will be simple and functional and seasonally appropriate.

Community: St. Thomas Aquinas will have programs that foster family, togetherness, inclusiveness, and a sense of warmth for the community where parishioners will desire to make St. Thomas Aquinas a center of their lives.

1. **Welcoming:** St. Thomas Aquinas will actively engage students and resident parishioners to encourage a sense of belonging.
2. **Small Group:** St. Thomas Aquinas will have a diverse portfolio of small group activities that focus on the particular needs of students and resident parishioners.
3. **Fellowship:** There will be a program of social activities offered approximately each month to bring students and resident parishioners together to create a sense of community.

Education: In response to the needs of our student and resident parishioners, St. Thomas Aquinas will have outstanding education programs to serve pre-school through adult formation

1. **Theological study:** St. Thomas Aquinas will offer theological study opportunities for university credit, preaching, and informal discussion opportunities.
2. **Adult education:** St. Thomas Aquinas will have adult religious education opportunities with broad appeal.
3. **K-12 Education:** St. Thomas Aquinas will support strong programs of K-12 REI
4. **Sacramental preparation:** St. Thomas Aquinas will have excellent sacramental preparation programs.
5. **Counseling programs:** St. Thomas Aquinas will support Purdue students as they face internal and external challenges to their faith and life.
6. **Retreats:** St. Thomas Aquinas will have a broad retreat program to meet the diverse needs of student and resident parishioners.
7. **Ecclesial Lay Ministry:** St. Thomas Aquinas will encourage participation in the diocesan Ecclesial Lay Ministry.
8. **RCIA:** Persons seeking communion with the Catholic Church will be welcomed and strongly supported and taught our faith through the Rite of Christian Initiation program for adults.

Stewardship: It is our goal that the community of St. Thomas Aquinas will be generous, sharing the diverse gifts of time, talent and treasure that God has bestowed upon us for the improvement of our own community and of other communities around the world. In this spirit St. Thomas Aquinas will have programs to encourage the stewardship of its members and to enable our community to share its many gifts with the outside world.

1. **Vocations:** We will have active programs to encourage and cultivate vocations in religious and lay leadership.
2. **Financial:** St. Thomas Aquinas will have a financial base that is sustainable based on the support of the local community, alumni, parents of Purdue students, and friends of the parish. The parish financial condition will be transparent and open to the community's suggestions for setting priorities.
3. **Time and Talent:** St. Thomas Aquinas will actively encourage and facilitate students and resident parishioners to contribute their time and many talents to sustain the parish and live the message of the gospel in our community.

Parish Facilities: Because of the importance of the facility to our mission, the parish will maintain the facilities to ensure their future security and functionality.

Social Ministry St. Thomas Aquinas will have an active social ministry that will include service, missions, and social justice education and action.

1. **Social Ministry and Social Justice Programs:** St. Thomas Aquinas will have active programs of social ministry and for social justice to engage the students of Purdue, the parishioners and the diocese. The programs will be built around advocacy, solidarity, and community organizing.
2. **Social Ministry Service:** St. Thomas Aquinas will have an array of service opportunities for students and resident parishioners, such as our current Haiti missions, LUM, Habitat for Humanity, and Kentucky trips.

3. **Social justice education:** St. Thomas Aquinas will have publicly available programs to provide education on the Catholic tradition of social justice, such as JustFaith, Lay leadership training, retreats, and speakers.