



2013-2014  
Parish Report:  
*“One Family in Christ”*

St. Thomas the Apostle Parish  
West Hempstead, New York

## One Family in Christ

***“What shall I give  
to the Lord  
for all his  
goodness  
to me?”  
(Psalm 116:12)***

### Parish Mission Statement

*We, the joy-filled Catholic community of St. Thomas the Apostle, are united in faith and drawn to the life-giving sacrifice of the Eucharist. Through worship, ministry and education we foster spiritual growth and Christian values. As a parish family, we share with and encourage each other through the many times of our lives. With open hearts and helping hands we respond to the needs of our community and the world.*

### St. Thomas the Apostle Parish

24 Westminster Rd.  
West Hempstead, NY 11552  
516-489-8585  
[www.stthomasapostle.org](http://www.stthomasapostle.org)

## Our Parish Clergy

Rev. Msgr. Francis J. Maniscalco

*Pastor*

Rev. Noel Effiong

*Associate Pastor*

Rev. Marcellus Gorleku

*Associate Pastor*

Rev. Msgr. John A. Alesandro

*In Residence*

Rev. Ligori Philips

*In Residence*

Deacon John Ford

Deacon Edward Cunningham

Deacon Jacques Philippeaux

Deacon Anthony D'Auria

## Our Pastoral Team

Ray Rockensies

*Business Manager*

Christina Teisch

*School Principal*

Mary Ann Pellegrino

*Director of Religious Education*

Eileen Minutoli

*Asst. Director of Religious Education*

Irene Peplinski

*Director of Human Services*

Mary Rockensies

*Director of Youth Ministry*

Martha Pramnieks

*Director of Music*

Cindy Sobiesiak

*Director of Parish Growth*

## FROM THE PASTOR

October, 2014

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

I am happy to be able to present to you this Parish Report for 2013-14, "One Family in Christ." It contains a description of our pastoral ministries in words and pictures, personal testimony of those whose lives our ministries have touched, our operating budget for the current fiscal year which began September 1 and runs through August 31, 2015, and a report on our operating revenues and expenditures for the fiscal year just completed and the previous one. Also included is a report on contributions for fiscal year 2014.

I give thanks to God for our parish staff and volunteers who make possible the wonderful works described in this report and for all of you whose financial contributions support these ministries.

The picture on the report's cover is of the beautiful window above the altar in the church. I think it is extraordinarily appropriate for the theme of this report, "One Family in Christ," because it represents the sources of the faith and love that make us one. The host and chalice appear at the center of a cross, recalling the Eucharist which is our family meal. In this meal, the Lord Jesus is present as our food and drink, to transform us into his body to do his work in our world. At the ends of the beams of the cross are the symbols of the four evangelists, representing God's holy word in Scripture. Scripture is our family history, as it were, revealing that God has saved us because of his love for us and called us to be his people, united in promoting his Kingdom here on earth.

It is in our unity of faith and love that is the greatest testimony we can give that we are truly Christ's disciples. I hope this report will help give us all a sense of what we have been able to achieve in this last year and can continue to achieve into the future as "One Family in Christ."

In His peace,





Catholic Schools Week 2014



First Holy Communion 2014



Confirmation 2014



Backpack Blessing

## **FAITH FORMATION & EDUCATION**

### **Bringing about the faith development of our youth and adults preparing for sacraments**

**STA Religious Education (RE)** provides for the faith formation of our young people ages 5-18. The program is made possible by volunteer catechists, some of whom have served for more than 20 years. Young men from Chaminade H.S. also serve as catechists as part of a special program of pastoral service. Special Sunday grade level Masses encourage participation of children in the Eucharist with their families. RE prepares our children and young people for the celebration of Reconciliation and First Holy Communion. Our Confirmation candidates and their parents make a covenant to participate in a two-year program in which they commit themselves to study, to prayer and to service. Last year our Confirmation candidates performed 3232 hours of service during their years of preparation. Children with special needs are offered an opportunity to celebrate First Holy Communion at a Mass suited to their needs.

#### ***Person-to-Person***

A letter from a parent to Bishop Murphy in the past year summarizes the spirit of service of our entire Religious Education program. The parent, who had difficulty finding a program suitable for a special needs child, wanted to share with the Bishop that St. Thomas provided a program for the child that could serve as an example for the whole diocese.

**STA Elementary School** seeks to be a community of faith which instills in our young people a desire to learn about our faith and our world through a comprehensive academic curriculum, prayer and liturgy and communal activities. Of her own role in this community, our Principal, Mrs. Chris Teisch writes, "The role of a Catholic school principal encompasses many entities. Most important is the responsibility to supervise and manage teachers to be the spiritual instructors of our faith paramount in the daily operations of the school. Ensuring the mission statement of, 'To Teach, Build Community

and To Serve' is a constant thread throughout the projects and curriculum we provide the students. I am responsible for guiding teachers to prepare prayer services, Masses, religious retreats, spiritual growth and development for the children throughout the year. Our efforts displayed during Catholic Schools Week give witness to all of our commitment to following the gospel of Jesus. The overseeing of the sacramental program is of paramount concern. Guiding the students towards preparation for First Holy Communion, Reconciliation and Confirmation comprise the most important elements of our religious educational program in the school."

**St. Thomas Youth Group** is made up of teenagers, primarily St. Thomas parishioners but open to all, under the supervision of St. Thomas Youth Ministry, with separate meetings for middle-school (grades 6 - 8) members on Sunday nights, and high-school (grades 9 - 12) members on Monday nights. At meetings, the teens play sports, interact socially, and have discussions, all under adult supervision. Weekly meetings are held from September through December, monthly meetings from January through April. Youth Group members stage a dramatic reading of the Stations of the Cross narrative at Easter time. During the summer school-vacation season, Youth Group is focused on casting, rehearsing and presenting an annual theatrical production, which is an important fundraising event. The Youth Ministry schedules members to serve as lectors and ushers at the 6:00pm Mass from September through December, and as lectors from January through June. Throughout the year, we schedule community-service projects such as visits to the Interfaith Nutrition Network (INN), grounds keeping at Halls Pond Park, Christmas caroling, and Adopt-A-Family at Christmastime. This October, we plan to begin attending Holy Hour and Dodge Ball monthly at St. Ignatius Church in Hicksville. All teens are invited to join Youth Group; please contact Youth Minister Mary Rockensies, or Assistant Youth Minister Jackie Hanley, at 516-538-7467.



**Caroling for Seniors**



**School Holy Week Pageant**



**Palm Sunday Mass (before procession to Church)**



**Ducklings Fascinate our Students**



**Blessing of Catechists**

### ***Person-to-Person***

“Each year the residents of Atria Tanglewood look forward to the St. Thomas Youth Group visiting and performing Christmas Carols. Many of our residents do not have family nearby and visits from young people brighten their day so much and help them to enjoy the beauty of the Christmas season. Each time the teens visit, the residents are reminded that today's youth are caring, beautiful young people who have so much love and joy to give, and who share it willingly with them. This intergenerational experience also affords the teens, who may not have older people in their lives, to see firsthand that seniors have a lot of wisdom to impart, and can be fun too. Thank you once again for offering to visit this year. We look forward to seeing you all in December.”

**STA Marriage Ministry** helps couples to be prepared for the spiritual commitment called for by marriage and the challenges married couples face. Couples are first of all interviewed by a parish priest or deacon to set their wedding date. They then fill out the FOCCUS inventory, which is designed to help them learn more about themselves and their relationship, and discuss the results of the inventory with our parish FOCCUS facilitator. The couples also attend the Pre-Cana program during which volunteer married couples raise and discuss with the engaged couples important issues to help them realize how serious a step they are taking in entering the life-long Sacrament of Marriage. Volunteer couples conduct wedding rehearsals just prior to couples' wedding dates.

**Baptism Preparation:** Parents wishing to have their children baptized attend a meeting conducted by volunteer couples and individuals to help these parents understand more fully what the Sacrament of Baptism means and the essential role that parents have in influencing their children to live up to the commitment made in baptism. Prior to the baptism, parents are also individually interviewed by the priest or deacon who will baptize their child.

### **LITURGY**

#### **Praising God and giving him thanks in the midst of the assembly**

**Choir:** “He who sings prays twice,” *St. Augustine*  
Our parish Music Ministry helps us express what words alone cannot. Everyone who comes to Mass, from the presider to the lectors and ushers, we are all a part of the singing church. Our parish is blessed to have parish choirs that start in 3rd grade and continue through the “golden years.” The role of the parish choirs is to invite those who have gathered for Mass into song and to embellish the voice of the assembly. Our singers use their gift of song to spread faith to the hearts and minds of all who hear them. Our church choir ministry is made possible by volunteer choir members, some of whom have served for more than 30 years. Our church choir sings in the 10:30am Sunday Masses as well as at Christmas, Holy Week, Easter, and other liturgies. Our Christmas young people's choir is made possible

by volunteer leadership (serving 28+ years) and members (singing through high school). Our young people's choir rehearses Saturday morning from November through December and sings at the 4pm Christmas Eve Mass in the Church. Our choir sings music of many styles and periods. You are cordially invited to consider taking an active role in leading the sung prayer of our parish by becoming involved in our music ministry.

**Ministers of the Mass:** Altar Servers, Cantors, Special Ministers of the Eucharist, Lectors and Ushers take diverse roles in our weekly celebration of Sunday Mass, providing service but also realizing the truth that liturgy is what its name means – the work of the people – the people of God.



**January Family Mass**



**Baptism at the Easter Vigil**



**Youth Group Stations of the Cross**



**Neighborhood Mass**



## PARISH GROWTH (PG)

**Offering the opportunity to learn about the faith, to be initiated into the Church and to experience STA as a welcoming community**

Parish growth ministries seek to promote STA as a welcoming community striving to attract others to a more active faith life and offering a friendly environment for all. **Social Sundays, Family Masses, and special receptions** are made possible thanks to parishioners who serve on the **Coffee Crew, Family Mass Committee, and Hospitality Committee**. Newlyweds and families of the recently baptized are personally invited back to receive special blessings at Mass. **Neighborhood Masses** emphasize that the life of our parish extends beyond our church/chapel buildings. Our **returning Catholics program** invites Seekers to consider reconnecting to the Church. **The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults** helps adults and older children develop their relationship with Jesus in preparation for initiation into the Catholic Church. All adults are invited to rediscover the basics of our faith through **“What Catholics Believe.”** This series is also a component of our **Adult Confirmation program**. Each month, **St. Thomas the Apostle eNews** messages are emailed to over 400 subscribers and **welcome letters** are mailed to individuals and families who have recently moved into West Hemsptead. Parish events are also submitted to local online and print publications. At heart, PG ministries are about fostering love for Jesus through the Church.

## HUMAN SERVICES (HS)

**Addressing the spiritual and corporal needs of the members of our parish and community**

**The Ministry of Consolation** assists families experiencing the loss of a loved one by helping them prepare for the funeral and being present to assist during the services. This ministry is coordinated by a volunteer who oversees 40 members as greeters, lectors, altar servers, Eucharistic Ministers, and representatives at wakes. Also involved is a **Cake Bakers Ministry** as one of the follow-ups to the funeral. Three special Masses are provided annually for consolation: All Souls, Parents of Deceased Adult Children, and Spouses of Deceased Parishioners. A luncheon follows the latter two to allow the pastor and consolation ministers the opportunity to offer additional support to these mourners.

The **Bereavement Ministry** offers grief support to our parish family members and community. Two spring and fall eight-week sessions are held, facilitated by a two-person team, one specifically for the loss of a spouse and the other for general loss. There are ten current members on the team.

### *Person-to-Person*

One returned Catholic participating in our Parish Growth programs has noted the impact of “people who were not only ‘talking’ about Jesus, but people who lived their lives in such ways that Jesus shined right through them.” She says that these “living examples” are “the primary reason that I’ve stuck around this time!”

**Spiritual Renewal:** Every year a Lenten Mission is offered. The most recent was preached by Reverend Frank DeSiano, CSP, president of Paulist Evangelization Ministries. About 160 people attended at least one of the three evenings of the Mission. In addition, three Sunday afternoon mini-Missions were preached, two by Bishop Emil Wcela and the third by Msgr. John Strykowski, with an average attendance of about 70 people. The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick was offered after the 9am Saturday Masses during Lent. An average of 30 people were anointed each of those Saturdays. Furthermore, the popular Little Black Books for Lent were made available again this year as a way to reflect together on seasonal scriptures and Catholic culture.

Our **Prayer Shawl Ministry** creates knitted or crocheted shawls in memory of deceased loved ones which are presented at the final sessions of our Bereavement Ministry meetings with an attached prayer for the recipient. A special evening of support and prayer at Christmastime deals with the loss of a loved one during the holidays. After completion of the bereavement program, the **Next Steps Forward Ministry** provides monthly sessions to those who need help with moving forward after the loss of their loved one.

The **Ministers of the Eucharist** to the homebound (HEMs) are coordinated by a volunteer that schedules 29 ministers for visits to our parishioners. Care and concern are provided by sending get well, sympathy and “thinking of you” cards (214 this year, along with 47 frozen dinners to sick or homebound parishioners). Seniors and the infirmed are helped to doctor’s visits, physical therapy, cancer treatment and the supermarket by



**Knitting for Newborns**



**Thanksgiving Dinner**



**Youth Summer Theater—"The Sound of Music"**



**Religious Education Students Visiting the Church**



**Second Grade Penance Service**

volunteers in the **Drivers Ministry**. Nassau County senior services information is offered to parishioners, along with information regarding **Companion/Home Health Aid** services.

**HS Clients** and parishioners are assisted to the extent possible with food, financial, clothing and housing issues. Items from the pantry are often supplemented by donated supermarket gift cards. Over seventy families are offered school supplies each September. A new **Birthday Blessings Ministry** offers a "birthday in a box" filled with a cake, gift, paper goods/decorations and balloon to our clients' children ages 1 through 10. Clients are also assisted seeking employment and with legal issues through Nassau/Suffolk Law Services. The homeless are offered the same assistance as our families in need, and eight regularly come once a week.

**St. Vincent de Paul Society's** 8 dedicated STA members greatly assist in helping meet the needs of our **HS** clients.

**HS** also works in conjunction with STA's **Mature Singles** group which offers seniors 55 and older a monthly social/informational afternoon and is coordinated by four officers with a membership of forty-three.

STA HS networks with diocesan Catholic Charities which offers assistance for housing, a Meals on

Wheels Program to the homebound, and a Food and Nutrition (FAN) program for young mothers.

The **STA HS** office is staffed by twelve dedicated and competent **Administrative Assistants**, some who volunteer twice each week, and have been doing so for over five years. They log all information on the required daily Catholic Charities log, which is then compiled into a monthly report. The report is tabulated into an annual report specific to the number of services for St. Thomas the Apostle. The Assistants also shelve donated pantry items and prepare pantry bags for clients. They also prepare numerous booklets for our funeral Masses, manage the office correspondence, bookkeeping, requisition of supplies and the maintenance of the office/reception area.

### ***Person-to-Person***

Peter (not his real name), a homeless regular came to Human Services and received his usual requested food and metro cards. He is always offered coffee and something to eat, which he gratefully accepts. Upon being given his coffee he commented, "Thank you so much for helping me and allowing me to sit here and drink my coffee. I am enjoying listening to the nice music in the background. It is so welcoming and safe here."

## **A CARING COMMUNITY**

**STA Thanksgiving Parish Meal:** Begun three years ago, our STA Thanksgiving Parish meal is offered for those who might be alone on Thanksgiving or may not be able to prepare a meal for themselves. Volunteers cook the food, create the appropriate Thanksgiving atmosphere in the Msgr. Smith Auditorium, act as hosts, serve tables and also deliver meals to those who cannot leave their homes or residences. Besides this special occasion, STA assists those in need with our Advent Giving Trees and Lenten Living Trees.

**STA Knitting and Crochet Group** began in the fall of 2004 with six members and has grown to over 70 members! The group meets each Wednesday at 10:00am until 12:00pm from September until June in the Parish Center to share our talents with one another and others over coffee and bagels. Each week the group's donations of baby hats, blankets and sweaters are sent to the pediatric and newborn units at Winthrop University Hospital.

Prayer shawls are distributed to the cancer units along with adult hats to Winthrop, Mercy Hospital and Franklin Hospital. St. Thomas' bereavement group also distributes prayer shawls made by our group to all those who have lost a loved one.

### ***Person-to-Person***

Our Knitting and Crochet Group recently received a note from a spouse of a patient at Winthrop who had received a handmade blanket. He noted that "the spirit is with us" and that the blanket kept his wife warm and comfortable. Another note was from grateful parents, thanking us for their receipt of a hat, sweater and blanket which will now be a family heirloom.

## MINISTRY STATISTICS

	9/1/13- 8/31/14	9/1/12- 8/31/13	9/1/11- 8/31/12
		<b>Baptism</b>	
Infants	117	119	128
Children	6	6	7
Adults	3	2	0
<b>Total Baptisms</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>135</b>
		<b>First Holy Communion</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>125</b>
		<b>Confirmation</b>	
Children	117	111	116
Adults	12	10	8
<b>Total Confirmations</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>124</b>
		<b>Funerals</b>	
Funeral Masses	91	101	106
Funeral Service Outside Mass	4	10	1
Memorial Masses	2	0	1
<b>Total Funeral Services</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>108</b>
		<b>Weddings</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>27</b>
		<b>Enrollment</b>	
School	393	426	440
Religious Education	537	524	550
Youth Ministry	87	97	103
	<b>Volunteers (other than societies)</b>		
Eucharistic Ministers	119		
Lectors	33		
Ushers	36		
Choir	25		
Altar Servers	85		
Catechists	67		
Knitting for New Borns	60		
Sacramental Preparation	51		
Family Festival	50		
Hospitality/Coffee Crew	36		
<b>Human Services:</b>			
Bereavement Ministry	10		
Next Steps Forward	3		
Prayer Shawl Ministry	21		
Consolation Ministry	40		
Cake Bakers Ministry	12		
Drivers Ministry	11		
Helping Hands	12		
Pantry	4		
Ems to the Homebound	29		
St. Vincent de Paul	9		
Office Assistants	12		

	Budget 9/1/14-8/31/15		Finals 9/1/13-8/31/14		Finals 9/1/12-8/31/13	
<b>Operating Revenues</b>						
Sundays and holyday collections	\$983,885	63.66%	\$883,489	63.57%	\$902,165	63.63%
Special Monthly Collections	\$49,850	3.23%	\$52,417	3.77%	\$50,666	3.57%
Christmas	\$65,000	4.21%	\$61,661	4.44%	\$48,296	3.41%
Easter	\$48,000	3.11%	\$38,536	2.77%	\$43,232	3.05%
Other Collections	\$0	0.00%	\$1,725	0.12%	\$6,637	0.47%
CMA Rebate	\$23,000	1.49%	\$0	0.00%	\$0	0.00%
Other Fundraising	\$99,200	6.42%	\$70,630	5.08%	\$73,726	5.20%
Parish Programs	\$78,350	5.07%	\$97,779	7.04%	\$90,370	6.37%
Perquisites^	\$52,000	3.36%	\$47,425	3.41%	\$51,860	3.66%
Shrines & Poor Boxes	\$21,000	1.36%	\$21,306	1.53%	\$20,448	1.44%
Donations	\$90,000	5.82%	\$48,305	3.48%	\$77,829	5.49%
Rental Income	\$26,240	1.70%	\$47,350	3.41%	\$42,300	2.98%
Misc. Auxiliary	\$9,000	0.58%	\$19,192	1.38%	\$10,378	0.73%
<b>Total Operating Revenue</b>	<b>\$1,545,525</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>\$1,389,815</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>\$1,417,907</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

^ Fees for weddings, funerals, baptisms

### Operating Expenditures

Clergy Salaries	\$48,200	3.12%	\$57,949	3.51%	\$62,898	3.79%
Lay Salaries	\$441,100	28.54%	\$454,841	27.53%	\$511,693	30.81%
Clergy Benefits	\$133,400	8.63%	\$139,563	8.45%	\$139,639	8.41%
Lay Benefits	\$130,000	8.41%	\$140,300	8.49%	\$122,756	7.39%
Fundraising	\$26,000	1.68%	\$32,872	1.99%	\$31,782	1.91%
Parish Programs	\$44,300	2.87%	\$62,084	3.76%	\$57,958	3.49%
School Subsidy	\$230,225	14.90%	\$221,729	13.42%	\$218,243	13.14%
Office Expenses*	\$91,650	5.93%	\$101,011	6.11%	\$94,440	5.69%
Liturgical Expenses**	\$42,000	2.72%	\$35,966	2.18%	\$39,625	2.39%
Diocesan Assessment***	\$97,050	6.28%	\$93,886	5.68%	\$110,395	6.65%
Misc. Auxiliary Expenses	\$2,000	0.13%	\$10,982	0.66%	\$10,432	0.63%
Rectory Household	\$25,500	1.65%	\$24,887	1.51%	\$28,794	1.73%
Utilities	\$93,800	6.07%	\$100,135	6.06%	\$84,499	5.09%
Contracted Maintenance Services	\$35,000	2.26%	\$51,398	3.11%	\$21,234	1.28%
Ordinary Maint/Repairs/Supplies	\$33,000	2.14%	\$55,555	3.36%	\$64,318	3.87%
Insurance	\$72,300	4.68%	\$65,707	3.98%	\$58,910	3.55%
Other Maintenance & Supply	\$0	0%	\$3,280	0.20%	\$2,925	0.18%
<b>Total Operating Expenditures</b>	<b>\$1,545,525</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>\$1,652,145</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>\$1,660,541</b>	<b>100.00%</b>
<b>Excess/Deficit</b>	<b>\$0</b>		<b>-\$262,330</b>		<b>-\$242,634</b>	

\*Includes Postage/Printing/Telephone//Professional fees/Furniture & equipment

\*\*Flowers/Candles/Missalettes/Choir expenses

\*\*\*Every parish is assessed a percentage of its ordinary collection and other operating income to support diocesan administration

### SOME FISCAL FACTS:

**DEFICITS:** St. Thomas has run at an operating deficit for most of the last 10 years, usually six-figure ones. Attempts have been made to deal with them (see, Salaries & Benefits).

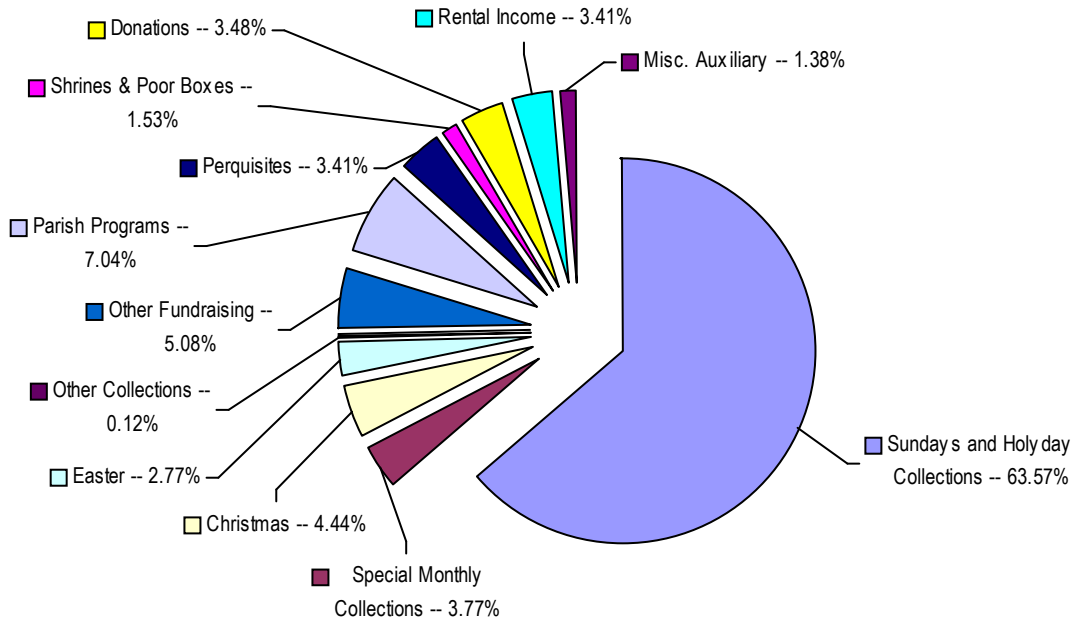
**COLLECTIONS:** A parish's "bread-and-butter" income is the first collection each Sunday. These collections have declined from a weekly average, counting Faith Direct, of over \$19,700 for FY 09, to an average of \$16,960 for FY 14 just concluded.

**SALARIES & BENEFITS:** Since FY 12 the total of these expenses has been reduced by nearly \$130,000 or 14.06% but the decline in revenue, noted above, has offset the effect of these cuts.

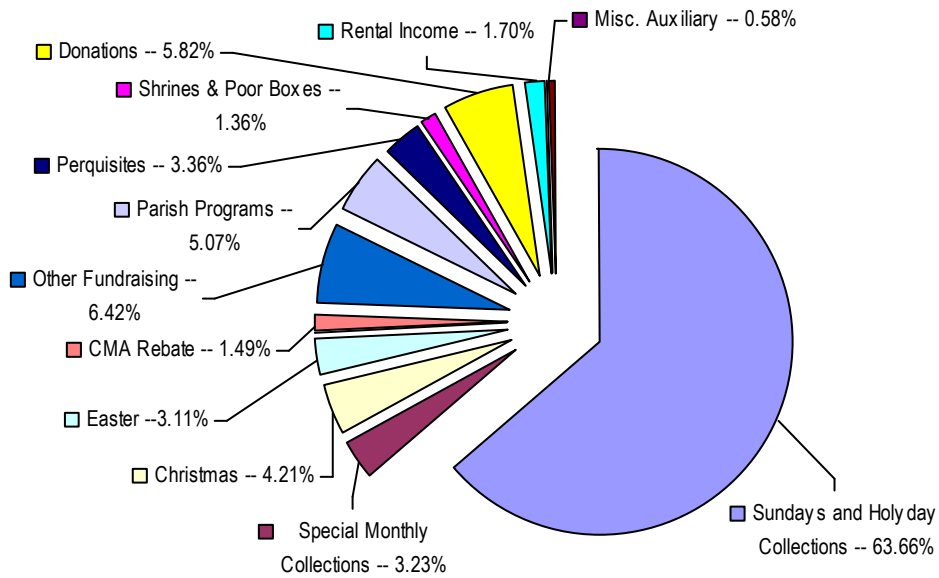
**BEQUESTS:** Two very large bequests and several smaller but significant ones greatly helped our financial situation. However, we have not had bequests of any kind in the last three years.

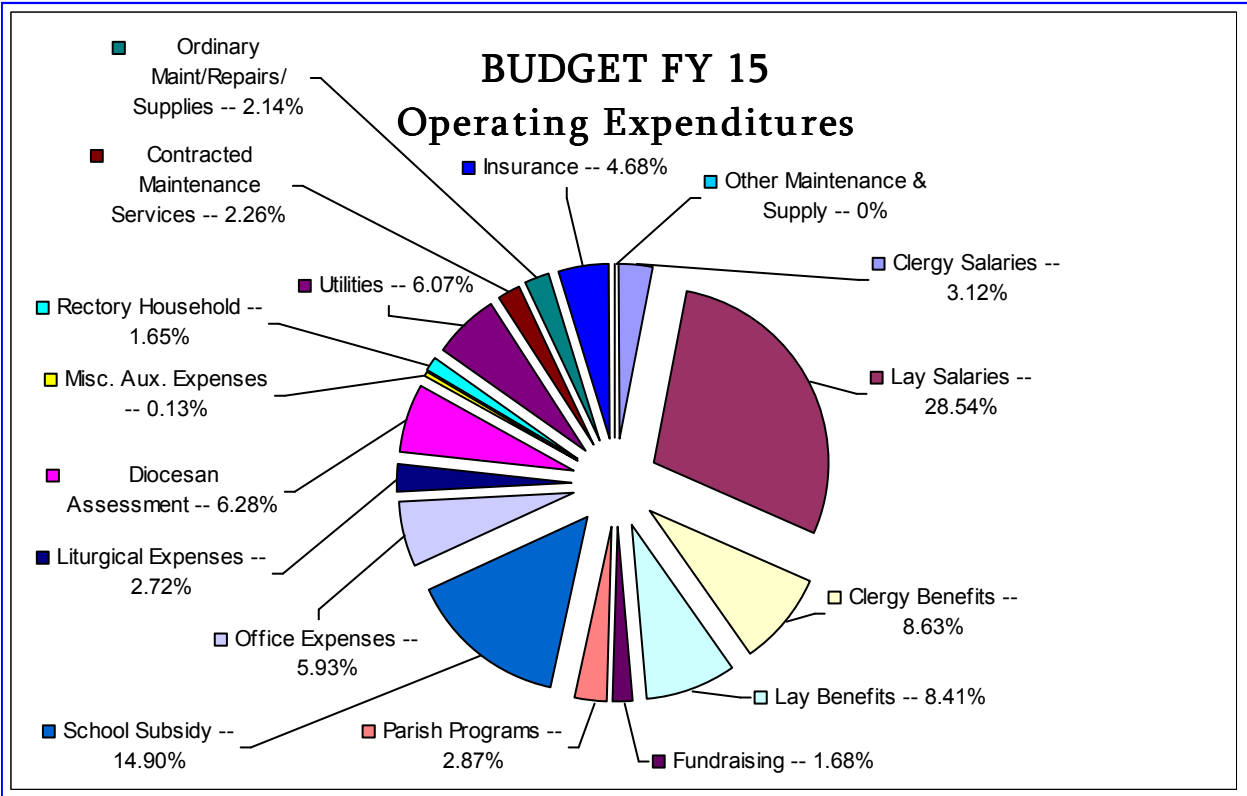
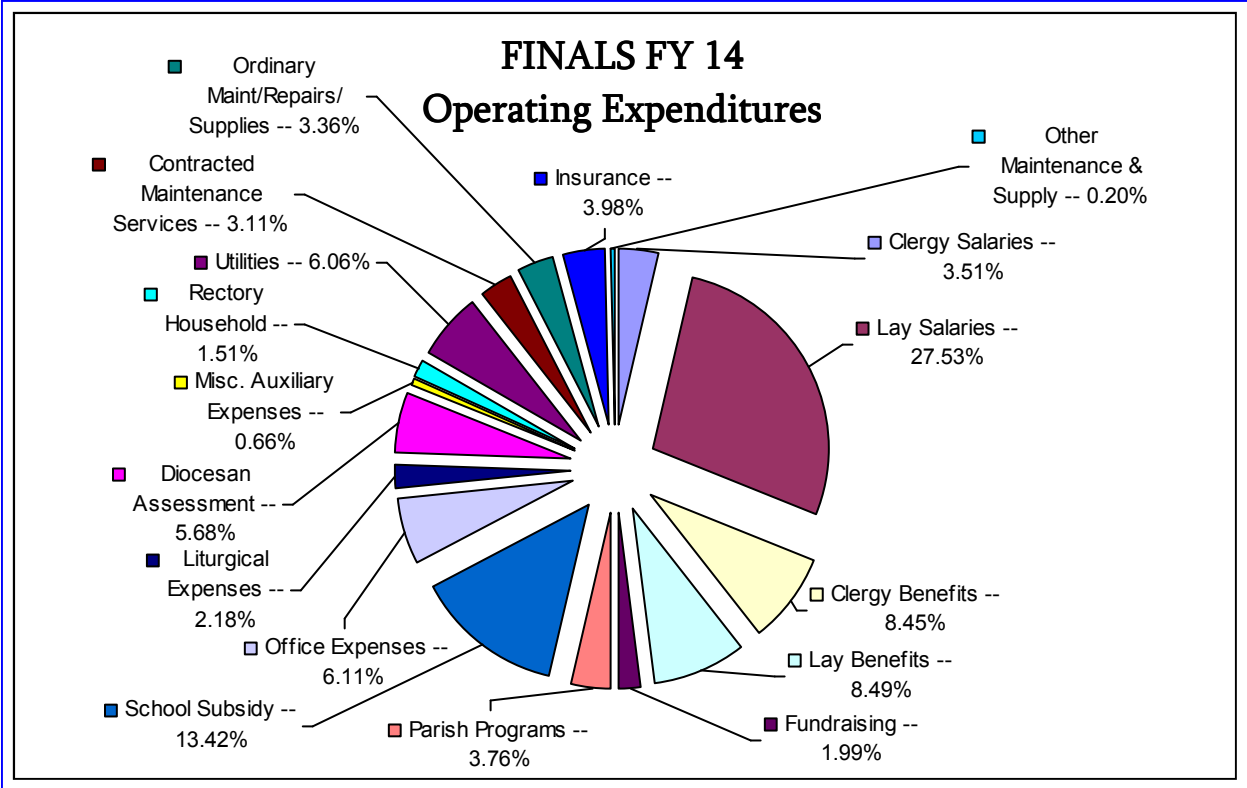
**SCHOOL SUBSIDY:** Our school enrollment has declined by almost 100 children since 2008. Yearly increases have kept tuition income relatively steady, but our tuition still falls short of what it actually costs to educate a child. A subsidy from the parish is needed to avoid a school deficit, which makes solving the parish's deficit situation all the more pressing.

## FINALS FY 14 Operating Revenue



## BUDGET FY 15 Operating Revenues





## OFFERTORY GIVING... WHERE DO YOU FIT IN?

Each Sunday here at St. Thomas, in the collection, the parish receives donations through the envelope system, individual checks and cash. While the amount that comes in through the envelopes, checks and through Faith Direct can be kept track of and those parishioners given annual statements of their contributions, we have no way of knowing which and how many parishioners put cash in the collection basket or how much. With this in mind, the pie chart below provides a graphic of our contribution levels for FY 2014 (9/1/13-8/31/14).

As a starting point, here are some facts about contributing to our parish.

- **Currently we have 2727 families registered in the parish**
- **On average 552 families used the envelopes each Sunday**
- **137 families currently use “Electronic Contributions” for their offertory donations**
- **1414 of the 2727 registered families gave to a Sunday Parish collection in the period of September 1, 2013, through August 31, 2014. Excluding Christmas, Easter collections and cash, this totals \$816,276 in contributions**

**Thank you for your continued support, and for your prayerful consideration of your financial commitment to our One Family in Christ!**

### “WHERE ARE YOU?”

