



March 22, 2022

## Celebrating St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Loud and Clear

Dear St. Thomas Parishioners,

This year we are celebrating the 100<sup>th</sup> year of Saint Thomas Aquinas Parish. It was an honor to have Bishop Malloy celebrate Mass for us on Saturday, December 4, 2021, as that is the actual date of the founding of the parish. From Our Short History: "Bishop Peter Muldoon of the Rockford Diocese originated St. Thomas Aquinas Parish on Sunday, December 4, 1921. At that time, all Catholics living west of West Avenue became members of the new parish, leaving the mother parish of St. Mary. The new church, located on Harlem Avenue, just north of Stephenson was completed and dedicated on May 28, 1922." Many changes have taken place since that time and we know that in 1973 plans were made by Msgr. Raymond Wahl, the 7<sup>th</sup> pastor, for a new church on Kiwanis Drive. The groundbreaking ceremonies for the new church took place on October 21, 1973 and the church was completed and dedicated by Bishop Arthur O'Neill in 1974. 1995 saw the building of the O'Neill Center, and the educational wing with a large lobby to connect the wings. Thanks to Dick Elder whose major gift sparked the generosity of others, the Adoration Chapel was dedicated by Bishop Doran on November 26, 2002.

Here we are in 2022 and thanks to the generosity of all of our parishioners over the years, our church, chapel and buildings look great and provide a beautiful spiritual oasis here in Freeport. As we celebrate 100 years of faith, sacraments, family and community outreach, it is customary for us to make a gift to the parish. Please know that we are not wishing to increase our savings but rather to obtain a gift for the parish that immediately benefits all parishioners. The Parish Council recommends a new sound system in the Church and in the chapel, along with a camera system for professional live streaming. In the last years we have had issues with the sound system as we experience dead spots, feedback, echoing, and a need to constantly make adjustments. We had a professional company look at what we currently have and most of our sound equipment dates back to the mid 70's. Technology has greatly changed since then. The company we are working with has made recommendations that will greatly increase the quality of sound in the church and help all to hear better, especially our elderly.

We can have a new sound system installed and equipment for projection and live streaming, in the church and in the chapel, for approximately \$50,000. If each contributing parish family made a Centennial gift to the parish of \$150, we will have the funds for this entire project. For some \$150 may be a great deal beyond their normal Sunday offering and others may be able to give a bit more. I invite you to make a gift to the project that will immediately benefit all of us as we worship God each day and each Sunday.

Please make any donations payable to St Thomas Aquinas and make a note on the check or envelope **"Sound System Gift."** Donations can also be made via our online giving link found on our website. These funds will be kept separately and be used to complete this project. Any generous amount will be appreciated and get us to our goal.

Fr. Peter