Dear Parishioners,

It is with great excitement that I present to you this detailed booklet showcasing the plans for our new church building. I do not just wish to keep you up-to-date; I invite each and every one of you to join me and your fellow parishioners in embracing this opportunity for “Honoring Our Past, Building Our Future”.

Many of you participated in the Diocese’s Living Our Mission campaign. Through this program, over $800,000 was pledged to support the Diocese. Your generosity also helped our parish raise approximately $5 million for our building project. As you will recall, our project was initially envisioned and presented as an expansion and renovation of the existing church at an estimated cost of $6.3 million. Following months of meetings in which architects, construction experts, and many of you voiced opinions and rendered advice, the Building Committee made the unanimous decision that a new structure would be more fiscally responsible. It was further determined that a new church would alleviate and relieve the parish’s financial burden of allocating more than ten percent (10%) of its annual income to ongoing repairs to the current deteriorating structure. Additionally, the Building and Renovation Committee (BARC) of the Diocese of Richmond recommended new construction, rather than renovation as the best solution.

All of you were invited and many of you participated in our town hall meetings where the design and preliminary plans for our new church were unveiled by the Boston-based architectural firm of Cram & Ferguson, specialists in Catholic church design. Since that time, the design and plans have been on display in the Link. I believe it is fair to say that reaction to the new design has been overwhelmingly positive throughout our parish, university, and neighborhood communities. The renderings depict a remarkably beautiful church that will relate in style and materials to the University of Virginia, as well as to the Priory. Incorporating all the priorities established when the project began last Spring, the church will be an ever-present witness of our faith for generations to come.

The months ahead will be an exciting time for St. Thomas Aquinas University Parish. I hope that you will share fully in this opportunity with interest, enthusiasm, and generosity. Most importantly, let us keep our Parish’s church project in our daily prayers. Let us build our Church as an offering of praise to God, honoring our past and building our future on our true foundation, Jesus Christ.

In Him,

Very Rev. Joseph Barranger, O.P.
Pastor and Prior

Very Rev. Joseph Barranger, O.P.
The legacy of St. Thomas Aquinas University Parish is of a visionary people, drawing upon the strength and beauty of a rich heritage, and facing the challenges of the future with passion, imagination, and wisdom. We see it in the example of St. Dominic de Guzman, the founder of the Order of Preachers, whose followers have served here faithfully since 1959. As the Constitutions of the Order boldly proclaim: “we have as our special function the prophetic office by which the Gospel of Jesus Christ is proclaimed everywhere by word and example, with due consideration for the conditions of persons, times, and places so that faith is awakened or penetrates more deeply all life in the building up of the body of Christ, which is perfected by the sacraments of faith.” We see this in the example of Thomas Jefferson, the founder of the University we serve. As he wrote in 1820 to the English reformer William Roscoe: “this institution will be based on the illimitable freedom of the human mind. For here we are not afraid to follow the truth wherever it may lead, nor to tolerate any error as long as reason is free to combat it.” Finally, we see this in the history of our own Parish, since its foundation in 1963.

No less now than in our past, we are a visionary people, embracing the mission of the Gospel in and through our parish. Today we face fresh challenges, manifested in a dramatic visual way through our church-building project. Our new church will offer capacity, functionality, and durability—essentials for a parish worship space. But do these qualities demand the magnificent structure designed by Cram & Ferguson? What else will the new church provide for our community? These are critical questions for all of us, which can only be answered by a thoughtful consideration of the history and role of Church buildings, and of the work of our parish.

A Visible Sign, a Living Church

The Church’s 1,700-year heritage of classical church architecture is rooted in the Old Testament revelation of God’s presence, from Moses’ desert tabernacle to the Great Temple in Jerusalem. The promise represented here finds fulfillment in the New Testament: God chooses to dwell among us, incarnational and personal. How does this dwelling manifest itself in practical terms? Early Christians seemed to follow the model of desert itineracy—first meeting in homes to celebrate the Eucharist, the memorial of Christ’s Passover, and, during periods of intense persecution, gathering in the catacombs in and around Rome. From this cradle of Christianity, the Church grew and began to construct large buildings modeled after the classical Roman architectural style. The first such structure, begun in the early-fourth century, was St. John Lateran in Rome, still in use today. As early as the fifth century, church architecture changed from the classical Roman to the Byzantine style, with its beautiful iconography, decorated domes, marble columns, and mosaics. Toward the close of the first millennium the Romanesque style appeared, characterized by its massive size, its thick walls, rounded arches, sturdy columns, large towers, and decorative arcading. Because of their simplicity (a contrast with the Gothic, Baroque, and neo-Gothic), Romanesque-style churches tend to be less costly to build than other classical styles. Following World War II, many in the Church moved away from traditional architecture to modernism in church design and minimalism in furnishings and decoration. Over the past

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Very Rev. Joseph Barranger, O.P.

Honoring Our Past, Building Our Future
15-20 years, the pendulum has begun to swing back, with many examples of new churches designed in a traditional style to be a “church that looks like a church”.

A Church That Evangelizes

Our patron, St. Thomas Aquinas, recognized that man’s mind is raised to contemplation through material objects. Likewise, in his Spiritual Exercises, St. Ignatius Loyola stressed the importance of visualizing the subjects of meditation, inspired by sacred images. St. John Paul II and Pope Benedict XVI both wrote extensively about the indispensability of transcendent beauty in Catholic architecture. Indeed, this architecture can inspire faith renewal and evangelization. By expressing beauty, permanence, and transcendence, a church building can teach all who see it what it means to be Catholic. For all of these reasons, our new church will serve as a catalyst for a deeper commitment to our Faith, among both regular and occasional participants in the Eucharist and other liturgies, as well as a compelling invitation to all, especially the 4,000+ University of Virginia undergraduates who self-identify as Catholic, and whom we are dedicated to serve in a particular way.
The Mission of the Order of Preachers and its expression in the life of Dominican friars is perfectly tailored to University Campus Ministry. Many of Saint Dominic’s earliest followers were instrumental in the development of the intellectual life of Europe at that time, and we continue the work of scholarly engagement today. This is possible because the intellectual life of the human person is in a large sense the reflection of the Imago Dei. Our work is to provide a well-rounded opportunity for Christian maturation in a university setting—a place that is focused on the forming of the intellect. This proper place for each person to grow in his or her faith assists in the education and maturity of the entire human person. In essence, we are fostering an individual student’s faith by providing a proper worship space. We are giving each student a new opportunity of encountering the Lord Jesus Christ. Further, by doing so, we are integrating the University’s own ideals, and strengthening the intellectual enterprise of the entire student body. We are entering into the same mission and goal as we work toward giving a proper physical space, next door to the Grounds of Mr. Jefferson’s University, for God to act within the hearts and minds of students, faculty, and staff. At the same time, we will thereby provide a clear, visible pledge to the University, not just of our long-term dedication, but of our explicit and unabashed Catholic identity. We are #UVACatholic, and this is our church, a beacon for evangelization and service to the entire University Community.

—Fr. Joseph-Anthony Kress, O.P., Catholic Chaplain to the University of Virginia

If Mass is where Heaven meets earth, then a church should communicate the glory and beauty of God and His dwelling place. It excites me to know that the new church will do just that.

—Elizabeth Hofer, Chair Of The Student Leadership Team, 2017-2018

Proclaiming Our Catholic Identity
Over the last two years of professional consultation, planning, and prayer, we have been governed by three uncompromisable principles, put forward by our pastor, Fr. Joseph Barranger, O.P.:

**THREE UNCOMPROMISABLE PRINCIPLES**

- *To construct a building that will stand the test of time.*
- *To expand seating capacity significantly to accommodate our growing parish.*
- *To create a more suitable sanctuary for the celebration of the sacred liturgy.*

These have brought us to the plans provided by the architectural firm Cram & Ferguson, Boston-based specialists in Catholic church design, in close consultation with our local architects, Train Architects. In addition to incorporating the priorities of fiscal responsibility, beauty, and practical functionality, these plans depict a remarkably beautiful Romanesque-style structure that will relate in style and materials to the St. Thomas Aquinas Priory, where the Dominicans reside, and to the University of Virginia itself.

Notable details include:

- The exterior of the building complements its setting within the Grounds of the University and beside the Dominican Priory.
- It is cruciform, reflecting the centrality to our Faith of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection.
- We will have a spacious sanctuary area that can accommodate celebrants, concelebrants, and altar servers at Mass, reflecting our growing Dominican community.
- The increased seating is arranged to retain the intimate feeling of the current structure, while at the same time setting the altar as the unobstructed focal point from every pew.
- The building is designed to be acoustically sound so that, even without our excellent new sound system, all can hear!
- Through the generosity of a donor, we will have a Mary Shrine with seating to accommodate individuals and small groups who wish to pray to Our Lady.
- For the first time, our priests will have a sacristy and vestry, where they and the altar servers can vest and the coordinators can prepare for liturgies.
• Our Alderman Road doors will finally realize their full potential as a ceremonial entrance, offering a new repository for the stained glass of our current church. This stained glass will provide a “jewel box” effect within the entrance.
• We will have four confessionals, providing an adequate and proper setting to this Sacrament which is so vital to the Christian spiritual life.
• Church seating will increase from ~800 to ~1200.
• Our plan includes an outdoor garden and usable park space, so that we will be able to enjoy the land around our church in a new way.
• We will maximize use of parish land, so that no space will be wasted!

To view full renderings of the design, please visit our website at: building.stauva.org.
“My confidence in our construction budget accuracy is high. The process we are using for the Church Project Design and Construction has been time tested at UVA where from 1999 until my retirement in 2012, I served as Director of Design and Construction at UVA responsible for all capital projects. In this position over $1.5 Billion of construction was completed. This process was also used on the Priory which was finished below budget. Our current construction cost estimate is based on a design that is over 50% complete and has involved our Construction Manager and numerous competing trade contractors. Finally we have also included a 10% contingency in our budget.”
— Sack Johannesmeyer, Project Manager

The estimated cost of the new church and essential furnishing is just over $11 million, comprised of the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Church construction cost</td>
<td>$8,290,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Architecture and engineering fees</td>
<td>875,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project contingency</td>
<td>1,000,000</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total church cost</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,165,000</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Essential furnishings (altar, tabernacle, ambo, font, Mary shrine pews, confessionals, stations, etc.)</td>
<td>900,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total project cost</strong></td>
<td><strong>$11,065,000</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Additional furnishings, fixtures, and liturgical elements, including stained glass windows, side shrines, statuary, sculptures, wall art, pipe organ, etc., will be purchased and installed either through building fund donations in excess of our target, or as planned gifts and bequests. This will provide future members of St. Thomas Aquinas an opportunity to join their fellow parishioners in making a sacrificial investment in their new spiritual home.

Fr. Joseph and the parish finance council have established a goal to raise a minimum of $10 million for the new church, including the $5 million raised in last year’s Living Our Mission campaign. Achieving or exceeding that goal would reduce, or possibly eliminate, the future financial burden of long-term debt. Following are details of funds raised to date and amounts needed to be raised to achieve this goal.

**FUND-RAISING PLAN FOR THE NEW CHURCH (IN MILLIONS)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cash and pledges received to date</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2016 (primarily from Living Our Mission)</td>
<td>$5.2</td>
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<tr>
<td>2017 (primarily from major LOM Donors)</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional required to begin construction prep</td>
<td>2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additional required to reach goal</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal by year-end 2018</td>
<td>$10.0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
You may be wondering how much your family should pledge. No one can tell you the amount of your very best sacrificial gift; each family’s circumstances are unique. We ask only that you reflect prayerfully on how much God has given you and your family and respond with great love and generosity. This is truly a decision of faith.

**No Gift is Too Small!**

This campaign is one that belongs to every member of the parish. Your prayerful support and whatever financial pledge you can make—even the pennies of our youngest members!—will be treasured. Some of the loveliest churches in the world have been built through the generosity of poor laborers and their families. Even if you can only contribute $5 per month, you will be joining in this wonderful opportunity for each of us to serve our parish. We do not want anyone to be left out of this exciting project!

**Suggestions for Giving**

The suggested gift plans on the page following provide for payment of pledges over a maximum of five years, with a suggested initial offering of 10%-30% (20% used in table) to minimize construction debt and related interest cost; for the same reason, a payment period of three years or less is encouraged if that is financially feasible for your family.

We ask that each family consider a minimum pledge of $3,000, which after an initial offering of 20%, amounts to just $1.31 per day, or $40 per month, over a five-year payment period.

We know that a pledge of $3,000 may not be possible for some of our parish families; therefore, it is vital to the success of the campaign that those who have the means to make larger pledges do so.

Families and individuals who are financially capable of pledging $10,000, $25,000, $50,000 or more are asked to step forward and become campaign leaders.

“**And he sat down opposite the treasury, and watched the multitude putting money into the treasury. Many rich people put in large sums. And a poor widow came, and put in two copper coins, which make a penny. And he called his disciples to him, and said to them, “Truly, I say to you, this poor widow has put in more than all those who are contributing to the treasury. For they all contributed out of their abundance; but she out of her poverty has put in everything she had, her whole living.”**

Mark 12:41-44, ‘The Widow’s Offering’
Last year’s Living Our Mission campaign and this year’s Honoring Our Past, Living Our Future initiative can be viewed as Phases I and II of an overall project to raise the funds needed to build our new church. The success of Phase II depends on significantly expanding the base of LOM donors (470 total, 150 greater than $3,000) as well as supplementary pledges, payable to St. Thomas Aquinas Church Building Fund, by many of our parishioners who made generous pledges to the LOM campaign. We know from scripture that God will reward such generosity doubly.

Please review the Suggested Gift Plans on the following page and choose a plan that is right for you and your family.
Not everyone can make the same size gift, but everyone can make the same size sacrifice.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Initial</th>
<th>Gift</th>
<th>Daily</th>
<th>Balance Over Five Years</th>
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<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gift</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>Initial</td>
<td>Gift</td>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>Sacrifice</td>
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<tr>
<td>$250,000</td>
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<td>$200,000</td>
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<td>$80,000</td>
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<td>$1,333</td>
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<td>$667</td>
<td>$8,000</td>
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<td>$6.58</td>
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<td>$8,000</td>
<td>$4.38</td>
<td>$133</td>
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<td>$1,500</td>
<td>$6,000</td>
<td>$3.29</td>
<td>$100</td>
<td>$1,200</td>
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<tr>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>$600</td>
<td>$2,400</td>
<td>$1.31</td>
<td>$40</td>
<td>$480</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As You Make Your Pledge Please Remember:

- Pledge payments are in addition to your weekly offertory contribution.
- Your campaign pledge is a restricted gift to be used for the new church building.
- Payment reminders and a special payment envelope will be mailed to you in accordance with the payment plan you choose.
- Pledge payments are fully tax deductible in the year paid.
- Pledges are not legally binding, but rather are an indication of your intention to donate.
- Please make checks payable to St. Thomas Aquinas Church Building Fund.

“Give and gifts will be given to you…the measure with which you measure will in turn be measured out to you.”
– Luke 6:38

Suggested Gift Plans
“Every community therefore has the duty to take special care of its own sacred buildings, which are a precious religious and historical patrimony.”

— Pope Benedict XVI
Our new church will be expertly built with quality materials to last 100 years and more. The financial sacrifice we make to construct this beautiful church will represent an investment in our spiritual home, and in the faith of future generations. When the centennial of the church dedication is celebrated in 2118, members of the parish—perhaps including some very young current members—will thank us for the spiritual legacy we left them, joining all of us and those who went before us “in the building up of the body of Christ” through His Church.

We invite all members of the community to join together in praying for our parish and this exciting building project.

**PRAYER TO MARY, MOTHER OF THE CHURCH**

Virgin Mary, Mother of the Church, in you the Word was made flesh. For over fifty years, that same Word has been received, contemplated and praised in our parish. We now desire to build a church as an offering of praise to God, honoring our past and building our future on our true foundation, Jesus Christ, your Son. We ask you, dear Mother, to intercede on our behalf, together with our patron, St. Thomas Aquinas. Guide and protect our efforts. Pray that our hearts be consumed with zeal for the dwelling place of God Most High. May God bring our project to successful completion so that our church may continue to be a place where sinners repent, where faith increases, and where graces flow in spreading the kingdom of Christ, Our Lord. O Mother of the Word Incarnate, despise not our petition but in your mercy, hear and answer us. Amen.
1. **Why build? Why not renovate?** In facing the considerable problems and challenges in our current church, the parish Building Committee considered two options: 1) expanding and renovating the current church, incorporating structural elements of the current building into a fresh, renewed, larger worship space, and 2) demolishing our current church and building a completely new church on the current site, a considerably more costly option. Initially we chose the first plan. As the architects proceeded with detailed design of the project, however, serious acoustical and structural problems came to light that the architects, working with experts, could not resolve at an acceptable cost. At that time, based on the recommendation of several architectural firms and construction experts, the Building Committee and Fr. Joseph made the decision to set aside the “expand-and-renovate” plan and to build a new church instead. The unanimous decision of the Building Committee was that building a new structure would not only be more fiscally responsible, it would also give us a building that is beautiful, intimate, enduring, and acoustically perfect. Additionally, the Building and Renovation Committee (BARC) of the Diocese of Richmond recommended new construction, rather than renovation, as the best solution.

2. **What is the difference between this project and the Living Our Mission Campaign?** Like all parishes in the Richmond Diocese, we were called upon to join in the diocese-wide Living Our Mission capital campaign. LOM offered a unique opportunity to support the critical ministries and projects of the diocese while at the same time raising considerable funds (the greater percentage of funds raised) for the direct use and funding of our own parish project. The goal of the combined campaign was set at a minimum of $5 million, including $675,000 for the Diocesan share of LOM and $4,325,000 for our church building fund. Through the generous contributions of many parishioners, by the end of June 2016, the combined campaign actually raised $5.8 million, including approximately $5 million for our church building fund.

3. **When will construction start and when will it be completed?** Our goal is to break ground summer 2017.

4. **Where will Sunday Mass be held while the Church is closed? How many Masses and what time will they be held?** Sunday Mass will be held in St. Thomas Hall, with overflow seating in the double classrooms. We will have seven Masses: Saturday, 5:15pm Vigil; Sunday 7am, 8am, 9:30am, Noon, 4:00pm and 5:15pm. In addition, we have a 9pm Sunday Mass at the UVA Chapel during the academic year.

5. **Will there be daily Mass?** Yes, the friars will celebrate weekday Masses at our usual times: 8am and 5:15pm. Daily Masses will be held in the Hall. Additionally, we have a 12:25pm Mass at the UVA Chapel during the academic year.

6. **Will ministries still be able to use the Hall?** On Sundays, the Hall will be dedicated to Sunday Masses. During the week, half of the Hall will be available for ministry functions. Additionally, our two double classrooms (Rooms 9&11 and 2&4) and single classrooms will be available for ministry use.

7. **What will happen to our religious education/youth ministry programs (held on Sundays)?** Never fear! Our programs are still going to be scheduled to serve our families. Elementary Religious Educa-

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“I am excited to have a beautiful church to help students lift their hearts, thoughts, and prayers to the Lord when they come to pray!”

tion classes will take place between two of the Sunday morning Masses and our Youth Ministry programs (EDGE and Life Teen) will meet after our Sunday evening Masses.

8. **What will we do for Christmas and Easter Masses?** We will hold extra Masses for Christmas and Easter. Please watch the bulletin for more details.

9. **What about energy consumption?** In spite of the fact that we will have a larger building footprint with more seating, our energy consumption will be markedly reduced. We will have significantly-improved building envelope insulation, allowing us to use the same HVAC capacity as the old church, but with a more efficient system. Further, all lighting will be LED, reducing electrical consumption.

10. **Will there be any significant cost savings going forward?** Over the past few years we have spent nearly 10% of our total offertory collections on repairs and maintenance of the current church. Structural and mechanical engineers advised us to expect more of the same going forward. Thanks to the high-quality materials and up-to-date systems that will go into our new building, we anticipate a considerable savings!

11. **Will there be sufficient parking for the new Church?** The project will not significantly impact parking on weekends.

12. **Where will the construction equipment park?** Some will park within the building footprint, some in the parking spaces against the church, or off-site.

13. **What does this new building have to do with UVA and our Campus Ministry (our primary ministry)?** The answer to this question is: EVERYTHING! We are a University Parish, established to serve students, faculty, and staff of the University. Inspired by the Dominicans who serve here, our vibrant, growing parish family embraces this ministry in a special way, offering a uniquely grounded framework for worship, scholarship, apostolic service, and community.

14. **Will any parts of the old church be reused or recycled?** We are eager to preserve and recycle as much of our current building as possible. Our stained glass will find a new home in our ceremonial entryway, with the large image of St. Thomas Aquinas placed over the west staircase, greeting all who enter the Church.

15. **Will we have a new organ?** A pipe organ is not part of our estimate. However, additional furnishings, fixtures and liturgical elements, including stained glass windows, side shrines, statuary, sculptures, wall art, pipe organ, etc., will be purchased and installed as funds become available through future building fund donations and planned gifts and bequests. This will provide future members of St. Thomas Aquinas an opportunity to join their fellow parishioners in making a sacrificial investment in their new spiritual home.

16. **What will our seating capacity be?** Church seating will increase from ~800 to ~1200.

“**This new building represents a thrilling catechetical opportunity. How powerfully the very stones will speak to children, inviting them into intimate communion with God and His Church!”**

—Eleanor Nicholson,
Director of Religious Education.
The following questions are from “Q&A” in Catholic Church Architecture and the Spirit of the Liturgy, Denis R. McNamara, 217:

1. Didn’t the Second Vatican Council do away with traditional, beautiful churches? What about “noble simplicity”? The documents of the Second Vatican Council relating to art and architecture are in complete continuity with the Church’s great tradition even as they set certain guidelines for the liturgical renewal. The document on the Sacred Liturgy, Sacrosanctum Concilium, asked that sacred art be composed of “signs and symbols of heavenly realities” that were meant to be expressive of God’s “boundless beauty.” (SC, 122)….It is interesting to note that despite the common misunderstanding, the Council never used the phrase “noble simplicity” to refer to liturgical art and architecture. It actually asked that churches strive for “noble beauty” (SC, 124). The term “noble simplicity” was mentioned in the Council’s documents in relation to the rites (SC, 34). So, beauty is in fact the goal of new church architecture, according to the documents of the Second Vatican Council.

2. Since the people are the “living stones” of the Church, why should we need anything other than a simple meeting hall for Mass? The people are indeed the living stones of the earthly Church. However, the documents of the Second Vatican Council remind us that the Sacred Liturgy is an exercise of the priestly office of Jesus Christ, head, and members (SC, 7), where we “take part in a foretaste of that heavenly liturgy which is celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem, toward which we journey as pilgrims, where Christ is sitting at the right hand of God, a minister of the holies and of the true tabernacle; we sing a hymn to the Lord’s glory with all the warriors of the heavenly army” (SC, 8). The job of liturgical art and architecture is to make a building that not only serves the needs of the earthly congregation, but also allows them, through the use of sacred images, to “see” the full community of the liturgy: angels, saints, the Trinity, and even the souls in purgatory….A church building, therefore, aids in our full, conscious, and active participation by showing us by way of foretaste the very realities in which we are participating.

3. The upper room of the Last Supper was a simple place [and] Jesus never wore fancy vestments or drank from gold cups. Why should we do this in the liturgy? Shouldn’t we give money to the poor instead? Because the Sacred Liturgy is in one sense a memorial of the Last Supper, many people think that the liturgy is supposed to imitate the earthly time of Christ. However,…[the] Catholic liturgy is not primarily a recall of the earthly Christ, but a foretaste of the heavenly Christ of the second coming….The earthly liturgy recalls the shadows of the Last Supper and Passover, but more importantly, it serves as an image of the heavenly Wedding Feast of the Lamb. The earthly chalice is not only a recall of the cup of the Last Supper, but of the glorious, golden, radiant feast of heaven. Similarly, the church building should show us the order and perfection of heaven. Building beautiful buildings should never be a substitute for feeding the poor and nursing.

“When a Catholic community builds a church designed to last for more than a century, they build it not just for themselves, the living. Rather, they build it for unborn generations of Catholics to come. In 2117, the parishioners of St. Thomas Aquinas will still be benefiting from the sacrificial gifts we make today.”

— Jason W. Trujillo, Parishioner.
the sick, but it is not an “either/or” question. The poor and the sick are also expected to participate in the liturgy and they deserve access to the foretaste of heavenly realities as much as anyone. Moreover, the poor are the least likely to have beautiful homes and personal artwork. A beautiful church gives them a refuge of beauty, which they need more urgently than do the wealthy. Serving the poor means serving their human need for liturgical beauty and for food and shelter.
His disciples remembered that it is written:  
“Zeal for your house will consume me.”  
—John 2:17