

November 23, 2002

Dear St. Thomas the Apostle Parish Family,

“I’ll never believe it without probing the nail prints in his hands, without putting my finger in the nail marks and my hand into his side.” These words of St. Thomas the apostle have been used over the years to label Thomas the doubter, and it seems that there have been doubts and fears associated with our parish from the very beginning.

It was a bold and daring group of Catholics that built the first church in 1973. At the time it was doubted that this small group of 30 families could really support a church. In the years since the building of the first church, our community has struggled and grown. At times, St. Thomas’ words may have been our own.

Today we celebrate a new chapter in the history of this resolute and tenacious community. Again we have taken on a bold vision to which we believe God is calling us. Our new church is the direct result of countless parishioners who set doubt aside and believe that God would help bring this vision to a reality.

Like the Apostle Thomas, we have experienced the risen Lord and been assured of His presence. I believe it has also been through our experience of His crucifixion that we have come to a deeper faith in the resurrection. Today, as we dedicate and move into our new church home, we should hear the words of Jesus to Thomas, “Do not persist in your unbelief, but believe!” Our response is, “My Lord and My God.”

Peace be with you.

Fr. David Boettner

## St. Thomas Church History

1943	First Mass celebrated in the area, seven families
1946	Parish moved to Lenoir City (Nichols School)
1947	Mass moved to the home of Ted Lancaster
1947	Becomes part of the Harriman Mission
1961	Mass moved to the Memorial Building of Lenoir City Library
1973	First church building completed at 2500 Harrison Road, Lenoir City. Paid \$7,500 for the 4.5 acres, \$76,000 for the church
1990	Thirty-six families (Loudon County population 31,255; TV (Tellico Village) population 834)
1992	Feasibility study of expanding the church due to growing population (Tellico Village has a big influence). Average attendance at two Masses is 146, 89 on Sunday, with a church capacity of 110
1993	124 families
1994	Addition and current entrance added to the building
2000	320 registered families with weekend Mass attendance of approximately 510, four daily Masses and four weekend Masses including Saturday vigil and Spanish Masses. A "Homecoming 2000: Stewardship for the Future" event was held on October 15
November 19, 2002	Last Mass in the Harrison Road building
November 23, 2002	Dedication of the new church at 1580 St. Thomas Way. Fr. David Boettner is the pastor. Donations are made for church furnishings and artwork
August 25, 2005	Groundbreaking for Parish Family Life Center (PFLC)
February 11, 2007	Dedication of PFLC
October 4, 2009	Installation of Fr. Christian Mathis and Fr. Tom Moser as pastor and associate
2010	Stewardship Committee created in addition to the PPC and Finance Council
2013	Fr. Doug Owens and Fr. Antonio arrive
June 2015	Fr Julian Cardona arrives