



# MORE INFORMED

STM Newsletter

June/July 2021



Generous Faith  
Expression  
reaching exciting  
milestones in 2021



A Fond Farewell  
heart overflows  
with gratitude

Congratulations  
Graduates  
stm catholic school  
class of 2021

From Mind to Heart  
adult education at  
st. thomas more

Vision of Help &  
Support  
marriage and family life

A Sweet Deal  
middle schoolers  
consecration to mary



ST. THOMAS MORE PARISH

*Go and make disciples*

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## MORE INFORMED

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## deadline

June 10 for the August/September issue and August 10 for the October/November issue. Articles may be edited for clarity and space.



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# Generous Faith Expression

reaching exciting milestones in 2021

## our pastor's message

As St. Thomas More celebrates its 50th anniversary one marvels at the many highlights that mark those years. Apart from the family events, growth in personal spiritual journeys, joys of things like baptisms and weddings, and sorrows of gathering for the funerals of family and fellow parishioners, we have had other more (pardon the pun) concrete bricks and mortar milestones.

We have purchased the property on which we currently have what could arguably be regarded as the premier parish facilities in the Archdiocese of Denver. On that land first was built a multi-purpose building that housed a chapel and adjacent gym that could be used for holding the larger Sunday Mass crowds.

There was at the same time built not only offices, but also a restaurant that would be a unique feature that drew attention and recognition for its ability to highlight that the parish was a center for community gathering and activities, not just a place for the sacramental celebrations.



*Fr. McCallin breaks ground on the Youth Center in 1987.*

As the parish became an established community of many large families, the need for ministering to and educating the youth in the ways of the faith led first to a vibrant youth center and then to the awareness of the value of a parish school.

The school buildings housing at one time around 800 students during the day, and providing classrooms for Religious Education and Catechesis on the evenings and weekends, were constructed over time and have been a heavily used and great resource.

Then, after years of usage, the second church worship space was seen to be ready for remodeling and upgrade to help make the liturgical setting more beautiful as well as highly functional. At the same time a more appropriate setting for the perpetual adoration of the Lord was made possible.

This jubilee effort was followed by the eventual construction of a new rectory that would house the priests and seminarians that would be coming to the parish over the years in a setting that was solid, practical and comfortable.



*Fr. Melvin Thompson during the ground breaking for the Church Renovation and Adoration Chapel*



*Reviewing Renewing Our Heritage plans during the pre-construction phase.*

community to encounter the Lord in the weekly Mass. God is indeed good.

The final task was to complete the pledges and collect the funds to pay off the seemingly ever present parish debt for the many important projects. Through the generous commitment of our parish community, and the helpful oversight and recommendations of the parish financial council and knowledgeable staff members, we knew that the efforts would lend themselves to eventually being out from under the debt.

Which brings us to this summer. After a year of limitations in regular offertory, and watching the expenses and actions of the parish in its various ministry endeavors, a wonderful event is upon us.

We are making the final payments on our debt service with the funds that have been set aside for that purpose as well as some operating funds that have become available over the past couple years.

So for the first time in decades, the parish is actually debt free from any and all construction efforts that have made our facilities possible and beautiful.

Praise the Lord and thank you to one and all who have played a role in this.

Now, before I go any further, I will add a little clarification. Some in our parish are still making payments on their pledge commitments and we thank you for that and ask that you complete that commitment if possible.

We were able to make the earlier payoff by using reserves from the parish offertory and the monies that have been saved from operating expenses. Still, we are counting on your paying off those few remaining pledges and know that will help replenish the savings we have had to use.



*Msgr. Tom and Martin Shumsky cut the ribbon during the Renewing Our Heritage Grand Opening in 2018.*

Finally, the parish stepped up to remodel and update the original structures, as well as the youth center, making them functional and aesthetically appealing for the next quarter century. Little did we know how a more beautiful and well-designed parish hall would be used during a year-long pandemic to provide a setting for the

I have never had the opportunity that most families have of purchasing a home to live in, raise a family in and plan on using for the equity it might provide for emergency expenses, college costs or eventual retirement funds.

I do know that most families do so by taking out mortgages that are sometimes set to play out over thirty

years, but often are extended. Whatever the length, I know from my own family's experience and from what I have heard from many others, it is a rare but wonderful occasion when the mortgage is finally paid off. Some even have mortgage burning parties.

That, my friends, is exactly where our parish family is this summer. We are out from under the long running debt, able to focus more completely on the actions and ministries that will allow us to more fully carry out the Gospel ministry we are charged with, and do so in a new found sense of joy and hope.

And know that you have made this possible! I give thanks to God for you and for your constant and generous

faith expression that has made this possible. Being a stewardship parish is something we happily proclaim, but your actions put the substance into that declaration.

May all who have made this glorious moment possible be blessed by the God whom they have and continue to serve so well. And may your commitment to and involvement in St. Thomas More parish help launch it into the next fifty years of all that God calls us to.

God bless you, give you His peace, and fill you with His joy. ♦

– Msgr. Tom

## RECIPE from the RECTORY

By Renee Heinemeyer,  
Rectory Chef

### “Fall-Off-the Bone” BBQ Ribs

Ribs are one of the most popular and featured pork dishes that create that favorite summer barbeque. This recipe requires a bit of “prep time” to enjoy these truly “fall-off-the-bone” ribs. To truly round out the perfect summer BBQ, make fresh coleslaw and serve with homemade cornbread and chilled applesauce.

Prep Time: 30 minutes  
Cook Time: 4 hours

Total Time: 4.5 hours  
Servings: 6 – 8

#### Ingredients

- 10 lbs. Pork Ribs
- BBQ Sauce – 4-5 largest-size bottles
- Applesauce – 4-5 large jars
- Beer – 3-4 larger (16 oz.) cans

#### Supplies

- Spray Cooking Oil
- Large cookie tray that is “BBQ-safe”
- Large tinfoil (heavy-duty) disposable cooking pan
- Heavy-Duty Foil to cover the ribs on the grill.

#### Directions

Pre-heat the grill to 400 degrees.

Prep ribs by cutting down racks into 3-4 rib sections.

In a large soup pot, par-boil the ribs in water on the stove for 3-4 minutes.

On readied grill, place the ribs (bone side down) onto the grill. Watch carefully as to not burn! Turning only once.

In the tinfoil tray, spray the entire pan with cooking oil spray, then transfer all ribs.

Adjust grill for indirect heating: Burners #1 & #4 set to medium; #2 & #3 set to OFF.

In the pan, layer the ingredients in this order: BBQ sauce, ribs, apple sauce and beer.

Cover with heavy duty tinfoil and add a few holes for venting.

Cook for 4 hours. Rotate the meat at 2 hours and add additional liquid (beer) as needed. The ribs on the bottom could burn, so be sure to rotate the meat.





# A Fond Farewell

heart overflows with gratitude

## a message from fr. john ludanha

On Friday, April 9 at 5:15PM I received the list of new assignments from the office of the Archbishop. All parochial vicars in the Archdiocese of Denver do expect such changes after three years of service at one parish.

According to these new assignments, I am going to be a parochial vicar at Most Precious Blood Parish, Denver. My new assignment begins in July this year, until then, I will be around at STM.

As I reflect on my three years at Saint Thomas More Parish, my heart overflows with gratitude.

First and foremost I thank the Almighty God for the gift of life and priesthood. In His love, mercy, wisdom and providence, God led me to STM and gave me a responsibility to serve the STM parishioners. This to me was an



*Fr. John performs the sprinkling rite at Easter Sunday Mass in 2021.*



*Fr. John at the 2020 March for Life in Washington D.C. with STM Youth Ministry.*

opportunity not only to serve but also to grow in holiness through service.

I thank the Archbishop and his assistants for assigning me to STM for three years. I am fully aware that it is a great honor to be trusted to serve the people of STM in collaboration with the pastor on behalf of the Archbishop.

Monsignor Tom, the pastor of STM, stands out as deserving special recognition and appreciation. He received me at this parish, introduced me to the staff members as well as to the parishioners.

His great wisdom, long time experience, leadership skills and zeal for service among many other talents and virtues, have constantly inspired me and given me courage in service. He is truly a great treasure, "old is gold."

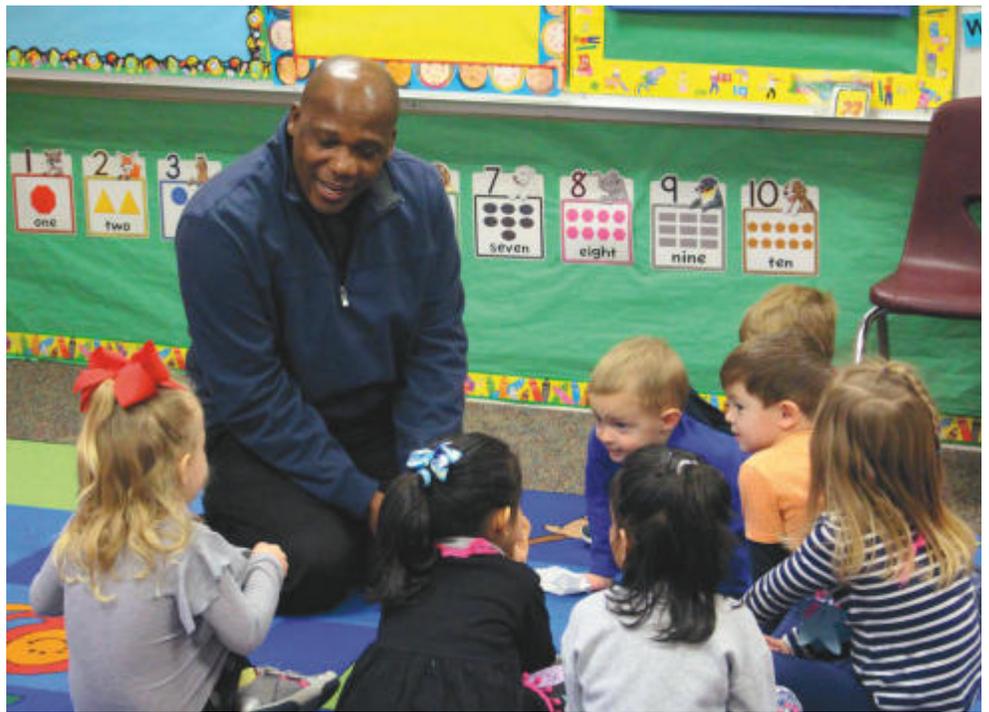
My brother priests, Frs. Rohan and Ivan, have been great companions during these three years. Their humility and holiness of life have always challenged me to do more and do better.

STM is very blessed to have many and very talented Deacons: Tim, Alan, Dave, Steve, Bob, George and George. You all have been a great blessing to me. I have always been overjoyed to serve with you, and you have inspired me tremendously by your lives and homilies. It suffices to say to you all "Thank you!"

I owe special gratitude to all STM staff members, you do the hard works which oftentimes go unrecognized, but God keeps all the records. Your hardworking has made my service and the services of other priests go smoothly.

I am most indebted and have a great deal of gratitude to all the STM parishioners. It has been a great honor and privilege to serve you for three years. You have always amazed me with your prayers, generosity, devotion and compassion.

During these three years, I have received words of affirmation and encouragement from so many of you. Christmas and Easter cards, and gifts, dinner invitations,



*Fr. John with STM Catholic Preschool students.*

prayer cards, many mass intentions have been offered for me at your request and the list goes on. All these have left a smile on my face.

To all my friends, I wish to thank you for your companionship, sincere friendship and support. I do express my sincere heartfelt gratitude for throwing your doors and facilities wide open to me. Your homes have always been a Bethany for me.

Finally, brothers and sister in Christ Jesus, I have one request to make. I know, many of you have praised how a wonderful person I am, for that I say THANK YOU!

But also I am fully aware that you did not live with an angel; you lived with me, a human being, prone to weaknesses and failures.

Some of my weaknesses have been open and obvious, some remain hidden. So my request is that FORGIVE ME AND PRAY FOR ME. I am praying for you as well. Please come to see me at MPB, it is only about 20 minutes driving from STM.

SHALOM! ♦

– Fr. John Ludanha



*Fr. John celebrates with brother priests and deacons at the 2019 Good Friday service.*



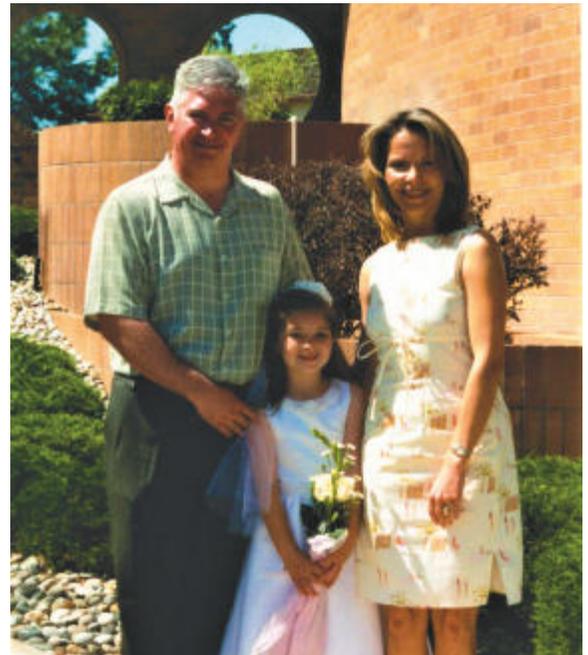
# memories from our parishioners



*The McCarty family with Fr. McCallin at their daughter Jennifer's First Communion in 1984.*

Summer time means there is an abundance of sacramental celebrations of First Communion, Confirmation and Marriage. Throughout our 50 year history, we have been blessed to witness so many of these milestones in our parishioners lives. We are glad to share these photos from parishioners and our archives.

To celebrate this anniversary, we want to dedicate these pages of the *More Informed* to these special moments. If you have photos you would like to submit, please email [moreinformed@sthomasmore.org](mailto:moreinformed@sthomasmore.org) or visit the parish office with your photos. ◆



*Hannah Crites with her parents Steve and Shirley at her First Communion in 2003.*



*1972 Confirmation of Ellen Leadbeater's son, Charles.*



*2018 Confirmation of Liam McAlpine, son of Chris and Molly McAlpine and grandson of Tom and Ellen Kocalski.*



*Archbishop Aquila at a 2017 Confirmation Ceremony.*



*Wedding of Phil and Irene Lindemer on August 4, 1979.*



*Wedding of Jason and Brandi Herzberg on September 11, 1999.*



*Wedding of Don and Linda Enloe on June 29, 1991*



*Wedding of Gene and Kristine Krist on September 4, 1993.*



*Wedding of Zac and Jennifer Varela on June 15, 1996.*



*Wedding of Michael and Carly Krizmanic on June 28, 2014*



*Wedding of Ian and Breanna Stemper on October 24, 2020.*

# From Mind to Heart

## adult education at st. thomas more

Jere Allen  
Retired Director of Catechesis

After Vatican II there was much talk about Adult Education in the Church.

In the early 80's I remember a series called RENEW which was the beginning of Small Christian Communities at STM. People or couples met in small groups in the homes and "renewed" their faith with two sessions in a year, one in the fall which coincided with Advent, and one during Lent.

The people involved became friends and some of these groups are still meeting today. The lessons were scripture-based and it was a good introduction for people to read the Bible.



*Msgr. Tom and John Cox with St. Thomas More's 2020 RCIA class at the Rite of Election in the Cathedral Basilica of the Immaculate Conception.*

I had been in a neighborhood Bible study for awhile, but I was the only Catholic in it! So, I started one at St. Thomas More which met on Monday mornings each week.

Once I was hired in 1987, one of the main vehicles for Bible Studies was the implementation of the ACTS II Evangelization Training program which was approved by Fr. McCallin and began in the fall, 1987.

The Sisters of the New Covenant (Franciscans) were the core teachers of the program. It began with over 50 people and was very successful. The evangelization which happened was phenomenal! Each participant had a prayer partner who we prayed with and for. I am still in touch with my prayer partner!

Small group settings that formed during the training are still going strong to this day. The sisters had a very strict guideline and materials which we followed, and spent Sunday afternoons and some weekends in classes. A lot of the Vatican II documents were studied, *Evangelii Nuncianda*, *The Constitution on the Church*, *Gaudium Spes*, were among the main ones. These documents are among the most beautiful and guiding letters of the Church.

The main focus of the documents is Evangelization, and the message was to bring the Good News to all people. It was our job to do that, not just the priests and bishops. It



*Jere Allen in her office soon after being hired as RE Director in 1987.*

was eye-opening to those of us who were brought up to just "pray, pay and obey" and not ask questions. We were indeed enlightened by these documents!

In the fall, 1987, Fr. McCallin came into my office and asked, "Is it ok for me to have my convert classes?" Imagine my surprise when the Pastor asked little me, a new hire, if it was ok? Of course, I said yes!

Joe and Sherry Ellebracht who had been working with baptism and marriage prep were also teaching that class along with Fr. McCallin (see page 12).



Fr. Greg Lesher leads a book study in *The Padre* in 2016.

In 1989, we had a new pastor, Fr. Michael Walsh. He came into my office in late July and announced to me that I would be heading up the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) which was to be implemented in all parishes that year.

I really knew very little about it except it fascinated me. I found out about a training, a five day intensive, headed up by the North American Forum, at Snow Mountain Ranch in Granby in early September. Fr. Frank Gerber and I attended it and that was it. I was hooked.

The RCIA program was up and running. I recruited some catechists to help me and began interviewing people who were interested in becoming Catholic.

The ACTS II program was still in place at St. Thomas More. In the meantime, we were beginning a new RE idea called the Family Program.

This involved whole families who would come to Mass together once a month, on Sunday and then have classes after for the parents and children. The parents usually had a speaker on a relevant topic, while the children were in grade level groups with volunteer catechists.

Then the parents were given books to work with the children the other three weeks of the month. It was for first through eighth grade students and was very successful. It now is the Faith and Family program which still is going strong.

Another very popular Adult Program was the Tuesday Morning Bible Study, which I took over in 1987 when

I was hired. It met in what is now Peregrine Hall and we used the Little Rock Scripture Series to study different books of the Bible. Now it is still meeting with John Cox and we are using materials from Ascension Press and the Augustine Institute. The studies are excellent.

Another successful program was "Remembering Church" which brought fallen away Catholics back into the Church. It was meaningful to the people who participated and there was a ceremony in the spring during Mass which welcomed them back.

In the 90's the new *Catechism of the Catholic Church* was adopted by all the bishops.

Roberta Marsh began a four-year study of the *Catechism* which was very well received by many people. It took each pillar in depth, one per year, and was studied each week in a class with small group discussions. The *Catechism* is a very beautiful masterpiece of our faith which is living and true!

ALPHA was begun by Dcn. Gary Rogge and a team of volunteers: the Alpha Program. It was held on Saturday mornings during the early 2000's in what used to be St. Joseph's Hall, under the Church (prior to the offices being remodeled.) Many people who attended this program went on to begin RCIA and became Catholic or returned to the Church and sacraments.

One very meaningful experience at St. Thomas More was bringing in visiting priests for Missions during the year. Some were in the fall and some during Lent. These Missions were very evangelizing and the presenters were excellent (for the most part!).

There were also parish retreats at times. Fr. Ken Leone (now Msgr.) led these in various retreat centers while he was assigned here.

Some of the other excellent programs we have hosted at St. Thomas More were the Catholic Biblical School, the Catechetical School (both run by the Archdiocese), and many key events like the 2009 and 2010 National Biblical Conferences which brought Scott Hahn and Jeff Cavins to our parish.

It is very true that in summary the Adult Education effort is very important to our faith. Keep learning everyone! ♦

# More STM Beginnings

## early days of sacramental ministry

Sherry Ellebract  
Former Baptism and Marriage Prep Coordinator

We worked with Fr. Ken Leone in the late 1970's to bring marriage preparation to the parish instead of sending couples to the archdiocese.

Joe and I attended the classes at the archdiocese and then adapted the program to STM, recruited and trained couples to meet with engaged people and then turned the leadership over to someone else.

While attending classes at the archdiocese, Fr. Tom Worth noted that we were from "the Archdiocese of the South." (Fr. McCallin was making his mark with The Padre restaurant and his other plans for the parish.)

Then in about 1980, Fr. Leone asked us to research and bring to the parish level an Infant Baptism class for couples expecting babies.

We worked with Dcn. Grover Cleveland to write the program, recruit and train couples and then turned the leadership over to another couple.

From 1976 to 1981, we were heavily involved in Marriage Encounter and served as Executive Coordinators for 18 months for Northern Colorado and the Western Slope.

Now, on to the "convert" classes. Fr. McCallin conducted "convert" classes twice a year with baptism for the first class in December (class began in September) and baptism for the second class at Easter (class began in January).

In 1980, we asked Father McCallin if we could sit in on his 'convert' classes and be there as a resource if anyone in the class had questions of a lay couple. He agreed. Then after a year of participating in his one-hour class—which began promptly at 7:00PM and ended on the dot at 8:00PM—we asked him if we could have an additional hour to spend with the group and cover topics that they might have additional questions about.

During his portion of the class, he never took questions—simply talked on the topic. He agreed to give us the additional hour!

He covered topics including: Proof of God, God & Us – Happiness, Man vs Science, Old Testament, Divinity of Christ, Four Marks of the Church, Commandments, Sacraments, Eucharist and Reconciliation.



*Fr. Ken Leone and Fr. Fred McCallin celebrate Mass in the mid 1970's.*

The second hour of each meeting was also open for questions and areas of concern. We also gave the group handouts on various topics or showed films/filmstrips (high tech for the time!)

After each class was finished, I recorded the appropriate information in the parish record books and prepared their baptismal and confirmation certificates. We assisted Fr. McCallin from 1980 through 1986.

One of the more humorous times was during the baptism ceremony when the altar boys accidentally tipped over the incense censer and set the altar bench cushions on fire. (There was a long bench behind the altar with a green cushion on it.)

Smoke was beginning to come out of the cushion, so Joe calmly walked over and carried the cushion back to the sacristy to put out the smoldering cushion. Fr. McCallin never acknowledged that there was a crisis and continued baptizing the folks as if nothing was amiss. ♦

# A Space Full of Treasures

## stm parish library



*The STM Parish Library located in the Narthex across from the Devotional Cove.*

Robin Herbka  
STM Parishioner

It's been 32 years since the STM Parish Library opened. Initially it was located in the Lower Level below the Padre. If you wanted to visit the library, you could do so on specific days, during specific times. Mary Freeman, parishioner and professional librarian, helped organize and catalog the materials when the library first opened.

Fast forward from 1989 to 2008 when STM completed its renovations and the library found a new home just off of the Narthex. The new location is more accessible, is open during church hours and provides a comfortable space which fosters learning and growth.

The library only includes items of a religious or inspirational nature, with more than 200 items checked out each month. There are materials for adults in the front room and selections for children through teenage years located in the back room. The back room also includes board and picture books for our youngest parishioners.

The front room, like the children's section, is organized by topic. You will find books on the Bible, Catholicism, Mary and the rosary, saints, inspiration, popes and papal documents and theology. There are also DVDs available in both sections of the library. In addition, there are audio CDs on specific topics.

Once you have selected items for your enjoyment, you simply use the computer to borrow them. That borrowing system and the computerization of all the

library materials are courtesy of volunteer Danette Johnson along with her husband Daniel.

All you need to check out items is the 10-digit phone number you used when you registered with the parish. When returning your items, you will again use the computer to check them in. There is a team of 15 volunteers who help sort through and catalog donated materials, return items to the shelves and create the window display of books relating to current topics and liturgical seasons.

Ann Benson, parish library volunteer coordinator, describes the library as "a warm, comfortable place to be." She also "encourages everyone to come in, take a look and enjoy and use what we have."

Visit the library with your family the next time you're at the parish. If the parish is open, the library is open. ♦

### Congratulations STM!



St. Thomas More has been selected for the 2021 Best of Englewood Award in the Religious Organizations category by the Englewood Award Program. Having received this award three years in a row, our parish qualifies for the 2021 Englewood Business Hall of Fame!

Each year, the Englewood Award Program identifies companies they believe have achieved exceptional success in their local community and business category. According to the Englewood Award Program, "These local companies enhance the positive image of small business through service to their customers and our community." The program honors the achievements and accomplishments of local businesses based on those who have shown the ability to use their best practices and implemented programs to help make "the Englewood area a great place to live, work and play."

# Vision of Help & Support

## marriage & family life department

### The Marriage & Family Life Department

The Marriage and Family Life department at St Thomas More began in 2009 under the direction of pastor Rev. Andrew Kemberling and Maryanne Carter as the director. Their vision was to help and support marriages and families throughout their spiritual and life journeys.

In 2011, Maryanne handed over the baton to David Salvado who became the director. Jo Holt took over a year later and served as director for 8 years. Sandra Schwab, our current director of the Marriage and Family Life department, was previously the Ministry Coordinator and brings great experience and knowledge to her position.

In its beginning stages, the department consisted of volunteers who helped with marriage preparation and annulments. Over the years the department has grown to meet the needs of our parishioners with the addition of two part time staff members. Currently, along with Sandra, Connie Wood and Melanie Lauer work together to provide our



*STM Marriage and Family staff: Sandra Schwab, Connie Wood and Melanie Lauer.*

parishioners with sacramental preparation, life assistance programs and many couple and family activities.

Sacramental preparation for marriage and baptism are a big part of the department's focus.

Connie, our Marriage Coordinator, meets with couples who are engaged, or are planning to be engaged, eight months before their wedding and walks alongside them as they prepare for their Sacrament of Holy Matrimony. The process of engagement and preparation is meant to help couples build a solid foundation for their marriage – with God at the center of their marriage – by giving them tools to support them throughout life's ups and downs.

She also assists couples who are preparing for their Convalidation. These couples have been married civilly and wish to bring their marriage into the Catholic Church. Just as with any sacrament, couples can expect



*Parishioners after outdoor Mass at the 2019 Family Campout.*

a time to study and reflect on the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony as well as enrichment and strengthening of their marriage relationship. Couples are also encouraged to deepen their personal relationship with God and having God at the center of their marriage.

Connie also coordinates Marriage Preparation Retreats that are held at our parish for couples from St. Thomas More and other parishes in our diocese. Cana Companions, a ministry that prays for couples going through the marriage preparation process, reports to her as well as our Mentor Couples, who help facilitate discussions, using a life-skills report with couples who are going through the marriage preparation process.

Marriage and Family Life also has Wedding Coordinators: Connie Wood, Melanie Lauer and Monica Bates. They are responsible for helping and coordinating wedding rehearsals and wedding ceremonies.

Sandra works with families who wish to bring their infant in to the Catholic Faith through the Sacrament of Baptism. She guides them through the Baptism preparation process.

In addition to the sacramental preparation, the members of the department provide a variety of helpful programs and ministries to enrich marriages and families in our parish community and beyond.

Through Sandra's leadership and coordination with Communio (non-profit churches consultants) and several parishioner volunteers, numerous events have been planned for this year. They include Family Movie Night and Couples Movie Night in the summer, a Marriage



*Ken and Becky Garry, Paul and Bambi Winkler, Ray and Jean Boyd, Betty and Frank Peltes and Caroline and Terry Peltes at the 2012 Spirits, Ribs and Parables picnic.*

Enrichment Retreat, a Cornhole Tournament and a Fall Festival just to name a few. All these events will be promoted through our parish media avenues.

Melanie, Ministry Coordinator, is the go-to person for the many department's ministry leaders. Her goal is to help in the success of their ministries by handling the details of meeting space reservations, availability of necessary materials and timely event promotion.

There are a variety of ministries that help and support parishioners in all places of their life's journey. Married couples can join ministries such as Teams of Our Lady, which focuses on marriage enrichment, scripture and prayer. Spirits, Ribs & Parables gathers for fellowship and Sunday Gospel discussions over dinner. Single Parents provides support to parents who are single and raising their children to become disciples of Christ. Comfort for the Divorced is an educational series and support group for those affected by the challenges of divorce.

For those who are looking to learn about budgeting and the Church's teachings about money Financial Freedom is another ministry the department offers. If you are looking to discover or enrich your relationship with Christ you are welcome to attend the Welcome CRHP 2.0 (Christ Renews His Parish) retreat. This highly talked about retreat offers personal reflection, prayer and long-lasting friendships with fellow parishioners.

If you need any assistance or would like more information about any of the ministries and programs provided by the Marriage and Family Life department, please don't hesitate to contact them as they are willing to help and serve. ♦



*Parishioners enjoying Family Movie Night in 2017.*

# The Search

## a lenten journey of faith

Irene Lindemer  
Director of  
Communications and  
Stewardship

St Thomas More parishioners were invited to participate in something new for Lent this year. With the support of Monsignor Tom, all parishioners were encouraged to participate in *The Search*, a FORMED video series examining the meaning of life's journey.

Over 80 groups were formed at STM with over 430 people participating with this dramatic production hosted by Catholic speaker, Chris Stefanick and created by the Augustine Institute located in Centennial.

"Chris Stefanick did such a wonderful job of narrating, sometimes with humor," remarked parishioners Gene and Dorothy Lomme who participated in the Tuesday afternoon group on campus.

Small groups were formed in many ways in response to the introduction of *The Search* program. Some groups met on Zoom with members near and far, others met in homes with family members and neighbors and many met on our parish campus.

Parishioners who were already in a small faith community invited their groups to participate. STM school teachers shared it with their middle school students. Choirs who have not been together for almost a year met to share the seven-part series with each other.

David Tschumper, Youth Ministry Director, invited the parents of high schoolers to participate while their youth were involved with Youth Group. He commented that this was one of the best parish wide programs St. Thomas More parish has ever had. Youth minister Greg Johnson and his wife met in person with a group of young adults, including non-Catholics, and youth minister Cheyenne Secor hosted a Zoom group with other young adults.



Parishioner Barb Finnegan was in a small group that met after the 9:00AM Mass on Mondays led by Dcn. George Morin. She commented that *The Search* is amazing and well done. Her group had very good discussions and she said, "I looked forward to every session and am so happy to have made new STM friends."

Ellen Kocialski was also in the Monday morning group. She said, "I can't tell you how often I wiped happy, joyful and wonderful spiritual tears from my eyes! We were blown away by the production and of course, the depth of our Catholic faith."

Other parishioners watched the series with members of their families. Married couple Brandon and Margaret Brown watched *The Search* together in their home.

Margaret described the impact of the series for her, "I feel like it deepened my connection to my husband and by doing so deepened our faith. I'm a cradle Catholic. My husband was not. So we each bring different viewpoints which makes for wonderful discussions."

Pattie Wilcox also shared this with her family and commented that she looked forward to watching *The*

Search each week. She remarked, "It provided a peaceful reflection during Lent that I enjoyed."

Numerous parishioners who were able to participate in *The Search* seven-week series were touched by the content, pleased with the production, proud to be Catholic and would like to see similar programs at St Thomas More in the future.

As Becky Schmid said about her experience, "We really enjoyed *The Search* and it far exceeded our expectations. We had 3 generations of family members in our group: grandmother, daughter and granddaughter, etc. All loved it."

If you were unable to participate this Lent with *The Search*, you are welcome to view it on Formed.org and invite others to share it with you. We invite everyone to take advantage of our parish subscription to FORMED, a media platform created by the Augustine



Institute, and view the many thought-provoking and inspiring videos available.

You may access FORMED directly from our parish website [www.stthomasmore.org](http://www.stthomasmore.org). Click on the EXPLORE link on our home page which will take you to the FORMED.org link. Enjoy! ♦

Life itself can feel like one giant cry room that we are all stuck in. As parents, we work hard, and despite the best laid plans, we can feel isolated and frustrated. Even with the best of intentions, we end up stuck in our own cry room. So what's the solution? How do you get out? Listen and find out!

Hosts Jo Holt and John Cox are servants of the Church, who would like to share their mistakes, lessons they've learned and practical solutions so you are no longer stuck in the cry room.

**Follow us on Facebook and Instagram!**

**Find our podcast on...**



# Works of Mercy In Action

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## pilgrimage of mercy impact

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From September of 2020 through January 2021, our parishioners had the opportunity to embark on a Pilgrimage of Mercy through the Corporal Works of Mercy.

Each month participants stamped their pilgrimage passports after completing at least five works of mercy.

Passports that were stamped all five months of the pilgrimage were entered into a drawing to join Msgr. Tom on a Pilgrimage to Chimayo, New Mexico! The trip has been postponed due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Parishioners are invited to participate and details will be available once the plans have been finalized.

We congratulate our winners! Our adult winner is Karen Smoody and Kieren Duda is the winner of the youth drawing.

*More Informed* talked with Karen Smoody about her experience on the Pilgrimage.

Why did you participate in the Pilgrimage of Mercy?

I feel that I am blessed and I have a passion in helping and serving others, especially where most needed. I am also Godmother to my four granddaughters (currently age 16, 9-year old twins and an 8-year old) and feel it is my duty and privilege to teach them how to reach out to help others in need. They love BINGO and also wanted to participate too.

I love visiting sites of healing so I can share them with those who feel there is no hope for them. It also helps in evangelizing about how great our God is.

What is something you learned while on the Pilgrimage of Mercy?

Even though we wanted to, some of the items were not easy to complete, so we didn't get them all checked



*Karen Smoody, Pilgrimage of Mercy drawing winner*

off, yet it was a fun and sometimes challenging event for us to do together.

Have you seen any new fruits or graces in your life since beginning the Pilgrimage of Mercy?

It was fruitful for me to witness my granddaughters' desire to take on a challenge as well.

For instance, one of them learned how to knit a hat with a loom, so she made one for herself AND one to give to someone in need at Samaritan House.

It always brings a smile to my face to see someone else's face light up when receiving a gift, especially homemade (fleece blankets we made and delivered to Children's Hospital), let alone one from a complete stranger. It seems to also give them a ray of hope and to know that they are loved.

I cherish watching the joy in my granddaughters' faces and feel the warmth and love in their hearts when we pay it forward and to know they don't have to be afraid to reach out and serve others.

What work of mercy has had the most impact in your life?

Paying it forward at the drive-through. When it happened to me, I was overwhelmed with tears of joy and gratefulness, and this exercise gave me the opportunity (and courage actually) to JUST DO IT myself.

Praying for the imprisoned. I heard a story from a gentleman who visited the prisons (whose mother had been murdered). As it turned out, he learned that he had been working with his mother's murderer!

Talk about tears and such emotions he must have felt, let alone forgiving the man. It reminded me of the story of Maria Goretti and I pray that I can have a heart to forgive like that. ♦

# Prayer, Reflection, Action

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## religious freedom at home and abroad

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By the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

People of faith are committed to serving others in God's love, often focusing their efforts in the important areas of healthcare, child welfare, the respect of life, refugee resettlement, education and more. Religious freedom protects the space in which we can continue to serve.

Religious Freedom Week begins Tuesday, June 22, the Feast Day of Sts. Thomas More and John Fisher, and continues through Tuesday, June 29.

The theme for this year's Religious Freedom Week is "Solidarity in Freedom." Join Catholics across the country to pray and act for the freedom to serve faithfully and with integrity.

We are called to follow Christ as missionary disciples by serving others and living our faith in all that we do. Let us take a few moments each day from June 22–29 to pray, learn more, reflect, discuss and take action on religious liberty, both here in this country and abroad.

Following are ideas of topics for prayer, contemplation and discussion with your family, friends and others, for each day of Religious Freedom Week:

**Tuesday, June 22: Adoption and Foster Care**  
Sts. Thomas More and John Fisher, whose feast day is today, pray that children waiting to be placed in a loving home and the caregivers who serve those children will find strength and support from the Church.

**Wednesday, June 23: Catholic Social Services During the Pandemic**  
Pray that God would continue to grant Catholic institutions the wisdom and courage to serve a world suffering the effects of the COVID pandemic.

**Thursday, June 24: The Equality Act**  
May the Holy Spirit give us the courage to bear witness that the dignity of all people ought to be respected in our country.



**Friday, June 25: Church Vandalism**  
For Christian witness in the face of attacks on our churches will convert hearts to faith in Jesus Christ.

**Saturday, June 26: Catholics in Nicaragua**  
Pray for our Catholic sisters and brothers who are suffering in Nicaragua.

**Sunday, June 27: Conscience Rights for Medical Professionals**  
May nurses, doctors, therapists and all ministers of healing be strengthened by the Holy Spirit in their imitation of Christ's compassion and care for the sick.

**Monday, June 28: Pope Francis' Solidarity with Beleaguered Christians in Iraq**  
Pray for Christians in Iraq, and that people of all faiths in the land of Abraham may live in peace.

**Day 8: Tuesday, June 29: Free Speech**  
May Christians have the courage to speak the truth with kindness and clarity, even in the face of adversity. ♦

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To learn more and find additional daily reflections and specific ways to take action for religious freedom in your everyday life, visit [usccb.org/ReligiousFreedomWeek](https://usccb.org/ReligiousFreedomWeek).



# The Lion's ROAR

stm catholic school

By STM Catholic School Faculty & Staff

## Diaper Drive Thank You!

Diaper Drive 2021 was an **OVERWHELMING** success! The STM community truly knows the meaning of generosity as we collected the equivalent of 127,309 diapers this year, far surpassing our goal of 75,000!

The STM Beta Club's leadership shown a light on an important community issue and rallied to support babies! We are so proud of our Beta Club members for their hard work. Students braved cold, wet and early mornings to raise awareness of this issue.

Eighth Grade Beta members Kaeden Ellmann, Peter Heitmann, Zach Meyer and Aiden Prananta were instrumental in ensuring the Diaper Drive was a success. Thanks to everyone's efforts, we will be helping so many mothers keep their babies dry and clean. ♦



## Bringing Learning to Life

Despite all the challenges thrown at teachers and students this year, teachers are still finding ways to bring learning to life. Through virtual speaking engagements, innovative lessons and several STM traditions, students are finding joy and excitement in learning.

The Middle School recently had the opportunity to virtually engage with a Holocaust survivor and a National Award Winning author. Students had a chance to learn first-hand about the horrors of a concentration camp and the incredible spirit to overcome the unfathomable experience.

C.R. Stewart met with Middle School student to discuss the writing process and the importance of crafting a

strong story line. Fifth Grade students continued their American History traditions.

As part of their unit on the American Revolution, students researched their favorite historic figure and presented their finding to their fellow students. Topics ranged from George Washington to Molly Pitcher with an entire cast of characters in between.

Dressed in period costumes, the speech also included a first-person narrative and speeches and writings from their figure.

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First Grade students celebrated the beginning of Spring while learning about science. Students incubated eggs and watched chicks hatch. The unit started with a visit from a Farming and Husbandry expert to learn how to care for their young charges.

Our students are incredibly thankful to all our teachers who found incredible ways to teach this year! ♦



## STM Catholic Embarks on New Opportunities for Dyslexic Students

This year, STM Catholic started a new program for students with Dyslexia. The program, NoticeAbility, invites Middle School students to explore their unique strengths through teaching entrepreneurship skills.

Students spent the school year creating inventions and businesses that make people's lives easier.

Using Social Emotional Learning skills, the goal of NoticeAbility is to teach Dyslexic students to focus on their abilities, not their learning differences.

While NoticeAbility is a nationwide program, STM is the only school in Colorado and the only Catholic school in the country to participate in this ground-breaking program.

On Thursday, April 29, NoticeAbility students presented their Business Plans to parents, teachers and community leaders. We are so proud of our NoticeAbility graduates and all their accomplishments this year.

NoticeAbility will continue next year with an Engineering and Architecture program. ♦



As Christians, the tradition of honoring one's father is as old as the Ten Commandments' fourth commandment to honor our parents. Many biblical figures show us how to do just that, including Isaac to Abraham, Joseph to Jacob, Solomon to David, and even Jesus to St. Joseph.

This is a perfect day to be thankful for the invaluable gift of fatherhood and pray for those who don't have a father in their life.

Let us pray that our fathers, through the intercession of St. Joseph, have a blessed Father's Day. ♦

Visit the STM Gift Shop for the perfect gift for Dad!

# Congratulations, Graduates!

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## stm catholic school class of 2021

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Our 43 eighth grade students finished their journey at STM Catholic School in May. As we say farewell to our graduates, we wish them many blessings and great success as they move on to high school. We pray that

they will continue to be faithful and fruitful sowers of God's word and work. Our newest alumni will remain in our hearts and prayers and they are always part of our parish school family. ♦

Julia Arnett

Jordan Beaumont

Spencer Buege

Addison Burke

Elinor Christensen

Paige Coleman

Sean Cunningham

Ryder Davies

Ava Denslow

Kali Ebner

Kaedon Ellmann

Andrew Fete

Vaughn Filby

Ryann Francavilla

Matthew Franzluebbers

Claire Frontz

Jane Gray

Delaney Hahn

Grace Hankins

Madelyn Hannam

Brandon Hawkins

Blake Hedlund

Peter Heitmann

Taylor Hoffman

Henry Johnston

Alessandro Kelly

Paisley Krahn

Alexandria Lancaster

Isabella Lecciso

Vivian Leege

Charles Lind

Zachary Lorenzo

Sydney Lowery

Sophia Mavis

Zachary Meyer

Carter Moody

Tristan Nonnenmacher

Sienna Passaglia

Sarah Pike

Aiden Prananta

Audrey Searle

Riley Shea

Stella VanNatter



# A Sweet Deal

## middle schoolers consecrate themselves to mary

Kira Weiland  
Teacher at STM  
Catholic

As part of the Lenten season, the middle school students at STM spent time each day going through *33 Days to Morning Glory* by Father Michael Gaitley on Marian Consecration.

On Thursday, March 25, the Feast of the Annunciation, the students were consecrated to Mary in a special ceremony led by Msgr. Tom Fryar.

Each student was given a certificate and Miraculous Medal to remember the event. This was a beautiful moment for the school community commemorating their devotion to our blessed mother.

Some of the Middle School students spoke at the ceremony explaining what Marian devotion meant to them. ♦

Mary Kate  
Sixth Grader

What is a Marian Consecration? Before we started this consecration, I was not sure what to expect. I have come to realize that giving myself to Mary can be a powerful thing. I know now that consecrating myself to Mary is like holding her hand and allowing her to lead me to Jesus. I have learned that prayer does not just have to be recited words.

I can turn to Mary and talk to her as I would my own mother. Mary wants the best for me and has a special ability to provide me with all I need while bringing me closer to her Son. I have learned that I do not need to be so concerned about praying for things that I want or need in my own life, but that our prayers and good works are about the grace applied to others through Mary.



*Middle School Students receive their blessed Miraculous Medals on the Feast of the Annunciation.*



*Msgr. Tom blesses the student's Miraculous Medals during the consecration ceremony.*

When we help others with the graces of prayer, we are actually helping ourselves in a way that is much larger than anything we could do on our own. Like Fr. Michael Gaitley says "it's a sweet deal." ♦



Students participate in a special consecration ceremony.

Sophie  
Seventh Grader

Why is Mary called a Mediatrix? A Mediatrix is defined as someone who occupies a middle position. It is never the intent of Mary to come between or block our path to Jesus. Mary has never done anything but God's will for her.

I've learned that Mary pondered in her heart things that she did not fully understand. This is a good way to be with God. He will make things known to us when we put our trust in Mary who was the perfect example of this trust.

This also means that her greatest wish is to help us love her Son more in order that we live His Divine will. Graces that God bestows upon us are multiplied when they go through the Immaculate Heart of Mary just as good works that we perform are multiplied when we offer them through Mary.

The part I liked the most is when St. Maximilian Kolbe pointed out that Mary's spouse, the Holy Spirit, is the uncreated Immaculate Conception and Mary is the created Immaculate Conception. This shows how closely Mary works with God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit. If God can entrust Himself to Mary by asking her to be the mother of His son, why shouldn't we?

This point made me feel comfortable and excited to entrust myself to Mary so I can experience her presence in my life. ♦

Ava  
Eighth Grader

How has my relationship with Mary changed?

This consecration has allowed me to think about Mary on a new level. I have realized that Mary can be many things on many levels to a person.

She is our mother and I now know that she is close to us at all times... ready and willing to help with anything we are dealing with.

She is happy when we are happy and sad when we are sad.

She wants to protect us from trouble and knows

that growing close to Jesus is exactly what will make us happy and holy. She wants her children to get along and help each other which is why when we give her all of our trust and intentions, she helps us help each other.

One meaningful point I realized during this consecration is how much Mary meant to the four saints we were introduced to: St. Louis de Monfort, St. Maximilian Kolbe, St. Teresa of Calcutta and St. John Paul II.

Mary was something different to each saint and it is another example of how Mary used those saints to help us get to Jesus through her heart.

I hope to keep getting to know Mary by trying to say the Rosary on my own and by just talking to her like I would a friend. ♦

“ If God can entrust Himself to Mary by asking her to be the mother of His Son, why shouldn't we? ”



# The **SPARK**

middle school & high school youth

## Embracing Jesus' Passion

### youth ministry lenten retreat

Greg Johnson  
Middle School Youth Minister

Every Palm Sunday weekend middle school and high school youth ministry hold Lenten Retreats. Each year the theme changes. This year the theme was “Elements” from the song by Christian artist TobyMac. We focused on the elements we face in life when it comes to our faith, family, school, sports, socially, mentally, emotionally and physically. Throughout the weekend we had talks, small groups, activities, games, meals together, prayer, confession and Mass. Davis and Miles Williamson, who attended the retreat, wanted to share their experience. ♦

Davis Williamson  
Seventh Grader

My name is Davis. My brother Miles (sixth grade) and I attended the Lenten retreat. We learned a lot about Jesus’ passion and our faith. We also got the opportunity to carry a cross through the streets to experience a little bit of Jesus’ suffering and be a witness to the people in our community. Our favorite activities were combat, kickball, small groups and little skits we did to help us learn about what Jesus went through.

We learned a ton about elements in our lives and compared them to Jesus’ Passion. Another thing that we found very interesting as well is that when He died on the cross it was for sins people had already done and the ones that people will make in the future. We are very thankful to have been on the retreat and we took a lot away from it. ♦



*Miles and Davis carry the Cross during the Youth Ministry's annual Palm Sunday Cross Walk.*



*Retreatants pray during the Youth Ministry Lenten Retreat.*

# Prayers, Love and Support

## consequences of covid-19 on youth

Jill Mason, MD  
community pediatrician and  
STM parishioner

We are now one year into the COVID-19 pandemic and while we are making strides in decreasing the amount of daily COVID-19 cases and deaths in our country, we are seeing a new crisis... escalating mental health concerns in our children and adolescents.

Overnight, in March 2020, our children and adolescents were suddenly faced with social isolation, disrupted education and new stressors in the home from the uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic.

They woke up to discover the nation had gone virtual for school, family gatherings and faith worship.

Imagine, you have finally made it to the last part of your Senior year or 8th grade year — BAM — just like that the world stops. There would be no sport season, there would be no in-person graduations, there would be no extended family gatherings and there would be no in-person Mass.

These important rite of passage experiences that we remember from our youth lost to the mandated isolation due to the pandemic. Let us not forget Easter 2020 at STM when we all tuned in virtually and saw photos of parishioners taped to the pews.

We were unable to attend Mass and receive Holy Communion in person last year on Easter. It was a time of confusion, worry and sadness for us as well as our youth.

We know the social isolation over the past year is causing an exponential rise in anxiety and depression in our youth. Our own community is seeing an unimaginable increase in office visits for mental health with limited resources to help.

Children's Hospital Colorado has had weeks where suicidal ideation is the number one complaint presenting to the ER, not sore throat or rash, but youth having



*Youth participate in a card stacking game at a youth ministry event.*

thoughts of ending their lives. The pediatric psychiatric units have been full for months.

Some experts predict mental health may be the most prevalent “long haul” symptom of COVID-19 in the pediatric population as a result of the indirect effects of the pandemic.

The youth of STM need our prayers, love and support. They are doubting themselves being made in the image and likeness of God. We must ask God, the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph to protect our youth. Please consider spending one hour in Prayerful Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament with the special intentions of comforting the youth struggling with mental health issues, strengthening the faith life of our youth, protecting our families and in continued support of our youth ministries during these unprecedented times. ◆

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Dr. Mason was born and raised in Wichita, KS and attended University of Kansas Medical School. She moved to Colorado in 2006 and is in private practice at Rose Pediatrics in Highlands Ranch. She has a sixth grader who attends STM and is involved in the Echofire youth ministry program.



ST. THOMAS MORE  
CATHOLIC PARISH IN CENTENNIAL  
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## Time Sensitive Material

I do not care  
very much what  
men say of me,  
provided that  
God approves  
of me.

– St. Thomas More

