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# MORE INFORMED

STM Newsletter

June 2022



My Spiritual Journey  
choosing the better portion

Corpus Christi  
o saving host, o bread of life



What is the Real  
Catholic Church?  
the church is incarnational

The Traveling  
Vocation Chalice

One Day at  
a Time

Lenten Retreat–  
Small but Mighty



ST. THOMAS MORE PARISH

Go and make disciples

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## MORE INFORMED

Published by the St. Thomas More Office of Communications six times a year.

Its mission is three-fold: to proclaim the Gospel, to build up community by keeping them informed and to call the community to worship and service.

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## deadline

June 10 for the August issue and

August 12 for the October issue.

Articles may be edited for clarity and space.

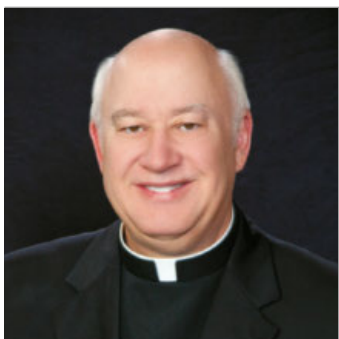


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# My Spiritual Journey

choosing the better portion

## our pastor's message

The thoughts, memories and appreciations are many as I write my concluding article for the *More Informed*. As I hope you are aware, I announced in April that I would be retiring and stepping down from my role as pastor of St. Thomas More Parish this summer. My final official weekend will be both the Feast of Corpus Christi and Father's Day, on Sunday, June 19. Both of which seem highly appropriate to me.

As many have asked what lies behind this new chapter in the life of the parish, and in my own priestly service, I want to share with you what was very much a part of my prayers and understanding when coming to the awareness that this is the proper time and action. It started with a deep reflection on the passage from the

Gospel of Luke wherein Jesus is at a dinner being given by His close friends, Martha, Mary and Lazarus. As final preparations for the feast are being seen to, He is sitting and sharing with His friends and disciples.

Martha, conscious that she is working extra hard to make the event special and memorable, comes out and asks Jesus if He is not concerned that Mary is just sitting at His feet, listening to what He is sharing. All the while she is attending to the many details and needs to ensure a successful gathering. He responds to her saying "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and upset about many things." Then He commended Mary as having chosen the better portion.

The value of sitting at the Lord's feet and soaking in His wisdom and grace has become a deepening desire in my own spiritual journey. I realize that for most of my priestly service I have been about the tasks of administration and the details of making sure all was prepared and well for the Lord and His people, both within the Archdiocese and in several sizable parishes. I was hearing the Lord calling me to start a new chapter of my life in which I was more the humble and receptive vessel, being filled anew with the wisdom and grace of our God. With any luck, this will take me through the final third of my priestly life. Pray that I come to Him with an openness to all He has in store for me.

I give great thanks for the path I have been on that has brought me to St. Thomas More Parish. What a tremendous setting for my final pastoral assignment within the Church of Denver. This community, and mainly the faithful who make it so special and blessed, is a true witness to the call of our Lord to be a sign of His presence within the world we are a part of.

Your faith lives are inspiring. The daily presence at the Masses, the use of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, the devotion witnessed for over a quarter of a century within our Perpetual Adoration Chapel, the groups of prayerful support, youthful learning, faith formation



Jan Vermeer, *Christ in the House of Martha and Mary*, 1655.



“ As we serve the Lord in our lives, let us always pray for each other.

and expression, stewardship manifested in personal generosity and the blessings it brings to others, both near and in other areas of the world, all show that the strong and abiding foundation of this community is the Gospel call, heard and lived out.

I can say from experience that no other parish in our Archdiocese has a staff that is so experienced and good, wise and committed as we have here at St. Thomas More. The resources they make present just heighten the wonder and appreciation of what we are able to do in and for the Lord. They have helped make my time among you joyous and productive in carrying out the daily work of the Gospel. And I have no doubt that the witness and

fruits of this group of fine people will continue to amaze and astound for many years to come.

Along with my gratitude for those who have worked with me over the years here, I am most sincerely appreciative of all of you, the parishioners of St. Thomas More. You are a constant witness to me of faithfulness and love and commitment. Your constant presence for the spiritual life lived out here is a tangible expression of your faith and love. Your generous and selfless attitude in living out our call to be a sign of Christ's presence in our world constantly amazes and inspires me to be all the more self-giving and sacrificing. Your willing response to the many and various calls to make the beauty and power of our faith manifest here is a reminder to me of my own call, in baptism and ordination.

I cannot tell you how many times, while placing the Lord back in the Tabernacle after communion, or in taking a knee and acknowledging God when passing through the church, my quick and sincere prayer to Him is a heartfelt thanks for the good people of St. Thomas More and that I have been blessed to be placed among you during this time in my own spiritual journey. Thank you for your goodness.

## Corpus Christi Sunday, June 19

All are invited to two events in honor of Monsignor Tom as we say farewell.

10:30AM Mass and Reception

5:30PM Mass, Corpus Christi Procession and Reception

Both receptions will be in McCallin Hall.



Another of the things that I have been especially conscious and appreciative of in my time here is the very art and décor of our worship setting. The church itself has the image of the saints in progression to the sanctuary depicted in the stained-glass windows on each side of the main body. One of the last items I have been moving forward is to bring the many relics we are custodians for into that same setting, displayed on both sides of the church leading up to those window depictions. In this way the procession of saints is even more tangible, evident and expressive. (See rendering and further details on page 17.)

And from my perspective this is a reminder that we are gathered as the communion of saints, past and present, in our coming together here for prayer and worship, especially in the Mass. I am quite aware of the fact that I am surrounded by good and holy men, women and children, daily within our parish. And you are not only an inspiration to me, but a reminder that all of us are called to draw near to the Lord, especially as we draw near one another. Thank you for your faith and witness which has supported me on my faith journey here over these past several years. You are a true and great blessing.

Know that although I will no longer be assigned to a parish, I will be a priest the rest of my existence, and as long as I am able, and the Lord makes it possible, I will be continuing to do that which most of us went to seminary for in the first place. I will still be celebrating the grace and love of God in the sacraments, especially in Masses and Confessions around the Archdiocese.

Pray for me that I will be able to serve the Lord and His people well in this new chapter of my life. And pray that my knowledge of and love for Him will continue to grow and deepen until my dying day.

Finally, be aware that you will continue to be within my prayers. May the God who loves you without limit help you to continually grow and deepen in your love for Him and for one another.

And, as I have mentioned many times throughout the years, please always remember to pray for your priests. Pray that they are holy and courageous in their proclamation of the whole Gospel. Pray that the Lord brings you the spiritual leadership that will best enable you to live out your own discipleship in the most fruitful ways possible. And know that God is with you, as Jesus Himself says, until the end of time!

This call to prayerfulness reminds me of the invocation I had on the card that was given out at my priestly ordination, 44 years ago this month. On it was the simple invitation: As we serve the Lord in our lives, let us always pray for each other. God bless you always.

– Msgr. Tom

## RECIPE from the RECTORY

By Renee Heinemeyer, Rectory Chef



### BELTA Sandwich

*(Bacon, Egg, Lettuce, Tomato & Avocado)*

The original BLT sandwich dates back to 1903, at which time it actually included a slice of turkey meat. This variation of the BLT, the BELTA, has found its place here at the St. Thomas More rectory dining room. We found a way of enhancing this great all-time American favorite by adding a fried egg and a smear of mashed avocado. (Serves 2)

#### Ingredients

- 4 whole wheat bread slices
- Thick-cut, hickory-smoked Applewood bacon
- Miracle Whip® dressing
- Avocados – soft enough to mash
- 2 eggs
- Romaine or Iceberg lettuce
- Tomato slices – approximate 1 tomato for 2 sandwiches

#### Directions

- Broil bacon at 450 degrees; check every 10 minutes. DO NOT overcook the bacon. Keep it just before doneness—you'll thank me later.
- Prep the avocado mash; prep sliced tomatoes and lettuce leaves.
- Begin making the fried eggs. Be sure to cook them OVER HARD and break the yoke! Add salt and pepper. I like to spray a small egg pan with Pam® cooking spray and add a dot of oil. Flip eggs to ensure doneness.
- Toast the bread slices. Spread Miracle Whip® on one side and mashed avocado on the opposite side.
- Layer bacon, egg, lettuce and tomato. Place one side atop the other.
- Slice the sandwich. If bacon is positioned on the outer halves of the bread slices, this will enable a nice even and clean slice through the center of the sandwich.
- Add the toothpicks to make it look like restaurant quality. (I don't think I need to tell you to—now enjoy it!)



# Thank You, Monsignor Tom

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## celebrating eight years of inspiration

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Monsignor Tom became our fourth pastor in June of 2014. He came to us with a depth of experience as pastor in several parishes as well as serving as Vicar General and Moderator of the Curia for ten years.

He has added to the legacy of the pastors that came before him. Our parish is known for the generosity of our parishioners. Our generosity has continued to grow under his guidance for us to live a life of stewardship of the gifts with which God has blessed us.

Soon after his arrival, he began the completion of our final phase of construction, the remodel of the original building that our founding pastor built in the early seventies. The beauty of our campus was extended to our very popular McCallin Hall, The Padre and our lower level, which is home to many ministries in St. Peregrine Hall.

In January 2017, Monsignor Tom was granted a well-deserved sabbatical. Time away from our parish gave him the opportunity to reflect on the many blessings God has given him during his priesthood. He spent the first three months in Rome attending classes and lectures with 34 other priests from around the world. The final three months were filled with time reconnecting with family and friends across the country.

He has continued the support of our youth, the future of our Church. The High School Youth Center was included in the final phase of the remodel creating a great welcoming environment. Monsignor Tom has been very supportive of the numerous activities our Youth Ministry provides our middle school and high school youth.

He is also proud of our school and the excellent academics for which it is known. He spent time each week visiting the classrooms and always enjoyed answering the students' questions as they tried to stump him. He has encouraged the visibility of our students at our weekend Masses and parish events.

Monsignor Tom has touched many hearts during his time here with his thoughtful and inspiring homilies, his caring and sensitivity to the needs of others, always available to listen and provide guidance and his encouragement for all to receive the grace of the sacrament of reconciliation.

We thank you, Monsignor Tom, for the smiles, the kindness, the humor, the sincerity and your beautiful witness to your love of God and your faithfulness to your vocation as a priest. May God bless you. ♦







# Corpus Christi

## o saving host, o bread of life

By Irene Lindemer

A humble nun in Belgium with a vision, an archbishop who later became Pope Urban IV, St. Thomas Aquinas and Pope Clement V all had a part in bringing us this glorious feast day.

Originally, Maundy Thursday, or Holy Thursday, was the day the Church commemorated the Holy Eucharist initiated by Jesus at the Last Supper. What was intended to be a joyful and solemn rite was overshadowed by the Passion of Jesus, the sorrowful memories of His betrayal, the agony in the garden and Peter's denial. As the Triduum is a time of sadness and sorrowful reflection, separating this joyful event to honor the commemoration of the Holy Eucharist as a new feast made sense.

In the thirteenth century, St. Juliana, Prioress of Mont Cornillon, in Liege, Belgium was the first to suggest a special feast in honor of the Blessed Sacrament. From her childhood, she had a deep veneration for the Blessed Sacrament and longed to honor it with a special feast. She had a vision of the moon with a dark spot on it. She heard a heavenly voice say that the dark spot represented a great feast honoring Corpus Christi (Latin for Body of Christ) that was missing from the liturgical calendar, represented by the moon.

She shared her vision with Robert de Thorete, the Bishop of Liege and to Jacques Pantaloon, Archdeacon of Liege who later became Pope Urban IV on August 29, 1261. Bishop Robert called a synod in 1246 and ordered the celebration to be held the next year in his diocese. It was celebrated for the first time on June 5, 1249.

Pope Urban IV (Jacques Pantaloon) issued a papal bull (decree) "*Transiturus*" on September 8, 1264 extending the celebration to the universal Church. The annual celebration of Corpus Christi is held on the Thursday after Trinity Sunday. Here in the United States, the feast is celebrated the following Sunday.

Pope Urban IV commissioned St. Thomas Aquinas to compose the texts of Mass for the new feast. The prayers and hymns that he wrote are still used to this day. Following the death of Pope Urban IV, the succeeding popes did not encourage the celebration of the feast day. Pope Clement V in 1314 renewed the decrees and the feast became more widespread.

The following is a hymn, *Verbum Supermini Prodiens* (The Divine Word Coming Forth), written by St. Thomas Aquinas. You may recognize it.



Our Corpus Christi procession at the blessing of city of Denver station in 2016.



O salutaris hostia,  
Quea caeli pandis ostium,  
Bella premunt hostilia:  
Da robur, fer auxilium.

O saving host, o bread of life,  
Thou goal of rest from pain and strife,  
Embattled are we, poor and weak:  
Grant us the strength and help we seek.

In the fourteenth century it became the custom to carry the Blessed Sacrament in a procession after the Mass on Corpus Christi. The Council of Trent (1545–1563) approved and recommended the procession as a public profession of our belief in the real presence of Christ in the Eucharist.

Here at St. Thomas More, we have added a procession to our celebration of this feast day. The procession begins immediately following the 5:30PM Sunday Mass. We have three stops, or stations, along the route around our parish campus. At each station, the Blessed Sacrament is placed on an altar table and the people pray and sing. Our three stations include prayers for the city of Denver community, prayers for our school and students and prayers for our church and our church community.

This year, Corpus Christi is on Sunday, June 19. We have planned to again have a procession after the 5:30PM Sunday Mass. This will be Monsignor Tom's last procession at St. Thomas More as pastor. We invite you to join us for the Mass, the solemn and joyful procession with the Blessed Sacrament and a special reception for Monsignor Tom immediately following the procession. ♦



*The blessing of the church station in 2019.*



*Our Corpus Christi procession moving towards the school station in 2019.*

# What is the Real Catholic Church?

## the church is incarnational

By John Cox

If I was to ask the question: What is the Church?, I would receive as many different answers as I would people whom I asked the question.

Why are there so many different views of the Catholic Church? Some people view her as the Bride of Christ while others see her as the Whore of Babylon.

Who is she really? Why are so many people, including Catholics, so dismayed with the Church? Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI gives us one reason:

Some are unhappy because the Church has conformed too much to the standards of the world. Others are angry that the Church is still very far from doing so. Many people have trouble with the Church because she is an institution like many others, which as such, restricts our freedom. The limits the Church erects seem doubly burdensome because they reach into man's most personal and most intimate depth. For the Church's rules for ordering life are far more than a set of regulations to keep the shoulder-to-shoulder traffic of humanity as far as possible from collision. The rules affect our course in life, telling us how we are supposed to understand and shape our freedom. They demand of us decisions that cannot be made without painful renunciation. (Ratzinger, Joseph Cardinal. 1996. *Called to Communion: Understanding the Church Today*. San Francisco: Ignatius Press. pg 134)

The reason why people are so unhappy with the Church may be due to their misperception that the Church restricts our freedom.

“ The proper perspective of viewing the Catholic Church is that she is both human and divine.

Consider this analogy. The Church is our mother, and we are her spoiled teenage children. When mom gives a child what the child wants, even if it is bad for him, the child will perceive his mother as a good mom. On the other hand, when mom limits her son's freedom and tells him “No” because that is what is best for the child, the child rebels and sees mom as an overbearing oaf. In the analogy, the mother has not changed, only the child's perception of the mother has changed.

If we approach the Church with the expectation that she is an institution that will allow us to live in unlimited freedom, live how we want to live and believe she is there to support us in whatever way we want to live our life, then our view of the Church is that she is a saccharine, feel good institution whose role it is to build up our ego.

On the other hand, if the Church sets limits to our freedom, then our view of the Church is one of narrow-mindedness, un-welcoming and judgmental. In either case, the Church has not changed, only our opinion of her has changed.

The Church has been around for over 2,000 years. Our opinion of the Church may change from day to day, depending on what kind of day we are having. So maybe the problem is not the Church, but rather our perception of the Church.

So, what should our perception of the Church be? The answer is in the Incarnation, the fact that God became man. Jesus Christ is both fully man and fully God, two natures in one person (CCC 481).

When we overemphasize one nature over the other, heresies begin to form such as Gnosticism or Arianism. If one overemphasizes Jesus' divinity, then God becomes unreachable and aloof leading to Gnosticism.

On the contrary, if Jesus' humanity is overemphasized then Jesus becomes some kind of glorified social worker or a good teacher, rather than our Redeemer. This belief leads to Arianism. Consequently, to know Jesus well, one must acknowledge and find balance in recognizing that He is both divine and human.

As we continue to contemplate the Incarnation and perceive Jesus in the correct light, the result will be that we will begin to perceive His bride, the Church, in the correct light as well.



Furthermore, if we overemphasize Jesus' divinity, then our perception of the Church is that it is aloof, a place solely for receiving sacraments, having no purpose for us in everyday practical life.

Conversely, if we overemphasize Jesus' humanity, seeing Jesus as just some kind of glorified social worker, then our perception of the Church is that it is a club called to be inclusive, or simply an institution called to feed the homeless and provide material needs for people. In short, the Church simply becomes a glorified soup kitchen, like any other secular institution.

The proper perspective of viewing the Catholic Church is that she is both human and divine.

The Church is human in the fact that she is composed of sinners, some of them even grave sinners. She also has material needs and structures; she has the poor, the homeless and the downtrodden.

But she is also divine, transcendent, by the power of the sacraments where we encounter Jesus and are redeemed and restored to the glory that the Father desires of us becoming truly Catholic, leading us to be authentically freed.



*St. Peter's Square in Vatican City.*

When we contemplate the Incarnation, we begin to find balance in both worlds, both the physical and the spiritual. Consequently, when we contemplate the Church in light of the Incarnation we begin to perceive the Church as human and divine as well. We begin understanding what it truly means to be Catholic, resulting in true freedom. ♦



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!

# The Traveling Vocation Chalice

## a week of prayer for vocations

St. Thomas More is committed to the stewardship of vocations, and many vocations to the priesthood and religious life have been fostered through our efforts. Stop by the Info Cove and see the numerous vocations that have come from our parish. It is inspiring!

In 2009, a new ministry was added to our parish. As part of our Stewardship of Vocations program, two chalices were purchased, prayer books were created and sign-up sheets were placed in the Info Cove. We have a traveling chalice for our parishioners to take to their home for a week of prayer and another chalice for the students at our parish school to have in their classrooms on a rotating basis.

### Why a chalice?

Typically when a priest is ordained, either they select a chalice or one is given to them as a gift. Their chalice is then used when they celebrate Mass and the Precious Blood of Jesus is consecrated. The chalice was selected for the vocation ministry as a reminder for us of the beautiful gift of the Holy Eucharist we receive.

### Who can participate?

All parishioners have the opportunity to host the chalice in their home for a week of prayer for vocations. Families, couples and individuals are invited to take part in this special ministry. We have several families that host the chalice many times throughout the year and experience a special time focused on future priests.

### How does it work?

Once you have prayerfully determined that you want to bring the traveling vocation chalice into your home for a week, use the QR code link at the end of this article to sign up. You will see several weeks listed. Simply select the week that best fits your schedule and sign up. You will receive an email from Karen Smoody with detailed information.

At the Mass time you select, you will come forward and receive the traveling vocation chalice along with a booklet of instructions and prayers. You will be acknowledged at Mass and also in the Sunday bulletin.

### Where do I place it in my home?

Select a special prayer space in your home. We suggest setting up a small table and place the chalice, along with a Bible, candles, a crucifix and other religious objects that you select. Thus you have created a prayer space where the vocation chalice prayers should be recited every day



with all members of the family present. The prayers have been divided into parts for the family to share.

### How do I return the chalice?

At the conclusion of your week of prayers, you will return the chalice to the parish by 5:00PM on Friday. You will receive complete, detailed instructions when you sign up and will be able to ask any questions you may have.

We hope through our efforts and God's grace that this spiritual devotion will plant the seed of a priestly vocation in many young men. May God bless you abundantly as you pray for priestly vocations!

Use the QR code to sign up. For more details, contact Karen Smoody at [karens@stthomasmore.org](mailto:karens@stthomasmore.org). ♦





# We Love Our Priests

## reflections on the traveling chalice

By Beatriz Scelza

There is no Lord in the Eucharist without a priestly blessing; there is no remission of sins without a priestly absolution.

In a moment of grace and clarity, I realized in my heart that the reason why I can receive my Lord in the Eucharist is because a young man sometime in his young life heard Jesus calling him to be His priest, and the young man responded with a “yes.” This is a such a profound call and response.

We need holy priests to help us in our journey to heaven, and all priests need our prayers to be holy and serve the Lord. Priests need the prayers of the community they shepherd.

The ministry of the Traveling Chalice represents to our family both an opportunity and a gift. In gathering as a family around the chalice to recite the short guided prayers, we have the opportunity to become instruments of grace by asking the Lord to shelter His priests, and to call more men to this holy vocation.

The short time spent in prayer is also a gift to our family. It is a gift to take a little time away from the frantic pace of our lives to check in with each other, to remember that there is more going on in this life than we realize, to remember the real reason why we exist and where we are going: Jesus and Heaven. ♦

By Rob Craig

Let’s hear it for our priests!

We love our priests. They do amazing things. They baptize our kids. They bring us the Eucharist. They sit before us *in persona Christi* so that whatever we confess is forgiven. What would we do without our priests?

They don’t do it for the pay. Their reward is greater than pay. It’s treasure stored up in Heaven (Mt: 6:20) and shared with us intentionally. Which is not to imply that their job is easy. The famous Peace Corps slogan could apply to them—toughest job they’ll ever love. And for love of the Father, and for us, they have sacrificed everything.

They deserve our prayers.

STM offers parishioners a unique way to pray for our priests, and it’s called The Traveling Chalice. It’s unique in its approach. It’s rich in symbolism. It involves parishioners—individuals or whole families—bringing into their homes a consecrated chalice and praying before it for the sake of all members of religious life, for vocations, for deacons, and for our dear priests. The chalice will be empty, its bowl aimed upward, as if in supplication to Heaven.

If you or someone you know feel the call to pray for the people who live and move daily *in persona Christi* sign up today. ♦

### A Prayer for Vocations

God our Father, we pray for your priests. Stir up in them the grace of their vocation.

We pray, O Lord: For your priests in our parish and archdiocese.

For your priests in distant mission fields.

For your faithful and fervent priests. For your young priests. For your dying priests.

For the souls of your priests in Purgatory. For the priests who baptized us.

For the priests who have absolved us from our sins.

For the priests who have offered us your Body and Blood in Holy Communion.

For the priests who have taught us.

For the priests who have encouraged us.

For the young men who are discerning a vocation to the priesthood.

Keep all priests close to your heart and bless them now and always.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

St. John Vianney, patron saint of all priests, pray for us.

# One Day at a Time

## our faith journey through dementia

By Deb Wells, parishioner

John was an early riser, though many nights he didn't sleep well. In his slumber, he would vocalize lesson plans for the next day at the high school where he taught English literature. Or he would act out dreams that were often quite physical – fighting an unknown assailant. This had been happening since the early days of our marriage.

The journey to school would typically begin at 6:00AM. I recognized that he was having some difficulties in his job. When he began asking me in these early hours to pray for him, I was concerned, but totally clueless as to the reason for his troubles. The school administration was also concerned. He had been under scrutiny by the vice-principal and principal, but talking to John, I really couldn't put the details together. To him the issue had to do with his hearing.

There were clues that I became aware of: his difficulties with the process to submit final grades at the end of the semester, resulting in urgent calls from the school secretary; problems with lesson planning, now requiring my participation and assistance. But the wake-up call was a disciplinary letter he brought home written by the principal citing eleven performance deficits that he needed to correct immediately. He was crestfallen. He LOVED teaching! He left the corporate world in his 40s to return to the profession he loved.

By all counts, from the former students we encountered at malls, sporting events and other places, he was a well-loved teacher. Things were changing though. Students had sought out the administration with their observations of the lack of consistent teaching they were seeing in his classes day-to-day. The insidious troubles with his work built over two to three years.

“It's time to get your affairs in order, while you can still make decisions.”

A few years prior to that, other indications of cognitive difficulty and personality changes became apparent. John was honored to be approved as a candidate for the formation of the diaconate class of 2000.

Beginning in 1996, the program would be four plus years of rather intense study and participation with other future deacons from the archdiocese. I was surprised by the level of involvement that I, as a future deacon's wife, would have in the process. I observed troubling facets of the way John was being impacted by whatever was going on with him. There was a multistep process of finding prayers throughout the day-long weekend sessions of diaconate study. I noticed he was struggling to find the pages in the breviary in the series of steps. At first, I felt that I should leave it to him to figure out, but in the end, I took over, finding the right page and handing it over to him, time after time.

On days that I wasn't accompanying him, he would return home with stories that puzzled me. The group of his fellow diaconate candidates from St. Thomas More would invite him to join them for lunch—he would always decline. Church leadership planned to take photos of the candidates to display. He refused to have his photo taken. I would do the word processing for his papers, and often they didn't make sense to me, but I dismissed it as my lack of knowledge of the subject.

He continued with the diaconate formation program for a while longer. At the end of the second year, he received a letter from the head of the program at the archdiocese letting him know that he was no longer to participate. Again, he was crushed.

In April 2002, John began an early disability retirement. Though he hadn't received a diagnosis yet, the cognitive testing clearly indicated that this is a person who should not be in the classroom.

A few months later, we sat in the office of a neuropsychologist, who is specially trained in giving tests to assess a person's cognitive condition. The testing session to help diagnose various types of dementia takes about four to five hours. John had just had the test a few weeks before, driving himself from the south metro area to Northglenn to visit the specialist. Now we were hearing the words: “early memory loss” and “Alzheimer's.” That was sobering enough, but was also followed by, “It's time to get your affairs in order, while you can still make decisions.”



Father Michael Walsh, SJ, was the pastor of St. Thomas More when John and I began attending Mass in 1986. He knew us a bit from roles ranging from the fundraising committee to begin the parish school, to John's attempt at the diaconate. Fr. Walsh was now at St. Vincent de Paul and was using his gift in providing the sacrament of healing at monthly Masses.

We arrived early and began observing others who were in attendance, some clearly impacted by disease, injuries and other visible physical health concerns. Others had afflictions, such as John, that were less apparent. The service started with a wonderful homily on the topic of forgiveness, which Fr. Walsh explained, is critical to the healing process. He also welcomed all in attendance, including those who did not follow the Catholic faith.

As those receiving the anointing were at the altar, we noticed that two rather burly guys were standing at either side of them, just behind. Several people received the sacrament before one of them seemed to faint. Ahh, we realized, those guys behind them were there to help them gently fall to the ground and ease them to a space out of the way.

John and I approached the altar and Father asked us what malady we were hoping to address. When we said "Alzheimer's," he was visibly stunned. He then looked at me and said, "You need healing, too." John was first, and I could see something happening – then the two guys guided him to the floor. He "rested in faith" for about fifteen minutes. Later he described that he had tried to fight it. He told of "golden light" that filled his consciousness, and later said he could feel his "brain connections being repaired." We followed the prescribed support to the journey of healing by reading certain applicable passages in the New Testament for the following weeks.

After a few days, John announced that he thought it was inappropriate to continue taking the medication he was prescribed for Alzheimer's. He felt it would indicate a disbelief in the healing process. On a visit to All Souls parish to pick up holy water shortly after that, we had the opportunity to talk with the parish priest there. He let John know that the medication could indeed be the way God was helping him fight the disease.

Actually, in a bleak way, our prayers were answered. It turned out that John didn't have Alzheimer's. Unfortunately, it was a form of dementia that has even more confusing and difficult symptoms: Dementia with Lewy Bodies. Caused by the same protein that accumulates in the brains of those with Parkinson's disease, DLB includes hallucinations, delusions, movement disorders, loss of planning and executive function skills, sleep disturbance that can precede other symptoms by decades, varying levels of awareness from hour to hour, day to day

and week to week. We didn't learn this probable diagnosis until 2007, and it was confirmed on autopsy.

His immediate response, however, was one of despair. On the car ride home from the specialist he kept repeating, "I have no hope." We were both stunned at first, and sad. Following a few weeks of crying and introspection, John began settling into his new reality.

He started attending daily Mass. I was still working, so I would drop him off and then head to work. The walk back to our home was a little over four miles, and he enjoyed it. He also joined the rosary prayer group after Mass and made new friends. Unfortunately, prior to us understanding what he was dealing with, he would become tense and confused about his role as Eucharistic minister. The lead noticed problems and let him know.

As with anything in life, there are a few humorous moments that lighten things up. John was dedicated to frequently receiving the sacrament of reconciliation. We would go together and he would write down what he intended to cite as his failings. As we waited in line, he would study and study his little piece of paper. Eventually, he wanted me to join him in talking with the priest so I could help him remember and communicate. Entering the confessional together, we surprised more than one priest.

## Understanding Alzheimer's and Dementia

Seven-week Series  
Begins Monday, June 20  
6:30PM in St. Peregrine Hall II

Alzheimer's disease is not a normal part of aging.  
Join us to learn about the following:

- the impact of Alzheimer's
- the difference between Alzheimer's and dementia
- the stages and risk factors
- the current research and treatments available for some symptoms
- Alzheimer's Association resources

Contact: Deb Wells at  
[dwells@alz.org](mailto:dwells@alz.org) or 720.699.9279.

On one occasion, when Fr. Mel was hearing confessions on the side of the altar out in the open, we both came up to him. After explaining in whispers why I was along for the sacrament, he gently told John that he would not need my help in the future.

Reflecting on our years of attending Mass together, subtle changes in John were progressing. When we held hands during the Our Father, his hands were always warm and dry. I remember appreciating that little nuance! But then it changed—his hands became clammy and sweaty. I realize now that is an indication of autonomic nervous system issues. His stamina was also impacted by the disease. As we stood, and knelt and stood, he would be able to stand for shorter and shorter periods.

Throughout his illness John was amazingly aware of his situation—up to the time of his death, unfortunately.

One of his first self-reported concerns was losing his way to church. Oddly, though, years later he could give his brother-in-law directions to get there. That is one of the features of dementia with Lewy Bodies—fluctuations in symptoms, awareness and attention. For many care partners this can be frustrating. Especially when their “up” times occur with social occasions.

Quite common, “show timing” is the name given to the sudden lack of symptoms that a person with dementia has when they have visitors or see a doctor. More than once, I had a guest take me aside and tell me, “Gee, I really don’t see a difference in John.” It’s these occasions that cause the partner to wonder if they are really the one with a disorder.

When John was first diagnosed, I told an acquaintance about it. She had just been through several years of providing care for a parent. She wisely said, “There will be blessings.” I kept those words in mind throughout the time I was on the journey with John.

Early on, I was contemplating what my future might be like with a husband with dementia. As I was sitting at work, staring at my computer, trying to concentrate on a project, my thoughts drifted to all the potential impacts of the disease.

“What if he becomes violent?” “What if he doesn’t know me at some point?” I then began to say a few Hail Mary’s. A warmth washed over me and I realized that there was no point in worrying about every possible aspect of what might happen. “Just take it one day at a time!” popped into my head and that became my mantra for several years of being a care partner. In the bleak times of starting to plan our future, I would remind John of this. And, as it turned out, John never forgot who I was—or really anyone in the family for that matter.

We found several philosophies and approaches to be helpful during John’s illness:

- **Schedule/Structure:** Having a steady routine provides a grounding for both the person with the illness and the care partner.
- **Fun and Laughter:** intentionally finding something light to focus on in every day was helpful to us. Watching comedies on TV or looking for the humor in daily life can be a life saver.
- **Outings:** taking advantage of simple pleasures like a trip to the park, a ride in the mountains, visiting friends, etc., is important.
- **Social Gatherings:** we didn’t stop entertaining during John’s illness. In fact, I think we had more get togethers with family and old and new friends.
- **Get Involved in the Cause:** it really helped both of us to feel that we were doing something productive to fight the illness. Raising money for research, learning everything we could about the symptoms, causes, treatments, etc., provided that outlet, and we made a new group of friends with whom we had something in common.
- **Support:** we gained so much from our involvement in support groups! It was through our monthly sessions with other couples facing the same future that I realized that John’s symptoms were quite different than those of the people diagnosed with Alzheimer’s. And, again, we made great friendships that remain with me today.

All in all, my hero in this story is John. As a younger person he was quick-witted, loved a good story or joke, and was a bit “feisty!” The changes in him over the years, affected by the disease, resulted in a more docile personality—always appreciative of my efforts and very loving.

John made the following statement one day in his final months: “I’ve had joy in my life!” What a beautiful feeling it was to be a part of his journey. Indeed, there were blessings. ♦

*Deb Wells is a long time St. Thomas More parishioner, who is set to retire from an encore career as Director of Operations at the Alzheimer’s Association. She facilitates two support groups for caregivers of those with dementia with Lewy Bodies/Parkinson’s disease dementia. She is part of the STM Bereavement Support Team that offers twelve-week programs for those who are mourning the loss of a loved one. You can reach her at [dwells@alz.org](mailto:dwells@alz.org).*



# Surrounded by Saints

## a new home for our reliquaries

By Irene Lindemer

As Monsignor Tom mentioned in his Pastor's Message in this issue of the *More Informed*, he has initiated the construction of two beautiful additions to our sanctuary.

We have been working with Eidos Architects and Haselden Construction for the design and construction of two reliquary cabinets. They will be installed on both sides of the sanctuary where two large paintings are currently displayed, one by the Working Sacristy and the other by the Cry Room.

St. Thomas More parish, through the thoughtful generosity of several parishioners, is the custodian of 60 individual relics of our dear saints, including the relic of the True Cross mounted in the sanctuary crucifix.

Relics are the physical remains of a saint (first class relic) or their personal items preserved for the purpose of veneration (second class relic). A third class relic is one that has come in contact with a first or second class relic. Venerating the relics of the saints is an ancient practice dating from the beginning of Christianity.

The rendering to the right depicts the initial design showing the cabinetry framed with the same beautiful marble installed in our sanctuary. The interior will be lit appropriately, creating an ambiance of reverence. Each cabinet will have the capacity to hold approximately 60 relics or more, depending on the size of the various reliquaries.

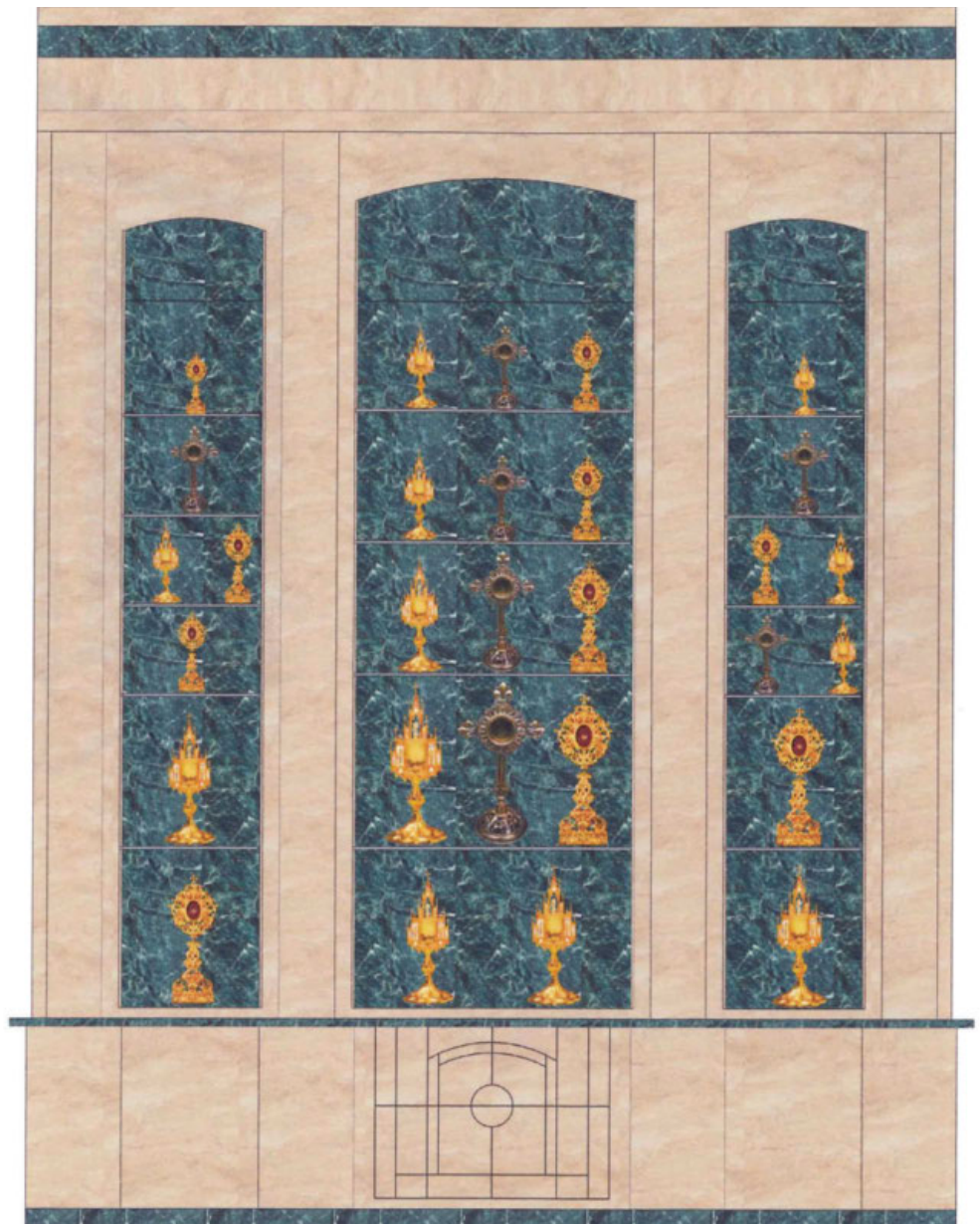
It will be a glorious sight to see when this addition to our sanctuary is completed. The proposed time line for completion is approximately three months, to be determined by the availability of the materials required.

We will continue to display the relics on the feast days of the saints for individual veneration.

Upon completion, a visual procession of saints will begin with the reliquaries and continue with the saints and angels depicted in our stained-glass windows leading to the altar.

It will feel like a glimpse of heaven as we move forward together to receive Holy Communion, we join the many who have gone before us through the ages, the canonized and uncanonized saints!

All you Holy Men and Women, Pray for Us. ♦



# What to Say When

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## a source for the defense of life

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By the Respect Life Committee

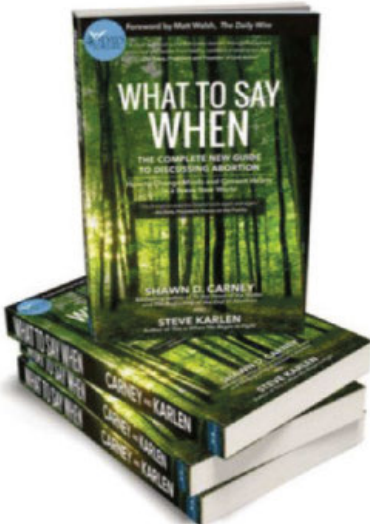
If you have ever felt unequipped to discuss abortion with your pro-choice friends, neighbors and family—or even perfect strangers—the new book *What to Say When* is a must have for your pro-life library.

This book is written by Shawn Carney, co-founder, CEO and President of 40 Days for Life and Steve Karlen, Campaign Director for 40 Days for Life. The authors have been on the pro-life frontline for years and have condensed their knowledge of how to answer pro-choice arguments in this easy-to-read book.

The authors state that in discussing abortion it is important to stay calm and polite when making your case for life. Don't let abortion advocates distract you with hypothetical situations and stay on topic. Make abortion supporters play defense by asking questions that make them think about their position.

The first chapter provides many different questions you might ask pro-choice advocates such as “what is an abortion” and “why do you support abortion.” Abortion advocates will have to articulate their beliefs, perhaps for the first time. Listen attentively and ask them to explain what they mean. Be confident knowing the pro-life position is truth.

There is a chapter entirely devoted to the commonly heard pro-choice refrain, “My body, my choice.” Carney and Karlen provide excellent advice on refuting this saying. The baby has his or her own unique body and abortion is about the baby's body not the mother's body.



Your pro-choice friend may try to convince you that Planned Parenthood benefits women by providing necessary women's health services. You can counter this by telling them that Planned Parenthood is the leading abortion provider in America, that killing children offsets any good Planned Parenthood might do and that



Planned Parenthood is the ultimate evil special-interest group.

The issue of rape is often raised in a discussion about abortion. The authors state that your response should be that of course the rapist should go to prison. Human dignity is not defined by the circumstances of our conception and in no other scenario do we punish a baby for the crimes of his or her father.

This book addresses many other topics related to the issue of abortion including what NOT to say and why about:

- the science supporting life begins at conception
- IVF, surrogacy and other artificial reproductive technologies
- climate and population control
- contraception as a means to limit abortion
- abortions can be medically necessary

What to say when pro-choicers try to change the subject is also addressed.

Each chapter ends with a clear and concise summary of the chapter that can be referred to often. *What to Say When* is essential reading for those who wish to gain confidence in discussing abortion by having solid answers to pro-choice arguments.

Ending abortion, protecting the right to life, is the pre-eminent human rights issue of our time. We must educate ourselves to defend life and be a change in this world. ♦



# Yes! It's Back!

## time and talent fair coming in august

It's not just about serving others; it is about community, being supported and supporting others, meeting amazing people and building confidence to do things beyond your expectation. It's being part of something bigger than you, working together to make a difference for people we have not yet met, or may never meet, but were able to make a difference in their lives.

We have been in a cocoon, wrapped up in isolation, fear, anxiety and uncertainty these past few years. More and more of us are stepping out, reaching out to others with a desire to help, to serve, to just laugh with the joy of life.

St. Thomas More has so many ways to be part of a community that shares your interests. Watch your mail box in July for our *2022-2023 Guidebook* for stewardship of time and talent opportunities. It is full of prayer groups, service ministries, liturgical ministries, outreach ministries, ways to help with parish events, retreats and much more for adults, children and our youth.

Take some time to go through the booklet and mark what interests you. Maybe you like to sing along in your car, but are not quite brave enough to sing in a choir. We have a variety of choirs that your voice will blend perfectly with one of them! Love to knit, join the STM Stitchers. Like to

cook, be part of the Helping Hands ministry or help with the Knights of Columbus fish fries. Your heart is filled with the desire to pray, join one of our numerous prayer groups. Handy with woodworking, help the new Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Have a passion to serve the poor, be part of our food ministries, Angel Tree, Project 600 or STM Diaper Disciples. What is stirring in your heart?

Mark your calendar for the weekend of August 27 and 28 for our parish Time and Talent Fair. You will have the opportunity to talk to fellow parishioners about the ministries they are involved in and why they enjoy what they are doing.

We are called to serve with whatever talent God has blessed us with. We may not think it is much, but everyone has something to share. Now is the time to be connected with others, to share the joy of giving all that we have to give to others in need.

Ministry Leaders be sure to reserve a table for your ministry for the 2022 Time and Talent Fair. Contact Ann Morin at [annm@stthomasmore.org](mailto:annm@stthomasmore.org).

See you at the Fair! ♦

## FABULOUS, FUN FESTIVAL

Friday, JULY 1 — 5:00–8:30PM



Festivities begin with Mass at 5:00PM in the Church followed by food and games in the School Sport Park.



Enjoy wonderful food and beverages, live music, games galore including a gigantic corn toss, miniature golf and so much more!

So put on your red, white & blue and come join the fun!



# The Light of Christ

## experience the paschal mysteries

By Yvette Ramos

Let us see these Paschal mysteries through the eyes of the children who are in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, a faith formation method being added this fall to our Religious Education programs.

### Tomb of Resurrection

“Why are you looking among the dead for He who is the Living One? He is not here; He is risen.” – Luke 24:5–6

We walked with Jesus in His Passion and placed ourselves next to Him on Good Friday when He died. But it is with great joy and anticipation that we visit His Tomb on Easter to find, as Mary Magdalene did, that it is empty. Jesus conquered death. His light and life are stronger than death. Jesus reveals that death is just a passage to more life – to the fullness of life. He shows us that the light will never again be overcome by the darkness and that it will fill the entire world.

### The Liturgy of Light

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.” – Isaiah 9:1

Isaiah prophesied these words over 700 years before Jesus’ birth. The Hebrew people knew that their times of war and captivity would end with a Messiah. When would this Savior come? How would they know for sure it was Him?

It is in Jesus’ resurrection that we know that He, as the



A child choosing a gift of the Holy Spirit and lighting her candle in the Pentecost celebration.

Light, defeats darkness and death. We live this out in our Catholic faith with the Liturgy of Light in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, which seeks to intentionally model the Easter Vigil. Every year on the Easter Vigil, the Church receives a new Paschal candle. Some children refer to this as the “Jesus candle.”

Christ the Good Shepherd first calls His sheep by name on the day of our baptism. On that day, our individual baptism candles are lit from the Paschal candle. We literally receive the light of Christ into our hearts that day until the end of time.

Similarly, we experience the growth and love of Jesus Christ at the Easter Vigil when the darkness of the church at night becomes illuminated as we light our individual candles first from the Paschal candle. The light penetrates and floods the church. It overcomes the darkness.

The Liturgy of Light in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd mirrors this momentous occasion and the fact that Jesus’ Resurrection is the linchpin of our Christian faith. Each child is called by name to light their individual candle from the model Paschal candle. This sensorial experience is truly profound for children. They see the light, smell the flame of the candles, and experience the dark room being illuminated. They can feel the warmth of Christ in their hearts and respond with great joy.

### Pentecost

“You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth.” – Acts 1:8

Before His ascension into heaven, Jesus told the disciples to wait in the city until the power on high comes to them. They returned to the Cenacle house where the Last Supper took place. There, they were transformed with power to share the Good News to go out in all the world preaching and baptizing. These gifts of the Holy Spirit are for us to share in as well. They are first given to us in Baptism and then solidified fully into us in Confirmation so that like the disciples, we too can go out into the world sharing the Good News.

Franka, age 6, in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd atrium, said, “The Holy Spirit made Jesus be born. When He rose, the Holy Spirit gave Him more light. The light grew with all of us in the whole world.”





The Origin of the Liturgy of the Word synagogue and Cenacle House early Church worship.

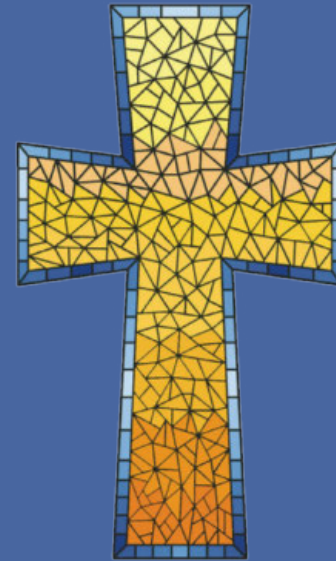
### Origin of the Liturgy of the Word

In the synagogue, Jesus read from Isaiah 61:1–2, “The spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord has anointed me,” and then proclaimed to all who were there that, “Today, this has been fulfilled what you are hearing.”  
 – Luke 4:16

Jesus often taught His disciples by modeling what He wanted them to do and how to do it. It was only after His death, resurrection, ascension into heaven and Pentecost when the apostles received the gifts of the Holy Spirit to do all that Jesus had commanded of them, that they continued His public ministry. They went back to the synagogues to proclaim the Liturgy of the Word like Jesus had shown them, but there was division and derision among the Jews as to what to think of Jesus’ teachings.

The disciples returned to the Cenacle house where the Last Supper took place and Jesus instituted the Liturgy of the Eucharist. This is also where Jesus commanded them to return to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit on Pentecost. It was here where the birth of the early Church took place, where both the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist were celebrated. These are the humble beginnings of the Catholic Church, and children come to experience these events in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd.

Registration for Catechesis of the Good Shepherd for ages four (as of June 1) through eighth grade is available on the STM website under Faith Formation Online Registration. For questions or if you are interested in helping to make any of the materials with basic cutting, coloring, handwriting, painting or woodworking, please contact Yvette Ramos at [yvette@stthomasmore.org](mailto:yvette@stthomasmore.org) or 303.221.9176. ◆



# 2022–2023 Religious Education and Sacramental Preparation Registration

Sign up now through  
 Friday, August 19  
 for our wonderful faith  
 formation programs.

*The link to register online is  
 available on our parish website:  
[stthomasmore.org](http://stthomasmore.org).  
 Classes will begin the week of  
 Sunday, September 11.*



# The Lion's ROAR

stm catholic school

## Sharing our Blessings

As this busy school year comes to a close, we reflect on the many, many blessings we have been given this year. Top on the list of blessings are our students and their accomplishments. We are wildly proud of each and every one of them.

As always at the end of the school year, we say goodbye to our amazing eighth grade class. They will be missed, most assuredly. However, we look forward to hearing of their amazing successes in the future. We send them off with the hope that they will always call STM home and the knowledge that they have truly impacted our lives.

Not just the eighth graders, but the whole building is humming with the end-of-school merriment.

Kindergartners celebrated the end of the year with a concert in May.

Third graders recently were confirmed and received their First Communion. A huge thanks to the parish, parents, and teachers, Mrs. de la Cuesta and Mrs. Doherty, for

their hard work in getting our students prepared for these memorable sacraments. They were able to wear their First Communion outfits for the May Crowning!

Our fourth and fifth graders traveled to Coors Field for STEM day at the Rockies with Steve Spangler, a great opportunity to enjoy our beautiful state and learn some cool science.

Our very talented student body showed just how talented they truly are at the annual talent show and of course at the dynamic direction of Mrs. Burkholder.

A paramount blessing that we often remember is the parish and the support we feel at the school. Thank you all for being part of this faith-filled and mighty community. We are truly raising disciples of Christ.

We would also like to extend a special thanks to Monsignor Tom for his years of faithful support. He will be greatly missed! ♦





# Educational Adventures

## STEM Day at the Rockies



## Fifth Grade Newtons Lab





Father Matt visits our students



Congratulations Class of 2022!





# Preschool Crowning of Mary

As we look to our Mother Mary in the month of May we honor her with the Crowning Ceremony here at STM Preschool. The preschool is privileged to have a beautiful statue of her, watching over us, with her intercessory prayers daily for our preschool program. She mingles and watches as we come and go, hold religion class, and play on the playground making her a part of even the simplest of aspects of our interactions and memories here at the preschool.

On Tuesday, May 3, the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (CGS) class for the preschool, taught by Mrs. Anita, was outside learning and participating in the Crowning of Mary. Just as Mass got out, a man was taken back by such young students around the statue of Mary. The man was in awe at this sight, and it brought him to tears.

When the students were finishing up with their crowning ceremony, there was a bustle of students leaving Mass. It was then that the man was approached because he was clearly moved by watching this ceremony.

Come to find out, this man was Jim Hilger, who donated the statue to the parish after his son, Michael Brien Hilger, passed away from an autoimmune heart disease. Jim was invited back to our school to participate in more crowning ceremonies with our other classes that Thursday, May 5.

Jim has been a faithful parishioner of St. Thomas More for

several years. He participated in the ground-breaking of our school and has donated two statues on behalf of the passing of his wife and son.

When Jim returned on Thursday, he joined the Bees class (three-year-old preschool) for their CGS May Crowning. He provided the story and information behind the donation of the statue of Our Lady of Grace.

His son was a student at Notre Dame University. The inspiration behind this statue was Jim's desire to have this statue replicated from the statue that stands prominent on top of the famous Notre Dame Dome. He meticulously picked out the granite and details of this statue that were used. There was not a dry eye surrounding Mary when Jim was asked to join the class around Mary for a picture. It was then that he shared a beautiful photo of his son and he held it next to the Blessed Mother.

A picture is worth a thousand words. Indescribable is the main focus behind this image. Not only was there a beam of light that extends from the heavens piercing through Jim's heart, but noticeable rays of light coming from Mary's hands and rainbows bowing protectively over our children. We are so honored to have Mary and we are so grateful for the generous donation that Jim made. His intentions and purpose for her is above and beyond.

Our Lady of Grace, pray for us. ♦





# The SPARK

middle school & high school youth

## Lenten Retreat – Small but Mighty

*Over Palm Sunday weekend, STM youth ministry held their annual spring Lenten retreats for both middle and high school. Two active youth wanted to share their retreat experiences, Sadie Duffield and Jacqueline Del Ciotte.*  
– Greg Johnson

by Sadie Duffield,  
Eighth Grade

The youth Middle School Lenten Retreat could be summed up in the phrase “small but mighty.” This two-day retreat helps open your eyes to what Jesus went through during His Passion. Sometimes it’s hard to fully absorb the pain Jesus experienced during the Passion.

The Lenten Retreat provides an opportunity for you to reflect on Jesus dying on the cross through a different lens.

All participants walked four miles in remembrance of Jesus carrying the cross. I didn’t even carry the cross on my back the whole time and I could barely make it!

The Lenten Retreat also gives you time to reflect on yourself and your Lenten journey. This Lent, I felt like I didn’t sacrifice as much as I had in the past.

While meeting in your small groups with encouraging leaders, you can reflect on your mistakes and grow not only spiritually but in your relationship with Christ.

Lastly, what makes all retreats so much fun is the community of youth that attend. I have met so many good friends and adults through the youth retreats while growing in my faith. ♦





# Feeling God's Presence

by Jacqueline Del Ciotte,  
High School Sophomore

Over the past couple of Lenten seasons, I've done what I thought everyone else was doing, giving up something that didn't necessarily have any value. I gave up candy and ice cream, and even watching TV, which did not last at all. But what I realized was that I didn't fully understand the experience of what Lent actually was. That's when I decided that this past Lent was going to be filled with a growth of myself and my faith in God through all kinds of things.

Every morning, I had a Lent booklet that I would do for the day that allowed me to talk to God in the morning and understand who He is. What I also did was go to the



Lenten Retreat at St. Thomas More. I wanted to have an experience that would allow me to grow closer to my Catholic community and feel God's presence in a different

kind of way. And through that experience, my goals were thoroughly fulfilled.

During the retreat, we did all kinds of things that not only strengthened my relationship with friends, but my relationship with God. Visiting the Mother Cabrini Shrine and praying the Stations of the Cross was one of the things I felt was important for me to go through before Holy Week started because I felt that it really helped me comprehend, to a certain extent, what Jesus went through in order to save the world and it kept me thinking about it throughout the whole week. Plus, we got Chick-fil-A after, so it definitely was at the top of my list (not just because of the Chick-fil-A, though).

Another thing I felt was important that weekend was doing praise and worship as a whole group. I have to admit that at first, the whole thing felt a little weird, especially in a room of other teenagers who were most likely thinking the same thing. But eventually, we were all singing, despite how tone-deaf you are or if you don't have the best singing voice.

I think the takeaway from the experience for me was realizing that I have nothing to hide from God because He knows everything about me. The barriers of not worshipping God from what others might think of us became completely irrelevant because the team leaders made us realize how it was a one-on-one time between you and Him.

Lastly, there was the Palm Sunday walk with the Cross. The four-mile walk with everyone at the retreat was a really great experience. It allowed me to strengthen my friendships with others and just enjoy going outside.



Other things that I forgot to mention earlier that we did were playing games outside, making s'mores, sleeping overnight, going to Mass on Palm Sunday, adoration and confession and driving in the bus! Overall, I really enjoyed the retreat, especially for my first one with St. Thomas More, and this retreat has made me especially excited for ones in the future. ♦





ST. THOMAS MORE  
CATHOLIC PARISH IN CENTENNIAL  
8035 S Quebec St | Centennial, CO 80112

## Time Sensitive Material

“ The ordinary acts we practice every day at home are of more importance to the soul than their simplicity might suggest. – St. Thomas More



Bronze statue of St. Thomas More by Louis Laumen, 2006.