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# MORE INFORMED

STM Newsletter

August 2022



The Bloody Work of  
the Parishioner  
bringing nourishment to the world

Declaration of Nullity  
a declaration of truth about  
marriage



Synod Update  
a universal call to listen to the  
Holy Spirit

Class of 2022 Goes  
to D.C.

The Stars and  
Stripes

Moms in  
Crisis

Faith, Friends and  
Fun



ST. THOMAS MORE PARISH

*Go and make disciples*

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## MORE INFORMED

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## deadline

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## content

- 3** The Bloody Work of the Parishioner  
By Fr. Randy Dollins
- 5** Mary's Veil  
By Marianne Carter
- 6** Meet Our New Pastor  
By Claudia Cangilla McAdam
- 8** Welcome, Fr. Chris!  
By Irene Lindemer
- 9** Another Fabulous Festival
- 10** The Stars and Stripes  
by Renee Heinemeyer
- 12** Faithful Citizenship
- 13** Moms in Crisis  
By Margarita Nelson
- 14** Declaration of Nullity  
By Lucinda Marques
- 16** Synod Update  
By Mandy Cox
- 18** American Heritage Girls  
by Syna Joseph and Maria Mundackal
- 19** RE For Special Needs  
by Sheri Funderbunk and Margaret Froehlke
- 20** Celebrating God's Greatness  
by Ethan Peterson
- 22** Class of 2022 goes to D.C.  
by Gretchen DeWolfe
- 24** We Welcome Kendra Douglass
- 24** Mrs. Basile wins the Mizel Award
- 25** Preschoolers Travel the World  
By Mary Tellus
- 26** Yes...She is Hooked!  
By Jen Brummel
- 27** Faith, Friends and Fun  
by Dan and Andrea Donaldson

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# The Bloody Work of the Parishioner

bringing nourishment to the world

by Fr. Randy Dollins

If all of your veins, arteries and capillaries, i.e., all your blood vessels, were laid out, end to end, it would be long enough to circle the diameter of the Earth roughly eight times. As you know from your study of biology, the heart uses two chambers to pull blood from the lungs and push it into the rest of the body, then it uses two other chambers to pull blood from the rest of the body and push it to the lungs. The primary function of blood is to transport oxygen and nutrients to the entire body and collect waste that needs to be expelled.

Jesus gives us many analogies for understanding the role of the Church and its members in the world. He tells his disciples that they are the salt of the earth, the light of the world, branches on a grape vine, trees that bear fruit, etc.

“You are the salt of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot” (Mt 5:13).

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden. Nor do they light a lamp and then put it under a bushel basket; it is set on a lampstand, where it gives light to all in the house. Just so, your light must shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your heavenly Father” (Mt 5:14–16).

“I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing” (Jn 15:5).

In an early defense of the faith (probably second century), an unknown author wrote a letter to a Roman official explaining the role Christians play in the world and he used the analogy of the soul and the body:

To speak in general terms, we may say that the Christian is to the world what the soul is to the body.

As the soul is present in every part of the body, while remaining distinct from it, so Christians are found in all the cities of the world, but cannot be identified with the world. As the visible body contains the invisible soul, so Christians are seen living in the world, but their religious life remains unseen (Letter to Diognetus).

This analogy helps us understand our role and duty as disciples. The efforts of the Church, including the vast visible works of mercy and the even more vast, yet mostly hidden, prayers and sacrifices, when united to Christ’s sacrifice, are truly the animating and life-giving soul that keeps our world from descending fully into darkness.

In my own contemplation on the life of a Christian disciple, the parish and the world, I have found our circulatory system to be another fitting analogy. Allow me to explain:

The Church, in particular the local parish, is the heart and all of us are the blood. The movement of our lives is driven by the pushing and pulling of our participation in the sacraments.

Pulled from the world, we are pushed into the sacraments, in particular the Mass. The Sacraments are the lungs where we receive sanctifying grace, most

“ I am excited to see where and how the Holy Spirit may be inspiring us to go out.

importantly the Body and Blood of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist, but also the indwelling of the Holy Spirit and adoption in our baptism, and the gifts of the Holy Spirit in our Confirmation. This sanctifying grace is something like oxygen. The grace associated with other things offered at the parish can also be considered oxygen and nutrients. The parish then pulls us from the sacraments and other offerings and pushes us into the world, where we bring the Gospel, the Good News of Jesus Christ, his presence alive in us and the Spirit's gifts at work in our works and prayers.

Our mission is most often lived out in the time spent outside the parish. Traveling through the seemingly endless blood vessels of our lives where we are called to transmit the oxygen. While this is a worthy task, it can be a demanding and difficult one.

As we live out our mission in the world, we become depleted, we take on our own junk and collect the waste of others. Left in this state we would certainly wither, but this is not the end of the cycle, we are once again drawn back to the sacraments, often adding Confession to the list, by and through the heart, i.e., the parish.

No man is an island, so too, no Christian is called to exist outside of a larger community of faith. Left alone we lack the push and pull and enrichment necessary for our mission. The unfortunate lie is thinking we can ignore the mission, believing that receiving the sacraments is all that is asked of us. Our enemy (the devil) wants us to forget that we are the salt of the earth, the soul of the world, the blood of the body. When this happens, our own lives become insulated from the greater mission, and we lose our purpose.

Everything that happens on the campus of St. Thomas More Catholic Parish is truly amazing, but it would be squandered if we did not bring the nourishment of the Good News to the rest of the world. It would be empty if we were not agents of mercy and forgiveness who bring the sin and despair of the world to Jesus on the cross.

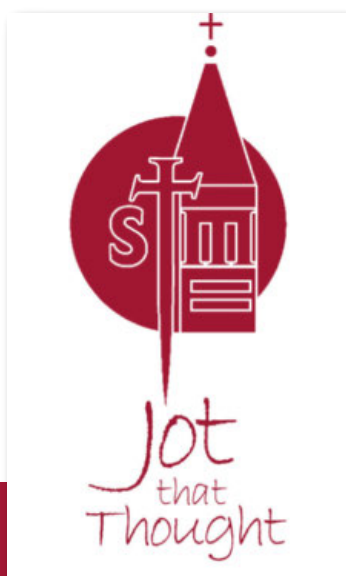
While I know that many of you are bringing the Good News into the world, I'm excited to see where and how the Holy Spirit may be inspiring us to go out. Together, our parish as a whole, as disciples of Jesus Christ and by the power of his death and resurrection, can truly bring life and expel darkness in the world around us. ♦

## Let My Heart Hear You, Lord

by Irene Lindemer

"Speak, for your servant is listening" (1 Samuel 3:10).

We typically see this quote on our screens at Sunday Mass after listening to the homily. We are given a moment or two to ponder what has touched our hearts, whether the words proclaimed in the gospel, the words spoken during the homily or the words sung in a hymn.



Sometimes we come to Mass with our minds full of distractions, anxieties, worries, too busy with our lives, as Martha was when Jesus came to visit her and her sister, Mary in Bethany. Our minds so full, we forget to quiet ourselves to experience the True Mystery we are so privileged to

share, the Precious Body and Blood of our Lord we are so unworthy to receive.

Awhile back we had the honor to have Matthew Kelly speak at our parish. During one of his talks, he encouraged, rather, challenged us to open our minds and hearts before we entered the church for Mass, to be engaged. He told us to say a little prayer such as, "God show me one way in Mass that I can become a better version of myself this week." His intent was that we listen during Mass, really listen without distraction to what the Lord is saying to us. He suggested using what he calls a Mass Journal, to write down whatever comes to us.

In response to Kelly's prompting, we designed a "Jot That Thought" card for our parishioners and continue to provide the cards tucked into the pew pockets. Their intent is to be available for us to take a moment or two and write down what touches our heart, tweaks our conscience or inspires us. Writing down one or two words, a phrase or a biblical quote for future reference is helpful for us in preparation for a quiet moment of reflection and more importantly, to share what we heard with others. ♦

**"God, show me one way in this Mass that I can become a better version of myself this week." – Matthew Kelly**

# Mary's Veil

## a different type of relic

by Maryanne Carter

Relics have a very long history in the Catholic tradition. Even in the Old Testament, God worked through the bones of Elisha to revive a man being buried (2 Kings 13:20-21). The bones of the saints have no power themselves, but God works through the saint to draw us closer to holiness as we learn from the saint's life and ask for the saint's intercession. We are not to idolize the relic of the saint. Our thoughts in venerating a relic should be of God and how he has been glorified through this saint and how God can be glorified through our devotion to a saint.

There are three types of relics. A first class relic is a body part, such as bone, blood, flesh or hair of the canonized saint or blessed. A second class relic is something that belonged to the saint such as a piece of cloth from their habit or a walking staff or book. A third class relic is an object that has been touched to a first or second class relic or an object that had been touched by the saint.

The relics in the custody of St. Thomas More have come from many places. Some came from individuals, some from other parishes. Fr. Mel Thompson gave several relics to us and a few came from an Abby that had closed. A parishioner once found a relic at an ARC store in the jewelry area.



St. Thomas More is custodian of a relic of one of Mary's veils.

Unfortunately, relics are sold on eBay and other internet sites. Often these relics are fake even when offered with a certificate of authenticity. According to Canon Law, "It is absolutely forbidden to sell sacred relics" (Can. 1190.1). Therefore, it is best to not purchase relics online.

Saint Thomas More parish is currently the custodian of 60 first class relics. All the relics have certificates of authenticity and are used for public veneration.

One of the most recent relics we've received is a small piece of Mary's veil authenticated by Eugenio Raffaele Faggiano, C.P., Bishop of Cariati, Italy (1960+). This special relic was given to our parish along with three other relics. They had been in the custody of a recently deceased parishioner whose family member brought them to our parish. All four have been authenticated as true relics.

Though it is difficult to accurately track the history of ancient relics, it is believed that Mary's veils would have been held in respectful honor and preserved with special care.

History indicates that the original veil, from which the relic we are custodian, was given to the Chartres Cathedral in 876 by King Charles the Bald. It was a long oblong piece of silk reported to have been worn by Mary at the Annunciation and birth of Christ. King Charles' grandfather Charlemagne (or Charles the Great) had received the veil as a gift from the Byzantine Empress Irene before the fall of Constantinople.

Around 1000 AD the veil and other relics were placed in a wooden trunk and covered in gold. The trunk survived a fire in 1194 that severely damaged the church. During the French Revolution, 1789–1799, the trunk was destroyed, and the veil was cut into several pieces to be kept safe by different individuals. In 1809 and 1819 two pieces were given back to the Cathedral and are still there today to be venerated by all.

Watch for the relic of Mary's veil to be displayed on several of her feast days in the coming year. ◆

# Meet Our New Pastor

## a man in love with the Lord

by Claudia Cangilla McAdam

With his congenial demeanor and quick smile, it is easy to see that STM's new pastor, Fr. Randy Dollins, is a man in love with the Lord and ready to helm this large parish. The best way to get to know Fr. Randy as a man and as a priest is to see how he arrived at the place he is today.

Curtis Martin, the founder of the Fellowship of Catholic University Students (FOCUS) has said that priests too often tell their vocation story and leave out their conversion story. And so, Fr. Randy prefers to share the latter by way of introduction because "at some point Jesus became the Lord of my life," and that's what's most important.

Growing up in Aurora in the Queen of Peace parish, Father says he was a typical kid on a trajectory to become a perfectly ordinary person. Growing up in a secular Catholic home, when he was in seventh grade, his mother signed him up for a religious education group.

"I quickly found a group of friends, but more importantly, girls from other schools who would talk to me because they didn't know I was considered to be a dork at my school," he said.

His experience of the group had such an impact on him that he returned for eighth and ninth grade and signed himself up for the high school Confirmation program in tenth grade. That sophomore year, he was still with the same group of friends, but he realized that "I started loving it for content rather than camaraderie."

The key to his conversion was a one-night confirmation retreat. "The youth minister's talk was 'if you follow

“ I surrendered myself to God and prayed that he help me make his will my will.



God's will, you are going to be happier than if you follow your will," he said. "I surrendered myself to God and prayed that he help me make his will my will."

Young Randy Dollins went home from that retreat a different kid. "It's false to say that I was a perfectly pious kid," he admitted. But the direction of his life had been irrevocably altered. The next year when the church needed high school students to lead retreats for the eighth graders, he was there, and he continued to do peer ministry at Queen of Peace.

He realized something was missing in his life when he attended World Youth Day in Denver the summer between his junior and senior years of high school. He clearly remembers Pope John Paul II's arrival at Mile High Stadium. "I was excited, but not crying like many others. I thought, 'They have something I don't have.'"

He graduated from high school and bypassed college when he was offered a fulltime job doing graphic design. In his late teens and early 20s, "I was making good money and had free time, so I became the associate volunteer youth minister at Queen of Peace and helped lead a World Youth Day trip to Paris."

At age 21, he discerned that he was called to the priesthood, but first on the agenda was an adventure year serving as a missionary with NET Ministries. "I had

a suitcase, backpack and a sleeping bag and I traveled the U.S. with eleven other young adults going diocese to diocese giving youth retreats six days a week to middle school and high school students.”

When he returned home at Christmas, he applied to seminary and entered in the fall of 1999, along with the future Father Matt Hartley, with whom he is now reunited at St. Thomas More.

Following ordination, Fr. Randy served on the western slope, traveling week-to-week between the tri-parishes in Craig, Meeker and Rangely. After three years there, he became a pastor in Breckenridge and finished building Our Lady of Peace in Silverthorne. Additionally, he served as the dean of the western slope. “It’s like being the big brother to the other priests,” he explained. “I was the bishop’s man in the territory.”

Being “the bishop’s man” took on new meaning in 2014 when Archbishop Aquila asked him to assume the role of Vicar General in place of Monsignor Tom Fryar, who was leaving the position to pastor STM. “I was minding my own business on the other side of the Continental Divide,” he said as he spoke of his surprise at being named Vicar General.

The VG role is one he will maintain in conjunction with his duties at St. Thomas More. “The Vicar General has the bishop’s general authority to get things done. If you imagine that the entire Archdiocese is a big family company owned by the Archbishop, I’m essentially his



oldest son who helps run the overall business,” he said with a smile.

He is excited to be at STM, to learn from the staff and the parishioners. “STM is a place that’s not broken. It’s a ship in working order.” He is also looking forward to an experience he has never had: celebrating Mass with the same people two Sundays in a row, something that his western slope priestly duties prevented. “My alb is in my car. Now, it will be nice to have it in a closet. I’m looking forward to the continuity. I haven’t been in a parish with a school before, so I’m looking forward to that, too.”

In his free time, Fr. Randy is an outdoorsman whose favorite activity is snow skiing. In summer, he enjoys paddleboarding and hiking in the mountains.

In reflecting on his journey thus far, Fr. Randy gives thanks to God that at age 15, “I found a treasure that’s more important than other things.” That retreat he took at that age proved to be the hinge point of his life.

“God plucked me out of a path that would lead to mediocrity and set me on a great adventure. And I’m still living out that adventure. Join me on the adventure,” he said in invitation to all parishioners.

“I’m a disciple. I’m trying to be a better one. You should be a disciple, too.”

Fr. Randy, we’ll try. Welcome! ♦



# Welcome, Father Chris!

## sharing in our joys and our sorrows

by Irene Lindemer

Growing up in Castle Rock, Colorado, young Chris Marbury at the age of four or five, told his parents, "When I grow up, I want to make people live forever."

He attended Douglas County high school where he was a varsity track and cross-country athlete. As part of his desire to help people live forever, he earned a degree in biochemistry and molecular, cellular and developmental biology at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

He intended to work in medical research but during college, his plans changed. He explains how this came about, "I had a profound and personal encounter with Jesus in the Eucharist which made me realize that I could truly bring others to eternal life through His sacraments and priesthood."

He commented that he was, at first, reluctant to accept a call to the priesthood as he had never considered it before. Taking time for prayer and spiritual direction, he discerned that the call was real and joined the St. John Vianney Seminary in 2013.

Archbishop Aquila asked him to complete his formation at the Pontifical North American College in Rome in 2016. He describes his time in the seminary as the best of his life, "seminary helped me to deepen my spiritual life, form life-long friendships, grow in virtue and knowledge and meet people from all over the world."

Father Chris said that his ordination to the diaconate and priesthood "were two of the most powerful and memorable days of my life." On October 2, 2019, he was ordained as a deacon in St. Peter's Basilica in Rome with 30 men from around the world. "When the bishop laid his hands on my head, it felt like electricity flowed into my body and transformed my entire person."

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, Father Chris was ordained a priest on May 16, 2020 in the sparsely filled Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, witnessed by



only parents and immediate family members of those being ordained.

During his six years in Rome, four years in seminary and two as a priest, he finished a licentiate in philosophy, served as a tour guide at St. Peter's Basilica, ministered in a Roman prison and worked at a parish on a U.S. Naval Base outside of Naples.

He describes this time as "a tremendous blessing which allowed me to better glimpse the universality of the Church." He has many stories to share with us including his encounter with the Holy Father, taking pilgrimages in Italy and Europe and meeting many priests and religious from all over the world.

When asked who his favorite saint is and why, Father Chris said though he has many, St. Thérèse of Lisieux has been "the most persistent in my life" as she "has appeared again and again in my life in surprising and personal ways." St. Thérèse is known for her devotion to pray for priests. She has helped Father Chris learn how to return to the basics of a simpler life and have a childlike trust in God.

He did mention that he enjoys many outside sports such as skiing, hiking, running and cycling. He also plays the piano, which just may come in handy. He also commented, "I love visiting and blessing homes or sharing meals so don't be afraid to invite me!"

St. Thomas More is his first full-time parish assignment. He is excited to join us. He is looking forward to celebrating our joys and sharing in our sorrows as a community as well as celebrating the sacraments and growing closer to Jesus together.

We as a community will embrace Father Chris with joy and enthusiasm and will gratefully share our many blessings with him.

Welcome to St. Thomas More, Father Chris! ♦



# Another Fabulous Festival

an evening of community filled with lots of fun

Our second Fabulous Fun Festival was held on Friday, July 1. The evening began with Mass with our new pastor, Fr. Randy Dollins as the celebrant. A delicious barbecue, popcorn and ice cream treats along with numerous games and the Dean Bushnells twelve piece band were the perfect combination for a delightful evening of fun and friendship. Photographers Dave Rich and Dede Bryan's photos capture the joy and frivolity of the evening. ♦



# The Stars and Stripes

## a proud sign of honor and respect

by Renee Heinemeyer

We have traditions to show honor and respect for our country, blessed abundantly by the grace of God. We stand for the National Anthem, we show respect for our American flag and when we say the Pledge of Allegiance, we stand before it with our hand on our heart.

You may have noticed as I have, that overtime, many have moved away from the reverence and respect for our beautiful flag. Possibly through ignorance, torn or battered flags are simply thrown away, rather than being properly destroyed in a privately dignified manner. You may have been shocked or dismayed as I have been, seeing images of the flag being set to flame by angry protesters. This is not how we respect our country, let alone our American culture and American traditions.

### What The American Flag Means

The American flag, and those beautiful stars and stripes, represent all the brave men and women who have served to protect us, who have given their lives and made the ultimate sacrifice that we may have (and enjoy) the basic freedoms which so many other countries do not possess. Therefore, it is important to show respect for it.

### How to Care for The American Flag

When putting the flag away, it is important to have it folded into a triangle with the stars of union (blue portion) showing on the outside.

- Raise and lower the flag by hand, hoisting it briskly and lowering it with steady and calm respect. Be sure to display the blue union field facing up.
- Hang prominently, and never have it remain outside at night, unless lighted.
- Utmost respect: Our American flag should never touch the ground.
- It should not be dipped to any person or thing. It should not be draped over oneself or used as an article of clothing.
- Monitor your flag, especially if it is windy.
- If torn or irreparably damaged, learn how to properly dispose of old weathered flags by contacting your local Boy Scouts or Knights of Columbus.

### When to Raise Our Flag

How often have you seen our flag at half-staff, and not understood “the why” behind it? The flag is flown at half-staff in reverence to a fallen comrade, the passing

of an US congressional member or president, a tragic country event or whenever the president or state governor declares a period of mourning.

For example, did you know that for Memorial Day, the last Monday in May, the flag should be flown at half-staff until noon, remembering our fallen heroes, and then raised to full staff after that for the remainder of the day?

Other days when the US flag is flown at half-staff from sunrise until sunset are: Peace Officers Memorial Day, May 15; Armistice Day, July 27 in remembrance of the Korean War; Patriot Day, September 11; National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Day, first Sunday in October and Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, December 7.

There are several Flag Holidays throughout the year. Here is a list of many of them:

- New Year’s Day, January 1
- Martin Luther King Day, third Monday in January
- President’s Day, third Monday in February
- Mother’s Day, second Sunday in May
- Armed Forces Day, third Saturday in May
- Flag Day, June 14
- Father’s Day, third Sunday in June
- Independence Day, July 4
- Labor Day, first Monday in September
- Constitution Day, September 17
- POW/MIA Recognition Day, third Friday in September
- Columbus Day, second Monday in October
- Veterans Day, November 11
- Thanksgiving Day, fourth Thursday in November
- Christmas Day, December 25
- Any state holiday

### Always remember and Never Forget

Our American Flag represents one of the only countries in the world that states God’s name in prayer, the National Anthem and the Pledge of Allegiance. As we continue to focus on our faith, let us not forget the Creator who made this country abounding with freedoms, which are not enjoyed, cherished or privileged in other countries. As we gaze upon our flag, let us always remember in thanksgiving, the love of God that has so abundantly blessed our country.

May God continue to bless our United States of America! ◆

# Independence Day 2022

## a day of gratitude and celebration

St. Thomas More parish continued our wonderful tradition of starting Independence Day with Mass and beautiful music provided by the Festival Choir. After Mass, the Knights of Columbus Honor Guard and members of our Boy Scout Troop 770 led the procession outside for the flag-raising ceremony and prayer service. And of course, refreshments were served on the Padre Plaza to complete the festivities. ♦



*Photography by Bob Bartlett*

# Faithful Citizenship

## our baptismal call of responsible citizenship

“We need to participate for the common good. Sometimes we hear: a good Catholic is not interested in politics. This is not true: good Catholics immerse themselves in politics by offering the best of themselves so that the leader can govern.”

– Pope Francis, September 16, 2013

The U.S. Catholic bishops have reminded Catholics on many occasions to participate in political life. “In the Catholic tradition responsible citizenship is a virtue and participation in political life is a moral obligation” (no. 13; *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship*).

In response to the concern of the many social justice issues that our country currently faces, and our moral obligation to respond, we can no longer stand on the sidelines and hope that someone else will take on this role.

### Faithful Citizenship Groups

Parishioners of several churches in the Archdiocese of Denver responded to this call with the establishment of Faithful Citizenship groups. Melissa Ogburn, a St. Thomas More parishioner, has taken on the leadership role for our parish.

Working with others from St. Thomas More and nearby parishes, she has organized several events and is currently moving forward with this ministry, focused on how a good and faithful Catholic should prepare to vote. It is the intent to create an environment that allows for productive conversation, sharing of information and civil dialogue with the imitation of Christ’s compassion and love as our model.

The Faithful Citizenship group at our parish meets once a month in St. Peregrine Hall. To stay informed, consider joining their Faithful Citizenship Flocknote email group by texting STMCO to 84576 or connect with them online at [stmco.flocknote.com](http://stmco.flocknote.com).

### Civic Duty

As we move closer to the mid-term elections, it is very important that we become students of how best to form our consciences to live out our Catholic faith as we perform our civic duty.

Faithful Citizenship has scheduled an event on Wednesday, September 7 from 7:00 to 9:00PM to assist in preparation for the upcoming November election.

This important meeting will be held in McCallin Hall and further details will be included in upcoming Sunday bulletins. Contact Melissa Ogburn at [faithfulcitizenship@stthomasmore.org](mailto:faithfulcitizenship@stthomasmore.org) to learn more.

In addition, you will also find an abundance of information provided by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) including videos and teaching documents such as *Forming Consciences for Faithful Citizenship* to inform, and form us, to be good Catholics. There are also several prayers, including one to pray before an election. These excellent resources are located on the USCCB website: [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org) under the Justice, Peace and Human Development section. ◆

Merciful Father,

Thank you for inviting each of us to join in your work of building the kingdom of love, justice and peace.

Draw us close to you in prayer as we discern your call in our families and communities.

Send us forth to encounter all whom you love:  
those not yet born, those in poverty, those in need of welcome.

Inspire us to respond to the call to faithful citizenship,  
during election season and beyond.

Help us to imitate your charity and compassion  
and to serve as models of loving dialogue.

Teach us to treat others with respect, even when we disagree, and seek to share your love and mercy.

We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever.

Amen.

# Moms in Crisis

## walking with pregnant women in need

by Margarita Nelson

On June 24, the Supreme Court decision reversing *Roe v Wade* was publicized. Tragically, it had been nearly 50 years since abortion was legalized in our country. June 24 is also the Solemnity of the Nativity of St. John the Baptist (and this year the Solemnity of the Most Sacred Heart of Jesus was also celebrated on this date).

How fitting that we will remember this victorious day when we celebrate the saint who recognized our Lord by leaping in his own mother's womb. We can hold this beautiful image near as we celebrate the sanctity of human life as well as continue to work without ceasing to ensure all precious babies are protected everywhere.

The USCCB has a wonderful program, Walking with Moms in Need, that many parishes across the country are implementing. A core team of parishioners take inventory and compile a list of local resources for pregnant women in need and for parenting moms in need, identify any gaps in services available and communicate the information to parishioners and the

community. We must demonstrate to moms in crisis our commitment to uphold the sanctity of life while assisting those same moms. For more information on this life-affirming program, visit [www.WalkingWithMoms.com](http://www.WalkingWithMoms.com). If you would like to participate in this parish effort, please email [respectlife@stthomasmore.org](mailto:respectlife@stthomasmore.org).

Resources in the Denver metro area include pregnancy hotlines, pro-life pregnancy centers, pregnancy support groups and post-abortion healing resources. A woman in crisis can contact a pregnancy hotline with questions and to learn about resources. Pro-life pregnancy centers assist in many areas including healthcare and much-needed baby items as well as referrals to additional assistance such as housing, job training and parenting classes. Other resources include programs that assist throughout the pregnancy and beyond and provide mentors.

Statistically, there may be women in our pews or in our lives that have experienced the damaging effects of an abortion in the past. For this reason, we also list post-abortive healing resources. Please contact [respectlife@stthomasmore.org](mailto:respectlife@stthomasmore.org) with any questions. ♦

### Denver Metro Area Resources

#### Pregnancy Hotlines:

Care Net – 877.791.5475 or [Care-Net.org](http://Care-Net.org)

#### Pregnancy Decision Online

866.804.8482 or [PregnancyDecisionOnline.org](http://PregnancyDecisionOnline.org)

#### Heartbeat International

800.712.4357 or [HeartbeatInternational.org](http://HeartbeatInternational.org)

#### Pro-Life Pregnancy Centers:

Alternatives Pregnancy Center  
24-hour Helpline: 303.295.2288  
[YouHaveAlternatives.org](http://YouHaveAlternatives.org)

#### Bella Health and Wellness

303.789.4968 or [BellaWellness.org](http://BellaWellness.org)

#### Birthline of Colorado, Denver

303.832.2858 or [BirthlineColorado.org](http://BirthlineColorado.org)

#### Boulder Pregnancy Resource Center

303.960.7915 or [BoulderPregnancyResourceCenter.com](http://BoulderPregnancyResourceCenter.com)

#### Caring Hands Pregnancy Center in Aurora

[PregnancyDenver.com](http://PregnancyDenver.com) or 303.903.1270

#### Marisol Health

Denver & Lafayette  
303.731.6130 or [MarisolHealth.com](http://MarisolHealth.com)

#### MyChoice Resource Center, North Denver

720.323.5138 or [MyChoiceColorado.org](http://MyChoiceColorado.org)

#### Other Resources:

The Avi Project (Accompanies moms mostly ages 18-35 throughout pregnancy and beyond)  
[www.TheAviProject.com](http://www.TheAviProject.com)

Footprints (Parish program that accompanies pregnant young women and assists with strengthening the Catholic faith through the Church) <https://CCDenver.org>

#### Post-Abortive Healing:

Alternatives Pregnancy Center  
[www.YouHaveAlternatives.org/Counseling-After-Abortion](http://www.YouHaveAlternatives.org/Counseling-After-Abortion)

#### Project Rachel

<https://HopeAfterAbortion.com>

#### Sisters Of Life

<https://SistersOfLife.org/Healing-After-Abortion>

# Declaration of Nullity

## a declaration of truth about marriage

By Lucinda Marques  
Executive Assistant to the Judicial Vicar at the  
Archdiocese of Denver

*Editor's Note. The process of petitioning for a declaration of nullity, or commonly referred to as an annulment or a Catholic divorce, is complex and often misunderstood by members of the Catholic Church. The following information offers a brief review of the Catholic Church's teaching on the Sacrament of Marriage, the components of an invalid marriage and a simplified description of the process of petitioning for a declaration of nullity. This process is intended to guide couples to the beautiful gift and blessing of a sacramental marriage.*

What is marriage?

The Catholic Church teaches that marriage is a covenant, "by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole of life and which is ordered by its nature to the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring, has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a sacrament between the baptized" (Can. 1055 §1).

Are all marriages valid?

Because the institution of marriage is created by God (Vatican II, *Gaudium et Spes* 48), the Church's teachings concerning the dignity of marriage apply to all marriages, not merely those of Catholics. Although the Sacrament of Marriage only exists between two baptized persons, even non-Christian marriages are presumed to be valid, until the contrary is proven (Can. 1060).

What are the civil implications of a Declaration of Nullity?

There are no civil implications in the United States. Therefore, a declaration of nullity does not affect in any manner the legitimacy of

children, property rights, inheritance rights, names, etc. Instead, it declares the parties' freedom from the rights and obligations of marriage and thereby allows a person to contract a new marriage or pursue a vocation to the priesthood or consecrated life.

How might a marriage be null or invalid?

Consent makes marriage and, without true consent, a marriage cannot be formed. Consequently, a foundational requirement for a valid marriage is that it be entered freely by both parties.

In addition, both must understand the nature of marriage and bind themselves to a true marriage, which is faithful, indissoluble, open to the birth of children and oriented toward the mutual care and well-being of the spouses.

Furthermore, both spouses must possess the necessary psychological capacity at the time of their wedding to weigh, to choose, and to assume the rights and obligations of marriage.



The Church also acknowledges that there may be impediments from natural law (e.g., consanguinity, a prior bond of marriage, etc.) or ecclesiastical law (e.g., priests who have made a promise of celibacy or religious who have made a public perpetual vow of chastity) which would invalidate marriage.

Finally, Catholics and Eastern Orthodox Christians are required by Church laws to observe certain formalities when they marry. Under certain circumstances, omitting these formalities (“Marrying outside the Church”) can invalidate the marriage.

#### A declaration of truth

The Church does not “annul” marriages but declares what the facts establish. A declaration of nullity, thus, is not a favor or privilege granted at the Church’s discretion but only a declaration of the truth about a given marriage. Under the authority of the local bishop and sharing in his ministry, the Tribunal exists to investigate the facts and determine whether a marriage was invalid.

#### Who needs a declaration of nullity?

Marriage is a lifelong bond dissolved by death, but not divorce. Therefore, any person (regardless of religion, denomination, or baptismal status) who seeks to marry in the Catholic Church but has been married before must be free from any previous bond of marriage.

If one’s spouse is still living, the Tribunal needs to establish your freedom to marry or that of the person you wish to marry. In addition, if a person wishes to be baptized or received into the Catholic Church and, currently, is married invalidly (e.g., a second marriage contracted during the life of the first spouse), baptism or reception cannot proceed until the Tribunal establishes your freedom to marry or that of your current spouse.

Those who are divorced but have not remarried civilly are not required to seek a declaration of nullity, especially if they have no intention to marry again or pursue the priesthood or consecrated life. Some may choose to do so, motivated by a desire to seek peace.

Those who seek to heal the wound of a failed marriage may find comfort engaging in the intense introspection that the process demands. In all cases, it is necessary that a final divorce, civil annulment, or some other proof of definitive separation be evident before the Tribunal’s investigation may begin.

Indeed, it is the Church’s desire that the marriage nullity investigation begin only after the hope of spousal reconciliation has passed. We ask that you seriously and prayerfully discern this, especially with clergy, counselors, family, and friends.

How does the process begin in the Archdiocese of Denver?

Once you have determined that petitioning for a declaration of nullity is the right step, please seek out an advocate approved to serve in the Archdiocese of Denver.

Each parish should be able to assist you in finding an advocate, and the Tribunal website maintains a current list of advocates. You and/or your advocate will submit a preliminary questionnaire (found on the Tribunal’s website) which will allow the Tribunal to determine which case type applies to your marriage.

#### What are the different case types?

The majority of cases follow the Ordinary (Formal) Marriage Nullity Process; in other words, the marriage, externally, appears to have been valid but it is alleged that the consent was defective internally.

Another common case type is Lack of Form, which is a brief investigation into whether Catholics married according to the canonical form (external celebration of the marriage). In far less cases, nullity may be apparent through documentary proof.

Finally, an abbreviated process can be used when nullity of the marriage is manifest at the outset of the process and both spouses agree on the reasons for the nullity.

#### How long does the process take?

Due to the great number of cases considered, the various case types/processes, and the requirements of canon law, an exact time cannot be specified.

Each case is unique, and a complicated case normally will require more time and attention than a case where nullity is easily manifest. ◆

#### Who do I call?

If you have determined that you want to pursue a declaration of nullity, contact our parish office at St. Thomas More. Our Pastoral Minister, Deacon George Morin, will provide you the resources you will need and help you with the names of advocates approved by the Archdiocese of Denver.

You may contact Deacon George by email at [dcngeorgem@stthomasmore.org](mailto:dcngeorgem@stthomasmore.org) or 303.221.9239.

# Synod Update

## a universal call to listen to the Holy Spirit

By Mandy Cox

Following the February Parish Listening Sessions, parishes across the Archdiocese submitted summary reports of their discernment sessions. St. Thomas More held three listening sessions, as well as, accepting online submissions of personal discernment forms. These sessions provided parishioners the opportunity to learn more about how the Archdiocese was responding to the call for the universal church to participate in listening to the Holy Spirit. The three areas of focus were the Archdiocese, the parish and self. Participants then discerned what the Holy Spirit was saying to them during Eucharistic Adoration, and then sharing these responses with small groups.

These comments were gathered and reviewed by the parish Synod team. After discussion and discernment, the Synod team compiled and submitted a summary of comments from St. Thomas More to the Archdiocese. The action of the Holy Spirit was evident in the similarities between the comments by such a large variety of parishioners.

The most remarkable finding I noticed was how sincerely parishioners took the call to respond to the Holy Spirit as an individual. So many comments centered around God's call for specific outreach, calling on neighbors, friends, family or getting involved in specific ministries or areas of need.

The following is the summary of the comments collected during the St. Thomas More discernment gatherings.

### Question 1 – Church of Northern Colorado – Archdiocese of Denver

- Be mindful of those who are not feeling welcome in the Church. How do we connect with them and invite them?
- Provide help for families to enable them to teach their families what the faith truly teaches, not just what society says about the Church.
- A bold presence and teaching by the Archbishop and a clear awareness with the priests to share that same boldness.
- Boldly proclaiming the truth, through all means available to us (media, social media, radio, tv). Consistent message among all Catholics. Unity among parishes in how they proclaim that message.

- There is a sense of hurt and brokenness among the faithful, especially for those with close relatives who feel unwelcome in the Church. A desire for the Church to be honest about these hurts, especially those caused by failures on behalf of the hierarchy.
- That the Archdiocese will help parishioners know “how” to evangelize, and to encourage parishioners to evangelize.

### Question 2 – The parish of St. Thomas More

- Support for the schooling of Catholic youth, assisting their families with passing on the faith, as well as academics. Address the financial component to assist families to send children to Catholic school, from parish support and parishioners that don't have children in the school. Examples given of the Diocese of Wichita as a model.
- Outreach to local community around the parish. Finding creative ways to invite our local community to interact with the parish: movies, sports, barbecues, car shows, Q&A with the priests, pot lucks, etc. Finding different media and signage that can engage local community.
- Visible presence of prayer on our campus, even outside of the sanctuary, by doing walking rosaries, prayer processions around the campus.
- Making parishioners aware of parish activities already existing in the parish. Encouraging established groups to be open to new people joining.
- Common work with other parishes, not in competition with them.
- Family and Man/Woman specific ministries.

### Question 3 – Individual Reflection

- We need to “just do it” to reach out.
- When we see someone that we don't know at Mass, then say hello and invite them to eat or fellowship after Mass
- When we greet someone at Mass, ask them if I can offer Mass for their intentions.
- Call personal holiness, prayer, participation in the Sacraments, especially Eucharist.
- Do NOT be afraid to live the faith and make it visible by actions.
- Knowing specific people that God is calling them to witness to.



- Feeling called to specific ministries to serve others.
- To avoid being hostile or judgmental in sharing the faith.

The Archdiocese collected the parish summaries to prepare for an Archdiocesan Discernment Retreat at the end of March. Parish representatives, priests, religious, and lay persons, as well as the Archbishop and his staff, gathered for a three-day retreat to review common

themes from the parish level listening sessions. Following a review of parish summaries and prayerful discernment, small groups shared their spiritual insights. Each small group shared with the larger group a summary of their discernment.

In the coming months, the Archdiocese will be sharing its final summary of discernment that will be sent to the Vatican. ♦

## Time & Talent Fair 2022

Many of our St. Thomas More ministries have been active throughout the Covid-19 pandemic while others held back just to be safe and are now coming back in full force.

Our last Time and Talent Fair was held in August of 2019 and we are excited to announce that our 2022 Time and Talent Fair will be held after all Masses on Saturday and Sunday, August 27 and 28. Before you come, take a moment to check out your new Time and Talent Guidebook filled with information about our 80+ ministries and programs. During Mass, you will have time to complete a Time and Talent card to indicate which ministries you are currently involved with and which ones you would like to learn more about.

Then plan on stopping by McCallin Hall to have a little food, a little fun and learn a whole bunch about how awesome it is to be part of the ministries at St. Thomas More. Discover how easy it is to make a difference in someone's life by simply sharing the talents and time God has given to you. See you there! ♦



# American Heritage Girls

## focus on service to our community

by Syna Joseph and Maria Mundackal

We are two American Heritage Girls who have risen to the rank of Patriot, which is the highest level in American Heritage Girls.

American Heritage Girls (AHG) is an activity that we have truly enjoyed participating in throughout the numerous years we have attended.

Similar to Girl Scouts, there are a lot of fun badges. What is different is that American Heritage Girls has a focus on the Christian faith. This is a K-12 program that emphasizes service to the community. There are awards available such as the Presidential Service Award.

We each have both completed done numerous service activities and have earned more than 100 hours of service each year. Being part of AHG has given us a chance to focus on service to our community.

Our troop, CO2012, hosts a Pajama Party each year with the invitation extending towards the entire community. Furthermore, there are options for the Christmas Party and other such events that truly embody the creativity and enjoyment of the entire program.

This program focuses on faith, leadership, social/emotional support, life skills, outdoor activities and building women of integrity. We have both participated in rock climbing and archery and have helped lead badges for the younger girls.

Additionally, there are always fun, unique individuals to meet and everyone is so welcoming. Join AHG for a fun-filled group, with faith and community that truly emphasizes the foundations of women with integrity. Contact our Troop Leader, Alexandra Harden [alzharden@comcast.net](mailto:alzharden@comcast.net) for more information. ♦



# Shepherd's Promise – Word of Life

by Deanne Vizurraga

Shepherd's Promise is an after-school catechesis program for children pre-K through eighth grade. In addition to traditional classroom learning, the children learn about Jesus and his Church through playing roles in the Living Rosary and Living Stations of the Cross. They also have an opportunity to lead Mass and conduct a special Advent presentation.

This year, we will implement a new curriculum, *Word of Life*, for Kindergarten through fifth grade which just

launched with the collaboration between the Augustine Institute and Loyola Press. Jesus' Church will further come to life for the students through contemplating religious art and scripture passages. We will be using the Formed digital media library for enrichment as well.

Shepherd's Promise meets on Tuesday from 4:30–5:45PM or Wednesday from 6:00–7:15PM.

For more information, please contact Deanne Vizurraga at [deannev@stthomasmore.org](mailto:deannev@stthomasmore.org). ♦

# RE for Special Needs

## serving all of God's people

by Sheri Funderbunk

St. Thomas More has had a special religious education program for 42 years and counting! In the seventies, Father Larry Freeman and Sister Mary Catherine Widger saw the need for a program which would help people with special needs become more involved with their faith and parish life. They developed a multi-faceted program for the developmentally disabled which includes religious education and faith formation, pastoral care, special events, awareness programs and even some assisted living opportunities. Our parish is one of ten operating in the archdiocese. We currently have a Special Needs Religious Education program which includes faith formation, Sacramental preparation and fellowship for students from school age to adulthood.

Many students with special needs choose to take part in the regular faith formation programs, rather than the special needs program. We typically meet once a week on Tuesday nights during the school year. Some who come to our program never want to leave. We have school-age students up to age 62! After Father Larry's passing, his twin brother Father Roland Freeman took over. He conducts a special Mass just for our group and families four times a year. This is especially meaningful for our group as he involves all of the students in the Mass and explains as needed. When students are preparing for sacraments, they get individual instruction. The STM Religious Education office has purchased educational kits which help even the non-verbal participants understand their faith. These kits are also made available to families who do not belong to the program.

The original vision has been largely realized at St. Thomas More. There are so many faith-filled people involved in

parish life that were once marginalized. At one time in other parishes, it was not uncommon that special needs children were denied the sacraments because they could not memorize their prayers. We have students who have become Altar Servers, Lectors, Ushers, a Knight of Columbus and are daily Mass attendees. The fellowship developed here has led to prom dates, information sharing for parents, help with health crises and deep friendships between many. We are currently in need of new adult and teen volunteers to serve as teachers and helpers. As with any volunteer opportunity, you will receive much more than you have to give. You cannot find a more spirit-filled group! If interested, contact Mary Janiczek at 303.809.7827 or [mary@janiczek.com](mailto:mary@janiczek.com). ♦



Brennan Froehlke with Sister Mary Catherine.

by Margaret Froehlke

What a great opportunity to spread the good work about this special class and community you and your faithful volunteers have created for STM families.

We are privileged to have this faith experience in Brennan's life. Brennan has been an active member of the STM Special RE Class since 2008. The class has enriched Brennan's faith life and has broadened his STM Church family and community. The committed and talented faith filled staff creatively and patiently present the Gospel and Church teachings to this diverse group of individuals each week, both in-person and virtually. Brennan looks forward to seeing his classmates and teachers and especially enjoys being a part of the monthly Masses with Fr. Freeman and Sister Mary Catherine. ♦



# Celebrating God's Greatness

## supporting budding interest in Catholicism

by Ethan Peterson, VBS Tribe Leader

St Thomas More has been my parish for as long as I can remember and I feel fortunate to have made all my sacraments here so far. I participated in Vacation Bible School (VBS) when I was in elementary school and I thought it would be a great way for me to give back now that I am in high school.

As a Tribe Leader, I didn't know what to expect and was looking forward to sharing this week with our class of ten first-graders. It was a lot of fun preparing and decorating our classrooms beforehand to make it fun and adventurous for them.

This year, our VBS overall theme was "Monumental: Celebrating God's Greatness". The tribe leaders were also given a daily theme, along with a prayer for the beginning of the day that could be used with our tribe, a saint of the day and one of the Luminous Mysteries of the Rosary.

This was so helpful because we were able to incorporate these daily themes into our group activities. For example, when we were praying the rosary in front of the statue of Mother Mary, we read a story that related to our topic of the day. After the first day, it became a fun challenge to see how we would incorporate the day's theme with the activities that were planned, as well as the other activities that were leader-run.

The best part of my week as a Tribe Leader would be the people I met and worked with, but it was mostly about the kids in my classroom. Initially, I was interested in volunteering because I was able to earn community service hours but I quickly began to enjoy the daily curriculum and the fun interactions with the kids. I especially liked answering their questions throughout the week which not only helped to support their budding interest in Catholicism but it also helped to strengthen and deepen my own Catholic faith. ♦






# 2022–2023 Religious Education & Sacramental Preparation Registration

Sign up now through Friday, August 19  
for our 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

## Class of 2022 goes to D.C.

by Gretchen DeWolfe

In May 2022, the St. Thomas More Catholic School class of 2022 took our first class trip ever to Washington, D. C. We used the company World Classrooms and had four of the best days of our lives.

Students traveled to the nation's capital and toured the National Archives, the 9/11 Pentagon Memorial, Jefferson Memorial, FDR and MLK Memorials, Arlington National Cemetery, the Museum of the Bible, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the Lincoln Memorial and the White House. The students also took a trip to Gettysburg National Park and Mount Vernon. We also enjoyed Mass at St. Patrick's, the oldest Catholic church in Washington, D. C. The kids had great nights out at the National Harbor and Alexandria, Virginia.

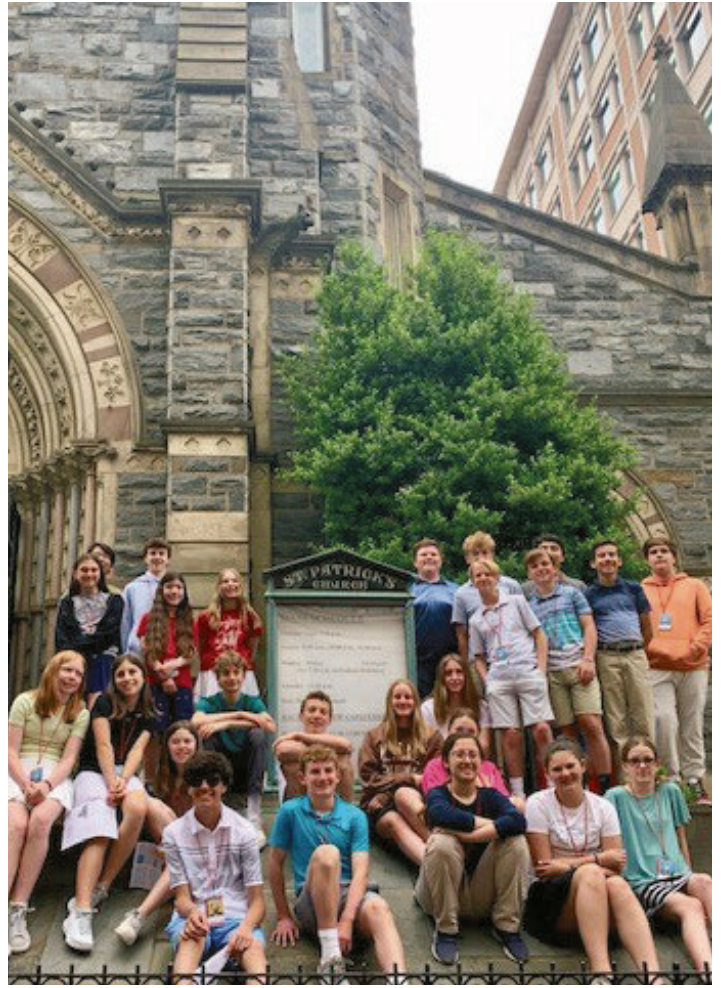
Twenty five students, seven parents and three staff members ventured with the kids. One eighth grader remarked about his journey, "It was truly an amazing trip, especially with all the love and support from the parents and teachers." Another student reflected on our trip to Arlington National Cemetery. Witnessing the cemetery and the changing of the guard was the most moving part of the trip for him. "Arlington just showed me all of the men and women who are lost or died fighting the wars to keep America safe. Just seeing the guards in how strict they are and how perfect they need to be just really blew me away. It was really powerful that they would do that for the unknown soldiers who are dead and missing from the past wars."

STM Middle School already has their trip lined up for next year with the class of 2023, and we hope to make it an eighth grade tradition for all years to come. Abby Basile is

the eighth grade social studies teacher who is coordinating this adventure.

She remarked, "What stood out to me most was how incredible the students of STM are. We know how great they are inside our classrooms, but taking them on a trip like this really showed me just how wonderful we have it at STM. Their manners, faith and interest, and joy and love they find in each other wowed tour guides, historians, park rangers and staff wherever we went. They just soaked up all the information and fun that they could and it was incredible to witness. They did STM proud on this trip." ♦





# We Welcome Kendra Douglass

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by STM Faculty & Staff

STM Catholic is pleased to welcome our new Assistant Principal, Kendra Douglass. Mrs. Douglass is a native to Colorado and grew up in nearby Littleton.

Mrs. Douglass went to St. Mary's Academy from elementary through high school. She received her undergraduate degree from St. Louis University in St. Louis, Missouri where she majored in elementary education.

While attending St. Louis University, Mrs. Douglass was also a member of the women's varsity swim team. Go Bilikens!

After graduating from St. Louis University, Mrs. Douglass went on to receive her Masters Degree from Regis University where she studied Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment with a minor in Leadership. In addition to finishing her Masters program, she spent a year teaching seventh and eighth grade special



education at Havern School.

Mrs. Douglass has over thirteen years of experience teaching third and fourth grade, all at schools within the Archdiocese of Denver, and most recently at Our Lady of Loreto.

Outside of teaching and education, Mrs. Douglass is married to her husband, Brant, and mother to their five boys: Camden, Austin, Cole, Hunter and Connor. Wow, she is a busy mom!

She and her husband are huge Denver Broncos fans and they thoroughly enjoy going to the games. Mrs. Douglass also enjoys the outdoors and spending time at Steamboat Springs every year as a family.

Mrs. Douglass commented that, "having grown up in this parish and now getting to be a part of the school community, I am humbled and beyond grateful for this new opportunity." ♦

# Mrs. Basile wins the Mizel Award

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by STM Faculty and Staff

On Wednesday, May 25, Mrs. Basile was one of twelve teachers in Colorado to win the Mizel Award for Excellence in Holocaust Education.

She received this award from Governor Jared Polis, Mayor Michael Hancock, and Attorney General Phil Weiser at Empower Field at Mile High Stadium. Her award is a Shofar, which is a Jewish horn. Congratulations to Mrs. Basile for your dedication to Holocaust education.

"When students study the Holocaust, they are given a chance to interact with information that may challenge their view on the world, that causes them to confront issues of moral significance, and also teaches them to recognize the signs that allow genocide to happen." ♦





# Preschoolers Travel the World

by Mary Tellus

The children at the STM Catholic Preschool Summer Camp have started their travels around the world this year! The summer camp is a theme-based program in which we immerse the children into each theme.

We learn, play and make friends along the way! We have a real pilot that flies us each week to our destinations and a flight attendant to make sure our travels are safe! Our pilot is Ms. Kaaryn's dad, Captain Jeff Dahlquist, and of course our flight attendant is none other than Ms. Kaaryn.

Captain Jeff explains where we are going on a map and tells us how long it is going to take to get there! He tells the travelers about the place they are going with some highlights to see while they are there and tells them to make sure they have fun along the way!

Our first stop was Italy during the week of June 14. We painted with spaghetti, made flags, experienced the Olympics, took a trip down the canal on a gondola and made passports for the summer travels. During the summer we will also be visiting Brazil, America, Hawaii, the North Pole, Japan and Australia. ♦





# The **SPARK**

middle school & high school youth

## Yes...She is Hooked!

by Jen Brummel

Words cannot even express our deepest appreciation for you! Doug and I are so grateful for the wonderful evening Sarah experienced at STM last night. As I shared with both of you, Sarah is longing for an incredible high school ministry program knowing that everything she has ever-known and participated in, is now back at our previous parish from which Doug and I resigned. The bar was set high because of her exposure to many high school youth ministry opportunities and programs. Well ... you surpassed it! She saw the genuine and solid ministry mind-set and programming you coordinate and can hardly wait to jump in with both feet.

I knew she had rehearsal every day this week from 8:00AM–5:00PM for the show, and I knew she would be very tired. However, she looked at me in the car on our way to STM and said, “I prayed. Let’s go do this, but I am so nervous, Mom. What if no one talks to me and wants to get to know me. I just want really good Catholic friends and a great high school program that I can be part of and contribute to. I want to be involved and help them too, but what if they already all have friends and a good group and I am just sitting there? I know you asked me to trust you and give this place a try. Will you pick me up early if no one talks with me?” I asked her to take a breath, pray with me and just give it a chance. The rest is history.

After she hopped in the car at 9:00PM and handed me all the fliers and permission slips, she started telling me all about her time. I heard all about the priest who plays dodge ball and pool and actually knows the teens’ names and asks questions about their lives. She commented how nice everyone is, especially Mr. David, Ms. Christina and Father Matt. She rattled off so many things she experienced, heard and what she saw transpiring with the

teens and adults. For the whole drive home, I only listened. We got to the house and she hurried in to tell her sister Abigail how much she will love the middle school night. She retold almost all the details to her siblings last night and then to her father in the morning. Yes... she is hooked.

Sarah was waiting to see how last night would be before explaining to the director that she needs to leave rehearsals an hour early tomorrow so she can go to the leadership night. Well, this morning, she told the director. Take it as a compliment that she would leave rehearsals early so she can be a part of the high school youth group. Sarah’s heart is full. Thank you! ♦



# Faith, Friends and Fun

by Dan and Andrea Donaldson

Hello! We are Dan and Andrea Donaldson and we have five kids. We recently joined St. Thomas More parish in the fall of 2021. One of the biggest reasons why we chose this parish was the amazing youth group and our desire to volunteer. We love our Catholic faith. It is incredibly important for us to raise our children to love Jesus and His Church, and let them know how much they are loved by Him! Society does not make this so easy. We need to lean on our church family in order to help us in this endeavor. The St. Thomas More middle and high school youth groups definitely help us do this through energetic faith, meaningful fellowship and lots of fun!

Our faith is compelling and exciting! This is lived out by the youth group leadership and our wonderful priests. David Tschumper has been rock solid in leading the youth ministry at St. Thomas More for over 30 years. He has impacted the lives of countless young people with the Gospel. In fact, many of the kids that have gone through David's programming have now grown into adulthood and serve as leaders and volunteers in the ministry. Christina Hale has been a part of this youth group for many years, and now provides a listening ear and encouraging voice as a valuable assistant to David. Greg Johnson is another such person and he leads middle school ministry at STM with passion, energy and joy.

STM youth ministry is also served by an amazingly enthusiastic priest who totally gives of himself for the youth. Fr. Matt is very active and involved. He gives monthly talks that are not only informational, but they're also practical, and even inspiring to the teens to help them live out their faith. David, Greg, Christina, Fr. Matt and the volunteers have one thing in mind when it comes to the youth they serve, it is the love of Jesus. They share that love each and every week.

Activities centered on Christ can and should be engaging and fun. That's definitely the case each and every week. Through mission trips, retreats, service projects, Nerf gun wars, movie nights, road trips, sporting events, concerts, beach bashes and regular meetings there is always something fresh and exciting to do. Our teens can do one, or do them all!

All of this happens in an environment of community and fellowship. The teens involved in the STM middle and high school youth groups are able to hang out with one another and talk about their faith, their life, their problems, their questions and be encouraged by one another. True friendship happens and even extends outside of youth group.

Great things are happening with the STM youth ministry and we are truly grateful to have our teens involved! We also love volunteering and helping out. If your teen isn't participating yet, they should definitely check it out this summer. Also, we encourage and invite parents of teens to get involved and volunteer your time. You too will grow in your faith, make new friends and have fun! We've been totally blessed by our involvement with the youth ministry at STM and we're confident you will be too. ♦



Photography by Alphonsus Deadatus



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

## Time Sensitive Material

**If not us, who?  
If not here, where?  
If not now, when?  
If not for the Kingdom, why?**

**TIME & TALENT FAIR 2022  
SATURDAY & SUNDAY, AUGUST 27 & 28**