
A LETTER FROM FATHER



PASTOR

Rev. Jeffery Walker, STL
fr.jeffwalker@sttomsbg.org

DEACON

Deacon Dan Brahier, PhD
deacondan@sttomsbg.org

PARISH MANAGER

Theresa Williams
theresa@sttomsbg.org

DIRECTOR OF CAMPUS MINISTRY

Alicia Schmiesing
alicia@sttomsbg.org

STUDENT MINISTRY INTERN

Shannon Carmon
carmos@bgsu.edu

NEWMAN HOUSING MINISTERS

Allison Mancarella
Mary Wires
nhminister@sttomsbg.org

**DIRECTOR OF MARKETING &
ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT**

Sophia Bauer
sophia@sttomsbg.org

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC

Ed Gerrity
edward@sttomsbg.org

BOOKKEEPER

Kathy Helm
kathyhelm@sttomsbg.org

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS TEAM

Ray Kagy
ray@sttomsbg.org
John Souder
john@sttomsbg.org

SACRISTAN

Kathy Wojciechowski
kathy@sttomsbg.org

Dear Friends,

With many students staying home after Thanksgiving break and only returning in the new year, it was quiet here in December. While I appreciate some quiet time, I was more than happy to see our students return at the beginning of January! I was even more pleased to see how happy they were to return!

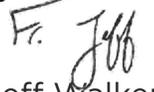
I was recently talking with a couple young ladies who were particularly thankful to be back at St. Tom's where the Sacraments are so readily accessible. "I kind of took for granted how great it is to have Mass every day so close by and at college student friendly times," one student told me. It's good to have Mass within walking distance for our students and at times that fit their schedules. Another student piped up: "And confession

too!" The first student continued, "I couldn't find confession anywhere other than 4pm on Saturdays back home. Not good."

We've tweaked our calendar just a bit, starting this semester. Now, Holy Mass and the Sacrament of reconciliation are offered every day of the week here at St. Thomas More. That's our mission, after all: to bring Jesus to students and students to Jesus!

I'm happy to share with you some stories in this newsletter. Stories about alumni who are doing great things to build up God's kingdom. Stories of donors who have seen the impact of our campus ministry at St. Tom's. And most importantly, stories of our students. God is doing great things at St. Thomas More and I'm confident he has many more good things yet to come! It's your financial and spiritual support that makes our mission possible. Thank you so much for your ongoing donations and constant prayers!

Yours sincerely in Christ,



Fr. Jeff Walker



MY NEW LIFE AS A MISSIONARY

My faith journey began at St. Tom's almost four years ago. The first mass I attended included an opportunity to sign up for more information about involvement within the parish, including Bible studies. Little did I know that my Bible study was led by a FOCUS missionary. As the years went on, I got to meet more missionaries and holy people in the St. Tom's community. They taught me about the person of Jesus and introduced me to a life completely promised to Him. I even entered into a chain of discipleship with women who continue to call me higher today. I still share friendships with the missionaries that were here. It is a blessing to have had their guidance for such formative years of my life. Without their



(Top) A former FOCUS Missionary Emily with Lucia, now a future FOCUS Missionary.
(Bottom) Lucia with the group of young ladies part of her discipleship chain.

support, I would not have the understanding of the church and the relationship with Jesus that I have now. Because of their example, I am also on the path of being a FOCUS missionary! Their "Yes" inspired my "Yes." I have countless precious memories with the people who have walked with me, and it is fires like the ones in their hearts that will set the world ablaze for the Lord.

Lucia Boulos, Senior
Bible Study Leader

Thanks to your support of the Mission Support Fund, we have invited FOCUS missionaries to return to BGSU for the 2021-2022 Academic Year!

HUMBLY SERVED

I had the pleasure of being a part of Mary's bible study this [past fall]. Throughout my life I had grown up Catholic going to church every Sunday, but I never had the opportunity to be involved in a bible study. When I heard about the one Mary put together I knew that it was something I really wanted to experience.

Joining a bible study helped me learn more about my faith and showed me how to become closer to God by teaching me how to pray. An important idea that has stuck with me throughout my time during bible study was that we need to be intentional in our prayers in order to open our hearts to God. Life can be challenging and it can be hard to find time to think about praying with all the other things going on but it is important to take some time throughout the day to talk to God and thank him for all the gifts He has given us.

Emma Borbley, Freshman
Bible Study Participant



Ethan and fellow students enjoying a dinner event at St. Tom's pre-pandemic.



Emma and friends declared winners of the gingerbread-building competition before the Winter break,

SERVING HUMBLY

Back when I decided to come to BG, there was something about this place that I knew I needed to be a part of. And especially now, I can see it's just because of the connection between the college and the parish, it's just like something I've never seen before, especially coming from a parish that didn't really have very many college students who would go to it. Having one that's completely focused on it, one that has a connection between the parishioners and the college students, I think is something that I think is important.

I think definitely BGK—Koinonia retreat—was something where I had felt community before, but that retreat just opened my eyes to the beauty of being connected as a group. You know, it was the most welcoming experience I have had probably, I would even say, in my entire life. It was very much, you know, it was different. It was unlike anything I had ever gone on.

Ethan Nagy, Senior
Koinonia Lay Director for BGK24



(Top) Andrew and wife Brittany on vacation two years ago. (Middle) A group of students at Miles Dairy Queen when Andrew was Campus Minister. (Bottom) Group picture at World Youth Day 2011



FINGERPRINTS ON THE CEILING ALUMNI FEATURE

I was a seminarian in the Diocese of Toledo... for four years. As I was discerning out, Fr. Mike had been the pastor at the time and part of my discernment into seminary, and so I had talked to him about my decision to leave. He proposed joining him and coming here to St. Tom's. So when I left seminary and came here, I was technically a Missionary and was primarily the advisor to the Men's Household. The next year I became the Campus Minister. There was a lot of working with the students and helping organize all of the on-campus stuff, as well as one on one and discipleship with the student leadership.

One of the most enriching things was discipleship mentoring with the student leaders. Just being able to be part of their life and walking with them as they pursued holiness, so much of what I saw in the students inspired me and challenged me since I wasn't that much older than them. A lot of the students I was mentoring became my friends, they were running as fast as I was!

Andrew Reinhart
Parish Life Coordinator

You can also find Andrew on **Awaken Catholic**, a local powerful ministry and talk show, led by some of the holy men and women he met during his years serving on our parish team.

Awakencatholic.org

WHAT I DIDN'T KNOW I WAS MISSING



(Left) Mary with a group of girls after a small group hang out. (Top Right) A Past Halloween party in Seton Hall (Bottom Right) Natalie and Mary being Natalie and Mary.



What struck me when I first found St. Tom's was the ability to actually have a Christian community, because growing up I never really had one. I was an Atheist for a while and when I came back to the Church, my church didn't have a youth group. My family was like "why are you suddenly so into your faith," so I didn't have a Catholic-Christian community to be part of necessarily other than going to Mass on Sundays. And then I came to St. Tom's and I found that community. I didn't realize how much I had missed that until I found it again.

In my time at St. Tom's I'd say the biggest realization for me was that God is in everyone, even if it's not openly manifested, even if they're not just smiling with the Joy of the Gospel. God is still in that person and you should treat them like that. That doesn't always make it easy, trust me, I know that! But yeah, knowing that God is in everyone.

Mary Wires, Senior
Newman Housing Minister

Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself.

Matthew 6:34

WHY I GIVE: BUILDING A FUTURE

As you look around Mass, there's a lot of gray hair like mine and so anything that we can do to support an effort to have kids from across the street come here at least for Mass and maybe more...is very important to us.

When I was a young kid my grandfather on my mother's side, whose first name was Marsh believe it or not, was real good friends with Fr. Ollivere and I guess not many people remember him, but he was an extremely persuasive person at getting people to help him build this place. My grandfather was one of those people [he persuaded]. He was handy, and so I spent a lot of days here—and sometimes evenings—with my grandpa helping him build different parts.

The two of us [helped] built the wall where the original tabernacle was because my grandfather thought that was a pretty important wall. It's not particularly a well-kept secret but we goofed it up and it's out of line with the rest of the walls on the south side of the church. It's hard to tell because of the beams that go through there. We didn't notice until it was done that we had started in different places. But there's a lot of quirks like that, as people are finding. We want the St. Tom's building of quirks to one day become too small for all of the students.

It's a good place to learn because we pick up things from the students that you wouldn't get at a traditional parish. You really find out what is important to people who are growing. Neat place to be, it's changed a lot over the years.

Michael Marsh
Parishioner and Donor



Mike and wife Theresa standing in front of a small downtown restaurant in Grand Rapids.

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PARTNERS IN MISSION

"Some give by going to the missions. Others go by giving to the missions."

College campuses in the 21st century are truly mission territories for the Church. Thousands of souls flock to our campus each year seeking knowledge, understanding, transformation, and relationship. Our University Parish offers them all that and **MORE**.

We strive to be good stewards of our resources and use your gifts wisely to advance the mission entrusted to us to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ at Bowling Green State University. Join us as a partner in mission by a generous financial contribution to one of the funds below and a pledge of spiritual support.

Secure the future of campus ministry in Bowling Green by donating to the Endowment Fund which provides an enduring source of support for our University Parish. Be part of the evangelization of the BGSU community by donating to the Mission Support Fund. These donations enable us to bring FOCUS missionaries to our campus as well as speakers and other programming directly related to the evangelization and catechesis of BGSU students. Take care of our St. Tom's family by setting up a recurring donation to our Virtual Collection Basket to keep our lights on, our facilities sanitized, the temperature controlled, and the sacristy stocked!

PARTNERS IN PRAYER

We count on our benefactors most of all for spiritual support! Please remember St. Thomas More University Parish and the BGSU community in your daily prayers! Know of our prayers for you. Spread out across the world, we are united in the Eucharist. Holy Mass is offered on the First Thursday of every month for the intention of our benefactors.



"Being here has definitely helped me form an intimate relationship with Jesus, especially with encouraging daily Mass and participating in Confession. Not just through the Sacraments, but also through the ministries."

Tucker Howard, *Junior*

BY MAIL

Fill out and return the enclosed envelope with a check or money order made out to "St. Thomas More University Parish."

ONLINE

Go to sttomsbg.org/donate for a one-time or monthly donation via credit/debit card, PayPal, Venmo, or automatic withdrawal.



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WINTER 2021

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THE CATHOLIC FALCON