

PASTOR

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

DEACON

Deacon Dan Brahier, PhD
deacondan@sttomsbg.org

PARISH MANAGER

Theresa Williams
theresa@sttomsbg.org

NEWMAN RESIDENT MINISTERS

Tucker Howard
Anna Findlay
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

"...so many of our students chose to gather together and celebrate the Eucharist..."

A LETTER FROM **FATHER**



Dear Friends,

It's been a wonderful first year as Pastor of Saint Thomas More! I admit that coming to a new place in the midst of a pandemic, my expectations for this first year were low. However, our BGSU students impressed me at every milestone of the year! While almost every parish in the country has seen a steep decrease in attendance after beginning to reopen last year, our St. Tom's community has been an especially bright beacon of hope. Throughout the fall, our Sunday Mass crowd was about 2/3 of our pre-pandemic attendance. Then, beginning at the start of Lent, we saw a large increase in the number of folks attending our Sunday Masses. With every excuse to stay home, so many of our students chose to gather together and celebrate the Eucharist each Sunday. It was a weekly reminder to me of the goodness of God and the importance of Grace!

These summertime weeks certainly bring a change in dynamic for our parish, but we are all very busy preparing for next year already. I've already had the pleasure of giving some tours to families of future Falcons who will be joining us in the fall. Seniors Tucker Howard and Anna Findley have been chosen to be our Newman Catholic Living Community Resident Ministers for the coming school year. We are in the process of hiring in a new Director of Campus Ministry to be part of our St. Tom's Team and preparing to welcome a team of FOCUS missionaries back to our campus. Pandemic restrictions in the State of Ohio and the Diocese of Toledo are to be lifted entirely the first week of June, and I am ready to have a year of campus ministry at full strength starting in August!

Thank you so much for being part of the St. Thomas More family! Your donations and your prayers sustain us in all we do!

God bless and Go Falcons!
Fr. Jeff Walker

CHRISTENDOM@BGSU

LEARN THE FAITH. LIVE THE FAITH.

A secular university like BGSU excels in many different areas of study. But it can be difficult to study the “science of God” at the same level a student might study the science of economics, biology, or politics. The **Christendom@BGSU** program provides our college students at St. Thomas More the opportunity to take for-credit courses in Catholic Studies through a partnership with Christendom College in Alexandria, VA.

Shannon and Jimmy are two of our St. Tom’s students who piloted the **Christendom@BGSU** program for the Spring 2021 semester. They met virtually with Dr. RJ Matava and other public university students from around the country every Monday evening for HIST 501: Early Christian Literature; an interactive, Online class on the Fathers of the Church. Then, on Thursday afternoons, they gathered in the Antioch Library with Fr. Jeff to break open that week’s material in an in-person, small group setting and prepare their thoughts for that week’s assignment.

Your gift to the St. Thomas More Endowment Fund makes partial scholarships available for BGSU students who wish to take part in the **Christendom@BGSU** program. Thank you for your generosity!

FROM OUR STUDENTS



“The impact this has had on my soul is **GREATER** than I could have imagined.”

Shannon Carmon, Sophomore



“Professor Matava is so passionate and **ON FIRE** about the material. And I love the weekly in-person meetings with Fr. Jeff at St. Tom’s. It’s **REALLY GREAT** to be able to talk about this with my friends.”

Jimmy McDermott, Freshman

WHERE TWO OR MORE ARE **GATHERED**



The support that this community offers had a huge impact on me, in all aspects of life; in faith, education, and even social aspects. Being someone far from home, St. Tom's has allowed me to have a second family where I've had various missionaries and other students invite me to their homes for holidays when I'm unable to travel back to Connecticut and my own family. They've been super kind and welcoming.



When I got to college I started making the faith my own. I think being around other people seeking to make the faith their own helped me in learning and seek a deeper understanding on why the Church believes a certain way. At St. Tom's it's very much a mindset of "...let's find it out together."

Allison Mancarella, Senior

LIKE NEVER BEFORE

I knew my faith was something that was going to be important to me so I started doing some research on the churches around and noticed that St. Thomas More was the one on campus, so that's how I started getting involved there.

The FOCUS Missionaries from my freshman year, and the Holy Land trip during my sophomore year Spring Break were huge impacts for me. It was a once in a lifetime opportunity and it really impacted my faith, that I was able to go on that trip. Just being able to see all of the places that Jesus grew up, it was so cool to be able to experience what he did, and every Holy Week since then has been that much more for me, being able to say "I've been there and seen this". To have that experience was really cool.

Ashley Georges, Senior



"Every Holy Week since then has been that much **MORE** for me."



BETTER TOGETHER KEATON & ABIGAIL

We went on our first date and it went “badly”. We went to go see Christmas lights and Keaton ended up hitting a car on our way. But we had the best conversations. He ended up hitting the car because he was staring at me. He said he couldn't stop looking at me so he hit the car! We kept talking after that, and then I graduated and came to BGSU. Keaton ended up coming to BG the following year.

Walking into Freshman year without him I got to see there was a whole new world outside of our town. My discernment was a lot of prayer time to sit in and ask a lot of questions. God kept reassuring me and working me through those concerns, and eventually I hit a point where I just ‘knew’.

Keaton had a support system with the men in the church here and I had mine with the women. When we were growing separately we were also growing as a couple. If we didn't have that support system walking into college it definitely would have been challenging, especially with the society we have today.

Abigail White, Senior

After the first date I dropped her off and went home, and my dad stayed up to ask me how it went. I had never talked to another person so easily, the way Abigail and I had talked to each other. Me being myself, I told my dad I think she is the one. As we grew closer I yearned more for the marriage life with her.

Being closer together here at BG and St. Tom's helped us out tremendously. We used to pray back home, we even used to have this thing called FCA (Fellowship Christian Athletes) that Abigail started at our high school, and I co-led after she graduated. Being able to go to adoration here together has been amazing. We didn't get that back home, the community here. It was a lot more community-based. Through that we grew closer to the Lord.

Keaton McEldowney, Senior



Keaton and Abigail are one of ten couples currently undergoing pre-marriage formation at St. Tom's.

WHEN GOD KNOCKED, I ANSWERED



When I came to Bowling Green I met Justin, a missionary for the Catholic Falcons, through a friend who had converted two years prior to me. I started talking with him, making polite conversation as I was getting dinner ready for the group who was over. I didn't know much about Catholicism and hadn't really been around it much to have those conversations about it. He was very polite about it and said, "Hey, if you've never been to Mass you should give it a try. Or not!" It was very much a "take it or leave it", which wasn't usual for me to hear, I was used to religion being shoved down my throat. I thought, I had been trying out a couple of places, and it would be kind of weird going to Mass that early on a Sunday, but I said why not!

When I went, I felt something. I like to in the moment find that empirical evidence, but there was something beyond that which got me to really start thinking. I think it was about six months until I finally came around and decide I needed to go through RCIA, or at least look into it.

It was definitely a different experience than what I thought it was going to be. It was very conversational, very open to questions.



Douglas being baptized in June 2020

I had a lot of questions that were on my mind that were answered. Lots of things I was able to come to terms with later on and why it's the case. I have so much more to learn. Luckily I have a lot of friends who are Catholic Theologians!

This parish is one of the few stable rocks in my life. I feel at peace here so that I can focus on my relationship with God. I'm a very chaotic and sporadic person,

I'm always on the move, constantly changing what my future is going to be. But Church, and the community and God are the very few

pillars I have, where I KNOW I need to be here. It's a comfort of mine. It's also good to know that when life gets hard, God is still there for me. Most people worry if they ask questions that it'll look like they are doing something wrong, but if you don't have clear understanding you just need to ask.

Douglas Simpson

WHY I GIVE: THE PIVOTAL MOMENT



When I started my freshman year, I would go frequently to praise and worship on Wednesday nights and then moved into Offenhauer and began going less often. There were a lot of people asking me to go on this Koinonia retreat. I think I got asked to go on the first one, but I kept saying no, that's not my thing. My senior year I finally said yes and I went on BGK6. That is where I met my wife Kelsey. I actually proposed to her in Seton Hall gym because that was where we officially met. I sadly waited until late in my career to really get involved, but the last year I was there was really pivotal.

I did the whole college fall-away Catholic thing. It was the little things that kept nagging at me to eventually go to St. Tom's. I knew it was all surrounded in God, and the Holy Spirit was guiding me. I never felt so much peace.

St. Tom's holds a special place in our hearts, and although we haven't been back there yet it still feels like home. It housed pivotal moments in our lives. We want that for more people. We always talked about how we change our titling, St. Tom's is the one that will never leave, we don't ever see us NOT giving to St. Tom's because of how important it is. We want that for so many more people.

Kyle Racette



It's crazy how in different seasons the Lord provides, and just how it looks so different each time... In HS we had youth group and my family unit at home...Then college Sophomore year I had that yearning still and really took off with it from there...That carried on into our adult life once Kyle and I got married. We were yearning for young adults we could learn life with and grow together. Family to friends to catechetics.

There are so many memories at the parish, it's such a pivotal point. It played such a big part in our faith journey and in each other that we hope with our titling that the resources can be used to welcome others and to love on other college students.

Kelsey Racette

PARTNERS IN MISSION

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



St. Mother Theresa is a modern day patron saint of mission. Famous around the world for her service to the poorest of the poor, Mother Theresa once made this comment: "There are many in the world who are dying for a piece of bread but there are many more dying for a little love. The poverty in the West is a different kind of poverty—it is not only a poverty of loneliness but also of spirituality. There is a hunger for love, as there is a hunger for God."

College campuses in the 21st century are truly mission territories for the Church. St. Thomas More is a missionary parish. We offer "living water from the fountain of salvation" to Falcons who are thirsting for they-know-not-what. We give the nourishment of the Truth to those who are hungry, for "man cannot live on bread alone."

Your regular contributions make you a Partner in Mission at BGSU.

Set up a recurring gift to our Mission Support Fund which supports the many student ministries of our parish. Your gift to Mission Support makes our bible studies, retreats, small groups, community events, and more possible.

Your gift to the **St. Thomas More Endowment Fund** secures the future of campus ministry in Bowling Green though a faith-based, ethical investment in the Catholic Investment Trust managed by the Diocese of Toledo.

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.**

BY MAIL

Fill out the enclosed envelope and send in your one-time gift made payable to "St. Thomas More University Parish."

ONLINE

We count on you for continuous partnership. Set up a recurring gift to our Mission Support Fund by visiting sttomsbg.org/donate



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SPRING 2021

THE CATHOLIC FALCON

