



Spring 2015



MISSION STATEMENT

We are

St. Thomas More Parish,

members of the

living body of Christ,

born again in Baptism and

strengthened through the

Eucharist to promote the

Gospel values of our

Catholic faith.

Pastor's Reflections

Over a Decade of Service to St. Thomas More



I was recently looking over the parish registers which contain the parish sacramental records. A quick review showed that I had performed 283 baptisms, presided at 109 weddings and ministered at 190 funerals since I arrived at Saint Thomas More in June 2003. This means that hundreds of individuals, as well as their extended family members, have crossed my life path these past 12 years.

I have been greatly enriched by meeting so many persons – who have allowed me to enter into the most joyful as well as the saddest moments of their lives. The priesthood is what gives me entry into the hearts and souls and lives of people, who welcome me with such kindness. I have always thought that the tone and spirit of sacramental preparation is key to the efficacy of the upcoming holy celebration. For example, I have always been so conscious that wedding preparation meetings, especially with non-Catholics who are marrying a Catholic, must be pervaded with hospitality and the welcoming nature of the Church. Many are nervous about meeting with a priest; a warm and enthusiastic atmosphere takes away fear and can give a favorable first impression of both priesthood and Catholicism – both of which have taken many blows in Bible-belt regions. As a child, I remember being so scared of my parish priest when I was preparing for first Communion and Confirmation. As a result, I've always intended that the children in my parish would never have that fear but could see their priest as their guide, teacher and friend.

We live in an age in which weekly Mass attendance by Catholics is not what it was a generation ago – even though the Diocese of Owensboro has one of the highest rates in the country (over 50% weekly attendance). Having lived here for 12 years, I was



Continued on back

Stewardship

Stewardship of Giving Wrapping Up

Stewardship: The conducting, supervising, or managing of something; especially: the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care. (From the Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

We are not owners of the gifts we receive from God. We are stewards, responsible for receiving those gifts in gratitude, using them wisely, and sharing them justly. Everything we have comes from God—our talents, family, achievements, possessions, finances—even the air we breathe! We give back a generous portion of those gifts through time, talent, and treasure, not because we are giving to a church need, but because as recipients of God's many gifts, we have a need to give.

Saint Thomas More implemented a three-phase stewardship approach in 2005. Annual renewals of prayer, ministry, and financial giving provide opportunities to give thanks to the Lord, and remind us to embrace Christian stewardship as a way of life, not view stewardship as a once-per-year chore on our to-do lists. As members of the family of Saint Thomas More Parish, we are grateful and giving.



We Pray. Each Advent, we are offered an opportunity to make a personal commitment to increase our prayer lives through Stewardship of Prayer, which reminds us to make time for God in prayer and keep it a daily priority. As stewards we must be rooted in the presence of Christ through prayer and sacraments that provide spiritual nourishment.

We Serve. In late summer, during our Stewardship of Ministry renewal, parishioners consider how they can best offer their talents in parish ministry. Everyone has God-given talents, something to contribute to parish and community. Through serving others, we also serve the Lord.

We Give. Our Stewardship of Giving renewal takes place during Lent. Through prayerful discernment, we determine an appropriate level of annual giving to our parish. Planned, proportionate, and sacrificial giving of our treasure is an expression of gratitude to the Lord.

Our parish is truly blessed! We are a vibrant parish of almost 900 families. Our beautiful church and Works of Mercy Chapel are resplendent with reverent liturgies and sacred music. Our lovely campus includes

the Rosary Garden, an inviting, tranquil place for prayer and peaceful moments. The myriad ministries and programs offer opportunities for almost everyone to participate and share their talents, enjoy fellowship, and nurture their spiritual lives. Perpetual Adoration, established in our Works of Mercy Chapel in August 2012, is a wonderful way to spend time in prayer with the Lord before the Blessed Sacrament. Feel

"Tell them to do good, to be rich in good works, to be generous, ready to share, thus accumulating as treasure a good foundation for the future, so as to win the life that is true life."

- 1 Timothy 6:18-19

free to drop in anytime or schedule a regular hour of Adoration by emailing adoration@StMore.org.

We have so much for which to be grateful! Your continued support through prayer, service in parish ministry, and financial giving is deeply appreciated, and will help ensure that Saint Thomas More Parish continues to grow and thrive now and into the future. May God bless you abundantly for your generosity.

Our 2015-2016 Stewardship of Giving renewal is underway. If you have not yet had an opportunity to do so, please pray about your annual giving to our parish, then complete and return a pledge card. Extra packets are available in the Gathering Space; information and pledge cards may be printed from our website at www.StMore.org.

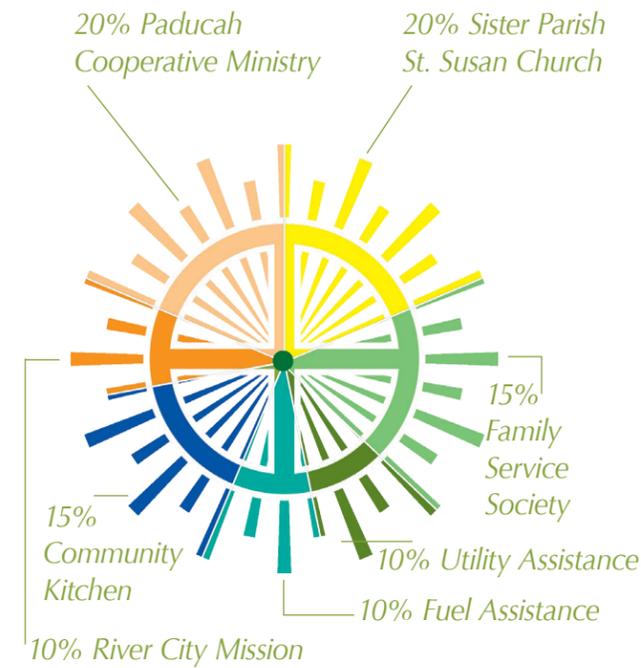
Where Does My Gift Go?

Giving Has a Community Impact

After St. Thomas More's general operating expenses are covered a portion of your dollar goes to St. Mary School System. And, while St. Mary is a one of the parish's larger expenses, those dollars offset the amount we tithe to the Dioceses of Owensboro, which also is a large expense.

What you may not realize is that after the parish's needs are met, a portion of gifts to St. Thomas More goes back into our community. The philosophy of this parish has been to help others less fortunate than ourselves. Whether it be an annual gift to the Paducah Cooperative Ministry, or support of Family Service Society or local food pantries, or even individuals who have fallen on tough times, the Pastoral Council and the Finance Committee strive to be good stewards of the money our parishioners choose to give.

Please prayerfully consider your annual commitment during this time of Stewardship and be confident that your gift is part of a bigger picture that envelops the entire community.



Welcome ... Farewell

A Welcome Back, Two Farewells and Two Welcomes

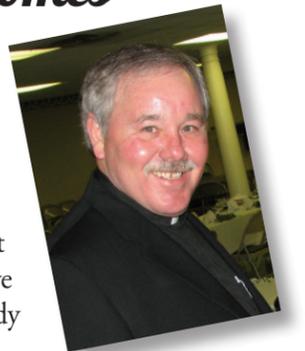
After a long three-month absence, St. Thomas More is excited to welcome back Parochial Vicar, **Rev. Brandon Williams**, from his brief assignment in Bowling Green. He will be returning to St. Thomas More the first week of May. However, his welcome back will be followed by a farewell.

Fr. Brandon has been assigned as Pastor to St. Leo's Parish in Murray, and will be leaving the first week of June. In addition to the farewell of Fr. Brandon, it is with a sad heart that we also say goodbye to **Rev. J. Patrick Reynolds**, as Pastor of St. Thomas More. Fr. Pat has been reassigned to Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in Owensboro and also will be leaving the first week of June.

Receptions for both Fr. Pat and Fr. Brandon will take place sometime in June. Keep your eyes on the bulletin for details.

While change is always difficult, there is excitement in change if you look hard. So, with great excitement, we look forward to welcoming our new Parish Pastor, **Rev. Brad Whistle**, and our new Parochial Vicar, **Rev. Michael Charles Ajigo**. Fr. Brad comes to us from Owensboro and is looking forward to meeting St. Thomas More parishioners. Both Fr. Brad and Fr. Michael will be arriving the first week of June. Look for more information about a welcoming reception in your bulletin in the coming weeks.

In the meantime, you can watch a short video of Fr. Brad online at www.lourdescatholicchurch.org. Our Lady of Lourdes is Fr. Brad's current parish and the video serves as a welcome message to parishioners and potential parishioners of the church. We look forward to welcoming both priests and showing them some genuine *far* western Kentucky hospitality!



St. Thomas More Easter

More Than Mass on Sunday

+ Easter morning Mass at St. Thomas More is certainly one of the more beautiful services of the entire Liturgical Year. However, if you just attend Easter Mass, you are missing so much of the spirit of the Resurrection and the solemn beauty of Holy Week.

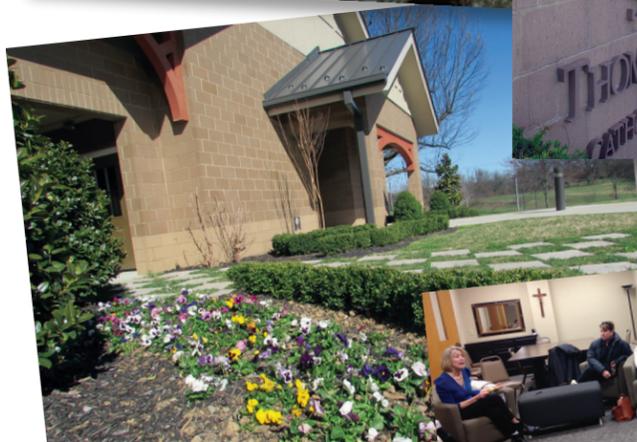
Tenebrae, Latin for shadows, is celebrated on the evening before Maundy Thursday during Holy Week. The practice dates back to the ninth century and includes the extinguishing of candles as the Matins and Lauds are read. It is a beautiful service that has seen a resurgence after briefly falling out of practice post Vatican II.

Good Friday evening, liturgical readings and Holy Communion are punctuated with the opportunity for veneration of the Cross. The Crucifix is carried into church and placed at the foot of the altar. Parishioners are invited to come forth and touch or kiss the cross and say a short prayer and thank Jesus for his sacrifice.

Easter Vigil on Saturday night harkens to the early days of the Church with fire and water. The evening begins with The Service of Light, which includes the lighting of a new fire outside of church and the preparation of the Paschal Candle. This is followed by the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of Baptism and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

All the activities of Holy Week culminate in Easter Morning Mass and the celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus.

Next year, consider taking a little extra time to appreciate the many offerings of your parish during the Lenten Season and Holy Week. **+**



Spring Has Sprung

Rosary Garden Club and Grounds Ministry Gear Up



Spring is a time of renewal and a time of growth both in spirit and in nature. You would be hard pressed to find a better example of nature's beauty than at St. Thomas More.

God's beauty in nature is one of the most precious gifts given to us, but the old axiom holds true, "God can move mountains, but don't be surprised if he hands you a shovel." So, with shovels in hand, St. Thomas More's dedicated Grounds Ministry took to the campus the last week of March.

Weeding, fertilizing and even repairing potholes in the parking lot were tackled by this group of dedicated parishioners. The beauty of our campus and the sheer size of the space require a great many hours of volunteer service. Our parish has been truly blessed with such a strong group of committed volunteers.

With the recent addition of the Rosary Garden, a new group of volunteers came together to ensure the beauty of that outdoor space.

St. Thomas More's Rosary Garden Club is a chartered Garden Club that focuses on the Rosary Garden in particular on our grounds.

This group meets year-round and is constantly updating, planting and planning to keep the garden in tip-top shape.

Beginning in late winter, planning for the coming spring season begins by first deciding what will be planted and then assigning tasks to each member. There are those who plant, those who water regularly and those who add a special touch to the garden like mums in the fall or ribbons and bows in May.

Both these groups deserve a great big "green" thumbs up from us all. To be involved in the Grounds Ministry, contact **Jim Sanders** through the parish office. For more information about the Rosary Garden Club, see **Phyllis Stovesand** or call the office. **+**

Coming in May...

Two exciting additions to our calendar this year are coming in May. First, join us this Mother's Day, May 10, as we revive an old tradition with a procession and May Crowning of our Rosary Garden statues. The congregation and First Communion Class, led by Fr. Pat, will make their way to the Rosary Garden statues immediately following the 9 a.m. Mass.



Then, on May 12, our Rosary Garden will be featured in this year's Mayfair. Mayfair is a garden walk-through

sponsored by the Paducah Garden Club and we couldn't be more pleased to be included.

In Brief...

Youth Mission Trip to Lourdes Just Weeks Away

Over the last three months, we have been featuring students who will travel to Lourdes, France, this June. St. Thomas More and Lourdes Hospital are proud to work together on this mission of spiritual growth and healing for the youth of our parish. While at Lourdes, students will be serving the sick and needy pilgrims at one of the most holy sites in the world. They will prepare meals, help push wheelchairs and whatever else is asked of them. Our youth will participate in daily catechism study and attend at least one Mass in the grotto. All while strengthening their understanding of our Catholic faith.

In short, *they are going to serve Christ in others. They are going to share their youthful smiles and joy with many who are in despair. They are going to learn to love.*

We want to take this opportunity to thank those who have given so generously to make this journey a reality. Also, we want to remind you, it is not too late to be part of the journey. Please take a few minutes and prayerfully consider this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for our youth and whether or not you can help financially support their effort.

Look for trip photos in the next issue of *The Word* and online at our website throughout the end of June. ☩



Hispanic Men's Retreat



In late winter, St. Thomas More's always active Hispanic Ministry held a weekend men's retreat. There was plenty of food, plenty of fun and a whole lot of faith growth in this powerful weekend in the presence of God.

If you would like to be more involved in the Hispanic Ministry, contact *Sr. Esther Ordóñez, MAG* at sr.esther@StMore.org. ☩

Welcome Our Newest Members

Pictured with *Fr. Pat*, RCIA Director *Pat Cairney* and their sponsors, are those who entered the Church at the Easter Vigil.

Please welcome, *Yung Duong, Jennifer Hansrote, Sean Hansrote, Andrew Richison* and *Dennis Sanders*. ☩



Men's Prayer Breakfast Not to be Missed

On the second Saturday of each month at 7:30 a.m., the St. Thomas More Men's Group holds their prayer meeting and breakfast. In February, their normal breakfast meeting day landed on St. Valentine's Day. For this special breakfast, members were invited to bring their wives and hear Lourdes Hospice Director, Kay Williams, give a special presentation on the revitalized and expanding Lourdes Hospice program.

Frank Burch, aided by *Frank Bosh* arranged table flowers and provided gift certificate door prizes for the ladies. Following a sumptuous breakfast prepared by our cooks, *Noel Wise, Frank Block* and *Mike Polashock*, Williams presented a thorough, enlightening picture of the Lourdes Hospice program, concentrating on the new addition to the Lourdes campus. The new hospice center is expected to be complete by early to mid-summer and will be devoted entirely to the care and treatment of hospice patients. This is a revolutionary concept that will augment Lourdes' well-established program of care for in-home hospice patients throughout the region.

If you would like more information about the Men's Prayer Breakfast, just contact the parish office or pop by on the second Saturday of the month! ☩

Living The Faith

Being Active at Church Translates to a Christ-Centered Life

☩ Faith is our life! Life for us is a continuous conversation with God about the good and the bad." That's how Dr. James and Camilla Shumaker began, when asked about the importance of the Church in their lives.

Jim and Camilla are long-time members of St. Thomas More Parish and have played active roles in the church the entire time. Their commitment to St. Thomas More and Catholicism runs deep in their family. Their children attended St. Mary Schools, and during the time their children were there, you would rarely go to a ballgame or a fund raiser without seeing either Jim or Camilla or both volunteering.

A pediatrician, Jim retired a few years ago, and found he had more time on his hands and decided what better way to fill it than to be even more involved at St. Thomas More. For nearly a decade, Jim headed up the local chapter of the Serra Club, which provides support and encouragement to those seeking a religious life, such as priests, brothers and nuns. During his time leading the club, they have shepherded through a current seminarian, as well as countless others who have chosen a vocation of religious life.

Jim said, "When you're working, you are busy working. A lot happens and you tend to focus on the 'right now' of what you are doing. Once you retire, you have a great deal more time to ponder

what is happening both internally and externally. It gives you an opportunity to see the ways God is present in your life."

"Even when you are raising a family, so much is going on. You just get through the day. After your children have grown, you get the privilege of seeing God's work in them," said Camilla.



They were steeped in the life of the church. Today, some of my children are very active in faith, while some are not. Some attend Mass regularly, some don't. But, I know God is a part of their lives and I take great pride in that."

Jim added, "I wanted a family and I wanted them for God and the Roman Catholic Church. That doesn't mean that's what I was going to get. God's wisdom is what guides each of us. For my family, I can continue to be a friend and be available."

After Jim retired, he relished in the slower pace. "Now, each morning, I have the opportunity to get up and reflect on the day ahead and what God is calling me to do. It can be as mundane as a thank you note, or as deep as spending an hour at Eucharistic Adoration," he said.

On Adoration, Camilla added, "The Holy Eucharist is the life breath of our faith. Until the Works of Mercy Chapel was completed, we really had now way to commit to that precious time with God. Now we can."

"I don't listen as much as I should and it takes discipline to sit for an hour in silence in the presence of God. Eucharistic Adoration affords me the opportunity of 'forced silence' and to really listen to what God has to say to me."

Jim and Camilla agree the church has been, in their words, "A gift" to their lives. They are involved in Marriage Encounter Weekends, Catholic Way Bible Study and more.

Camilla said, "I really enjoy talking about the word of God with others in Bible Study and I enjoy reading on my own just as much."

"The Holy Eucharist is the life breath of our faith."

— Camilla Shumaker



Jim added, "The Protestant faiths have always done such a good job at delving into the bible, but there was no unity there. It is nice that we as Catholics are taking a longer look at the bible, with the backdrop of our unified Catholic faith."

Jim and Camilla agree that St. Thomas More, the Catholic Church and the presence of God in their lives are true gifts. Gifts that last a lifetime. ☩



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Masses

Monday & Thursday 6:00 pm
Tuesday & Friday 7:00 am
Saturday 5:30 pm
Sunday 9:00 am, 11:00 am
Mass in Spanish 1:00 pm

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Pastor's Reflections (from page one)

amazed to look in the congregation on Easter Sunday (a day when there are many 'twice-a-year' folks) and I knew most of them also - through sacramental, business, counseling or ministerial occasions over these years. I was happy to see them. I realize that some people are in the Church, hanging on by a thread, because of bad experiences or personal trauma. It has always been my desire to make them feel welcome always and to remind them that God needs their presence and their time and talents. As I leave Saint Thomas More to be reassigned to Our Lady of Lourdes in Owensboro, I will surely miss familiar faces and treasure relationships and so many kindnesses. I remember my first weekend here in June 2003 - I felt so alone because I did not know a single person in Paducah. Time and grace have worked wonders!

I feel compelled to ask forgiveness for not living up to any promises made and apologize for any negligence and forgetfulness (which accelerates over time). I can honestly say I have not acted in malice; I have attempted to be conscientious about commitments. I have always wanted all our parish sacramental occasions to be permeated with a personal and joyful touch. Likewise, I have intended that my homilies each Sunday make the Scriptures touch our personal lives and to give some direction for our week ahead. Hopefully they have had an element of teaching, history and perhaps humor interlaced.

I suppose I could talk about the accomplishments from a material vantage these past years - paying off the church debt, fully funding our parish endowment, building of the Eucharistic chapel, expanding youth ministry, etc. Material gains and improvements are all part of administration - which of course is important. However, in the eternal scheme of things, our salvation is Christ comes first. I have never wanted to draw parishioners to me; rather I want them to love Jesus Christ and to develop a deep prayer life and friendship with Him and His Body, the Church. Perhaps I have helped some of you along that path. Know that I will miss you and am grateful for how you have impacted my life. Let us pray for each other! ☺

The Word is published by St. Thomas More Catholic Church for parishioners and those interested in the Catholic faith.

If you know someone who would like to be added to our mailing list, contact Lois Bell by email at lois@StMore.org

The Word is written and edited by J. Patrick Kerr and St. Thomas More staff.

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