

St. Thomas More

Roman Catholic Church – Parish Newsletter

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THE TOWER

25 Years ~ Our Beginning!

— by Rev. Michael Ratajczak

This year we celebrate the 25th anniversary of the founding of our Parish on September 1, 1985.

Bishop Robert Brom, the Chief Shepherd of the Diocese of San Diego, will be with us for our celebration and lead us in the Eucharist on Sunday, October 17, at the 10:30am Mass.



Fr. Bob White Celebrates First Mass, 1985

A Parish reception will follow on the Parish grounds that will be family friendly. It promises to be an event in which all Parishioners will be able to participate. It will be a “down-home” gathering.



Our former Pastors have been invited. Rev. Robert White, our Founding Pastor, will not be able to be with us, due to previous commitments. Rev. Peter McGuine, our Second Pastor, who was so instrumental in bringing us to the site that we presently occupy, will be here to celebrate with us.



First Baptism at St. Thomas More, 1986

We have much to celebrate as a Parish. We have come a long way in the last twenty five years from very humble beginnings. We began meeting in various places, such as Parishioners’ homes, then moving to Eternal Hills Mortuary, then to the strip

mall site on Shadowridge Drive, and then in 2001 to our present multi-purpose Parish Center which has served us very well for the past nine years.

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THE TOWER

In naming our Parish newsletter, we remember the Tower of London where St. Thomas More spent his last days and suffered a martyr's death.



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Parish Mission Statement

To worship God, teach and live the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and serve God's people in word and deed.

Our Beginning — continued



Some of our STM Pioneers, circa 1986

(Continued from page 1)

We have come a long way, but we still have a way to go in terms of the build-out of our campus with the construction of our permanent Church.

We presently are in Phase II of our Capital Campaign, "Our Journey Into The Future Together," in which we will raise \$2 million so that we can obtain the necessary loan from the Diocese in order to begin construction.

In our 25th year, we recognize those among us who are the Pioneer Members* of STM. They have been with us from the very beginning, and continue to walk with us still today.



Fr. Peter McGuine 1996

As part of our 25th anniversary celebration, the Parish Staff felt a need to offer a special gift to the Parish. All of us wanted to do something that would help us to deepen the bonds of community that are already so manifest in this community.

After much discussion at several of our monthly Parish Staff meetings, we came upon a plan that would help to focus attention on the notion of relationship as the main ingredient in a Christian Faith Community. Indeed, there is no Christianity without community. This fact is very evident as we spend time reading the Acts of Apostles in the New Testament.

With that in mind, each member of the Parish Staff will meet with ten registered households of St. Thomas More to have a "One on One,"

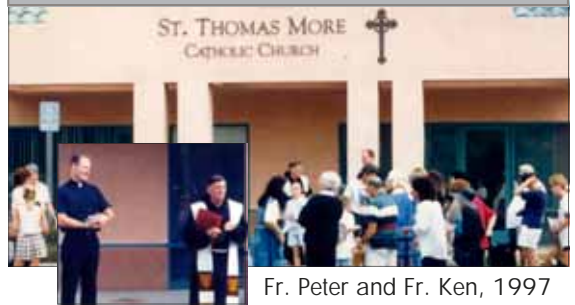
Our Pioneer Members*

- Elaine & Jim Berquist
- Hazel Bronzan
- Charlene & Joe Buhkert
- Pat & Marv Cap
- Peg Chambers
- Tom Conners
- Mary Rita DePietro
- Lorraine & Steve Doering
- Janula & Anthony Fajardo
- Norma Flanagan
- Lois & Len Garth
- Marge & Jack Gillen
- Pat & Phil Goscienski
- Pat & Milt Gray
- Marge & Roy Heath
- Justin Hickey
- Bette & Paul Johansing
- Georgene & Jim Kamphuis
- Paul Kennedy
- Mary Lou & Bob Kranz, Sr.
- Helen Kuhn
- Katherine & Hank Ley
- Jeanette Marriott
- Barbara & Claude Miller
- Beverly Miller
- Edith & Tom Noel
- Evi & Reuben Quinn
- Doris & Charles Rutz
- Kathy & Paul Santy
- Maurine Shaughnessy
- Norm Shultz
- Freda Schweitzer
- Pat & Dave Sweet
- Ginger & Tommy Thompson
- Ethel & Bob Vanderhagen
- Esther Woodard
- Nancy & Richard Wozniak

(Still living in the Southern California Area)

- Mary Jo & Ron Cap
- Mary Hughes
- Jan Kremenik
- Georgiana Lapp
- Jeanne Morrow
- Raymond McNay
- Kathleen & Larry Slagal
- Alice Zemenick

*These are the Pioneers we have recorded who joined the Parish between the years of 1985 and 1990. If you know someone who joined STM during this period, please let us know. We would like to recognize all of our Pioneers on October 17.



Fr. Peter and Fr. Ken, 1997



Parish Center Groundbreaking Ceremony, December 1999

short meeting with no specific agenda other than for Staff Members and Parishioners to get to know each other a bit better.

Lorraine Doering, our Parish Office Technician, has randomly selected ten households per Staff Member from our "Parish Data System."



Celebrating the Easter Liturgy, 2007

We have no agenda. This is not some hidden plan to ask for money or to ask for a commitment to a Parish ministry. This process will take place in July and August and will be the Parish Staff's gift to the Parish.



Fr. Mike Ratajczak and Bishop Robert Brom, 2003

As we draw near to October 17, 2010, may we continue to gift each other with renewed commitment to our Parish.

May this new strength and hope push us into the future and may the build-out of our Parish Campus with the construction of our permanent church soon be a reality!♦



Parish Center Blessing, July 1, 2001



Faith and Fellowship Thrive on our Plaza after Mass, 2004



Stations of the Cross on Good Friday, 2005



Rendering of Our New Permanent Church

Love, Mentor, and Serve — by Bret Schanzenbach

July 1, 2010, marked the end of an era at St. Thomas More as Jeff and Gale Gibbons stepped down as the High School Youth



Jeff and Gale

to the community at large.

In 1995, Fr. Bob White asked Jeff and Gale if they could possibly start leading the Middle School Youth Group at the parish. Of course at the time, it seemed like an innocent enough request. Gale had been involved with various forms of youth ministry since 1982 when she first worked at Resurrection Church in Escondido. During their dating years, Jeff and Gale had worked on youth ministry retreat teams together for the Diocese of San Diego. But that was when they were still single and had no children. By 1995, Jeff and Gale had four children ranging in age from 13 years old down to three years old. But evidently they did something

right because their tenure as the Middle School Youth Ministers only lasted two years. They had done such a great job with that initial task that Fr. Peter hired them as High School Ministers in 1997. The rest is history.

Back in 1997, of course, neither Jeff nor Gale had any idea that their commitment to High School Youth Ministry would last until 2010. During that time, they have witnessed multiple “capital campaigns,” the purchase of two different church campuses, the building of a new



2002 High School Youth Retreat

Parish Center, and the graduation of all four of their children! But time does fly when you are *creating* fun!

To say that they started with humble beginnings is an understatement. Gale recalls, “I remember doing youth



One of the first “Coffee and Donuts!”

group out of our house, wondering whether or not we were too loud for the neighbors. We would have to go out in our cul-de-sac at the end of the evening and make sure the teenagers didn’t hit any of our neighbors’ cars as they left as parking was so tight near our house.”

But hosting the youth group in the humble environment of their home living room had its perks as well. Gale reminisced how the youth group kids became just an extension of their family. Gale remarked, “I remember kids would come over straight from a sporting activity or a job and have dinner with us because they didn’t have time to go home and have dinner before youth group.”

Jeff noted that his “old man” tag that he has worn proudly throughout his time working with the youth group started way back in the beginning. “Bill Goeltz and Tom Jocelyn just



First High School Youth Retreat with Fr. Ben Innes — circa 1997



St. Thomas More High School Youth In Steubenville, July 2008

decided I was too old and thus they came up with my label. I told them the same thing I have told all the kids in the youth group for the past 13 years, that *I am only 29 years old.*”

Over the years, as Jeff desperately tried to hold onto 29, he and Gale amassed many wonderful memories that they will carry with them for a lifetime. There were pool parties at the rectory when Jeff stole the teen boys’ thunder by diving into the pool before they could throw him in.

But Gale’s greatest joys have been in watching kids develop into leaders. A few examples that made her swell with pride were watching Danny Treat commit to missionary work in New Orleans, Austin Rose becoming part of the worship team at UCLA and Aly Wolters’ work at a refugee center in San Diego. Knowing that she and Jeff had some small part in the

development of these and many, many other teens is the most rewarding aspect of their ministry. Gale even remembers how Bill and Theresa

(Jocelyn) Goeltz started dating while in the St. Thomas More Youth Group.

Jeff said that over the years many people had asked, “How do you do it, year after year?” Jeff noted that doing a ministry like this together with Gale made a big difference in being able to carry on through the years. But in the end, Jeff noted that he always felt like he was the one being ministered to, rather than vice versa.

Jeff and Gale never got too caught up in the typical youth ministry trap of worrying about numbers. They had large years when 30+ kids would show up regularly on Monday nights and over 50 kids would go to the annual Steubenville San Diego conference. But they also had lean years when Monday nights were more intimate and personal.

Throughout their time they knew that it was God’s job to bring the kids in

who were supposed to come, not theirs. They just focused on what they were supposed to do—

love, mentor

and serve those teens so they could meet Christ personally. And it is the passing on of the faith to the next generation that Jeff and Gale Gibbons leave as their lasting legacy to both St. Thomas More Church and to the world at large. ♦



Priceless High School Youth Memories!



Monday Night Mass, 2009

Pray Until Something Happens (P.U.S.H.) — by Chris Smith

Louise and Ron Briseno feel that middle school can be a hard time for many children.

These are the formative years when children make choices and set patterns for high school and beyond about relationships with God, parents, the opposite sex, their peers, and the circle of friends they will be with over the next seven years of school.



Louise and Ron



Annual Halloween Party Fun

They felt they could help these children see that good choices would help to make the years easier. Neither Ron nor Louise had been in or led a middle school youth group, but it was their belief that someone should step up and offer direction to these children. That, coupled with a faith that God was leading them to do this, made this an easy choice for them!

During their tenure leading P.U.S.H. (Pray Until Something Happens), the couple has been instrumental in helping children grow into the young people we see today.

They are excited about where the program will be going in the future. Louise notes, “it is wonderful to have a Youth Advocate who will be on staff and at the church during the

week. That will help the program grow even more!”

Though many of these children gain a solid direction from their home life, Louise and Ron feel blessed that they were another voice for the children to see that their life-choices are in their own hands, making it easier for them to have faith and belief, and to say “yes” to where God is leading them.

The Brisenos appreciate the support offered by Fr. Mike Ratajczak, Fr. Peter McGuine, Kathleen Bell, and Gale and Jeff Gibbons when they began and then made their journey with the program. Nicole Rhodes and Chris Hollowell were a tremendous support system to the middle school youth as well! Most importantly, Louise says, “Thank you to each and every



MS Youth Sunday Carwash — A Parishioner Favorite!

child who attended our youth group. You have touched and enriched our lives more than you will ever know.”

During their years leading P.U.S.H., Louise and Ron watched our middle schoolers raise money through the annual carwash to support homeless teens at Stand Up for Kids. They

saw them load backpacks for these teens, gaining an understanding about the basic need for toothbrushes, deodorant, and socks. And they watched them write a meaningful Christmas card to each backpack recipient.

Ron and Louise saw the middle school youth grow within our Parish family, working alongside adults as greeters, readers, musicians, and Eucharistic Ministers and enjoyed the fun times at retreats, Halloween parties, movie nights, car washes, Fear Factor, March Madness,

Monday Night Mass, holy day events, and just seeing each other every weekend at Mass.

“I’ve been so blessed,” Ron says, “to be allowed the opportunity to witness the spiritual growth of so many of our St. Thomas More youth into wonderful teens and young adults. My life is better because of them!”♦



Youth Retreat 2007



Backpack Collection for Stand Up For Kids, 2008

High Seas Faith Expedition



High Seas Expedition: a vast voyage through God's Word is a five-day Faith Adventure for 240 youth.

All activities center around one Bible Point for the day.

Fun for kids, teenagers, and adults!

Everyone in this summer program dives into God's Word and we'll never be same again.

Not only do kids experience amazing Bible adventures but they also watch for God in everyday life.



We call these "God Sightings."



During games, the 3, 4 and 5 year olds re-enact how St. Paul survived the storm at sea.



God shows His powerful love throughout Scripture...



High school and college age teens provide leadership and care for crew members ranging in age from 3 to 11.

...a swashbuckling adventure through God's Word.



Crew members talk about how "God's Word is comforting" during some of the troubled times of life.



Ægis Living at Shadowridge



Our neighbors at Ægis Assisted Living are gifting us with a fantastic fundraiser to benefit St. Thomas More!

Friday, September 24, will mark the first annual event with a happy hour and delicious dinner for 50 people.

Signups will begin the weekend of August 29 at St. Thomas More. Thank you Ægis!

We Give Thanks!



Sunday, November 21

4:00pm

Upper Level of the Parish Center

**St. Thomas More's
Sanctuary and Handbell Choirs
in Concert**

Fall 2010 Event Preview



St. Thomas More Celebrates Our 25th Anniversary

Sunday, October 17, 2010

Save the date!

10:30am Mass with Bishop Brom
followed by a Parish Party
in the best tradition of Oktoberfest

*An afternoon of fun, food, and festivities
with family and friends!*

Check the bulletin for details
beginning September 12!

