

# St. Thomas More

Roman Catholic Church – Parish Newsletter

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# THE TOWER

## For the Love of Mary . . .

— by Jane Gladden, Lena Rumps, Douglas Lynn, and Chris Smith

**S**and-carved from leaded glass, our Marian Shrine captures the scene of the Annunciation—the Angel Gabriel telling Mary that she would conceive and bear the Son of God, and her response:

*Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.*

*May it be done to me according to your word.* — Luke 1:38

Liturgical artist Claire Wing of Dallas, Texas, designed and fabricated the shrine after receiving input from the Interior Design Team and Fr. Mike.

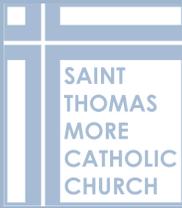
The Interior Design Team suggested the depiction of a young Mary as an inspiration to the youth of our Parish. Mary was probably about 13 years old when Gabriel gave her God’s message. The artist chose a 13-year-old granddaughter of a friend as the model for Mary and depicts the Blessed Virgin without a veil as was the custom when at home.

The young Mary of Nazareth is approached by a being of light, the archangel. Gabriel is shown below and to the right of Mary, subtly portrayed because his power stems from the message he bears, not his

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The Marian Shrine at St. Thomas More Parish



## 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.



*The Tower* is published semi-annually by **St. Thomas More Catholic Church**  
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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.



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own presence. The light that fills and forms his being is the Light of God, emphasized by the natural light spilling down from above through the Church's Tower of Light.

The young Mary is surrounded by a cloud depicting an eternal, cosmic moment, outside of time, and referencing how God spoke to his people from within dense, encompassing clouds in both Old and New Testaments. The Womb of the Virgin is symbolized by a swirling nebula, from the Latin word for "cloud." Here, the God of the Universe crosses the threshold of time to become God's Word made Flesh. Notice the bright light of Jesus at the moment of his conception. Scientists recently discovered that at that moment there is a flash of light called the "zinc spark"!



Subtly piercing through the clouds above the Virgin are small droplets of rain, symbolizing a passage from Isaiah, "Let the clouds rain down the Just One, and the earth bring forth a savior" (54:5), which we hear proclaimed during Advent. There is also a circle of gold alluding to a "halo," an aura of holiness.

It is open at the top, symbolizing her openness to the Holy Spirit of God. And finally within the cloud are the three descending gold shapes symbolize the Triune God—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Mary's bare feet recall another encounter in which God reminded Moses to "remove the sandals from your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground" (Exodus 3:5).

The twelve gold stars refer to the passage in Revelation (12:1-2a): "A great sign appeared in the sky, a woman clothed with the sun, ...and on her head a crown of twelve stars. She was with child."

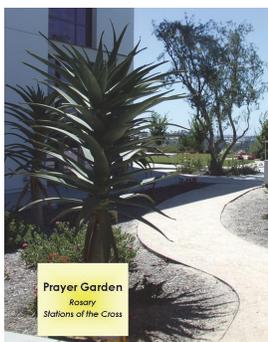
The shrine consists of three individual panels of glass and weighs close to 600 pounds. There are votive candles and a bench giving space to meditate, reflect, and pray.

*A note from Claire Wing:*

"I am grateful and indebted to both the donors of the Shrine of the Annunciation, and to the Catholic Community of St. Thomas More for giving me the opportunity to create this work. May it be a place of prayer for many years to come. *Ad majorem Dei gloriam.*"

## The Prayer Garden: An Invitation to Commune with God

Our Prayer Garden, located to the north of the plaza, is the site of our outdoor Rosary, Stations of the Cross, and path for prayer and reflection. The Art and Environment Team created this contemplative space to spend time walking the path, praying for personal or other intentions, or just communing with God.



Any Rosary may be prayed, and you will find a brochure for the diocesan Rosary for Peace. There are also temporary Stations of the Cross, which will be



replaced when our new Stations arrive.

You are encouraged to visit this beautiful area at any time. Through Christ, we know that when we pray for peace, healing, forgiveness, kindness, mercy, hope, or thanksgiving, God hears us.

# Accompanying Others through Their Season of Grief

— Sr. Maureen Brown, CSJ

The faith community of St. Thomas More Parish has a great desire to help families prepare a funeral for their loved one that truly honors that person and witnesses to their faith and the faith we all hold in common. But...

*Did you know it takes about 80 people to provide a Funeral or Memorial Mass and reception for our bereaved families?*

There is an opportunity for anyone who wants to be involved in this very important ministry! We have a Core Team who meets with the family walking with them through all the funeral planning and supporting them following the funeral. We need liturgical ministers: greeters and ushers, Eucharistic ministers, altar servers, and folks who would like to sing in the Paschal Choir even if they do not have time to be part of one of our other Parish choirs. Can you serve?

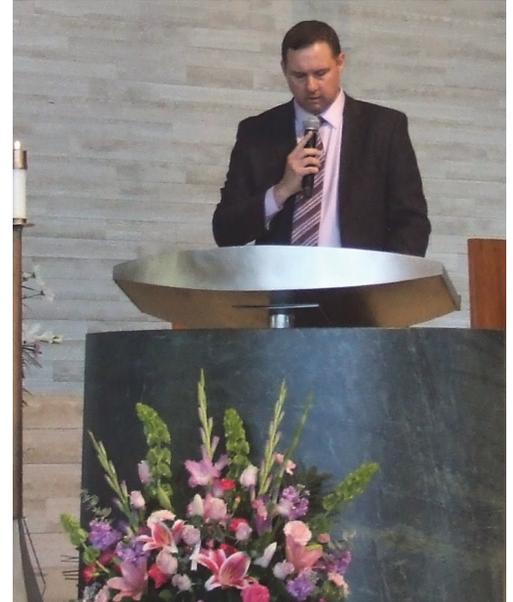
Our Parish is a community of hospitality, and so we provide the majority of what is needed for a reception following the funeral. Team phone callers contact volunteers to donate a dessert or salad, and others set up, serve, and clean up for each of the receptions. This is such an important time for families to just relax and be together, to greet friends, and perhaps even to mend family grievances without the stress of having to host a reception themselves. Can you serve?

Our families are so deeply grateful for the loving care they receive and for the many ways we minister to them at a time of death and grieving.

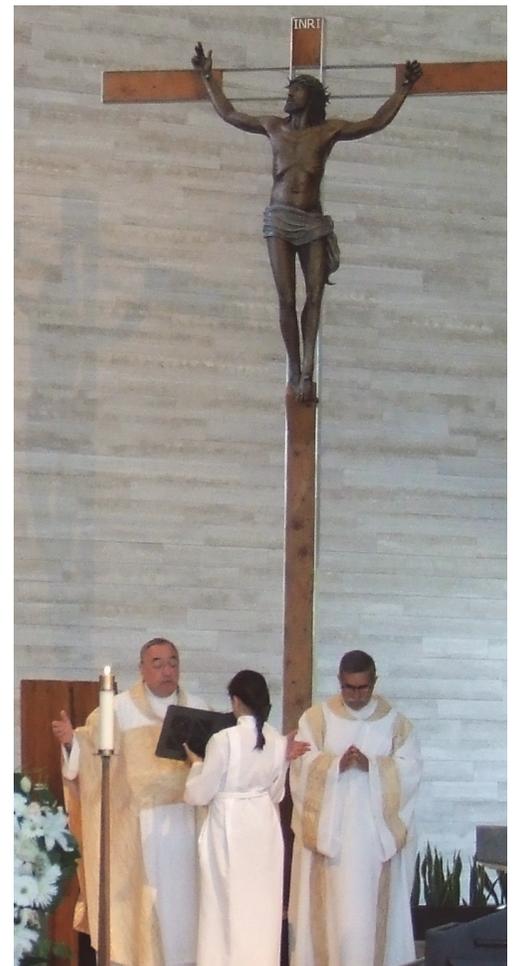
As Christians, and as a Parish family, we are called to live the Corporal Works of Mercy—one of which is to bury our dead. It takes a community to do it well!

And last but not least, another aspect of

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Bereavement Core Team members, family members, liturgical ministers, and Fr. Mike all play important roles as we celebrate the lives, deaths, and eternal lives of our beloved dead.



## Accompanying Others through Their Season of Grief

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our ministry is to help our Parishioners pre-plan for their own funeral. If you choose pre-planning, it is a great gift to your family. They are so consoled to know your wishes will be carried out.

*Blessed are they who mourn,  
for they will be comforted.*

— Matthew 5:4

The Reception Team prepares, serves, and cleans up at every funeral. Hospitality Ministers, Greeters, Core Team, Cantor, Altar Servers, Deacons, Pastor, and Follow-up Bereavement Team all have important roles with the many details necessary to make these occasions flow smoothly.

