

# Church of St. Thomas More

A Roman Catholic Parish in the Diocese of San Diego

1450 South Melrose Drive  
 Oceanside, CA 92056  
 760.758.4100 Phone • 760.758.4165 Fax  
 www.stmoside.org • parishoffice@stmoside.org



**Rev. Michael Ratajczak, Pastor**  
**Deacon Thomas A. Goeltz**  
**Rev. Thomas W. Thompson, Pastoral Associate**  
 (858-945-2251) Hospital Chaplain at  
 Scripps La Jolla, Scripps Green, & UCSD Thornton

**Office Hours: Monday-Friday**  
 8:30am-12:00 noon and 12:30-4:00pm

**Mass Schedule**  
 Saturday at 5:00pm  
 Sunday at 8:30am and 10:30am  
 Tuesday-Friday at 8:15am  
 First Monday of the Month at 7:00pm

**Eucharistic Adoration**  
 Monday-Friday, 6:30am-7:30pm

**Reconciliation (Confession)**  
 Saturday, 4:00-4:30pm

**Spirituality † Tradition † Community**

**November 23, 2008 • Our Lord Jesus Christ the King**

## Stewardship Awareness Month

Stones were distributed the last two weekends. On each stone, the name of a parish household is inscribed. We ask that each household prays daily for the family they receive. With each of us praying for one another, we are fulfilling God's command to love one another. If your household has not yet received a stone, please check the information table on the Plaza.

The next step will be to pray for our entire faith community and the many goals that lie ahead of us. Specifically, we ask that you keep these stones in a special place, because we will want them back when we break ground for our Sanctuary! They will become part of the foundation of that milestone accomplishment. One day we will look back on this day and smile at the progress we have made in our time!



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*Inserts: Advent Reflections; Stewardship Renewal*

## Pastor's Column

*Rev. Michael Ratajczak*  
*michaelr@stmoside.org*  
*758-4100 x100*

### Parish Advent Communal Penance Service: "The Sacrament of Reconciliation— God's Unconditional Love for Us!"

In recent years, a name change has taken place with the "Sacrament of Confession." We no longer call the act "Confession," but rather "Reconciliation" and/or "Penance."

This name change better reflects what happens in this celebration. We do not go to the priest just to list our sins, have them forgiven, and receive a penance; but rather, and most importantly, we come to the priest to celebrate the forgiveness of God that we experience in our lives. We come to the Sacrament with a sense of joy for what God has already done in our lives and what God continues to do—showering us with unconditional love.

The verbalization of our sins, the verbalization of the words of absolution, and the acceptance of a penance are steps in the process of celebrating God's forgiveness and unconditional love for us.

If we are open to God's love, we begin to experience the many ways in which God forgives us our sins in the daily occurrences of our lives.

When we ask forgiveness from someone we have offended, our sins are forgiven. When we accept the forgiveness of another, our

*(Continued on page 2)*

**Our Mission is to:  
worship God,**

**Mass Schedule:** Saturday at 5:00pm; Sunday at 8:30am and 10:30am;  
Tuesday-Friday at 8:15am; first Monday of the month at 7:00pm;  
watch bulletin for holydays

**Rite of Reconciliation (Confession):** Saturday from 4:00-4:30pm  
(or by appointment)

**Eucharistic Adoration:** Monday-Friday from 6:30am-7:30pm

**Liturgical Ministry:** Contact Douglas Lynn at 758-4100 x140

**Choirs and Music Ministry:** Contact Douglas Lynn at 758-4100 x140

**Communion for the Homebound/Hospitalized:** Contact Parish Office

**Anointing of the Sick:** Contact Parish Office

**Matrimony:** Contact Parish Office a minimum of 9 months in advance  
*For further information, call Rev. Michael Ratajczak at 758-4100 x100*

**teach and live the Gospel of Jesus Christ,**

**Inquiry into the Catholic Faith:** First and third Thursday evenings

**Religious Education for Youth & Children:** Two times a month,  
September-May, on Sundays

**Religious Education for Adults:** Various times, September-May

**Liturgy of the Word for Children:** 8:30 and 10:30am Masses

**Little Rock Scripture Study:** Weekly sessions, morning or evening

**High School Youth Ministry:** Monday evenings

**Middle School Youth Ministry:** Two Monday evenings per month

**Preparation for the Sacraments:**

**Baptism (for infants):** Begins with an appointment with the Pastor

**Baptism (7-14 yrs.)/RCIA:** One to two year process with children and  
parents

**Baptism (adults)/RCIA:** One to two year process; weekly sessions

**First Reconciliation:** In home process begins in Level 1

**First Communion:** In home process begins after first reconciliation

**Confirmation:** Minimum two year process of preparation; begins in  
high school

*For further information, call Kathleen Bell at 758-4100 x110*

**and serve God's people in word and deed.**

There are many groups who serve the parishioners  
and provide outreach to the local community.

*For further information, call Chris Smith at 758-4100 x120*

**STM \$crip News**

Are you making a list and checking in twice? Get started by  
checking out the updated Scrip List. Stop by the Scrip table after  
Mass for a copy and for more information on how Scrip can make  
your holiday gift buying faster and easier!

*For information, call Theresa Goeltz at 453-2876*

**I Want to Earn STM Building Fund \$\$\$ with My...**

Albertson's Card #(11 digits) \_\_\_\_\_

Ralph's Card #(13 digits) \_\_\_\_\_

Please send me a Food 4 Less Card

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

*Please place completed form in the collection basket or return  
it to the \$CRIP table after weekend Masses or the Parish  
Office during the week. Thank you!*

**Calendar Highlights**

Also check the Parish website for complete calendar  
information for the current month: [www.stmoside.org](http://www.stmoside.org), then  
select "Schedules and Calendars"

**The Week Ahead**

Nov 23 Liturgy of the Word for Children at 8:30am and  
10:30am Masses  
Nov 23 Music Ministry presents "With Thankful Hearts"

**The Month Ahead**

Nov 24 P.U.S.H. Middle School Youth Talent Show

*(Pastor's Column continued from page 1)*

sins are forgiven. Each time we talk to God in the silence of our  
hearts and sincerely seek forgiveness from God, our sins are  
forgiven. Each time we celebrate the Eucharist, we hear the  
words of the priest shortly before the reception of Holy  
Communion—"Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the  
sins of the world! Happy are we! We are called to His supper!"—  
our sins are forgiven.

So why go to the priest? We do so in order to celebrate the  
forgiveness of God that we experience in our daily lives, to  
ritualize it, sacramentalize it and, as in all things, to place our  
lives and God's involvement in our lives within the context of the  
Church, the Body of Christ.

The priest "stands in" for the community. As we verbalize our  
sins, we are mindful that there is no such thing as a personal sin.  
Our sins, no matter how personal we may think them to be, affect  
others—"No Man Is an Island." We live in community. Our lives  
always touch the lives of others.

Telling our sins, hearing our sins from our own lips, helps us to  
be real and to acknowledge our weakness and our dependence  
upon God. It is so easy to rationalize our sinfulness when we talk  
to ourselves "in our heads." It is an entirely different experience  
when we hear ourselves verbalize our sinfulness. Those sins  
become much more real! We become much more aware and  
sensitive of our responsibilities to others.

The priest "stands in" for Christ. Hearing the words of  
absolution, the forgiveness of God, from the lips of the priest is  
indeed comforting. You know how wonderful it feels when a  
family member or friend says, "I love you!" In the Sacrament of  
Reconciliation we allow God to say those words to us in and  
through the person of the priest.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is not something to be feared  
but to be celebrated with trust and confidence because of God's  
unconditional love for us.

Next weekend, on Sunday, November 30, at 4:00pm, our Parish  
celebrates her Advent Communal Penance Service. This day is  
the first Sunday of Advent. What a great way to "kick off" the  
season, to help make the days before Christmas "holy," not  
"hectic." In this Parish celebration, a number of our young people  
will be celebrating this Sacrament for the first time. Your  
presence will also be a sign of support to them.

Many priest-confessors will be available for you. They will be in  
Church waiting for you so that through the words of absolution  
God will once again say to you:

"I forgive you, and I love you unconditionally!"

Will you be there to hear God's words?

*F. Mike*

**Readings for the Week Ahead**

Sunday Year A; Weekday Year II  
Readings online at [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org).

**Sunday, November 23** (160)  
*Our Lord Jesus Christ the King*  
Ezekiel 34:11-12,15-17

Psalms 23:1-3,5-6  
1 Corinthians 15:20-26,28  
Matthew 25:31-46

**Monday, November 24** (503)  
*Andrew Dung-Lac, priest, martyr, & his companions, martyrs*

Revelation 14:1-3,4b-5  
Psalm 24:1b-4b,5-6  
Luke 21:1-4

**Tuesday, November 25** (504)  
*Catherine of Alexandria, virgin, martyr*

Revelation 14:14-19  
Psalm 96:10-13  
Luke 21:5-11

**Wednesday, November 26** (505)  
Revelation 15:1-4  
Psalm 98:1-3b,7-9  
Luke 21:12-19

**Thursday, November 27** (648A)  
*Thanksgiving Day*  
Sirach 50:22-24  
Psalm 138:1-5

1 Corinthians 1:3-9  
Luke 17:11-19

**Friday, November 28** (507)  
Revelation 20:1-4,11-21:2  
Psalm 84:3-6a,8a  
Luke 21:29-33

**Saturday, November 29** (508)  
Revelation 22:1-7  
Psalm 95:1-7b  
Luke 21:35-46

**Sunday, November 30** (2)  
*First Sunday of Advent*  
Isaiah 63:16-17,19;64:2-7  
Psalm 80:2-3,15-16,18-19

1 Corinthians 1:3-9  
Mark 13:33-37

**Mass Intentions**

Saturday, November 22, 5:00pm George Duarte ☩
Sunday, November 23, 8:30am Rose Grassilli ☩
Sunday, November 23, 10:30am Vivian Silva ☩
Tuesday, November 25, 8:15am Vance ☩ & Freda Schweitzer
Wednesday, November 26, 8:15am Rita Shepard
Thursday, November 27, 9:00am Carol Kleekamp ☩
Friday, November 28, 8:15am J. C. Gonzalez ☩
Saturday, November 29, 5:00pm Lorraine Kauffman ☩
Sunday, November 30, 8:30am Alice Sullivan ☩
Sunday, November 30, 10:30am Tom & Pat Hannon

**Prayer List**

*Call 758-4100 x102 to add a name for four weeks.*

Michael Ainis  
Mary Alexander  
Mary Baker  
Patricia Barbour  
Barbara Ann Beaven-Buhl  
Carl Bechtold  
Tom Belprez  
Nancy Bermudez  
Janet Brown  
Raymond Brown  
James Coleman  
Thomas Cornwell & Family  
Margie Daniels  
Linda Dossman  
Kathryn Ernst  
The Fiore Family  
Peggy Fischer  
Larry Fisk  
Rick Gonzalez  
Claudette Gunderson  
Anita Hage  
Susan Hallahan  
The Harker Family  
Greg Hayes  
Bud Hazlett  
Cynthia Horner  
Vesna Ivcevic  
Bernie & Ginny Jaeger  
Sue Johnston  
Joan Jones  
Colleen Kaup  
Paul Kennedy  
John Kilcher  
Debbie Kinny  
George Kleekamp  
Willis Koffroth  
Carol Kope  
Elizabeth Kowellek-Hayes  
Sr. Anne Kremenik  
Lillian Lachance  
The Lamelin Family  
Brandon LeBlanc  
Cassandra Loretto  
Lauren Loretto  
Loree Luther  
Jackie Lynn  
James MacArthur  
The Carole Markell Family  
Ken Mauro  
The Patrick McCarthy Family  
Bob McWilliams  
Carroll Tom & Nona Miller  
Nancy Moore  
Andy Murchison  
Sarah Murphy-Parson  
Margie Myers  
R. Northrup  
Henry "Bud" Parson  
Joan Picco  
Helen Pingtella  
Nikol Pitesa  
Mari Jo Porter

Anne Post  
Otila Quiroz  
Janet Raiman  
Margo Redford  
Dort Riley  
Joanne Robinson  
Sr. Loyola Romey  
Dorothy Rouse  
Rose Rowland  
The Russo Family  
Julie Shea  
The Soler Family  
Ed Sox  
Dorothy and Ray Staehr  
Robert Sullivan  
Lisa & Kyle Valpoon  
Arnie Velasco  
Lisa Vickonoff  
Dominic Vienna, Jr.  
Dominic Vienna, Sr.  
Jeanie Vitale  
Vanessa Vitiello-Koble  
Kevin Watson-Graff  
Marilyn Wesel  
John Whitton

**Deployed Military**

*As a faith community let us pray for all who serve our country in these troubled times. We pray especially for those connected to our Parish who have been deployed:*

1st Lt. Jeffrey Bauer, USMC  
Pfc John Brandone  
Christian Caplinger, US Army  
Pfc. Nicholas B. Dawson,  
US Army  
Lance Corporal Brandon Doyle,  
USMC  
MSGT Steve Gallegos, USMC  
Sgt. Stephen Gerke,  
101st Airborne  
Col. Kathleen Henderson  
Med. Staff Sgt. Jana Alexander  
Madrid, USAF  
Ronald Meyers, US Navy  
Search & Rescue  
Pvt. 2 Jess Phillips, US Army  
Spec. Jared Ratzlaff, US Army  
Maj. Scott Wadle

*Thank you for your prayers for  
Lt. Mark Correa, US Navy, &  
SPC Robert Sullivan, US Army,  
who have  
returned home safely.*

*All-powerful God, be their constant companion and strength in every adversity. May they experience your faithful presence, gentle love and compassionate healing.*

**Lord Jesus Christ the King  
~ We Give You Thanks  
Christian Stewardship**

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**WITH THANKFUL HEARTS  
CONCERT  
Liturgy & Music**

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**Children's Stewardship  
Faith Formation**

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**Thanksgiving Dinner at STM**

If you signed up for our annual Thanksgiving Dinner, remember to join us on Thursday, November 27, at 1:00pm.

*We look forward to celebrating the holiday with you!*

**Collection for National Needs**

Envelopes were stapled to the front of the bulletin three weeks ago for the 2008 Collection for National Needs. This collection supports the Black and Indian Missions, the Catholic Home Missions, the Catholic Communication Campaign, the Catholic Campaign for Human Development, and the Catholic University of America. The envelopes may be returned any time during the month of November. Thank you for your support!

## Eucharistic Adoration

Monday-Friday • 6:30am-7:30pm • Blessed Sacrament Chapel

Exposition of the Eucharist on First Fridays and one other day of each month. Next date: Friday, December 5.

For more information, contact John O'Donnell at 598-6003.

## Leftover Halloween Candy?

Got candy left over? If so, please bring it to the Parish Office and place it in a box for Deacon Tom before December 1. He will see that it gets to a Mexican orphanage and other organizations as special treats for those who have very little else. Thank you!

## Pies! Pies! Pies!

Every year Brother Benno's throws a Thanksgiving feast for the homeless and underprivileged. In good times they feed as few as 400 and in bad times as many as 800 people. St. Thomas More has been active in providing home-baked apple and pumpkin pies for this special meal. Please help again this year and deliver baked apple and pumpkin pies to St. Thomas More by noon on Wednesday, November 26. Give those in need a taste of fine, home cooking. Thanks!

## Can't Get to Mass?

Our Parish has ministers who can bring Holy Communion to anyone who is unable to attend Mass—the homebound, those in the hospital, those in convalescent homes.

Please call the Parish Office at 758-4100 for more information.



## St. Thomas More Middle School Youth Group

Meets  
Monday  
Nov. 24  
at  
7:00pm

## First Annual Talent Show 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Place Prizes

All Parishioners are "Welcome" to attend!

Visit our website: [www.stmoside.org/ym](http://www.stmoside.org/ym)

Email: [ronb@stmoside.org](mailto:ronb@stmoside.org)

Call Ron or Louise Briseno @ 758.4100 x 153

## FEELING BLESSED?

High School Youth Group  
Monday, November 24, 2008  
7:00-8:30pm

Questions? Call 726-7236

## Welcome to Newly Registered Parishioners

Tony & Linda Cardona  
Thomas & Barbara Holden & family  
Fred & Stacey Liberatore & family  
Robert & Christine Wurz

## Congratulations to

Christine Filice & Colin Evans

who were married on November 15, 2008

May God keep you in love with each other,  
so that the peace of Christ may stay with you  
and be always in your home.



## Flower Donations

We would like to gratefully acknowledge the contribution of:

Bruce & Wilma Rolland  
Freda Schweitzer

whose generosity helped to defray the cost of flowers this weekend in our liturgical environment.

## Christmas Angel Time Is Coming Up!

You will notice that the Christmas Tree is up this weekend. You can take an ornament and buy a gift to make some child's eyes light up on Christmas morning. You can also sign up for Christmas Connections to connect with a family from our sister parish, St. Peter Claver in New Orleans. These are great opportunities to experience the real meaning of Christmas. If the economy is affecting us, you can imagine how hard it must be hitting poor people.



We had our first meeting and things are moving right along. We are short, however, of volunteers to cover the 8:30am Masses. We also need some big boxes (moving type). If there is anyone in the parish who can obtain some for us, that would be wonderful.

If you have any questions, please contact RJ and Suzee Irwin at 760-597-2706 or [rj.suzee@sbcglobal.net](mailto:rj.suzee@sbcglobal.net)

## New Orleans Anyone?

A date has been secured to return to New Orleans in 2009—March 21-March 28 or 29.

Our group will stay, once again, at the Center of Jesus the Lord but work under the auspices of the Catholic Charities sub group: The Helping Hands of Christ. They have full-time staff that assess the houses of those who are requesting assistance, direct the actual repair work, purchase all materials at a reduced price because of bulk buying, and have a huge store house of small and large tools!

The directors of Helping Hands have assured us that if any folks from our sister parish, St. Peter Claver, apply, they would do their best to send our group to those houses to work on. We could also find other ways to get together with our friends at St. Peter Claver, including attending Mass there and having a social one evening.

If you would like to be a part of this "awesome group", please let Sr. Maureen know by Monday, December 21. Feel free to invite friends or family. We can have up to 25 in the group, so it will be a "first come, first served" basis. (Please let me know either way so that I'm sure no one has been left out.) To request further information, please contact Sr. Maureen at 758-4100 x131 or [maureenb@stmoside.org](mailto:maureenb@stmoside.org).

# Stewardship & Development

Serve God's People

Chris Smith  
Director of Stewardship & Development  
chriss@stmoside.org; 758-4100 x120

## CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP

### Lord Jesus Christ the King ~ We Give You Thanks

St. Matthew's account of the end of human history portrays all the nations being gathered up before Christ for an accounting. Christ reveals a kingdom of compassion, where the hungry are fed, the thirsty refreshed, the refugees and homeless housed, and where healing and comfort are extended to the sick and imprisoned. It is clear that God wants to work through each of us.

As Thanksgiving approaches and Stewardship Awareness month at STM is in its final stages, how have each of us done with our personal choices to make this world a better place?

Many thanks to the Rudolph family for sharing their Christian stewardship experience with us last weekend! Each of them shared how God has worked through them to make a difference in our world ~ what beautiful testimony to their faith in action.

I share a few points they made that merit extra reflection:

- ◆ Each of us makes up the church, which asks each of us to share our time, talent, and treasure to continue God's work.
- ◆ Taking a leap of faith to "make time" to help others not only strengthens our faith, but gives us great joy!
- ◆ As our church grows, being involved helping in a variety of ways keeps us connected as a family of faith.
- ◆ Helping others strengthens us and brings us closer together.
- ◆ Wow, a *lot* goes on behind the scenes that makes our liturgy so special and seamless! Many hands make weekend (and weekday) Masses possible.
- ◆ Many opportunities are available for Christian stewardship that take place "off" of our church campus, including care facilities for the aged, homeless shelters, hospitals, and homes. \*Check the new stewardship book for more options.
- ◆ Christian Stewardship makes us living stones who joyfully do the will of Jesus Christ, our King, with gratitude.



We are blessed at STM to have a large number of parishioners who give very generously of time, talent, and treasure to serve a wide variety of ministerial needs. The majority of our Parish, on all sides of the economic baseline, truly stretch to make our world a better place. And this is done joyfully!

For the record, I want to give as much as possible, in whatever ways possible, so that I don't end up with the goats when my time comes! I pray that whatever gifts God gives me find their way back with increase ~ and not only to my family and friends. It is easy to give to those we know and love. Remember that Jesus walks among us in many forms.

May we all do our best to one day hear these words: "Well done, my good and faithful servant. Come, share your master's joy."

Thank you for making St. Thomas More what it is today!

**"Whatever you did for the  
least of my brothers, you did for me."**  
—Gospel of Matthew



## St. Thomas More Vehicle Donation Program

Do you have a vehicle you want to donate?  
The St. Thomas More program is easy!

Call us, and we'll have it picked up.  
You get the tax deduction!

Call the Parish Office at  
760-758-4100 x100



## PBJ Update

(Food for children at the Emergency Crisis Center  
at Catholic Charities in Vista)

2008 GOAL: 365 jars

2008 TOTAL: 631 jars!

Our "count" ends with the church year today! Thank you!

✻ 2006 = 543  
✻ 2007 = 501  
✻ 2008 = 629  
✻ 2009 = ?



"When did I see you hungry and feed you?"

"Amen, I say to you,  
whatever you did for one of these least children of mine,  
you did for me."

—Matthew 25

## Collection for Week of: November 15/16, 2008

Number of Registered Households:	980
Offertory*	\$ 7,573.02
Offertory (Loose Collection)	1,044.56
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 8,617.58</b>

(\* Offertory Envelopes, Credit Card withdrawals,  
Automatic Checking or Savings Account Deductions)

## There are many ways to help support your Parish.

We offer a variety of options for easier giving.

In addition to the extra "mail-back" envelopes included in your packet, we offer automatic:

- ◆ Credit Card Withdrawal (Visa, MC, or Discover)
- ◆ Automatic Checking Account Deduction
- ◆ Automatic Savings Account Deduction

To participate in these time-saving alternatives,  
please contact the Parish Office at:  
758-4100 x100 or parishoffice@stmoside.org

## Liturgy & Music

Worship God

Douglas Lynn  
Director of Music/Coordinator of Liturgical Ministries  
douglasl@stmoside.org; 758-4100 x140





Lift up  
your  
heart!  
Lift up  
your  
voice!  
Rejoice!

# With Thankful Hearts!

## Adult Choir Adult Handbell Choir

in Concert to benefit  
Interfaith Community Services

### Sunday, November 23 at 4:00pm

**We look forward to seeing you here!**

**Please bring a free-will donation of a canned good (or three!)**

Canned soup of all kinds  
Canned vegetables Jelly, jam, and peanut butter  
Canned meats  
Cereal  
Beans (canned or bagged)  
Canned pasta meals  
Juice or juice boxes  
Other canned or dry-packaged foods  
Fruit: apples, oranges, grapefruit, avocados, and lemons

HELPING PEOPLE HELP THEMSELVES



## HOLY WAITING

### Music Ministry Next Week

**NOVEMBER 27**  
**Thanksgiving Day**

Cantor

**NOVEMBER 29/30**  
**First Sunday of  
Advent**

**5:00pm Mass**

Cantor

**8:30am Mass**

Handbell Choir

**10:30am Mass**

Cantor

The season of Advent, which begins next Sunday, is the time for expressing the hope and strengthening the dreams that will carry us through the next year. Advent is the way we as church express our hopes. Prophetic visions, prayers and songs calling for the Lord to come do help us to hope profoundly. Advent allows us to do what most others do in December—but to see in the coming Lord the answer to our dreams.

*In our Catholic tradition, keeping Advent means singing the songs of expectation, of our hopes and longing, before we enter into the full-throated praise of Christmas carols.*

Here are a few lines from our tradition on what Advent is about. “Advent has a twofold character: as a season to prepare us for Christmas when Christ’s first coming is remembered; as a season when that remembrance directs the mind and the heart to await

Christ’s second coming at the end of time. Advent is thus a period for devout and joyful expectation.”

Thomas Merton, in his book *Seasons of Celebration*, reviewed the ways Saint Bernard of Clairvaux approached these comings of Christ. The first advent was Christ’s birth. The other will be at the end of time. Faith in these two stimulates recognition of a third, the advent of Christ in our church now, today. Viewed from this perspective, the Advent liturgy, with its scriptures, prayers, and songs, is neither a romantic return to the Old Testament while we wait for the baby at Bethlehem, nor is it an exercise in expressing hope for an ever-receding end of time. The Advent liturgy is neither nostalgic nor illusory.

*When we take the tradition and enter it fully, we become Advent, the people in and through whom Christ comes.*

—G. Thomas Ryan, ©LTP

## Faith Formation

Teach and Live the Gospel

Kathleen Bell  
Director of Faith Formation  
kathleenb@stmoside.org; 758-4100 x110

Dear Children,

Every Sunday at Mass, the priest says: "Let us give thanks to the Lord our God," and we answer: "It is right to give God thanks and praise!" In this beautiful season of the year we are surrounded by reminders that YES, it is absolutely "right" to praise God and give thanks for all the good gifts we have.

How do we show our thanks to God? We show thanks in our words and in our actions. At St. Thomas More we call those actions of thanks: **STEWARDSHIP**.

- We say thank you to God for the gift of **TIME** by sharing our time with our family and friends and those we have a hard time calling friends.
- We show thanks to God for our **TALENTS** by using them well.
- We praise God also by sharing our **TREASURE** with our church.

Do you get an allowance or earn money on your own? You can give God thanks by sharing some of your treasure each week at Mass. When the basket is passed around at the time we offer our gifts at Mass, the big people put envelopes in the basket with their treasure inside to show their thanks to God.



Now we have "little people" envelopes as well, so you can give some of your money each week to your church to show God your "thanks and praise." Just ask for your own box of envelopes at the Information Table after Mass and use one each week to hold your gift to St. Thomas More. Each child can have one!

I am so grateful for our young stewards, excited to share their TIME, TALENT, and TREASURE because it is absolutely RIGHT to give God thanks and praise!

*Mrs. Bell*

## Good News about Going to Mass

Studies prove that Mass has physical, emotional, and intellectual benefits for your children.

**Researchers tell us that taking kids to Church every week will:**

reduce their risk of ever committing a crime

provide them with a solid sense of right and wrong

increase their average life expectancy by eight years

improve their odds for a "very happy" life

make them less likely to suffer from depression

significantly reduce their likelihood of using alcohol, tobacco, and drugs

reduce the tendency toward rebelliousness

improve their attitude at school

dramatically lower their risk of suicide

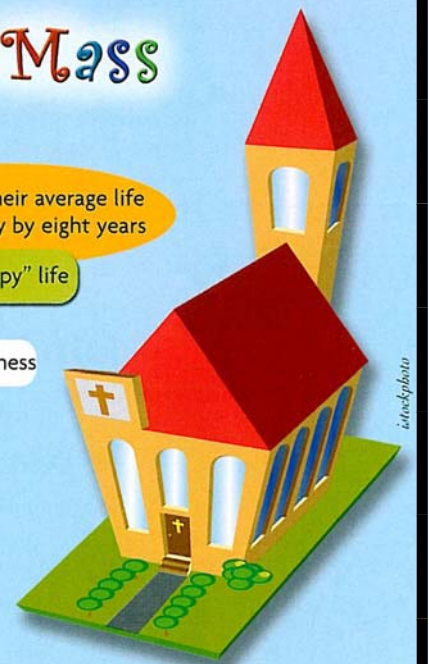
increase school participation

even increase the likelihood that they will wear seatbelts

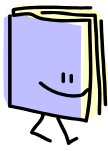
**The good news is that these benefits apply to adults, too!**

Furthermore, according to a Barna Research Group study, adults who attended church regularly as children are nearly three times more likely to be attending a church today than adults who did not go to church during childhood.

(Information compiled from studies by the National Institute for Healthcare Research, Duke University, Indiana University, The Centers for Disease Control, The University of Michigan, and Barna Research Group.)



**Little Books**



The Little Blue Book for the Advent-Christmas Season is now available. Many parishioners look forward to these six-minute meditations as a way to make a very hectic season HOLY.

Advent begins November 30, so get yours today. Perhaps a gift for your Thanksgiving guests?

Your \$2 donation is appreciated to help cover the cost of the book. They are available today at the Information Table, or on the lower level of the Parish Center during the week.

**Looking for Information on the Catholic Faith?**

Are you interested in learning more about Catholicism, becoming a Catholic or returning to the Catholic Church after being away? You're invited to Inquiry Sessions, which meet on the first and third Thursdays of each month at 7:00pm at the Parish Center.

*For information, call  
Bob Taylor at 630-4589.*

**Women's Guild**

**Board Meeting**—Monday, December 1, at 12:30pm at Germaine Wilmott's home to discuss plans for the December 8 party and other events. Please try to attend! RSVP to Germaine Wilmott at 758-9949.

**December Luncheon Meeting**—Monday, December 8, at 11:00am. Lunch will follow. After lunch, we will have "Sing-along Songs" and games. Cost is \$10 per person. Reservations and payment are due by December 1. The location is Grandview Terrace Park, 718 Sycamore Ave., Vista. RSVP to Mary Vernaci at 727-2318 or Germaine Wilmott at 758-9949.

**Knights of Columbus**



**St. Bonaventure Clothing Drive**—Our annual collection of clean, serviceable clothing and household items for St. Bonaventure Mission in New Mexico will take place on the weekend of November 22-23 after each of the Masses. Items especially needed at this time of year are warm clothing, XL sweat shirts and coats, and blankets. For more information, contact Jim Baker at 630-2471.

**Entertainment Books**—The Knights of Columbus will be selling Entertainment Books this year. The books are great gifts and will be available on the Plaza after Masses. Please call Jim Bailey at 754-1635 to reserve your book.

**Christmas Cards and Magnets**—We will be selling Christmas cards and "Keep Christ in Christmas" magnets on the Plaza after Masses while supplies last.



The Spirited Seniors have reserved a block of 25 tickets for the Christmas production of *Forever Plaid* for a Sunday, December 14, at 2:00pm matinee at the

Avo Theater in Vista. A special low price of \$14.50 per ticket is being offered. Carpooling will be available if necessary. Reserve your ticket early. Complete the form below and deliver it with your check to the Parish Office, box 12, by December 7.

For further information and carpool arrangements, contact Joyce Frink at 724-8091.

**More's Workers Head to the Mountains**

Last weekend 25 More's Workers went to Whispering Winds Catholic Camp and Conference Center to perform maintenance tasks. The 165-acre facility, which is located five miles south of Julian, hosts youth and adult retreats, conferences, and summer children's and family camps. The camp is heavily dependent on volunteers for continuing operations.

An advanced contingent arrived on Thursday to prepare a building for outside painting and to remove a rotted deck from another building. The balance of the team arrived early Saturday morning and immediately went to work on three major projects. A large group began painting the outside walls and trim of a double-wide trailer building that is used as the welcome center and camp store. Trim painting was completed on Sunday. Another group installed lighting to illuminate the Mary's Grotto outdoor Mass area. The third team began rebuilding the large deck and wheel chair ramp on one of the conference buildings. Some of the decayed wood structure had to be replaced and all of the ramp and deck boards were replaced.

The weekend was not all work. We had time to enjoy the fresh mountain air, the beauty of the large oak trees, and serenity of the early mornings and evenings. At the end of the work days we returned to our sleeping quarters tired and dirty, but ready for a hot shower, happy hour, and stimulating conversation. Several delicious main meals were served by the camp cook.

Call the parish office at 758-4100 x100 if you are interested in joining More's Workers on other projects.

<b>Forever Plaid Ticket Reservation Form</b>	
Number of tickets: _____ x \$14.50 = \$ _____ (Checks payable to St. Thomas More Spirited Seniors)	
Name(s)	
Phone:	



## News from the Larger Church

**Interfaith Thanksgiving Eve Service and Pie Sharing in Solana Beach**—Wednesday, November 26, 7:30pm, at St. James Catholic Church, 625 S. Nardo Ave., Solana Beach. This service has been a Thanksgiving tradition in North County for over 20 years. Please join members of many faiths to pray for our country and to give thanks for our religious freedom. Bring a pie to share and after the service there will be a social time to share pie and celebrate our nation.

**Advent Mondays Retreats at Mission San Luis Rey in Oceanside**—December 1, 8, 15, and 22, explore the themes from Thomas Merton's book, *New Seeds of Contemplation* with Mark Schroeder, OFM. Merton, a Trappist and writer, uncovers the reality of contemplation. For more information, contact 757-3659 or [www.sanluisrey.org](http://www.sanluisrey.org).

**Advent Wreaths for Sale at Mission San Luis Rey in Oceanside**—These one-of-a-kind wreaths handcrafted from succulent plants grown at the Mission are on sale at the Mission Gift Shop, 4050 Mission Avenue, Oceanside. Many other gift items are also available. Don't forget to ask for your discount. For more information, contact Cornelia at 757-3651 x117.

**Advent Retreat at University of San Diego**—Saturday, December 6, 9:00am-12:00noon, at Salomon Hall, Bishop Maher Hall, USD. Presented by Annice Callahan, RSCJ, Ph.D., the theme will be *Solitude in Daily Life as an Advent Practice: The Wisdom of Thomas Merton*. The presentation will combine input, prayer, time for reflection, and faith sharing. For more information, contact 619-260-4784 or [ccs@sandiego.edu](mailto:ccs@sandiego.edu) or [www.sandiego.edu/ccs](http://www.sandiego.edu/ccs).

**Young Adult Holiday Party in San Diego**—The Diocesan Office for Young Adult Ministry announces the Young Adult Christmas Party to be held on Saturday, December 6, at St. Brigid Parish Hall, 4735 Cass St., San Diego. It will be an evening of great food, music, dancing and fun! Cash bar and dinner is catered by Lotsa Pasta. Cocktail attire. Young adults ages 21-39 are welcome! Cost is \$20 before December 4 and \$30 at the door. For more information and to purchase tickets, contact [www.yamsd.org](http://www.yamsd.org) or 858-490-8260.

**Advent Retreat at Mission San Luis Rey in Oceanside**—*The Gift of Peace* with Br. Mark Schroeder December 12-14, will use the symbols of Advent to deepen our awareness of the Incarnation, looking into places in our lives and world that need Christ's Peace. For more information, call 757-3659.

**Hospice Volunteers Needed in San Diego County**—Sharp Hospice Care needs caring, compassionate adults and teens to work with the terminally ill and their families throughout San Diego County. Training for hospice volunteers will be January 15-February 7, 2009, for a total of one Thursday evening session and four Saturday sessions. The training's focus is on: communication skills, ethics, needs of the terminally ill, family dynamics, pain and symptom management, grief and bereavement, and spiritual care of the dying and their loved ones. For further information, contact Camelia McRae Gower, Program Coordinator, at 619-667-1900.

**Catholic Cruise to the Mexican Riviera**—May 10-May 17, 2009, on the Carnival Splendor out of Long Beach, CA. For more information, contact Cheryl at 949-249-9618.

**St. Francis Church Online Auction**—You're invited to check out our online auction! St. Francis Church has joined [www.CatholicAuctionsOnline.com](http://www.CatholicAuctionsOnline.com) as a new high-tech fund raiser. Items are added as they arrive and have a time limit for bidding. Register as a buyer and get started today!

**Foster and Affirm Vocations to Priesthood and Religious Life in Carlsbad**—Join the Serra Club of San Diego North Coast at 8:00am Mass at St. Patrick Church in Carlsbad followed by a breakfast meeting on the second Saturday and fourth Tuesday of each month. For more information, call 729-9528.

**Volunteers Needed as Advocates for Foster Children**—Become a child advocate and make a lasting difference in the life of a foster child. More than just a mentor, you can give hope to a child who has none. For upcoming information session dates, contact [www.speakupnow.org](http://www.speakupnow.org) or 858-569-2019.

**Volunteers Needed at Casa de Amparo in Oceanside**—Make a lasting impact in a child's life as a Senior Mentor by volunteering 7-10 hours weekly at Casa de Amparo's Child Development Center in Oceanside. Work on social-emotional developmental objectives with children ages 18 months-5 years old in one-on-one and small group settings. Mentors must be age 50+ and able to make a minimum 6-month commitment; stipend included. For more information, contact Rayni Risher at 453-2300 x209 or [rrisher@casadeamparo.org](mailto:rrisher@casadeamparo.org).

**Volunteer Tutors and Mentors Needed in San Diego**—to make a difference in a child's life! Nativity Prep Academy, located in southeast San Diego, is a middle school committed to providing a Catholic education to boys and girls in one of San Diego's most underserved neighborhoods. If you would like information about our rewarding volunteer opportunities, please contact Julie Bishop at 619-544-9455 x300 or [jbishop@nativityprep.org](mailto:jbishop@nativityprep.org).



**Mission San Luis Rey Retreat Center in Oceanside**—has an ongoing schedule of retreat activities. For more information, contact 757-3659 or [www.sanluisrey.org](http://www.sanluisrey.org).

**Diocesan Young Adult Ministry**—Contact Carrie Giebel at [cgiebel@diocese-sdieog.org](mailto:cgiebel@diocese-sdieog.org) or 858-490-8260 for scheduled young adult activities around the Diocese.

### Penance Services at Parishes at Local Parishes

Date	Time	Parish
Sun., Nov. 30	4:00pm	St. Thomas More, Oceanside
Mon., Dec. 1	7:00pm	St. Margaret, Oceanside
Wed., Dec. 3	7:00pm	St. Mary, Star of the Sea, Oceanside
Tue., Dec. 9	7:00pm	Nativity, Fairbanks Ranch
Wed., Dec. 10	7:00pm	St. Patrick, Carlsbad
Thu., Dec. 11	7:00pm	St. James, Solana Beach
Sat., Dec. 13	10:00am	St. James, Solana Beach
Mon., Dec. 15	6:30pm	St. Mark, San Marcos
Tue., Dec. 16	6:30pm	Mission San Luis Rey, Oceanside
Wed., Dec. 17	7:00pm	St. Peter, Fallbrook
Thu., Dec. 18	6:30pm	St. John, Encinitas
Fri., Dec. 19	7:00pm	St. Elizabeth Seton, Carlsbad
Mon., Dec. 22	6:30pm	St. Francis, Vista



1450 SOUTH MELROSE DRIVE · OCEANSIDE, CA 92056 · PHONE: 760-758-4100 · FAX: 760-758-4165

[www.stmoside.org](http://www.stmoside.org) · [parishoffice@stmoside.org](mailto:parishoffice@stmoside.org)

Office Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30-12:00noon and 12:30-4:00pm

**Parish Contacts**

Updated 10/26/08

**Council Chairs: Pastoral**—Doug D’Agrosa 941-6800 • **Finance**—Paul Ibbetson 734-1051 • **Development**—Ron Briseno 726-4496

**Pastoral Council Committees**

- Faith Formation & Evangelization** ..... **Rory Griffin 414-3939**
- Religious Education (Adults)..... Wayne Zych 598-9244
- Small Church Communities ..... Sondra Parks 598-1269
- Little Rock Bible Studies ..... Masako Streling 295-2594
- Religious Education (Children) ..... Kathleen Bell 758-4100 x110
- Liturgy of the Word for Children..... Cathy Meyer 598-7853
- Sacramental Preparation ..... Kathleen Bell 758-4100 x110
- Mid. School Youth Ministry .... Ron & Louise Briseno 758-4100 x153
- High School Youth Ministry..... Jeff & Gale Gibbons 726-7236
- Young Adult Ministry..... Joanna Mueller 726-5644
- Evangelization ..... Available
- Vocations ..... Deacon Tom & Patt Goeltz 758-4100 x130
- RCIA/Adults ..... Mario Diaz 758-7870
- RCIA/Children..... Jeanette Marriott 434-1818

- Liturgy** ..... Available
- Altar Linen Care ..... Marge Gillen 639-1929
- Bereavement Facilitator ..... Sr. Maureen Brown 758-4100 x131
- Ecumenical & Interreligious Affairs ..... Regina Aulizio 295-5530
- Environment & Art ..... Kathy Quinn 722-7525
- Eucharistic Adoration ..... John O’Donnell 598-6003
- Interior Design Team ..... Pat & Phil Goscinski 732-1414
- Liturgical Ministries ..... Douglas Lynn 758-4100 x140
- Liturgical Music..... Douglas Lynn 758-4100 x140
- Wedding Coordinator..... Geralyn Sandin 940-1553

- Marriage & Family Life** ..... **Kalei & Paul Mendiola 945-9042**
- FAMILIA..... Kalei & Paul Mendiola 945-9042
- Family Services .....Deacon Tom Goeltz 758-4100 x130
- Marriage Preparation .....Rev. Michael Ratajczak 758-4100 x100
- .....Deacon Tom Goeltz 758-4100 x130
- Parents & Tots ..... Paul Mendiola 945-9042
- Widows & Widowers..... Helen Kuhn 727-8612

- Parish Organizations & Events** ..... Available
- Golf Classic ..... John Murphy 945-9935
- Historian ..... Anne Marshall 727-2668
- Knights of Columbus ..... John O’Donnell 598-6003
- Library ..... Chris James 598-5881
- Spirited Seniors.....Stella Leué 726-3869
- ..... Judy & Jerry Buoniconti 758-5113
- Women’s Guild..... Germaine Wilmott 758-9949

**Social Ministries** ..... **Suzee Irwin 597-2706**

- Blood Drive ..... Linda Dicus 726-5081
- Bereavement Follow-up Support ..... Linda Dicus 726-5081
- Brother Benno’s..... Deacon Tom & Patt Goeltz 727-8442
- Christmas Angel Ministry..... R.J. Irwin 597-2706
- Congregations for Civic Action... Sr. Maureen Brown 758-4100 x131
- CPR/AED Classes ..... Phil Goscinski 732-1414
- Disability Facilitation ..... Ann Eriksson 599-7151
- Fraternity & Michaelle House ..... Carmen Tamayo 727-3028
- Huggy Buddies Program..... Gale Gibbons 726-7236
- Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice
- ..... Sr. Maureen Brown 758-4100 x131
- Interfaith Shelter Network ..... Frank Coxon 599-8760
- Jail Ministry ..... Rita McCarthy 758-4100 x100
- More’s Workers..... Dick Belprez 295-1431
- Prayer Request Line..... Pat Wong 806-1310
- ..... Norma Flanagan 630-0180
- Project Linus..... Mary Coxon 599-8760
- Pro-Life Activities ..... Jane Kelleher 724-9658
- Sick & Homebound (*Eucharist*) ..... Jean McCloskey 643-2363
- Sister Parish Program ..... Sr. Maureen Brown, 758-4100 x131
- St. Bonaventure Mission..... Knights of Columbus 598-6003

**Office Support**..... **Henny Jocelyn 758-4100 x100**

- Adopt-a-Project ..... Joe Garcia 758-4100 x151
- Chair Set-Up ..... Lorraine Doering 758-4100 x102
- General Support..... Henny Jocelyn 758-4100 x100
- Kitchen Overseer ..... DeAnne Gonzales 598-8748
- STM Host Program..... Henny Jocelyn 758-4100 x100

**Development Council Committees**

- Annual Catholic Appeal .....Flora Fallone 758-4100 x100
- Capital Campaign ..... Bill Ipsen 723-0402
- New Construction ..... Brian Leahey 598-5697
- Parish Membership ..... Louise Briseno 726-4496
- Planned Giving ..... Chris Smith 758-4100 x120
- Publicity/Public Relations..... Anne Marshall 727-2668
- Sacrificial Giving/Tithing ..... Paul Ibbetson 734-1051
- Scrip Sales ..... Theresa Goeltz 453-2876
- Stewardship ..... Chris Smith 758-4100 x120
- Vehicle Donations ..... Henny Jocelyn 758-4100 x100

**Pastoral Staff**

- Rev. Michael Ratajczak, Pastor ..... 758-4100 x100 ..... [michaelr@stmoside.org](mailto:michaelr@stmoside.org)
- Deacon Tom Goeltz ..... 758-4100 x130 or 727-8442 ..... [thomasg@stmoside.org](mailto:thomasg@stmoside.org)
- Rev. Thomas W. Thompson, Pastoral Associate; Hospital Chaplain at Scripps La Jolla, Scripps Green & UCSD Thornton ..... 858-945-2251 ..... [thomast@stmoside.org](mailto:thomast@stmoside.org)
- Sr. Maureen Brown, Pastoral Associate ..... 758-4100 x131 ..... [maureenb@stmoside.org](mailto:maureenb@stmoside.org)
- Kathleen Bell, Director of Faith Formation ..... 758-4100 x110 ..... [kathleenb@stmoside.org](mailto:kathleenb@stmoside.org)
- Gale & Jeff Gibbons, High School Youth Ministers..... 758-4100 x150 ..... [jeffg@stmoside.org](mailto:jeffg@stmoside.org), [galeg@stmoside.org](mailto:galeg@stmoside.org)
- Ron & Louise Briseno, Middle School Youth Ministers..... 758-4100 x153 ..... [ronb@stmoside.org](mailto:ronb@stmoside.org), [louiseb@stmoside.org](mailto:louiseb@stmoside.org)
- Stacey Griffin, Faith Formation Office Assistant..... 758-4100 x110 ..... [staceyg@stmoside.org](mailto:staceyg@stmoside.org)
- Douglas Lynn, Director of Music/Coordinator of Liturgical Ministries ..... 758-4100 x140 ..... [douglasl@stmoside.org](mailto:douglasl@stmoside.org)
- Kathy Santy, Assistant Music Director ..... 758-4100 x100 ..... [kathys@stmoside.org](mailto:kathys@stmoside.org)
- Chris Smith, Director of Stewardship & Development..... 758-4100 x120 ..... [chriss@stmoside.org](mailto:chriss@stmoside.org)
- Joe Garcia, Director of Maintenance..... 758-4100 x151 ..... [joeg@stmoside.org](mailto:joeg@stmoside.org)
- Henny Jocelyn, Receptionist/Secretary..... 758-4100 x100 ..... [hennyj@stmoside.org](mailto:hennyj@stmoside.org)
- Natalie Provinse, Bookkeeper..... 758-4100 x104 ..... [nataliep@stmoside.org](mailto:nataliep@stmoside.org)
- Lorraine Doering, Parish Office Technician ..... 758-4100 x102 ..... [lorrained@stmoside.org](mailto:lorrained@stmoside.org)

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Thank you to our advertisers! Please patronize these merchants and let them know you saw their ad in the St. Thomas More bulletin. Any business owners are welcome to advertise their services. Please call Chris McAdams of C & M Publications at 951-683-0608. Thank you.

*You also, as living stones . . . —1 Peter*

We are most grateful to our parishioners who step up each year to facilitate the nearly 100 ministries that make St. Thomas More such a vibrant Faith Community.

Following are some facts and descriptions of a few of the things that happen during the year, both visibly and behind the scenes, thanks to the efforts of our Christian stewards. More hands are always welcome!

**It Takes . . .**

- ◆ **422 Masses** to fill our Parish's liturgical needs each year judging by the past 12 months.
- ◆ **5-6 People (10 Person Teams)** to set up the 495 chairs and arrange the Upper Level on Saturday mornings for Mass, every other week.
- ◆ **75 Liturgical Ministers** to cover three Masses on any given weekend, including Eucharistic ministers, Hospitality ministers, Greeter, Readers, Altar Servers and Sacristans for each Mass.
- ◆ **16 Eucharistic Ministers** to bring communion to Tri-City Hospital, on a weekly basis, each month on Tuesdays (four teams of four people).
- ◆ **12 Eucharistic Ministers** weekly to administer communion to our Parish's shut-in members and to the convalescent and retirement homes we serve.
- ◆ **61 Handbells** to make up the four-octave set that 10 to 12 ringers use to play during Mass. We're very grateful for the surprise Parishioner Handbell donation, which has made this choir possible!
- ◆ **6 Artisans** on our Art & Environment team to prepare and maintain our worship space for our various seasons, feasts, and solemnities.
- ◆ **83 Musicians** to make the music we currently hear at the Parish during the year.
- ◆ **6 Weeks** of rehearsal for every song that any of our choirs presents during a liturgy, an average of about 1-1/2 total practice hours each.
- ◆ **275+ Stewards** to help our Faith Formation and Evangelization Ministries flow so seamlessly.
- ◆ **35 Catechists and Assistants** (plus more helpers) to share faith in the RE.A.CH program for our youth twice a month. **265 children** are enrolled in this program which covers youth from 3 to 18 yrs. old.

- ◆ **50+ Parishioners** make our annual Vacation Bible School a success each summer. Enrollment is 160!
- ◆ **8 Adult Facilitators** for Liturgy of the Word for Children to allow our young parishioners, ages 4 through 12yrs., to share God's Word on their level during the first part of Sunday Mass. *Adult Facilitators are needed to help with this ministry!*
- ◆ **Many Hands** to help facilitate "Looking At Life Through The Eyes of Faith" which offers multiple opportunities for adult faith formation throughout the year. Help is especially needed for our Parish Retreat in March 2009, as well as ideas for future planning. Wayne Zych would welcome your participation on the committee!
- ◆ **6-Hour and 10-Hour Faith Formation Courses** to cover the needs of our teens. These are presented by those who enjoy interacting with teens. Help is needed to expand the courses offered. A team of young adult facilitators is a great alternative.
- ◆ **Great Faith for 40+ Parishioners** to participate in our weekly morning and evening sessions of Little Rock Scripture Studies.
- ◆ **Faithful Stewards** to help facilitate our RCIA team, led by Mario Diaz. This program conforms to fit the number of sponsors needed to welcome and prepare new members for initiation into the Catholic Church.
- ◆ **3 Catechists** to help with monthly classes to prepare parents presenting infants for Baptism.
- ◆ **10 Baptism Banner Makers** to make a special banner for each new Catholic.
- ◆ **32 People** to cover the details necessary for us to have Monday Night Mass on the first Monday of every month, as well as to provide music on certain weekend and special liturgies.
- ◆ **8 STM Parishioners** to staff the serving line at Brother Benno's on the first Saturday of each month. 12 members stand ready to fill in as it is necessary.
- ◆ **Many People** to provide dinners, on the last Sunday of each month, to North County Solutions for Change homeless shelter in Vista. Individual families, and/or ministerial groups provide the monthly dinners, which serve 35-40 people.

***It takes over 1,400 stewards to continue the mission and ministry of Jesus at STM!***

- ◆ **60-75 Stewards**, depending on the size of the funeral, to help the Bereavement Ministry cover details of a funeral from start to finish, including:
  - Core Team Ministers** who work with the family
  - Liturgical Ministers** for Mass or Memorial Service
  - Bakers and Salad Makers** for the receptions
  - Kitchen/Reception Area** set up/clean up crews
  - Ushers and Greeters** for the Services (*More are needed please!*)
  - Paschal Choir Members** provide musical support at every funeral
- ◆ **8 People a week** to sell Scrip after each weekend Mass and during the week on Tuesday/Thursday mornings. It takes 23 people to run the Scrip program and a minimum of 1,000 families using Scrip to make this program worthwhile.
- ◆ **6-8 Stewards** to stuff our bulletins every week!
- ◆ **120+ People** to coordinate all the details of our annual Golf Classic. May 1, 2009 marks our 10th Annual Golf Classic and includes:
  - Golf Tournament** for adults
  - Miniature Golf Tournament** at Boomers! Vista
  - Happy Hour, Dinner & Dancing** at STM
  - Raffles, Live and Silent Auctions**
  - Childcare** provided (with dinner/entertainment)
- ◆ **8-10 Parishioners** to promote our Pro-Life efforts with Birth Choice in San Marcos, Life Walk and collections for newborn infants.
- ◆ **3 People** to keep our Library organized. *Got time?*
- ◆ **60+ People** to make our Christmas Angel Program a success with collections for the homeless shelters in Vista, stockings for local families in need, outreach gifts for our Sister Parish in New Orleans and infant items for Birth Choice, San Marcos.
- ◆ **Numerous Knights of Columbus** to help with:
  - 30-45/Sunday** Breakfasts,
  - 22 weekly/Lenten** Fish Fries,
  - 9-10/St. Bonaventure** clothing collection
  - 6 per weekend/Christmas** card, stickers and entertainment book sales.
- ◆ **10 Spirited Seniors** to plan and organize multiple annual events to enhance the spiritual, educational and friendship needs of all its members.
- ◆ **Multiple Women's Guild Members** to:
  - 56/facilitate** Bake Sales,
  - 10/quilters** to provide for annual raffle,
  - 40/coordinate** the annual Fashion Show,
  - 20/coordinate** Game Days.

- ◆ **36 Parishioners** to coordinate ongoing efforts with our Sister Parish, St. Peter Claver in New Orleans.
- ◆ **35+ More's Helpers** to help those in need in our own neighborhood with house repairs under the auspices of Interfaith Community Services. Emails go out when help is needed.
- ◆ **14 Parishioners** to facilitate our "Welcome Ministry" which introduces prospective members to the life and activities of our faith community.
- ◆ **14 Stewards** from our Membership Committee to host semi-annual Welcome Receptions for our newest members.
- ◆ **8 Women** to promote the work of Project Linus by making blankets for children undergoing physical or emotional difficulties. *Help welcome!*
- ◆ **4 Certified Instructors** to train and certify **300+ Parishioners** in CPR/AED with the American Red Cross classes offered at the parish.
- ◆ **10 Stewards** with Faith Works to assist our local community organizations to improve the quality of life and neighborhoods.
- ◆ **14 Interior Design Team Members** to attend to the numerous details involved with the Interior Design of a Roman Catholic Church!
- ◆ **13 Development Council Members** to address our ongoing build-out plans. These include Capital Campaign and New Construction members who monitor the many necessary components involved to bring our build-out to fruition.
- ◆ **10 Finance Council Members** to assist our Pastor with keeping our parish financially sound.
- ◆ **"Our Journey Into The Future . . . Together"** Capital Campaign (\$12.4M total goal) to continue on course in order to turn our dreams into reality. We are grateful that, after nearly 4 years, 78% of our registered households have made pledges!
- ◆ **Money** to pay bills for our homes, and also costs money to pay the bills for our 22,500 sq. ft. multi-purpose Parish Center. We've occupied our first building for 6 years, and have ongoing maintenance. Your gifts to our operating budget are necessary to continue our current mission, as well as being able to move forward with any new buildings!
- ◆ **8 People per day, one per hour** for Eucharistic Adoration when we have Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament on the first Friday of each month.  
*Make time for Jesus!*

**St. Thomas More, pray for us!**

# Church of St. Thomas More

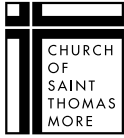
## Christian Stewardship Opportunities Response Form

**The Mission of the Church of St. Thomas More is to:  
worship God, teach and live the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and serve his people in word and deed.**

Please take time to carefully review the stewardship book and select the area(s) that best fit your desire to serve.

Make a heartfelt selection! Return this form

- via the collection basket at Mass,
- to the Parish Office during the week
- or by mailing to the Parish office.



*God's Peace!*

### STEWARDSHIP: Time & Talent

#### PASTORAL COUNCIL

##### Faith Formation & Evangelization

- Evangelization
- Vocations
- Adult Faith Formation
- Little Rock Scripture Studies
- Small Church Communities
- Religious Education for Children
- Liturgy of the Word for Children
- Middle School Youth Ministry
- High School Ministry
- Young Adults
- Rite of Christian Initiation
- Adults
- Children
- Sacramental Preparation
- Baptism
- Reconciliation/Eucharist
- Confirmation

##### Liturgy

- Altar Linen Care
- Bereavement Ministry
- Ecumenical/Interreligious Affairs
- Environment & Art
- Eucharistic Adoration
- Interior Design Team
- Wedding Coordinator
- Liturgical Ministers
- Altar Servers
- Eucharistic Ministers
- Hospitality
- Readers
- Sacristans

- Adult Choir
- Children's Choir
- Handbell Choir
- Monday Night Mass Music Team
- Paschal Choir

##### Marriage & Family Life

- Marriage Preparation
- Engaged Encounter Weekend
- Evenings for the Engaged
- Family Services
- Marriage & Family Enrichment
- Parents & Tots
- Widows & Widowers

##### Parish Organizations & Events

- Golf Classic
- Historians
- Knights of Columbus
- Parish Library
- Senior Ministry
- Social Activities
- Women's Guild

##### Social Ministries

- Bereavement Follow up Support
- Blood Drive
- Brother Benno's
- Christmas Angel Ministry
- CPR/AED Classes
- Disability Facilitation
- Faith Works
- Fraternity and Michaelle House
- Huggy Buddies Program

- Interfaith Committee for Worker Justice
- Interfaith Shelter Network
- Jail Ministry
- More's Helpers
- Parish Social Justice (PSJ)
- Prayer Request Line
- Project Linus
- Pro-Life Activities
- Sick and Homebound
- Sister Parish—St. Peter Claver
- St Bonaventure Mission

##### DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL

- Annual Catholic Appeal
- Capital Campaign
- New Construction
- Parish Membership
- Planned Giving
- Publicity/Public Relations
- Sacrificial Giving/Tithing
- Scrip Sales
- Stewardship Coordinator
- Vehicle Donations
- Welcome Ministry

##### FINANCE COUNCIL

- Committee Chairpersons

##### OFFICE SUPPORT

- Chair Ministry
- General Support
- Kitchen Overseer
- STM Host Program

<b>Name(s):</b>	<b>Phone:</b>
<b>Email:</b>	
<b>Ministry(ies) of choice:</b>	

# Church of St. Thomas More

## Christian Stewardship Treasure Response Form

*... are built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood,  
to offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*  
—1 Peter 2:5

Name:

Address:

City, State / Zip:

Phone: (    )

Email:

*There are 3 options for giving at St. Thomas More*

### OPTION 1 ~ TITHING

We will tithe 10% of our gross income  
(8% to St. Thomas More, 2% to other charities)

Our tithe offering to STM will be

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ weekly, or

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ monthly

#### Payment Options

- Cash or check
- ACH (auto checking withdrawal)
- Credit card (VISA, Mastercard, or Discover Card)

OFFICE USE ONLY

Operational \_\_\_\_\_

Building Fund \_\_\_\_\_

Total Tithe \_\_\_\_\_

### *Your Tithe Includes:*

- Capital Campaign/Building Fund
- Parish Operational Offering
- Religious Education Fees
- Sacrament Stipends  
(Baptisms, Weddings, Funerals, etc.)
- Annual Catholic Appeal (ACA)
- All National Collections:
  - \* Annual Lenten Appeal
  - \* Collection of the Holy Father,
  - \* Propagation of the Faith,
  - \* World Missions Collection,
  - \* National Needs Collection and
  - \* Retirement Fund for Religious Collection

### OPTION 2 ~ SACRIFICIAL GIVING

(includes both sections below)

#### Operational Offering

My/our operational offering to STM will be:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ weekly

or

\$ \_\_\_\_\_ monthly

*If you choose to make an operational sacrificial gift, please also complete the building pledge section*

#### “Our Journey Into the Future . . . Together”

My/our Building Fund Pledge will be:

\$ \_\_\_\_\_

**AND**

Please select payment option

**o 3 years (36 months)**

**o 5 years (60 months)**

Weekly      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Quarterly    \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Monthly      \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Semi-annually \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Annually     \$ \_\_\_\_\_

#### Payment Options

- Cash or check (payable to St. Thomas More)
- ACH (auto checking or savings withdrawal)
- Credit card (VISA, Mastercard, or Discover Card)

### OPTION 3

I/We are unable to make a building fund pledge at this time, but will continue to support the Operational Fund.

Donor Signature:

Date:

*Your commitment is made before God and is confidential.  
It is not legally binding and may be changed if necessary by contacting the Parish Office.*

For further information, please contact Chris Smith at 760-758-4100, x120 or [chriss@stmoside.org](mailto:chriss@stmoside.org)

# ADVENT 2008: At-Home Retreat

**A**dvent stirs my imagination. I always look forward to the new liturgical year to put a fresh perspective on my own relationship with Christ. The ancient prophets clear away the clutter in my heart so I can cultivate again a desire to remain in communion with Jesus and live that love in service with people. The sacred texts and the quiet liturgies also remind me of the intimacy God has ready for me right now in my own relationships. The urgency of some of the pre-Christmas Scriptures focuses my attention on the ultimate coming of Christ at the end of time.

Living out the Advent message in our culture, however, is always conflicting for me. In the weeks before Christmas, our society depends on us to spend more money than our budgets can bear. I get flustered listening to Christmas commercials that begin the day after Halloween. I cringe at the reality of overindulgence, plastic decorations, and false happiness. I hate parties where I pretend that Christmas brings happiness only for the well deserving and the best dressed. In the midst of straddling these cultural lies, something deeper is invested in God's Son becoming flesh. Advent teaches us how to live. I find in the church's prayer a deep longing for God, who loves me and asks me to bring to the poor the love they deserve. I look forward to Advent because the short liturgical season renews in me a desire to continue following the risen Christ even in my complacency and doubt.

The following Advent retreat is designed for you to connect again to God, who opens up your imagination. In this busy season, I invite you to take time to explore how God births hope in you, how faith changes your perceptions of Christ in the world. This liturgical season offers us all a path to honesty, compassion, and love, even in the darkest time of the year.

**Gospel:** The Sunday Gospel is cited for each week. The complete text can be found at [www.downtownchapel.org](http://www.downtownchapel.org) or at the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' webpage

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Rev. Ronald Patrick Raab is a priest of the Congregation of the Holy Cross and serves as associate pastor of the Downtown Chapel of St. Vincent de Paul Parish in Portland, Ore. He preaches retreats around the country and serves as director of the Brother Andre Institute, educating catechumens and candidates in the Archdiocese of Portland.

([www.usccb.org/nab/](http://www.usccb.org/nab/)). Read the Gospel from the previous Sunday every day during the week. Allow the story and the words to soak into your resistance, your stubbornness, and your doubt. Open yourself in the quiet of prayer to Christ's challenge, consolation, and forgiveness. Read and reread. Ready your heart to rest in the word of God, which forms us all in love.

**Theme:** Each week's theme connects the Gospel with life experience. Your prayer and reaction to the Gospels creates the theme for yourself. Do not ponder the written theme if the words do not speak to you or connect with your experience. Sit with the Gospel in silence. Allow your inner life to speak to you. Write down or journal your reactions, insights, or perspectives of the Gospel and the season of Advent. Be quiet. Write.

**Guidance:** These spiritual prompts are to help you enter more deeply into the Advent message and your own life experience. Pick the statements that speak to you. Write and keep writing from the Spirit's invitation. You may use one or more of the statements, either for your personal prayer or for the beginning of conversation within a group setting.

**Prayer:** The written prayer is a model for your own personal prayer. After your silent and written reflections, form your thoughts into a prayer to God. Be as honest as you can in the moment. The more honestly you write, the more you will see the connection to the message of the Scriptures and your own life. Pray for what you desire and what the world needs. Make your prayer a tangible statement of God's challenge and love for you. The essence of the retreat is to formulate your own prayer during this Advent season.

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# Advent 2008

**1st Sunday of Advent: Nov. 30, 2008**

**Gospel: Mark 13:33–37**

“Be watchful! Be alert!”

## Theme

I regret not paying more attention to people. Every morning I look over my shoulder in prayer at the day before and realize what I could have seen. I missed an opportunity to affirm a colleague’s creativity and insight. I was blind to a parishioner because I was in a hurry to meet someone else. I tripped over another person sitting on the sidewalk asking for a handout on my way to an appointment. I see more clearly in prayer the faces I missed before. Their eyes told me to stop and pay attention, but my agenda was far more important.

Advent calls me every year to stay awake from the inside out. My preoccupation with the world’s natural disasters, skyrocketing prices, and political changes settles into my soul and often blinds me to the reality of life right before me. I shut my eyes to protect myself from people’s needs. Staying awake becomes the key to prayer when I would rather sleep through the cold, blustery, dark days of Advent. The Scriptures prop open my eyes so my heart can view God’s love for the world around me. The stories of the past challenge me still to view that I am neither in charge of my day nor my life. I hear the call of the prophets still challenging me in the voices of people I love and those who pass through my every day.

## Guidance

1. Jesus, wash away the scales of cynicism and selfishness from my heart so I \_\_\_\_\_.
2. I fear waking up to the call of John the Baptist because he challenges me to \_\_\_\_\_.
3. John, point me in the direction of Jesus’s life so I may \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Our worshiping community sleeps through John’s message, so I need \_\_\_\_\_.
5. In prayer, I realize the sleepiness of our society, and I \_\_\_\_\_.

## Prayer

Jesus,  
the night was short, my sleep restless.  
The morning feels heavy, my breathing shallow.  
I sit too comfortably in my faded chair.  
My hands hold on tightly to my favorite Bible.  
My heart wants to cling to you,  
but instead sleepiness shrouds my thoughts.  
My prayer turns toward yesterday.  
I hear clearly now my sarcastic remarks.  
I see how I passed others on my way to selfishness.  
I pray through my self-sufficient heart and my cold soul.

Wake me from the slumber of my neglect.  
I hear again in this dark Advent morning,  
my reluctance fades in the dawn,  
you call me,  
“Watch!”  
Amen.

**2nd Sunday of Advent: Dec. 7, 2008**

**Gospel: Mark 1:1–8**

“I have baptized you with water;  
he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit.”

## Theme

I trap myself by living in the past. I cling to moments when life went my way, when I felt in control. The older I get, the more I realize that as a youth I thought life should be a certain way. I thought everyone had what they needed — education, family, housing, and health. Now I understand I am not in control of my life or other people’s lives. I experience now more than ever, working among the poor, that there is no certainty in life. My Advent prayer needs to dig into the reality of life, to be grounded in truth. I cannot live on the grace of yesterday. My friends with addiction wait for the new day of sobriety. I wait with others who search for housing and who long to let go of past abuse. Advent radically breaks into our chaotic lives and teaches us that God still brings love, and we all stand together with the prophet John, who clears away our illusions.

We do not patiently wait for a baby to be born in Advent. Jesus already came into our midst in the past, and the Eucharist today prepares our hearts for the second coming of the risen Christ. Our prayer does not give way to nostalgia but grabs us by the heart to wake us up so that we will listen again to the prophets’ cries. We dig into the issues of our day, the darkness in our culture, and the lies of our society that keep us unaware that Christ first came humbly to those in need. This is the message of the Messiah, in every age, for every person.

## Guidance

1. I catch myself living in the past when I expect \_\_\_\_\_.
2. I long for God’s grace this day so \_\_\_\_\_.
3. John, I desire to hear your voice in my life so \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Jesus, help us turn selfish priorities into love of others because \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Our Advent worship challenges my perspective because \_\_\_\_\_.

## Prayer

Jesus,  
in the morning air I catch a whiff of my toxic illusions.  
I taste my words of bitterness and complaint.  
I hear the echoes of yesterday’s unfulfilled expectations.  
In this Advent dawn, unveil the Spirit’s delight.  
Catch me off guard.  
Break down my heart’s defenses.  
Crack open my illusions.  
Level my resistance.  
Find me again and come to me.  
Remind me that I belong to you.  
Refresh my life and open me to love.  
Prepare in my heart a room for you to live.  
I ready my soul this day.  
You wait for me.  
I see you here.  
Amen.



# At-Home Retreat

**3rd Sunday of Advent: Dec. 14, 2008**

**Gospel: John 1:6–8,19–28**

"I am the voice of one crying out in the desert;  
make straight the way of the Lord."

## Theme

I hide behind the many masks of my life. I seek the shelter of other people's approval. I protect myself behind the lies I tell other people and try to justify my life by making myself acceptable to friends and strangers. When I travel this path of self-deception, I wander away from the real grace I know God is offering me. Hearing the voice of the prophet John cracks open my deceptions, my false self, and my pretense about what my life should be or who I ought to become.

Only God can change me, and I change when I acknowledge the truth of my life. The Advent Scriptures shake me out of my phony pretense and wake me from the sleep of my false power, rigid authority, and forged clericalism. I find my real self when I allow God entry into my heart and convictions. In other words, God alone is the source of my life. My true identity rests on the grace God has for my future. Advent calls us all to realize our relationship with God, and in this communion we are followers of the Christ who shows us how to live, love, and belong in the world. Being in God with a full and honest heart becomes the center of our rejoicing, of living life with grace and gratitude.

## Guidance

1. John, shake me out of the lies that \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Jesus, the obstacles I encounter on my path toward you are \_\_\_\_\_.
3. When I pray, I feel the weight of my denial because \_\_\_\_\_.
4. I hear the clarity of John's voice this Advent in my relationship with \_\_\_\_\_.
5. Today, I rejoice in the Lord's presence because \_\_\_\_\_.

## Prayer

Jesus,  
I sit quietly here in the dark morning.  
I feel the chill of the winter air.  
I hear the rain beating on my bedroom window.  
Here I want to feel safe.  
I give myself permission to expose my heart to the morning chill.  
My face creeps out from behind my fear-driven mask.  
My hands rest on my lap with my fist opening to welcome you.  
In this first light of dawn, I listen again.  
You call me to connect with everything that is alive.  
I trust again in my breath of a new day.  
I claim myself among your beloved.  
This morning I rejoice in you.  
I cannot control the gloom of fear and destruction in the world.  
So I welcome you as giver of all my life.  
I want to hear your voice as you hear my plea.  
I rejoice in you as you make me as I am.  
Amen.

**4th Sunday of Advent: Dec. 21, 2008**

**Gospel: Luke 1:26–38**

"Do not be afraid, Mary,  
for you have found favor with God."

## Theme

Paying attention is never easy for me. The older I get, the more I realize life boils down to remembering to floss my teeth, pay the monthly bills on time, and feeling guilty about not eating healthy. I desire to be really present in life. Every morning I begin with trying to be really present to myself and expose my infidelity, my regrets, and my gratitude to God. In being present to myself, I realize God's desire to be present to me. I recall each morning that God finds favor in my uncertain faith, my hesitant trust, and my human restlessness.

Advent reminds me that God became flesh because divine favor rests on all humanity. God's love caresses the human condition and is found in simplicity, calm, and quiet. Jesus birthed hope as human beings found him in a cave, wrapped in his mother's garment, breathing the cold air with his fearless parents. His life on earth taught us not to fear our deepest longings. He showed us how to respect our differences, listen to others' needs, and serve those locked in fear. We remember his birth because we are human and still trying to grasp the empty, cold, and silent tomb of his resurrection.

## Guidance

1. When I pray, I fear \_\_\_\_\_.
2. God, receive my struggles to \_\_\_\_\_.
3. God, birth in my heart a new desire for \_\_\_\_\_.
4. Mary, model for me patience so I \_\_\_\_\_.
5. God, unite us all in a world that \_\_\_\_\_.

## Prayer

Jesus,  
I sit in the quiet cave of my room.  
I want to crawl out of my skin in my restless search for you.  
I await your touch.  
Tell me again that I am enough.  
Show me again the miracle of my own breath.  
I await your presence.  
Dissolve my worry that I must control my own life.  
Allow me to feel we are never apart.  
  
I await your peace.  
Calm the concern that war and violence bring me.  
Reveal in me your work that here continues.  
I await your hope.  
Feed me with grace that fills me up.  
Satisfy my endless craving for what I cannot grasp.  
Remind me again,  
I am home in my own skin.  
Amen.

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# Advent Wreath – Making Your Own



Advent for children should rightly be a very busy time, starting with the making of the Advent wreath. This is a sacramental in which the whole meaning of Advent is symbolized, and symbols are a language children understand very easily. Included below are guidelines for explaining this symbolism to your children, and also a family blessing for the wreath.

## Directions

If the wreath is to be hung from the ceiling, the frame can be made in a number of ways. It can be wire coat-hangers unshaped and twisted to form a circle (with cross-pieces to brace it); it can be cut from plywood; it can be a cast-off floral wreath frame; it can be several circles of heavy cardboard cut and taped together and braced with cross-pieces.

Candleholders, improvised or ready-made if suitable, can be wired to, soldered to, or cut into the frame at the four points of the compass (we made ours of bouillon tins, nailed to the braces and silvered). On a hung wreath the greens are fastened to show from the bottom rather than the top. It is tied with purple ribbons between the four candles and hung by the ribbons from the ceiling.

The principal protection against fire is to have the candleholders firm and the candles firmly in them. We never let the candles burn down too far, nor light them unless there is a grownup present. The candles need not be blessed candles, although the beeswax candles burn the most beautifully and more slowly, and there are plenty of ways to use up the leftover candle stubs.

A table wreath can be a simple wreath of greens resting in a pan of water to keep them fresh, or a large ringmold filled with wet sand which will keep the greens fresh; or you may put greens in a ringmold filled with wet plaster (of course they do not come out!). Candlesticks are placed on the table inside the wreath. The ribbon may be tied to the candle, or it may bind the wreath or be tied on it in four bows between the candles.

Well, what does it mean?

The circle is a symbol of eternity and the never-endingness of God, and the evergreen is a symbol of eternal life and the never-changingness of God. Tertullian in the third century wrote to the Christians of his day: "You are a light of the world; a tree ever green." Children love to learn by symbols.

We wondered one year if the smaller ones remembered. "What does the circle of the wreath mean, dear? Do you remember?"

A small boy thought very hard and then said: "I can't tell you but I can show you." He hugged himself with both arms and went round and round in a wide circle. "See? God never stops."

"You mean God goes round in circles?"

"No! God doesn't go round in circles. *God never stops means God never ends.* He thought "He never begins, either. Like circles." It is what the catechism says, only in his words....

*Did God have a beginning? God had no beginning. He always was and always will be.*

The four candles in the wreath are for the four weeks of Advent. Three candles are white or purple and one is rose to match the rose vestments permitted on Gaudete Sunday (third Sunday of Advent), reminding us of the

shout of joy in that day's

Introit. . . . "Rejoice (*gaudete*)

in the Lord always, again I say, rejoice." The rose-colored candle says that the promise is almost fulfilled; come, everyone, rejoice!

The ribbon is purple for penance, but it is a different kind from the penance of Lent. That penance is heavy with sorrow, bitter and painful with the knowledge of our sins. We are sinners in Advent, too, but the emphasis is differently placed. The emphasis is on our longing, our need, not only for the great graces of the feast of His Nativity, for the renewing in our hearts of the mystery of His birth, but our need to be ready for the glorious moment of His Second Coming. This penance is a chastening, a cleansing, a hurrying and a waiting, a longing and an aching that is at the same time both painful and sweet. Like the family waiting for the baby to come, we could all but die with the waiting for His birthday, and His coming again in glory.

The family gathers for the blessing of the wreath on the Saturday night before the first Sunday of Advent, or on the first Sunday itself, with the father or some older member of the family reading the blessing.

## Blessing of the Advent Wreath

*Father or Leader:* Our help is in the name of the Lord. *All:* Who made heaven and earth.

*Father or Leader:* Let us pray. O God, by Whose word all things are sanctified, pour forth your blessing upon this wreath, and grant that we who use it may prepare our hearts for the coming of Christ and may receive from you abundant graces. Through Christ Our Lord. *All:* Amen.

*(Sprinkles wreath with holy water.)*

The father or leader reads the prayer for the first week, then holds up the youngest child to light the first candle, which is also lighted all through the week when the family gathers in the room with the wreath. Two candles are lighted by the oldest child the second week, three the third by the mother, four the fourth by the father. .

*Weekly Candle-Lighting Prayer:* Loving God, as we light our Advent candle(s) may we rekindle in ourselves the desire to prepare a way for the birth of Christ. May the food we are about to receive nourish both our bodies and our hearts. We ask this in your Holy Name. Amen.

The candles are never lighted unless an adult is present. When there is a guest who asks: "What a pretty wreath. Is it something special, with the candles like that?" the children love to explain: "It's an Advent wreath, and the four candles are for the four weeks of Advent. Every week we light another candle, you see, and the light around it grows bigger. That means that the birthday of the Light of the world is coming soon. Baby Jesus, you know, and Christmas. It's His birthday and He's the Light of the World."

Activity Source: *Year and Our Children, The* by Mary Reed Newland, P.J. Kenedy & Sons, New York, 1956