

# MORE ABOUT US

## St. Thomas More Parish



### The Journey To Eternity

By: Becky Ready, DRE

Do you think much about the purpose of life? Lately, I have been thinking about it a lot since my birthday this past summer. In a nutshell, to me the purpose of this life is preparation for eternity. We were made to last forever and God wants us to be with Him in Heaven for eternity. One day our hearts are going to stop and that will be the end of our bodies, but it will not be the end of us. Why not? Because we are created body, soul and spirit. We are temples of God. We have three parts: an outer court, our bodies; an inner court, our souls with its faculties of thinking, willing and loving; and an inmost court, a sacred well—our spirits. It is in this inmost core of our beings that we are made into the image and likeness of God. We were made by God and for God, and until we figure that out, life isn't going to make sense.

We all know that life is a series of problems: either we are in one now, we're just coming out of one, or we're getting ready to go into another one. The reason for this is God is more interested in building our character than in making us comfortable. In fact, he consistently afflicts the comfortable and comforts the afflicted. His ultimate will for us is that we become holy. For that to happen, we need to learn to focus on our purpose, not on our problems. When we focus on problems, we go into self-centeredness. When we focus on our ultimate purpose, we no longer have to think as human nature impels us to think—carnal thoughts, worldly thoughts, bitter, angry, shameful and lustful thoughts. Now we can think with the inspired thoughts of Christ himself.

Through our Catholic sacraments we become "children of God," partakers of the divine nature. We receive a new nature, a new dignity, a new identity, a new covenant, a new family, a new spirit, a new mind, a new relationship with Jesus, a new heart, a new power, a new hope, a new mission, a new destiny. Wow! Who wouldn't want all that!

The key question of the Gospels is: How about you...who do you say that I am? This is a major question that no one else can answer for us. It is personal and it is real. The heart of Christianity is a personal relationship with Jesus. The heart of this relationship is love. The heart of love is communication. The body of love is relationships. Christianity has to do with relationships, forming and reforming relationships in openness, love and communications with Jesus and with others. God is creating family on earth.

I invite you to enter more and more into this family, to come and join us at Mass every weekend where we worship together and receive the Eucharist together, the source and summit of our Catholic life. I also invite you to join us in our

### From the desk of Fr. Bill Wagner, Pastor

"The Lord's Day, the day of Resurrection, the day of Christians, is our day. It is called the Lord's Day because on it the Lord rose victorious to the Father. If pagans call it the 'day of the sun' we willingly agree, for today the light of the world is raised, today is revealed the sun of justice with his healing rays." (St. Jerome, d. 420 A.D.)

Sunday is the first of all days since it is the day Jesus rose from the dead and recreated not only the human race, but also all of creation. Sunday "fulfills the spiritual truth of the Jewish Sabbath and announces man's eternal rest in God." (Catechism of the Catholic Church)

The early Christians primarily defined themselves as distinct from other faiths because of their belief in the risen Christ and their custom of gathering for the breaking of the bread every Sunday. Sunday Mass was their particular distinction. They would never have dreamed of calling themselves Christians or believers without the Sunday gathering.

Sunday is so important and essential to our individual and community identities that the Church has considered it and still considers it sinful to not attend. For some reason today, there are many Catholics who either do not believe this or are completely unaware of this ancient teaching. Why? Is it a denial of the reality of sin? A lack of true faith? An unawareness of our dependence on God? A lack of appreciation of the reality and presence of God in our world and lives? Laziness?

Well, I suppose we really cannot fully understand another person or why someone does anything at all. But, we all must realize that what we say and do influences others. Parents have a special responsibility and duty to model the practice of the faith to their children. It is a serious matter indeed to teach children about the value of Sunday Mass. It should always be our first priority without exception. Simply sending children off to a Catholic school or Sunday religion instruction is never enough. In fact, it is a waste of everybody's time and resources if instruction is not accompanied by practice.

I, as pastor, urge you to be a worthy disciple of the Lord and give thanks for what He has done for us by celebrating the Lord's Day every Sunday, even during the summer months, even while on vacation, even when other important things need to be done.

growing ministries.

Together in community we can share in this journey to eternity. We can discover together who Jesus is for each of us and for our community. This life received which becomes the life shared is the only life

we can pass on to the next generation. And that's a life filled with purpose that offers true and lasting meaning.





## From the desk of Deacon Jerry Cain

As the leaves begin to turn colors and drift to earth thoughts of winter can't be too far off. And just as we rake up leaves and clean out dying plants in our gardens, we also prepare for the coming of Advent. You see, Advent is a time to remove clutter and get focused. A new liturgical season is beginning. "Prepare the way of the Lord!" the scriptures proclaim. So, how do we prepare for the coming of the Christ Child at Christmas? Well, not a whole lot different than how you prepare for your own family celebration in your home. We start with plans for decorations in church and plan the many liturgies that will be celebrated here at St. Thomas More. (The Holiday and Events Schedule is enclosed in this issue of *More About Us*.)

And finally, we put up our Advent gift giving trees. Each year our Social Action committee provides opportunities for our parishioners to help out those who are less fortunate. During the Giving Tree collection, brightly decorated tags representing different organizations are placed on the trees to be taken by fellow parishioners. Ornament tags

are available on the first two weekends of Advent. Each tag will list a specific item to be given to individuals and families who live in the greater Cincinnati area. We are asked to return the gifts we have purchased and place them under the trees at the entrances of church. This is just another reminder that our families go far beyond those who are relatives. As we prepare for the coming of the Christ Child at Christmas, let us remember those among us who need help with some basic human needs. That's what we are called to do. That's what it means to be a true follower of Christ.

God Bless, Deacon Jerry

## SEM—South East Ministries

A bit of thanks to all who continue to contribute to the SEM Food Pantry. Your contributions have helped SEM serve the needy in our area. In 2005, SEM served more than 10,000 people with food and monetary assistance; a comparable number will be assisted in 2006.



Thanks to St. Thomas More's Social Action Committee for providing a meal and worship service twice this summer to the workers at River Downs, many of whom are Hispanic migrants. Several other SEM churches did the same, and SEM's Racetrack Ministry was able to provide these services on a weekly basis during the 2006 racing season.

If you are interested in volunteering a little time to lift the spirits of the elderly, the SEM housing facilities (the SEM Haven, SEM Villa, SEM Laurels, SEM Terrace in Milford, and SEM Manor in Forestville) need volunteers to visit residents who may have few visitors. Contact any one of these facilities or Jody Bridges at 752-6569 for more information.



## HOPE EMERGENCY

Ursulines  
of Brown County

The STM Youth Ministry will be collecting new and gently used gifts for Hope Emergency in Brown County. This year they will be asking for gifts targeted for teens. You can drop off gifts (unwrapped) in the box located underneath the church by Fr. Wack Library up until Sunday, Dec. 10th. Some suggestions: clothes, gift certificates, jewelry, games, etc. Also, I will need assistance in the delivery of these gifts to Brown County, so if you have a truck or van and can help, please let me know.

For more information please call Diane Brennan, Youth Minister at 753-2551 or email: [dbrennan@sttm.org](mailto:dbrennan@sttm.org).

## The Chancellors Club - Senior News

### HOSTING AN ADVENT EVENT

By: Mary F. Walter

Getting an early start for the coming Season of Advent, the STM Chancellor's Club announces a special **Day of Reflection** for Tuesday, December 5th. To take place at the Comboni Mission Center, Forestville, it invites not only its own club members but also encourages any Parish adult or senior wishing to attend.

Being coordinated by Pastoral Associate, Michael Thomas, and Chancellor members, the day will begin at 10:00 am and features a guest speaker, Mr. Madz Lim, to present key spiritual talks for the program. There will be Mass, an opportunity for Confession (if desired) along with lunch and event will end about 2:30pm.

Madz Lim, the Pastoral Associate, and a parishioner along with his family, at All Saints Church in Montgomery, is currently a deacon candidate (together with Michael Thomas and John Convery for the Archdiocese of Cincinnati). He holds a M.A. degree in Pastoral Ministry from the Athenaeum of Ohio (class of 2004). A native of the Philippines, Mr. Lim is recently retired as Global Information Technology Associate Director from Procter and Gamble after 31 years of service at this worldwide company.

The **Day of Reflection** will close with a preview visit to the famed Christmas Crib display at the Mission Center (not to open officially to the public until later in the month) with a concluding themed meditation.

As we each think "Christmas" and focus on the true, the really true meaning of the Season, our making time for this special day can be a tangible personal "gift of preparation" to top our own Christmas list!

Watch the bulletin for details or call Michael Thomas in the parish office at 753-2549 for additional information.





## From Peg Fischer, STM School Principal

The new school year began on August 23 with a record 319 students enrolled in kindergarten through grade 8. Our theme "Catholic Schools: The Good News in Education" will be carried out with monthly focus on selected Catholic values, such as compassion, justice, reverence, and hope, to name a few. Our daily announcements, classroom activities and prayers will help to teach and support the theme each month.

New programs and staff for the year include our online lunch account service, E-Lunchroom, which lets students purchase their lunch items each day by using a barcode. A record of purchases is kept and each family has an internet login that lets parents check their account balance and view student purchases. This removes the need for our staff to handle money while serving food, and reduces time for students waiting in line.



Also new this year, Kurzweil reading software is available for our students who need assistance with reading due to a learning disability or visual impairment. Students can use the software to have a test, textbook, magazine or website read to them. Our new LD tutor, Sr. Susan Ruedy, helps students learn to use the program, and helps teachers to use this resource to create materials for their students. Sr. Susan is at St. Thomas More twenty hours a week to assist junior high students. Students in kindergarten through fifth grade receive reading help from Mrs. Beavers, another Auxiliary staff member.



Students and staff are all looking forward to our annual Blessing of Pets which returns this year since the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, October 4, falls on a school day. October will be a busy month in the classrooms for students in grades 2-8 as they tackle the Terra Nova achievement tests. DWP (Discipline with Purpose©) continues to help set a good foundation for students to learn age-appropriate self-discipline. Parent information is sent home on a monthly basis to help parents share in DWP program.

St. Thomas More School is a vital ministry of the parish; your support is appreciated! Parents of pre-school age students will receive information about future enrollment in October, and again in January, as our annual Open House approaches. In the meantime, keep the evening of January 30 open! For more information on what you parish school has to offer, call the school office at 753-2540 or email [info@stm.org](mailto:info@stm.org).



## LOCKS OF LOVE

Maria Steinmetz (right) and Abby Witter (left) wanted to grow their hair for Locks of Love, a non-profit organization that provides hair-pieces to financially disadvantaged children 18 years and younger suffering from long-term medical hair loss. It was Maria and

Abby's desire and determination to help other children in need that kept them motivated to grow their hair for years to have enough to donate. As friends and classmates going into the 2nd grade at St. Thomas More School, they learned that they each had the same goal and decided they would go together when it was time to get their hair cut. Both patiently waited for each other to be ready. On June 5th, Maria and Abby eagerly entered the salon to give their precious gift – TEN INCHES OF LONG, BEAUTIFUL HAIR.

On Friday, July 7th, sixteen year old Alex Ivers, who is a Junior at Amelia High School in the International Baccalaureate Program, had 10 inches of her beautiful hair cut and mailed it to Locks of Love in Lake Worth, Florida. She has been growing her hair since the eighth grade and thought this would be a wonderful way to help others in need. Way to go girls!

For more information you can go to their website: [www.locksoflove.org/donate\\_hair.php](http://www.locksoflove.org/donate_hair.php)

## A History of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul

by Bob Guenther

On November 1, 1830, Antoine Frederic Ozanam left his home in Lyon to enroll at the Sorbonne, the University of Paris, to pursue a law degree. Shortly after his arrival, Ozanam became acquainted with Emmanuel Bailly, publisher of the *La Tribune Catholique* newspaper. Bailly founded a student organization called "The Conference of History" and Ozanam joined the group. The conference attracted a variety of individuals with differing opinions and beliefs. They met on Saturdays to discuss a wide range of subjects, except politics.

One Saturday, during a heated verbal exchange, Jean Broet, a student and follower of the doctrine of Saint-Simonism challenged Ozanam and his friends. "We agree that at one time your church was a great church and was a great source of good. But what is your church doing now? What is she doing for the poor? Show us your works and we will believe you."

Ozanam accepted the challenge. He and several of his friends agreed to meet and discuss what they might do. On April 23, 1833, Ozanam's 20th birthday, they met. Ozanam's words moved the six students present, "We must do what is agreeable to God. Therefore, we must do what our Lord Jesus Christ did when preaching the Gospel. Let us go to the poor. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul was born.

Between 1833 and 1860, the Society mushroomed and spread to the United States in 1845. Inspired by Gospel values the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, a Catholic Lay Organization of men and women, join together to grow spiritually by offering person-to-person service to those who are in need and suffering in the tradition of its founder, Frederic Ozanam and Patron St. Vincent de Paul.

The St. Thomas More Conference currently has 16 active members and invite you to join our ministry by calling 753-2561 for more information. Our case load has increased and we could use the additional help.



When the idea/event is not of God,  
God says no.  
When you are not right,  
God says grow.  
When the time is not right,  
God says slow.  
When everything is right,  
God says Go!

Anonymous



St. Thomas More Parish  
800 Ohio Pike  
Cincinnati, Ohio 45245



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## STM Cookbooks

The parish cookbook is now available with about 450 recipes submitted by parishioners. The cost is \$15.00 each and can be purchased at the parish office or email the Elizabeth Ministry at [elizabethministry1@fuse.net](mailto:elizabethministry1@fuse.net). Proceeds benefit the Elizabeth Ministry and STM School. Makes a great Christmas gift!

## JULYFEST 2006

The JulyFest 2006 Winners were:  
Grand Raffle—Ford Car: Mary McCarthy  
\$1000 Prize— Jim Seipel  
PTO Tuition—The Winkler Family  
Early Bird Winner—Al & Carol Meisman

**Congratulations!**

**It's boring....I don't get anything out of it....** We're not referring to an NFL football game or a concert of one of your favorite country singers. All too often we hear people referring to **MASS** as boring and that they don't get anything out of it. Wait....don't stop reading yet! This may be the one thing that you have been searching for. That purpose in life...you know the one thing that God gave everyone...*"The man without love has known nothing of God, because God is love"* (1 John 4:8). Love is energy and without it there is no Eucharist and little communication with Heaven. Read the following and you just may have a different outlook on the Mass and Eucharist....you may just begin to glow (after you attend Mass):

- ✚ Mass is a miracle and the greatest gift from God. It was instituted to draw us into one Body, praying and caring for each other, where we are called to heal, comfort, teach and reconcile.
- ✚ At Mass there is a heavenly presence—the greatest of angels and saints are in Adoration.
- ✚ If you go to Mass every day you hear just about the entire Bible in 3 years.
- ✚ The Eucharist is the key to love and heaven.
- ✚ Faith, humility and love are the three deepest secrets of the Eucharist and the way we defeat Satan.
- ✚ The rays of the Eucharist are the arrows against Satan.
- ✚ Holy Communion transports the whole of paradise into our hearts and you can taste the heavenly grace. From the tabernacle comes the fragrance of heaven.
- ✚ Father Alessio Parente, an associate of St. Pio, has said, that we shorten our Purgatory by every liturgy and win a high degree of glory. We receive the priest's blessing which the Lord ratifies in Heaven. We kneel amid a multitude of angels who are present with reverential awe at the adorable sacrifice.

(Information taken from various sources including: *Secrets of the Eucharist* by: Michael H. Brown)