

St. Thomas More Catholic Church
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Parishioner

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 Advent/Christmas
 2018

RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults)

On December 2, at the 10:30 Mass, our RCIA candidates will participate in the first Rite on the Journey of Faith, known as the RCIA. We are happy to welcome these 5 candidates and we encourage you to welcome them as well.

We have been exploring what it means to be Catholic—both in our relationship with God AND in our relationship here in the parish. They have moved through the Inquiry period, and are ready to follow Jesus more earnestly. They are committed to taking the next step in the RCIA process.

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Clockwise from the top:

James Class

Jen Staebell

Tommy Janing

Hayley Teutsch

Joshua Bonnell

Once the inquirers experience the Rite of Acceptance or the Rite of Welcoming (during Mass on Dec 2), they will express their intention to follow the way of Christ, and their sponsor will affirm their sincerity and ongoing conversion. They will begin the next phase (the catechumenate) and will continue to grow in faith through study, reflection and prayer.

We will be introducing these candidates to the parish on Dec 2nd. Get to know them through these photos and congratulate them after Mass. By our reception we let them know how important they are in our parish family. We will also be attending various activities throughout the coming months to become acquainted with how we practice our discipleship and outreach in this area.

~by Sister Pauline Schwandt

Feast of St. Nicholas

December 6th is the feast day of St. Nicholas. This feast day is an especially exciting one for children as they count down the days on their Advent calendars in anticipation of Christmas Day. From the ninth century to the eleventh century in the West, Nicholas has been one of the most popular saints in Christendom and in Christian art and is the patron of many countries, dioceses, churches, and cities. He was a Greek bishop of Myra in Lycia (now Turkey).

His charity to the poor is commemorated in modern times by those who follow the tradition of stuffing a boot, shoe or stocking with gifts on his feast day. "Santa Claus" comes from the Dutch form of his name, "Sinterklaas". He is the patron saint of sailors, merchants, and children.

While Catholics in America aren't as big on celebrating this feast day with their children, more and more



American Catholic families are adopting St. Nicholas Day as a special Advent family tradition. St. Nicholas' feast day traditions vary widely

from country to country, but they all carry the same theme of small gifts and treats left in either shoes or stockings. Continuing this Advent tradition in your own home is a great way to teach your children to venerate the saints and to deepen their knowledge of and love for the Christian faith.

~excerpts from www.timeanddate.com & www.cns.com

St. Stephen, the First Martyr

St. Stephen was one of the first ordained deacons of the Church. He was also the first Christian martyr.

The Greek word for which we derive the English word martyr literally means witness. In that sense, every Christian is called to bear witness to Jesus Christ, in both their words and their actions. Not all are asked to shed their blood.



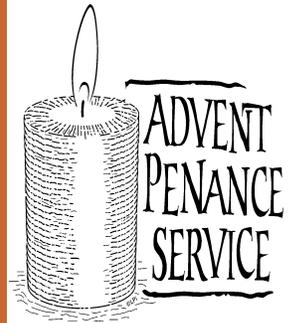
Those who do shed their blood for the faith are the greatest of witnesses. They

have been especially honored since the very beginning of Christianity. Stephen was so conformed to Jesus in his holy life that his martyrdom was both a natural and supernatural sign of his love for the Lord. It also inspired the early believers as they faced the first round of brutal persecution.

Great preaching and miracles were attributed to Stephen. The Bible records that Stephen "full of grace and power, did great wonders and signs among the people."

St. Stephen is often depicted with stones, a Gospel Book, a miniature church and a martyr's palm frond. He is the patron saint of Altar Servers, bricklayers, casket makers and deacons and his feast day is celebrated on December 26.

~excerpts from www.catholic.org



**Advent
Penance Service**

December 20

7:00 pm



**Holy Day of
Obligation Mass**

**Feast of the Immaculate
Conception**

December 7

5:30 pm

December 8

9:00 am





Christmas Masses

December 24

5:00 pm

Midnight

December 25

9:00 am



Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

December 31

5:00 pm

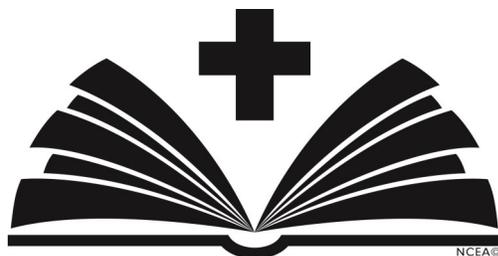
January 1

9:00 am



National Catholic Schools Week

Since 1974, National Catholic Schools Week is the annual celebration of Catholic education in the United States. It starts on the last Sunday in January and runs



Catholic Schools
Learn. Serve. Lead. Succeed.

all week, which in 2019 is January 27-February 2. The theme for National Catholic Schools Week 2019 is "Catholic Schools:

Learn. Serve. Lead. Succeed." Schools typically observe the annual celebration week with Masses, open houses and other activities for students, families, parishioners and community members. Through these events, schools focus on the value Catholic education provides to young people and its contributions to our church, our communities and our nation.

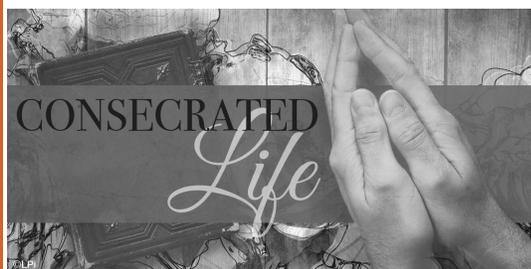
Celebrate with the students during a school Mass during the week. Also note the special activities going on all week in the school to celebrate National Catholic Schools Week. Most of all, thanks to the St. Thomas More school families and parishioners for your ongoing support of our school and all Catholic schools.

~excerpts from www.ncea.org

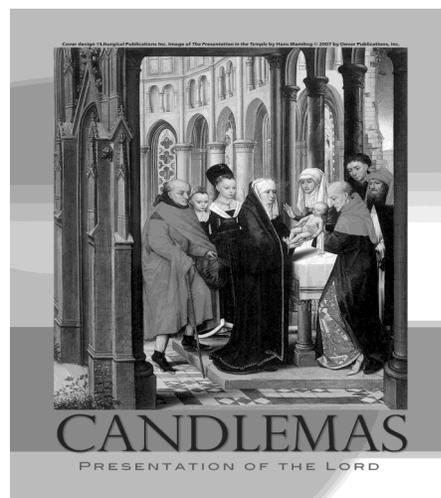
World Day for Consecrated Life

In 1997, Pope Saint John Paul II instituted a day of prayer for women and men in consecrated life. Consecrated life, in the canon law of the Catholic Church, is a stable form of Christian living by those faithful who are called to follow Jesus Christ in a more exacting way recognized by the Church.

ferred to the following Sunday in order to highlight the gift of consecrated persons for the whole church.



This celebration is attached to the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord on February 2nd. This Feast is also known as Candlemas Day, the day on which candles are blessed symbolizing Christ who is the light of the world. So too, those in consecrated life are called to reflect the light of Jesus Christ to all peoples. The celebration of World Day for Consecrated Life is trans-



World Day for Consecrated Life is celebrated on February 2nd however, it is observed in parishes on the Sunday after February 2nd. In 2019, this day is celebrated in parishes on February 2-3.

~excerpts from www.nrvv.net and www.google.com/wikipedia

World Day of the Sick

The World Day of the Sick is a feast day of the Roman Catholic Church which was instituted on May 13, 1992 by Pope John Paul II. Beginning on February 11, 1993, it is celebrated every year on the commemoration of Our Lady of Lourdes, for all believers seeks to be “a special time of prayer and sharing, of offering one’s suffering.”

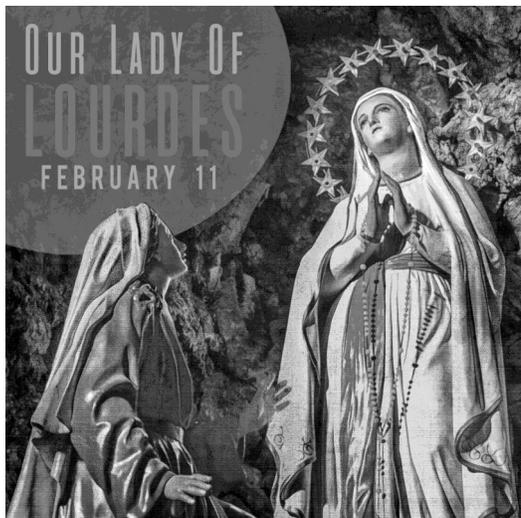
Pope John Paul II had been diagnosed with Parkinson’s disease as early as 1991, an illness which was only disclosed later, and it is significant that he decided to create a World

Day of the Sick only one year after his diagnosis. The Pope had written a great deal on the topic of suffering and believed that it was very much a salvific and redeeming process through Christ, as he indicated in his apostolic letter Salvifici Doloris.



The Feast of Lourdes was chosen because many pilgrims and visitors to Lourdes have reportedly been healed by intercessions of the Blessed Virgin. In 2005, the World Day of the Sick had a special significance since it was the year John Paul died from a sepsis. Many people gathered around him as he lay dying. In 2013, Pope Benedict XVI announced his resignation during this feast day, and he cited his declining health as his reason for retiring.

~excerpts from www.en.wikipedia.org



This newsletter is published by the Parish Office. It is published four times a year to coincide with the Liturgical seasons of the church. It will be published at Advent/Christmas, Lent/Easter, Ordinary Time I (until the Feast of the Assumption), and Ordinary Time II (Assumption until the end of the year).

Wishing you a
New Year
full of blessings



Baptisms

Congratulations to all those who received the sacrament of Baptism this Fall.

~**Laura Marie Santiago Cabello**
~**Weston Daniel Riskowski**
~**Michael Ellis Roberts**
~**Tobias Fogarty Arlen**
~**Helena Aleya Nolazco**
~**Everly Josephine Tomasek**
~**Sebastian Thomas Scott**
~**Delanie McLaughlin**
~**Natalie Sophia Toledo**
~**Helena Marie Dworak**
~**Isaac Lujang Samuel**
~**Maddox Marshall Gifford**

~**Connor Christian Fanciullo**
~**Camille Rose Sample**
~**Hazel Clare Sullivan-Gentry**
~**Devin Conner Laflin**



St. Valentine

Christmas Dinner Prayer

Loving God and Father of us all, we joyfully celebrate the birth of your Son, the eternal Word who came to dwell with us and is born this day of the Virgin Mary.

May the meal we share on this great feast satisfy us not only with the good food you give us, but also grace us with the fullness of your love, which you bestowed on our human nature when your Son took on our very flesh.

May we come to share completely in your divine life through the coming of your Son among us. May his self-giving love be made manifest in our hearts so that the joy of our Christmas feast may extend beyond our family and home to touch the lives of others with the love that makes this day holy and makes us all children of one family in you. Amen.



St. Valentine was a priest and physician in Rome. He along with St. Marius and his family comforted the martyrs during the persecution of Emperor Claudius II, the Goth. Eventually, St. Valentine was also arrested, condemned to death for his faith, beaten with clubs, and finally beheaded on February 14, 270AD. He was buried on the Flaminian Way. Later, Pope Julius I built a basilica as the site which preserved St. Valentine's tomb. Archeological digs in the 1500s and 1800s have found evidence of the tomb of St. Valentine. However, in the thirteenth century, his relics were transferred to the Church of Saint Praxedes near the Basilica of St. Mary Major, where they remain today. Also, a small church was built near the Flaminian Gate of Rome which is now known as the Porta del Popolo but was called in the 12th century "the Gate of St. Valentine," as noted by the early British historian William Somerset (also known as William of Malmesbury) who ranks after St. Bede in authority.



The popular customs of showing love and affection on St. Valentine's Day is almost a coincidence with the feast day of the saint: During the Medieval Age, a common belief in England and France was that birds began to pair on February 14th, "halfway through the second month of the year." For this reason, the day was dedicated to "lovers" and prompted the sending of letters, gifts, or other signs of affection.

Weddings

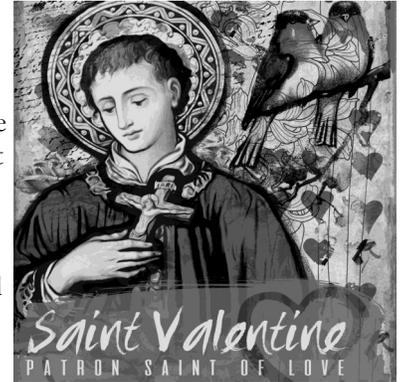
Congratulations to the following couple who celebrated their wedding at St. Thomas More this Fall!

Kayla Johnson & Tom McCoy—November 3, 2018



While it seems that the exchange of "valentines" is more the result of secular custom rather than the memory of St. Valentine, and that the celebration has been further paganized with cupids and the like, there is a Christian message that should be remembered.

The love of our Lord, depicted beautifully in the image of His most Sacred Heart, is a sacrificial, selfless, and unconditional love. Such is the

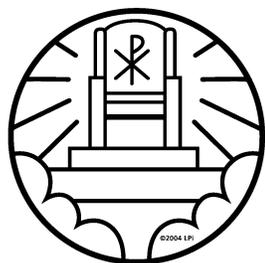


love that each Christian is called to express in his own life, for God and neighbor. Clearly, St. Valentine showed such a love, bearing witness to the faith in his dedication as a priest and in the offering of his own life in martyrdom. On this Valentine's day, looking to the example of this great saint, each person should offer again his love to the Lord, for only by doing so can he properly love those who are entrusted to his care and any other neighbor. Each person should again pledge his love to those loved ones, praying for their intentions, promising fidelity to them, and thanking them for their love in return. Never forget Jesus said, "This is my commandment: love one another as I have loved you. There is no greater love than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends" (Jn 15:12-13) St. Valentine fulfilled this command, and may we do the same.

~excerpts from www.catholiceducation.org

Chair of St. Peter

Yes, there is a physical object known as “the Chair of St. Peter.” It is housed at the Vatican, at the back of St. Peter’s basilica. February 22nd is the Feast of the Chair of St. Peter. On the other hand, there is a spiritual authority that this chair represents. This is a very ancient tradition, proven to have existed in Rome since the fourth century. On it we give thanks to God for the mission he entrusted to the Apostle Peter and his Successors.



“Cathedra” literally means the established seat of the Bishop, placed in the mother church of a diocese which for this reason is known as a “cathedral”; it is the symbol of the Bishop’s

authority and in particular, of his “magisterium”, that is, the evangelical teaching which, as a successor of the Apostles, he is called to safeguard and to transmit to the Christian Community. . .

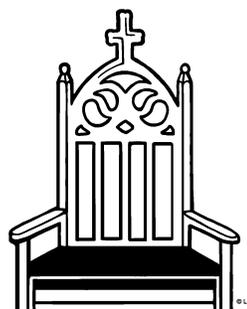
The See of Rome, after St. Peter’s travels, thus came to be recognized as the See of the Successor of Peter, and its Bishop’s

“cathedra” represented the mission entrusted to him by Christ to tend his entire flock.

Celebrating the “Chair” of St. Peter, therefore, means attributing a strong spiritual significance to it and recognizing it as a privileged sign of the love of God, the eternal Good Shepherd, who wanted to gather his whole Church and lead her on the path of salvation.

Although the pope’s infallible pronouncements are called *ex cathedra* (“from the chair”) statements, he does not have to be sitting in the physical chair. He simply has to use the fullness of his authority as the successor of Peter to definitively teach a particular matter pertaining to faith or morals. The use of the full extent of his teaching authority is referred to figuratively, as him speaking “from the chair” of St. Peter.

~excerpts from www.ncregister.com



Alpha

By Lisa Spellman

Ever wonder what faith really is?

Ever want more out of your faith?

Ever feel like your faith is waning or maybe even gone?

Alpha will explore these topics and many more.

The 11-week Alpha course begins Jan. 10 and will run through April 11, 2019



Sessions will be held in the St. Thomas More School cafeteria from 6 to 8 p.m. A meal will be provided.

For more information and to register contact: Theresa Gunia at 402-990-2957; or Rick Fanciullo, 402-558-8861.

Alpha



Follow the Pope!
@Pontifex

“Do not follow Jesus only when you feel like it, rather, seek Him every day. Find in Him the God who loves you always.”

Pope Francis



December 8

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary

December 25

The Nativity of the Lord—Christmas

January 1

The Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God—New Year’s Day

January 27—February 1

Catholic Schools Week

March 6

Ash Wednesday

The Pope's Pulse

"If one member suffers, all suffer together with it" (1 Cor 12:26). These words of Saint Paul forcefully echo in my heart as I acknowledge once more the suffering endured by many minors due to sexual abuse, the abuse of power and the abuse of conscience perpetrated by a significant number of clerics and consecrated persons. Crimes that inflict deep wounds of pain and powerlessness, primarily among the victims, but also in their family members and in the larger community of believers and nonbelievers alike. Looking back to the past, no effort to beg pardon and to seek to repair the harm done will ever be sufficient. Looking ahead to the future, no effort must be spared to create a culture able to prevent such situations from happening, but also to prevent the possibility of their being covered up and perpetuated. The pain of the victims and their families is also our pain, and so it is urgent that we once more reaffirm our commitment to ensure the protection of minors and of vulnerable adults.



May the Holy Spirit grant us the grace of conversion and the interior anointing needed to express before these crimes of abuse our compunction and our resolve courageously to combat them.

~excerpts from the letter of His Holiness Pope Francis to the People of God dated August 20, 2018

St. Thomas More Parish & Education Memorial Endowments

In Memory of Veronica Barrett

Jim Miriovsky
Phil & Sue Franco

In Memory of Donald Beeghly

Chris & Mary Shipp

In Memory of John Bober, Jr.

Matt & Mimi Maher

In Memory of Jack Caldwell

Marsha Sterba

In Memory of Elizabeth Clavin

Paul & Lorrie Reed
Bob & Jeanne Maher
Jim Miriovsky
John Mayhan
Matt & Mimi Maher

In Memory of Ruth Corcoran

Jim & Sharon Paladino

In Memory of Julie Costello

Jim & Sharon Paladino

In Memory of Stephen Costello

Bob & Jeanne Maher

In Memory of Dorothy Czyz

Gus & Barb Godek

In Memory of David Dodd

Allan & Sharon Schumacher

In Memory of Patricia Ernesti

Larry, Loretta & John Houlton

In Memory of Joseph Fanciullo

Larry, Loretta, & John Houlton
Greg Burrows
Allan & Sharon Schumacher
Paul & Lorrie Reed

Mike & Karen Fogarty
Paul & Sandy Boisseree
Russ & Connie Johnson
Fred & Terese Cottone



Phil & Sue Franco
Marie Bohls
Elaine Skoch
Judy Parker
Lucille Wisinski
Joe & Louise Ferrante
Rose Anne Rozmarin
Ed & Yvonne Kros
Jack & Kay Monzingo
Ralph Marcan
Peter & Mary Marinkovich
Thomas & Christi Kjar
Hank & Mary Lou Zdan
Mary Beth McKee
Jim & Ann Ponec
Mark & Jennifer Munchrath
Rudy & Judy Tesar
Robert & Ruth Niver
Mike Kirk
Mark & Laurie Patton
Mary & Thomas Vondra
Susan & Jim Franco

Kathleen Pecha
Joan Chonis
Mary & Richard Adams
Lillian Krehbiel
Susan & Bill Laird
Mary Elbert
K. Zakrzewski Hobza & John Hobza
Judy & Randy Haug
Michael Niehaus
Joe & Charlene Kurt
Mr. & Mrs. Richard Huss
Jean & Jerry Stahmer
Don & John Dethlefs
Dolores Bassemier
Ray & Marie Mack
Dan & Terri Clark
Kathleen Maher
Tony & Terri Vacanti
John & Betty Petroski
Steve & Cheryl Petroski
Bob Zadina
Roger Munchrath
Sue Bednacz
Gloria Rettenmaier
Rick & Dee Vaughn
John & Alberta Hassett
Denise Rockwell
Mary Ann Neroch
Patty Collins
John & Barb Lenagh
Rose Crowley
Dorothy Begley
Mr. & Mrs. Dave Bouckaert

St. Thomas More Parish & Education Memorial Endowments

In Memory of Dan Frost

Rich & Donna Limbeck

In Memory of James Gabel

Bob & Judy Wichert
Larry, Loretta & John Houlton

In Memory of Dorothy Gillen

Nick & Lucille Mickells

In Memory of Faye Gomez

Bob & Margie Hladik

In Memory of Nora Greco

Bob & Judy Wichert
Larry, Loretta, & John Houlton



In Memory of Carol Mathews

Nancy Olderog

In Memory of Dennis Lee Miller

Bob & Jeanne Maher

Lynette & Jeff Horak

Karen & Terry Ficencic

Helen Harvey

Mary Beth McKee

Julia Bosak

Jodee Fuller

Peter & Loreta DeMarco

Kevin Ryan

Gordon & Becky Bennett

In Memory of Annette Kay Pflug

Catholic Engaged Encounter

In Memory of Stephen Ptacek

Greg Burrows

Russ & Connie Johnson

In Memory of Ann Robinson

Ann Robinson

In Memory of James F. Rogers

Betty Mayhan

In Memory of Jo Russo

Lorraine Andersen

In Memory of David Stull

John & Katherine Coniglio

In Memory of Leo Tegeder

Mark & Carol Zuroske

In Memory of Betty Truman

Rose Ann Rozmarin

Carol Jean Zuroske

In Memory of Elenore Welniak

Nick & Lucille Mickells

In Memory of Rose Willemyns

Paul & Lorrie Reed

Mary Stankiewicz

In Memory of Lucy Zak

Leo & Gerri Majorek



In Memory of Theresa Hall

Matt & Mimi Maher

In Memory of Joseph Hermanek

Allan & Sharon Schumacher

In Memory of Linda Hiller

Jim & Sharon Paladino

In Memory of Michelle Miser

Mr. & Mrs. Dave Bouckaert

In Memory of Lee Monson

Greg Burrows

STM Knights of Columbus

Larry & Dona Hoskinson

Paul & Lorrie Reed

In Memory of Jerry Olson

Larry, Loretta, & John Houlton

Rita Seminara

In Memory of Henrietta Parys

Rita Ryan

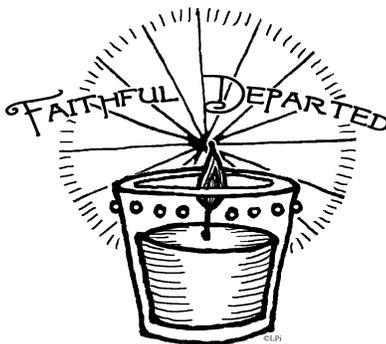
Marsha Sterba

Kate Maher

Karen Daniel

Gerald & Dorothy Hakenholz

Mabel Folda



In Memory of Delores Kirchofer

Matt & Mimi Maher

In Memory of Margaret Leise

Anthony Aliano

