Hope
Be vigilant at all times...
Lk 21:36
A Note From Our Pastor

Welcome Michael Van Dyke

Today we extend a warm welcome to Mr. Michael Van Dyke who will be serving our parish as a deacon intern for a year. Michael has completed his formal studies at Sacred Heart Seminary for his ordination to the Diaconate next year. As his final preparation he has an internship year here at STM under the supervision of Deacons Michael and Chris. Our parish is blessed to have Michael with us. When you get the chance, make sure you give him a personal welcome.

The Grace of Advent

Advent belongs to us. I say this because from Thanksgiving to December 25th the secular world is already celebrating the Christmas season. But as Christians we know the four weeks before Christmas is the time to prepare for Jesus’s coming. Advent is a time to celebrate light in the midst of a society that demands “instantaneous results.” We celebrate Advent well when we share our faith with our children, our family, our friends, and those we care about.

The weeks before Christmas are a very busy time for everyone. But on this first day of Advent, resolve to use some of this time to draw the family together, or a few friends together, into the grace of Advent. Take time to tell stories of your family: the stories of the decorations for the tree you bring out year after year. The story of the manger and why it has the central place in your Christmas setting. The stories of Christmas past. Use the Advent booklets that can be found on the Information Counter and let them help you prepare for the celebration of Christ among us, the true meaning of Christmas.

Remember, the commercial world is not the least bit interested in Advent. That’s why it truly belongs to us. Use it correctly and you’ll experience the presence of Emmanuel (“God-with-us”) as you prepare for His coming. That’s a very important Christmas gift given to yourself, and others, too.

Get a good start on Advent. Have a wonderful week and please find a place for me in your prayers.

Msgr. Tom Rice

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Pathways to Peace
By Deacon Christopher Stark

Today marks the beginning of Advent. Advent represents for us an opportunity to grow in awareness. Awareness of just how much our God loves us. Awareness of how much our friends and family mean to us. It’s a time to be mindful of who we are as a Church, an Archdiocese, a parish – a family, and each of us; individually. “Who am I, and why am I here?”

Advent is an opportunity to be reflective of the meaning and purpose of life. “What’s it all about anyway, where do I fit in...why should I care, what’s in it for me...what’s being asked of me...how do I feel about control, and allowing God in...of allowing others “in”?”

We humans can become easily seduced away by the mundane of the day-to-day of simple existence. Working, cleaning, exercising, studying, gaining, losing, measuring, wanting,...all of these chores that are merely consuming of our time and energy...and existence. That’s not living, that’s just existing. So many times in my life – I’ve failed to live...and I’ve just existed.

We have been created to be so much more. You and I have been created to be...so much more! We have been created to experience a privileged reality – the opportunity to encounter our God and Savior. For our own sake, and for the sake of the world around us. The encounter that we’ve been invited to experience is an interior experience within ourselves – our hearts, our minds, and yes – our souls. This same encounter is also one that we can find outside of ourselves. In the people, places, and things that surround us.

It begins with awareness. An awareness the enables us to realize that life is so much more than the transactions of the day-to-day. Life’s meaning is drawn out of our relationships. Do we consider our Creator, and to what purpose has our God created us? Do we consider the opportunities for how best to grow in knowledge of and in relationship with our God? Are we meant to go it alone in this life, or are we – by design – meant be belong to another, others – within a family – a community?

My prayer for all of us is that we will take this opportunity – this Advent season – to grow in awareness of how much we are loved by God. We are God’s 1st priority! We are HIS people. YOU matter...and so do I.

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THIS WEEK’S EUCHARIST INTENTIONS

**Saturday**
- December 1
  - 4:30p: Jack Saylor—15th Anniversary
  - 4:30p: Alicia Tuazon—Special Intention

**Sunday**
- December 2
  - 7:30a: For the People of St. Thomas More
  - 9:30a: Joseph Chick—Birthday Remembrance
  - 11:30a: Alba Balderi
  - 11:30a: James F. Dunleavy
  - 11:30a: John Dunleavy, Jr.

**Tuesday**
- December 4
  - 9:00a: Rick Doyle—Birthday Remembrance
  - 9:00a: Eugene Dytyniak

**Wednesday**
- December 5
  - 9:00a: For the People of St. Thomas More

**Thursday**
- December 6
  - 9:00a: Nick Balderi
  - 9:00a: Jim McCown

**Saturday**
- December 8
  - 4:30p: Jacinta Grooms

**Sunday**
- December 9
  - 7:30a: For the People of St. Thomas More
  - 9:30a: Jacinta Grooms
  - 11:30a: For the poor and the homeless

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**PRADE INTENTIONS**

**PRAY FOR THE SICK**
- Rosanne Bishop
- Maurine Brennan
- Chris Crocker
- Ferdinand Drygalski
- Msgr. Michael Dylag
- Barbara Geis
- Ann Henning
- Dan Mittelstaedt
- Carol Simmons
- Jamie Strong
- Helen Walczak
- Greg Wise

**PRAY FOR THE DECEASED**

*Our deepest sympathy and prayers to the family of:*
- † Jerry Brielmaier—father of Jennifer Bacon
- † Robert Jermstad—husband of Barbara Jermstad
- † JoAnn Lukas—mother of Dan Lukas
- † Judy Stotenbur—sister of Ed Demerly
- † William R. Urban—father of Rev. Thomas Urban

*Blessed are those who have died in the Lord; let them rest from their labors for their good deeds go with them.”*

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**ADVENT WREATH LIGHTING**

If you are interested in participating in the Mass by being a candle lighter for the Advent Wreath, please sign-up at the Information Counter or call the Parish Office at 248-647-2222.

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**Eucharistic Adoration**

Sunday, December 16, 12:30-6:00pm
Vespers and Benediction at 6:00pm

For most of us, this is a very busy time of year. The demands of shopping, decorating, entertaining, cooking, baking, etc. puts our lives at a frantic pace. Our focus tends to be on all the things we have to get done. Often the REAL meaning and celebration of CHRISTmas may get blurred in the midst of our secular world. A beautiful way to “stay in focus” and prepare for the celebration of Christ’s birth is to spend quiet, prayerful time before Him in Eucharistic Adoration. Step away from your hectic schedule and seek His peace. Slow me down Lord, so that I may be attentive to You.

To help assure that at least two people are present before the Holy Eucharist at all times, please sign up for a specific time at the Information Counter.

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**JoAnn Lukas**

Died on November 17, 2018
Buried from St. Thomas More
On November 24, 2018

_Eternal rest grant unto her
O Lord and let perpetual light
shine upon her. Amen._

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**PRAY FOR THE MILITARY**

Major Matthew Altomari
SSgt. Cory Borders
Lt. Andrew Boschert
Major Phil Brule
Sgt. Maj. Patrick Corcoran
Capt. Joel Cortright
ENS Michael Dwyer
Capt. Chip Evans
Spc. Evan K. Fowler
2nd Lt. Theresa Consentino
SSgt. Daniel F. Jamison

M1st Class Megan Jamison
1st Lt. Paul F. Kramarz
PFC. Lane Luyckx
Lt. Christopher Mitek
OS2 Emily Muhlenbeck
LTjg. Bradley Pienta
Capt. Nick Pollock
Sgt. Kyle Stout
Capt. Ben VanHorrick
Spc. Carl Voag
ENS. Adam Weisgerber
Dear St. Thomas More Parishioners,
Hello! Msgr. Rice asked that I share a little about myself as I begin my diaconal formation internship here at St. Thomas More. My name is Michael Van Dyke, though feel free to call me Mike. My wife, Juanita, and I have been married 33 years. We are members of St. Fabian Parish in Farmington Hills. We joined St. Fabian as part of the merger of St. Colman and St. Fabian six years ago.

I am a “cradle Catholic”, born and baptized in Grand Rapids. Juanita is a native of Lawrenceville, Georgia, and raised Pentecostal. We met after I had moved to Atlanta after graduating from Michigan State in 1983. We married in 1985 and in 2000 moved to Farmington Hills. For the record, Juanita loves Michigan and the four seasons!

I have been discerning this calling to the Permanent Diaconate for over 12 years. It first came about when I was praying for vocations and I started hearing whisperings asking, “What about you?” While Juanita and I had talked about the diaconate on and off, it wasn’t until about five years ago, and after Juanita had joined the Church, that she sensed something truly stirring in me and said, “follow your heart.” With that I applied for and entered Formation.

Juanita and I are looking forward to the time we will be spending with you over the next nine months. I am grateful to Msgr. Rice, Dcn. Michael and Dcn. Chris, not to mention the staff and you, the parishioners of St. Thomas More, for everyone’s support in this phase of my formation, which, God willing, will lead up to ordination next October. I pray that I am able to give to you as much as I am sure to receive through this internship. Please know you are all in my prayers.

In the peace of Christ,
Mike Van Dyke
The STM Book Club December selection is *The Destiny of the Republic* by Candice Millard. The complete title includes *...A Tale of Madness, Medicine, and the Murder of a President.* This fascinating slice of US History includes the centennial celebration in Philadelphia, the Statue of Liberty, and advances in medicine. The president is assassinated and there is medical blundering that leads to his death.

Please join us Tuesday, December 18 at 10 AM in Room 2.
The weeks of Advent remind us to set aside some of the hectic business of the holiday season, and to quietly reflect on the promise of the baby born in Bethlehem over 2000 years ago. There are plenty of Bible passages that relate to the Advent themes of waiting, preparation, light in the darkness, and the coming of the promised Messiah. Let us remember to Keep Christ in Christmas this year by taking one of the Advent Reflection Booklets available on the counter in the gathering space. Reference: https://www.catholic.org/advent/advent.php?id=18

**CHILDREN’S CHRISTMAS PAGEANT 2018**

Planning for our 3rd Annual Children’s Pageant is under way! The pageant will be performed during the **4:00 pm Mass on Christmas Eve**.

If your child is in Kindergarten-5th Grade and is interested in participating, please join us for an informational meeting on Sunday, December 2nd at 10:45am in Room 2.

We have multiple parts for each age group available and costumes will be provided. 5th Graders will be eligible for the Mary and Joseph roles. These roles will be randomly selected by Msgr. Rice at Mass on Sunday, December 9th at the 11:30 Mass. Also a baby Jesus is needed under the age of one.

Rehearsals are required for participation and will be held on Sunday, December 9th at 12:30 pm and Sunday, December 16th at 6:30 pm with a pizza lunch provided.

**We are also looking for 6th-8th grade Lectors, Altar Servers, and Ushers to serve during the Children’s 4:00 Mass. Sign up is available outside of the Faith Formation Office.**

We look forward to another amazing pageant celebrating the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ.

Please contact Shauna Haras with additional questions at shaunaharas@yahoo.com.

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**INVITING ALL**

**9TH THROUGH 12TH GRADERS**

- **12/02:** Youth Group Meeting 7:00 – 8:15 pm
- **12/09:** 11:30 am Youth Group Mass and Advent Family, Party immediately following
  
  Signup for the 12/9 Advent Youth Group Mass is outside of the Faith Formation Office.
  
  **7:00 – 8:15 pm Youth Group Meeting in the Social Hall**

- **12/16:** Christmas Party/Dance! 7:00 – 8:30 pm in the Social Hall

  Sign up via email at pobrien@catholiccentral.net

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Please join us for the **5TH ANNUAL CHILDREN’S CHRISTMAS PARTY**

after the **11:30 am Family Mass**

hosted by the Youth Group

**DECEMBER 9**

**12:30-2:00 P.M.**

IN THE SOCIAL HALL FOR FUN, GAMES, AND A SPECIAL GUEST provided by Hospitality

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**#STMYG**

Thank you to those who have donated globes in the past. We are still in need of a few more. If you have one that you’d like to donate please drop it off at the Faith Formation Office.

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**BRING A FRIEND**

Come find out what the RCIA is all about. We would love for you to join us! We typically meet on Tuesday evenings at 6:30 pm in Room 1. We start off with dinner, so come hungry. No need to RSVP, just drop in any time. The topics for the upcoming gatherings are listed below.

- **Dec 4** - Advent
- **Dec 11** - Jesus Incarnation presented by Dcn Michael
- **Dec 18** - Overview of Sacraments

Direct questions to Josylin@stmoffice.com
CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE PROGRAM

The annual St. Thomas More Christmas Giving Tree Program begins this weekend. The wooden trees with tags for the charitable organizations will be set up in the Gathering Area.

Please take a tag from the organization(s) that you would like to help.

Snowflake—Vista Maria
Gingerbread Man—Crossroads of Michigan (Det.)
Christmas Tree—Ladies of Charity
Teddy Bear—Mary’s Children Family Center
Snowman—Morse Elementary School
Red Circle—St. Elizabeth Briarbank for Women
Angel—St. Vincent de Paul at STM
Blue Star—Welcome Inn Homeless Shelter (Men)
Pink Star—Welcome Inn Homeless Shelter (Women)
Sunburst—Baldwin Center
Lamb—Wee Care, Right to Life-LIFESPAN
Apple—SVdP South Oakland Food Depot
Blue Circle—Crossroads Care Center, Auburn Hills
Yellow Star - SVdP Justice Initiative

PLEASE NOTE: All gifts, with tags securely attached, must be brought to the Social Hall no later than Sunday December 9th, so that the gifts can be delivered to the organizations that week.

Pathways to Peace continued from page 2

There’s dignity in our existence – not by our having arrived, but because we’ve been created. We are loved by the One who has created us.

May God bless you and your search for awareness of meaning for your life during this Advent season. May the arrival of the light of Christ enable you to come to see how much YOU MATTER to God, your family & friends, and your faith community. May you find peace as a result of this season of hope.

God bless you.
Deacon Chris

Giving Thanks

The Christian Service Commission would like to thank the parishioners for contributing to the Thanksgiving collection of grocery gift cards and cash donations. Your generous donation of over $4600 will benefit the families assisted by our own St. Vincent De Paul Conference and the needy families at Morse Elementary School. Your generosity makes a difference in the lives of the less fortunate in which we serve.

THE FIRST OF THE MONTH COLLECTION
St. Vincent de Paul—December 1 & 2

Halloween Outreach

Dear St. Thomas More Parish,

Thank you all very much for your support in our yearly Halloween Outreach. The event was a huge success! There were well over a thousand people here at the Seminary, and many families left with a huge smile on their faces. Hopefully a few of them may have the seed of a priestly vocation planted in them and that they could see that the Seminary is more than a building for studies but also for ministry. This would not have been possible without your help. We hope that you will continue to support Sacred Heart Major Seminary over the years to come, and on behalf of the Sacred Heart community, I send you thanks and blessings.

Sincerely,
Francisco Herrera
Undergraduate Seminarian

The Christian Service Commission thanks you for helping those in need have a merrier Christmas.
We have arrived at the powerful season of Advent, a season to prepare with awe and wonder for the Feast of the Incarnation of Jesus — born to us as Savior and Brother. It is a season to prepare for His return at the end of time.

It is also a moment to remind ourselves that that our individual judgment day is coming, too, when we will be called to give an account for all that God has given to us during our lifetimes. In other words, Advent is a steward’s season!

Our readings for the first week of Advent waste no time in calling our urgent attention to these themes of reflection and preparation. They seem to shout, “Wake up! Get ready!” and offer us some practical advice as we enter into this season.

The Gospel, from Luke, warns, “Beware that your hearts do not become drowsy from carousing and drunkenness and the anxieties of daily life.” How easy it is to lose focus on our Lord either by too much indulgence in our lives or by too much worry about our lives. Both extremes are easy to fall prey to. To avoid these traps this we are told to “be vigilant” and “pray for strength to sustain us.”

During Advent, we Christian stewards must ask ourselves some hard questions. Am I staying faithful to my prayer life? Am I using my energy and skills to serve others? Am I overly concerned about material gain? Am I relying my “stuff” or my investments as my source of comfort or security? Am I living for the moment or for the coming of the Lord?

Get ready Christian stewards! He’s coming! Let us prepare with awe and wonder.

The St. Thomas More Intercessory Prayer Service is Wednesday, December 19 at 7:00 pm.
Readings for the Week of December 2, 2018

Sunday  
First Sunday of Advent  
Jer 33:14-16; Ps 25:4-5, 8-9, 10, 14; 1 Thes 3:12—4:2; Lk 21:25-28, 34-36

Monday  
Memorial of Saint Francis Xavier, Priest  
Is 2:1-5; Ps 122:1-2, 3-4b, 4cd-5, 6-7, 8-9; Mt 8:5-11

Tuesday  
Saint John Damascene, Priest and Doctor of the Church  
Is 11:1-10; Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 12-13, 17; Lk 10:21-24

Wednesday  
Saint Nicholas, Bishop  
Is 25:6-10a; Ps 23:1-3a, 3b-4, 5, 6; Mt 15:29-37

Thursday  
Saint Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor of the Church  
Is 29:17-24; Ps 27:1, 4, 13-14; Mt 9:27-31

Friday  
Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary  
Gn 3:9-15, 20; Ps 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4; Eph 1:3-6, 11-12; Lk 1:26-38

Saturday  
Second Sunday of Advent  
Bar 5:1-9; Ps 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6; Phil 1:4-6, 8-11; Lk 3:1-6

ADVENT BOOKS AVAILABLE

This year we will be offering two options for daily reflection during Advent. The Little Blue Book from Diocese of Saginaw offers six-minute reflections on the Sunday Gospels for this year. This Advent we also have Jesus—God’s Promise. This book is Advent devotions inspired by Henri J. M. Nouwen.

Please look for the books on the counter in the gathering area. Either book will enhance your Advent and Christmas prayer experience. Donation of $1 is appreciated for each book to defray the cost.

2019 CALENDARS ARE HERE

Pick up a 2019 Calendar at the Information Counter

November Monthly Giving Report

@ November 26, 2018

Monthly Goal ($16,680 x 4) $66,720
Envelope Total $46,796
Loose Donations $4,145
Electronic Giving $3,685
Donations Received by Mail $3,400
Envelopes Issued 1388
Electronic Contributors 48

FISCAL YEAR TOTALS

Offertory Budget to Date $355,584
Actual Offertory Received to Date $309,433
Over/Under For Fiscal Year 2018-19 ($46,151)

Weekly Offertory Received

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As a final act of love and gratitude, please remember St. Thomas More in your Will

Christmas Flowers

Christmas Season is upon us so please consider making a donation in a loved one’s name toward the purchase of flowers to decorate the Church for Christmas.

Names will be listed in the Christmas Bulletin for donations received by December 14th. Due to publishing deadlines, names received after December 14th will be listed in the January 6th bulletin. Flower envelopes are in the church pews.

Thank you for your continued support of St. Thomas More Parish
**PASTORAL STAFF**  
Monsignor Thomas G. Rice, **Pastor**  
248-647-2222 x. 1111  

**Weekend Mass Assistance**  
Monsignor Michael Dylag  
Fr. Robert Spezia  
Christopher Stark, **Deacon**  
248-647-2222 x. 8888  

**WORSHIP and CHRISTIAN SERVICE**  
Deacon Michael Stach, **Pastoral Associate**  
248-647-2222 x. 5555  
dcmichael@stmoffice.com  

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bjfoos@gmail.com  

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Patrick O’Brien, **Youth Minister**  
pobrien@catholiccentral.net  

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