

**CATHOLIC PARISH OF  
ST. THOMAS MORE**

**PARISH PASTORAL COUNCIL  
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**MINISTRY AND COMMITTEE  
REPORTS**

**JUNE 26, 2018**

# OUR PARISH MISSION

**We are a large and ever-growing parish,  
generously blessed with gifts, talents and diversity,  
blending traditions from our original community  
with the visions of our newcomers.**

**We relish the gifts of our ministries and volunteers,  
welcoming all.**

*We “devote ourselves to the Teaching of the Apostles,  
to Community Life, to the Breaking of Bread and the Prayers.”*

**Acts (2: 42)**

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## 40 Days for Life

40 Days for Life is a community-based campaign that draws attention to the evil of abortion through the use of a three-point program of Prayer & Fasting, Prayer vigil and Community outreach. By taking a determined, peaceful approach to showing local communities the consequences of abortion, it puts into action a desire to cooperate with God in the carrying out of His plan for the end of abortion in Canada. The 40-day campaign parallels Biblical history, where God used 40-day periods to transform the world.

St. Thomas More has been participating in the 40 Days for Life since 2015 through prayer, fasting, witness and community outreach to end abortion. Participants (single, couples, families) or ministries sign up for an hour or more from 8 am to 6 pm to pray and/or fast in their home, church or outside of the Abortion Clinic and witness.

St. Thomas More participated in both 40 Days for Life Campaigns on the following days:

- **Tuesday, October 17, 2017** with 5 praying and/or fasting from home while approximately 54 people (14 from other parishes) took turns praying across from the Abortion Clinic and
- **Tuesday, April 13, 2018** with 7 praying and/or fasting from home with approximately 52 parishioners praying from one ½ hour to 2 hours on a beautiful warm day.

In the past there have been passersby, clients from the Abortion Clinic or a member of their families who have verbally challenged us for being present and/or holding signs they have found offensive.

At the last campaign on April 13, our participants who were praying across the Abortion Clinic in Edmonton on 109 A Avenue were falsely accused of throwing an item with a discriminating message to a client from the Abortion Clinic. The Edmonton Police questioned St. Thomas More participants and from their investigation, the complaint was dropped.

The next month, the NDP Alberta's Health Minister announced a pending legislation to create buffer zones around abortion clinics and prevent protesters from approaching patients or staff.

Since September of 2017, 2 parishioners have come forward to form a Pro Life Group at St. Thomas More and the organization of this group is currently in progress. Other individuals have also expressed a desired to join the group. The couple will be coordinators for this new group and all future pro-life events including 40 Days for Life will now be the responsibility of St. Thomas More Pro Life Group.

I am grateful for our dedicated priests and parishioners who have participated through their prayers, fasting or as witnesses in the campaigns since 2015.

Respectfully submitted by  
Monica Bober, Family Evangelization Coordinator

# Altar Servers

Under the guidance of Fr. Antony Fernando, Fr. Saga Devadoss, and Fr. Samson David, the Altar Server ministry continues to successfully serve in the parish with 49 active servers.

Currently, the Altar Servers are male/female children and youth, ages 9 (must have received 1<sup>st</sup> Reconciliation and 1<sup>st</sup> Holy Communion) to 17 who are practicing members of the parish assisting the ordained ministers at liturgical celebrations. However, new entrants to the ministry must be ages 10 to 17, the regular requirements notwithstanding. This is an important and special ministry as God calls all Altar Servers to help in the celebrations to promote the spiritual well-being of his people as they come together in prayer.

In addition to the previous ranks, two new Altar Server rankings were introduced this year: Aspirant and Advanced.

- The Altar Server **Aspirant rank** is for children under the age of 10 who wish to serve at the Altar. They may do so on weekdays only, and are not permitted to perform any of the normal Altar Server functions. This rank was instituted by Fr. Antony in 2017 for the desire of some young children in the parish who wish to serve. The idea is that they would wear an alb and be present in the Sanctuary during Mass, observing and learning from the Altar Servers what to do.
- New servers over the age of 10 are given the **Junior rank**, until they have gained one year experience, and have received the appropriate training, at which time they would be promoted to Senior rank. The distinction between the ranks is that of Liturgical function. Junior servers have fewer tasks to perform, and spend their first year serving getting comfortable with being present in the Sanctuary, and observing the Senior servers.
- **Senior rank** servers perform the bulk of tasks that have been allocated to Youth servers, including carrying the candles, assisting with the dressing of the Altar, assisting with the cruets and lavabo, ringing the bells, and certain other tasks for special Liturgical celebrations. There are always two Senior servers and one Junior server assigned to each weekend Mass, availability permitting.
- The **Advanced rank** is for Senior servers who are 15 years of age and older. This rank is open to such servers by invitation, and is not a mandatory. Servers who opt into the Advanced rank receive training in the Liturgical functions belonging to the Adult servers, and also training in extra-liturgical rites, such as Adoration and Stations of the Cross. They are expected to be leaders among the Youth servers, and to take on more responsibilities, including volunteering to help at various Altar Server events, and to even lead some of the training sessions for the Senior and Junior practices.

Altar Servers are required to arrive 15 minutes before Mass to vest and prepare, wearing clean and Sunday best attire, being attentive and respectful during the liturgical celebrations. The server is a part of the celebration, and is expected to participate by listening and responding in prayer and song – being a leader in prayer. Whenever a scheduled server is unable to attend, a replacement must be found, or another server who happens to be attending that same Mass ought to fill in, if available.

It has been mandatory, beginning in the fall of 2016, for all Altar Servers to attend training sessions as scheduled, as many of them did not attend the training in the previous year. Going forward, each training session will be directed to a specific set of servers (Senior rank, for example), and will only be mandatory for that group of servers.

Completion of a Volunteer Information Form (which includes parent/guardian consent), as well as an Altar Server Information Sheet is mandatory, and all current volunteers have completed these in advance of their first serving date.

I continue to produce the monthly schedule of the Altar Servers, utilizing an excel spreadsheet containing a list of all active servers, and their available Mass times. I issue a visual calendric schedule, and aim to distribute it to the altar server families as early as three weeks in advance of each month.

Two Altar Server retreats were put on this year. The first featured a talk by Fr. Antony, teaching the kids about a monastic style of silent prayer, as well as a presentation by Fr. Samson about the beauty and importance of each individual life. The second retreat event was a field trip to St. Joseph’s Seminary, where the kids attended Mass and, had lunch, took a tour of the seminary, led by two seminarians, and also heard a talk given by Jonathan Quist, in which he shared the story of his calling to the priesthood. In December, the altar servers participated in an optional social event, which was 5-pin bowling at Bronx Bowl, and a pizza party afterward. A second social event is scheduled in June, and will be held at Hawrelak Park. This event will feature games, food, an awards ceremony, as well as the deputation of the servers for the next year. A second deputation ceremony will be held later in the year for the new servers who signed up at the Stewardship Fair, and any current servers who were unable to attend the June ceremony.

Thank you to our priests for their support, prayers and presence in this ministry; and thank you to Monica Bober for her wealth of knowledge, experience and assistance in some of the more practical aspects of running this ministry.

Respectfully submitted by  
Christopher Snaith, Altar Server Coordinator

## Baptism

### Highlights of 2017 - 2018

<b>Baptized children in 2017</b>	<b>- under 1 year old</b>	<b>74</b>
<i>(July – December)</i>	<b>- between 1 and 7 years</b>	<b>47</b>
	<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b><i>121</i></b>
<b>Baptized children in 2018</b>	<b>- under 1 year old</b>	<b>39</b>
<i>(January – June)</i>	<b>- between 1 and 7 years</b>	<b>19</b>
	<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b><i>58</i></b>

Most months of the year baptisms are celebrated 3 times; Saturday at 5 pm, Sunday at 12 pm and 2 pm Sunday Liturgy. Liturgy Baptisms are celebrated only on 1<sup>st</sup> Sunday in Advent (if necessary) and not at all during Lent. In 2017, there were 5 Sundays in December so we were able to have liturgy baptisms the Sunday before Advent began. For years, we have not offered noon baptisms during July & August and in 2018 we did not offer baptisms on Mother’s Day for the first time. Liturgy baptism were not offered in October as I was on pilgrimage to India with Fr. Jaya & Fr. Mahesh and many of the Dust Angels. To replace it I added another Liturgy Baptism opportunity just before Lent began.

In 2016, we determined that Baptisms on the weekend between Christmas and New Year’s could occur only when Christmas Day falls on a Tuesday, Wednesday or Thursday. Having the condition is out of consideration for the baptism team members – to ensure they are free from volunteering at Christmas time when they are entertaining their own visitors or going to Mass at a parish of a family member. Families often wish to baptize at Christmas since they already have family coming around Christmas time. This additional opportunity to baptize was approved for 2018 by Fr. Saga and the Baptism Ministry Team but is contingent upon demand. The

baptism brochure will indicate one choice for a baptism Mass on this weekend initially but may include another option Mass/Liturgy if the need presents itself.

The baptism preparation procedure includes the following: completion of the Baptism Registration form by parents with supporting documentation attached; an Office Visit involves a welcoming conversation and an explanation of the materials they receive; and, completion of the Baptism Preparation Sessions held twice a month (two evenings totaling 4 hours) or a 4 hour Saturday session before the child's baptism celebration date. Under special circumstances parents/godparents have been allowed to take the classes post Baptism. There are no sessions in July, August, or December. Participants receive a letter stating they have completed the Baptism Preparation requirements, which is valid for 5 years.

Parents are encouraged to attend the classes again for their 2<sup>nd</sup> and subsequent children if upon gentle inquiry it is discovered that parents are not practicing what they promised they would at the baptism of a previous child. If parents requesting baptism have not attended the Baptism Preparation Sessions within 5 years, it is mandatory to complete the sessions again. Parents are encouraged to attend again with the godparents, even when they themselves do not need it if their godparents have not taken it.

The baptism form completed by the parents includes testimony that the godparents are baptized, confirmed Catholics who actively practice their faith including regular Mass attendance, regular reception of the Sacraments and living a Catholic Christian life (married in the church or abstaining from Eucharist if not). Most parents have a lack understanding as to what a practicing Catholic is; consequently, this is explained using a simple, loving, encouraging but direct approach during the Office Visit and the Baptism Preparation Sessions.

Due to an increase in unmarried parents, parents married by Justice of the Peace or married in a denominational church, parents are asked to book an appointment with Fr. Tony or Father Saga in order that the priests can educate, inform, invite and, at the same time encourage them to rectify their present marital situation (e.g. convalidation, annulment, etc.). Many or most parents do not see the need or importance of following up to do this for reasons usually due to convenience, time, priority and they do not understand the fruit that will result in one's marriage by making it a sacramental one and thereby being able to receive Eucharist we Jesus said we must to have Eternal Life. Additionally, at the Office Visit and during the Baptism Preparation classes parents are gently informed to abstain from receiving the Eucharist until their marital situation is rectified.

In previous years, there has been an increase in Baptisms of children because parents want their children to attend Catholic school even if the parents are not Catholic themselves. This has not been the case in the 2017 and the first half of 2018. When it does occur though, the parents are always informed that there are two routes for this to be accomplished: 1) parents go through R.C.I.A. and the family becomes Catholic or 2) Parents, who for whatever reason do not wish to become Catholic must be willing to raise their children Catholic by bringing their children to Sunday Mass, catechism classes and ensure they receive the other Sacraments. As the Policy & Procedure manual states: There must be a reasonable hope that the child will be raised Catholic.

When delivering the Baptism Preparation classes, I am very aware that most participants lack knowledge not only about Baptism but about Christianity in general; and, in particular about the Catholic faith. I find it is necessary to catechize not just on the Sacrament of Baptism, but more wholly on the Catholic faith, (i.e. who is God?, how Jesus Himself instituted The Church, the Sacraments etc., how we got The Bible & The Creed, Apostolic Succession ). There is a great absence of knowledge in religious education, relationship with Christ and the importance of attending mass, knowing and being a part of the Body of Christ, the Church and Church history, saints, traditions, scripture etc. In reality, I find that I am presenting a much-abbreviated R.C.I.A. class to which most are very receptive and leave feeling good about being Catholic.

Godparents are also required to attend the classes, ideally at this parish or alternatively their own parish and as a last resort a parish which offers a class more suited to their personal schedule.

A 'Godparent Information Card' is a gift to the godparent(s) on the day of their godchild's baptism. This was implemented to encourage and help the godparent to become more involved in his or her own faith formation. It is hoped that by this they are more inspired and equipped to assist the parents in passing on the faith to the child in their role and with the responsibility as godparent(s).

Our Baptism Team consists of 8 dedicated volunteers who have helped make this ministry visibly welcoming and spiritually inspiring for the families.

The baptism ministry is one that is very rewarding. Month by month, family by family I see the spirit growing and people embracing the Catholic Faith. As well, I see God's newly baptized sons and daughters becoming members of the Body of Christ and our faith community here at St. Thomas More Church.

Two years ago the 'remaking' of the 'I am the vine; you are the branches' mural was started. It remains a work in progress due to volunteer availability. The volunteers are art teachers and their students from Louis St. Laurent and Mother Margaret Mary schools and one parishioner. It is my hope that the mural will be finished over the summer of 2018. I have still been collecting photos of the baptized children and once the mural is complete I will be restart the practice of displaying them for the year. A plaque acknowledging the volunteers will be added to the mural wall upon completion.

The photos from the vine of the baptized children go into albums at the end of each year. The photo albums we have been using to 2014 are no longer available. It took me a long time to look for and decide on a suitable replacement. The 2016 baptism children are in the new style of album on the library shelf with the others. The 2017 album will join the albums on the library shelves once our volunteer has time to complete it.

Fr. Tony instituted 'drinkable' blessed water in individual bottles at the Easter Masses in 2017. Bottles had to be sought out, purchased, sterilized, labeled and filled and organized into 100 bottles lots for each Easter Mass. Even with the help of volunteers this was an extremely time consuming endeavor and I am much relieved that we have decided not to continue with it.

In August 2017, Fr. Tony rearranged the staff offices due to the 2 youth ministry coordinators beginning in September and himself wishing to be more accessible to parishioners and nearer to the youth ministry coordinators. Sara and Corina moved into the office that Kathleen and I shared, I moved into Fr. Tony's office and Fr. Tony moved into the spare office which overlooks the narthex. In January, I moved into the spare office since Fr. Tony was no longer here and it had become available. The current office is a very suitable size to accommodate parents, often with a stroller and a number of children with them. I have provided a play table and a few toys/books/puzzles to occupy the children while the adults are busy.

In September 2017, the Edmonton Catholic School District provided a gift for every child 7 and under who was baptized at any parish within their district. The gift is a beautifully designed folder which contains a letter signed by Archbishop Richard Smith and EDSD Superintendent Joan Carr explaining the effects of baptism and invitation to consider Catholic education, a book all about going to school and a growth chart with a place to put Sacramental milestone dates.

Thank you to our priests, baptism team, parishioners, volunteer artists and staff who have made this wonderful ministry very welcoming for our parents and their children.

Respectfully submitted by  
Diane Middleton, Sacrament Assistant – Baptism Ministry

## **Card Social**

The STM Seniors Contract Bridge Club continues as a friendly seniors club with over 20 registered members. We meet every Wednesday in the beautiful Chapter Room. We do manage to recruit a few new members from the Parish by putting a notice in the weekly bulletin. The age of our group is from 55 years and is open ended.

One of our better bridge players is Bertha who is 100 years old.

Our Bridge Group is self-sufficient from our weekly funds of \$3.00 per week/member. This fund allows us to cover our expenses such as playing cards, coffee, cookies, stationery, etc. Some amount from this fund is also for weekly token cash prizes for winners. Twice a year, in mid-June and before Christmas, we organize a Pizza luncheon and day of fun competitions for bridge club members. STM staff are invited to attend the luncheons.

We try our utmost to keep the Chapter Room and kitchen clean and in order.

On behalf of all Bridge Club members, we would like to say thank you very much to all STM staff members for their assistance, kindness and most of all for allowing us to use the facility.

Respectfully submitted by  
Carol Bahry & Julie Oberst

## **Catholic Mom's Group**

"Coffee, Kids, and Catholic Moms" started in January 2018, and has been meeting twice a month in the parish hall on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month. We started with a core group of about four moms (and our ten kids), and have grown substantially. We now have a group of approximately eight regulars and some weeks have even had as many as sixteen moms show up with their kids. Needless to say, there are lots of kids running around as well!

We have been busy enjoying coffee, supporting one another in our vocations as mothers, and studying the Our Father through a study guide we purchased through "Blessed is She." We look forward to continuing over the summer and through the coming year, and will be actively advertising our group again in the fall. We are so thankful to St. Thomas More for providing our children and us a place to build a strong community of Catholic moms.

Respectfully submitted by  
Michelle Bourbonniere

# Catholic Women's League

**Current Membership:** 106 members (highest ever)

## **Current Executive:**

- President: Tere Rubio
- President-elect: Pam De Luca
- Vice-President: Annette Patterson
- Secretary: Dorothy Johansen
- Treasurer: Yvonne Fummerton
- Past President: Dorothy Johansen
- Standing Committee Chairs: Nicole Favis, Clover Oryschak, Alissa Jones, Jean Ashdown, Sharon Wilde

Currently Jean Ashdown serves on Diocesan Council as Treasurer. Two Life Members in our council; Rose Marie McCarthy and Dorothy Johansen.

## **Mission Statement:**

The Catholic Women's League of Canada is a national organization rooted in gospel values calling its members to holiness through service to the people of God.

## **Our Council Donations this year:**

- Basically Babies – donations of new and gently used baby articles.
- School Lunch Program (E4C) facilitating Parish donations twice per year.
- Chrism Mass – Sandwiches and Squares and volunteers for reception
- Marriage Preparation Weekend – provide workers to prepare and serve meals.
- Back Porch Ministry - \$125
- Collecting at meetings for Nickels for the North
- Collecting at meetings for Development and Peace – 1% Program
- Catholic Missions in Canada - \$380
- Catholic Near East Welfare Association - \$125
- MaterCare International - \$125
- Euthanasia Prevention Coalition - \$125
- The Wilberforce Project - \$125
- Oaxaca Mexico Medical/Dental Mission - \$300

## **Council Activities:**

- Members are active in many ministries/groups in the Parish.
- Distributed CWL Poster Essay Contest information to schools in our parish boundary.
- Prepared baptismal bibs, gifts, and cards for all parishioners receiving sacraments.
- Attended Zone 9 meetings, hosted the Mid-winter Diocesan Meeting
- 22 members registered for the Diocesan Convention,
- Members planning to attend the Provincial and National Conventions.
- Two teams entered and participated in the Faith, Fitness and Fun Run at Newman College received the award for the highest fundraising for a group. This year 13 members are already interested in this event.
- World Day of Prayer at Ermineskin Community Church
- Stations of the Cross – Mary's Way held on a Friday
- Worked throughout the year to make our views against Euthanasia known to politicians.

- Working on two resolutions for presentation next year – one on Dental Health, the other on Radon Gas Detection.
- Supported Marian Mass in May.
- Hosted a well-attended Women’s Lenten Retreat in March.
- Supported Catholic Girls’ League with four members taking an active role in leadership with the group.
- Two members belong to the Friends of the Catholic Women’s League Leadership, raising funds for special projects.
- Participated in 40 Days for Life protesting abortion and praying for conversion.
- Attended Wilberforce Dinner.
- Discussed Resolutions passed at National Convention – sent postcards against pornography to government.
- Assigned a Prayer Sister to each member.
- Held a Spring Fashion Show and Tea in June for socializing.
- Cookie Walk in December to raise money for our activities and donations.
- Held a Spring Chicken Sale to raise money for our activities.
- Potluck dinners in December and June for socializing, awards, and increased spirituality.

**Speakers:**

- We have speakers at our meetings on various topics throughout the year. This year we enjoyed Father Saga and Father Samson, and are planning to hear from Magdalene House Society on Human Trafficking and on the Dental/Medical mission to Oaxaca, Mexico.

**Summary:**

- Our council is in good shape spiritually as we have had many activities to grow in our faith.
- Financially we are having one of our best years, even though we did not break even on the mid-winter meeting hosting due to the weather. We continue to provide free registration to all our members who wish to attend Diocesan, Provincial, or National meetings and conventions and are enjoying the fellowship of the large number of members of our council who attend these events.
- We continue to volunteer in our parish in many ways, and continue to support those in need.

**Future:**

We are participating in the Parish Needs Survey process, and will be supportive of the direction of the parish in the future. We are looking forward to having a direction and hope that this includes the twinning of our Archdiocese with the Mackenzie Fort-Smith Diocese.

Respectfully submitted by  
Dorothy Johansen, St. Thomas More CWL Past President

## Children's Liturgy

This past year, we had 32 volunteers that assisted at different times throughout the year with delivering the Children's Liturgy.

We delivered the Children's Liturgy for each Saturday 5:00 p.m. Mass and Sunday at 8:30 a.m. / 10:00 a.m. / 12:00 p.m. **We have had a lack of volunteers to lead the Sunday 12:00 p.m.**

For this program to be successful, it is important for the volunteers to be able to fulfill their scheduled time throughout the year.

We had many children that participated in the Children's Liturgy, with the Sunday 10:00 a.m. Mass having over 75 children on most Sundays.

We plan to begin the Children's Liturgy again the third week of September 2018. The program provided an opportunity for the children to relate to the message of the Mass from a child – friendly context.

This year, we continued the process of completing Criminal Record Checks for each of the volunteers.

Respectfully submitted by  
Cheryl Shinkaruk

## Coffee After Mass

The purpose of this ministry is one of hospitality and service. The parish provides coffee and cookies after the Saturday 5 p.m. Mass and after the regular Sunday Masses. This ministry is coordinated by the Parish Office with the assistance of about 10-15 volunteers. The Knights of Columbus volunteers on the second Sunday of the month, and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul volunteers on the third Sunday of the month.

Our parish is very large and continues to grow at a rapid rate. The hospitality of coffee after mass does provide an opportunity for parishioners and those visiting us to interact spiritually and to bond them into our church community.

One of the rewards of this ministry is seeing the eagerness of the children as they enjoy the treats that are provided – cookies, juice. Also provided are tea and coffee for adults.

Special thank you goes to Terry McGhee for coordinating this ministry. We need a number of dedicated volunteers and are always looking for assistance; so please be generous of your time and your efforts. Contact Terry McGhee at 780-434-3678 if you would like to be involved in this wonderful experience.

Respectfully submitted by  
Christopher Snaith – Business Administrator

## **Counting Ministry**

There are approximately 54 members in this ministry. The Business Administrator of the parish coordinates the counting schedule. Volunteers are scheduled on a team that counts for a period of one month.

Each team has a team captain along with three or four volunteers that assist in the counting of the weekly offerings. This procedure helps to ensure the financial integrity of the parish finances.

This past year we did see a number of our team members retire. At the Stewardship Fair, we were blessed to have two volunteers step forward to join this ministry. We are still in need of a team to count in the month of December

Thank you to all members, veterans, retirees and newcomers for your dedication and fine work.

Respectfully submitted by  
Christopher Snaith – Business Administrator

## **Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion**

Over 85 members of our parish serve as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion (EMHC) in our parish. Several new members have joined our ministry over the past year while three long serving members have retired. Generally we have been able to meet the needs of each mass with the exception of the Sunday 6:00 pm mass. We could use a few more volunteers for the 6:00 pm mass.

The Mass schedules are prepared four times each year: Winter up to Easter, Spring-after Easter to the end of June, Summer up until Labour Day, and Fall up until Christmas. For the Christmas Season and Holy Week-Easter, members sign up to serve. Most members receive their schedules via email, however printed schedules are always available for those members who do not have computers.

Suggestions regarding the distribution of the Eucharist would be most welcome.

Respectfully submitted by  
Sharon Pisesky, Coordinator of EMHC

## **Eucharistic Study Group**

The Eucharistic group met every other Friday (but always on the First Friday of the month) from September until June at which time we had a parish day of recollection on the last meeting of the year, which this year coincided with the Feast of the Sacred Heart. The day of recollection included talks by Rev. Father Miguel Irizar, Mass, Rosary, Divine Mercy Chaplet, a Eucharistic Procession to three stations set up around the perimeter of the Church. This Procession ended with Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament.

The group read and discussed various books with reference to the Scriptures, other noted writers and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. As many of the group as so wished to, came to the Rosary at 8:25 A.M. the Chaplet at 8:45 A.M. and Holy Mass at 9:00 A.M. and then proceeded to the Library where we had our coffee-breakfast and then our prayer to the Holy Spirit and began our reading and discussion. On the First Friday of each month we stopped our reading and discussion at 11:00 A.M. so that those who wished could spend an hour of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament which is exposed every First Friday.

The books we read are entitled: *Give Me Souls and Take Away the Rest* by Father Tony and our main book is entitled: *The Blessed Eucharist, Our Greatest Treasure* by Michael Mueller, C.S.S.R.

Should the group continue next year, the main book we will be reading will be *The Fourth Cup* by Scott Hahn and another short book on the Eucharist.

Respectfully submitted by  
Marcella Cloran

## **Familia**

A report was not submitted for this ministry, this year.

## **Families of Nazareth Movement**

The Families of Nazareth Movement is a formation program designed to help its members achieve a closer union with Our Lord, Jesus Christ. Father Andrew Bogdanowicz is the Moderator for the movement in our Archdiocese.

Members from all over Alberta met monthly for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, Confession, Mass and a Retreat guided by Father Andrew. Members in individual parishes met weekly to pray and share their experiences as they encountered Our Lord in the spirituality of events.

Respectfully submitted by  
Tracy Edmonds

## **First Holy Communion**

This school year 265 children celebrated their First Holy Communion at STM. In the fall, we have a few children celebrate First Holy Communion. The main spring session is for the child in grades 2-4. Many of the children who celebrate in the fall are preparing for their Confirmation and are 'catching-up' with the sacraments.

**Program** - The Holy Communion program begins with a parent drop in registration held on the first Saturday of the month Oct-Feb. The parents attend meetings in February, March, April and May in preparation for the child's First Holy Communion. The meetings are a mixture of catechism, retreats and workshops that are specific to the sacrament.

**First Holy Communion Celebrations** - We are very happy with the way the celebrations ran this year. This year we chose four weekends and allowed children to celebrate at either the 5 pm, 10 am or noon Mass. The priests gave homilies that included the children and their families, a perfect opportunity to remind these families of the awesome responsibility they have to raise their children in the faith. We are thankful to the CWL for the gift they give each child on their Holy Communion Sunday.

We will continue to charge \$10.00 for Holy Communion supplies provided.

Respectfully submitted by  
Kathleen Eistetter

# First Reconciliation

We hold First Reconciliation in conjunction with First Holy Communion. Most children who celebrate their First Reconciliation are also preparing for their First Holy Communion. The majority of children celebrate the two sacraments in the spring. However, a few usually celebrate prior to Confirmation in the fall. We always offer First Reconciliation and First Holy communion to those who require ‘catching up’ on the sacraments prior to Confirmation.

**Program:** We will continue in the future to schedule our First Reconciliation meetings and celebrations as we have done so this year--beginning with drop in registration to get the paper work underway before we actually hold meetings January through May. We have catechism sessions and a retreat that focus on Reconciliation.

**First Reconciliation Celebration:** We had one evening set aside in April for all 265 children to celebrate their First Reconciliation. We invited many priests to assist with this event. It was a very busy night in the parish and all reports from priests, children and parents were good. The children loved their first experience with Reconciliation. We are thankful for the gift that the CWL gives each child on this night.

We will continue to charge \$10.00 for Reconciliation supplies provided.

Respectfully submitted by  
Kathleen Eistetter

## FORMED

In February 2017, with the support of Fr. Antony Fernando, St. Thomas More Parish purchased **FORMED.org**, a subscription based website that provides FREE 24/7 unlimited online access to movies, audio presentations, video based study programs and ebooks essential for parishioners and schools to understand, live and share the Catholic Faith.

Described as the Catholic Netflix, FORMED contains multi- media resources to enrich, educate and entertain our Catholic faith addressing social, cultural and family issues. FORMED can be accessed on a desktop computer, laptop, tablet, smart phone and streamed to a TV.

*Just as St. Paul used the Roman roads to spread the Gospel in the first century, we must use technology in this digital age to share our faith in the twenty-first century. FORMED empowers parishes with life-changing tools for sacramental prep, youth ministry, adult faith formation, RCIA, marriage and family life, and more!*

Since February of 2017, St. Thomas More FORMED Committee has done the following to promote and bring FORMED into every parish household:

- Held our first launch in the spring of 2017 which included bulletin announcements to introduce FORMED, pulpit presentation, passing out FORMED business cards as part of a reversal collection method during Mass. A second launch is planned for fall 2018
- Display in entrance of the church with business cards; posters placed throughout the church, bulletin announcements including movie, audio, book and study program of the month. This will resume in the fall of 2018 with monthly bulletin announcements. Business cards and/or will also be made available in the entrance of the church

- Gave a short presentation to “Meet the Principals” in August and had all those that attended register with FORMED using their smart phones.
- Contacted schools by email and phone to promote FORMED and how it can be used for personal faith formation, classroom presentations, homework assignments, and family faith formation. 3 responses and 1 invitation were received. We will continue to reach out to the schools
- Business card or Promotion letter handed out to each family receiving sacraments of Baptism, 1<sup>st</sup> Reconciliation/1<sup>st</sup> Communion and Confirmation. We will continue to do this.
- Presentation given to St. Vincent de Paul and plans are to offer a presentation to all Associated Groups with St. Thomas More parish
- Movie “Mary of Nazareth” was shown in December with low attendance; Lent to Remember study program was offered during lent with approximately 15 attending. We are looking for volunteers to coordinate Movie Nights beginning in the fall as this is an excellent way to evangelize and promote community at the parish.
- Renewed it’s subscription for 2018-2019 year

Many of our parishioners are still unaware of this FORMED, and so there is still a lot of work to be done in spreading the word. Whether you watch a movie, read a book, listen to an audio or participate in a program, FORMED is meant to transform and evangelize every parishioner!

Respectfully submitted by  
Sharma Iyer, Monica Bober, FORMED Committee 2018

## Funeral Team

The Funeral Team work with grieving families to coordinate Funeral masses of their loved ones at St. Thomas More Parish.

During 2017, the funeral team consisted of 3 parish volunteers and the Family Coordinator as back up. Currently there is 1 person acting as the Funeral Coordinator and the Family Coordinator continues to support and assist as needed. The Funeral Coordinator reports to the priest and the Family Coordinator.

The Funeral Coordinator has been helping with this position for several years now and truly exemplifies the skills that are required to work with grieving families. These skills include flexibility being able to organize, coordinate and communicate with the family and those involved in the funeral mass.

Up to 4 hours is spent planning, meeting with the family, and coordinating with the parish priests, music director, lunch coordinator and adult server coordinator. 4 to 6 hours is spent on the day of the funeral.

In May of 2017, the parish Funeral Lunch Committee retired from preparing the food for funerals and is now replaced by Divine Creations Catering who is now the official caterer for all funeral lunches at the parish. The lunch committee continues to set up, serving coffee and the catered food at all funeral lunch receptions.

For 2017, **30 funeral masses** and 1 liturgy were celebrated at the parish. 21 funeral lunches were served in the parish hall.

From January to May 2018, **11 funeral masses** and 1 liturgy were celebrated. 9 funeral lunches have been served.

Funeral fees to continue to be as follows:

- \$200 Music fee
- \$200 Church fee
- \$200 Priest Donation

To cover the rising maintenance costs of the building, a hall fee of \$250.00 has been added to the funeral fees.

Respectfully submitted by  
Monica Bober, Family Coordinator 2018

## **Growth in the Spirit Prayer Group (Catholic Renewal Services)**

The Growth in the Spirit Prayer Group is a Catholic charismatic prayer ministry established in St. Thomas More Parish in September of 2012. The ministry meets every Tuesday evening from 7:40-9:30 pm, right after the 7 pm mass. The ministry operates under the auspices of the Catholic Renewal Services of the Archdiocese of Edmonton and the support and blessing of the St. Thomas More Pastor.

### **Our Ministry's Vision**

Our vision is that St. Thomas More Parish is home to a vibrant, Catholic, prayer community where members have a deep personal relationship with Jesus, are open and docile to the Holy Spirit, and have a deep love for our Heavenly Father manifested through an appreciation of the Word and the Sacraments and the willingness to serve God through acts of love and service.

### **Our Mission & Charisms**

Our role and mission in St. Thomas More Parish is to promote prayer growth in the spiritual life of our members and encourage them to use their charisms in various ministries. The prayer group provides an atmosphere in which members can grow in their personal relationship with God through praise and worship, teachings, scripture reflections, communal and one-on-one prayer, and sharing of personal testimonies. Through our prayer meetings and a variety of renewal activities, members are able to identify and foster their charisms and use them for service. The Growth in the Spirit Prayer Group fits into the life and mission of the church by seeking to fulfil the church's mission of evangelization, sanctification and renewal.

### **2017-2018 Activities**

The ministry's activities in 2017-2018 included the following:

- Weekly prayer meetings from September 2017 through June 2018. Each meeting included praise and worship, teachings, scripture reflections, sharing of witness testimonies and intercessory prayers. Integral to each prayer meeting is lifting up of the needs of our pastors, our parish, and the needs of those who have requested for prayers.
- Ministry members, with pianist Ania Romanowska, led the music at the Tuesday 7 pm masses.
- Assisted and participated in the Catholic Archdiocese of Edmonton's Pentecost Event on May 19, 2018, led by Fr. Andrew Bogdanowicz and organized by the Catholic Renewal Services. This is the fifth Archdiocesan Pentecost Vigil and was celebrated by Fr Matthew Hysell.

- Supported and organized the conference “Come Back to Jesus” with Maria Vadia, held on April 12-14, 2018 at St. Theresa’s Parish.
- The ministry also actively participated in the events and activities of the Catholic Renewal Services including hosting in the monthly prayer breakfasts, conferences and other events.

Respectfully submitted by  
MaryAnn Sosa

## **Hearts United: Holy Devotions for Today**

The purpose of the Hearts United ministry is to promote and reinvigorate the practice of beautiful and longstanding Catholic devotions within our parish community.

Hearts United was established in the fall of 2017. Several individuals and groups were working separately to promote a variety of devotions to Our Lord and Our Lady at STM. There was much informal collaboration; consequently, we began to work together in earnest. The result was that all have come together under the banner of “Hearts United: Holy Devotions for Today”. Hearts United refers to the union of the Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Heart as well as the union of the heart of St. Joseph with these hearts; and, the union of all of our hearts with the Sacred Heart and the Immaculate Heart. The following outlines the various aspects of this ministry.

### **Rosary Circles**

The STM Rosary Circles began in the fall of 2013. Currently there are 160 individuals, couples and families praying in eight full Rosary Circles. (Since a complete Rosary has 20 decades, each Rosary Circle has 20 participants each praying one decade.) Each Circle has a Patron Saint.

Each Rosary Circle member prays one assigned decade of the Rosary each day for the intentions of:  
 vocations to the priesthood and religious life from our Parish  
 intentions placed in the Prayer Petition Box (located by the Statue of Our Blessed Mother at STM) and the  
 intentions posted outside the chapel at the Providence Centre  
 the families of the Parish  
 the youth of the Parish

Each member prays on his/her own, whenever it is most suitable. The decade that each member prays changes each month. Members are provided their assigned decades via a monthly email or phone call. Twice a year there is an opportunity for members to meet in person and pray the Rosary as a group (in October and in May). These gatherings are optional. New circles are added as new members join. Pray-ers can leave the Circles at any time by requesting to have their names removed from the list.

### **Petition Box**

One of the intentions for the Rosary Circles is to pray daily for all of the petitions placed in the Petition Box. The Box is literally overflowing at the end of each month. At the monthly First Saturday Mass, the petitions from the Box are placed in a blue velvet bag, which is placed on the altar during the Mass. At the end of the Mass, the Celebrant leads the procession out into the Mary Garden where the petitions are lit on fire.

## **Rosary Lights and Chaplet Lights: Prayer Before Weekend Masses**

Since Oct 2016 the Rosary has been prayed 30 minutes before all weekend Masses except before the Sunday 10am Mass when the Chaplet of Divine Mercy is prayed due to a lack of time. Twenty-eight (28) volunteers belong to this ministry, with only one person leaving the ministry since 2016. In response to Pope John Paul II's 2002 Letter on the Rosary, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, we pray the Rosary 1) to contemplate the mysteries of Christ at the School of Mary, 2) to pray for world peace, and 3) to pray for the cause of the family. We have had comments from many people that the communal prayer in the parish has brought more silence, more focus, and more reverence to the time prior to these Masses, as well as hope to the hearts of many. Having our parish priest join us has been most encouraging and for this we give him our heartfelt thanks.

## **Mary, Help of Christians Monthly Novena**

Instituted in 2016, the parish prays a monthly novena to Mary, Help of Christians for our Youth. The novena starts on the Friday that is nine days before First Saturday. Our Priests lead the novena prayers following daily Mass; or, parishioners can pray the novena on our own. Hearts United facilitates the novena by placing an announcement in the bulletin each month and by sending a reminder email to Marian devotees. Early in 2018, with the permission of Fr. Saga, prayer cards were made and distributed for the novena.

## **First Friday Adoration**

Dating back to 2006, Adoration continues to take place on the First Friday of each month. A group of the faithful gather to pray for the needs of the Parish, for an increase in vocations to the priesthood and religious life, and for seminarians. At present, Adoration begins following the 9:00 am Mass and concludes at 3:00 pm after the Divine Mercy Chaplet is prayed. A small core group of committed Adorers each fill one-hour time slots during Adoration and Adoration time is recorded as the Adorers sign in and out. Attendance at Adoration is typically lower in summer. A schedule for the next First Friday is always available. To increase awareness of the need for First Friday Adorers bulletin announcements, posters, leaflets and prayer are used. We are employing a new Sacred Heart image for First Friday that pairs with the Immaculate Heart image for First Saturday used with the permission of artist Cameron D. Smith. Hearts United donated the First Friday banner.

### **Current objectives are to:**

- increase commitment of Adorers for a specific time commitment on a monthly basis
- continue to work on increasing awareness of the need for Adorers
- educate parishioners regarding the purpose of First Friday Adoration, the Sacred Heart of Jesus and St. Margaret Mary Alacoque
- to consider a program to encourage parishioners to enthrone the Sacred Heart in their homes (for example, as per the book "Healing Promises: The Essential Guide to the Sacred Heart" by Anne Costa)
- begin discussion regarding extending First Friday Adoration to a later time in the afternoon or even into the evening for those who work during daytime hours

## **First Saturday Devotion**

Under the direction of Fr. Saga, Hearts United is in the process of establishing the First Five Saturdays devotion as Our Lady of Fatima requested. In speaking to the Fatima children, Our Lady said: "I promise to assist at the hour of death, with the graces necessary for salvation, all those who on the first Saturday of five consecutive

months, **shall confess, receive Holy Communion, recite 5 decades of the rosary and keep me company for 15 minutes while meditating on the mysteries of the rosary, with the intent of making reparation to me.**”

On First Saturdays, the Rosary is led from the lectern beginning at 8:40 am. Generally, there is no homily in the Mass. To meet Our Lady’s request of a 15-minute meditation on one or more of the mysteries of the Rosary, Hearts United leads a meditation in the Chapter Room following the Mass. Since the Devotion began in November, approximately 25 people (not always the same people) participate in the meditation time. In addition, a beautiful new banner of the Immaculate Heart (donated by Hearts United) is set out each First Saturday.

### **Consecration of STM Parish to the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary (July 1, 2017)**

To honour the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Confederation, the Canadian Council of Catholic Bishops invited all Bishops to consecrate their dioceses to the Immaculate Heart of the Blessed Virgin Mary on Canada Day, July 1, 2017. Further, the Canadian Bishops stated that Bishops may in turn invite their parish priests to consecrate their parishes to the Immaculate Heart as well. On Saturday July 1<sup>st</sup> at the 9:00 am Mass, Fr. Antony Fernando consecrated the parish. A potluck celebration followed. As well, “Our Lady of Canada” prayer cards were distributed throughout the July 1 and 2 weekend and the consecration prayer was prayed at all Masses.

### **Month of the Rosary (October 2017)**

With the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Fatima in October 2017, the month of the holy Rosary gained new momentum and interest among many. Hearts United donated a beautiful banner of Our Lady of the Rosary. Five weekly bulletin inserts were developed to highlight the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Our Lady of Fatima and Her messages given to the shepherd children. Brief teachings pertaining to the weekly bulletin themes were read prior to each weekend Mass for the entire month. A candlelight Rosary followed by a Marian themed movie night on 13 October drew a large crowd, including people from other parishes. It was decided to offer a candlelight Rosary & movie event again in October 2018.

### **Consecration to Jesus through Mary (Sat December 9, 2017)**

The Annual Consecration to Jesus through Mary began in the fall of 2015. The Consecration is scheduled to take place on or near the Feast of the Immaculate Conception (8 December) each year. Fifty-seven (57) individuals signed up to make or renew their consecrations this year. Since 2015, approximately 360 people have made the Consecration. Participants undertake a ‘33 day personal retreat’ using the book “33 Days to Morning Glory” by Father Michael Gaitley. Participants prepare on their own; however, the group is linked by email through which participants receive regular, brief meditations and expressions of encouragement. All those who wish to make or renew their Consecrations come together for Mass in which the Consecration is made as a group. A celebration follows and certificates are given to those who consecrate for the first time.

### **Feast of St. Joseph (2018)**

The feast of St. Joseph (19 March) was celebrated at STM on Saturday, March 24<sup>th</sup> with: 8:30 am Rosary, 9:00 am Mass, and a reception in the hall. Over 250 people were in attendance. A special edition St. Joseph’s bulletin was printed and holy cards of St Joseph, at the request of our pastor, were printed and distributed. It is hoped that in the future more can be done to bring about a renewed appreciation for St. Joseph (Husband of the

Blessed Virgin Mary, Principal Patron of Canada, Patron of the Universal Church, and Patron of the Archdiocese of Edmonton) and by extension a renewed dignity of the necessary and noble vocation of fatherhood.

## **Divine Mercy (2018)**

This year, the history of DM, the message of DM and the devotional practices attached to it (Chaplet of DM and veneration of the DM Image) were brought to all parishioners at all weekend Masses. In 2000, Pope St. John Paul II added Divine Mercy Sunday (the Sunday after Easter) to the Universal Church's liturgical calendar and in continuity with that, the Church celebrated the Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy (Nov 2015-16). In response at STM, it was decided to celebrate Divine Mercy Sunday on a wider scale. New DM banners (donated by Hearts United) were designed and displayed in the church; 1500 DM cards were distributed among the faithful; and, the Chaplet of Divine Mercy was prayed before all DM Sunday Masses. Underlining the universal dimension of this solemnity (to which all Catholics have a 'right') and in light of this broader approach to Divine Mercy Sunday at STM, there was no 3:00 pm service.

Parishioners were invited to pray the DM novena which begins each year on Good Friday. A handout outlining the novena was distributed on Good Friday. The Divine Mercy Novena (Day 1) and Chaplet of DM were prayed before both Good Friday services. Day 2 of the Novena and Chaplet was prayed before the Easter Vigil. Parishioners were encouraged to complete the entire Novena in preparation for Divine Mercy Sunday.

## **Month of Mary (May 2018)**

This year Hearts United offered to assist the Knights of Columbus with the promotion of the May 7<sup>th</sup> Marian Mass. In addition, to highlight both the new Marian feast day—Mary Mother of the Church (established as the Monday following Pentecost Sunday) and the May 24<sup>th</sup> feast of Mary Help of Christians, a second Marian Mass was planned for Tuesday, May 22<sup>nd</sup>. The new Marian feast—Mary Mother of the Church—was instituted by Pope Francis with the intention that the 'promotion of this devotion might encourage the growth of the maternal sense of the Church in the pastors, religious and faithful, as well as growth of genuine Marian piety.' (Decree by the Vatican Congregation for Divine Worship and the Discipline of the Sacraments, March 3, 2018). It is our hope that this new feast will be observed henceforth at STM on the Monday (or Tuesday, if more practical) following Pentecost Sunday (a date that varies from year to year).

Respectfully submitted by

Christine Foisy-Erickson, Kathy Gust, June Iwanicka, Heather Reimer, Jo-Anne Ward

## **K4J (Kids for Jesus)**

K4J Program and K4J Captains Program (Kids for Jesus - 4 years to 9 years) continued for the 8<sup>th</sup> year.

Classes were held once a month (6:00 pm – 7:30 pm from October 2017 to May 2018. Cost remains at \$50 per child.

### **K4J Program**

This program teaches and motivates children the tools they need to know and live the Catholic faith through a different virtue each month, participating in the monthly activity stations (songs, crafts, games & snacks) and to actively live throughout the month in the class and at home working and completing the activity packs (1 for each month) they are given at the beginning of the program.

## **K4J Captain Program**

This year the Grade 3 & 4 Captains began each class with prayers, learning the song of the month and the virtues and teachings of the Catholic faith, but mainly spent each class preparing and leading assemblies for the younger children by presenting and explaining the monthly virtue through songs, skits, explanation of saints. This year the focus was on the assemblies with the goal to reinforce to the Captains (as they were learning the virtue of the month and preparing for the assemblies) to also live the virtue themselves, being a Christian role model to the younger children, their siblings and friends.

There was too much time spent on assembly preparation and not enough Catechesis. The proposed plan for the 2018-2019 year will be mainly Catechism with Apostolic Project time spent (every other month), while assemblies will be presented every other month with minimal preparation.

## **Apostolic Projects**

This was not implemented this year, but will be brought back in for both the participants and Captains during 2018-2019 year.

## **K4J Buck Program**

The children are encouraged to earn bucks each month by returning their completed Virtue Activity sheets/cards (each monthly pack has one) and by displaying virtues with their peers and leaders during the K4J classes (ie. patience, attentiveness, charity, thankfulness) which the Certificate/Buck Coordinator passes out. Certificates and bucks are then presented at the end of each class to recognize the participants.

In May the children use their bucks (kept in their own envelope in the church and given out to the children in May) to buy religious items and/or candy as a reward for all their hard work. Over the years, we have seen more children participate.

It is suggested that we also present certificates and bucks to participants-Captains with the most completed Activity sheets, the most bucks and the most displayed virtues during the classes.

## **Additional to the regular classes:**

- **Class pictures** were taken in the December of 2017 with Fr. Saga, Fr. Samson and Deacon Randy participating in the picture.
- **Deacon Randy** came by to speak to the children about the December virtue and then **blest the children's baby Jesus** figurines brought from their Christmas manger.
- **Fr. Don Flummerfelt volunteered to be St. Nicholas** during our December class in celebration of the saints Feast Day. Fr. Don was the perfect St. Nicholas and the children were not only surprised very excited to see him also. We plan to do this again next year.
- **Deacon Robert Lee** was our special guest in May for the K4J Year End Pot Luck. He spoke about his vocation as a seminarian and invited everyone to attend his ordination on June 28th. St. Thomas More has arranged for a free bus to drive parishioners wanting to attend his ordination mass.

## **Volunteers**

K4J program is totally reliant on our parents and/or parishioners to volunteer and lead each class. Without their generosity, dedication and time, K4J would not be able to function.

**We had a total of 41 families, 61 participants and 21 volunteers participating in the K4J program.**

This year, for the first time, Sara Dmitri, our Youth Coordinator coordinated the K4J program with the Family Coordinator. Sara brought a lot of great ideas and energy to K4J, particularly with the Captains program guiding and assisting volunteers as well as the children. The 2017-2018 K4J was to be passed over to the Youth Ministry, but due to the Youth Ministry's workload, this program was shared. K4J program is expected to be given over completely to the Youth Ministry for the 2018-2019 year.

We are sincerely grateful to Fr. Sagayaraj Devadoss for supporting this program and for Fr. Samson Antony, Deacon Randy Abele and Fr. Don Flummerfelt for your presence and coming to present Catechesis to the K4J children throughout the year.

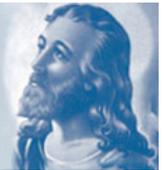
We would also like to acknowledge our thanks to Rebecca Stark, one of our K4J leaders who has been a dedicated, gifted and a true witness for Christ since it began. Her daughter Hanna is one of the original K4J members and has been coming to classes each month since 2010. She will be moving on to the girls Challenge Club in October 2018.

Respectfully submitted by  
Monica Bober, Family Evangelization Coordinator  
Sara Dmitri, Youth Coordinator

## **Knights of Columbus Father Bonner Council 7599**



*Father Bonner Council 7599*  
St. Thomas More Parish — Edmonton, Canada



This report is prepared by the Knights of Columbus Father Bonner Council #7599 for Columbian Year 2017-2018:

### **Church Program**

- Knights assist at Mass as adult servers, lectors, EMHCs, ushers, collections, funeral team, including full complement of ministers for monthly K of C Mass
- Hosted Stations of the Cross
- Participated in the Pentecost vigil hosted by Catholic Renewal Services for the Archdiocese of Edmonton
- Took an active role in the Veneration of the Cross at Good Friday Services
- Partnered with other Parish Ministries to celebrate Marian Mass
- Formation Program at Council meetings — Principles of the Order
- Donations to support seminarian (RSVP) and Newman Theological College and St. Joseph Seminary
- Conducted “Pennies for Heaven” for seminarian and religious vocations
- Hosted Padré Night for priests and religious in the Archdiocese

### **Family Program**

- Conducted the “Consecration to the Holy Family” prayers after Masses
- Family of the Month / Family of the Year awards
- Family Pasta Dinner and Dance

- Conducted “Family Retreat Activity”

### **Community Program**

- Seniors’ Christmas Dinner and Dance
- Habitat for Humanity “build days”
- Monthly pancake breakfasts
- Christmas hampers deliveries
- Charities Appeal raffle ticket sales
- Members assist at Marian Centre
- Conducted “40 Cans for Lent” project for Marian Centre, St. Vincent de Paul and Food Bank
- Coffee Service After Masses every 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month
- Provided scholarship grant to deserving Mary Margaret High School student
- Conducted, in partnership with Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Church Clothing Drive.

### **Council Program**

- Members serve as sales force for the parish’s grocery card sales program
- Conducted Columbian Year End Celebration and Awards Night
- Knight of the Month / Knight of the Year awards
- Installation of Officers and year-end BBQ
- Fall and spring membership drives
- First-Degree Exemplifications
- Second-Degree Exemplification
- Honour Guards for various events

### **Youth Program**

- Basketball Free Throw Championship
- “Keep Christ in Christmas” poster contest
- Conducted Youth Halloween Pumpkin Carving contest.
- Conducted Youth Leadership and Scholarship Award

### **Culture of Life Program**

- Conducted “Life Chain” activity for the sanctity of all human life
- Conducted “Love Life Ribbons” in support to March for Life
- Participation in 40 Days for Life
- Volunteered in repainting Back Porch office rooms and fence
- Conducted Mother’s Day for Life
- Participation in March for Life rally

### **Public Relations**

- Manage and maintain Council Monthly Newsletter
- Manage and maintain Council Website
- Contributes articles on Council events for the Parish Bulletin

Respectfully submitted by  
 Leo Sosa, Grand Knight 2017–2018 / [info@kofc7599.org](mailto:info@kofc7599.org) / [www.kofc7599.org](http://www.kofc7599.org)

## **Ladies Auxiliary**

MAY WE DO WITH LOVING HEARTS WHAT GOD ASKS US TO DO

The LADIES AUXILIARY started their ministry in 1978 and continues to meet Wednesday mornings in the choir room from 9:30 am to 12 noon. We meet to socialize, to give support to one another and to work on projects that benefit the church and our community.

We prepare baby layettes and tied quilts for Wings and the Society of St Vincent de Paul.

We have a roster of 17 ladies with 7-10 meeting on a regular basis, while others do work at home. We thank you for the space provided for us to meet weekly.

Respectfully submitted by  
Elaine Smith

## **Lectors**

Lectors serve the parish by proclaiming the Word of God during the Liturgy of the Word. They proclaim the Word of God, with reverence and clarity, and work to make a connection to Jesus Christ. Those who serve in this Ministry are called to do so, and to share their gift with the parish community. I continue to be grateful for the efforts of our volunteers who serve as lectors.

St Thomas More is blessed to have more than 76 lectors who serve at four masses over the weekend and during liturgical celebrations during the year. We also have four members of our community on our sub-list and three who have taken a leave but who wish to eventually return to our Ministry.

My objective remains to continue with an annual workshop and Ministry formation so that we can develop and support those who have been called to proclaim the Word of God at our parish.

Respectfully submitted by  
Marion Haggarty-France

## **Light of Christ Drama**

The activities from 2017/2018:

- Fatima Play which took place in October 2017
- The Spark Your Faith with Son Sparks Lab Play which took place on January 21, 2018

Respectfully submitted by  
Renata Bacso

## Marriage Preparation

The course was March 16, 17 and 18, 2018. Twenty-two couples were in attendance and as a whole group we attended 12:00 mass on Sunday. We are very pleased to report that the evaluations came back very positive again this year.

We have been blessed to have many volunteers. During the weekend, six married couples took part as presenters and organizers. We were grateful to have Deacon Randy Abele join us on Saturday to give a talk to our engaged couples on the Sacrament of Marriage. Johanna Deitrich also joined us Saturday to talk to the couples about selecting music for their ceremony and other details about planning the liturgy. A lawyer came from the Estate House to speak about wills. We were also pleased to have a nurse and St. Thomas More parishioner, Louise Boychuk give a presentation Natural Family Planning.

Dorothy Johansen and ladies from the CWL provided a lovely lunch on Saturday, as well as cheese and cracker plates Friday and coffee with muffins on Saturday and Sunday mornings. We don't know what we would do without them!

Thank you to Olivia Diaz for making and printing the certificates for the engaged couples who completed the program with us.

The engaged couples also completed FOCCUS questionnaires on-line and met with a facilitator to discuss and review the results of their questionnaires. In April, the facilitator notified us that she will no longer be continuing as a FOCCUS facilitator and has been unable to find a replacement. Michelle Dendwick-Spak, coordinator for Marriage Preparation, has been looking into how to fill this need and will discuss further with the Marriage Preparation team and Fr. Mitch.

Next year's dates will be March 15, 16 and 17, 2019.

Respectfully submitted by  
STM Marriage Preparation Team

## Music Ministry & Sound Ministry

Members of the St. Thomas More Music and Sound ministries continue to lead and encourage the congregation's prayer through song. *One who sings well prays twice.*

Membership in the adult choir continued to hover around 70 members who regularly sing at one of following Masses: Saturday at 5 pm; Sunday at 8:30, 10 am or 12 noon. Regular accompanists are: Violeta Borromeo, Cathy Jabusch, David Moret, and Paulette Pelland. Additionally, the choir is occasionally accompanied by parishioners Iggy Tian and Michael Gust (and other visiting instrumentalists) for special occasions. One of 19 dedicated cantors leads the psalm and acclamations at each mass.

A dedicated group of young singers and instrumentalists (piano, saxophone, flute, guitar, violin, etc.) provide the music at the Sunday 6 pm. Regular accompanists are Renny Hendra and Indri Purwana on piano, and Derek De Gannes on guitar. Several young people serve as cantors at this mass as well.

In addition to singing at all Sunday Masses, special baptism services, First Communion masses, Confirmation, weddings, funerals, two special Marian Masses, Christmas Masses and all Easter Triduum services, the adult choir also presented an advent concert. More than 750 people attended a concert entitled *Scripture &*

*Song – Music to prepare for Christmas* on Sunday Dec. 17 at 3 pm. all involved. A freewill offering was collected. No reception was held due to scheduling limitations with the 6 pm mass.

Several choir members also sang at a common prayer service to commemorate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation with singers from across the Archdiocese and other Lutheran congregations on Oct. 30 at All Saints Anglican Cathedral.

Special thanks to Tamara Mackenzie for helping out in various capacities throughout the year as needed.

The Funeral Choir is comprised of approximately 20 members, some of whom sing with the adult choir, as well as a handful of additional singers who are dedicated to this special ministry. Most funerals in 2017-18 were accompanied by David Moret.

Joe Buijs and Joan Holloway continued to work with their dedicated group of volunteers to diligently and efficiently organize and maintain the choir's growing library of music. Their assistance is much appreciated.

The Children's Choir continued to sing monthly at the 10 am mass between October and May. Directed by Samantha Goerz and accompanied by Renny Hendra, approximately 18 children in Grades 3-9 rehearsed on Thursdays and sang regularly at mass. This was Samantha's first year directing the choir; she encouraged children to provide instrumental accompaniment on violin and clarinet to further beautify the music-making. Several young singers are developing their cantoring skills by proclaiming the psalm when the Children's Choir sings at mass.

The Sound Ministry has grown in number to 16 volunteers who diligently operate the sound board at all services throughout the year. Special thanks to Kirby Jabusch and Dale Petryk who have been working behind the scenes to continually improve the system and provide training.

A heartfelt thank you to all members of the music and sound ministries for so selflessly sharing their time and talents.

Respectfully submitted by  
Johanna Dietrich, Music Ministry Coordinator

## **Prayer Shawl**

Every Friday from 9:30-11:30, September through the to the end of June, approximately 10-14 ladies from the parish gather in the Youth room to knit and pray. At approximately 10:30 one of the parish priests/deacon or visiting priest joins the ladies to bless the completed shawls.

These shawls are given a number and recorded in the Prayer Shawl book along with the name of the recipient. Recipients are continually being prayed for. To date over 1450 Prayer Shawls have been made and given away. This year the ladies have been knitting prayer blankets/shawls for Gianna Center. These are given to the new born babies and their mothers.

This ministry was started in November 2016. The shawls are never for sale but a donations is always gratefully accepted to purchase more yarn. Many parishioners have also donated yarn. This year CWL gave a donation of 300 dollars.

Respectfully submitted by  
Linda Sorenson

## **R.C.I.A. Adapted for Children (Rite of Christian Initiation Adapted for Children)**

Under the direction of Father Antony Fernando, our past Youth Coordinator, Corina Santaera facilitated the YouCat 4 Youth program for young parishioners from grade 4 to 12 and the RCIA-Children catechumens.

The classes were held on the 1st, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3rd Thursday evenings (7:30 pm – 8:15 pm) each month from October 2017 to May 2018, while the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday evenings (7 pm – 8:15 pm) was scheduled for the RCIA to prepare them for the Rites and review the Catechesis presented at the Y4Y. This was facilitated and instructed by the RCIA – Children coordinator.

YouCat 4 Youth curriculum was based on the RCIA Journey of Faith series and YouCat. Each month a speaker or Corina presented the session theme to the children.

The RCIA-Children program began with 8 inquirers. 2 of the 8 stopped attending before Christmas due to unknown reasons. After several attempts to call, text and email, the parents have never replied. In January of 2018, an 8 year old girl joined our parish coming from Good Shephard parish due to her mother also being in the RCIA at St. Thomas More. On March 31, seven children ages 8, 10, 11, 12, 13 and 15 from 5 families received the Sacraments of Initiation. Four of the children's parents (1 or both) also became members of the Catholic Church.

The children and their families were required to also attend weekly mass on Sundays, attend and participate in the 4 Rites, Breaking Open the Word and the Scrutinies (all part of the discernment and formational process of being received into the Catholic Church).

The Journey of Faith program is cohesive, comprehensive and flexible creating a practical and attractive formation process, for both the participants and catechists. Because there are forty eight catechetical lessons, the program requires the participants to meet weekly.

While the RCIA children enjoyed the program, the RCIA coordinator was only present with them once a month to review and prepare them for the Rites. This brought a challenge for the RICA coordinator working to build and nourish a relationship with them in the RCIA spiritual journey. I strongly recommend that the formation be brought back to the original process and remove the children from joining the parish Youth groups during the RCIA year. Information and an invitation to the Youth groups or ministries will be included instead during one of the Mystagogy sessions, "Your Special Gifts."

Consistency, formation and relationship is the key to the success of the RCIA for children at the same time flexibility is a great asset. Because of the family dynamics drastically changing and ensuring the Coordinator and parish priest's work within certain parameters, each catechumen/candidate or family as a whole should be considered as part of the curriculum development process for the RCIA child.

Parent's involvement is key to the success of the child's formation while ongoing (weekly) support from the Catechist and the faith community in all areas of the family dynamics is also vital to help the family to grow in the Catholic faith together during the RCIA year and continue living the Catholic faith beyond Mystagogy.

Classes will continue to be 1 hour and 15 minutes each week to accommodate the entire curriculum. I recommend that the Journey of Faith handouts be given out at each class as a supplementary resource. The handouts can also be used during class as a resource activity.

Respectfully submitted by  
Monica Bober, Family Evangelization Coordinator

# RCIA

## RCIA Process and Team:

The ‘tested and true’ Journey of Faith curriculum by Liguori Publications was revised over a year ago. In 2016-17, we began incorporating the changes made by Liguori Publications into our curriculum. For 2017-18, the revised curriculum was fully implemented. While overall the modifications were minor, our Catechetical team is happy with the revised curriculum in terms of meeting the needs of our Inquirers as they are introduced to the Faith.

Our Catechetical team included myself, Darlene Smigelski (Coordinator) and Kathy Gust (Assistant Coordinator) along with Catechists: Louise England, Tracy Edmonds, Cheryl Fisher, Tom Gust, MaryAnne McGill, and Seminarians Adam Rieger and Sedney Polinar. Unfortunately, Sedney was not able to complete the year with us. We also welcomed new Catechists Jeremy Sit and Sharleen Jackson to the team. Father Don Flumerfelt (retired) greatly assisted the RCIA as a catechist, sponsor, retreat leader and confessor. We were grateful for the contributions of all of our dedicated team members.

For the third year in a row, we had faithful volunteers, Roseanna Ross and Mildred Njiki who provided childcare, which enabled the participation in the RCIA of several of our Inquirers and Sponsors. It is because of our dedicated childcare team that many are able to embark on the RCIA journey.

## The Inquirers:

Of the 55 enquiries we had by phone, email or in person, ultimately 27 were enrolled in the program and ended with **20 Adults and 8 of their children** being received and celebrating the Sacraments at the Easter Vigil. Of the **20 RCIA adults, 11 were Baptized, 4 made a Profession of Faith and 5 Catholics celebrated Confirmation and the Eucharist.** We also had a regular showing of **2-3 ‘Companions on the Journey’** – those who wished to learn more about the Catholic faith – several of whom are Catholic. There were also 7 “CIC” children (*RCIA Adapted for children*) at the Easter Vigil prepared by our Priests and Monica Bober, Family Evangelization Coordinator.

## Lesson Learned:

Ephphatha House has served as a good place for the RCIA Retreat. As of the end of May 2017, **Ephphatha House came under the management of the Carmelites and is now called the Mount Carmel Spirituality Centre.** We were able to hold our Retreat at this location again this year and will continue to do so in future years.

The Vigil Reception was hosted by RCIA Alumni with Pat Choma acting as consultant. We are grateful to Donna Molloy (Reception team-lead), Donna and Doug McLean, Emily He, Farrah Hart, Sidonia Lumpini-Luankadi and friends Joel, Mia and Kim. While the food was catered, the RCIA crew set up, served and cleaned up afterward. It was a beautiful reception after the highest Mass of the year! We look forward to RCIA Alumni organizing the reception in years to come.

When our long-time videographers Paul and Greg Sorenson were not available to record the Easter Vigil Mass, through the assistance of Youth Coordinator Sara Dmitri we enlisted the services of youth members of the Parish, Jude Dias and Felix Ikokwu. We were able to borrow equipment from their high schools with the permission of their Principals at Mother Margaret Mary and Louis St. Laurent. The involvement of the youth has provided an opportunity for them to gain skills and serve the Parish community. Going forward we are investigating the need to produce a video copy of the Vigil for the RCIA to minimize the work required by the videographers.

A Parish Babysitting Ministry with numerous Volunteer Management approved adults would be helpful.

**Highlights:**

Our annual *RCIA Edition of Martha's Kitchen* netted **85 meals** for those in need in our midst. This year the meals went to the *WINGS (Women In Need Growing in Strength)*.

Once again, we had Paul and Carol Quist speak on the Sacrament of Marriage. Their continued education on the beauty of the sacrament is producing good fruit in couples.

The on-line *RCIA Presentation Series* of audio and slides of all our teaching sessions continues to grow. (<http://www.stmparish.com/rcia2011-12presentation.html>) and will be available in a cleaner format with the launch of the new Parish web site.

**Support Ministries:**

We thank God for our Custodian, Arthur Connick and Acting BAdm Christopher Snaith for their support.

Respectfully submitted by

D. T. Smigelski, RCIA Coordinator, [stm.rcia.coord@stmparish.com](mailto:stm.rcia.coord@stmparish.com), 780-434-6313 (ext. 226)

## **Sacristans – Linens Required For Mass**

Our Primary Objective, as a member of a team, is to ensure that there is always a ready supply of clean linens for use in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Our responsibilities include: (1) Gathering for laundering purposes purificators, corporals, hand towels, finger towels, baptismal towels and other linens at the beginning of each week, (2) Ensuring that the linens are washed according to instructions from the missal that the water for the first wash is poured down to the earth, since we do not have a sacarium, (3) The linens are washed and ironed at the Sacristan's home and returned to the Sacristy, the latest by Thursday or Friday in preparation for the weekend Masses. The expected time commitment for each week is approximately 2-3 hours per week. The washing of albs, other vestments, etc. , including other responsibilities, is assumed by the Sacristan—Head Coordinator.

Currently we have 7 sacristans washing linens, the count including the coordinator. Several sacristans had to resign due to poor health. Although we have been able to acquire a very limited number of new volunteers during our Stewardship Fair, unfortunately, consistency and reliability have been issues of concern. It should be noted that the sacristans who are currently helping us have served faithfully for many, many years.

In terms of our responsibilities, each Sacristan undertakes the washing and ironing of linens for a month or 4 weeks per year, the assignment scheduled by the coordinator. The coordinator assumes the washing and ironing of linens during the months when a sacristan is unavailable.

For questions or clarification, please contact the undersigned at (780) 434-4715. Thank You.

Respectfully submitted by

Talya Shen, Coordinator, Sacristan-Linens Required for Mass

## Scripture Study

This group, which meets Wednesday mornings after mass, is interested in studying the word of God through the scriptures. We had 22 registered members this past year, though weekly attendance varies in the winter months.

In September, 2017, we started studying “Acts: The Spread of the Kingdom”, and finished 14 of the 20 sessions in the Ascension Press DVD series. We will finish the remaining 6 sessions before Christmas, 2018, and will begin a new study in January, 2019.

All of these studies include DVD presentations, with each participant purchasing a study guide, which provides overviews of each session and questions to review. The sessions provide for group discussion and fellowship.

The group makes two charitable donations a year with proceeds from voluntary donations. We support needy parish families and the Back Porch.

This group always welcomes new participants.

Respectfully submitted by  
Annette Patterson

## Social Justice Ministry

Our Ministry believes that our world is our responsibility. Working through action, education and advocacy both locally and globally we can begin spreading the seeds of peace and justice.

This year we tried to achieve some of our goals in works as follows:

### Local Action:

- **Inner City Pastoral Ministry** – In December our Ministry along with St. Stanislaus, and St. Marys schools prepared and served lunch to several hundred inner city homeless and underemployed. The church service and fellowship that go along with serving this lunch make it a really wonderful experience for the volunteers.
- **Habitat for Humanity** – Members of our Ministry helped to provide a meal for 35 volunteers at a build on June 2, 2018.

### Global Action:

- **Sierra Leone Women’s Group** – Our ministry has maintained contact with this group through one of our former sponsored refugees, Rachel Fallal.
- **Development and Peace** – We hosted the 50th Anniversary Gala for D and P in the Church Hall on November 4, 2017. It was well attended and included entertainment by the Logan Family Singers and speakers such as Bob McKeon.

- Fall Action Campaign – we offered information and education to parishioners on the D&P campaign
- Share Lent – we ran the share lent campaign offering educational materials, presentations at all masses and information on this year’s campaign
- Seminars and Workshops – Members of our committee attended workshops, annual meets and seminars sponsored by Development and Peace.

## Advocacy

Over the last year members of our group met our new MP Matt Generoux and continued the process of meeting with him at his office to discuss a variety of issues. These include the current situation with regards to a mining ombudsman to be put in place by the Federal government in order to deal with issues that arise in the Global South and involve Canadian mining companies. Cuts to humanitarian aid were also discussed. Lastly, the issue of Right to Die legislation which is currently in discussion in Ottawa.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or wish to discuss any of the above information further. Thank you.

Respectfully submitted by

Erin Gaudet, Chairperson - STM Social Justice Ministry, (780) 235-1992

## The Legion of Mary

### (Our Lady of Good Counsel Praesidium and Morning Star Junior Praesidium)

The Senior praesidium, Our Lady of Good Counsel meets every Thursday at 7:00 p.m. at St. Thomas More library. The Junior praesidium, Morning Star meets every Saturday at 3:30 pm at the Small meeting room.

#### Membership:

- Spiritual Director - Fr. Sagayaraj Devadoss

#### Active Members:

- Senior Praesidium: 8 + 2 (new)
- Junior Praesidium: 7
- Auxiliary Members: 71

**Mandate: The Legion of Mary intends to render its service, with the spirit and solicitude of Mary, to every person who is the image of Christ.**

#### Activities:

- Senior Praesidium - Pastoral Care consisting of visits to sick and shut-ins at home or at Extended Care facilities. Each week we visit approximately 175 Catholic residents offering lay-led liturgy and Holy Communion at the following centres: Good Samaritan Society – Wedman House, Good Samaritan Southgate Care Centre, Shepherd’s Care Foundation, Devonshire Care Centre, Lifestyle Options Riverbend, Lifestyles–Whitemud Crossing, Riverbend Retirement Residence, Windermere Manor and Westcliff Manor. Weekly Home visits are made on Sundays, Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursday to bring Holy Communion to elderly Catholic residents who are unable to attend mass on Sundays. Mass is also

celebrated once a month at Good Samaritan Southgate Centre, Devonshire Care Centre, Lifestyle Options Riverbend, Lifestyles-Whitemud Crossing and Riverbend Retirement Residence.

- Junior Praesidium – Members, except for the 2 officers coming from the Senior Praesidium, are aged 10-16. Members are being taught to be more prayerful. They are assigned to help at home in the Spirit of the Family of Nazareth, extend help in school in every way they can, and try to influence friends and peers about the Catholic faith. They are also assigned to practice a particular virtue each week.

#### **Other Activities:**

- We inform the Priest of those residents in extended care facilities who require anointing or Sacrament of Reconciliation especially at Christmas and Easter.
- Masses are offered for all deceased members of the Legion.
- Once per year, we attend volunteer appreciation functions at three of the care facilities.

#### **Weekly**

- Senior Praesidium members meet every Thursday in the library, St. Thomas More Church at 7:00 p.m. We hold 52 meetings a year. During the summer months (July and August) our meetings are held at Providence Centre as the Church is closed for evening meetings.
- Junior Praesidium members meet every Saturday at the Small Meeting Room at 3:30 pm for the prescribed 52 meetings a year. During the summer months and whenever the Church is closed, members meet at the houses of two of the members.

#### **Monthly**

- Legion of Mary Curia meeting.

#### **Annually**

- Marian Mass in May – attending the meetings, contacting the schools, leading the Rosary and participating in the Mass.
- Legion Functions: Acies Function, Praesidium Function, General Reunion, Outdoor Function and Annual Retreat

We thank God and our Blessed Mother Mary, for their guidance and protection; our spiritual director, Fr. Saga, Fr. Samson, Deacon Randy, the office staff and all others for their help and assistance throughout the year. A special thanks to our active members who faithfully perform their pastoral works each week and to our auxiliary members, for their continuous support through their daily prayers.

Respectfully submitted by  
Alice M. Estacio, President – Our Lady of Good Counsel Praesidium

## The Lord's Flock

The Lord's Flock Catholic charismatic community's mission is to help people encounter Jesus through the Holy Spirit – using scripture, praise and worship, and fellowship.

In the past year, The Lord's Flock chapter at St. Thomas More reached out to parishioners, family, and friends through many spiritual events, as well as social activities. Highlights include:

- Weekly prayer meeting:
  - Met **every** Sunday for two hours, including long weekends, Easter, and Christmastime.
  - Increased attendees' knowledge of Catholic teaching and sacred scripture through catechism talks and Bible study
  - Promoted rich spiritual life of attendees through intercessory prayer and praying Rosary
  - Averaged 12 attendees
- Conducted a seminar in May 2018 and invited all parishioners to attend, for free
  - led by The Lord's Flock International director and renowned international speaker Michaela Flores and Al Flores
  - 30 attendees
- The Lord's Flock members regularly volunteered in other ministries at St. Thomas More, serving as lecturers, ushers, Eucharistic ministers, collectors, and coffee servers after morning Mass
- Held social events for community bonding: picnic in the park, and Christmas party at St. Thomas More parish hall
- The Lord's Flock members met regularly outside the parish as well, assisting in and attending events of Catholic Renewal Services such as:
  - Hosting a prayer breakfast once a year
  - monthly prayer breakfasts
  - Dr. Mary Healy conference & healing service held at St. Thomas More

Respectfully submitted by  
Lunn Bagunoc

## Vacation Bible School (VBS)

Vacation Bible School was held July 10 – 13, 2017 in the mornings (9 am to 12 pm) for children ages 4 to 10 and the Captain Program, ages 11 – 14. Cost was \$50.00 per participant and \$25.00 for Captains.

The *K4J SUMMERTIME BLAST* is one of four K4J Vacation Bible School programs currently produced. The children are taught how to develop the virtue of INITIATIVE that center around learning how to pray to Jesus in the Eucharist, receive his grace, then go out to share his love with the world!

Children are divided into age groups and meet each morning in the Chapter room for the Opening Prayer. All groups then meet in the church hall for the morning assembly (learning the day's gospel passage, focus of the day & VBS songs) presented by the Captains. The groups rotate through five Stations each day - Missionary in Motion (Catechesis and Saint of the Day), Games, Crafts, Snacks and Songs. The morning ends with the children

attending the closing assembly presented by the Captains. Groups then move back to the Chapter room for the Closing Prayer and parent pick up.

On the last day, K4J kids hold their own special “It’s a Blast” party beginning with mass, a wrap up show performed by the Captains, thank you’s from Family Coordinator and finally food, clowns, a Bouncy Castle, game and craft.

In addition, each child was encouraged to participate in the Mission Project by completing sacrifices at home and having their parents sign the form and returning the sheet to their Group Leader.

Following the party, each child at K4J Vacation Bible School received a Take Home Treasure as a reminder of their VBS participation.

**We had a total of 29 participants (ages 4 – 10), 10 Captains (ages 11 – 14) and 20 volunteers.** The numbers were low as Initially VBS was going to be cancelled, but after consulting with Fr. Antony, it was decided that VBS should be offered to the parish.

I am sincerely grateful to Father Antony Fernando and Father Sagayaraj Devadoss for their spiritual support, guidance and presence at VBS, and to our wonderful volunteers & parents for their gifts, time, support and example. God has so richly blessed us!

Respectfully submitted by  
Monica Bober, Family Evangelization Coordinator

## Youth Lectors

The Youth Lector ministry serves at the 6 PM Mass by proclaiming the Sacred Scripture during the Liturgy of Word and may also lead the Prayers of the Faithful. To schedule Youth Lectors for the upcoming season, a mass email is sent out asking for each volunteer to sign up for dates that fit with the schedule of the families of the lectors. They also choose which reading they will proclaim - 1st, 2nd readings or Prayers of the Faithful. Training is required before they begin serving and prayerfully rehearse on their own (depending on their age, assisted by parents) the reading at Mass. There is no minimum age; however, children under the age of 13 are required to audition during training. The desire is to proclaim the Word and parents as well as the youth themselves must agree that the reading can be done competently during Mass.

For the 2017-2018 year, we have an average of 17 – 21 lectors scheduled every four months aged 8 – 24 years of age. Recruitment is done as needed, including during the Stewardship Fair and the summer months. We have a very eager group of volunteers, but there have been times where a Youth Lector could not be scheduled due to the overwhelming response to read each season. By approaching the situation critically, I determine what course of action is the fairest. However, I am aware that there must be an improvement in the scheduling process so that all willing and available Youth Lectors can volunteer at least once every four months.

I sincerely appreciate the support received from our Youth Coordinator, Sara Dmitri. I am also very grateful for all our Youth Lectors who so delightfully proclaim God’s love for us. They serve in a beautiful and vital ministry. Our youth are dutiful to their commitment, to their community, and the church. It is through them and how they proclaim God’s Word that we are guided in our journey with God.

Respectfully submitted by  
Angela Moreno, Youth Lector Coordinator.

# Youth Ministry

This year of youth ministry was filled with many new and exciting events. Fr. Tony hired on myself along side Corina Santaera to be co-youth coordinators for the 2017-2019 year. He desired for us to provide more opportunities for catechism within the parish to build on what the youth have learnt through sacramental preparation, which was taken on by Corina. Fr. Tony also wanted a greater connection with the schools, enforcing more regularly scheduled school visits, especially to discuss the important of sacraments and the importance of them to live out our faith, which was primarily taken on by myself. From this, came our mission statement as follows.

**Mission Statement:** Bring youth to the fullness of the Catholic Church through the ministries and the Sacraments. To accomplish this we want them to know how to know their faith, do their faith, and live it out in the world.

**Sara's mission statement:** Take and bring youth into the church

**Corina's mission statement:** Take kids and youth deeper into the church

Based on this first year, we would encourage a few things to continue on youth ministry within the parish. First, putting together a Youth Advisory Committee to be a guiding light for all youth ministry within the Parish. This will also create a greater sense of community within all aspects of Youth Ministry and consistency between youth ministers. Second, would be to focus more on the needs of the youth already involved in sacraments or the parish. We found a gap of ministry for those both out of First Reconciliation/First Communion, and Confirmation. This is where we suggest focus for new ministry upcoming. Finally, we suggest having more parent involvement in youth ministry. The family is where all of ministry really starts, and so we encourage to have more easily accessible events which parents encourage their children to come to.

Overall the ministry was successful in our mission and would like to thank all the volunteer hours and prayers that were offered for the success of the youth ministry program.

God Bless,  
Sara Dmitri

## Conquest & Challenge

This ministry targets youth ages 11 – 16, providing opportunities for 14- 17 year olds to lead small groups, and adults to help run the program.

### Highlights of 2017 – 2018

- **Registrations per program**

Conquest	22 students	11 volunteer leaders
Challenge	22 students	9 volunteer leaders
- Challenge was coordinated by Youth Coordinator: Sara Dmitri
- Conquest was coordinated by Youth Coordinator: Corina Santaera (and Sara Dmitri for May and June)
- Both Conquest and Challenge continued their apostolate of forming youth in the Catholic virtues through teen/peer leadership.

- Conquest grew in teen and adult leadership, engaging the high school students to plan topics, discussion points, teachings and lead small group discussion
- Conquest and Challenge also have been active in various service and apostolic projects throughout the year.
  - This year the Challenge girls also raised money for the Catholic pregnancy resource center The Back Porch through a bake sale in November, with proceeds of \$ 1027.00
  - The Conquest boys and Challenge Girls enjoyed a Christmas social which began with carolling in front of St. John the Evangelist Church/Candy Cane Lane
  - The Challenge girls, along with the help of the Catholic Girls League made 175 Easter cards which were given to all the Catholic residents at that are services by our Sick & Shut-in Ministry
  - The Conquest boys made prayer and saint cards which were given to residence's at St. Andrew's retirement home.
  - The Conquest boys hosted a End-of-the-year social for Conquest and Challenge families to grow in community together. During this event there was a 50/50 fundraiser which made \$135.00 to be donated to The Back Porch.
- Both Challenge and Conquest provided opportunities every night for participants to learn more and grow deeper in their faith. This often would involve the use of retreats and guest speakers:
  - In April the Challenge girls hosted a day retreat for girls 11 – 16, called “True Beauty”, which invited girls from all of the parish to join. 34 girls participated in talks, crafts, games, and adoration.
  - The Conquest boys had external speakers, including priests and seminarian come to speak to the boys, discussing vocations and living a virtuous life.
- Both clubs also provide opportunities for the youth involved to make new friends, have fun, and form Christian fellowship. The clubs are gender specific and really allow boys to be boys and girls to be girls, but not in a narrow, stereotyped sense. Occasionally the clubs will collaborate with each other and participate in a common game or activity
- Adult volunteers have all being screened, and attended the “Called to Protect seminar”, in line with the regulations of the Archdiocesan standards.
- The leader of Conquest has stepped down from their position for next year. The high school teen leaders would like to take a more involved role in planning and organizing Conquest.
- Many of the Challenge teen leaders will be over 18 in this coming year. They will be requested to step down from their teen leader role for 2018-2019, and encouraged to step into an adult leader assistant role.

Respectfully submitted by  
Sara Dmitri

## **World Youth Day**

This group is targeted towards Young Adults (18 – 35 yr olds) to attend a worldwide gathering of Catholic Young Adults.

### **Highlights of 2017 – 2018**

- Organized through the Youth Coordinator: Sara Dmitri

- Preparations for World Youth Day in Panama in January 2019 included a leaders meeting on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2017, a camping trip in September (hosted by the Archdiocese), and a leaders meeting on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2018 at Newman Theological College.
- Flyers were posted on bulletin boards, a note was inserted in the bulletin and 2 meetings were hosted for those interested in finding out more information regarding World Youth Day 2019.
- There were a total of 5 interested participants from St. Thomas More and 2 interested participants that were not from St. Thomas More.
- Due to restraints in workload, and uncertainty in employment as of January 2019, it was determined that St. Thomas More would not send a group to World Youth Day 2019. The interested young adults were forwarded to Fr. Roger Niedzielski who is leading a group through the Basilica.
- Further contact for CAEDM WYD: <https://www.facebook.com/caedmwyd/> & <http://wyd.caedm.ca/>

Respectfully submitted by  
Sara Dmitri

### **Youth Ministry Advisory Committee**

This committee is intended to act as a guiding force for all youth ministry within St. Thomas More Parish. Committee members should include youth, those who are currently in programing, and those who have significant experience in youth programing.

The Youth Ministry Advisory Committee was encouraged to continue by Jonathan Quist, to help with consistency and assist during the transition for Corina and Sara as new Youth Coordinators. The committee was not initiated in Fall 2017, and at Fr. Tony's departure it was requested by Fr. Saga to avoid starting something new during this time of uncertainty.

I, Sara, would encourage this committee to begin again, to assist with forming a strong foundation and can provide support and direction for ALL youth ministry that takes place at St. Thomas More Parish.

Respectfully submitted by  
Sara Dmitri

### **Dominic Savio Youth Group**

This group is intended for youth 14 – 18 (Grades 9 – 12).

The Dominc Savio Senior Youth Group is a social/faith sharing group that meets every Sunday after the 6:00 PM Mass for students 14 – 18 years of age. In meetings we play games, eat snacks, socialize, and talk about living our faith and Church teachings. The group has decreased since the start, but now has a consistent 5 students and 2 new volunteers that come every Sunday. There are over 10 other students that have come in variable amounts throughout the year. We have enjoyed growing in prayer together, specifically through our weekly intercessions and monthly praise and worship events. Although small, this group has created a safe space for students to share their struggles and for us to openly discuss difficult topics. It has also been a joyful place for

volunteers to make a significant impact in the lives of youth of the Parish, one stating “I always look forward to Sundays, youth group is one of my favourite parts of the week.”

For students of this age, I would encourage this small group style of ministry. Potentially working through a book study, a video series, or just engaging in discussion, other small groups could gather at times that would suit the needs of those students best. This has potential to work with Young Adults and Junior High students as well.

Respectfully submitted by  
Sara Dmitri

## **School Outreach**

This addition was added to the Youth Coordinator role in February 2017, to correspond with the staff of the 13 Catholic Schools in our Parish boundary, visiting schools, helping coordinate liturgies both inside the schools and held at St. Thomas More Parish. In August 2017, Fr. Tony’s gave direction to myself and Corina to organize visiting the schools every Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday morning, along the lines of a third priest whose sole task would be to connect with the schools. A schedule was made to visit each of the 13 schools once a month for a 3 – 4 hour visit. The school could replace the visit with a liturgy either held at the school or at the Parish.

There have been overall:

- 108 school visits by Youth Coordinators
- 4 school visits by Priests (not including blessings or liturgies)
- 24 school liturgies at St. Thomas More Parish (Youth Coordinator present)
- 24 liturgies at the school (Youth Coordinator present)

School Outreach has created a great connection with the school chaplains and the Parish. It has increased communication between the Youth Coordinator and the schools, however it has decreased the connection of the priest with the school.

This ministry took approximately 50% of the time in the Youth Coordinators. It was a great way to encourage the sacraments of Holy Communion (Grade 2) and Confirmation (Grade 6) to the students. There were some classrooms who were visited 4 + times over the year, and with these classes, a relationship formed where true evangelization could begin. After every visit I told the students that if they see me at Church on Sunday they had to say hello – which many did! This is the beginning step of engaging youth into a further step of evangelization.

The grades that were the most visited were Kindergarten – Grade 3 (decided from the school viewpoint). It was difficult to visit the older grade classrooms, especially in large schools with multiple classes per grade. Visits to High Schools and Junior Highs were also decreased with this “scheduled” format of visits. Suggestions regarding this ministry:

I suggest that we do not use the scheduled school visit format from 2018-2017 year period and go back to the format of having the schools request a visit from the priest and/or youth coordinator. The school would also be allowed to initially request 3 Priest visits assigned for liturgies throughout the year.

Depending on the priests availability and course of direction for youth ministry, I would encourage a stronger priest to school connection, through Priests making drop-in visits to the schools periodically over the year or attend school staff meetings once a year.

During visits I would suggest having either a take home note/reflection that would go home to the parents (that would include the Church's contact information and Mass Times). As well, it would be a good idea to have an event to invite the families to at the Parish to therefore increase the Parish, Home, and School connection.

Respectfully submitted by  
Sara Dmitri

## **Confirmation**

Confirmation is intended for students Grade 7 – 12 (after age 11). Parents and other volunteers are encouraged to become small group leaders and engage further in the studies of their son/daughter.

The Sacrament of Confirmation was celebrated in our parish on November 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017 with, his Excellency, Bishop Gregory Bittman, who confirmed 196 confirmandi.

The Confirmation class was lead by the Youth Coordinators Corina and myself. Thirty volunteers were recruited to help with the program, leading small groups that were kept consistent over the 6 lessons. There were four 2- hour training sessions for volunteers, in which volunteers only had to attend 1 session.

The formation program involved three Monday nights from 6:30-8:30 PM, three Saturdays from 10:00 – 12:00 as well as a retreat hosted by Mike Landry which included a rehearsal and reconciliation. For curriculum, we used Dynamic Catholic's "Decision Point" series. The response of the students and volunteers was positive, however it was determined that the program is designed for High School students, so we will use the program for fall 2018, while selectively picking the lessons that are appropriate in age range.

For this year we have decided to keep the number of lessons to six, which will include a mandatory parent night and reconciliation within one of the sessions. We decided to run each session twice, once on Sunday from 1:30 – 3:30 and another on Monday 6:30 – 8:30 pm, this will reduce the number of students per night, increase consistency of the day of the lessons and increase engagement. On top of the six lessons there will also be a retreat, a rehearsal, and a post confirmation social. We are aiming to get 15 volunteers per night so that each volunteer will only have to manage a group of ten students. It has also been suggested that we concurrently run sessions for the parents of Confirmand students to attend during the same time of their daughter or sons Confirmation session, however this would require a volunteer comfortable with leading a large group of volunteers.

His Grace, Archbishop Richard Smith will celebrate confirmation this year on November 18<sup>th</sup>, 2017.

Respectfully submitted by  
Sara Dmitri

## **Young Adult Ministry: Conversio, Praise & Worship, Jesus Youth**

These ministries are intended for Young Adults aged 18 – 35 years old.

These ministries have all taken place over the course of 2017/2018 in hopes of forming and growing the Young Adult ministry at St. Thomas More.

Conversio was run by Youth Coordinator, Corina Santaera. It took place on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Saturday nights from 7:00 pm – 9:00 pm focusing on going through the Catechism of the Catholic Church. It included a talk given

by an external volunteer or external priest and followed by discussion. It was struggled to grow more to more than 5 young adults, however the young adults that came were very appreciative of it as a ministry. It was cancelled in April due to Corina's departure from her Youth Ministry position.

Praise & Worship was run for three consecutive Friday nights in June. It included an hour at the Parish with introductions, a little testimony on Praise and Worship and about 45 minutes of prayer through song. The event was followed with fellowship at a local restaurant. This event grew quickly with myself playing guitar, along with another volunteer, and up to 12 other young adults. This series seemed to interest young adults due to its easy entrance and participation, followed by a desire for fellowship. I would suggest running other short 'series' of events that include half faith/prayer and half fellowship.

Jesus Youth, young adult group started at the beginning of June 2018 from a group of friends within the St. Thomas More community desiring more ministry similar to that of Praise & Worship. The first night had 15 young adults. This ministry is organized by one volunteer, Jacqueline and includes 3 others who assist in the night. These nights will continue to run through the direction of Jacqueline.

Respectfully submitted by  
Sara Dmitri

## **Weekly Youth Volunteer Ministry**

This ministry sprouted from junior/senior high students desiring to fulfill their school directed volunteer hours within the parish. This is an open ministry in which anyone is welcome to drop by at the Church on Thursdays from 12:30 – 3:30 pm. These students have assisted in preparing documents for Confirmation, first Reconciliation, First Holy Communion and Baptism, they have helped Arthur with maintenance of Church grounds (inside and outside) and with an array of other activities that assist with Youth Ministry programming. During the three hours there is often a bit of time set aside to eat a snack (which we pray beforehand), grow in fellowship and play games. This volunteering experience for youth has become an extra youth ministry. It has become a safe space for many students to begin to get more comfortable within the Church environment, allowing them to have more of an ownership of what goes on at the Parish and therefore an increased engagement in their faith outside of Sunday Mass or religion classes. Multiple students have continued to be consistent volunteers even though they have completed the required hours for their religion class.

I suggest that this ministry continues to run in the 2018/2019 year. I would suggest to grow a 'database' with the information of these volunteers, and invite them to other Church events or youth groups that run in the parish.

Respectfully submitted by  
Sara Dmitri

## **Youth Retreats/Events within the Archdiocese**

Two retreats were organized and attended by the Youth Coordinators at St. Thomas More Church during the 2017/2018 year.

Face to Face Ministries ran a Retreat November 3<sup>rd</sup>, in Red Deer, Alberta. Corina Santaera organized youth from St. Thomas More to attend along with 3 other parishes from the Edmonton area. Corina organized a bus which took 4 youth and herself from St. Thomas More Parish along with 35 other youth and adult volunteers (from Holy Trinity Parish, Good Shepard Parish and St. Teresa's Parish) to the Retreat in Red Deer. It was a

transformative experience for the youth that attended, however I love to see a greater attendance from St. Thomas More Parish.

Holy Trinity Church in Spruce Grove ran a day long retreat on February 24<sup>th</sup>, 2018. I organized the retreat within the parish and was there with 12 youth from St. Thomas More Parish, out of the approximately 125 youth who attended from around the Edmonton area. It was a wonderful day of prayer, talks, fellowship, mass and adoration. Many St. Thomas More youth shared some very inspirational moments that they experienced God's love throughout the retreat and were encouraged to grow more fully with God.

During the retreat at Holy Trinity Church, one participant said to me "I wish we did these at St. Thomas More Parish!"

My suggestions:

Due to my experience running retreats with NET Ireland (National Evangelization Teams) I was able to run a few half day retreats for school students (between 30 – 60 students). I found these retreats particularly effective in evangelization efforts as it included discussions about the faith, activities, games, an opportunity for prayer and fellowship. Although not specifically within School Outreach ministry, I suggest that St. Thomas More hosts a few retreats for all youth in the parish a few times throughout the year in which school children could be invited to (either at a school or at the Parish).

Respectfully submitted by  
Sara Dmitri

## **Youcat for Youth (Y4Y) – along with RCIA for Children**

The ministry was started as an opportunity for all youth in the Parish to be catechised at the same level and along with the students in RCIA for Children. The program was structured around the Journey of Faith program. Corina Santaera run the program on the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursdays of the month from 7-8:15pm, co-currently with RCIA. A speaker was brought in for most of the sessions. The speakers included parishioners, friends, priests from around the diocese and other staff members. Overall there were more than 16 different speakers who ran the catechesis sessions. This free ministry started of with over 20 youth attending, including 5 youth that were part of the RCIA for Children program. By the end of the year there were the 5 RCIA for Children youth and 3 others. Most of the youth that stayed were in Grades 3-5, and found the program to have great depth into the Catholic faith and to be a more dynamic than the alternative program for their age range, Kids for Jesus. Corina suggested having fewer guest speakers and also fewer meetings per month, therefore increasing the opportunity to focus of having more fruitful and meaningful lessons. As well she believes with a lower time commitment, more youth would have stayed interested.

Respectfully submitted by  
Sara Dmitri

## **Youth Ushers and Greeters**

### **YOUTH USHERS**

Youth Usher and Adult Head Ushers serve at the 6 pm mass by helping to establish a climate of welcome, helpfulness and order among those gathered for the Mass. Youth Ushers assist with the collection and usher for the faithful during Holy Communion.

All new youth and adult Head Ushers are trained by the Usher Coordinator and other Head Ushers. There is no scheduling for the youth ushers. Upon arriving 15 minutes before mass begins, the youth ushers are asked to sign in with the Head Ushers (2), place their name tag on and follow directions of the Head Ushers for serving in the Mass.

For the 2017-2018 year, we had average of **6 – 10 ushers/greeters** serve each Sunday at mass and **20-25 listed as Youth Ushers**. The response from the youth being involved has been good, but we still need more to serve in this ministry because the number of youth ushers volunteering each Sunday is inconsistent. I may consider scheduling as a way to eliminate or decrease the challenges this has brought over the years.

### **HEAD USHERS**

A Head Usher for the Youth led Sunday Mass at 6 pm, must be an adult 18 years of age or older.

Head Ushers arrive one half hour before the Mass preparing the collection baskets, organizing the ushers and finding a family to bring up the gifts. During Mass, head ushers are required to seat parishioners, oversee collection and the taking up of the gifts, bring the collection and placing it inside the church safe, usher for Holy Communion and ensure that those who are disabled have the Eucharist brought to them. At the end of the Mass, the Head Ushers put out the bulletins and when Mass is over ensure everything is put away.

We had 5 scheduled Head Ushers in the beginning of fall 2017 and 2 stepped down due to work commitments. One of our Youth Ushers who recently turned 18, became a Head Usher. We have recently recruited 4 Head Ushers and are in need of 2-4 more Head Ushers so they would be scheduled once a month rather than every 3 weeks. The Head Usher ministry now has 7 Head Ushers and are scheduled (2 per mass) on a rotation basis. If they are unable to usher on their scheduled date, they are responsible for finding a replacement from the current Head Usher list.

I very grateful to our Head Ushers who give of their time and Christian witness to support our youth serving at these masses and; for our youth for their commitment to their community, the church and, who because of them we are able to guide them and be guided in our journey with God. I sincerely appreciate Sara Dmitri and our priests for opening the church so our Head Ushers can be here early enough to prepare for mass.

Respectfully submitted by  
Monica Bober, Family Evangelization Coordinator