

"More" from St. Tom's

For alumni, parents, former parishioners, and friends of
St. Thomas More Catholic Student Parish in Kalamazoo, Michigan

JUNE 2016

Welcome Fr. Dan Hyman

My brothers and sisters in Christ, I am excited to be joining your parish family. A few weeks ago, the bishop informed me that he had named me as the new pastor of St. Tom's. I fondly remember my assignment there as a seminarian and eagerly anticipate joining them in the mission of the Church. I was born in St. Joseph, Michigan, with one older sister who is married and lives in Indiana. My father died when I was 21. I attended school in the Lakeshore School District and then worked in the food industry for a couple of years before becoming apprenticed in the tool and die trade where I finished my apprenticeship becoming a journeyman die maker. Shortly after becoming a journeyman I felt God calling me to come and see what priesthood was all about, which led me to Sacred Heart Major Seminary for eight years. After seminary I was assigned to the St. Augustine Cathedral for two years as the parochial vicar, and then was assigned as pastor to St. Mary of the Lake in New Buffalo for almost two years before being assigned to St. Thomas More. I also am the spiritual director for the English-speaking Cursillo movement within the Diocese of Kalamazoo. I enjoy the spiritual life and the entertainment arts. I am looking forward to meeting the people of St. Tom's in the coming weeks and to serving them. I am praying for them during this time of transition and ask for your prayers for me as well.



Fr. Ken's Departure

We decided to share this fantastic news with you in a more informal way, rather than writing a memorial or eulogy.

Joyful history was made on 19 May 2016 when it was announced that Father Kenneth W. Schmidt had been appointed as the 10th pastor of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Portage, Michigan. Those poor people thought they were rid of him in 1973 after he graduated high school and went off to the seminary but, just like a bad nickel (inflation), he will return there after 43 years.

After a stifling reign lasting 21 long years, Bishop Paul Bradley finally exercised his great wisdom in moving Fr. Ken out of St. Thomas More Catholic Student Parish. A huge sigh of relief is believed to have been the cause of wind gusts and a small tornado in Kalamazoo County that evening.

Dr. John Dunn, president of Western Michigan University, expressed his glee and his hope that new enrollment at Western will experience a surge, and student retention will increase by 50% because of Fr. Ken's departure. Kalamazoo College does not expect these same dramatic results, however, because "our students are so smart," said an admissions officer, "that they figured out not to go to St Tom's in the first place." Bronson Hospital expects to lay

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Pastoral Team: Fr. Dan Hyman; Sr. Pam Owens, CSJ; Deacon Joe Schmitt; Deacon Frank Sila;
Jason Aiello, Faith Formation; Philip Dezern, Youth Faith Formation and Social Justice Coordinator
Michael Zutis, Director of Music Ministry; Lisa LeVasseur, Campus Minister
Michele Cretsingler, Parish Secretary; Martha Reid, Bookkeeper; Lyle Smith, Maintenance

Fr. Ken continued

off some people who staffed the Emergency Room on Sunday mornings due to the number of people who would "feel sick after Mass." (Statistical research revealed a high correlation with attendance at St. Thomas More.)

During his notorious epoch he nearly drowned 572 babies (which he alleged were so-called "baptisms by immersion"), and presided over the funerals of 132 people who were "dying to get out of here." 291 people were also dragged kicking and screaming against their will into the Catholic Church through RCIA and 177 couples are stuck together because Fr. Ken witnessed their marriage.

St. Tom's is known for its generosity, and during his 21-year dominion the people of the parish contributed over \$12 million to support its mission, programs, and staff, including more than 2 million dollars comprised of parish tithing and additional contributions to support local non-profit justice and charitable organizations and outreach around the world.

Despite having a long reputation as a parish that "doesn't talk about money," Fr. Ken managed to conduct five capital campaigns during his interminable residency at the parish. In order to shut him up, the people eventually donated over \$5 million dollars to plan, renovate, and build new facilities, and pay the mortgage (which actually turned out rather nice despite Fr. Ken's involvement).

It's really quite amazing that he got anything done at the parish considering how often he was gone. Fr. Ken always used the excuse that he was working for the Bishop of Kalamazoo for the Office of Priestly Life and Ministry and the diocesan Tribunal. He also co-founded a program in the diocese to help childhood trauma survivors, which he used as an excuse to travel across the United States and around the world.

The only good thing we can say is that parishioners spirituality deepened as people's endurance and patience increased; many parishioners more closely identify now with the Israelites spending forty years in the desert.

Lots of Changes in Music Ministry

We have enjoyed the ministry of several talented musicians for the past few years. By sheer coincidence at almost the same time they are all moving on.

Vicki Matunas has been our Music Minister since 2014. For the past two years, she has planned the music coordinated the musicians, played for weddings and funerals, as well as most of the parish masses on weekends. Now that her son Wayne has graduated from high school, Vicki is making this move to be with her husband in Arizona (Wayne will remain in Kalamazoo). Remember us, Vicki, when you are sweltering in the heat and we are enjoying a cool breeze.

Joe Harkins graduated from WMU a year ago. He was a pianist and lead musician for the parish since 2012. He has also been a part-time helper with Lyle taking care of the parish grounds and buildings. Joe is headed out to the University of Denver for graduate studies in Jazz, and he'll be great; and some other parish will enjoy his talent. During the summer months, Joe will be working as a pianist in the dining room of the Hotel Iroquois on Mackinac Island, so be sure to say "Hi!" if you're on the Island.

John Forsleff also graduated a while ago, and he continued to lead music, usually on Saturday evenings. We miss his beautiful voice. He decided to head back to greener pastures (home).

We wish them all well, and we are grateful for their years of service, prayer, and music, which always enriched our worship.

We now say welcome to **Michael Zutis**, our new Music Minister. Michael is a student at WMU, double-majoring in piano performance and composition. Michael grew up in Traverse City. Michael will coordinate music planning, musicians, and vocalists; and be the pianist and choir director for parish masses. He will be learning a lot of new music, and we're sure it won't take him very long.

Welcome, Michael!

New Structures in the Diocese

If you no longer live in the Kalamazoo Diocese, you may not be aware that our local Bishop Paul Bradley announced a new structure for the Diocese at the end of January. In order to use our ordained personnel more effectively, and to prepare for the surge of priestly retirements in the next few years (25% or more), parishes have been joined in *collaboratives*. Each parish maintains its own identity, councils, etc., but one pastor will be named for each collaborative consisting of one to three parishes. St. Thomas More will be a standalone collaborative, while it continue it's partnership with St. Joseph Parish for the religious formation program, youth ministry, and social justice outreach.

This new structure means that there will be fewer pastors in the dioceses, and more priests available for service as associate pastors and other ministries. In May Bishop Bradley announced the new personnel assignments, giving new or additional responsibilities to 46 priests. It is an exciting effort and at the same time it has been very stressful as people waited for the announcements of the collaboratives and then waited again for the personnel announcements. On July 1 the entire plan will be implemented (see articles on the front page).

INs and OUTs at the Parish Apartments



The parish apartment building serves many purposes for St. Tom's. In addition to being home for parish staff, one apartment has

been renovated and designated as the *Romero Room*. It is dedicated as a lounge and meeting space for college students.



Apartment 4 has been occupied for many years by **Sr. John Mary Vianney**. She came to WMU almost nine years ago to earn her master's and doctoral degrees, successfully defending her dissertation in Biological Sciences in 2015. She stayed on to prepare for a teaching assignment in her homeland of Tanzania, and will return home at the end of the summer

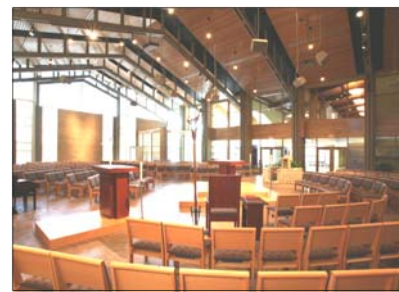
This fall another apartment will be the home of **Fr. Mari Osredkar**. Fr. Mari is a Franciscan priest and theology professor from Slovenia, who will be doing research, writing, and teaching at WMU for a few months.

We are happy to have this opportunity to support religious men and women and clergy during their academic work, because they also enrich our parish life and our awareness of the Church around the world.

Update on the parish capital campaign

In the fall of 2014, St. Tom's conducted another capital campaign to address the mortgage undertaken for the renovation and construction of our new facilities.

Bishop Bradley offered incentives that could reduce our mortgage rate when we significantly reduced the loan principal. Owing \$2.4 million at the inception of the campaign, we announced pledges of \$2.13 million – beyond our wildest expectations. Because our parishioners and benefactors have given so quickly, the monthly payments were soon almost half their former amount. We now owe less than \$600,000. We have also received additional gifts and



pledges since the official end of the campaign (we never say no!), so now we expect that the entire mortgage will be paid by the end of 2017. HURRAY, and THANK YOU!

Deceased

Since our last newsletter the following parishioners and alumni of the parish have gone home to God.

Colin Rooney, Violet Blowers, Judge Richard Enslen, Patricia Smith, Sheila Smith, Ernie Sanic, Dean Jacobson, Fr. William Fitzgerald, Mary Lou Pattison, Jackie Rice, Frank Stokes, Mary Hoyle, Tony Nelson, and Larry Paulik.

(When you are aware of others, please let us know so that we can include them in our parish prayers.)



FR. KEN'S FAREWELL

Mark your calendars for the last week of June, when we will express our farewells to Fr. Ken as he prepares to move on to his new assignment at St. Catherine Parish.

We will have a potluck dinner on Monday, June 27, and on Wednesday, June 29, and receptions on Tuesday and Thursday of that week. Both the dinners and the receptions will begin at 6:00, following the 5:15 Mass which everyone is invited to attend.

A program is planned for each of these evenings, which will include slides and a few people sharing memories of Fr. Ken through the years, followed by Fr. Ken's final words to us.

If you would like to send a letter to Fr. Ken email it to the parish lisa@stomskazoo.org or stoms@stomskazoo.org, (They will not be read by staff) Please include your mailing address in the letter.

A binder of all the letters will be given to Fr. Ken.



There will also be a box available at the dinners and receptions for any cards you may want to drop in. For those who are wondering about a gift for Fr. Ken, the parish has established two funds. You may make a donation to St. Thomas More directing your gift to the TRA Legacy Fund or to a special fund for his personal use.

