

February 20, 2016



Dear Parents,

As we complete the second week of Lent, we pray that it has been a fruitful one for you and your family. The Lord has entrusted you with a great responsibility of forming the conscience of your child and helping them to know Jesus. On behalf of the catechists and leaders of St. Thomas, we thank you for allowing us to help you through that endeavor. We are only an enhancement to what we hope and trust is provided to them at home through example, prayer, reading of Scripture, frequenting the sacrament of Reconciliation and the Eucharist. We want to use this opportunity to update you about what we are doing and how we can continue to grow together as one family.

Catechism: This year, we introduced a few changes which included arriving earlier to give the catechists more time with the students. This time has partly been spent on Chaldean cultural lessons; curriculum has been established by a passionate team of volunteers. After inviting new catechists to join, 8 members of our community responded generously and are currently shadowing our experienced catechists. Sr. Christine has also joined the team and visits the classrooms regularly.

Communion: April 30th is just around the corner! We are really excited and hope your children are as well. The kids have started learning the Chaldean hymns, which can often be a difficult aspect of the formation. Please be sure to listen to the CD that we provided to make it easier for the kids to learn. Also, unlike previous years, the roles distributed for the communion Mass will be done so randomly therefore giving everyone a fair chance at the various parts.

Middle School Programs: Tuesdays and Thursdays have been going well this year. We are excited to inform you that because the needs of our parish continue to grow, we needed to be creative. What do we mean? From the surveys that we conducted several months ago, we are aware of a great desire and need for new programs to be offered at St. Thomas. However, the evenings are always booked with the exception of Fridays. Fridays have been difficult to hold programs because it is a day that family and friends often gather, which is also an important time to build relationships. Therefore, starting **March 8th** we have decided to move the boys' middle school program to Tuesdays which is also the same day as the girls' middle school program. Both programs will still have its own set of leaders and topics, they will be run independently of each other. We will be more creative on how to better utilize the entire building on Tuesdays. Surely there are certain topics i.e. lent, prayer, pressures etc. where the talks can be combined. Finally, with this new change we have decided to change the names both groups will be referred to as **The Crew**. Understanding this might be inconvenient to some parents; we encourage you to see the positive effect of having Thursdays' available for other programs can bring to our parish family.

High School Program: Mark your calendars, our leaders have some highlighted nights coming up, March 2nd, there will be a special guest speaker coming in to speak to teens and parents about Alcohol and Substance Use Awareness and March 23rd, there will be hosting a movie night featuring The Passion of the Christ! Also, we have a few summer retreat for your high school teens: Steubenville will be June 17-19 and the Girls Lock-In will be in July!

Coming Soon to St. Thomas: Starting Thursday, March 10th, 214 Missionaries will be hosting the St. Thomas Study Hall; tables and chairs will be set up for quiet study and group study for college students only. Often when we study we focus on succeeding for our own benefit, but we are called to succeed to give greater glory to God! What better place to orient our study than the House of God! Lastly, God has given intellectual gifts to some people, opportunity to share these gifts through peer tutoring will be made available. More information in the weeks to come. Coffee and snacks will be provided.

None of the above accomplishments would be possible without our incredibly dedicated volunteers. These volunteers are parents, students, and workers; their love and dedication is truly instrumental to the life and the fruits of our parish. If you are interested in helping in any way; please contact Fr. Andrew. We are all called to growth and development in Christ. With that, we would like to hear from you on how we can better support you with your God given responsibility to help your child grow in faith! Please visit www.stccc.org to fill out our Parent Surveys. May the Lord continue to bless you and your family.

Remain in Christ,
Fr. Bashar Sitto
Fr. Andrew Seba