

## **Camp Fire Picture Chronology November 8, 2018 to November 8, 2021**

Thursday, November 8, 2018: View of Camp Fire from Chico about 10:00 AM:



Tuesday, November 20, 2018: [\*A Day in Paradise's Inferno\*](#) article published.

Monday, November 19, 2018: Rita, Stacey and Lauryn volunteering at the Newman Center. They focused on putting together an updated database of parishioners:



Tuesday, November 29, 2018: Newman Center Distribution: Staff from the Newman Center help with the distribution of donated items.



Wednesday, December 5, 2018: First look at devastation in Paradise:





Thursday, December 13, 2018:

We held our first STM Knights of Columbus meeting at the Our Divine Savior (ODS) parish hall. State Secretary, Dave Abbott, helped set up. Jim Collins thanked Greg Kidder and his wife Ivonne, as well as all the Knights and their wives who had been helping at the Newman Center and ODS. He thanked Supreme for sending \$10,000 in gift cards, Columbian Charities for sending a \$3,000 check for each Knight who lost his home and Supreme for helping Columbian Charities with a \$120,000 check. He also thanked Grand Knights Jim Wayne and Ed Grens for their support and Harold Frazier and Dave Lemire for setting up RVs on the ODS property. The Knights made plans for Larry Campbell's and Michael Gaukel's funerals. They also set up an Emergency Fund Committee to distribute donated funds to members in need. After the meeting, they gathered for pizza at a nearby restaurant. Even though our members were scattered, we had more than a quorum (12 members) to conduct business.



Sunday December 16, 2018: We distributed St. Thomas More fire recovery tee shirts and accepted donation from other Knights.



STM parishioners gather each Sunday at ODS at 1:00 for Mass to keep the parish together:



Friday December 21, 2018: More donors brought donations to Our Divine Savior's office.



Saturday December 22, 2018: We received 4,000 gift cards from Brother Knights:



Sunday December 23, 2018: Generous donors arrived by private plane from Santa Barbara. They covered rental expenses for one year and also presented a bag of presents to some of those who had lived in rentals in the Camp Fire area. The recipients gathered in a large room and shared the story of their experiences in the Camp Fire. Sad stories gave way to joy when the children of the donors presented bags of presents to all.





## 2019

Thursday, January 17, 2019: Lou Gervais (past Grand Knight and District Deputy) accepts the Star Council award (2017-2018) for Council 7773 from State Secretary, Dave Abbott. Thanks to Lou's efforts, our Council received this prestigious award.



Friday, February 1, 2019: *Heroism in Paradise* article published.

Tuesday, February 5, 2019: Snow covers homes spared by the fire as well as the ashes and ruins of Paradise bringing hope for better days ahead:





Friday, February 8, 2019: STM Knights dedicated kitchen crew with Liz Fierro pose between dinner preparations:



Sunday, February 17, 2019: STM Parish renovation going well. Severe smoke damage to ceiling being repaired, tree & debris removal underway. Next step: Greg Kidder meets with key diocese & insurance reps to determine remaining work and finalize go-forward plans:



Sunday, March 24, 2019: THE GOECKNER'S BID STM FAREWELL. That adorable couple we know as Bob & Geneva Goeckner met in 10th grade and have been together ever since. Married in Lynwood, CA., in 1958, they have five children. Their family now includes 12 grands and two great-grands. Bob served his country in the Navy and as an LAPD police officer; he served God & his community for 50 years in the Knights of Columbus, 15 years with St. Vincent de Paul & 20 years in the Elks. Geneva, meanwhile, always had a love for singing, and while raising five children has been a member of numerous choirs, including STM and, for 24 years, the Paradise Community Chorus. She's even sung at a Vatican High Mass! Bob & Geneva choose Paradise many, many years ago as the perfect place to live; but now a new chapter lies ahead. Since the fire, the Goeckner's and their children have been exploring possibly relocating to Tennessee, Utah, or Arizona. They will miss their many friends and parish family. And we will greatly miss them! God bless and safe travels Bob and Geneva. *See Bob's final Vincent de Paul efforts below (May 5):*



Saturday, April 13, 2019: ST. BONAVENTURE VISIT: STM parishioners welcomed members of St. Bonaventure Catholic Church of Concord, who held a fundraiser for STM. They came to present a check, visit our parish, and pray with us. A large contingent from St. Bonny came by

bus charter to provide a spiritual “shot in the arm” in the form of a moving short program, “Pilgrimage to Paradise,” and presented STM a check for \$11,000. Fr. Francis welcomed St. Bonaventure's Fr. Vellenkal who introduced the group from Concord. St. Bonaventure’s program opened with the hymn “Ashes” and a prayer. A verse from Ashes:

*We rise again from ashes, from the good we've failed to do.  
We rise again from ashes, to create ourselves anew.  
If all our world is ashes, then must our lives be true,  
An offering of ashes, an offering to you.*





April 15 – 19, 2019: St. Thomas More extends a heartfelt thank you to the students of Christian Brothers High School for all their hard work at the parish during Holy Week. The students cleared out debris, cleaned up flowerbeds, planted new flowers and shrubs along with many other tasks. We are so grateful for their help and willingness to reach out to

us. With your help and the help of many others “We rise again from ashes, to create ourselves anew.”



Tuesday, April 23, 2019: STM parishioners have been donating very generously to the can & nonperishable food drive and so they plan to keep the drive going.



Thursday, April 25, 2019: Knights of Columbus attend Joe Serembe's graveside service at Sterling City. Our Knights honor their brother Knight, Joe:



Sunday, May 5, 2019: St. Vincent de Paul President Bob Goeckner reports that the team is in place and the processes are up and running! The office is located on the Achieve Charter School campus in Paradise behind St. Thomas More. The team is now working through the vast number of aid applications filed following the Camp Fire.



Sunday, May 19, 2019: *FIRST MASS* SINCE FIRE AT STM.

St. Thomas More celebrated its first Mass back home in Paradise. What joy it was to be back at our home church! The well-attended Mass was celebrated by Bishop Jaime Soto along with Father Godwin, former STM pastor. Mass began with moving words from Bishop Soto then a blessing of the church walls. A reception followed on the campus of Achieve Charter School behind the church.

Wednesday, May 22, 2019: Knights gather for their May Business Meeting, their first meeting back in Paradise. Their banner and all other items needed for meetings and ceremonies have been replaced thanks to the generosity of other Knights of Columbus councils.



Monday, May 27, 2019: Knights help set up and take down flags in Paradise Cemetery for Memorial Day.





Sunday June 2, 2019: Parishioners celebrated last week's Easter Vigil Baptism of Carol James and Josh Kelly (not pictured) at a parish potluck:



Sunday June 9, 2019: NEW PRIEST FOR ST. THOMAS MORE!

Rev. Martin J. Ramat, previously Pastor of St. Philomene Parish, Sacramento, was appointed Pastor of Our Divine Savior Parish, Chico, and Priest Supervisor of St. Thomas More Parish.



Greg Kidder was appointed Parish Steward of St. Thomas More:

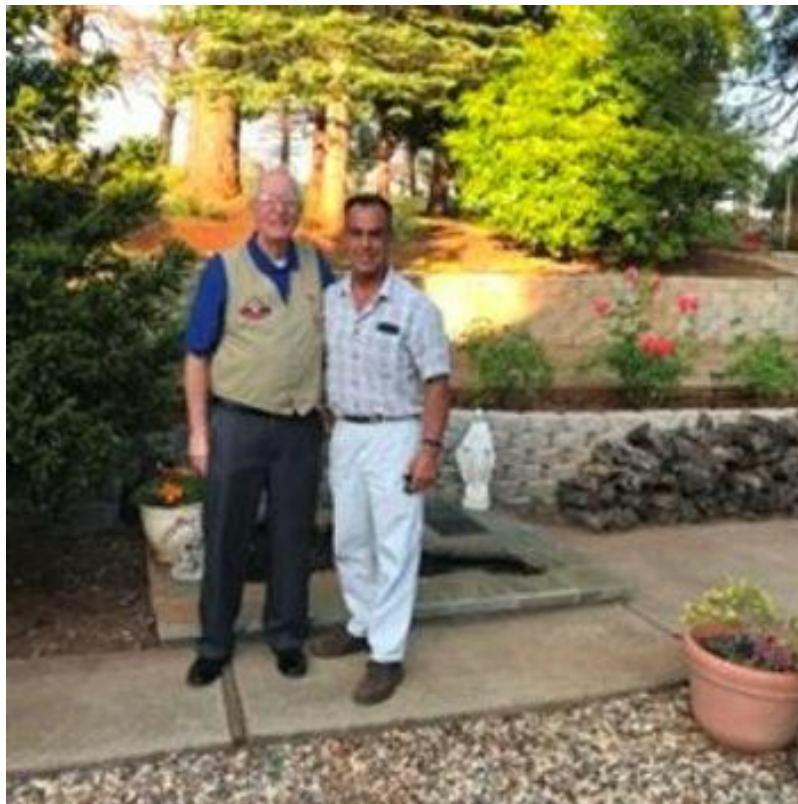


Tuesday, June 11, 2019: Fathers McSweeney and Cantwell join K of C State Deputy, Dave Abbott with his wife, Debbie, Parish Steward, Greg Kidder, and Jim Collins in visit Paradise and STM parish.





Thursday, June 13, 2019: Admission Degree at St. John's in Chico; new Knight Robert Gomez joined Grand Knight, Jim Collins, for a picture after the ceremony:



Wednesday, June 26, 2019: Installation of new Knights of Columbus officers:



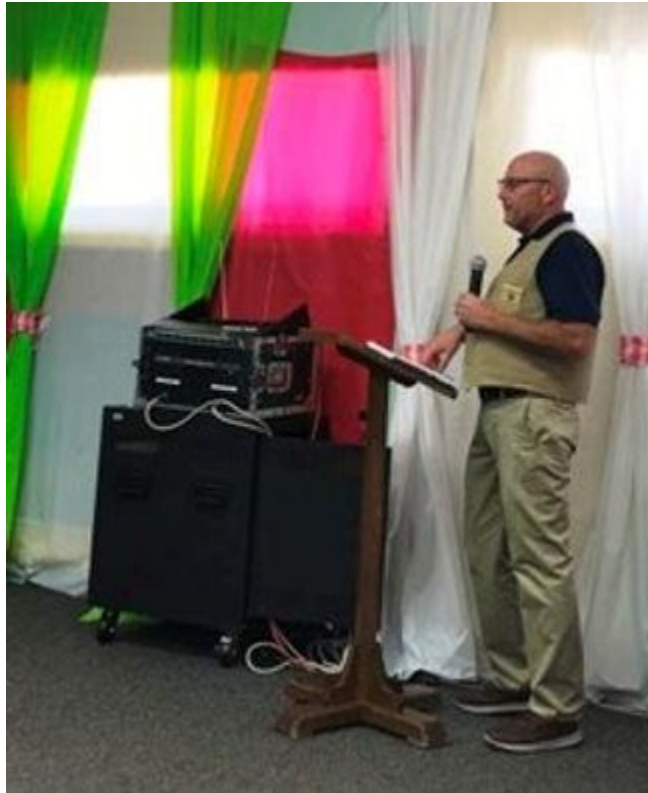
Parish Retreat: August 3, 2019

Saturday, August 17, 2019: Brother Knight Greg Wright at his double-wide in Los Molinos.  
The Knights had helped him with the purchase.



Sunday, October 13, 2019: Columbus Day Knights of Columbus Dinner. It was a miracle that our Knights could put on a spaghetti dinner without a gas stove and oven. They improvised with outdoor gas burners. The kitchen crew did a fantastic job. Spaghetti was followed by awards announced by Grand Knight, Dave Porter.





Tuesday, November 5, 2019: STM Knights accept a generous donation from the Grass Valley Knights of Columbus who shared the proceeds from their golf tournament to help our council.



Friday, November 8 2019: CAMP FIRE FIRST ANNIVERSARY [Fox News story and video](#),

Thursday, November 28, 2019: STM Women's Thanksgiving Potluck.

Sunday, December 8, 2019: Town hall meeting for STM parishioners seeking input on how our parish will grow, recover, and spread the Good News in the Paradise Community:





Saturday, December 14, 2019: STM welcomed local churches by hosting an ecumenical choir gathering:



Monday, December 16, 2019: Paradise neighborhoods are abuzz with trucks, tractors, and disposal equipment clearing the last lot in our neighborhood. RVs have moved back to lots cleared of debris waiting for springtime construction.





Neighbors who plan to rebuild, have cleared their lot but cannot let go of the hulk of a burned-out truck which brings back memories for them of better times and past adventures.



PG & E subcontractors tear up our streets to replace aging power and gas lines. Roadblocks are a daily nuisance but bring hope of improved infrastructure, removal of falling trees, and clearing for new constructions.



A few blocks away, there's hope for the New Year as a neighbor is framing a new home despite the cold, the rain and the muddy conditions. The frame stands in stark contrast to the empty lots on the same street.



The first wave of stalwart, pioneering Paradise Camp Fire survivors have returned living in mobile homes in the mud planning for better days. Their resiliency is evident in the Christmas decorations surrounding their improvised lodgings. They refuse to give up and are determined to celebrate the Christmas season.



Sunday, December 29, 2019: CHRISTMAS CELEBRATION 2019: [STM Women's Christmas Party](#):

Parishioners welcomed the SISTERS FROM THE ORDER of the EUCHARISTIC MISSIONARIES of the INFANT JESUS and OUR LADY of FATIMA. Greg Kidder promised that a group of Sisters from Mexico City would be coming to Butte County; and indeed, they arrived. The Sisters have been assigned a five-year mission to work in our area.

Because they are Spanish speakers exclusively, being here will be a total English-language immersion for them so when speaking English, be sure to speak slowly.



2020  
Spring 2020

Isolated by the Corona Virus, the main exercise consists in walking around the neighborhood a few blocks away where houses once stood along the Feather River canyon. One new home under construction stands at the end of a block of empty lots where spectacular homes once stood. Now all that remains are partially cleared lots, fallen mailboxes, and abandoned swimming pools.





Springtime poppies contrast with a rusty truck (a family treasure) that survived the fire. A neighbor's driveway leads to nowhere. The cleared lot gives an open view of RV homes and new construction in the background. Neighbors gather brush and burn it during the wet weather.



Thursday, June 11, 2020: Welcome Home to the Ridge: The St. Thomas More Project “Welcome Home to the Ridge” launched to Great Initial Success! Weeks before the Covid-19 pandemic forced us to suspend celebration of public Mass, we published a story in the bulletin about our intent to play a greater role in the rebuilding of Paradise through a project called Welcome Home to the Ridge. Thanks to a matching grant from the North Valley Community Foundation and the Butte Strong Fund, St. Thomas More launched a small but mighty symbol of welcome and support to new and returning homeowners. Once the homeowner takes occupancy, two or three members of the parish, wearing their parish t-shirts, will visit to present a “Welcome Home to the Ridge” gift, which includes —

- A five-foot tall crepe myrtle tree from a local nursery and a gift

bag with items donated by local businesses. The first two presentations were made by Lori MacPhail and Chris Rehmann.



Sunday, June 21, 2020: St. Thomas More Catholic Church celebrated Casey Knechtel's First Communion



Sunday, August 9, 2020: Bishop Soto celebrated a beautiful Mass at STM. We were joined by our Sisters, the Eucharistic Missionaries of the Infant Jesus and Our Lady of Fatima.



Saturday, October 17, 2020: A big Thank You to the men, and ladies of St. Thomas More for their hard work planting trees and other gardening work on the west side of the Church property! Beautifully done! The work continued a few weeks later with a smaller group.



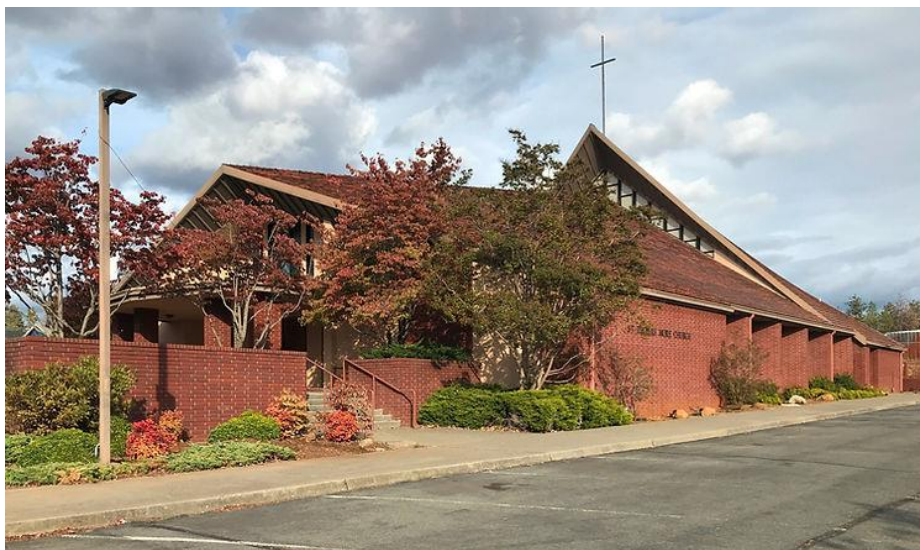
Sunday, October 25, 2020 [Fr. Martin Ramat's 13th Anniversary of Ordination.](#)



Halloween 2020: Jack and Clare Lemire prepare bags of treats for distributing on Pearson Rd:



**CAMP FIRE SECOND ANNIVERSARY**: Our Church has survived, but the hall and rectory are memories on bare ground.





Before Mass, parishioners gathered at the school kitchen to make lunch preparations. In front of the church, COVID 19 protocols were followed. Inside, pictures of three parishioners who perished in the Camp Fire were on display with those of other deceased parishioners.





After Mass, Knights and parishioners distributed hot lunches to nearly 200 in attendance. Warm food was welcome after snow had fallen at 11:08 am when bells had rung in memory of the November 8, 2018 Camp Fire. It has a bone-chilling memorial:





Throughout the day we reflected on two years of recovery and rebuilding from the ashes. There were signs of hope around town: parishioner-owned businesses open again, rebuilding efforts in every stage: planning by those living in RVs, foundations and homes under construction, and completed homes occupied by parishioners who celebrated a return to Paradise:













November 8, 2021:

**NATIONAL CATHOLIC REGISTER: THIRD ANNIVERSARY**