



Christmas Blessings

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Monday, December 27 – 7:00 a.m.

St. John, Apostle & evangelist
1 John 1:1-4; John 20:1a & 2-8

No Mass or Communion Service

Tuesday, December 28 – 7:00 a.m.

The Holy Innocents, Martyrs
1 John 1:5-2:2; 2:13-18

No Mass or Communion Service

Wednesday, December 29 – 7:00 a.m.

Fifth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord
1 John 2:3-11; Luke 2:22-35

No Mass or Communion Service

Thursday, December 30 – 7:00 a.m.

Sixth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord
1 John 2:12-17; Luke 2:36-40

No Mass or Communion Service

Friday, December 31 – 4:00 p.m.

AT HOLY FAMILY

Seventh Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord
1 John 2:18-21; John 1:1-18

Larry Moorman
(By Legion of Mary)

Friday, December 31 – 5:30 p.m.

AT ST. THOMAS

Stephanie Wagner
(By Denny & Cathy Wagner)

Saturday, January 1 – 8:00 a.m.

AT HOLY FAMILY

The Octave Day of the Nativity of the Lord, Solemnity of
Mary, Mother of God
Numbers 6:22-27; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:16-21

Raymond & Mike Metzger & Families
(By the Schenk Families)

Saturday, January 1 – 9:30 a.m.

AT ST. THOMAS

Faye Greenwell
(By Pat Sharow)

Saturday, January 1 – 5:30 p.m.

AT HOLY FAMILY

Bruce Dieker & Tommy Clark
(By Kay Downey)

Sunday, January 2 – 8:00 a.m.

Epiphany of the Lord
Isaiah 60:1-6; Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6; Matthew 2:1-12

Lucille Wagner
(By Richard Ryan)

St. Thomas – 10:00 a.m.

Parishioners of St. Thomas
And Holy Family

HOLY FAMILY TITHE TO THE LORD:

December 18-19, 2021

Holy Family: \$2,991.00

Sister Parish: \$75.00

School Support: \$340.00

Catholic Children's Home: \$65.00

Immaculate Conception: \$30.00

Christmas: \$50.00

Holy Family weekly budgeted amount: \$6,500

ST. THOMAS TITHE TO THE LORD:

December 19, 2021

St. Thomas: \$2,547.00

Immaculate Conception: \$25.00

Christmas Flowers: \$10.00

St. Thomas weekly budgeted amount: \$3,000

UPCOMING EVENTS

- ❖ **Legion of Mary** meets on Tuesdays at 5:00 p.m. in the convent. New members are welcome to attend.
- ❖ **Holy Family Bosco Kids** meets Wednesday from 6:15-7:30 and RCIA meets on Wednesday from 6:30-7:45 in the school cafeteria. Please contact Ann O'Sullivan for more information or questions about either of these programs, osullivan2031@gmail.com or 217-257-2516.
- ❖ **Nocturnal Adoration:** Saturday, January 1, beginning at 10:00 p.m. and concluding on January 2 at 7:45 a.m.

Please contact Tammy at 217-773-2825 or tmckeown@smseagle.org with any information you wish to have placed in the bulletin. I will

need any information by Monday at 2:00 p.m. for insertion into the next weekend's bulletin.

OFFICE HOURS

School Office hours will be Monday - Friday 7:30 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. Our phone number is 217-773-2825.

The Rectory phone number is: 217-773-3233.

SPECIAL PRAYER REQUESTS

Please keep the following in your prayers:

All Caregivers † The shut-ins of our parish and community † Matthew Bishop † For the safety of all of our military † For a Special Intention † Gay Gunn † Don & Marie Hendren † Jolene Lawson † Sharon Johnson † Gavin McDaniel † Boyd Tenhouse † Donna Reische † Janice Leverton † Jack and Margo Pool † Gary Shields † Carroll Hedden † Bonnie Meats † Abby Schuardt † Jack Cannon † Betty (Koch) Atteberry † Jim Steinkamp † Jenny Fox † Carrie Haskins † Heather Poppy † Stanley Harms † Pat Boylen † Sheila Thompson † J. J. Gronewold † Jack Johnson † John Norkus † Jim Wort † Marilyn Wort † Carolyn Kassing † Cal Noelke † Maryann Yeakel † Kimberly McKinny † Bryce Shank † Elaine Parkin & family † Barb Kuhn † Derry Schnelle † Mary Klingele Ahmed † Becky Hill † Sheila Roberts † Kelsie Broom † MacKenzie Wilmoth † Kay Downey † Marilyn Clark † Jim Heaton † Vera Marie Rolf † Nancy Salrin † Christine Colgan Moore † Randy McAvoy † Maddy Perry † Greg Flynn † Joe Ray

ST. THOMAS

Keeping in Touch. As we prepare ourselves and our homes for the coming of Jesus at Christmas, let's not forget our parishioners who are not able to be with us like they used to. Perhaps we can send a Christmas card or other greeting. If you know of someone who is homebound, please let us know here at the office. These are the St. Thomas parishioners that we know of:

Mrs. Pauline Seals, Good Samaritan Home, 2130 Harrison St., Rm. 332, Quincy, IL 62301

Mrs. Gay Gunn, Bickford of Quincy, 4221 Maine St., Quincy, IL 62305

Ms. Teresa Brady, 102 E. Park, Camp Point, IL 62320

ST. THOMAS LITURGICAL ROLES

December 31, 2021 - 5:30 p.m.

Sacristan: Denise Taylor
Lector: Karen Janssen
Ushers: Maurice Schmidt & Jacob Schmidt

Holy Family Bosco Kids and RCIA Updates

Merry Christmas to all of our Bosco Kids and RCIA families. Thank you for all the work/fun we had making the gift bags for the homebound and residents of Heritage Health. I wish you could have seen their smiley faces and eyes as we shared our gifts of love with them.

Classes will resume on January 5, 2022.

From the Pastor's Desk

First off, I want to wish each of you a very Merry Christmas. I pray that this Season of Christmas is a blessed one for you. What a glorious time as we celebrate the birth of Jesus.

As we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph on Sunday, we are reminded that to walk in the path of the Holy Family is to imitate their holiness,

humility, gentleness, and deep concern for one another. I also want to mention that in the Church of the Holy Family in Mt. Sterling, this Feast is celebrated as a Solemnity.

The Gospels give us very few details of the daily life of Jesus growing up in Nazareth. Here and there we get snippets of what His early life must have been like, and we can fill in some of the missing details from what we know of first-century life in Palestine. As a carpenter, Joseph was probably a man of modest means from the lower middle class. While a member of the Davidic clan, he and his family, and indeed his community, lived modestly.

Today's Gospel passage, often known as the Finding of the Child Jesus in the Temple, is very familiar. Here, the Holy Family has traveled to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover, and on their way home they realize that Jesus is no longer with them. Passover was, and continues to be, the key defining feast of Judaism - a commemoration of Israel's liberation from slavery and the source of its identity as God's Chosen People. Today, it stands as the backdrop to Luke's revelation of Jesus' fullest and deepest identity. Here, the Gospel tells us, Jesus reveals Himself as the Father's Son who has come among us to answer the great questions of human experience.

Filled with concern for His safety, and indeed with a little bit of righteous annoyance, the parents of Jesus return to Jerusalem where they find Him, not with children of His own age but with the elders. We can imagine what their emotions and fears must have been before they found Him, and their relief and joy when they found Him safe.

This Gospel, however, is not so much a commentary on family life but more a testimony to its importance in God's plan for our world. Having experienced the wonder of Jesus' birth, Mary and Joseph do not keep His holy presence to themselves nor closet Him away from the world. Instead, as faithful people of the Covenant, they ensure that He is brought up as part of a worshipping and faith-filled community. There, He would grow in grace and favor even in the face of life's struggles and challenges.

Today's feast sets before us the truth that, with God's help and despite all the challenges of life, we can grow in goodness and holiness. Imagine what a difference we could make in

our own families if we sought to understand more fully, as Saint John reminds us in our second reading, that we already share a holy dignity as God's children and a holy destiny that has yet to be revealed. As we celebrate the Holy Family, let us invite Christ Jesus to bring His loving presence into our homes this day, binding us together, healing our rifts, and allowing us to give ourselves over to loving God and others. Then we would truly be God's holy family.

And now just a few notes:

LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS THIS WEEK:

- Monday, December 27 - Feast of St. John, Apostle and Evangelist. St. John was the son of Zebedee and brother of James. It is presumed that he is the one who is referred to as the "disciple whom Jesus loved." St. John has contributed greatly to Sacred Scripture, authoring three letters, the Book of Revelation, and the most spiritual of the Gospels. He is symbolized by the eagle. He is mentioned in the Roman Canon (Eucharistic Prayer I). He died around the year 100 at Ephesus and is the patron of Asiatic Turkey. St. John, Pray for us!

- Tuesday, December 28 - Feast of the Holy Innocents - This Feast commemorates the children slaughtered by the barbaric King Herod whose goal was to kill the Christ Child and preserve his own power. Herod was an evil man, but ultimately, he was powerless against the Infant King of Glory. In the great plan of our salvation, only God the Father could dictate the perfect timing of Christ's sacrifice. His enemies pursued Him from the womb to the tomb, but He fulfilled His purpose with the help of the Holy Innocents. Theirs was a hidden martyrdom, but their immaculate lives bear witness to His glory as they reside in Heaven with Him forever. The only offense of the Holy Innocents was coming into the world at the same time as the Infant Jesus. They looked like Him and for that, they suffered death. What about us? How closely do we resemble Christ? Do we "look like Him" spiritually? How do others recognize Christ in us? Can they see Him in the way we speak, act, serve, and love? Together, let us aspire to "look like Christ" in honor of the Holy Innocents. In gratitude for their incomparable gift, let us live to sacrifice for the coming of His Kingdom. May our sacrifices be rewarded with triumph and

glory, if not for ourselves, then for those who follow. All the Holy Innocents, Pray for us!

- Wednesday, December 29 - Optional memorial of St. Thomas Becket, Bishop and Martyr. Thomas Becket was Chancellor of England for eight years and as Archbishop of Canterbury, he defended the freedoms and rights of the Church. He was killed on December 29, 1170, by order of Henry II. He was canonized just three years after his death and is considered the most famous martyr of the Middle Ages. St. Thomas Becket, Pray for us!

- Friday, December 31 - Optional memorial of St. Sylvester I, Pope. St. Sylvester was Bishop of Rome (Pope) from 314-335, organizing public worship and dedicating the Lateran Basilica. He is one of the first non-martyrs venerated as a saint. He died in 335. St. Sylvester, Pray for us!

- Saturday, January 1 - Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God. This is Ordinarily a Holy Day of Obligation, but since the Solemnity falls on a Saturday this year, the obligation is lifted in the United States. Still, it is quite an important celebration, and I will be offering both Vigil Masses and Masses on the day for this Solemnity at both parishes and encourage you to attend. The Mass times for this Solemnity are listed below. This is also the Octave Day of the Nativity of the Lord.

- THIS WEEK - I would like to try to take a few days away from the parishes after Christmas, and so I have asked Tammy to not officially schedule weekday Masses for the week after Christmas. As of this writing, I am not sure if we will be able to offer a Communion Service each day or not. So, I will keep you up to date with an announcement at Mass. Thank you for your understanding.

- CHRISTMAS - Again, a very Merry and Blessed Christmas to each of you. As we have now entered into this glorious Season of Christmas, let us reflect each day on Christ coming into the world. Christmas, remember, is not just a day. It is a Season. The Season of Christmas runs through the Baptism of the Lord, this year, January 9. So I encourage you not to rush this most joyous Season but to celebrate it as we are called to do.

- THANK YOU - I want to express my sincere thanks and appreciation to each and every

one of you and especially for the cards, gifts, and kind words and gestures for this Season of Christmas. What a blessing it is for me to be the pastor here at Holy Family and St. Thomas Parishes and St. Mary School.

- DECORATING - I would also like to thank all those who helped with decorating our churches for Christmas. They are always beautiful. We had some new and young members and families helping, especially at Holy Family. Your help is greatly appreciated.

Along these same lines, as I mentioned in last week's bulletin, for a number of years Amanda Genenbacher has been overseeing the decorating of St. Thomas Church. I thank her for all of her work to help make the church beautiful. Amanda is looking to step away from overseeing the decorating, and so I am looking for someone to take on this role. This does not involve doing everything yourself, but rather overseeing and directing the decorating for different Liturgical Seasons. Amanda is willing to work with someone to help you get started, and I also offer guidance in terms of proper Liturgical colors, decorations, etc. If you are interested in taking on this important role, please let me know and thank you for your consideration.

- UPCOMING LITURGIES - Below is the anticipated schedule of some upcoming special liturgies for both parishes:

AT HOLY FAMILY:

Sunday, December 26:
8:00 a.m. (No Vigil Masses on Saturday evening, December 25)

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, Vigil Mass Friday, December 31: 4:00 p.m.

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, Saturday, January 1: 8:00 a.m.

Epiphany of the Lord, Vigil Mass on Saturday, January 1: 5:30 p.m.

Epiphany of the Lord, Sunday, January 2: 8:00 a.m.

AT ST. THOMAS:

Sunday, December 26:
10:00 a.m. (No Vigil Masses on Saturday evening, December 25)

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, Vigil
Mass Friday, December 31: 5:30 p.m.

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God,
Saturday, January 1: 9:30 a.m.

Epiphany of the Lord,
Sunday, January 2, 10:00 a.m.

Since there have been a number of inquiries, I note that there is the obligation to participate in the celebration of the Mass for Christmas AND for the Sunday after Christmas. These are two separate obligations, and the obligations are fulfilled only by participating in two separate Masses. I will only be offering Mass to fulfill the Sunday obligation on Sunday at each parish as noted above.

-NOCTURNAL ADORATION - Nocturnal Adoration will be at Holy Family beginning on Saturday, January 1, at 10:00 p.m. until 7:45 a.m. Sunday morning. It will end with Benediction and be followed by our regularly scheduled 8:00 a.m. Mass. Thank you for those who faithfully participate each month. I encourage others to join us as well.

- POPE'S INTENTION - The Holy Father's Prayer intention for January is for true human fraternity. We pray for all those suffering from religious discrimination and persecution. May their own rights and dignity be recognized, which originate from being brothers and sisters in the human family.

- NEW YEAR - As we begin a new calendar year this week, I wish you all a happy and blessed new year. As you enter into the new year, renew your spiritual life and your commitment to conversion each and every day.

- BAPTISM - On Sunday, December 19, I baptized Emma Elizabeth Stamerjohn at Holy Family. Emma is the daughter of Drew and Kendra Stamerjohn. We welcome Emma Elizabeth as the newest member of God's family, and we offer our congratulations to her family.

- REPEAL OF PARENT NOTIFICATION - As I mentioned at some of the Masses last weekend, sadly, the Governor of Illinois has repealed the parental notification for children seeking an abortion. This is a great tragedy and contributes even more to a great evil. Our Bishop has already made a strong statement against this, and I am hoping to include more in next week's and/or future bulletins. Please

continue to pray for the protection of and respect for all human life in all stages, as well as the continued conversion of hearts and protection from all evil. Please pray also for all of our legislators - local, state, and national.

- END-OF-YEAR CONTRIBUTIONS - One final reminder, you still have time to make an end-of-year contribution. If you would like to make an end-of year contribution, I ask you to make those as soon as possible so that we can get them recorded in this calendar year.

Often times, folks are also required to take a disbursement from a retirement account each year. In many cases, if the disbursement goes directly to a charitable organization, there are significant tax advantages. Additionally, I learned of a new temporary tax law that may allow you to deduct up to \$600 given to a charitable organization even if you do not itemize deductions. If either of these apply to you, I encourage you to speak to a tax expert soon and consider a contribution to the parishes or to St. Mary School. As always, thank you for your continued support of the parishes and school.

- RESTORATION UPDATE - As I noted in last week's bulletin, the following are some updates to the restoration at Holy Family. I have received updated proposals for a lot of exterior work on the church that is very much needed. The work includes replacement of the roof, restoration of the bell tower, guttering restoration, masonry work, and exterior painting. The proposals are being reviewed by the Diocesan Office for Properties.

The total cost of these portions of the restoration will be right at \$1,000,000. It is recommended that we have on hand an additional ten percent of this amount for contingency and unforeseen circumstances.

Thus far, we have about \$420,000 from our Capital Campaign. Additionally, as I mentioned previously, we were anticipating some funds from insurance. This has been finalized and we anticipate receiving about \$130,000 from insurance. Part of this will be received only after the project is completed.

We do still have funds from the sale of the farm property. While we will likely need to use some of these funds, I would prefer not to exhaust those funds completely on the restoration.

Given this, you can see that we are still short in covering the entirety of these projects. Additionally, there are other restoration projects that we certainly want and need to look at after completing those mentioned here. And so, our capital campaign remains ongoing and is still very important.

We are, however, in a position to move forward. I will be looking at additional funding sources and opportunities. I encourage you to continue to support the Capital Campaign and to encourage others to do so as well.

I am looking at having the same contractor complete all of the projects mentioned here. They would likely begin erecting scaffolding as early as March and begin work in late April or May depending on weather. They estimate that this would be a four to six-month project.

As I've mentioned several times, this is a large multi-faceted project and one that is so important to preserving our beautiful church. Holy Family Church has stood strongly for many, many years, and it is time to make sure we preserve it for many more years to come.

I look forward to getting the work started as I know you are also anxious to see the work begin. I am equally excited about getting the projects completed and then to look at our other projects. Thank you for your continued support of this restoration project.

Thank you for your continued prayers and support for me, one another, the parishes and school, and the Universal Church. Please be assured of my prayers for you each and every day. May you have a most blessed week.

- Fr. Aaron

**Bulletin Short for
The Nativity of the Lord [Christmas],
Solemnity, Saturday, December 25, 2021**

Today. This first coming of Jesus is the promise that this Christ will come again. He is with us now - but also coming at some unknown time to complete all things in the perfect Reign and Kingdom of God. Today, we marvel over God's good grace.

- How will I behave with family and friends because Jesus Christ is with me and us today?

**Bulletin Short for
The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and
Joseph, Feast
Sunday, December 26, 2021**

Family Life. Even the pre-teen Jesus astonishes and worries His parents as they fret over their child! Those of us who are parents know this stress. But all of us, even us aged ones, are still children of God, dearly loved and called to be obedient.

- How will I obey God this day?
- What commandment will I keep?
- What mercy work will I do?

MT. STERLING CATHOLIC CEMETERY

The Mt. Sterling Catholic Cemetery will be closing their books for 2021 shortly. If you wish to make a contribution, please drop in the collection or mail to: Mt. Sterling Catholic Cemetery, P.O. Box 252, Mt. Sterling, IL 62353.



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