

Holy Family Parish

401 W. North St.
Mt. Sterling, IL 62353



St. Thomas Catholic Church

109 E. Spring, Camp Point, IL 62320

Rectory: (217) 773-3233

E-mail: holy.family@smseagle.org

Parish Staff

Rev. Aaron Kuhn, Pastor – (217) 773-3233

Emergency only (217) 242-9669

E-Mail: akuhn@dio.org

Deacon Michael P. Ellerman

Ashley Guthrie, Bookkeeper

Tammy McKeown, Parish & School Secretary

Cheryl Dillard, Liturgical Music Coordinator

Ann O'Sullivan, C.R.E.

School: St. Mary (217) 773-2825

Website: www.smseagle.org

Principal: Melissa Obert

Mass Schedule

Daily: 7:00 a.m. Tuesday-Thursday - 8:30 a.m. Friday

Saturday: 5:30 p.m.

Sunday: 8:00 a.m.

Holy days: Will be Announced

Sacrament of Penance

Saturday: 4:30-5:00 p.m. - Anytime by appointment

Eucharistic Adoration

First weekend of month

Phone (217) 593-6685, (217) 773-3233

E-mail: stthomascp@gmail.com

Parish Secretary: Pat Sharow

Renting of Hall: Cathy Holtschlag – 217-430-7493

Community for Christ Assistance Center Board Member:

Dorothy Obert – (217) 593-6520

Ministry Schedule: Bobbi Mock – (217) 430-2859

CHWC Director: Karen Janssen – (217) 242-5283

D.R.E: Laura Evans – (217) 316-1734

Sunday Mass 10:00 a.m.

Holy Day: Will be Announced

First Friday Adoration of the Eucharist 12:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

First Friday Mass 6:00 p.m. with

Reconciliation prior 5:00 - 5:45 p.m.

Ladies Bible Study Wednesday 9:30 a.m.

PSR classes Wednesday 6:30 p.m.

Men & Women's Society Meeting 1st Thursday 7:00 p.m.

Parish Pastoral Council Meeting – 2nd Thursday 6:00 p.m.

Website: www.stthomascp.org

<https://stthomascp.formed.org>

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Monday, December 4 – 7:00 a.m.

St. John Damascene, Priest & Doctor of the Church
Isaiah 2:1-5; Matthew 8:5-11

Communion Service

Tuesday, December 5 – 7:00 a.m.

Isaiah 11:1-10; Luke 10:21-24

Mary Margaret Bordenkircher
(By Joan Zurita)

Wednesday, December 6 – 7:00 a.m.

St. Nicholas, Bishop
Isaiah 25:6-10a; Matthew 15:29-37

Paul, Frances, & Larry Schenk
and Ruth James
(By Bob & Judy Schenk & Family)

Thursday, December 7 – 7:00 a.m.

St. Ambrose, Bishop & Doctor of the Church
Isaiah 26:1-6; Matthew 7:21, 24-27

Margie Dunn

Thursday, December 7 – 5:30 p.m.

AT HOLY FAMILY

Parishioners of Holy Family & St. Thomas

Thursday, December 7 – 7:00 p.m.

AT ST. THOMAS

Barb Kuhn
(By Kathy Weast)

Friday, December 8 – 8:30 a.m.

AT HOLY FAMILY
(School Mass)

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary
Genesis 3:9-15, 20; Ephesians 1:3-6, 11-12; Luke 1:26-38

Floyd Blentlinger
(By Legion of Mary)

Friday, December 8 – 5:30 p.m.

AT ST. THOMAS

Larry Langan and Jack Gronewold
(By Jim & Kim Gronewold)

Friday, December 8 – 7:00 p.m.

AT HOLY FAMILY

Janet Yakle
(By Barb Lehne)

Saturday, December 9 – 5:30 p.m.

St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin
Isaiah 30:19-21, 23-26; Matthew 9:35-10:1, 5a, 6-8

Parishioners of Holy Family
and St. Thomas

Sunday, December 10 – 8:00 a.m.

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe
Isaiah 40:1-5, 9-11; 2 Peter 3:18-14; Mark 1:1-8

Bob & Sylva Dixon and Julie Link
(By Cheryl Dillard)

St. Thomas – 10:00 a.m.

David & Esther Coggeshall
(By Pat Sharow)

HOLY FAMILY TITHE TO THE LORD:

November 25-26, 2023

Holy Family: \$2,751.00
School Support: \$90.00
Sister Parish: \$5.00
Cemetery: \$175.00

Holy Family weekly budgeted amount: \$6,500

ST. THOMAS TITHE TO THE LORD:

November 26, 2023

St. Thomas: \$1,979.75

St. Thomas weekly budgeted amount: \$2,635

UPCOMING EVENTS

- ❖ **Legion of Mary** meets each Tuesday at 5:00 p.m. in the convent. All are invited to pray the rosary with us and learn more about the Legion. “With Mary’s help we guide, console and enlighten others.”

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 - 8:00 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:

Bud Bordenkircher † Jeff Kozak †

Jim Duvendack † Marilyn Clark †

John Colgan †

ST. THOMAS

St. Thomas Christmas Party - Get ready for some festive fellowship and fun! Our St. Thomas Christmas party will be Sunday, December 10 after the 10:00 a.m. mass. A full meal will be provided. Plus, you can expect lots of laughs and a chance to take home a homemade cake. We're having a CAKE WALK! Don't forget to sign up. We'd sure like everyone to come.

ST. THOMAS LITURGICAL ROLES

December 10, 2023 - 10:00 a.m.

Sacristan: Jonah Coggeshall
Greeters: Mark & Amanda
Obert Family
Lector: David Leezer
Gift Bearers: Butch & Dorothy Obert
Eucharistic Minister: Theresa Bockhold
Collection Counters: Robin Coggeshall
Ushers: Jerry Herkert, Andrew Llewelyn

From the Pastor's Desk

Today marks the First Sunday of Advent and the beginning of a New Liturgical Year. The primary color of violet indicates the repentant nature of the Season. Advent Liturgies take on a more somber tone and the Gloria is absent from the celebration of Masses (except on Solemnities). Decoration of the church buildings and Sanctuary is minimal and music

during Advent liturgies should be moderate, without anticipating the full joy of Christmas.

The purpose of the Advent Season is to prepare the Church for the Lord's Second Coming. All too often we look at Advent only as a time to prepare for Christmas and by prepare we mean making ourselves busy getting everything ready for "the big day." This is not Advent at all. In fact, we should be emptying ourselves, making ourselves less busy, spending time in prayer and penance, in anticipation of Christmas joy, yes, but really to prepare ourselves for Jesus' Second Coming. Let us all make an effort to carry that out more fully.

Speaking about the coming of the Son of Man, the Lord told His disciples to "take heed, watch, for you do not know when the time will come." The Church, following the Lord's command, sets aside these weeks of Advent to call to mind the Lord's promised return and to exhort us to repent and turn our lives back to Him. We look forward to Jesus' coming with great hope because He will bring with Him the fullness of the Kingdom of Heaven.

In the Advent Liturgy, we are to experience deep spiritual hunger and the need for the grace of salvation. It is a Season of preparation so that we will recognize and embrace the Lord when He finally comes again.

May we all have a most blessed and holy Advent Season as we prepare ourselves for the Lord as He has commanded.

-LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS THIS WEEK:

-Monday, December 4 - Optional memorial of St. John Damascene, Priest and Doctor of the Church. Known for his competence, fairness, and humility in worldly affairs John became a monk and later a priest. Known also for his comprehensive synthesis of Catholic dogma and his defense of the veneration of images against iconoclasts.
St. John Damascene, Pray for us!

-Wednesday, December 6 - Optional memorial of St. Nicholas, Bishop. St. Nicholas was known to be a model pastor with great charity. He has been popularized as "Santa Clause" but his noted charity is so very important for all of us.
St. Nicholas, Pray for us!

-Thursday, December 7 - Obligatory Memorial of St. Ambrose, Bishop and Doctor of the Church. St. Ambrose was known to be a

compelling preacher and a great defender of Orthodoxy. St. Ambrose, Pray for us!

-Friday, December 8 - Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Holy Day of Obligation. This Solemnity originated in the seventh century and in 1708, Pope Clement XI established this Solemnity for the entire Church. The Immaculate Conception is the patroness of the United States of America and also Principle Patroness of our Diocese. Mary, the Immaculate Conception, Pray for us!

-Saturday, December 9 - Optional memorial of St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin. In 1531, the Blessed Virgin Mary appeared to Juan Diego four times at Tepayac near Mexico City. Known for his holiness, it is said that Juan Diego devoted himself to the pilgrims who came to see the miraculous image of Mary imprinted on his cloak. St. Juan Diego, Pray for us!

-ADVENT GIVING TREE - You may recall last year that each parish had an Advent Giving Tree, collecting baby items for Pregnancy Centers. I am planning to have a tree in the back of church again this year with Advent "ornaments." The ornaments will list baby items that we will collect and give to a pregnancy center. There is also a short prayer on the back of each ornament that I encourage you to pray.

If you'd like, take one or more ornaments and purchase the item(s) listed on the ornament. Return the item(s) to church by Sunday, December 17. I will have totes somewhere in the back of the churches to place your items. Please do not wrap the items and please keep the ornament and pray the prayer that is on it.

There are many needs and many opportunities to give. This is but one way to help those in need and also promote the sanctity of life.

-IMMACULATE CONCEPTION - Friday, December 8 is the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This is a Holy Day of Obligation. The faithful are obliged (required) to participate in the celebration of the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on this day (or at a Vigil the night before in anticipation of the day). It is seriously sinful to completely disregard this obligation. There are a number of Masses scheduled at both parishes which should give everyone ample opportunity to carry out this obligation.

Mass times for the Holy Day of Obligation are:

At Holy Family, 5:30 p.m. Vigil Mass on Thursday evening, December 7; 8:30 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. Mass on Friday, December 8.

At St. Thomas, 7:00 p.m. Vigil Mass on Thursday evening, December 7; 5:30 p.m. Mass on Friday, December 8.

-ST. THOMAS CHRISTMAS PARTY - St. Thomas Christmas party for all St. Thomas parishioners is next Sunday, December 10 in the parish hall following Mass. Sign-up sheets are in the back of the church to help plan for the meal. Please sign up as soon as possible.

-SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION - Sacraments are defined as an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace. They are great gifts to us, given to us by Christ so that we might have fullness of life in Him and grow in our Universal Call to Holiness. The Sacraments are necessary for our salvation.

In last week's bulletin I wrote a little about the necessity of participating in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass on ALL Sundays and Holy Days of Obligation and the serious sinfulness of neglecting this obligation. This week, I want to say a few things about the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a Sacrament of Healing. It is a beautiful and wonderful gift from God. Unfortunately, for many, it is celebrated far too infrequent. Some joke that the lines for receiving Holy Communion are long and the lines for Sacramental Confession are short but frankly, it's no laughing matter. We need to be in a state of grace to receive Holy Communion. If not, we commit the serious sin of sacrilege. The only way we get to that state of grace after falling into serious sin is through Sacramental Confession. Even if we don't find ourselves in grave sin, the grace of the Sacrament is so significant that we should regularly participate in the Sacrament. I would suggest at least once a month. For some, it may be more frequent.

If one thinks they are without sin, even Sacred Scripture tells us that they are deceiving themselves. Not only that, but it's also a pretty prideful assertion which in itself is sinful.

Why do folks avoid the confessional? There could be a number of reasons...maybe it's because we have to confront the reality of our sin and its ugliness; perhaps we're nervous

about going because of a particular sin we need to confess or maybe we don't quite know what to do or say, or we might think that the priest will somehow think less of us, or perhaps we've been away from the Sacrament for a long time, or maybe we don't even recognize the seriousness of our sins. These reasons are just the tip of the iceberg but these and any other reason that a person comes up with is really just an excuse. And we have to also be mindful that the devil himself puts many of these ideas in our head to keep us away from the Sacrament and to keep us in the cycle of sin, hopefully to keep us away from God, and not just now but for all eternity. If you think that isn't true, the devil certainly has deceived you.

In celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation, I'd like to offer some practical advice:

-We must prepare ourselves for the any Sacrament we celebrate. Preparation for the Sacrament of Reconciliation involves asking God to help you to know your sins and then doing a thorough examination of conscience before you ever even enter the confessional. You should use some formal examination of conscience to help you with this. There are a number of very good ones. If you need help finding one, let me know. Preparation also involves knowing the revealed Truth of Jesus Christ.

-If you don't know how to celebrate the Sacrament, again, there are a number of resources available to help you and you should learn but be mindful that the priest will help you. Let him know if you need help.

-Early on in the celebration of the Sacrament, you need to say how long it's been since your last Confession...this is both important and necessary. If you forget, the priest will likely ask you how long it's been since your last Confession.

-Confess your specific sins...those things you have done and/or those things you have not done. Name those particular sinful acts. Do not be too general...for example, if one confesses the sin of impurity, what does that mean? Name the sinful act. Also, be very careful about saying something like "wanting to be better at xyz." It may be a good desire but it's not confession of sin. Again, name the sinful act. Sin is always an act...name the sinful act (which sometimes is a sin of omission, something I didn't do but should have done).

-Confession is not counseling. A priest may give a few words of advice or encouragement but the Sacrament is not counseling nor is it intended to be. A priest may ask a question from time to time to clarify or to understand what a penitent is saying or confessing but not as a means to provide counseling.

-Confess YOUR sins, not someone else's sins. This may sound silly but I'm quite serious. Telling what someone else has done wrong only seeks to make an excuse for our own sinfulness or seeks to help us "feel better" about our own sin.

-Do not make an excuse for your sinful act. Sin is ALWAYS a choice that an individual makes. Give praise and thanks to God for helping you recognize your sinful act(s) and for bringing you to the Sacrament...and of course, for the Sacrament Itself.

-If you struggle with a particular sin, you need to confess that particular sinful act in the celebration of the Sacrament when it has occurred since your last confession, especially serious sin. However, be mindful that if you have made a good and thorough examination of conscience and a good confession, God forgives you of all of your sins, even those you may be unaware of or have forgotten. Be careful about naming a sinful act from the past for which you have already been forgiven. If a sinful act from the past comes to mind after receiving Sacramental Confession, especially if it is a serious sin, you can and sometimes should mention that in your next confession. But again, be mindful that, in the Sacrament, God forgives us of all of our sins committed since our last confession so long as we do not purposely and intentionally try to conceal any sin from God or the Confessor. I want to stress again though, that if you have committed a sinful act since your last confession, then you need to confess that sinful act even if it is the same or similar act that may have been confessed in a previous confession. There is a difference between past sins and repeated sins. Each sinful act is an individual act and an individual sin.

-Making a good Act of Contrition is not only important but a necessary element of the Sacrament. This is normally done within the Sacrament itself just after the Priest gives you a Penance and just before the Priest bestows the words of absolution upon you. If you do not know an Act of Contrition, there is often times a copy in the Confessional or the priest can certainly help you with it as well. An Act

of Contrition, though, is something we should come to know and we should, in our daily examination of Conscience, pray an Act of Contrition. As in prayer, be mindful of the words that you are saying in the Act of Contrition. They are powerful words that commit us to living a life of holiness.

-In an Act of Contrition, we say to God that we will strive to avoid falling into sin and to avoid that which leads us to sin. Be mindful that as you go forth from the Sacrament of Reconciliation, you will need to complete the Penance given to you by the Priest, of course, but you need to also go forth with the full intention of living a holy life and avoiding sin. One should always rush to the Sacrament when needed but should be very careful about the repentance, the change of life, that is also necessary. If one confesses sin but has no intention of repenting from that sin, how can God's grace be effective?!

-Be mindful of the Seal of the Sacrament of Confession. Whatever is heard in the Sacrament cannot be repeated or revealed or acted upon in any way for any reason. This applies to the Priest who is hearing the Confession, of course, and priests take this very serious. To break the Seal would be beyond a serious offense. BUT, be mindful that the Seal of the Sacrament extends also to every single person who may overhear another's confession. Again, to repeat, reveal, or act upon anything heard in the Sacrament is a grave offense. The one who is confessing their sins might wish to share something about the Sacrament with someone else which would be ok but again, the Priest hearing the Confession and anyone else who might overhear the Confession is bound by the Seal of the Sacrament. Anything else is a grave offense and carries serious consequences including excommunication from the Church.

-The Penance that the Priest gives and its careful and thoughtful completion is both necessary and important. The Penance is to be taken serious and carefully completed but without rigidity.

-Celebrate the Sacrament regularly. Again, I would recommend at least once a month and certainly more often if needed. You can always call me or another priest to set up a time for Confession...don't ever hesitate to do so.

There is a lot of information here but it's important so that we can enter into the

Sacrament more fully. Keep the information handy. If you have questions, don't hesitate to let me know. I will try to schedule some additional times for celebrating the Sacrament during Advent at both parishes so keep an eye out for that as well.

-CHRISTMAS LITURGIES – Below is the anticipated schedule of Christmas Liturgies for both parishes:

At Holy Family, Christmas Eve, Sunday, December 24 – 4:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.

-Christmas Day, Monday, December 25 – Midnight and 7:00 a.m.

At St. Thomas, Christmas Eve, Sunday, December 24 – 6:30 p.m.

-Christmas Day, Saturday, December 25 – 9:00 a.m.

A reminder that the faithful are obliged to participate in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass for the Fourth Sunday of Advent either at a Vigil Mass on December 23 or a Sunday Mass on December 24 celebrating the Fourth Sunday of Advent AND for Christmas either at a Vigil Mass on December 24 celebrating Christmas or at a Mass on Christmas Day. The parishes will celebrate Masses for the Fourth Sunday of Advent according to the regular schedule that we follow. The Mass times for Christmas are above.

-CHRISTMAS CARDS – Beautiful and solidly Catholic Christmas Cards are available in the back of each Church while they last. If you'd like to make a contribution toward them, use the marked envelopes and place it in the regular collection basket.

-CHRISTMAS FLOWER DONATIONS – If you would like to make a contribution toward our Christmas flowers, St. Thomas Parishioners should have an envelope for them in their regular set of offertory envelopes. If not, simply place your contribution in an envelope marked "Christmas Flowers." At Holy Family, please place contributions in an envelope and mark clearly on the outside "Christmas Flowers."

Thank you for your continued prayers and support. You remain in my prayers each day. May you have a most blessed week and Advent.

-Fr. Aaron

HOLY FAMILY BOSCO KIDS AND RCIA

Bosco Kids continue to meet as per the teachers' schedule. Confessions for Bosco Kids and families will be on 12/4 at 6:30 p.m. in the church. No classes will be held on 12/18, 12/25, and 1/1.

HOLY FAMILY ADULT FAITH FORMATION

Our 2023-2024 Adult Faith Formation session will be held during the 3 weeks of Advent and 5 weeks of Lent. The group last year chose this topic-- "Mary: A Biblical Walk with the Blessed Mother". The Better We Know Mary, the Better We Will Know Her Son. This program is an extraordinary pilgrimage that reveals Mary's unique role in God's kingdom and in our lives. Filmed on location in the Holy Land, Mary: A Biblical Walk with the Blessed Mother will place you in the midst of the powerful drama of her earthly life, taking you through her joys ... and her sorrows. You will learn how she works in our lives today, drawing us ever closer to her divine Son. Seeing Mary in this way will change you forever. Mary will become a part of your daily life, and in your daily life, you will become more like Christ.

We have received a grant from the diocese for this program--so there is no charge. Classes during Advent will be held on Tuesdays from 7-8:30 p.m. on 11/28, 12/5 and 12/12. Please register with Ann O'Sullivan at 217-257-2516 or aosullivan2031@gmail.com.

We look forward to seeing you all.

St. Peter Advent Mission

Fr. Kolbe Wolniakowski, OSB, a Benedictine Monk and Priest of Saint Meinrad Archabbey, will offer an Advent Parish Mission at St. Peter Catholic Church in Quincy, IL from Sunday, December 3-Tuesday, December 5. This Parish Mission will focus on the Eucharist as part of our National Eucharistic Revival. His Parish Mission will begin with the homily during all Masses on Sunday,

December 3 and will continue with Parish Mission Conferences at 6:30 p.m. on both December 4 and 5. Fr. Kolbe's Sunday homily will be recorded and posted to our Parish social media accounts if you are unable to attend for Mass. We hope to see you!

ST. THOMAS ADULT FAITH FORMATION

ADULT FAITH FORMATION
MINI SERIES

3 Nights-3 Topics

NOVEMBER 5TH	NOVEMBER 29TH	DECEMBER 6TH
Eucharistic Miracles Did you know there are miracles that back up the true presence of the Eucharist? Fr. Robert Spitzer tells us about the incredible science behind them.	Why Go To Mass? Fr. John Riley and Chris Stefanick discuss the roots of Mass and its profound implications for us today.	Why Would A Loving God Allow Such Suffering? Discuss Catholic philosophy and theology to help us understand this question as well as free will!
		

JOIN US FROM 6:30-7:45 AS WE WATCH A VIDEO AND DISCUSS THIS POPULAR TOPICS!

Meet at St Thomas Church Hall for this FREE event! Contact Laura Evans with any questions. 217-316-1334 or levans@adam.net

ST. MARY SCHOOL CROPS FOR KIDS

We brought in \$26,627.71 with our Crops for Kids Fundraiser. **THANK YOU** to the Pike and Brown County farmers for your generosity!!!

Snow Removal

We are in need of volunteers for snow removal around the school once it starts snowing. If you are interested in helping with snow removal, please let Melissa know (217-773-2825 or mobert@smseagle.org). Thanks!



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