

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 Paul Koch

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 16 – 7:00 a.m.

Numbers 24:2-7, 15-17a; Matthew 21:23-27

Communion Service

Tuesday, December 17 – 7:00 a.m.

Genesis 49:2, 8-10; Matthew 1:1-17

Mary Margaret Bullard
(By the Family)

Wednesday, December 18 – 7:00 a.m.

Jeremiah 23:5-8; Matthew 1:18-25

Marie & Raymond Koch
(By Joan Zurita)

Thursday, December 19 – 7:00 a.m.

Judges 13:2-7, 24-25a; Luke 1:5-25

Amy Ormond Lucky
(By Joan Siebers & Pat Berry)

AT ST. THOMAS – 5:30 p.m.

Carl & Dorothy Mast
(By Ray & Teresa Bockhold)

Friday, December 20 – 8:30 a.m.

(School Mass)

Isaiah 7:10-14; Luke 1:26-38

Ronnie Koch
(By Patty Koch)

Saturday, December 21 – 8:00 a.m.

St. Peter Canisius, Priest & Doctor of the Church
Song of Songs 2:8-14; Luke 1:39-45

Father Aaron's Intentions

Saturday, December 21 – 5:30 p.m.

Mary Volk
(By Dawn Dunn)

Sunday, December 22 – 8:00 a.m.

Micah 5:1-4a; Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45

Dave & Kay Downey
(By Dava, Kim & Michelle)

St. Thomas – 10:00 a.m.

Parishioners of Holy Family
and St. Thomas

HOLY FAMILY TITHE TO THE LORD:

December 7-8, 2024

Holy Family: \$3,464.70

School Support: \$67.00

Sister Parish: \$175.00

Cemetery: \$20.00

Retired Religious: \$880.00

Immaculate Conception: \$230.00

All Saints: \$20.00

Debt Reduction: \$50.00

Holy Family weekly budgeted amount: \$6,500

ST. THOMAS TITHE TO THE LORD:

December 8, 2024

St. Thomas: \$2,053.00

Immaculate Conception: \$151.00

Christmas Flowers: \$75.00

Retired Religious: \$235.00

Candles: \$24.00

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."
- ❖ **Red Cross Blood Drive:** The need for blood by patients being treated for accidents, routine surgeries, cancer, heart disease, and hemophilia is ongoing and must be met every day. The Red Cross Bloodmobile will be located at the **Legion Hall** on **Monday, December 23, 12:00 – 6:00 p.m.** Appointments are recommended but walk ins are welcome. Call 1-800 Red Cross or 217-257-3117 for appointments.

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:

Jeff Kozak † Jim Duvendack † Marilyn Clark †
Sheila Thompson † Logan Wilson †
Isabella Wilson † Calvin Schenk †
Dylan Hendricks † Mary Gregory †
Ezra Keokham † Greg Jones †
Misha Follis Allen † Susan Kenady †
Leona Dunn † Georgia Metz † Dyson Ham †
Caden Callihan † Nancy Salrin †

ST. THOMAS

The Altar and Rosary Society is collecting baby items and gift cards for food and gas during the Advent season for BIRTHRIGHT and CARENET. There is a tree in the entryway of St. Thomas, please take an ornament, purchase the requested item and leave it under the tree or if it is a gift card, place it in the offering basket. If you would like to make a monetary donation, please put it in a marked envelope in the offering basket and the society will purchase needed items.

We will be taking Christmas cards this year to our parishioners that are homebound and in nursing homes:

Teresa Brady
Pauline Seals

There is a box in the entrance of the church if you would like to drop off a card for them and they will be delivered.

If there is a parishioner who we missed, please call Clara @ 217-257-3244 and she will be happy to include them.

Last day to bring cards is Sunday, December 22. Thank you!

St. Thomas – Epiphany Party - Advent is a time of preparation. So too are we preparing for our parish Christmas celebration. It will be on Sunday, January 5, the feast of the Epiphany. More details and sign-up sheets will be coming. For now, mark your calendars! Bring the whole family on Sunday, January 5 after our 10:00 a.m. Mass.

From the Pastor's Desk

Today the Church celebrates the Third Sunday of Advent which is traditionally known as Gaudete Sunday, so-called from the first word of the Antiphon at the Introit. Gaudete means "Rejoice" and sets a tone of joyful expectation for the Lord's Second Coming and the celebration of His Birth as does the permitted rose-colored vestments for this day.

"Among those within the crowds who were asking Saint John the Baptist this question were tax collectors, soldiers and ordinary people. John gave an answer to them all, first telling them to turn away from the sins that they struggled with the most. Sin takes on many forms and often is closely associated with our daily duties in life. Some sins are sins of commission, meaning sins we commit by an intentional act. Some sins are those of omission, meaning a lack of certain virtues or a failure to do what we ought to do.

After addressing the particular sins that those in the crowds were struggling with, John then turns their attention to Christ. He states to them that "one mightier than I is coming" and that "He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." In other words, John was giving the people a twofold command. First, work to overcome sin. And second, turn your eyes to Him Who is coming to you. Repenting from sin is not enough. Once we repent, we must then fill the void within our souls with the presence of Christ.

Advent, just like Lent, is an important time within our liturgical year to heed these messages. Though it's true that we must work to overcome sin and turn to Christ every day of the year, God knows we need a special time each year when we give concerted effort to these spiritual endeavors. So, before Advent passes you by, heed the words of the Baptist and take some time to examine your conscience thoroughly. Perhaps use a detailed list of the Ten Commandments or the Seven Capital Sins. Once you do that, seek out an opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of

Reconciliation. Doing so is essential to a fruitful Advent season.

Once you thoroughly repent of the sins you struggle with the most right now, turn to the Savior of the World with special attentiveness to the miracle of the Incarnation this Advent. Spend time adoring the God Who came to us in the form of a little child. Meditate on this Gift. Gaze at a nativity scene prayerfully. Read the Scripture passages about the birth of Christ. Close your eyes and imagine yourself there at His birth.

Reflect, today, upon this twofold exhortation from John and apply it to your Advent preparations. Cleanse your soul in a special way from all sin this Advent. Then prayerfully ponder and meditate upon the reality we are preparing to celebrate. As John says, allow the Christ Child to truly “baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire” through your deepening devotion and prayer this Advent.

Prayer: My dear Jesus, please help me to see my sins as You see them. Help me to be attentive to every sinful action I commit and even those smaller sins of omission. As I ponder my sin, please draw me to Your mercy and grace so that I can then open the eyes of my soul more deeply to see You and to adore You more completely this Advent. Jesus, I trust in You.”

-LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS THIS WEEK:

-Saturday, December 21 - Optional memorial of St. Peter Canisius, Priest and Doctor of the Church. Lived 1521-1597; Patron Saint of the Catholic press, Germany, and writers of catechisms; Canonized and declared a Doctor of the Church by Pope Pius XI on May 21, 1925;

Liturgical Color: Violet.

“As we honor this great apostle of the Catholic faith, ponder the reasons for his success. He loved Christ, and he loved God’s people. He didn’t teach with arrogance or pride. He wasn’t harsh or heavy-handed. Instead, he won hearts as he won minds, gently but clearly leading people back to the faith, introducing them to the Person of Christ, and showing them the way to Heaven. Seek Saint Peter Canisius’ intercession today, praying that you, too, will become an evangelist in his mold. Commit yourself to sharing the Gospel with compassion, while never wavering from the truth.

Prayer: Saint Peter Canisius, God called you into His service at a crucial time when the

Church in Germany and all of Europe was experiencing confusion and was in need of reform. Your deep faith in Christ, coupled with your theological knowledge, enabled you to be a holy instrument of conversion for countless people for centuries afterward. Please pray for me, that I will learn from your example and become an apostle to those to whom I am sent. Saint Peter Canisius, pray for me. Jesus, I trust in You.”

-BAPTISM - On Saturday evening, November 30, I celebrated the Sacrament of Baptism with Breelin Justine Ford at Holy Family Church in Mt. Sterling. Breelin is the daughter of Justin and Emily Ford. We welcome Breelin as one of the newest members of the Church and congratulate her and her parents.

If you have a child who needs Baptism or are expecting a child, please reach out to me so that we can get Baptism scheduled.

-ADVENT - We remain in the Season of Advent and I encourage you to remain mindful of this Season each day. Advent calls us to prepare, to quiet our minds and our hearts as we reflect on God’s presence and His coming. In the busyness of life and especially in the hustle and bustle of these days leading up to Christmas, let us remain vigilant to the Season of Advent.

-CALENDARS - 2025 calendars are now available in the back of both churches while they last. Hendricker Funeral Home in Mt. Sterling provides these calendars for our parishes. I thank them for continuing to provide these for our parishioners. If you see Jamie or Tracy, please thank them or send them a note thanking them for the calendars.

There is just one style this year...Feasts and Saints. These are excellent calendars to have as they give a lot of information concerning Liturgical celebrations and norms.

Feel free to take one for yourself and/or for anyone you know who may be homebound or in a nursing home or otherwise unable to get one from the church. We are also planning to send one home with each St. Mary School Family as well.

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

At Holy Family

-Christmas Eve, Tuesday, December 24 - 4:00 p.m., 9:00 p.m., and Midnight; Christmas

Day, Wednesday, December 25 – Midnight and 8:30 a.m.

At St. Thomas

-Christmas Eve, Tuesday, December 24 – 6:30 p.m.; Christmas Day, Wednesday, December 25 – 7:00 a.m.

-CHRISTMAS FLOWER DONATIONS – You can still make a contribution toward the flowers for Christmas, St. Thomas parishioners should have an envelope for this in the regular set of envelopes (or use your own envelope and mark it “Christmas Flowers”). For Holy Family, please place your contribution in an envelope marked “Christmas Flowers.” The envelopes can be placed in the collection basket or mailed in to the office. These contributions are often made in memory of someone so please include the name(s) with your contributions. I will keep these folks in my prayers in a special way and I encourage all of our parishioners to do the same.

-O ANTIPHONS – According to the Universal Norms, number 42, beginning on December 17 each year, the Advent Weekdays are intended to serve to prepare more directly for the celebration of the Lord’s Nativity (Birth). At weekday Masses, we will begin using Advent Preface II on that day (we have been using Advent Preface I) and we will begin hearing the “O Antiphons”... ..O Wisdom, O Sacred Lord, O Flower of Jesse’s Stem, O Key of David, O Radiant Dawn, O King of All Nations, O Emmanuel (O God is With Us). It is no coincidence that the hymn, O Come, O Come Emmanuel has seven verses as each verse picks up on one of the seven O Antiphons.

There is much that one can continue to learn about the O Antiphons. Some of the following I’ve shared before but it is always a good review. From the USCCB, “The Roman Church has been singing the “O” Antiphons since at least the eighth century...They are a magnificent theology that uses ancient biblical imagery drawn from the messianic hopes of the Old Testament to proclaim the coming Christ as the fulfillment not only of Old Testament hopes, but present ones as well. Their repeated use of the imperative “Come!” embodies the longing of all for the Divine Messiah.”

And from Catholicculture.org, “The ‘O’ Antiphons are ancient antiphons that all begin with the invocation ‘O.’ They call to mind the ancient longing and pleading of the people of

the Old Testament for a Savior to come, invoking different Christological titles on the seven days before Christmas Eve. In praying these we remember the original yearning for the First Coming of Christ at Bethlehem, and echo the same waiting and supplication for the Emmanuel to come at Parousia, His Second Coming. The ‘O’ Antiphons take us through chronological order from before Creation to the birth of Christ at Bethlehem.

The O Antiphon for each day are as follows, in Latin and English: December 17: O Sapientia (O Wisdom); December 18: O Adonai (O Lord and Ruler); December 19: O Radix Jesse (O Root of Jesse); December 20: O Clavis David (O Key of David); December 21: O Oriens (O Dayspring); December 22: O Rex Gentium (O King of Nations); December 23: O Emmanuel (O God with Us). What I find so very interesting is that by the time we reach December 23, the backwards acrostic of the Latin initials of the Christological titles (the first letter of each Latin title) spell ERO CRAS which means “Tomorrow I will come.”

Again, there is so much to learn about the O Antiphons. One more quick thing I want to point out is the “O” itself. It may seem that this is nothing more than the start of an invocation. However, the “O” points to fullness. Again, from Catholicculture.org, “The circle is just a simple closed geometric shape, but in context with these ‘O’ Antiphons it is more than a shape or letter of the alphabet. The ‘O’ is all encompassing. The ‘O’ denotes fullness, completeness, wholeness, ripeness. The ‘O’ symbolizes eternity, no beginning or end. This simple letter plumbs the depths and speaks to the final fulfillment in the Second Coming of Christ at Parousia.”

-SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION – Please keep in your prayers those who are preparing to receive the Sacraments of First Reconciliation, Confirmation, and First Holy Communion. We have a number of children from both parishes preparing for these Sacraments. Confirmation and First Holy Communion for our Third Graders is scheduled for Saturday, February 1 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Springfield.

-END-OF-YEAR CONTRIBUTIONS – Often times, folks wish to make a year-end contribution to the parish. If you would like to make such a contribution, I ask you to make those as soon as possible so that we can get them recorded in this calendar year.

Additionally, folks are sometimes required to take a withdrawal from a retirement account each year. In many cases, if the withdrawal goes directly to a charitable organization, there are significant tax advantages. If this applies to you, I encourage you to speak to a tax professional soon and consider a contribution to the parishes or to St. Mary School.

-AN ADVENT REFLECTION: The following is an excerpt from Joseph Cardinal Ratzinger's (Pope Benedict XVI) writing "Seek That Which Comes First":

Stepping Out of the Night

What is Advent? Many answers can be given. We can grumble and say that it is nothing but a pretext for hectic activity and commercialism, prettified with sentimental clichés in which people stopped believing ages ago. In many cases this may be true, but it is not the whole picture.

We can also say that Advent is a time when a kindness that is otherwise almost entirely forgotten is mobilized; namely, the willingness to think of others and give them a token of kindness. Finally we can say that Advent is a time when old customs live again, for instance, in the singing of carols which takes place all over the country. In the melodies and the words of these carols, something of the simplicity, imagination and glad strength of the faith of our forefathers makes itself heard in our age, bringing consolation and encouraging us perhaps to have another go at that faith which could make people so glad in such hard times.

This latter kind of experience of Advent brings us quite close to what the Christian tradition has in mind with this season. It has expressed its view of Advent in the Bible texts which it took as the season's signposts. I will mention just one of them, a few verses from Paul's letter to the Christians in Rome. There he says, "... it is full time now for you to wake from sleep...the night is far gone, the day is at hand. Let us then cast off the works of darkness and put on the armor of light, let us conduct ourselves becomingly as in the day, not in revelling and drunkenness, not in debauchery and licentiousness, not in quarrelling and jealousy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ..." (Rom 13:11-14).

There are many people, of course, who urge us to get up and awake; "Germany, awake!" was the cry of those who, years ago, were bent on deluding the nation; and today

too there are awakenings and uprisings that lead further into darkness instead of out of it. What does Paul mean? He puts very clearly what he means by "night" by speaking of "revelling and drunkenness, debauchery, licentiousness, quarrelling and jealousy". For Paul, nocturnal revelling with all that goes with it stands for the dark side of human nature, man's being "asleep". For him it becomes a symbol of the pagan world as such, submerged in material things, held fast in the darkness that prevails where there is no truth and which, despite all its decibels and hectic activity, is asleep, because it lives unaware of genuine reality, of the real human vocation.

Nocturnal orgies as the image of a world in ruin—are we not appalled to see how aptly Paul characterizes our present times, which are returning to paganism? For us, "rising from sleep" means arising from conformity with the world and with the times and having the courage to believe and to shake off the dream that causes us to bypass our true vocation and our best possibilities. Perhaps the Advent hymns we hear every year may be lights to us, indicating our path, making us look up and recognize that there are greater promises than those of money, power and pleasure. Being awake for God and for other people—that is the kind of "waking" that Advent has in mind, the wakefulness which discovers the light and brightens the world."

Thank you for your continued prayers and support for me, one another, our parishes and school, and the Universal Church. Please be assured of my continued daily prayers for you. May you have a most blessed week and continued Advent Season!

-Fr. Aaron

HOLY FAMILY PARISH ADVENT STUDY PROGRAM

Reminder that the parish Adult Faith Formation series will be held for Advent and Lent will be A Biblical Walk Through the Mass -
-Discover the Beauty and Riches of the Mass. This is the program that the group from last year chose to study this year. This is a 5-week program. We will do the first 2 sessions during Advent and the last 3 sessions during Lent.

The Mass is nothing short of amazing. Through it, we encounter God in the most intimate way possible as we hear him speak to us in the Liturgy of the Word and as we receive

him Body and Blood, Soul and Divinity in the Holy Eucharist. The words, the gestures, and the rituals of the Mass are rich in meaning. Everything we say and do in the Liturgy is steeped in biblical language. A Biblical Walk Through the Mass explores the extraordinary biblical roots of the Liturgy and reveals what it all means and why it all matters. This fascinating tour of the Mass will renew your faith and deepen your love for and devotion to the Holy Eucharist.

We will meet on Tuesdays, December 3 and 10, from 7:00-8:30 p.m. in the school cafeteria. We invite you to gift yourself this Christmas season by attending this program. We received a grant for this program from the Diocese, so there is no charge for this program. Please let me know if you would like to come so I can order enough books -- e-mail at aosullivan2031@gmail.com or text/call 217-257-2516.

Holy Family Choir Practice

Holy Family Christmas choir practices will be held on Wednesday, December 18 at 6:00 p.m. Please join us!

POT OF GOLD

December Pot of Gold winners are:

\$200.00 - Dr. Franz Zurita
 \$100.00 - Vickie Fitzgerald
 \$50.00 - Darlene Duncan
 \$50.00 - Alexandra Smith
 \$50.00 - Steven Blentlinger
 \$50.00 - Deanna Briney

Pot of Gold tickets will be on sale soon for the new year. Contact any SMS student to purchase.

CHRISTMAS POINSETTIAS

Holy Family Women's Guild is accepting donations for Christmas poinsettias in memory of loved ones. Donations may be placed in the collection (*checks should be made payable to Holy Family Women's Guild*). Please include a note with the name of your loved ones.

CHRISTMAS CARD ADDRESSES

Below are addresses for the convenience of those wishing to send Christmas cards to clergy and deacons:

Fr. Aaron Kuhn P. O. Box 252 Mt. Sterling, IL 62353	Fr. John Beveridge 1017 Meadows Ct. Maryville, IL 62062
Fr. Stephen Thompson Holy Family Parish 2606 Washington Ave. Granite City, IL 62040	Fr. David Beagles 202 South Lincoln Robinson, IL 62454
Fr. Mark Tracy Holy Family Parish 2400 S. Franklin St. Decatur, IL 62521	Fr. Charles Edwards 2913 Bluff Ridge Dr. Quincy, IL 62305
Deacon and Mrs. Mike Ellerman 2322 St. Charles Drive Quincy, IL 62305	
Deacon and Mrs. Paul Koch 7 Highland Park Drive Mt. Sterling, IL 62353	
Mr. and Mrs. Matt Heldt 1062 1050E St. Mt. Sterling, IL 62353	
Fr. John Patrick Day, C.P. c/o Passionist Monastery 1924 Newburg Road Louisville, KY 40205	
Canon Benjamin Coggeshall St. Francis de Sales Oratory 2653 Ohio Ave. St. Louis, MO 63118	
Sister Mary Gabriel Villa Regina Motherhouse 4100 SW 56th St. Lincoln, NE 68522	
Sister Marcelline Koch Sophia House 924 N. 7 th St. Springfield, IL 62702	
Sister M. Samuella Volk Sacred Heart Convent, Motherhouse 1237 W. Monroe St. Springfield, IL 62704	
Sister JoAnn Volk, SSND 4200 Minnesota Ave., Apt. E St. Louis, MO 63111	

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