

## 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](mailto:holy.family@smseagle.org)

### Parish Staff

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

*Emergency only (217) 242-9669*

*E-Mail: [akuhn@dio.org](mailto: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](http://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](mailto: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](http://www.stthomascp.org)

<https://stthomascp.formed.org>

## LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

### Monday, December 23 – 7:00 a.m.

St. John of Kanty, Priest  
Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24; Luke 1:57-66

Communion Service

### Tuesday, December 24 – 7:00 a.m.

2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Luke 1:67-79

Father Aaron's Intentions

### Tuesday, December 24 – 4:00 p.m.

Isaiah 62:1-5; Acts of the Apostles 13:16-17, 22-25;  
Matthew 1:1-25

### AT HOLY FAMILY

Jennifer Volk  
(By Larry Volk & Family)

### Tuesday, December 24 – 6:30 p.m.

### AT ST. THOMAS

Vivian Schulte  
(By Maurice & Clara Schmidt)

### Tuesday, December 24 – 9:00 p.m.

### AT HOLY FAMILY

Larry and Rosemary Moorman  
(By Brad & Laura Kerker & Family)

### Wednesday, December 25 – Midnight

### Mass -- AT HOLY FAMILY

The Nativity of the Lord  
Isaiah 9:1-6; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14

Fr. Aaron's Intentions

### Wednesday, December 25 – 7:00 a.m.

### AT ST. THOMAS

The Nativity of the Lord  
Isaiah 52:7-10; Hebrews 1:1-6; John 1:1-18

Carol Likes  
(By St. Thomas Men & Women's Society)

### Wednesday, December 25 – 8:30 a.m.

### AT HOLY FAMILY

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

### Thursday, December 26 – 7:00 a.m.

St. Stephen, the First Martyr  
Acts of the Apostles 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Matthew 10:17-22

Robert Koch  
(By Mike, Alan, Glen, Diane & Families)

### AT ST. THOMAS – 5:30 p.m.

Gay Gunn  
(By Mike & Pam Rein)

### Friday, December 27 – 8:30 a.m.

### (School Mass)

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

Janet Yakle

### Saturday, December 28 – 8:00 a.m.

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

Father Aaron's Intentions

### Saturday, December 28 – 5:30 p.m.

Aaron Koch  
(By Mark & Mary Hill)

### Sunday, December 29 – 8:00 a.m.

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph  
1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28; 1 John 3:1-2, 21-24;  
Luke 2:41-52

Parishioners of Holy Family  
and St. Thomas

### St. Thomas – 10:00 a.m.

Mary & Orville Gronewold  
(By Kim & Jim Gronewold)

### HOLY FAMILY TITHE TO THE LORD:

### December 14-15, 2024

Holy Family: \$4,379.45

School Support: \$530.00

Sister Parish: \$100.00

Retired Religious: \$140.00

Immaculate Conception: \$358.00

Holy Family weekly budgeted amount: \$6,500

### ST. THOMAS TITHE TO THE LORD:

### December 15, 2024

St. Thomas: \$2,561.00

Immaculate Conception: \$50.00

Christmas: \$50.00

Retired Religious: \$20.00

Sister Parish: \$100.00

Catholic Children's Home: \$15.00

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](mailto: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

**St. Thomas Epiphany Party** - Sunday, January 5 is our day to celebrate as a parish family all the joys of the Christmas season. Join us after Mass for a delicious dinner. You don't have to bring anything, except yourselves. There will be a cake walk (always fun!) for both adults and children. There are sign-up sheets at the back of church.

## ST. THOMAS LITURGICAL ROLES

December 28, 2024 - 10:00 a.m.

<b>Sacristan:</b>	Denise Taylor
<b>Greeters:</b>	Maurice & Clara Schmidt
<b>Lector:</b>	Laura Evans
<b>Gift Bearers:</b>	Tod Perry Family
<b>Eucharistic Minister:</b>	Alicia Schmidt/Cathy Wagner
<b>Collection Counters:</b>	Dale & Sindy DeRousse
<b>Ushers:</b>	Matt and Charles Evans

## From the Pastor's Desk

Today the Church celebrates the Fourth Sunday of Advent. While Christmas is just a few days away, we keep ourselves in this Season, preparing ourselves for Christ.

-LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS THIS WEEK:

-Monday, December 23 - Optional memorial of St. John Kanty (Cantius), Priest. Lived about 1390-1473; Patron Saint of teachers, students, priests, pilgrims, Lithuania, and Poland; Canonized by Pope Clement XIII on July 16, 1767; Liturgical Color: Violet

Quote: Fight all false opinions, but let your weapons be patience, sweetness and love. Roughness is bad for your own soul and spoils the best cause. -Saint John of Kanty

"As we honor Saint John Cantius, ponder the fact that his attributes that made him so beloved were his humility, generosity, simplicity, concern for others, and diligence in his daily duty. These are qualities that we can all imitate in our own lives and are qualities that can produce saints. Consider any ways that you struggle with these qualities and seek to imitate this humble servant of God.

Prayer: Saint John Cantius, though you were a great intellectual, your humility and deep faith, coupled with your genuine love for those whom you ministered to, had a lasting effect upon the people of your community, and upon all of Poland. Please pray for me, that I will learn from your life and imitate your virtues so that I, too, will one day be counted among the saints. Saint John Cantius, pray for me. Jesus, I trust in You."

-Wednesday, December 25 - Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord - MERRY CHRISTMAS!  
Liturgical Color: White.

"Christmas Day is among the most celebrated feasts in the world. Everything else in life stops while the Christian world, in particular, celebrates the birth of the Savior of the World that took place over 2,000 years ago in the small town of Bethlehem. The first Christmas was celebrated by Mary and Joseph, but a multitude of angels saw to it that poor shepherds from the nearby fields joined the celebration as representatives of the entire Christian world to come. Though the Incarnation took place nine months prior when the Archangel Gabriel announced to the Blessed Virgin Mary that she would conceive a Child, that Child exited her sacred womb and breathed His first breath of air on that holy night.

It is amazing that God chose such a humble birth. He came into the world while His parents were about seventy miles away from their home and family in Nazareth after journeying to Bethlehem, the City of David, so they could fulfill the requirements of the census promulgated by the Roman emperor, Caesar Augustus. The census required all who lived within the Roman Empire to enroll in their hometown, in large part for taxation reasons. Joseph was from the house and lineage of King David, so he was required to go to David's ancestral home, Bethlehem, to register with Mary, his betrothed wife. The fact that the Savior of the World permitted Himself to become subject to the rulers of the pagan Roman Empire reveals His profound humility. The Son of God's perfection of humility is also revealed by the immediate circumstances of His birth. It took place not in a royal palace, not even in a nice home, but in a cave where animals dwelt.

The presence of the poor shepherds extends the Son of God's humility even further and also reveals the intrinsic dignity of every person. In God's eyes, every person is equal in dignity, and His life was for all people. From

God's perspective, poor shepherds offered Him just as much praise and honor as if the Roman emperor himself came to adore Him after His birth. The same remains true today. Every person is capable of offering honor and glory to God that do not depend upon social rank, wealth, or natural gifts. They depend upon that love and adoration that were found in the shepherds.

Jesus' birth in Bethlehem was also a fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecy found in Micah 5:1(2): "But you, Bethlehem-Ephrathah least among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel; Whose origin is from of old, from ancient times." In God's perfect foreknowledge and providence, He revealed the location of the birth of the Ruler of Israel through Micah, several centuries before."

As we celebrate this annual Solemnity, we are reminded that God, in His perfection of humility, molds His grace around the structures that His Church has been inspired to create. For that reason, we can be confident that the December 25 liturgical Solemnity is a day in which an abundance of grace is poured forth upon those who believe and honor His birth. Commit yourself, this year and every year, to a celebration of Christmas that goes beyond mere gifts, good food, and gatherings. Choose to celebrate Christmas Day for eight straight days. Don't pack away the decorations and nativity scene. Keep pondering the Christmas story. Prayerfully give thanks to God for His Incarnation and Birth. Make this Christmas celebration one that is permeated with faith, so that the Light of the World can permeate the darkness of the world in which you live.

Prayer: Most Holy Savior of the World, You are the Light that scattered the darkness. You chose to be born in the most humble conditions, elevating humility as a means of great holiness. As we celebrate Your birth, I pray that You will also be born in my life, and through me, into the world. May this Christmas be a time in which I come to know You more fully and intimately, joining the shepherds in their adoration of You, so that I can share in the abundant new life You came to bestow. Holy Savior, have mercy on me. Jesus, I trust in You."

-Thursday, December 26 - Feast of St. Stephen, Deacon and First Martyr. Lived Early First Century; Patron Saint of altar servers, builders, casket makers, deacons,



horses, masons, and quarrymen; Invoked against headaches; Liturgical Color: Red.

“Saint Stephen bears the unique title, “Protomartyr,” as the first Christian martyr. All we know of him comes from the Acts of the Apostles, Chapters 6–7. His name, of Greek origin, suggests that he was a Hellenistic Jew.

The Apostles remained in Jerusalem after Jesus’ Ascension, and the believers deepened their communal life. They ate together, celebrated the Eucharist, and shared their financial resources with each other (Acts 4:32–35). The early Jerusalem community was made up of Hebrew and Hellenistic Jews who lived together but differed in language and customs. The Hellenists complained that their widows were being neglected in the daily distribution (Acts 6:1).

To solve the problem, the Apostles asked the community to select “seven reputable men, filled with the Spirit and wisdom” (Acts 6:3) whom they appointed to oversee the daily distribution of provisions. Stephen was the eldest and likely the leader. As a Greek, he might have been chosen, in part, to ensure that the Hellenistic women and widows received their share of the daily distribution.

As a deacon, Stephen preached and even performed miracles. Some Hellenistic Jews debated him in public, “but they could not withstand the wisdom and the spirit with which he spoke” (Acts 6:10). This so agitated them that they dragged Stephen before the Sanhedrin, the highest religious, judicial, and legislative body within the Jewish community, for speaking against the Temple and the Law of Moses. As he stood before the angry Sanhedrin, Stephen’s face appeared like that of an angel.

Acts 7:1–53 presents Stephen’s speech before the Sanhedrin. He traced Israel’s history from Abraham to Solomon, the Temple builder, clearly uniting the Old Testament with the New Testament. He said Jesus was the New Temple and the New Priest Who offered Himself as the New and Perpetual Sacrifice. He called the Sanhedrin members and his accusers “stiff-necked people.”

Stephen’s accusers were so infuriated that they immediately dragged him outside the city and stoned him to death. Before being dragged to his death, he looked to Heaven and exclaimed, “Behold, I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God” (Acts 7:56). As his stoning began, he prayed, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit” and

“Lord, do not hold this sin against them” (Acts 7:59–60), echoing Jesus’ words from the Cross. The Pharisee Saul witnessed and approved of Stephen’s murder before his conversion on the road to Damascus.

After Stephen’s martyrdom, the close Christian community scattered, running for their lives. This scattering became the first great means of evangelization. One by one, new hearts were converted, as the scattered community shared the New Law of Christ with others. Stephen’s remains, which legend says were revealed to a priest named Lucian in a dream, were brought from Beit Jimal to Jerusalem in 415. Some years later, Stephen was buried at the site of his martyrdom, in what is today the Church of Saint Étienne (French for Stephen).

Prayer: Saint Stephen, you were graced to be the first follower of Christ who was martyred for your faith. You did not shy away from the cruelty and hatred of your persecutors but spoke the truth to them and prayed that they be forgiven. Please also pray for me, that I will be forgiven for the sins I have committed against others and will follow you by offering my life wholeheartedly to Christ every day of my life. Saint Stephen, pray for me. Jesus, I trust in You.”

-Friday, December 27 – Feast of St. John, Apostle and Evangelist. Lived early First Century; Patron Saint of arms manufacturers, art dealers, authors, basketmakers, bookbinders, booksellers, publishers, butchers, candlemakers, compositors, editors, engravers, friendships, glaziers, government officials, harvests, lithographers, notaries, painters, papermakers, printers, saddlemakers, scholars, sculptors, theologians, and winemakers; Invoked against burns, epilepsy, foot problems, hailstorms, and poisoning; Liturgical color: White.

Saint John the Apostle is believed to be the author of the Gospel of Saint John, three letters in the New Testament—John 1, 2, 3—and the Book of Revelation. In the Gospel attributed to him, he refers to himself as “the one whom Jesus loved” (John 13:23; 19:26; 20:2; 21:7). Tradition holds that he outlived the other Apostles, dying around AD 101, the only Apostle who died of natural causes.

“Little is known of John’s background other than what is found in the Gospels. He was most likely from Capernaum or Bethsaida, just north of the Sea of Galilee where he fished with his brother, James, and father, Zebedee.

The brothers were possibly Jesus' cousins on their mother's side.

In John's Gospel, John the Baptist points John and Andrew to Jesus. In Mark and Matthew's Gospels, Jesus calls John and James as they mend their nets. Jesus named James and John "Boanerges, that is, sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17), possibly for their zeal. Though the Twelve accompanied Jesus throughout His public ministry, Peter, James, and John emerged as His closest companions. Notably, Jesus brings these three disciples with Him when He raises Jarius' daughter from the dead, is transfigured in glory, and during the Agony in the Garden.

After his calling, John does not reappear in his Gospel until the Last Supper when he leans on Jesus' breast (John 13:23-25), accompanies Peter and Andrew into the Garden of Gethsemane for Jesus' agony, and stands before the Crucifix with Jesus' mother. There, Jesus entrusted His mother to John's care. On the third day, John ran to the tomb ahead of Peter when Mary of Magdala informed the two of them that she had seen the risen Lord. Finally, John is present at the miraculous catch of fish after the Resurrection. It was then that Jesus rebuked Peter for wondering what would happen to John: "What if I want him to remain until I come? What concern is it of yours? You follow me."

John appears in the Acts of the Apostles healing a lame man at the temple with Peter, being detained with Peter in prison for a night, and praying in Samaria with Peter for new believers.

Most scholars believe that John and the Blessed Virgin moved to Ephesus, in today's Turkey where he spent the rest of his life caring for her and ministering in Asia Minor. One tradition is that John was exiled to Patmos where he wrote his mystical visions down in the Book of Revelation. His three New Testament letters focus on love, truth, and Christian fellowship.

Today, near Ephesus, there is a pilgrim site called "Meryem Ana Evi" (House of Mary), believed to be the house in which John and the Blessed Virgin Mary lived and from which the Mother of God was assumed into Heaven. John lived to an old age, died of natural causes, and was buried near Ephesus in what are today the ruins of Saint John's Basilica, Selcuk.

Prayer: Saint John the Apostle, at a young age you heard Jesus' call to follow Him, and you willingly accepted. During His ministry, you

grew in a profound and mystical love of your Lord, and that love increased throughout your life. Please pray for me, that this pure and holy love will increase in my life so that I can share that love with others. Saint John the Apostle, pray for me. Jesus, I trust in You."

-Saturday, December 28 - Feast of the Holy Innocents. Patron Saints of babies, abandoned babies, children's choirs, students, and altar servers; Invoked against ambition, jealousy. Liturgical Color: Red.

"Herod the Great, King of Judea, was gripped by paranoia and insecurity. He jealously clung to his power and ruthlessly attacked anyone whom he saw as a threat, including his immediate family. Over the course of 30 years on the throne, he had his brother-in-law, wife, mother-in-law, grandfather-in-law, and three sons executed, the result of his paranoid delusion that each was plotting against him and seeking his throne.

The second chapter of the Gospel of Matthew relates the story of the Magi, the flight into Egypt, the Massacre of the infants, and the return of the Holy Family to Nazareth. We read, "When Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of King Herod, behold, magi from the east arrived in Jerusalem, saying, 'Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star at its rising and have come to do him homage'" (Matthew 2:1-2).

Upon hearing about the newborn king, Herod became greatly troubled and gathered the chief priests and scribes to learn from them where the promised king would be born. They answered him, "In Bethlehem of Judea..." (Matthew 2:5). Setting his wicked plan in motion, Herod called the Magi back, asked when the star first appeared, and ordered them to find the child and bring the babe to him so he could also do Him homage. The Magi did seek out and find the Christ Child, prostrated themselves before Him, did Him homage, and gave Him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Afterward, the Magi were warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, so they returned to their homeland in the East by a different route.

Foiled in his attempt to kill the newborn king, Herod moved to a more drastic plan. "When Herod realized that he had been deceived by the magi, he became furious. He ordered the massacre of all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had ascertained from the magi" (Matthew 2:16). Given the fact that Bethlehem was a small town, possibly

with fewer than 1,000 inhabitants, the number of boys under the age of two killed might have been close to a couple of dozen. One legend states that Herod even killed one of his own sons at that time. The same legend continues that when the Roman Emperor Augustus heard of the act, he stated, "It is better to be Herod's pig than son."

These boys, the Holy Innocents, are honored as the first martyrs for Christ, while Saint Stephen retains the title of the first Christian martyr, given his baptism. These children were the first to die on account of Christ. Of these infants, Saint Augustine said, "Herod accordingly kills many little children, in his determination to bring about the death of just one. And while he carried out this most celebrated and cruel slaughter of so many innocents, he was himself the first one he slew by such an utterly wicked deed" (Sermon 373). Within the wisdom and power of God, Herod will forever be condemned by his deed, and these children will forever be exalted.

Prayer: Dear Holy Innocents, you were treated with the utmost cruelty even before you were capable of understanding such cruelty. God permitted your suffering, and now He exalts you forever as the first witnesses to Him who shed your blood. Please pray for me, that I will always bear witness to Christ in my life and will walk with peace and joy amidst the sufferings in this life. Holy Innocents, pray for me. Jesus, I trust in You."

-CHRISTMAS LITURGIES - Following is the 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.

Thank you for your continued prayers. Be assured of my prayers for you.

-Fr. Aaron

## POT OF GOLD

Pot of Gold tickets are now on sale for the new year. Contact any SMS student or call the school office (217-773-2825) to purchase.

## 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 <sup>th</sup> St. Springfield, IL 62702	
Sister M. Samuella Volk Sacred Heart Convent, Motherhouse 1237 W. Monroe St. Springfield, IL 62704	
Sister JoAnn Volk, 4200 Minnesota Ave., Apt. E St. Louis, MO 63111	

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