

LITURGICAL SCHEDULE

Monday, February 3 – 7:00 a.m.

St. Blaise, Bishop & Martyr; St. Ansgar, Bishop
Hebrews 11:32-40; Mark 5:1-20

Communion Service

Tuesday, February 4 – 7:00 a.m.

Hebrews 12:1-4; Mark 5:21-43

Roberta Young
(By Her Friends)

Wednesday, February 5 – 7:00 a.m.

St. Agatha, Virgin & Martyr
Hebrews 12:4-7, 11-15; Mark 6:1-6

Barb Kuhn
(By Rodney & Sue Flynn)

Thursday, February 6 – 7:00 a.m.

St. Paul Miki & Companions, Martyrs
Hebrews 12:18-19, 21-24; Mark 6:7-13

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

AT ST. THOMAS – 5:30 p.m.

Father Aaron's Intentions

Friday, February 7 – 8:30 a.m. **(School Mass)**

Hebrews 13:1-8; Mark 6:14-29

Thomas L. Tracy
(By Barb Lehne)

FIRST FRIDAY - ST. THOMAS – 6:00 p.m.

Jerry Herkert
(By Alice Hughes)

Saturday, February 8 – 8:00 a.m.

St. Jerome Emiliani; St. Josephine Bakhita, Virgin
Hebrews 13:15-17, 20-21; Mark 6:30-34

Father Aaron's Intentions

Holy Family – 5:30 p.m.

John Moorman
(By Tammy)

Sunday, February 9 – 8:00 a.m.

Isaiah 6:1-21, 3-8; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Luke 5:1-11

Living & Deceased Members of the
Nocturnal Adoration Society

St. Thomas – 10:00 a.m.

Parishioners of Holy Family
and St. Thomas

HOLY FAMILY TITHE TO THE LORD:

January 25-26, 2025

Holy Family: \$3,893.00

Sister Parish: \$20.00

School Support: \$115.00

First Offering: \$15.00

Catholic Times: \$30.00

Church in Latin America: \$412.00

Debt Reduction: \$120.00

Holy Family weekly budgeted amount: \$6,500

ST. THOMAS TITHE TO THE LORD:

January 26, 2025

St. Thomas: \$2,664.00

Church in Latin America: \$195.00

Catholic Times: \$20.00

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."

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 † Pam Dunbar †

ST. THOMAS

Pauline Seals will be celebrating her 95th birthday on February 6. If you would like to wish her a happy birthday by sending her a card, her address is:

Pauline Seals
Good Samaritan Home
2130 Harrison Street
Quincy, IL 62301

From the Pastor's Desk

Today the Church celebrates the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord. This Feast is celebrated on February 2 each year even when it falls on a Sunday.

In our readings from Sacred Scripture today, Malachi in the First Reading prophesies about the coming of the Lord's messenger and his mission to purify the Lord's people. The author of the Letter to the Hebrews in the Second Reading explains that Jesus shared in our humanity in order to free us from the power of death and intercede for us as high priest before God. In the Gospel, Mary and Joseph bring the child Jesus to present Him to the Lord in obedience to Mosaic Law.

Let us persevere and trust in God. We can imagine that Simeon and Anna in the Gospel might have been tempted to give up hope that the Lord would fulfill His promise. But they persevered and continued to trust in God, they continued to listen to the promptings of the Spirit, until the day finally came when Mary and Joseph brought the child Jesus and they recognized Him as the Christ. And so, let us follow their example and trust in God in all things, rejoicing in Him in all things, until He brings those who follow His Will in all things to the Eternal glory of Heaven.

A bit more regarding today's celebration: "Mary and Joseph were faithful Jews who obeyed the Law of Moses. Jewish Law prescribed that two ritual acts needed to take place for a firstborn son. First, the mother of a newborn son was ritually unclean for seven days, and then she was

to "spend thirty-three more days in a state of blood purity" (Leviticus 12:2-8). During these forty days she was not to "touch anything sacred nor enter the sanctuary till the days of her purification are fulfilled." For this reason, today's feast has at times been called the "Purification of Mary." Second, the father of the firstborn son was to "redeem" the child by making an offering to the priest of five shekels so that the priest would then present the child to the Lord (see Numbers 18:16). Recall that the firstborn male of all the Egyptians, animals and children, was killed during the tenth plague, but the firstborn males of the Israelites were spared. Thus, this offering made for the firstborn son in the Temple was a way of ritually redeeming him in commemoration of protection during that plague. Since Jesus was presented in the Temple for this redemption, today's feast is now referred to as the "Presentation in the Temple."

"Candlemass" is also a traditional name given to today's feast because as early as the fifth century, the custom of celebrating this feast with lighted candles had developed. The lit candles symbolized Simeon's prophecy that Jesus would be "a light for revelation to the Gentiles." Lastly, this Feast has been referred to as the "Feast of the Holy Encounter" because God, in the Person of Jesus, encountered Simeon and Anna in the Temple.

Today's feast is celebrated in our Church forty days after Christmas, marking the day that Mary and Joseph would have brought Jesus into the Temple. Though Mary was pure and free from sin from the moment of her conception, and though the Son of God did not need to be redeemed, Mary and Joseph fulfilled these ritual obligations.

At the heart of this celebration is the encounter of Simeon and Anna with the Christ Child in the Temple. It is in that holy encounter that Jesus' divinity is manifested by a human prophet for the first time. At His birth, the angels proclaimed His divinity to the shepherds, but in the Temple, Simeon was the first to

understand and proclaim Jesus as the Savior of the World. He also prophesied that this salvation would be accomplished by a sword of sorrow that would pierce the Immaculate Heart of Mary. Anna, a prophetess, also came forward and “gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem” (Luke 2:38). Thus, these ritual acts were also a moment in which Jesus’ divine mission was made manifest to the world.

As we celebrate Mary’s ritual purification and Jesus’ ritual redemption, we should see them as acts in which we are called to participate. First, each of us is unworthy of entering the true Temple of the Lord in Heaven. Yet we are invited to enter that Temple in union with Mary, our Blessed Mother. It was her consent to the will of God that opened the door of God’s grace to us all, enabling us to spiritually become Jesus’ “mother” by allowing Him to be born in our hearts by grace. With her, we are now able to appear before God, purified and holy in His sight.

We must also see Saint Joseph redeeming us as he presented Jesus in the Temple. In offering Christ Jesus to the priest to offer Him to the Father, Saint Joseph also presents all who strive to live in union with Jesus. The hope is that, like Simeon and Anna, others will see God alive within us and experience the Savior of the World through us.

Ponder, today, your soul being the new temple of the Lord, and acknowledge your need to be purified and offered to the Father in Heaven. As Christ continues to enter into the temple of your soul, pray that He will shine forth for others to see so that, like Simeon and Anna, they will encounter our Lord within you.

Prayer: My saving Lord, Your loving parents offered You to Your Father in the Temple in accordance with the Law You revealed to Moses. In that offering, our souls are purified and we are offered to Your Father with You. I thank You for the gift of salvation and pray that my soul will

always radiate Your light as You dwell within me. Jesus, I trust in You.”

-WORLD DAY OF PRAYER - Today is also observed as World Day of Prayer for Consecrated Life. Its purpose is “to help the entire Church to esteem ever more greatly the witness of those persons who have chosen to follow Christ by means of practice of the evangelical counsels [chastity, poverty, obedience]” as well as “to be a suitable occasion for consecrated persons to renew their commitment and rekindle the fervor which should inspire their offering of themselves to the Lord.” (St. John Paul II, 1997).

-CANDLEMAS – As noted above, today has traditionally been called Candlemas Day. The Church prescribes for the Blessing of Candles and Procession for this day. I will be blessing candles as prescribed.

-LITURGICAL CELEBRATIONS THIS WEEK:

-Monday, Optional memorials of St. Blaise, Bishop and Martyr and St. Ansgar, Bishop.

St. Blaise: Died around the year 316; Patron Saint of illnesses of the throat and other illnesses, wool workers, animals, bricklayers, bakers, farm workers; Liturgical Color: Red.

“As we reflect upon stories that have been passed down through the years, perhaps the most important story [concerning St. Blaise] to reflect upon is the story of faith that so many people have had for many centuries in the intercession of Saint Blaise. From the people who might have sought his prayers at the time of his ministry, to those who sought his intercession during the Black Death centuries ago, to the priestly blessings today at Mass using candles to bless throats, God has used Saint Blaise in ways that he could have never foretold. This should reassure us that God wants us to turn to the intercession of the saints in our time of need. Though God is fully capable of directly answering our prayers, He often chooses to use the mediation of others to impart His grace. Reflect upon your own

devotion to Saint Blaise and all the saints. Seek out your special patron. Entrust your prayers to him or her and know that when you do, your patron offers you and your needs to God.

Prayer: Saint Blaise, you accepted the will of God as it was expressed through the acclamation of the people to become their shepherd. You lovingly spread the faith, healed the sick, and laid down your life as a martyr. Please pray for me and my family that we may be kept safe from all illness, especially illnesses of the throat, and pray that I will have the same courage you had to be a witness to Christ, even to the point of death. Saint Blaise, pray for me. Jesus, I trust in You.”

It is customary to bless throats on the memorial of St. Blaise. Deacon Paul may do this on Monday at the Communion Service. Since many people want to receive the blessing but may not be able to come on Monday, we are looking at the possibility of blessing throats at the Masses this weekend.

St. Ansgar: Lived 801-865; Patron Saint of Scandinavia, Denmark, Sweden, and various locations in Germany; Declared a saint by Pope Nicolas I around 865; Liturgical Color: White.

Saint Ansgar did not become a martyr in blood, but he did lay his life down for others, carrying the heavy crosses of mortification, selfless evangelization, tireless administration, courageous travels, and fidelity to his monastic calling. He returned to his Lord as a true martyr who gave his life for his sheep. As we ponder Saint Ansgar, reflect upon the ways that you are called to live a sacrificial life in wholehearted service of our Lord. What attachments do you need to let go of? What sufferings do you need to willingly embrace? What cross do you need to pick up and carry? Imitate this great saint by losing yourself for Christ, for that is the only way to find that which is eternally more.

Prayer: Saint Ansgar, you heard God calling you and responded to that call with

great fervor and courage. Through your labors, God brought about the conversion of many to the faith. Please pray for me, that I may imitate your fervor by laying my life down sacrificially for others. May I, like you, become a true martyr in spirit, carrying my cross to the very end. Saint Ansgar, pray for me. Jesus, I trust in You.”

-Wednesday, February 5 - Obligatory Memorial of St. Agatha, Virgin and Martyr. Lived about 231-251; Patron Saint of breast cancer patients, martyrs, rape victims, bellfounders, and bakers; Invoked against earthquakes, natural disasters, and fires; Liturgical Color: Red.

“It is shocking what people are capable of doing. Some are capable of the most hideous, diabolical, and self-serving acts. Others are capable of enduring those evils for the love of Christ with peace, strength, and joy. Regardless of the historical accuracy of the details of Saint Agatha’s life and death, her story, as it has been handed down, reveals the potential in every human heart. We have the potential to be great sinners, the potential to be great saints, or somewhere in-between. Allow your heart to be filled with a holy fear of sin and the witness of Saint Agatha to move you from that ‘in-between’ [to being a great saint]. Her courage and unwavering fidelity to Christ have shone a light for countless people throughout the centuries. One day, in Heaven, we will meet the true Saint Agatha and rejoice as we gaze upon the beauty and purity of her soul. Seek to make your soul radiate with that same glory by the grace of God and your fidelity to His holy will.

Prayer: Saint Agatha, you offered your life to Christ and your divine Spouse and were faithful to your last breath. Please pray for me, that I may learn from the witness of your life to be single-hearted in my fidelity to the will of God and devoted to Him above all earthly fears and evils, trusting in Him until the end. Saint Agatha, pray for me. Jesus, I trust in You.”

-Thursday, February 6 - Obligatory Memorial of St. Paul Miki and Companions, Martyrs. Martyred February 5, 1597; Patron

Saints of Japan; Canonized by Pope Pius IX on June 8, 1862; Liturgical Color: Red.

“Sometimes our attempts to share the faith with others appear to be silenced by the diabolical influences within the world. These martyrs of Nagasaki teach us that the seeds of faith can live on. The many martyrs that followed give witness to the power of God’s grace and the transforming character of His Word. How strong is your faith? Is it strong enough to endure torture and death? Allow the witness of these saints to inspire you to be more fervent.

Prayer: Holy Martyrs of Nagasaki, you and countless others gave your lives in witness to the faith that God planted in your hearts. Please pray for me, that I will have the same faith and courage that each one of you had, so that I will be a witness to Christ in all that I do. Holy martyrs of God, pray for me. Jesus, I trust in You.”

-Saturday, February 8 – Optional memorials of St. Jerome Emiliani and St. Josephine Bakhita.

St. Jerome Emiliani: Lived 1486-1537; Patron Saint of orphans and abandoned children; Canonized on July 16, 1767 by Pope Clement XIII; Liturgical Color: White.

“Saint Jerome was, at first, seduced by the glory and honor one can attain from the world. Apparent tragedy, for him, turned into glory. His imprisonment and suffering opened his eyes; he repented and turned his life toward Christ. He found his Lord in the poor, suffering, sick, and orphaned. He loved His Lord in them and became single-minded in His service.

Ponder your own ambitions in life. It is easy to become seduced by the passing “glory” of this world. But that false glory is fleeting. Seek to imitate this holy man by discovering the presence of God in those most in need of your love. Love them. See their dignity. Become an instrument of God’s mercy for them, and you, like Saint Jerome, will have discovered your purpose in life.

Prayer: Saint Jerome, you had a desire for greatness within your heart. Though

you first sought to fulfill that desire by worldly and passing honors, God opened your eyes and helped you to discover that the greatest honor is found in the wholehearted service of His holy will. Please pray for me, that I may imitate your generosity and devote myself to the service of the Gospel and the care of those in need. Saint Jerome, pray for me. Jesus, I trust in You.”

St. Josephine Bakhita: 1869-1947; Patron Saint of Sudan and human-trafficking survivors; Canonized October 1, 2000 by Saint Pope John Paul II; Liturgical Color: White.

“Quote: If I was to meet those slave-traders that abducted me and those who tortured me, I’d kneel down to them to kiss their hands, because, if it had not have been for them, I would not have become a Christian and religious woman. -Saint Josephine Bakhita”

“Saint Josephine was more than fortunate; she was greatly blessed by God. Later in life she not only forgave her captors, she also expressed her gratitude to them because God used their cruelty to lead her into the Catholic faith and consecrated life. Her witness reveals that God is all-powerful. He is able to take the worst and bring from it the best. He is able to transform tragedy into grace, abuse into mercy, hatred into love.

Ponder any way that you have been mistreated in life. If you find yourself angry or bitter, turn to this great saint and let her witness inspire you. In the end, she never lost hope. That hope led her from the cruelty of earthly masters to a holy slavery in the service of the divine King. If you find yourself bound by earthly masters, sins, or abuses, turn to the One Who promises complete liberation. Jesus must become our Master, and Saint Josephine shows us the way.

Prayer: Saint Josephine, you endured unimaginable cruelty from earthly masters. Through it all, you sought out the God Who continuously spoke to you from within. When you met this glorious God within the

Catholic faith, you refused to serve anyone other than Him. Please pray for me, that I may allow God to transform every hardship in my life into a source of His grace and transforming mercy. Saint Josephine Margaret Fortunata, pray for me. Jesus, I trust in You.”

This day is also designated the World Day of Prayer and Awareness Against Human Trafficking.

-FIRST FRIDAY - Friday, February 7, First Friday Devotions at St. Thomas. Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament at Noon with Adoration until 5:45 p.m.; Benediction at 5:45 p.m. followed by Mass at 6:00 p.m.. Confessions will be available from 5:00 p.m. - 5:45 p.m..

-BAPTISM - On Sunday, January 19, I joyfully Baptized Evan Charles Huber, infant son of Dustin and Megan Huber at St. Thomas. We welcome Evan Charles as one of the newest children of God and we congratulate his family.

-CONFIRMATION & FIRST HOLY COMMUNION: As of this writing, seven Third Graders from Holy Family and four Third Graders from St. Thomas are planning to receive the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Holy Communion on Saturday, February 1 at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Springfield. This is an exciting and joy-filled occasion.

To celebrate this locally at each parish, this weekend I will be investing each of the students with the Brown Scapular at Mass and there will a reception at each parish. For Holy Family, this is on Saturday evening, February 1 at the 5:30 p.m. Vigil Mass. The reception will be in the school cafeteria immediately following Mass. At St. Thomas, this will be at the 10:00 a.m. Mass on Sunday, February 2. The reception will be in the parish hall immediately after Mass. Everyone is welcome and encouraged to come celebrate with us at one or both parishes.

The kids receiving Confirmation and First Holy Communion are:

From Holy Family: Henry Barfield, Kinley Gallaher, Raylan Koch, Kya Mountain, McKenna Ormond, Sawyer Sinnett, and Alexis Stults.

From St. Thomas: John Jezierski, Jordan Kearby, Landon Mowen, Everett Obert.

Please keep all of those receiving the Sacraments in your prayers.

-SICKNESS - As of this writing, there is a lot of sickness affecting many people including our parishioners, teachers and staff in the school, and school families. Please continue to pray for those who are sick or suffering in any way.

Thank you for your continued prayers for me, one another, our parishes and school, and the Universal Church. You remain in my prayers each day. May you have a most blessed week.

-Fr. Aaron

Annual Whole Hog Sausage & Pancake Day

St. Edward Church, Mendon, Annual Whole Hog Sausage and Pancake Day with biscuits and gravy. Sunday, February 9 from 7:30 a.m.-12 p.m. Adults \$12; 10 and under \$6. To place a meat order by February 5 call Lindsey at 430-7437 or stedwardsmeatorders@gmail.com.

TAX REPORTING

If any parishioner would like to receive a statement of contributions for calendar year 2024, please contact the school office at (217) 773-2825 (for Holy Family) and (217) 593-6685 (for St. Thomas). A contribution statement will not be provided unless a request is received. As always, we suggest you refer to your own personal contribution records if at all possible.