



# NATIVITY OF THE LORD

And the Word  
became flesh  
and made  
his dwelling  
among us,  
and we saw  
his glory, the  
glory as of  
the Father's  
only Son,  
full of grace  
and truth.

JOHN 1:14



St. Thomas the Apostle Parish  
904 East Lake Avenue  
Peoria Heights, Illinois  
309-688-3446  
stthomaspeoria.org



Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to each of you!

At the end of Advent, we celebrate the birth of Christ on Christmas. However, this is only one of the special celebrations that we have in the Christmas Season.

Christmas itself is the most important of these days and, together with Easter, stands as the high point of our liturgical year. On Christmas, we celebrate the Incarnation, the mystery of the Word made flesh. The birth of God-with-us shows us in the most profound way possible how much our Lord loves us.

On the Sunday after Christmas, we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family, honoring Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Jesus did not come to us by himself, but entered into a family. In the Holy Family, all of our families are blessed and enriched. Husbands and wives can call upon Joseph and Mary to help them be the best role model for their children. Even the children can look to the Christ child as an example of holiness.

On January 1, we celebrate the Octave of Christmas with the Feast of Mary, Mother of God. This is a Holy Day of Obligation and a time to honor Mary who is the mother of Jesus, and therefore truly the Mother of God. We ask for her maternal care over each of us and the Church throughout the world in the new year.

The following Sunday is Epiphany, the day on which we remember the visit of the three wise men with their gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. These gifts remind us that Jesus is a king, the Son of God, and one who has come to die for us.

May God bless you and your families during this holy time of the year.

- Msgr Gray

## Readings for the Week of December 29, 2019

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph</b> Sirach 3:2-6,12-14; Colossians 3:12-21; Matthew 2:13-15,19-23
<b>Monday</b>	1 John 2:12-17; Luke 2:36-40
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>Morning Masses</b> 1 John 2:18-21; John 1:1-18 <b>Vigil of the Solemnity of Mary</b> Numbers 6:22-27; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:16-21
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>The Solemnity of Mary</b> Numbers 6:22-27; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:16-21
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Sts. Basil and Grefory Nazianzen</b> 1 John 2:22-28; John 1:19-28
<b>Friday</b>	<b>The Most Holy Name of Jesus</b> 1 John 2:29-3:6; John 1:29-34
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>St. Elizabeth Ann Seton</b> 1 John 3:7-10; John 1:35-42
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>The Epiphany of the Lord</b> Isaiah 60:1-6; Ephesians 3:2-3a,5-6; Matthew 2:1-12

## Mass Intentions

### Monday, December 30, 2019

7:00 a.m.	Deceased members of Farrell Family
8:00 a.m.	Suzie Draher/Chris and Mary Almasi

### Tuesday, December 31, 2019

7:00 a.m.	Marilyn Draggist/Jill and Chris Raia
8:00 a.m.	Tom and Irene McNamara/Sue Ann McWhirter
5:30 p.m.	For the intentions of Rachel Davis

### Wednesday, January 1, 2020

7:00 a.m.	Elinor Garvin/John and Marge McNally
9:00 a.m.	Jerry Brady/The Barkley Family
11:00 a.m.	June Fricke/The Frederickson Family

### Thursday, January 2, 2020

7:00 a.m.	Sr. Bernadette Kouri, FSJB
8:00 a.m.	Theresa Mahoney/Jim and Mary Lawless

### Friday, January 3, 2020

7:00 a.m.	John Rush/Herb Cohen
8:00 a.m.	World Peace and Special Prayer Intentions

### Saturday, January 4, 2020

8:00 a.m.	Purgatorial Society
5:00 p.m.	Harold Gilles/Betty Ghigi

### Sunday, January 5, 2020

7:00 a.m.	For the People
9:00 a.m.	Walter 'Bud' Smith/Robert and Chris Horkavi
11:00 a.m.	Bill Osten/Del and Dot Bertschy
5:00 p.m.	Robert Eckhart/Jim and Barb Eckhart Family



## Readings for the Week of January 5, 2019

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>The Epiphany of the Lord</b> Isaiah 60:1-6; Ephesians 3:2-3a,5-6; Matthew 2:1-12
<b>Monday</b>	<b>St. Andre Bessette</b> 1 John 3:22-4:6; Matthew 4:12-17,23-25
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>St. Raymond of Penyafort</b> 1 John 4:7-10; Mark 6:34-44
<b>Wednesday</b>	1 John 4:11-18; Mark 6:45-52
<b>Thursday</b>	1 John 4:19-5:4; Luke 4:14-22a
<b>Friday</b>	1 John 5:5-13; Luke 5:12-16
<b>Saturday</b>	1 John 5:14-21; John 3:22-20
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>The Baptism of the Lord</b> Isaiah 42:1-4,6-7; Acts of the Apostles 10:34-38; Matthew 3:13-17

## Mass Intentions

### Monday, January 6, 2020

7:00 a.m.	Jack McGinn/Christine Pogue
8:00 a.m.	All souls in Purgatory

### Tuesday, January 7, 2020

7:00 a.m.	Lorraine O'Rourke/Franciscan Sisters of St. John the Baptist
8:00 a.m.	Merton Hubert/Family

### Wednesday, January 8, 2020

7:00 a.m.	E.A.Presley/Jack and Margaret Weinstein
8:00 a.m.	Jack McGinn and Family/Mary Paul Long

### Thursday, January 9, 2020

7:00 a.m.	Marcella Majewski/Friends at AMT
8:00 a.m.	Jeremy Snyder/Grandpa
9:15 a.m.	Lynn Goble/Sue McWhirter

### Friday, January 10, 2020

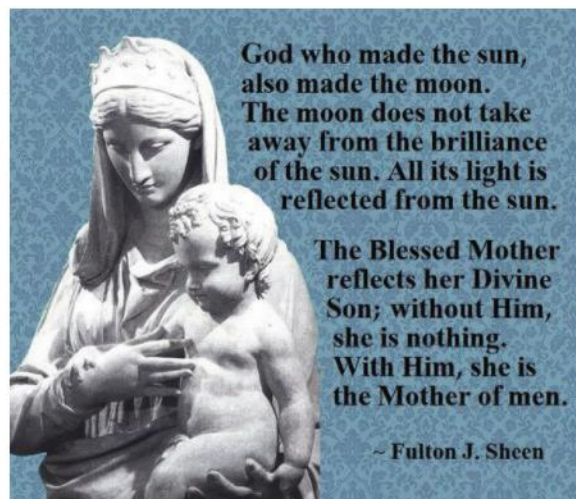
7:00 a.m.	Karen Helton/David and Kitty Picherell
8:00 a.m.	Elda Graves/Terry Liable

### Saturday, January 11, 2020

8:00 a.m.	Jack Pearl 2nd Anniv/Cari Connolly
5:00 p.m.	Bernard and Margaret Sauer/Family

### Sunday, January 12, 2020

7:00 a.m.	Joe and Ric Olson/Mike and Linda Jones
9:00 a.m.	Florence and Jim Ryan/Family
11:00 a.m.	Dennis Gainey/Mary Ann Bosh
5:00 p.m.	For the People



## Wedding Congratulations

Angela Umdenstock ~ Anthony Birge



## Solemnity of Mary Mass Schedule

Tuesday, December 31 5:30 p.m.

Wednesday, January 1

7:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 11:00 a.m.  
NO evening Mass

## Holiday Schedules

**ST THOMAS CHURCH** doors will be locked following the last Mass each day from December 25 through January 1.

**PARISH OFFICES** closed through January 1. We will resume office hours on Thursday, January 2.

**ST THOMAS SCHOOL** closed through Friday, January 3. Classes will resume on Monday, January 6.

**FOOD PANTRY** will be closed Thursday December 26 and Monday December 30. The Pantry will reopen on Thursday, January 2.



## Week of December 29

**SIGN UP FOR EUCHARISTIC ADORATION** in the Narthex this weekend

**CENTERING PRAYER** Monday, December 30, 8:30 a.m., Church

### SOLEMNITY OF MARY-JANUARY 1, 2020

NEW YEAR'S EVE 5:30 P.M.

NEW YEAR'S DAY 7:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m. and 12:15 p.m.

No evening Mass on January 1

**EUCHARISTIC ADORATION** Friday, January 3 beginning after the 8:00 a.m. Mass and closing with Benediction at 8:00 p.m.



## Week of January 5

**ST. VINCENT de PAUL AND FOOD PANTRY COLLECTIONS** this weekend

**CENTERING PRAYER** Monday, January 6, 8:30 a.m., Church

**ROSARY** Tuesday, January 7, 10:00 a.m., Chapel

**CCD** Wednesday, January 8, 6:00 p.m., School

**RCIA** Wednesday, January 8, 7:00 p.m., School Library

**CHOIR PRACTICE** Thursday, January 9, 6:30 p.m., Music Room

**CHARISMATIC PRAYER GROUP** Thursday, January 9, 7:00 p.m. School Conference Room

**ALL SCHOOL ROSARY** Friday, January 10, 3:00 p.m., Church

### UPCOMING EVENTS

Financial Peace Class	January 15
St. Thomas Holy Hour	January 16
That Man is You	January 17
Father/Daughter Dance	January 25

## Weekly Collection

### December 15, 2019

### Fiscal YTD

Collections needed .....	\$20,000 .....	\$480,000
Sunday Collections .....	\$13,569 .....	\$355,483
Electronic Collections .....	\$3,399 .....	\$81,194
Total Collected .....	\$19,968 .....	\$436,677
Over/(Short) .....	\$(3,032) .....	\$(43,324)

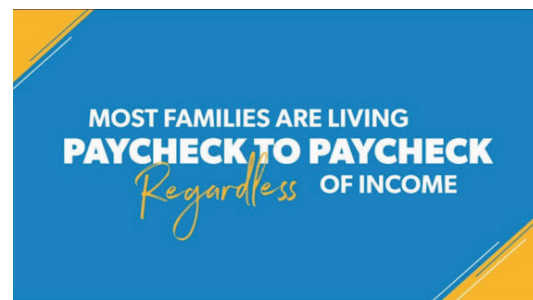
Your support of St. Thomas Parish is important to sustain our mission. Please remember to contribute regularly with your envelopes or checks in our regular Sunday collection. Electronic contributions can be made through direct debit, or by using the Giving tab on our parish website: [stthomaspeoria.org](http://stthomaspeoria.org). Thank you for your support.

## RCIA Topics

January 8	Baptism, Confirmation
January 15	Eucharist, Orders
January 22	Penance, Anointing, Funerals
January 29	Marriage, Religious Life
February 5	Moral Life: Free Will, Desire for Happiness, Passions, Good and Evil Acts
February 12	Virtues, sin and vice, Morality in Society
February 19	Prayer, Universal Call to Holiness, Prepare for Lent
February 26	Ash Wednesday: No Class

## Job Opening

The Parish Office is looking for an individual to work part-time with us as Val retires. We will be restructuring the job, and responsibilities will include editing the bulletin. Applicants must be knowledgeable in Microsoft Office, including Microsoft Publisher. If interested, send your resume to [parishoffice@stthomas-church.net](mailto:parishoffice@stthomas-church.net).



**Wednesdays, January 15—March 18, 2019,  
6:30 p.m., Parish Hall**

**We are able to offer you a reduced rate of \$79.** The standard parish rate is \$99. Enrollment includes the classes, an app to track spending and saving and access to livestreams throughout the year to help keep you motivated.

If you are interested in enrolling please contact Erich and Becky Crismore at 696-2582 or [e.crismore@hotmail.com](mailto:e.crismore@hotmail.com).

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## Pray with the Pope

**December 2019**

### **The Future of the Very Young**

That every country take the measures necessary to prioritize the future of the very young, especially those who are suffering.

**January 2020**

### **Promotion of World Peace**

We pray that Christians, followers of other religions, and all people of goodwill may promote peace and justice in the world.

## STS Students Volunteer at Neighborhood House

Thanks for all the support for our school toy drive. St. Thomas students have been supporting this program for over twenty years!



## St. Vincent de Paul Society Annual Report

The St. Vincent de Paul Society at St. Thomas is comprised of thirty-six members. This includes thirty who see clients (friends) in their homes, six who work at the Food Pantry, a finance person to manage the bookkeeping and a manager to coordinate a complex scheduling arrangement.

We get calls from people in distress who cannot make rent payments, debts to Ameren, sewer and water, etc. They face evictions and utility turnoffs. They have payday loan debt, which is an awful burden. Growth in calls from the Diocesan phone line were up approximately 20% in 2019 over 2018. All visits are made by two people. They take about one hour each, and most Vincentians will see one new client or more per week. About 10% of the calls are turned down. Some are repeat callers who are not able to improve their lives. Some are so far in debt that we can't help them. Mental illness can be a complicating factor.

Our Food Pantry has been growing. We served 4800 in the recent fiscal year, for a growth rate of 20%. Our delivery from the Midwest Food Bank has increased. We now commonly get meats and dairy, which require refrigeration and demand a more rapid turnover.

We often see people who have the motivation to change their lives. We have a *Coming Together to Get Ahead* (CTGA) program. This is a 16 week series of meetings designed to help these friends make a bigger transition.

Sometimes, our assistance pulls them out of a deep hole. Sometimes, we don't see it likely that our visit will bring lasting change. Our responsibility, however, is to provide assistance to the person in front of us who is in need. We learn from the experience, *the poor will always be with you*.

In 2019 we experienced a new problem. We closed operations on two occasions during August and September due to a lack of funds and just had to wait until the next collection.

These are the numbers for the year October 1, 2018—September 30, 2019:

Balance 10/1/18	\$ 9,869
Income	
Church Collections	\$62,970
Other Donations	\$23,040
Expenses	
Pantry	\$15,473
Miscellaneous	\$ 2,883
For those we serve	\$72,172
Balance 9/30/19	\$ 2,368

For your continued support of our mission, we are deeply grateful.

Mike Shekleton

## Empower Illinois Scholarship Applications For 2020/2021 School Year

The application process for an Empower Illinois Scholarship for the 2020/2021 school year will begin on Wednesday, January 15, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

The application is a two-step process. The first step is to reserve your place in line through the Empower Illinois website at [www.empowerillinois.org](http://www.empowerillinois.org) on January 15th beginning at 7:00 p.m. Applications are considered on the basis of the date and time that this first step is completed so it is important to complete step one as soon as possible once the process begins on January 15th.

The first step is a brief online form containing parent name, contact information and child's name. After reserving your place in line through step one, you will receive instructions by email about completing step two of the application process.

If you would like help in applying for the Empower Illinois Scholarship please contact Pat at [patwombacher@stthomas-school.net](mailto:patwombacher@stthomas-school.net) or at 688-3446, ext 1341 by Monday, January 13th and we will make sure that step one of your application is completed on January 15th.

Please remember that even if you received an Empower Illinois Scholarship for the 2019/2020 school year you will need to reapply for next year.

## March for Life in Chicago

The Catholic Diocese of Peoria is sponsoring a bus trip to the March for Life in Chicago on 1/11/2020. Space is limited so sign up soon. For more info visit: <https://cdop.org/march-for-life-chicago/>.

### Parish Registration

Complete this form and drop it in the collection basket, **or** mail to the Parish Office **or**

Register on our website at [stthomaspeoria.org](http://stthomaspeoria.org). Under *About* open the *New Parishioner Registration*, complete and submit the form.

Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

First Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**New Parishioner** \_\_\_\_\_ **Change of address/phone** \_\_\_\_\_

## St. Thomas Sponsor-A-Student Program

*Thanks very much* to all of our parishioners who have contributed to our Sponsor-A-Student Program during the past fiscal year. Your contribution makes a significant difference in the lives of St. Thomas and Peoria Notre Dame students. Collectively, we received almost \$185,000, which was available for financial assistance for our current school year. Your generous contributions provided tuition assistance to 68 families and their 97 students.

We appreciate your ongoing support of Catholic education, a priceless gift that will benefit our students throughout their lives. We are blessed to have parishioners who show such compassion toward others and value the benefit of a Catholic education.

If you are interested in making a contribution to Sponsor-A-Student program you may use the yellow envelope in your monthly envelopes or note that you would like your contribution to be directed to our Sponsor a Student Program.

## January Men's Cursillo

**January 23-26, 2020**

St. Thomas parishioners, Todd Denhardt and Ken Matheny, will be on the team for the next men's Cursillo. Please keep them in your prayers, along with the rest of the team, during this preparation period.

If you are interested in attending a Cursillo weekend, please contact Todd, Ken or the Cursillo office at 676-5587.

## SVdP Helpline Operator

The helpline is in need of an operator. This is a part-time position—15 hours per week. If interested please contact Sr. Michelle Fernandez at [sr\\_michelle@cdop.org](mailto:sr_michelle@cdop.org) or call 309-409-5092.

## St. Nicholas Charity on Wheels

Pack the van on Mondays from 10am-12(noon) at 419 NE Madison Ave. Peoria, IL 61603. December 2 and December 9.

Volunteers are needed throughout the diocese for assistance with several ministries.

Please contact us if you can help or submit an online volunteer request at <https://cdop.org/catholiccharities/>.



<b>St. Thomas the Apostle Parish • 309-688-3446</b> 904 East Lake Avenue, Peoria Heights, IL 61616 <a href="mailto:parishoffice@stthomas-church.net">parishoffice@stthomas-church.net</a>			<b>Receptionist</b> .....Val Wallenfang .....(x1301) <a href="mailto:valwallenfang@stthomas-church.net">valwallenfang@stthomas-church.net</a>		
<b>Pastor</b> ..... Msgr. Jason A. Gray .....(x1400) <a href="mailto:msgrgray@stthomas-church.net">msgrgray@stthomas-church.net</a>			<b>Administrative Assistant</b> .....Terri Moon .....(x1300) <a href="mailto:terrimoon@stthomas-church.net">terrimoon@stthomas-church.net</a>		
<b>Parochial Vicar</b> ..... Rev. Paul Stark S.J.....(x1430) <a href="mailto:paulstarksj@stthomas-church.net">paulstarksj@stthomas-church.net</a>			<b>Accountant</b> ..... Julie Streid .....(x1340) <a href="mailto:juliestreid@stthomas-church.net">juliestreid@stthomas-church.net</a>		
<b>Deacon</b> ..... Dcn. Mark Kelsch .....(692-4908) Dcn. John Nelson .....(981-2716) Dcn. Ed Mallow .....(360-7735)			<b>Tuition Coordinator</b> ..... Pat Wombacher .....(x1341) <a href="mailto:patwombacher@stthomas-school.net">patwombacher@stthomas-school.net</a>		
<b>School Principal</b> ..... Maureen Bentley .....(x1210) <a href="mailto:maureenbentley@stthomas-school.net">maureenbentley@stthomas-school.net</a>			<b>CCD Coordinator</b> ..... Angie Robenstein .....(x1200) <a href="mailto:angierobenstein@stthomas-school.net">angierobenstein@stthomas-school.net</a>		
<b>Sacrament of Baptism</b> Parents participate Baptism class before the Baptism of their first child. Contact the parish office to schedule the class.			<b>Music Coordinator</b> ..... Ann Horst .....(682-5507) <b>Choir Director</b> ..... Erin Craig <a href="mailto:erincraig@stthomas-school.net">erincraig@stthomas-school.net</a>		
<b>Confessions</b> Saturday 4:00-4:45pm & 6:00-6:30 p.m.			<b>Annulment Consultant</b> ..... John Mackoway .....(699-5213)		
<b>How to Submit Bulletin Information</b> Send information for the bulletin to <a href="mailto:parishoffice@stthomas-church.net">parishoffice@stthomas-church.net</a> with subject "Bulletin". Submissions are due by Friday noon one full week prior. Send images or logos separately as attachments. Submissions may be edited for content and length.					


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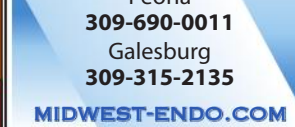

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