

## From Our Pastor



Christ is born for us! Merry Christmas!

Although this has been far from a typical year, we have completed our four-week journey through Advent, preparing ourselves to welcome the Christ child who has come to us. Let us give thanks from our hearts—now more than ever—for the truth that we know by the light of faith: Our God has shown us his great love by coming so near to us in such a humble way, born in a lowly manger.

Since so many things have changed over this past year, I believe that we must be conscious, deliberate and intentional about our practice of the Faith. It is easy for us to become isolated and disconnected from one another as we have had to substitute real interactions for digital ones. Never forget that Jesus has taken on our human nature in reality and in fact. Jesus comes to us not virtually, but truly and personally.

Let us give back by being truly present to Our Lord in this Christmas Season and in the new year. No obstacle, no pandemic, no medical advice, and no executive order can prevent us from growing in our spiritual life. Let the celebration of our Faith be a renewed priority, no matter what circumstances we encounter in the new year!

During this brief Christmas Season, we honor the Holy Family as we learn from Jesus, Mary, and Joseph in their home in Nazareth. We honor Mary, the Mother of God, as we bring in the new calendar year. We celebrate the Epiphany of Our Lord as the light of Christ shines forth to the three wise men and to the whole world. We celebrate the Baptism of Our Lord, as he wins for us the sacrament that frees us from sin. Let the joy of this season fill your hearts with peace.

I wish each of you every blessing during this Christmastime. I look forward to strengthening our parish and school in the coming year, and renewing the ties of fellowship that we have with one another. I very much look forward to resuming many of our traditions and celebrations when it is safe to do so. Please pray for me, Fr. Stark, our parish and school staff, and for blessings on our St. Thomas Family.

- Msgr. Gray



## Readings for the Week of December 27, 2020

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, &amp; Joseph</b> Genesis 15: 1-6; 21: 1-3; Hebrews 11: 8, 11-12, 17-19; Luke 2: 22-40
<b>Monday</b>	<b>The Holy Innocents, Martyrs</b> 1 John 1: 5—2:2; Matthew 2: 13-18
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>St. Thomas Becket, Bishop &amp; Martyr</b> 1 John 2: 3-11; Luke 2: 22-35
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Sixth Day Within the Nativity of the Lord</b> 1 John 2: 12-17; Luke 2: 36-40
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>Seventh Day Within the Nativity of the Lord</b> 1 John 2: 18-21; John 1: 1-18
<b>Friday</b>	<b>Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God</b> Numbers 6: 22-27; Galatians 4: 4-7; Luke 2: 16-21
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Sts. Basil the Great &amp; Gregory Nazianzen</b> 1 John 2: 22-28; John 1: 19-28
<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 28, 2020

7:00 a.m.	William & Rose Chase/Rose & David Chase
8:00 a.m.	Feast of the Holy Innocents LAOH

### Tuesday, December 29, 2020

7:00 a.m.	Florence & Jim Ryan/Family
8:00 a.m.	Lynn Goble/Angie Aeschliman

### Wednesday, December 30, 2020

7:00 a.m.	Joseph Nham Vu/Phan & Tam Vu
8:00 a.m.	Bette Grimm/Bette Eilers

### Thursday, December 31, 2020

7:00 a.m.	George Bodish 4 <sup>th</sup> Anniv/Dan & Kristina McNaught
8:00 a.m.	Walter Arnold/Terry Hardesty
5:30 p.m.	Frances McGinn/Mary Paul Long

### Friday, January 1, 2021

7:00 a.m.	Hylee Kemp/Kurt Rostetter
9:00 a.m.	Catherine Richardson/Rose Seghetti
11:00 a.m.	For the People

### Saturday, January 2, 2021

8:00 a.m.	Bishop Edward W. O'Rourke/Jeanne Whalen
5:00 p.m.	Bernard & Margaret Sauer/Family

### Sunday, January 3, 2021

7:00 a.m.	For the People
9:00 a.m.	Elizabeth Lehnhausen/St. Vincent de Paul Society
11:00 a.m.	Joe & Ric Olson/Terry & Marty Best
5:00 p.m.	Bette Grimm



## Readings for the Week of January 3, 2021

<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. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Religious</b> 1 John 3: 22—4:6; Matthew 4: 12-17, 23-25
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>St. John Neumann, Bishop</b> 1 John 4: 7-10; Mark 6: 34-44
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>St. André Bessette, Religious</b> 1 John 4: 11-18; Mark 6: 45-52
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>St. Raymond of Penyafort</b> 1 John 4: 19—5: 4; Luke 4: 14-22a
<b>Friday</b>	<b>Christmas Weekday</b> 1 John 5: 5-13; Luke 5: 12-16
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Christmas Weekday</b> 1 John 5: 14-21; John 3: 22-30
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>The Baptism of the Lord</b> Isaiah 55: 1-11; 1 John 5: 1-9; Mark 1: 7-11

## Mass Intentions

### Monday, January 4, 2021

7:00 a.m.	Jeanette Holland/Anne & Kevin Morrissey
8:00 a.m.	Elizabeth Lehnhausen/Paul & Ann Horst

### Tuesday, January 5, 2021

7:00 a.m.	Helene Flanigon/Lori Flores
8:00 a.m.	All Souls in Purgatory

### Wednesday, January 6, 2021

7:00 a.m.	Hylee Kemp/Don & Ruth Stahl
8:00 a.m.	Alice Grow/the Pearl/Cain Family

### Thursday, January 7, 2021

7:00 a.m.	Mary Schlink/Katherine Bartolo
8:00 a.m.	Merton Hubert/Family

### Friday, January 8, 2021

7:00 a.m.	Ric & Joe Olson/Phan & Tami Vu
8:00 a.m.	James A Geraghty, Sr./James Snyder

### Saturday, January 9, 2021

8:00 a.m.	Jeremy Snyder/Grandpa
5:00 p.m.	Rita Clark/Family

### Sunday, January 10, 2021

7:00 a.m.	Loretta Corwin/Eileen Gasper
9:00 a.m.	Mary Vogel Kelly/John & Amy Kelly
11:00 a.m.	Amal Khoury/Paul & Ann Horst
5:00 p.m.	For the People

## Our Sympathy

Jim Connolly, son of Cari Connolly and brother of Pat Connolly

John Skender, brother of Nancy Medendorp

Tom Burek, brother of George Burek



## Solemnity of Mary Mass Schedule

Thursday, December 31 5:30 p.m.

Friday, January 1  
7:00 a.m. 9:00 a.m. 11:00 a.m.  
NO evening Mass



## RCIA Topics

January 6: Penance, Anointing, Funerals  
January 13: Marriage, Religious life

## Holiday Schedules

**ST. THOMAS CHURCH** doors will be locked following the last Mass on December 25 and January 1.

**PARISH** The offices will be closed Dec. 25 through Jan. 1. We will resume office hours on Monday, January 4.

**FOOD PANTRY** will be closed December 22 to January 1. The pantry will reopen January 4.

Sponsor of the Week

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## Week of December 27

**CENTERING PRAYER** Monday, December 28, 8:30 a.m., Church

**ROSARY** Tuesday, December 29, 10:00 a.m., Church

### SOLEMNITY OF MARY-JANUARY 1, 2021

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

NEW YEAR'S DAY 7:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m., & 11:00 a.m.

No evening Mass on January 1



## Week of January 3

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

**CENTERING PRAYER** Monday, January 4, 8:30 a.m., Church

**ROSARY** Tuesday, January 5, 10:00 a.m., Church

**RCIA** Wednesday, January 6, 7:00 p.m., Parish Hall

### UPCOMING EVENTS

*That Man is You*

Resumes Jan. 21

## Thank You

The St. Thomas Food Pantry extends most sincere thanks to the parish for all the prayers and support that have been given us during this past year. We thank Ms. Theresa Hozie and her wonderful fourth grade class for sponsoring the St. Thomas School food drive, and we a big thank you to the school families for their plentiful donations.

Because of your prayers and donations of food, funds and winter wear, you have helped support 5,111 of our neighbors through the uncertainty of this difficult year. Your generosity has not only supported our clients physically, but it also showed them the love of our Savior and the hope for a better tomorrow. Your generosity truly humbles us.

We wish you a blessed Christmas and a happy (and healthy) New Year!



## Weekly Collection

	December 20, 2020	Fiscal YTD
Collections needed.....	\$20,000	\$480,000
Sunday Collections.....	\$22,749	\$360,714
Electronic Collections .....	\$3,399	\$81,576
Total Collected.....	\$26,148	\$442,290
Over/(Short) .....	\$6,148	\$(37,710)

**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.**

## Act of Spiritual Communion

*My Jesus, I believe that You are present in the Most Holy Sacrament. I love you above all things, and I desire to receive You into my soul. Since I cannot at this moment receive You sacramentally, come at least spiritually into my heart. I embrace You as if You were already there and unite myself wholly to You. Never permit me to be separated from You. Amen.*



## Pray with the Pope

**December 2020**  
**For a Life of Prayer**

We pray that our personal relationship with Jesus Christ be nourished by the Word of God and a life of prayer.

### January 2021

**Intention for evangelization - Human fraternity**

May the Lord give us the grace to live in full fellowship with our brothers and sisters of other religions, praying for one another, open to all.

## 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 \$177,000, available for financial assistance for our current school year. Your generous contributions provided tuition assistance to 55 families and their 84 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 generosity to others and value the benefit of a Catholic education.

If you are interested in making a contribution to our 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.

## Stay in Touch

1. **Join Msgr. Gray for Mass.** Link can be found on the parish website, [stthomaspeoria.org](http://stthomaspeoria.org) or the Parish App
2. **Bookmark the Parish Blog** which will feature regular updates ([jgray.org/st\\_thomas](http://jgray.org/st_thomas)).
3. **Download My Parish App** to receive push notifications (Visit [myparishapp.com/download](http://myparishapp.com/download)).
4. **Receive the Bulletin** and announcements in weekly emails from the parish. (Email [parishoffice@stthomas-church.net](mailto:parishoffice@stthomas-church.net) to sign up).
5. **Bookmark the parish webpage** ([stthomaspeoria.org](http://stthomaspeoria.org)).



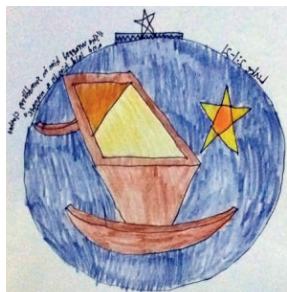
Ella Edwards



Emily Taylor



Rylie Bare



Joshua Operek



## 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 pay rent, or their Ameren, sewer or water bills, etc. They face eviction and utility turnoffs. They have payday loan debt which is an awful burden. Two Vincentians work together on each case. We are currently visiting by phone rather than in the client's home because of Covid 19. We continue to deliver food in emergency situations. Each call takes about one hour, and most Vincentians will see one or more new clients per week. About 10% of the callers 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.

We made 211 calls and helped 525 people. These numbers are down from the prior year. This could be due both to the stimulus checks and the higher unemployment checks. Demand picked up significantly in September.

SVDP helps with the cost of running the St. Thomas Food Pantry which has been growing. We served 5111 people in the recent fiscal year, for a growth rate of 6%. We continue to pick up food from the Midwest Food Bank. We now commonly get meat, fruit and dairy which require refrigeration and demand a more rapid turnover.

We often see people with the motivation to change their lives. Our *Coming Together to Get Ahead (CTGA)* program 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 need, in front of us. We learn from the experience that the poor will always be with us.

These are the numbers for the year October 1, 2019—September 30, 2020:

Balance 10/1/19	\$ 2,368
Income	
Church Collections	\$68,146
Other Donations	\$17,094
Expenses	
Pantry	\$ 7,265
Miscellaneous	\$ 3,258
For those we serve	\$55,861
Balance 9/30/20	\$21,224
Balance 12/04/20	\$13,566

For your continued support of our mission, we are deeply grateful. Please consider joining our group of Vincentians. For more information, please call:

Mark Kelch 309-692-4908  
 Maria Diaz 309-453-8025  
 Don Smith 309-693-8062

## Holy Hour for the Rights of the Unborn

Join us at Saint Mark's Church, 1113 W. Bradley Avenue, Peoria.  
7:00 P.M., on the first Monday of the month, Jan. 4th, 2021 for a Holy Hour.

Face masks and social distancing is requested.

Join us in praying to God for the protection of these innocent lives and the restoration of their Constitutional rights. Please remember that to *have* a right to do something is not the same as *being right* in doing it.

## Empower Illinois Scholarship Applications for 2021/2022 School Year

The application process for an *Empower Illinois Scholarship* for the 2021/2022 school year will begin **Wednesday, January 13, 2021, at 7:00 p.m.**

The application is a two-step process: first, reserve your place in line through the *Empower Illinois* website, [www.empowerillinois.org](http://www.empowerillinois.org), January 13<sup>th</sup> beginning at 7:00 p.m.

Applications are considered on the basis of the date and time this first step is completed, so it is important to complete step one as soon as possible once the process begins. The reservation page will open at 6:30 p.m. to provide families time to complete the form before submission at 7:00 p.m.

If you would like help applying for the *Empower Illinois Scholarship*, please contact Pat at [patwombacher@stthomas-school.net](mailto:patwombacher@stthomas-school.net), or 688-3446, ext. 1341, by Monday, January 11<sup>th</sup>. We will make sure step one of your application is completed on January 13<sup>th</sup>.

Please remember: even if you received an *Empower Illinois Scholarship* for the 2020/2021 school year, you need to **reapply** for the next year.

### 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 \_\_\_\_\_

## RANDY SIMMONS TUITION ASSISTANCE SCHOLARSHIP for PEORIA NOTRE DAME

The Simmons Family and Peoria Notre Dame announce the Randy Simmons Tuition Assistance Scholarship application is now available for the 2021-2022 school year.

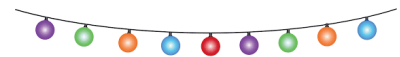
Current 8th graders who will be freshmen next school year are encouraged to apply. The application is available on Peoria Notre Dame's website, <https://www.pndhs.org/randy-simmons-tuition-assistance-scholarship/>

**The deadline to apply is February 12, 2021.**

Any questions, contact Mrs. Cindy Dermody, Peoria Notre Dame Director of Development at [c.dermody@pndhs.org](mailto:c.dermody@pndhs.org) or 309-691-8741.

### Found

A ring was found in a Food Pantry donation bag. Please call Diana at 309-453-7319 or email [sdjanda1@comcast.net](mailto:sdjanda1@comcast.net) if yours is missing.



### Parish Office Hours

9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

The Parish Office is open Monday-Friday from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Staff are also available by email or voicemail. To leave a message, call 309-688-3446, and at the prompt, press:

3 - Msgr. Gray

4 - Fr. Stark

0 - Terri-Administrative Assistant

1340 - Julie-Accounting

1341 - Pat-Tuition

If you have items to deliver for the Parish Office, you are welcome to put them under the door of the Office downstairs in the Church, or under the door of the main Sacristy upstairs. The Church is open from 7:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. every day.

### Food Pantry

Current needs are: Cereal, Crackers, Canned Fruit, Meal Helper, Pancake Mix, & Syrup

Thank you for your generosity



St. Vincent de Paul Helpline:  
677-7696

<b>St. Thomas the Apostle Parish • 309-688-3446</b> 904 East Lake Avenue, Peoria Heights, IL 61616 <a href="http://stthomaspeoria.org">stthomaspeoria.org</a> <a href="mailto:parishoffice@stthomas-church.net">parishoffice@stthomas-church.net</a>			<b>Administrative Assistant</b> .....Terri Moon ..... (x0) <a href="mailto:terimoon@stthomas-church.net">terimoon@stthomas-church.net</a>		
<b>Pastor</b> ..... Msgr. Jason A. Gray ..... (x3) <a href="mailto:msggray@stthomas-church.net">msggray@stthomas-church.net</a>			<b>Bulletin Editor</b> .....Peggy Sullivan.....(x1301) <a href="mailto:peggysullivan@stthomas-church.net">peggysullivan@stthomas-church.net</a>		
<b>Parochial Vicar</b> ..... Rev. Paul Stark S.J..... (x4) <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>Sacristan</b> .....Mother Vaclava Ballon, FSJB.....(688-3500) <a href="mailto:fsjbpeoria@yahoo.com">fsjbpeoria@yahoo.com</a>			<b>Tuition Coordinator</b> .....Pat Wombacher .....(x1341) <a href="mailto:patwombacher@stthomas-school.net">patwombacher@stthomas-school.net</a>		
<b>Deacon</b> ..... Dcn. Mark Kelsch ..... (692-4908) Dcn. John Nelson ..... (981-2716) Dcn. Ed Mallow ..... (360-7735)			<b>CCD Coordinator</b> .....Angie Robenstein.....(x1200) <a href="mailto:angierobenstein@stthomas-school.net">angierobenstein@stthomas-school.net</a>		
<b>School Principal</b> ..... Maureen Bentley ..... (x1210) <a href="mailto:maureenbentley@stthomas-school.net">maureenbentley@stthomas-school.net</a>			<b>Music Coordinator</b> ..... Ann Horst..... (682-5507)		
<b>Sacrament of Baptism</b> Parents participate in a Baptism class before the Baptism of their first child. Contact the Parish Office to schedule the class.			<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 <i>Bulletin</i> . 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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