

*My  
Lord  
and  
My  
God*

*St. Thomas the Apostle Church, Peoria Heights, Illinois  
AD 2020*



*“... you have drawn near to Mount Zion  
and the city of the living God,  
the heavenly Jerusalem,  
to myriads of angels in festal gathering,  
to the assembly of the firstborn enrolled in heaven,  
to **God** the judge of all,  
to the spirits of just men made perfect,  
to **Jesus**, the mediator of a new covenant,  
and to the sprinkled blood  
which speaks more eloquently than that of Abel.”*

*Heb 12:22-24*





*"And let them make me a sanctuary,  
that I may dwell in their midst."*

Ex 25:8

*“Look to the past with gratitude,  
live the present with passion,  
embrace the future with hope.”*

*-Pope Francis*





My fellow parishioners of St. Thomas:

When we talk about the Church, sometimes we talk about a building (for example, saying *I'm going to Church*) and sometimes we talk about a larger spiritual reality (for example, asking *What does the Church teach?*) The church building is important because it is the place where the Church gathers to worship God. But we are reminded in Scripture that the Church is made up of the people of God, being built as living stones into a spiritual temple where sacrifices can be offered through Jesus Christ (1 Pet 2:5). The physical building should contribute to and invigorate the spiritual work we do in offering sacrifice to God.

When I came to St. Thomas, I was happy to see the original 1940 church preserved, when the new church was added in 2002. This large space serves us well while maintaining our connection with the original structure. The plain style of the new church left open the opportunity to introduce new decoration to enrich our worship and create greater harmony between the new and original church buildings.

Based on my experience working in the Congregation of the Causes of Saints in Rome, I appreciate how the examples of the Saints can inspire us to grow in virtue. It seems fitting to look to the Saints when adding decoration to the church building because their prayers for us encourage our spiritual dedication to God.

To honor our first two pastors, two saints were chosen: St. Bernard of Clairvaux as the namesake of Msgr. Bernard Rank. and St. Patrick, in honor of Msgr. William Watson and his devotion to Ireland. We also remember we were a mission of St. Bernard's Parish before we became a parish of our own in 1937.

The selection of symbols on the sanctuary wall is drawn from my experience with Causes of Saints. Saints are chosen either for their acceptance of Martyrdom, or for living a life of heroic virtue as a confessor of the faith. Confessors are examined for their practice of the theological virtues of Faith, Hope, and Love; the cardinal virtues of Prudence, Justice, Temperance, and Fortitude; and the observance of the Evangelical Counsels of Poverty, Chastity and Obedience, according to their state in life, together with the crowning virtue of Humility.

From this list, there are twelve symbols: one represents Martyrdom, and eleven represent the heroic virtues of the confessor: Faith, Hope, Charity, Prudence, Justice, Temperance, Fortitude, Poverty, Chastity, Obedience, and Humility. These symbols, most of which are also found in the stained glass windows of the original church, highlight the virtues of the saints depicted around the Tabernacle in the sanctuary. The mosaic images of the Saints inspire us with real life examples of sanctity.

These elements enhance the beauty of the church, but they cannot merely be pretty images to admire. The virtues and the Saints must draw us personally to the Eucharist at the heart of our sanctuary and to a life of greater holiness. May we model in our spiritual lives the same beauty we see in our church!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jason Gray".

Msgr. Jason Gray  
Pastor

# *Order of the Symbols in the Sanctuary*

*The depictions of the virtues are organized primarily around the theological virtues and the symbol of martyrdom. These images are set within a gold background to distinguish them from the reddish background of the other symbols. Beginning in the lower left, there is the cross of faith, the anchor of hope in the lower right, the heart of charity in the upper left, as well as the cross and palms for martyrdom in the upper right.*

*Between the theological virtues on both the left and the right are the cardinal virtues: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. At the bottom and the top are the Evangelical Counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience, and the virtue of humility.*



## *Connections between the Individual Virtues*

Beginning in the lower left, the virtue of **faith** is associated with **poverty**, since the freedom to sacrifice worldly possessions for Heavenly treasures can only be made by one who believes. Faith is also connected with **prudence**, since faith is necessary to help us discern what is prudently right. Prudence relates to **justice**, since our knowledge of the right course of action helps us to render justly what is owed to each person. Justice leads to **charity**, which strives to go beyond what is strictly required by justice to give generously for love of God and neighbor. Charity is connected with **obedience**, as Jesus asked us to obey a new commandment, to love one another. Obedience is set on top since obeying God's law is a supreme good: *Thy will be done*.

Continuing on the right, the virtue of **humility** is on top as the crowning virtue of the saints who practice childlike simplicity and trust in God. Humility is modeled in **martyrdom**, since the martyr humbly lays down his or her life in witness to God. The strength of the martyr is shown in the virtue of **fortitude**, necessary for one to surrender his or her life. The sacrificial spirit of the martyr and the strength of fortitude are necessary to practice self-denial through **temperance**, or moderation in the use of worldly goods. Temperance is connected with **hope**, since one who practices moderation also trusts that the future promises of the Lord will be fulfilled. Hope is filled with trust and longing for the Kingdom of God, essential to **chastity**, which Our Lord describes as a sign of the Kingdom.





# *Theological Virtues*

*Theological virtues, associated with Christian theology, are the result of the grace of God. While the cardinal virtues are considered human virtues, the theological virtues have God as their object. These virtues, infused in us by God alone, help us be directed to God. We know the theological virtues by Divine revelation, as they have been taught to us by Jesus and in the Sacred Scriptures.*

*Both the theological and cardinal virtues are traits or qualities that dispose one to live in a morally good manner. We grow in these virtues by practicing them and developing them as a habit.*

*The theological virtues form the foundation of all Christian moral activity. We are animated by the theological virtues and, by practicing them, are formed to be children of God meriting eternal life.*

*Symbols of the theological virtues were inspired by the stained-glass windows in the daily Mass chapel. They are pictured on the following pages.*

# Virtue of Faith



*The virtue of **Faith** is depicted by **the cross** which represents the revelation of Jesus Christ. The cross is a sign of contradiction that is a stumbling block to the Jews and an absurdity to the Gentiles, but for the Christian it is the power and wisdom of God revealed (cf. 1 Cor 1:23-24).*

Faith is the virtue connected to belief in God. Faith helps us to believe in God and to believe all that He has said and revealed to us. Faith also leads us to believe all that the Church proposes for belief, since the Church is the Body of Christ that continues to teach and live the Gospel of Christ in the world today. Faith allows us to know the truth, to accept it in our hearts, and to live it with courage.

We can grow in Faith by developing this habit, but we can also lose our Faith by engaging in sin. When we do not put Faith into practice, our Faith is empty since Faith apart from works is dead. However, when we practice our Faith, we are formed into disciples, increasingly ready to take up our crosses and to follow after Jesus boldly.

Faith is an infused virtue by which the intellect perceives that which is true, especially that which cannot be proven by human reason alone. The truth is accepted as an act of the will because of the infallible authority of God who reveals it. Yet, Faith is not blind, since we continually strive to know, to understand and to expound these revealed truths using our power of reason. We grow in Faith through the illumination of the Holy Spirit.

“Our witness to the power of Faith reminds us over and over again that only God is God. No position, no possession, no other experience or relationship is as necessary or as good as God.

Faith in God liberates us from the sad mistake of imposing divine expectations upon one another or upon material things.

Faith in God then allows us to give real value to everyone and everything that enters our lives.

Faith in God repudiates despair.

Faith in God frees us from sins and addictions.

Faith in God shows us the significance of all our decisions and undertakings.

Faith in God reveals the wonder of life and the splendor of creation.

Faith renews our understanding of the scriptures and creeds that the Church has always proclaimed. For Christian believers, living and dying are really only acts of faith.

Making room for God, trusting in God, letting go and letting God be God are all profound expressions of faith.”

- from the 2013 Festival Letter “Faith” written by Bishop Daniel R. Jenky, C.S.C.

## *Act of Faith*

*O my God, I firmly believe  
that you are one God  
in three divine Persons,  
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.  
I believe that your divine Son  
became man and died for our sins  
and that He will come  
to judge the living and the dead.  
I believe these and all the truths  
which the Holy Catholic Church teaches  
because you have revealed them  
who are eternal truth and wisdom,  
who can neither deceive nor be deceived.  
In this faith I intend to live and die.  
Amen.*



# Virtue of Hope



*The virtue of **Hope** is depicted by the **anchor**, since it is the sure and steadfast rock for the soul. When put to the test, the anchor roots us to our firm foundation, Jesus Christ.*

Hope is the virtue by which we desire the Kingdom of Heaven and eternal life, placing our trust in Christ's promises. Hope leads us to trust also in the grace of the Holy Spirit, and responds to our desire for happiness which God has placed into our hearts. This Hope inspires us to purify ourselves to prepare ourselves for the Kingdom. Therefore, Hope keeps us from discouragement and frustration, sustains us in times of trial, and keeps us looking forward with confidence to the promise of redemption.

Abraham demonstrated Hope when he was put to the test in the sacrifice of Isaac, since he trusted in God's promise. The Christian demonstrates Hope by observing the beatitudes that raise our minds from the present circumstances to the promises yet to come. Hope comes to our aid during trials, since we are inspired by the merits of Jesus Christ who endured His Passion and who overcame every obstacle in His Resurrection from the dead.

Hope leads to joy, even in the midst of suffering. Hope assists us to persevere faithfully to the end to obtain an eternal reward for the good works accomplished with the grace of God. Hope is the opposite of despair.



“We know that all creation is groaning in labor pains even until now; and not only that, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, we also groan within ourselves as we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. For in hope we were saved. Now hope that sees for itself is not hope. For who hopes for what one sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait with endurance.”

- Rom 8:22-25

“Our blessed Lord was hopeful about humanity. He always saw men the way He originally designed them. He saw through the surface, grime, and dirt to the real man underneath. He never identified a person with sin. He saw sin as something alien and foreign which did not belong to man. Sin had mastered man but he could be freed from it to be his real self. Just as every mother sees her own image and likeness on her child’s face, so God always saw the divine image and likeness beneath us.”

- Ven. Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen

## *Act of Hope*

*O Lord God,  
I hope by your grace  
for the pardon of all my sins  
and after life here  
to gain eternal happiness  
because you have promised it  
who are infinitely powerful,  
faithful, kind, and merciful.  
In this hope I intend to live  
and die. Amen.*





# Virtue of *Charity*



*The virtue of **Charity**, depicted by the **heart on fire**, is closely associated with the Sacred Heart of Jesus (depicted with a crown of thorns), or the Immaculate Heart of Mary (depicted with roses and the sword of sorrow). The heart of the Christian should be formed after the Heart of Christ.*

***Jesus, meek and humble of heart, make our hearts like unto thine.***

Charity is the last of the three Theological virtues after Faith and Hope. St. Paul describes the enduring value of Faith, Hope, and Charity, indicating that Charity is the greatest of the Theological Virtues (1 Cor 13:13).

Charity is the theological virtue by which we love God above all things for His own sake, and our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God. Charity fulfills the two great Commandments given to us by Jesus: to love God with our whole heart, mind, soul, and strength, and our neighbor as ourselves (Mt 22:36-40). Jesus shows us the depth of His Charity when He loved us faithfully to the end, even to His death on the Cross (cf. Jn 13:1). The Charity shown by Jesus becomes a model for us to imitate when He instructed the disciples: “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love,” and “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you” (Jn 15:9, 12).

Charity is shown more perfectly when one loves an enemy, like the Father who sends His grace on the bad and the good (Mt 5:44-45), or like Jesus, who willingly forgave His persecutors (Lk 23:34).

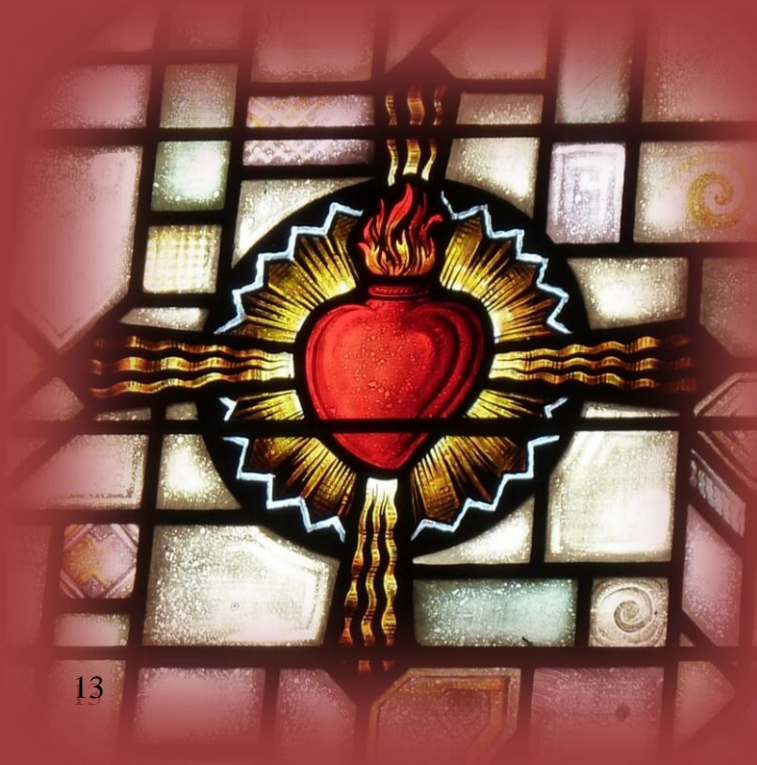
St. Paul eloquently explains the central necessity of Charity in the life of the Church (1 Cor 13). Without Charity, prophecies and heroic sacrifices amount to nothing. St. Therese of Lisieux teaches that Charity lives in the heart of the Church and inspires all her members. Charity inspires the apostles to preach the Gospel, and martyrs to shed their blood.

Charity animates the practice of all the other virtues and binds them together in perfection (Col 3:14). Charity purifies our motivations so that our virtuous deeds are performed selflessly.

God is the source of Charity, since *it is not so much that we have loved God, but that God has loved us and sent His Son for the expiation of our sins* (1 Jn 4:10). The practice of Charity fills us with the freedom of the children of God, no longer standing before God as slaves, or in servile fear. The strength to love others comes from the knowledge that God has loved us first. Charity leads us to turn away from sin, not so much because we fear punishment, as much as we fear to displease God, who is all good and deserving of all our love.

### *Act of Love*

*O Lord God, I love you  
above all things  
and I love my neighbor  
for your sake  
because you are the highest,  
infinite and perfect good,  
worthy of all my love.  
In this love I intend to live  
and die. Amen.*



# Virtue of *Martyrdom*



*The virtue of **Martyrdom** is depicted by **the cross**, since the martyrs are those who have faithfully taken up their cross and carried it after Our Lord, to the very end. Unlike the cross, used for the virtue of Faith, the cross of Martyrdom is often adorned with the **instruments of martyrdom**, with the **sword**, or the **crown of thorns** to depict martyr's suffering. It is often also adorned with **crown of palms**, representing their victory, since the martyr can say with St. Paul, "I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith. From now on the crown of righteousness awaits me" (2 Tim 4:7-8).*

Martyrdom is not precisely a virtue as much as it is the perfect embodiment of the Virtues. The martyr gives supreme witness to the truth of the faith, by bearing witness even in death to Christ, who died and rose from the dead.

Martyrs demonstrate the Virtue of Faith by preferring death before denying their belief in Jesus Christ. Even if the martyrs are offered life if they deny Christ, they consider themselves privileged to suffer for the sake of the Name of Jesus (Acts 5:41). The Virtue of Hope is seen in their trust that Jesus, who died and rose, will fulfill His promise of eternal life. The martyrs trust in the word of Jesus that those who remain faithful will receive the crown of life (Rev 2:10). The Virtue of Charity is seen in the supreme sacrifice of one's life. *No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends* (Jn 15:13).

A martyr is the victim of an unjust persecutor who acts in hatred of the faith or of Christian morality. The persecutor attempts to silence the proclamation of Christ by killing those who witness to Him. However, history has demonstrated that the courage of the martyrs inspires and strengthens the Church. It has been said that the blood of martyrs is the seedbed of Christians.

From the early days of the Church, those who have suffered martyrdom are considered victors. They have faced the trials and conquered. They washed their robes in the blood of the lamb and made them white as wool (Rev 7:14).

# Cardinal Virtues

*“Four virtues play a pivotal role and accordingly are called ‘cardinal’, all the others are grouped around them. They are: prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance. ‘If anyone loves righteousness, [Wisdom’s] labors are virtues; for she teaches temperance and prudence, justice, and courage.’ (Wis 8,7) These virtues are praised under other names in many passages of Scripture.”*

*- Catechism of the Catholic Church 1805*

*Unlike the theological virtues, the cardinal virtues are not, in themselves, the gifts of God through grace. Rather, the cardinal virtues are developed by practice to form a habit.*



# Virtue of Justice



*The virtue of **Justice** is depicted by **scales** hanging on a **sword**. Scales represent judgment and may be symbolic of the last judgment when Jesus comes at the end of time to judge our lives.*

*The **Sword** is the symbol of authority and can also suggest that justice can be swift and final.*

Justice is the moral virtue that consists in the constant and firm will to give what is due to God and neighbor. Justice toward God is called the *virtue of religion*. Justice toward men disposes one to respect the rights of each person so we may develop relationships that promote equity and the common good.

Justice is the cardinal virtue most frequently praised in the Sacred Scriptures. All the Ten Commandments are concerned with justice. The need for justice is evident even to small children who know they should *play fair* with their friends, and that there are such things as right and wrong.

Justice means to do what is right, even if we are not treated fairly in return. Jesus was the *just man* who died for the sake of the unjust. He accepted the unjust punishment of death on the cross so we might be reconciled to God.



# Virtue of Prudence

The virtue of **Prudence** is depicted by a **mirror**, as the prudent person will reflect on his choices with wisdom and foresight in order to choose rightly. Prudence is also depicted by a **serpent**, with several layers of meaning. First, the serpent is associated with the “remora” fish which attached itself to the hull of a ship, creating drag and causing the ship to sail more slowly. Prudence requires careful decision making that is slow, deliberate and not rushed.

Second, Jesus tells us to be as “clever as serpents” (Mt 10:16), as wisdom is required in the application of Prudence. Third, Prudence is not blinded by the reflection of beauty in the mirror, but is also aware of the dangers of evil presented by the serpent.



Prudence disposes us to use our powers of reason to discern what is good in every circumstance. Prudence also helps us choose the right means of achieving that good. For these reasons, Prudence is called *right reason in action*. It is not simply the intellectual virtue of knowing what is right, but also a moral virtue of knowing how to *do* what is right.

With the help of Prudence, we can apply sound moral principles, even in difficult particular cases, to know, accurately and confidently, how to achieve the good and avoid evil. The prudent man is attentive to where he is going, since Prudence will guide the observance of the other virtues. Hence, Prudence is often also called the *mother of all virtues*.

# Virtue of Fortitude



*The virtue of **Fortitude** is depicted as a **tower**, or a stronghold. It symbolizes readiness to remain steadfast in our will when faced with obstacles, physical and spiritual.*

Fortitude is the moral virtue that ensures firmness in difficulties and constancy in the pursuit of the good. It strengthens the resolve to resist temptations and to overcome obstacles in the moral life. The virtue of fortitude enables one to conquer fear, even fear of death, and to face trials and persecutions. It disposes one even to renounce and sacrifice his or her life in defense of a just cause.

Fortitude is not foolhardiness, rushing into danger without a thought of the consequences. Rather, fortitude is the virtue of the martyrs, who are willing to give up their lives for a purpose. They accept death for Christ in order to hold fast to the faith.

While we decide what needs to be done with the help of prudence and justice, fortitude gives us the strength to do it. Fortitude, a gift of the Holy Spirit, also allows us to cope with poverty and loss, and to rise above the bare minimum requirements of Christianity to great heroism.

# Virtue of *Temperance*

*The virtue of **Temperance** is depicted as an ewer and basin used to measure carefully what is needed, while avoiding excess. In Christian art, the pitcher is used to pour a moderate amount of wine into a cup. Alternatively, the basin can receive a modest amount of water, lest it overflow because of indulgence.*



Temperance, the virtue that moderates the attraction of pleasures, also calls us to be balanced in our use of worldly goods. Temperance teaches us to maintain mastery over our instincts and desires within the limits of what is honorable. Through Temperance, we learn to restrain our appetites and practice self-restraint. Fasting helps us grow in Temperance.

Temperance is associated with moderation or sobriety, teaching us to be restrained in our consumption of food and drink. It also calls us to be modest with respect to the desires of the flesh, and measured in our use of money and worldly objects.

Temperance directs our passions toward the high goals of loving God with all our heart, and our neighbor as ourselves, since it teaches us to curb our love for lesser things. Temperance helps love remain uncorrupted.



# *Evangelical Counsels*

*Beyond the Ten Commandments and the two Great Commandments to love God and neighbor, we are encouraged to strive for Christian perfection. The Evangelical Counsels of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience are signs of the Kingdom of God. To embrace these Counsels is to live in this world with our eyes more fixed on the world yet to come.*

*The Evangelical Counsels are embraced by all religious men and women who take vows of Poverty, Chastity, and Obedience. Diocesan clergy make promises of Chastity and Obedience. While they do not make a promise of Poverty, they are called to live a life of simplicity.*

*Other Christians, whether single or married, can accumulate possessions, be fruitful, and preserve freedom. However, Poverty reminds us to be detached from our possessions. Chastity reminds us to strive for purity in our fruitfulness. Obedience reminds us to use our freedom according to God's will.*



# Poverty



Poverty calls us to limit our dependence on worldly goods. Like the rich young man, challenged by Our Lord to give away his possessions (Mk 10:17-22), Poverty challenges us to think more of the needs of others than our own.

Jesus challenged the disciples when they proclaimed the kingdom not to take food, a sack, or money with them (Mk 6:7-9). Poverty requires trust in divine providence, that God will provide for our needs.

*Poverty is depicted by two turtledoves, representing the smallest offering a poor family might make when presenting a child in the temple (Lev 5:7 and Lk 2:22-24).*

# Obedience



In Obedience we submit our will to the will of a superior. Like children who are taught to honor father and mother, this fourth Commandment teaches even adults that we should maintain a childlike Obedience.

Obedience requires sacrifice. During the Agony in the Garden, Jesus expressed a desire to avoid the cross when He prayed that this cup should pass Him by, but not according to His will, but the will of His Heavenly Father (Mt 26:39). In the Lord's Prayer, Jesus teaches us all to seek and to obey the will of the Father: *Thy will be done* (Mt 6:10).

*Obedience is depicted by the two tablets of the Ten Commandments.*

# Chastity



*Chastity is depicted by the  
Easter lily, associated with the  
Resurrection and with purity.*

Chastity is the Evangelical Counsel in which we consecrate our lives now in anticipation of the Kingdom that is to come. Those who embrace celibate chastity forego the joys of marriage and family in order to live the Kingdom of God on earth, since, *those who are worthy to attain the coming age in the resurrection neither marry nor are given in marriage* (Lk 20:35-36). In this way, the celibate imitates the pure and virginal love of Christ who nevertheless gave Himself totally for the sake of His spiritual bride when He died on the cross. Chastity does not indicate the absence of love; rather, Chastity purifies love through selfless sacrifice for the beloved.

Chastity is a gift to a consecrated religious woman who pledges herself to Our Lord as a Bride of Christ. Chastity is a gift to the priest, religious monk, or consecrated brother who commits himself to the service of the Church with an undivided heart.

The laity, and especially those who are married, benefit from the Evangelical Counsel of Chastity which reminds us to restrain our bodily desires after the corrupting influence of original sin. We are reminded to raise our minds above worldly thinking, the desires of the flesh, and secular values in our culture, to a more noble and generous love.

# Virtue of Humility



*Humility is represented by the  
Lilies of the Valley that bow over,  
hanging low. The bowing flowers  
remind us to submit ourselves  
humbly before the Lord.*

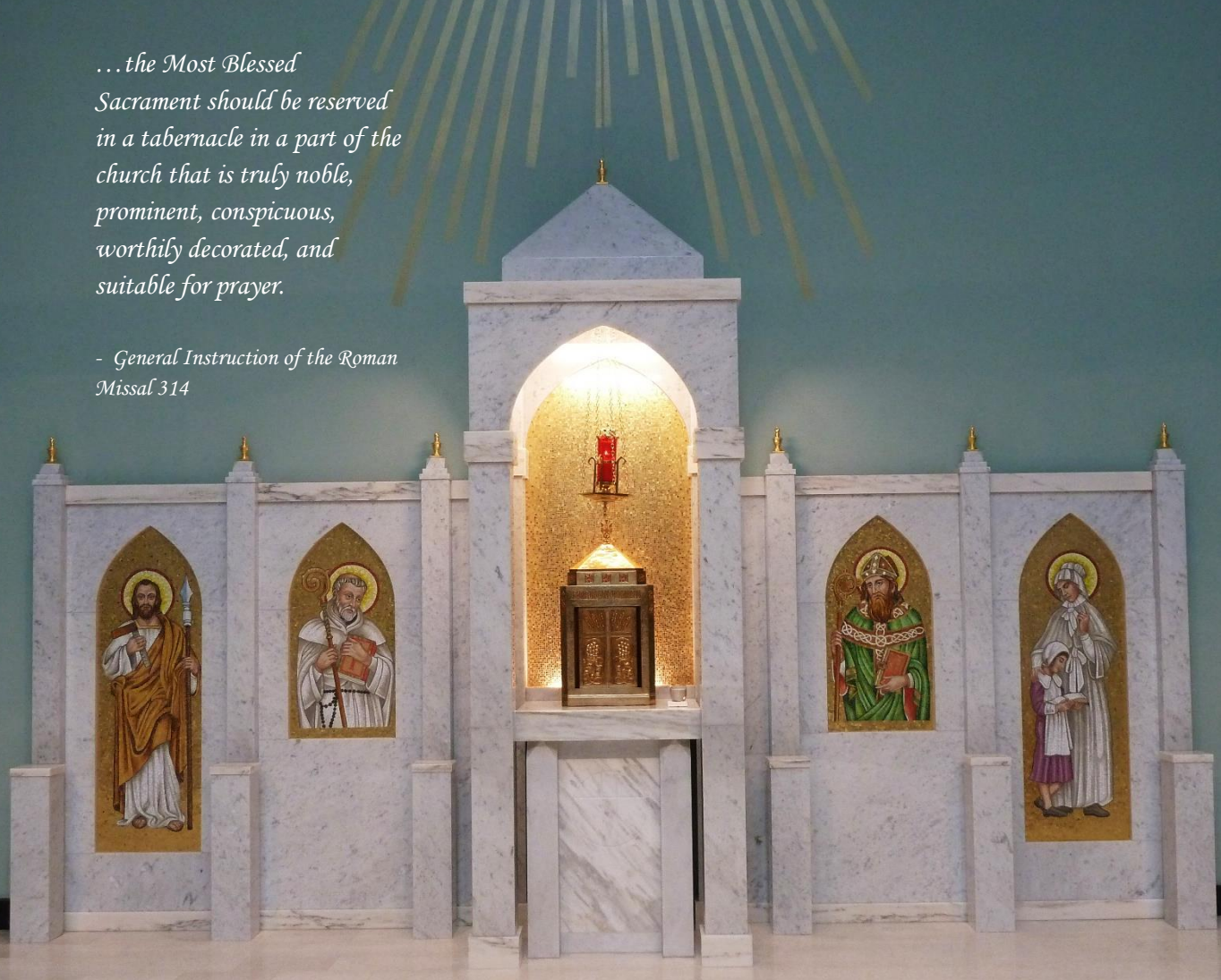
Humility, a virtue that grounds us, comes from the Latin word for earth (*humus*). The virtue of Humility is opposed to the capital sin of pride. As pride is often considered the deadliest sin, Humility is most valuable as a crowning virtue. The Devil refused to serve God, falling through pride, but has been conquered by the Virgin Mary, the humble handmaid of the Lord ready to do the Lord's will.

Humility prompts us to lower ourselves, placing the interests of others ahead of our own (Phil 2:3). The humble person receives a special Beatitude, *Blessed are the meek*. Jesus gives us the primary example of humility, since He is God who emptied Himself to share in our human nature, *humbling Himself even to death on the cross* (Phil 2:6-8). A person who humbles himself before God trusts the promise that God will exalt him (Jam 4:10).

Humility is rooted in the truth that we are small when standing before the majesty of God. However, false humility is dangerous when a person proposes something not true in order to appear artificially lower. Humility rejoices in the truth by recognizing that the gifts we have are actually given to us by the Lord.

*...the Most Blessed  
Sacrament should be reserved  
in a tabernacle in a part of the  
church that is truly noble,  
prominent, conspicuous,  
worthily decorated, and  
suitable for prayer.*

*- General Instruction of the Roman  
Missal 314*

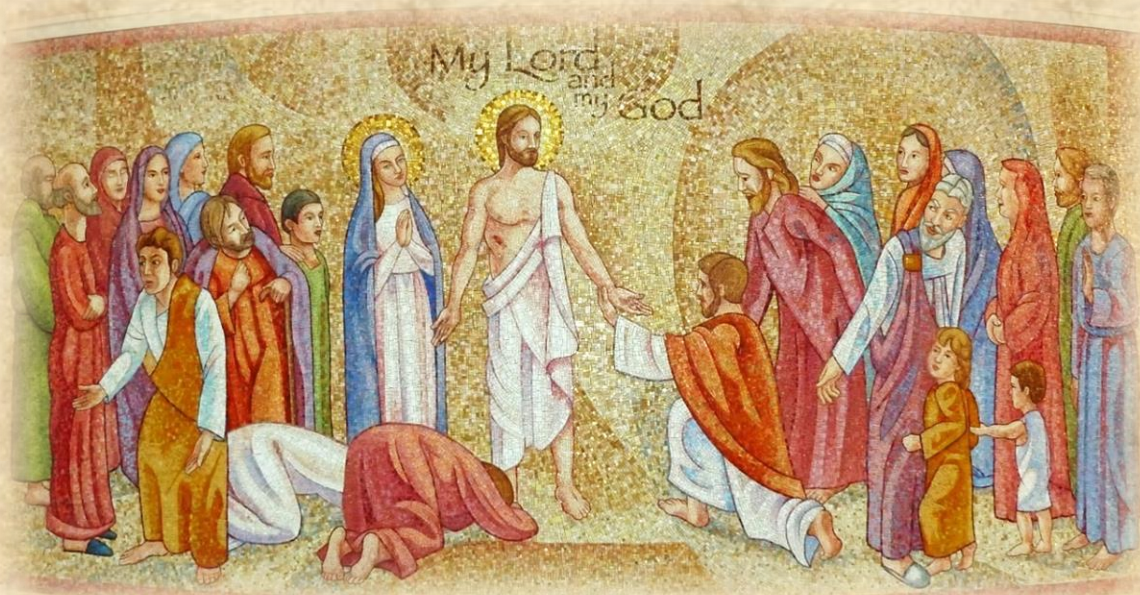


*O God, You have called our parish family to praise you  
and to teach our children to know you and serve you.  
Grant, we pray, by gathering together to honor the Eucharist,  
like St. Thomas, we may recognize your presence before us,  
our Lord and our God,  
giving witness to your merciful love.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*



# Why Mosaics?

*The inspiration to use mosaics as an art form for the sanctuary came from the large mosaic of St. Thomas in the narthex. This mosaic is unique and makes St. Thomas Church one of a kind in our area. In this renovation project, Deprato Rigali Studios envisioned the use of the existing elements in the original church to create a unified place of worship that builds on the past with gratitude.*



*“In the earthly Liturgy, the Church participates, by a foretaste, in that heavenly Liturgy which is celebrated in the holy city of Jerusalem, toward which she journeys as a pilgrim, and where Christ is seated at the right hand of God; and by venerating the memory of the Saints, she hopes one day to have some share and fellowship with them.*

*Thus, in sacred buildings images of the Lord, of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and of the Saints, in accordance with most ancient tradition of the Church, should be displayed for veneration by the faithful and should be so arranged so as to lead the faithful toward the mysteries of faith celebrated there.”*

*- General Instruction of the Roman Missal 318*



# *The Art of Mosaic*



Our mosaics were done in the “reverse application” technique. Tesserae are glued on the front side to a paper and then applied to the honeycomb panel with cement. Finally, the paper is removed and the mosaic comes out in all its beauty. Because all the work is done by hand, it makes the glass tesserae extremely valuable.

Artistic tesserae used by the artists of the Demetz studio are produced, by hand, on the island of Murano near Venice – the home of the “Venetian” mosaic. The artists expertly render images in fine detail and rich color.

The mosaics in our church were made in Italy by the Demetz Art Studio – a family-owned studio going back five generations. They were designed by Deprato Rigali Studios of Chicago. The art of mosaic is ancient, with pieces crafted as early as the third millennium BC. The mosaic has become one of the highest forms of sacred art, appearing in churches, cathedrals and basilicas around the world.



Mosaics are made of tesserae (Lat.: “cubes”), small pieces of brilliantly colored glass, ceramic, enamels, or even genuine 24 carat gold on glass. The colors are melted together with glass in a furnace, and are then flattened out and cooled. The most difficult part comes when each tessera is cut by hand in a cubical or other regular shape and applied, one next to the other, keeping a precise spacing between them.





# *St. Thomas* *the Apostle*

*St. Thomas appears in a few specific passages of Scripture. When Jesus prepares to go to Jerusalem, Thomas says he will go to die with Him (Jn 11:5-16). At the Last Supper, Thomas asks a question and is taught that Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life (Jn 14:1-7). Thomas is probably best known for his words of faith after the Resurrection, My Lord and My God (Jn 20:19-29).*

*After the Resurrection, Thomas was said to have evangelized Parthia and brought the Gospel as far as India. Tradition holds that Thomas visited the Indo-Parthian King Gondophernes who put him in charge of building the royal palace, since Thomas had skills as a carpenter. Hence, Thomas is depicted with the carpenter's square. He was martyred at Madras, which explains the depiction of the spear.*

*He is the patron saint of India, architects and builders.*

*Almighty Father, as we honor Thomas the apostle,  
let us always experience the help of his prayers.  
May we have eternal life by believing in Jesus,  
whom Thomas acknowledged as Lord, for He lives  
and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*



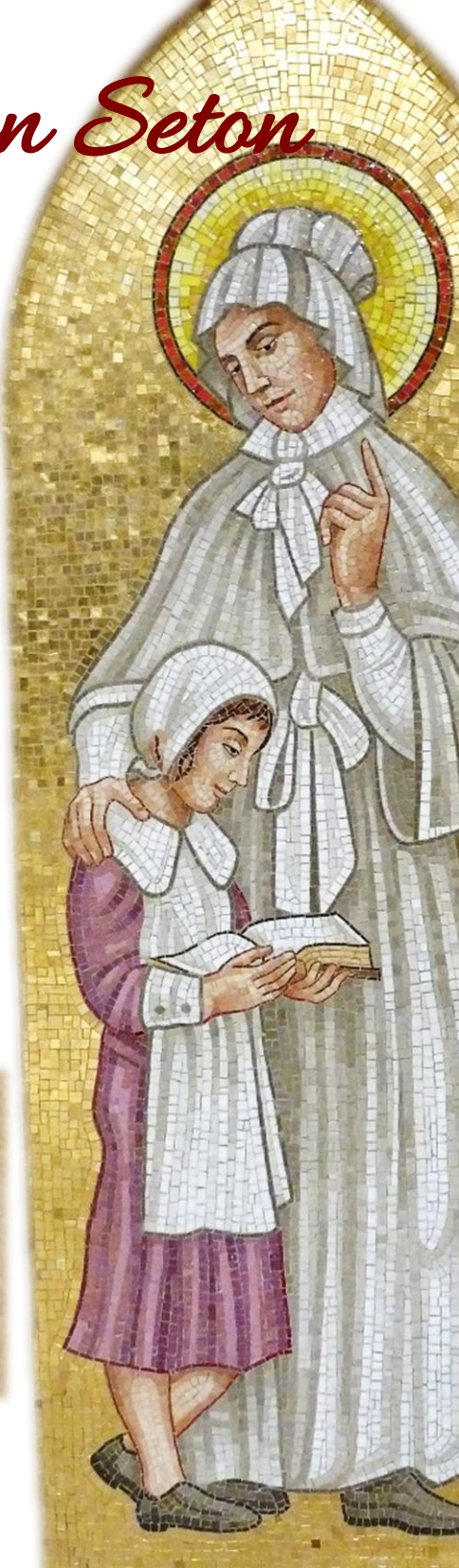
# St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

*St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, an American-born saint and the patroness of Catholic Schools, lived on the East coast from 1774 to 1821. As a young woman, she was raised Episcopalian, married and had children before her husband died. As a widow, she was moved by the devotion of her Catholic friends to the Blessed Sacrament. Converting to Catholicism in 1805, she dedicated herself to teaching children. She professed religious vows in 1809 and founded The Sisters of Charity, a religious order that ran a boarding school for young girls, a school for the poor, and an orphan asylum.*

*The Sisters of Charity grew under Mother Seton's influence, and served Catholics in Philadelphia, New York, and in several other states. The motherhouse was in Emmitsburg, Maryland, where Mother died of tuberculosis. Her selfless dedication to the education of children is remembered to this day.*

*We ask for St. Elizabeth Ann Seton's intercession as a secondary patroness to watch over St. Thomas School.*

*Lord God, You blessed Elizabeth Seton  
with gifts of grace as wife and mother,  
educator and foundress, so that she might spend her life  
in service to your people. Through her example  
and prayers may we learn to express our love for you  
in love for our fellow men and women.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*



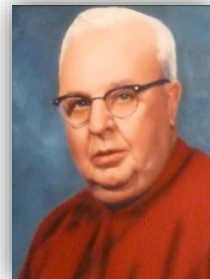


# *St. Bernard of Clairvaux*

## *Remembering Msgr. Bernard Rank*

*St. Bernard of Clairvaux was 12<sup>th</sup> century French saint and reformer. After a religious upbringing, he entered the Cistercian monastery along with thirty young noblemen, a group that included a brother, uncles and friends. Later, he was chosen abbot of the monastery of Clairvaux, where he directed his companions in the practice of virtue by his own good example. He was a powerful preacher and is reported to have performed miracles, especially in healing the sick. St. Bernard was known for courageously battling the heresies of his day, and for promoting unity within the Church.*

*At St. Thomas, we remember St. Bernard of Clairvaux, since our parish was once a mission of St. Bernard's Parish before we were established in 1937. As a mission, we were served by Father Bernard Rank, a parochial vicar at St. Bernard Parish, who came to say Mass in Peoria Heights. When St. Thomas was founded as a parish, Father Rank became our first pastor, serving until 1981.*



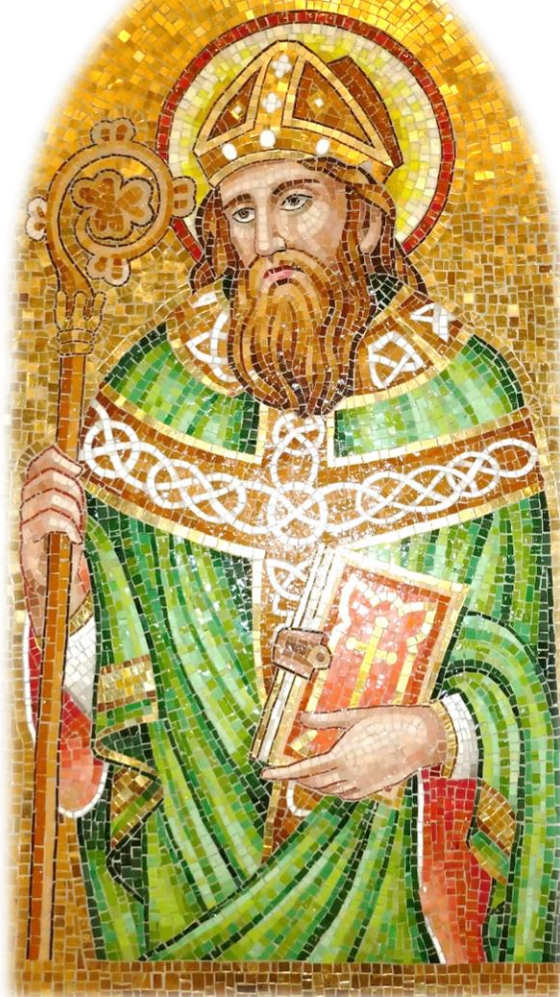
*Heavenly Father, Saint Bernard was filled with zeal for your house and was a radiant light in your Church. By his prayers, may we be filled with this spirit of zeal and walk always as children of light. We ask this through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.*



# St. Patrick

## *A Tribute to Msgr. William Watson*

*St. Patrick is the well-known missionary who brought Christianity to Ireland in the 5th Century. He was born in Great Britain, about the year 385. As a young man, he was captured and sold as a slave in Ireland where he had to tend sheep. Escaping from slavery, he chose to enter the priesthood, and later, as a bishop, he tirelessly preached the Gospel to the people of Ireland, where he converted many to the faith and established the Church. He was known for his preaching and explanations of Christianity, as well as for the miracles attributed to his prayers. St. Patrick is the patron of Ireland and of all Irish Catholics.*



*At St. Thomas, we remember St. Patrick in honor of our second pastor, Msgr. William Watson, well-known for his pilgrimages to Ireland. Many of our parishioners have fond memories of visiting the Catholic sites in Ireland with Msgr. Watson. By honoring St. Patrick, we remember an important part of Msgr. Watson's ministry at St. Thomas. He served as pastor from 1981 to 2015.*

*God our Father, you sent Saint Patrick to preach your glory to the people of Ireland. By the help of his prayers, may all Christians proclaim your love to all men. We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.*

# Blessed Virgin Mary

No Catholic church is complete without the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She was chosen by God to bear His only Son and so played a crucial role in our salvation history.

The choice of depicting the Blessed Mother under the title of the Immaculate Conception connects us to the universal Church as well as to our local Church.

In 1846, the United States bishops chose the Blessed Virgin Mary, under her title of the Immaculate Conception, as the **patroness of the United States of America**. Our Cathedral is also dedicated to her under this title.

Moreover, the original St. Thomas Church was dedicated on December 8, 1940, the feast of the Immaculate Conception.

Mary is portrayed as a woman clothed with the sun, with the moon under her feet. Mary, who was conceived without original sin, is depicted as trampling a serpent, representing the serpent in the Garden of Eden and Original Sin. Her posture is one of humility, with her hands folded in prayer symbolizing her constant intercession for us.

*Father, you prepared the Virgin Mary to be the worthy mother of you Son. You let her share beforehand in the salvation Christ would bring by his death, and kept her sinless from the first moment of her conception. Help us by her prayers to live in your presence without sin. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.*



# St. Joseph

*No other man in the history of humanity had greater privilege than St. Joseph, who was chosen to be the head of the Holy Family, the husband of Mary, and the earthly father of Jesus - the Son of God.*

*Scripture does not say much about him but what it does say is very important – he was a righteous man who demonstrated many virtues, among them faith, love, obedience, fortitude and humility. Joseph was the one under whose guidance Jesus “grew in wisdom, age and grace before God and man” (Lk 2:52). He taught Jesus the art of carpentry and is the patron and example of all workers. Tradition holds that Joseph died before Jesus began his public ministry, and so Jesus was present at Joseph’s death. For this reason, St. Joseph is also the patron saint of a happy death.*

*In 1870, in response to innumerable petitions from the faithful around the world, Pope Pius IX declared St. Joseph the **Patron of the Universal Church**.*

*St. Joseph is often depicted with baby Jesus in his arms, This image recalls Joseph’s role as guardian throughout Jesus’ childhood. He also holds a lily, to symbolize purity.*

*As the people of the Old Testament were encouraged to “go to Joseph” in Egypt, may we all entrust our needs and our prayers to Good Saint Joseph.*

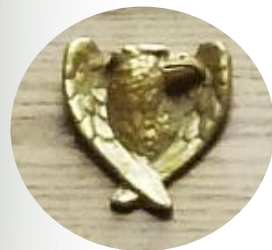
*Father, you entrusted our Savior  
to the care of Saint Joseph.*

*By the help of his prayers may your Church continue  
to serve her Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns  
with you and the Holy Spirit,  
one God for ever and ever. Amen.*





*The symbols of the four evangelists embellishing the beautiful crucifix from the original church were gold-plated to highlight the unique role that the Gospels hold in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass. The image of **the man** represents the Gospel according to St. Matthew; **the lion**, the Gospel according to St. Mark; **the ox**, the Gospel according to St. Luke; and **the eagle**, the Gospel according to St. John.*



*The Holy Spirit window was highlighted by a gold circle which gives it greater prominence. The rays flowing from the window were also painted in gold to symbolize the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the Church, and His sanctifying work in the lives of all believers, especially the saints whose faith we strive to imitate. Above the saints, there are seven gold caps in the shape of a flame, representing the seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit, and the tongues of fire that descended on the Apostles at Pentecost.*



*The marble bases from the original candle holders were retained, and wood tops were replaced with high polished brass holders, matching the existing paschal candle stand placed near the baptismal font.*

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*“The candles, which are required at every liturgical service out of reverence and on account of the festiveness of the celebration, are to be appropriately placed either on or around the altar...”*

*- General Instruction of the Roman Missal 307*



# Ambry



An **ambry** is a case in which the holy oils are kept in the church. It is typically inserted in the wall of the sanctuary and it is often placed near the baptismal font. Each year during Holy Week, the Bishop gathers with all the priests of the Diocese at the Chrism Mass and blesses the **Oil of the Sick** and the **Oil of the Catechumens**, and consecrates the **Sacred Chrism**. The oils are blessed in large vessels, poured into smaller containers and distributed to each priest for use during the sacramental celebrations throughout the coming year.

*“... it is with the **sacred Chrism** consecrated by the Bishop that the newly baptized are anointed and those to be confirmed are signed.*

*It is with the **Oil of Catechumens** that catechumens are prepared and disposed for Baptism.*

*Finally, it is with the **Oil of the Sick** that those who are ill are comforted in their infirmity.”*

*- The Order of Blessing the Oil of Catechumens and of the Sick and of Consecrating the Chrism no. 1*



*“Blessed  
are those  
who have not seen  
and have  
believed.”*

*Jn 20:29*

