

## St. Thomas the Apostle Parish Staff

Office Hours: M-F 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

904 East Lake Avenue,  
Peoria Heights, IL 61616  
[stthomaspeoria.org](http://stthomaspeoria.org); 309-688-3446  
[parishoffice@stthomas-church.net](mailto:parishoffice@stthomas-church.net)

Pastor: Msgr. Jason A. Gray.....(x3)  
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Parochial Vicar: Fr. Achilleus Tegamaisho..  
[frachilleus@stthomas-church.net](mailto:frachilleus@stthomas-church.net)  
Fr. John Twinomujuni.....In Residence

Sacristan: Mother Vaclava Ballon, FSJB  
(688-3500); [fsjbpeoria@yahoo.com](mailto:fsjbpeoria@yahoo.com)

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Dcn. Ed Mallow.....360-7735  
Dcn. Mark Kelsch (Senior Status)

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Director of Faith Formation: Mary Cushing....  
[marycushing@stthomas-school.net](mailto:marycushing@stthomas-school.net)

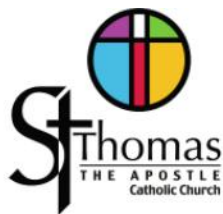
Music Coordinator: Ann Horst..... 682-5507  
Annulment Consultant:

John Mackoway.....699-5213

Parish Nurse: Mary Clare Geraghty....(x1350)  
[parishnurse@stthomas-church.net](mailto:parishnurse@stthomas-church.net)

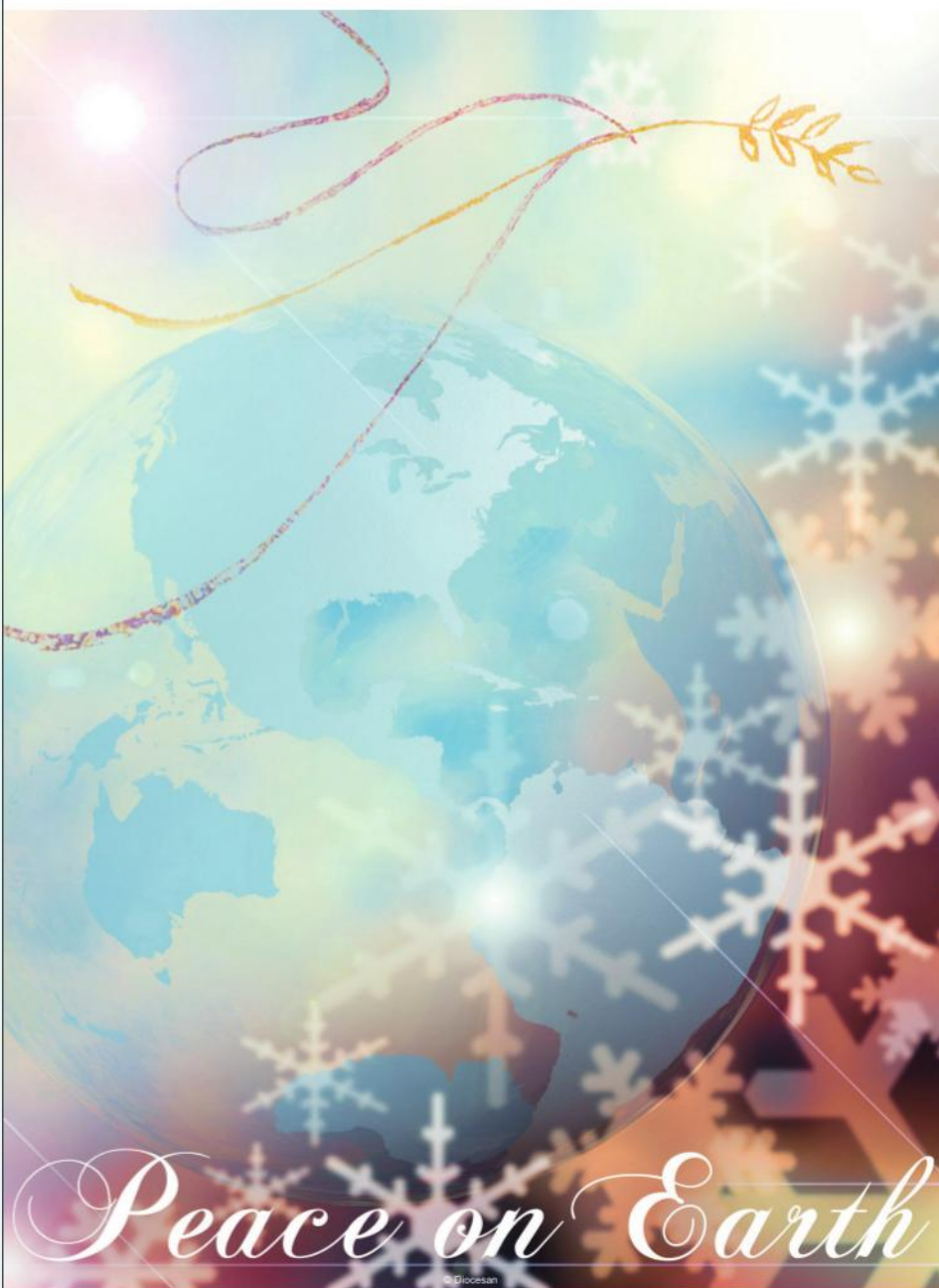
### Stay in Touch

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



*December 25, 2022*  
*Christmas*

*January 1, 2023*  
*Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God*





## From Our Pastor

*A child is born for us, Jesus Christ the Lord! The Word became flesh and dwelt among us!*

At Christmas we celebrate the incarnation, one of the central mysteries of the Faith. Jesus Christ, the eternally begotten Son of God has taken on our flesh and has truly become man. This mystery reveals Jesus' incomprehensible love for us. As our Savior comes near us, we are lifted up in hope when we might tend to despair. Let us live our lives in appreciation of all that Jesus has done for us.

As we look forward to a new year, I look back with gratitude for all that has been done at St. Thomas and look ahead to the opportunities before us. We have made important improvements in our parish and school, but more importantly, we have faced the challenge to be more dedicated to practicing our faith and returning to Mass.

Next year, Bishop Tylka and the US Bishops have asked us to prepare for a Eucharistic revival. We will participate in diocesan initiatives to increase our reverence toward the Blessed Sacrament. Your participation at our monthly holy hours and our First Friday devotions is already a sign of our Eucharistic focus.

Bishop Tylka will also be soliciting feedback for the Growing Disciples program. Each of our parishes will be asked to evaluate its strengths and consider opportunities for growth. I am grateful for the parishioners who have agreed to volunteer on committees for both of these initiatives.

Our parish will host a parish mission in March. This mission will offer encouragement to all the faithful in our parish, and for some of our parish leaders, we will focus on how we can promote ideas that will increase our spiritual growth.

Finally, at the end of the year, we had a few young men attend a St. Andrew Dinner hosted by the Diocese of Peoria. I encourage everyone to pray for vocations to the priesthood and to personally promote and encourage vocations among those you may know.

God bless you in the new year!

—Msgr. Gray



## Readings for the Week of December 25, 2022

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Nativity of the Lord</b> <i>Dawn:</i> Isaiah 62: 11-12; Titus 3: 4-7; Luke 2: 15-20 <i>During the Day:</i> Isaiah 52: 7-10; Hebrews 1: 1-6; John 1: 1-18 OR John 1: 1-5, 9-14
<b>Monday</b>	<b>St. Stephen, the First Martyr</b> Acts 6: 8-10; 7: 54-59; Matthew 10: 17-22
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>St. John, Apostle &amp; Evangelist</b> 1 John 1: 1-4; John 20: 1a, 2-8
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>The Holy Innocents, Martyrs</b> 1 John 1: 5—2: 2; Matthew 2: 13-18
<b>Thursday</b>	1 John 2: 3-11; Luke 2: 22-35
<b>Friday</b>	<b>The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, &amp; Joseph</b> Sirach 3: 2-6, 12-14; Matthew 2: 13-15, 19-23
<b>Saturday</b>	1 John 2: 18-21; John 1: 1-18
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God</b> Numbers 6: 22-27; Galatians 4: 4-7; Luke 2, 16-21

## Mass Intentions

### Monday, December 26, 2022

8:00 a.m. Marion R. Morrison/Jack & Margaret Weinstein

### Tuesday, December 27, 2022

7:00 a.m. Melvin & Lucille Noe/Mary Ann Noe

### Wednesday, December 28, 2022

7:00 a.m. Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians

### Thursday, December 29, 2022

7:00 a.m. Rose & Bill Chase/Dave & Rose Chase

### Friday, December 30, 2022

7:00 a.m. Grace Cafaro/Denise Noell

### Saturday, December 31, 2022

8:00 a.m. Klem Osika/Linda Osika

5:00 p.m. Mary Clary/Family

### Sunday, January 1, 2023

8:00 a.m. For the People

10:00 a.m. Tim Barkley/St. Vincent de Paul Society

5:00 p.m. Joseph & Lena Griffin/Steve & Edie Brereton



## Readings for the Week of January 1, 2023

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God</b> Numbers 6: 22-27; Galatians 4: 4-7; Luke 2, 16-21
<b>Monday</b>	<b>St. Basil the Great &amp; Gregory Nazianzen, Bishops &amp; Doctors of the Church</b> 1 John 2: 22-28; John 1: 19-28
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>The Most Holy Name of Jesus</b> 1 John 2: 29—3: 6; John 1: 29-34
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Religious</b> 1 John 3: 7-10; John 1: 35-42
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>St. John Neuman, Bishop</b> 1 John 3: 11-21; John 1: 43-51
<b>Friday</b>	<b>St. André Bessette, Religious</b> 1 John 5: 5-13; Matthew 1: 7-11 OR Luke 3: 23-38 OR Luke 3: 23, 31-34, 36, 38
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>St. Raymond of Penyafort, Priest</b> 1 John 5: 14-21; John 2: 1-11
<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, January 2, 2023

7:00 a.m. Gordon Jockisch/Jennifer & Jeff Shields

### Tuesday, January 3, 2023

7:00 a.m. Frances Farragher/Mike & Mary Lou Bartley

### Wednesday, January 4, 2023

7:00 a.m. Dr. Gerald Schwab/Mike & Bernadette Shekleton

### Thursday, January 5, 2023

7:00 a.m. Larry Zarley/Mary Ann Noe

9:15 a.m. Harriet Cowell/Deb Wenzel

### Friday, January 6, 2023

7:00 a.m. Larry Hanegman/Mark & Marlynn Kelsch

### Saturday, January 7, 2023

8:00 a.m. Kevin Myszkowski/Dave McCauley

5:00 p.m. Judy Marie & Lawrence Hallar/St. Vincent de Paul Society

### Sunday, January 8, 2023

8:00 a.m. Mary L. Miller/Kathy Spengler

10:00 a.m. Mary Ruskusky/The Catholic Women's League

5:00 p.m. For the People

## Our Sympathy

Fred Poepsel

## Holiday Schedules

**PARISH OFFICES** will be open on Friday, December 23 from 9:00 a.m. until noon. The offices will then be closed through January 2. We will resume office hours on Tuesday, January 3.

**FOOD PANTRY** will be closed from December 24 until January 2. It will reopen January 5.



## RCIA/OCIA

Wednesdays, 7:00 p.m. Parish Hall

**Date** **Topic**

December 21: NO Class

December 28: NO Class

January 4: Liturgical year, Church tour, Mass practice

January 11: Marriage

January 18: Orders, Religious Life

January 25: Penance, Anointing, Funerals

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## Pray with the Pope

December 2022

For volunteer not-for-profit organizations

We pray that volunteer non-profit organizations committed to human development find people dedicated to the common good and ceaselessly seek out new paths to international cooperation.



## Pray with the Pope

January 2023

For educators

We pray that educators may be credible witnesses, teaching fraternity rather than competition and helping the youngest and most vulnerable above all.

## Empower Illinois Scholarship Applications for 2023/2024 School Year

The application process for an Empower Illinois Scholarship for the 2023/2024 school year will begin **Wednesday, January 18, 2023, 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 18<sup>th</sup> beginning at 7:00 p.m. After you reserve your spot, Empower Illinois will contact you to complete the second part of the application.

Applications are considered on the basis of the date and time this first step is completed, as well as prior receipt of an Empower Illinois Scholarship, 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 16<sup>th</sup>. We will make sure step one of your application is completed on January 18<sup>th</sup>.

Please remember: even if you received an Empower Illinois Scholarship for the 2022/2023 school year, you need to **reapply** for the next year.



## Week of December 25

**PARISH OFFICE CLOSED** December 26 through January 2

**ROSARY** Tuesday, December 27, 10:00 a.m., Daily Mass Chapel



## Week of January 1

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

**SIGN-UP FOR FIRST FRIDAY ADORATION** This Weekend after all Masses, Narthex

**ROSARY** Tuesday, January 3, 10:00 a.m., Daily Mass Chapel

**CCD** Wednesday, January 4, 6:00 p.m., School

**RCIA** Wednesday, January 4, 7:00 p.m., Parish Hall

**ADORATION** Friday, January 7, after 7:00 Mass until Benediction at 7:00 p.m.

### UPCOMING EVENTS

Ladies Night Out	January 13
Parish Holy Hour	January 19



## St. Thomas - Food Pantry

The pantry accepts any shelf-stable food items, but these items are needed most: pancake mix, syrup, cereal, crackers, spaghetti sauce, canned fruit, peanut butter, meal helper, dry pasta, canned veggies, canned soup.

*Thank you for your generous support!*



## When you go to the poor, you encounter Jesus

### St. Vincent de Paul Society Annual Report

The St. Vincent de Paul Society at St. Thomas is comprised of 34 members who answer and respond to client/neighbor requests and several who work in the pantry. Within that group of volunteers, we have a finance coordinator, a scheduling coordinator and four call assignment coordinators who volunteer their time to keep this complex program running.

The calls we receive are from those in distress who need help with utility payments, rent and food. Many times, we receive calls when evictions are imminent and utility disconnections are pending. Two Vincentians work in teams on each case. We continue to deliver food in emergency situations. Each call takes 1-1.5 hours and each Vincentian takes 1-2 calls per week. We are not able to help each caller because they are too far in debt or if they have called too frequently. We try to help as many people as possible.

We made 264 visits and helped 657 people this past year. The pantry served over 4000 individuals.

The *Coming Together to Get Ahead* program is being resurrected in 2023. This program is 16 weeks in length designed to educate our clients/neighbors in order to change their lives.

We try our best to help our clients/neighbors with aid to meet their needs.

We have learned from experience that the poor will always be with us.

If you know someone who needs help, the helpline number is 309 677 7696.

These are the numbers for the year October 1, 2021 - September 30, 2022.

<b>Balance 10/1/2021</b>	<b>\$29,702</b>
<b>Income</b>	
<b>Church Collections</b>	<b>\$55,943</b>
<b>Other Donations</b>	<b>\$14,745</b>
<b>Expenses</b>	
<b>Pantry</b>	<b>\$2,537</b>
<b>Miscellaneous</b>	<b>\$3,173</b>
<b>For Those We Serve</b>	<b>\$96,857</b>
<b>Balance 9/30/2022</b>	<b>\$3,823</b>

We are deeply grateful for your continued support. May God bless you. Please consider joining our group of Vincentians. For more information please call:

Don Smith at 309 693 8062; Deacon Mark Kelsch at 309 692 4908; or Nancy Medendorp at 309 688 5996.

### St. Thomas Parishioners -

We would like to extend a most sincere thanks to you for unfailing support over the past year. Thank you to the St. Thomas fourth grade class for sponsoring the annual school food drive and the school families for their plentiful donations. Thanks also to the 8th graders for helping us on Thursday mornings and for helping us unload our monthly food truck. We are also grateful for the food we received from the Peoria Notre Dame food drive, as well as the unending donations of food that fill our parish collection box each week. Because of your prayers and donations of food and funds, you have helped us to provide 1,340 carts of food over the past year, serving 3,987 individuals. Your generosity truly humbles us. Thank you for spreading the love of our Savior to so many of our neighbors. We look forward to a healthy partnership as we serve those in need in 2023. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

~ The St. Thomas Food Pantry Volunteers

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Join us for a 6-part  
Catholic Women's  
Bible study based  
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Ephesians.



Thursdays 6:30-8:00pm  
Beginning Feb. 2nd

Pick up a flyer in the narthex or scan  
for more details!



**ST. THOMAS**  
**LADIES**  
*Night*

**Friday, January 13 6:30pm**  
**St. Thomas Parish Hall**

*Bring a Friend!*

**We will be playing Bunco,  
the famous social dice  
game!**

**Snacks are welcome**  
**Childcare available**

Questions? Contact Jessica Ramsay  
309-265-1989  
jessramsay1@hotmail.com

## The Peoria Area Catholic Young Adults Group

A group for those in their 20s and 30s which has been revamped to meet at a different area location at least monthly for a faith-based activity followed by fellowship. Please don't feel nervous to come if you are new as we have many new attendees each month. This could be a great New Year's resolution! For more info or to be added to the email list, contact [peoriacatholicadults@gmail.com](mailto:peoriacatholicadults@gmail.com).

### Upcoming events:

**Saturday, Jan. 7:** 4:30 Mass at St. Philomena's & 6:00 dinner at Sushi Ko in the Metro Centre

**Saturday, Feb. 4:** 6:00 Fr. Derick Tryphon Mwesiga speaking on the Church in Tanzania at Jalapeños in the Metro Centre followed by a social hour

**Thursday, Feb. 16:** 6:00 Adoration at St. Jude & 6:45 dinner at Avanti's (N. Knoxville)

## Principal Needed

Peoria Notre Dame High School is seeking a Principal for the 2023-2024 academic year. The new principal must be enthusiastic about the Catholic mission of the school – developing students in spirit, mind, and body. The preferred candidate for the position will have experience in administration, enthusiasm for youth, and the desire to work in a faith-based environment. The principal will report directly to the Office of Catholic Schools superintendent and will supervise the assistant principal, dean of students, athletic director, campus ministry, counselors, student services, and teachers.

For a full job description, qualifications, and requirements, please review the description sheet at <https://5il.co/1lxvy>. Download a Principal Application Packet from the Catholic Diocese of Peoria at <https://cdop.org/careers>.

The students of Peoria Notre Dame would like to thank all of the community members and neighbors who donated non-perishable food items for our annual Christmas Basket Drive.

Each year, our students collect more 20,000 food items to be distributed to 400 families in the Peoria area during the holidays. Thank you for helping bless the lives of others!



## Peoria Notre Dame High School Blood Drive

### Peoria Notre Dame High School

Commons  
5105 N. Sheridan  
Peoria, IL 61614

**Saturday, January 28, 2023  
9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.**

For an appointment call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or visit [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org).

You can save up to 15 minutes when you donate blood by using RapidPass! Visit [RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass](http://RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass) for more information. By donating at this blood drive, you are helping one or more graduating seniors earn a scholarship.

Come give Jan. 1-31 and automatically be entered for a chance to win an exciting trip for you and a guest to Super Bowl LVII in Phoenix! Includes travel, hotel, \$500 gift card, pre-game activities and more! Terms apply; visit [RedCrossBlood.org/SuperBowl](http://RedCrossBlood.org/SuperBowl).



Scan to be directed to RapidPass!



Scan to schedule an appointment.

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

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

## Understand Your Catholic Faith with The Catechism in a Year Podcast with Fr. Mike Schmitz!

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**How to Submit Bulletin Information**  
Send information for the bulletin to [parishoffice@stthomas-church.net](mailto:parishoffice@stthomas-church.net) 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. Please, DO NOT send PDFs.**

**Sacrament of Baptism**  
Parents participate in a Baptism class before the Baptism of their first child. Contact the Parish Office to schedule the class.

**Confessions**  
Saturday 4:00-4:45pm  
&  
6:00 p.m.-until last confession heard.

## Parish Office Hours

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  
0 - Terri- Administrative Assist.  
1340 - Julie-Accounting  
1341 - Pat-Tuition

If you have items to deliver for the Parish Office, you are welcome to put them through the mail slot 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 4:00 p.m. every day.

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