

## St. Thomas the Apostle Parish Staff

Office Hours: M-F 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

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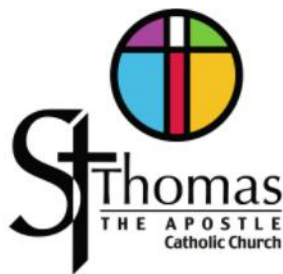
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### Stay in Touch

1. Join Msgr. Gray for OCIA Class. 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 3, 2023*  
*First Sunday of Advent*





## From Our Pastor

I am grateful for the participation of the members of the parish council in advising on parish matters at St. Thomas. I thank Ann Kube, John Bender, and John Goddard for their service over the past years. I appreciate their interest in the parish and their wise advice.

We have recently selected the new members who will begin their three-year term. Special thanks to those who have agreed to serve: Karen Cote, Michelle LaBarre, Tracy Schendl, and Patrick Singleton.

Advent will be shorter than normal this year. We have a quick four weeks to prepare ourselves for the birth of our Savior. We can use this time for our spiritual preparations, especially by making time for prayer and even daily Mass. Extra confessions will be offered on the second and fourth Sundays of Advent. Earlier this week, I offered a reflection on Mary, Mother of God, to our parish study, Women of the Word. A recording of this talk has been placed on our parish YouTube channel.

We also spend time at the end of the year gathering as a community. We will have a Donut Sunday this weekend and on the third Sunday of Advent, we will have our traditional open house in which we can gather after Masses.

Let us pray for one another as we prepare to welcome Jesus at his birth.

- Msgr. Gray



## Pray with the Pope

**December 2023**  
**For persons with disabilities**

We pray that people living with disabilities may be at the center of attention in society, and that institutions may offer inclusive programs which value their active participation.



## Readings for the Week of December 3, 2023

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>First Sunday of Advent</b> Isaiah 63: 16b-17, 19b; 64: 2-7; 1 Corinthians 1: 3-9; Mark 13: 33-37
<b>Monday</b>	<b>St. John Damascene, Priest &amp; Doctor of the Church</b> Isaiah 2: 1-5; Matthew 8: 5-11
<b>Tuesday</b>	Isaiah 11: 1-10; Luke 10: 21-24
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>St. Nicholas, Bishop</b> Isaiah 25: 6-10a; Matthew 15: 29-37
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>St. Ambrose, Bishop &amp; Doctor of the Church</b> Isaiah 26: 1-6; Matthew 7: 21, 24-27
<b>Friday</b>	<b>The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary</b> Genesis 3: 9-15, 20; Ephesians 1: 3-6, 11-12; Luke 1: 26-38
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>St. Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoatzin</b> Isaiah 30: 19-21, 23-26; Matthew 9: 35—10: 1, 5a, 6-8
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Second Sunday of Advent</b> Isaiah 40: 1-5, 9-11; 2 Peter 3: 8-14; Mark 1: 1-8

## Mass Intentions

### Monday, December 4, 2023

7:00 a.m. Pamela Curtis Bishoff/Frank Curtis  
8:00 a.m. Mary Helen Runkle/John & Gina Wetzel

### Tuesday, December 5, 2023

7:00 a.m. Dorothy Paesani/Dorothy Bertschy  
8:00 a.m. Jack & Frances McGinn/Mary Eaton

### Wednesday, December 6, 2023

7:00 a.m. Linus Langenfeld/The Rochford Family  
8:00 a.m. Rosemarie Maloney/John & Kathy Lewis

### Thursday, December 7, 2023

7:00 a.m. Richard Flores/Angela Kenny  
8:00 a.m. Mary Kay Barkley/Matt & Lesley Vonachen  
5:30 p.m. Melvin & Lucille Noe/Mary Ann Noe

### Friday, December 8, 2023

7:00 a.m. For the People  
**9:15 a.m.** Jim Becker/Jim & Chris Becker  
12:15 p.m. Betty Pegg/The Calabro Family  
5:30 p.m. Donna Abdnour/Steve & Linda Schrader

### Saturday, December 9, 2023

8:00 a.m. Dr. Patrick Whalen/Joe & Sandy Whalen  
5:00 p.m. Frances Farraher/Michelle Konecki

### Sunday, December 10, 2023

8:00 a.m. Michael Haughney, Sr./Mike & Theresa Haughney  
10:00 a.m. Tho Dang/Linh Luong  
5:00 p.m. For the People

## Week of December 3

**ST. VINCENT DE PAUL & PANTRY COLLECTIONS** This Weekend after all Masses

**ROLAN JOHNSON ORNAMENT SALE** December 2 & 3, after all Masses

**COFFEE & DONUTS** after Sunday morning Masses, Parish Hall

**MEN'S BASKETBALL** Sunday, December 3, 7:00 p.m., School Gym

**ROSARY** Tuesday, December 5, 10:00 a.m., Daily Mass Chapel

**CCD** Wednesday, December 6, 6:00 p.m., School

**OCIA** Wednesday, December 6, 7:00 p.m., Parish Hall

**FEAST OF THE IMMACULATE CONCEPTION** Vigil Mass Thur., Dec. 7, 5:30 p.m.; December 8 Masses 7:00 & 9:15 a.m.; 12:15 & 5:30 p.m., Church

**ROSARY** Friday, December 8, 12:00 noon, Church

**TMIY** Friday, December 8, doors open at 6:00 a.m., program at 6:30 a.m., Parish Hall

### UPCOMING EVENTS

Parish Open House	December 16&17
St Thomas Holy Hour	December 21

**61 MINUTES TO A MIRACLE**

FULTON SHEEN AND THE TRUE STORY OF THE IMPOSSIBLE

GUEST SPEAKER  
**BONNIE ENGSTROM**

THURSDAY, DEC. 7TH 9:15AM

**St Thomas**  
THE APOSTLE  
Catholic Church

## Weekly Collection

November 26, 2023

		Fiscal YTD
Collections needed.....	\$20,000	\$440,000
Sunday Collections .....	\$8,117	\$274,588
Electronic Collections.....	\$ 7,454	\$85,500
Total Collected .....	\$15,571	\$360,088
Over/(Short).....	\$(4,429)	\$(79,912)

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.

## Our Sympathy

Please pray for those who have died this week

## Immaculate Conception

The Feast of the Immaculate Conception, a Holy day of Obligation, is Fri., Dec. 8<sup>th</sup>.

Mass Times: Thursday, December 7, 5:30 p.m.  
Friday, December 8, 7:00 & 9:15 a.m., and  
12:15 & 5:30 p.m.

## Giving Tree



The Giving Tree is an important tradition at St. Thomas. Pick a gift tag from one of the baskets. We ask you to take one or more of the tags and purchase the requested gift. Please give new gifts only.

### RETURN YOUR GIFTS IN GIFT BAGS WITH THE ORIGINAL TAG ATTACHED.

You may leave them under the Giving Tree in the Narthex, or deliver to the Parish Office. Your generosity providing gifts under the Giving Tree has been incredibly helpful in the past. Last year we were able to distribute gifts to almost 300 individuals. This includes St. Thomas Families, Foster Children, Catholic Charities, and neighbors in our community.

**MONETARY DONATIONS** This year a monetary donation might work best for many people. You can make your donation on our website: [stthomaspeoria.org](http://stthomaspeoria.org). Go to GIVING, then DONATE NOW. As you complete the form please Apply your Donation to The Giving Tree.

Please make your monetary donation as soon as possible so our elves have time to shop before the deadline.

If your requested gift is a **gift card** you may purchase through Comet Cash after Mass or email **Allison Buckardt** at [aebuckardt@gmail.com](mailto:aebuckardt@gmail.com) or call **309-231-0449**.

**PLEASE RETURN GIFTS BY DECEMBER 15<sup>TH</sup>.** Thank you for your kindness and generosity!

Sponsor of the Week



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## Catechism Questions for OCIA Class December 6 Topic: Blessed Virgin Mary, Rosary

- When was the Eucharist instituted by Jesus Christ (CCC 1323)?
- What does the Mass have in common with the offering of the king-priest Melchizedek (CCC 1333, Gen 14:18)?
- What does the Mass have in common with the offering at Passover (CCC 1334, Ex 12:15)?
- What does the Mass have in common with the multiplication of the loaves and with the wedding feast at Cana (CCC 1335, Mt 14:13-21, Jn 2:1-11)?
- What word describes the transformation of the substance of the bread and wine into the substance of the body and blood of Christ (CCC 1376)?
- Where is the Blessed Sacrament retained outside of Mass (CCC 1379)?

Answers are in the indicated paragraph numbers of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC).



### Sheen Day Retreat

December 9, 2023

8:30 a.m. Mass with Bishop Tylka, Sheen talks, Guided Museum tour, Lunch, Gift Shop, Sheen Movie, Guided Cathedral Tour with Sheen points, Holy Hour, 5:00 p.m. conclusion

Reserve your spot with a donation of \$25 at [Retreats – Archbishop Fulton Sheen \(celebratesheen.com\)](http://celebratesheen.com)

Join us for Coffee  
and Donuts after  
morning Mass this  
weekend



## Rosary for Peace

We are peace warriors and the Rosary is our weapon. The Rosary is the most secret of secret weapons.



Come on **Friday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, at Noon** in Church before Mass to join forces with each other to answer the challenge we face today finding world peace.

Venerable Fulton Sheen said, *the power of the rosary is beyond description.*

We will ask our Mother, Mary, for her intercession in these troubled times. Please join us.

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



Our December bulletin article is dedicated to you, our St. Thomas parishioners. We thank you so much for your prayers and your generous contributions to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul. Your prayers and financial support are what enable us to help the poor. You are the foundation of our mission. We couldn't do this without you. The St. Vincent de Paul Society at St. Thomas helps approximately 35 to 40 families per month. Most of the requests that we receive are from people who have had an illness, a hospitalization, a work place accident, or a temporary physical disability which prevents them from working for a minimal period of time. When those we serve miss work, they normally don't get paid, thus putting them in a position of getting behind on their bills. Your contributions prevent evictions, water and Ameren shut-offs, help buy furniture for the homeless who are finally able to get a place to live, and the list goes on.

Those of us involved in the Society of St. Vincent de Paul say the following prayer at the end of every meeting. We want to share this prayer with you, as it reflects the spirit of our Vincentian Family.

*Lord Jesus, you who willed to become poor, give us eyes and a heart directed toward the poor; help us recognize you in them, in their thirst, their hunger, their loneliness, and their misfortune.*

*Enkindle within our Vincentian Family, unity, simplicity, humility, and the fire of love that burned in St. Vincent de Paul.*

*Strengthen us, so that faithful to the practice of these virtues, we may contemplate you and serve you in the person of the poor, and may one day be united with you in your Kingdom.*

*Amen*

Again, we thank you. God bless you.

Al Barhorst, Bettsey Barhorst, Brian Barkley, Edie Brereton, Cissy Carlson, Chris Clemons, John Galbreath, Cynthia Hall, Mike Hallar, Loretta Hardgrove, Mary Heller, Nancy Higgins, Mike Hinchman, Kim Jaegle, Diana Janda, Mark Kelsch, Marlynn Kelsch, Brian Kemp, Colleen Matarelli, Jim Matarelli, Brian Medendorp, Nancy Medendorp, Mary Jennifer Meister, Mark Milford, Rosemary Muchow, Mike Phelan, Mary Kay Pilat, Tom Pilat, Pat Pusey, Clarissa Rhode, Dave Schlicksup, Cindy Smith, Dan Smith, Don Smith, Jan Smith, Joan Utley, Linda Waible, Nanette Westerhold, and Walter Wilkins.

If you are interested in joining the St. Vincent de Paul Society, please call the church office at 688-3446, and a member who can answer your questions will contact you. Those of us who serve the needy through the Society know that we receive much more than we give.

~ Edie Brereton

## OCIA/RCIA Schedule

DATE	TOPIC
Dec. 6:	Blessed Virgin Mary, Rosary
Dec. 13:	Penance, Anointing, Funerals
Dec. 20:	Marriage
Dec. 27:	No Class
Jan. 3:	No Class
Jan. 10:	Liturgical year, Church tour, Mass practice
Jan. 17:	Orders, Religious Life
Jan. 24:	Individual aspects of the Moral Life
Jan. 31:	Prayer, Universal Call to Holiness

### St. Thomas - Food Pantry

Items most needed at this time are: pasta sauce, hamburger helper, peanut butter, pancake mix, syrup, and canned vegetables.

*Thank you for your generous support!*

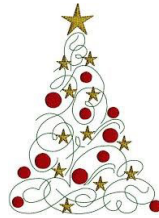
### Cocoa & Carols - A Family Christmas Concert

Joshua & Anna Russell will be performing a Christmas concert for two pianos on Friday, **December 22, at 7:00 p.m.** The concert will be here at St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church. The concert will feature favorite Christmas hymns for two pianos and will also contain arrangements that include their three oldest children. The concert is free and all ages are encouraged to attend! A freewill offering will be taken to benefit Destiny for Women Health Clinic.



Our next **Light of the World Retreat** will take place at

**St. Thomas February 23-26th, 2024.** This is an immersive weekend experience where participants personally encounter Christ through the presentation of the kerygma - the basic gospel message. This retreat is meant for any adult who wishes to move ahead in their journey of faith. For more information or to register, see the parish website.



## Parish Christmas Open House

Thank you for your generous support all year long  
**Saturday, December 16**  
**Sunday, December 17**  
After all Masses  
Please join us in the Parish Hall

Volunteers are needed to assist with set-up and serving.  
If you are able to help please call the **Parish Office**  
or **Denise Tascher @693-8633.**



November 2023

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As Jesus began His public ministry, he called twelve Apostles to join Him. When His ministry was complete, just before He ascended to heaven, He entrusted the mission to go make disciples to the Apostles while granting them his own power and authority through the gift of the Holy Spirit. While the Apostles were called specifically to the ministerial priesthood, they were not without support in their ministry. Many others, men and women, some who were acknowledged by name, and others who remain anonymous, provided support for them out of their means (cf. Lk 8:1-3). To this day, our Lord continues to call men to Himself for the sake of priestly ministry. Likewise, there remains the need to provide support for these men, especially during the time of a man's formal formation within the seminary.

We are currently blessed with 25 seminarians and there are others already applying for the coming year! Without including the expense of operating the Office of Vocations, the education alone—tuition, room and board—costs around \$270,000 per seminarian over the course of his six years of philosophical and graduate level studies in Theology.

In the Diocese of Peoria, we do not lament the fact that we are burdened with these costs. Rather, we are thankful that Jesus has called so many men who are willing to enter seminary formation in order to be future priests serving your parishes and families. For this reason, we have chosen to focus attention on this Thanksgiving holiday to thank God for our seminarians and to thank God for all who provide for them.

I ask you to prayerfully consider making a financial donation towards priestly vocations at Mass on Sunday, December 3, 2023. Your gift will directly contribute to the education of our seminarians. Your generous support is much needed and greatly appreciated. Please make your check available to the Catholic Diocese of Peoria Office of Priestly Vocations.

Peace and Prayers,

✠ Most Reverend Louis Tylka  
Bishop of Peoria



**2023**

*Simbang Gabi*

Join us for Misa de Gallo or Mass at Night, one of the oldest and most revered Philippine Christmas traditions. It will be celebrated at nine churches throughout the Diocese of Peoria, starting at the Cathedral and celebrated by Bishop Tyka.

DECEMBER 14	CATHEDRAL OF ST. MARY'S	6:00 PM
DECEMBER 15	ST. MARK	6:00 PM
DECEMBER 16	ST. JOSEPH-PEORIA	5:30 PM
DECEMBER 17	ST. VINCENT DE PAUL	5:00 PM
DECEMBER 18	ST. MONICA	6:00 PM
DECEMBER 19	ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE	6:00 PM
DECEMBER 20	BLESSED SACRAMENT	6:00 PM
DECEMBER 21	ST. PHILOMENA	6:00 PM
DECEMBER 22	HOLY FAMILY	5:00 PM



*And God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light.*  
Genesis 1:3

**SAVE THE DATE!**

Get excited for a night of friends, food and festivities at  
**SAINT THOMAS THE APOSTLE  
PROGRESSIVE DINNER!**

**JANUARY 20TH, 2024**

The night will begin at 5:00 p.m. with cocktails and appetizers at the homes of Laurie and Dave Williams and Julia Adams and Robert Beach.

You will enjoy a small group dinner in a parish home at 6:45 P.M.

At 8:45 p.m., everyone will make their way to Santa Rosa Cafe for dessert, entertainment, and a short live auction. Funds will be raised to replace the lighting in the classrooms at St. Thomas.

*Watch for more details in the coming weeks!*

### Parish Registration

Complete this form and drop it in the collection basket, **or** mail to the Parish Office **or** Register on our website at [sthomaspeoria.org](http://sthomaspeoria.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 \_\_\_\_\_



COME MEET  
**Santa Claus!**

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 9TH FROM 9-11 AM**

CELEBRATE THE SEASON WITH FACE-PAINTING, BALLOON ANIMALS, ARTS AND CRAFTS, GREAT FOOD, AND PHOTOS WITH SANTA!

ADULTS - \$6  
KIDS - \$4  
FAMILY - \$20




Peoria Notre Dame's  
**12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS**  
CASH AND CAR RAFFLE

Tickets: \$85 each,  
3 for \$240  
5 for \$375  
10 for \$700  
12 for \$720

Peoria Notre Dame High School is teaming up with Scherer Mazda of Peoria for the 6th annual 12 Days of Christmas Cash and Car Raffle! An Early Bird drawing of \$500 will be held November 16. Cash prizes will be drawn daily, beginning Monday, December 4 through Thursday, December 14. The Grand Prize of a 2024 Mazda CX-5 (MSRP \$31,100) will be drawn at 12:10 pm on Friday, December 15, 2023. Tickets may be purchased online at [pndhs.org/12days](http://pndhs.org/12days), or from a staff member or student of PND.

Yes, please send \_\_\_\_\_ (# of tickets) to:

My Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Ticket Seller: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

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Signature \_\_\_\_\_

OR check payable to  
Peoria Notre Dame, 5105 N. Sheridan Rd. Peoria, IL 61614





**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.



# Diocesan is proud to be printing

## St. Thomas the Apostle's Sunday Bulletin



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**For opportunities to advertise, please call 800-783-1623**

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