

St. Thomas the Apostle Parish Staff

Office Hours: M-F 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.

904 East Lake Avenue,
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parishoffice@stthomas-church.net

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msggray@stthomas-church.net
Parochial Vicar: Fr. Marc Nkulu.....
frmarc@stthomas-church.net
Fr. John Twinomujuni.....In Residence

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(688-3500); fsjbpeoria@yahoo.com

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Dcn. Ed Mallow.....360-7735
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marycushing@stthomas-school.net

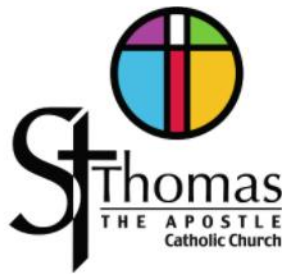
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Music Coordinator: Ann Horst..(309)208-4862

Annulment Consultant:
John Mackoway.....699-5213

Stay in Touch

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



February 18, 2024
First Sunday of Lent

**Your ways, O Lord, make known to me;
teach me your paths.**

— Psalm 25:4



© Diocese of Peoria Image © Thinkstock.com



From Our Pastor

We have entered into the solemn season of Lent, a time of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

There are some traditional ways of keeping each of these Lenten observances. You are encouraged to pray the Rosary, pray with the Scriptures, and especially to pray before the Blessed Sacrament by coming to daily Mass or to Adoration and Stations of the Cross. You are encouraged to fast and abstain from food or drink as a way of mortifying the senses. You are encouraged to be generous in giving to the Church and to the care of the poor.

Consider some other ways of keeping these Lenten practices. A way of entering more deeply into prayer is by silence. During Lent, the Church encourages us to keep more silence. As such, we do not use instrumental music during Mass. I also encourage a longer pause in silence after Communion to reflect on the gift of the Eucharist.

Another way of fasting can be to abstain from the extra distractions from television, social media, and our mobile devices. One should always abstain from immoral material. However, many find that we easily give up our peace by delving excessively into the news, politics, entertainment, or endless scrolling and searching for material to avoid boredom. Fasting from these digital distractions can also be a profitable practice.

Another way of almsgiving can be by giving of one's time. Giving your time is always valuable whether given to God in prayer, to the Church by volunteering, or to one's neighbor in service. You might give of your time by participating in the *Light of the World* retreat next weekend. Those who participated last fall found it time well spent and an enriching experience.

May we use this Lenten season profitably in the expectation of the joy of Easter.

- Msgr. Gray

If you gave something up for the Lord, tough it out. Don't act like a Pharisee looking for a loophole.

~ Rev. William Saunders

Pastor of Our Lady of Hope parish in Potomac Falls, Virginia and
Dean of the Notre Dame Graduate School of Christendom College



Readings for the Week of February 18, 2024

Sunday	First Sunday of Lent Genesis 9: 8-15; 1 Peter 3: 18-22; Mark 1: 12-15
Monday	Leviticus 19: 1-2, 11-18; Mark 25: 31-46
Tuesday	Isaiah 55: 10-11; Matthew 6: 7-15
Wednesday	St. Peter Damian, Bishop & Doctor of the Church Jonah 3: 1-10; Luke 11: 29-32
Thursday	The Chair of St. Peter the Apostle 1 Peter 5: 1-4; Matthew 16: 13-19
Friday	St. Polycarp, Bishop & Martyr Ezekiel 18: 21-28; Matthew 5: 20-26
Saturday	Deuteronomy 26: 16-19; Matthew 5: 43-48
Sunday	Second Sunday of Lent Genesis 22: 1-2, 9a, 10-13, 15-18; Romans 8: 31b-34; Mark 9: 2-10

Mass Intentions

Monday, February 19, 2024

7:00 a.m.	Nick Frasco/Linda Osika
8:00 a.m.	Glenda Murray

Tuesday, February 20, 2024

7:00 a.m.	Msgr. William Watson/The Barkley Family
8:00 a.m.	Matt Leali/Karen & Randall Jacobe

Wednesday, February 21, 2024

7:00 a.m.	Lillian McCadden/Ray & Ellen McRae
8:00 a.m.	John Otto Scherer/Barbara Turner

Thursday, February 22, 2024

7:00 a.m.	Hop Nguyen/The Luong Family
9:15 a.m.	Jim Becker/Jordan Stahl

Friday, February 23, 2024

7:00 a.m.	Eugene Poignant/Judy Volk
8:00 a.m.	Hafner & Smith Families

Saturday, February 24, 2024

8:00 a.m.	Ron Richardson/The Richardson Family
5:00 p.m.	Fred Darche/The Phelan Family

Sunday, February 25, 2024

8:00 a.m.	Dolores Oppe/Warren Oppe
10:00 a.m.	For the People
5:00 p.m.	Rita Willems/The Willems Family

Week of February 18

CHOIR PRACTICE Sunday, February 18, 9:00, Music Room

MEN'S BASKETBALL Sunday, February 18, 7:00 p.m., School Gym

PARISH OFFICE & SCHOOL CLOSED Monday, February 19, Presidents' Day

ROSARY Tuesday, February 20, 10:00 a.m., Daily Mass Chapel

PARISH COUNCIL Tuesday, February 20, 7:00 p.m., Parish Office

CCD Wednesday, February 21, 6:00 p.m., School

OCIA Wednesday, February 21, 7:00 p.m., Parish Hall

WOMEN OF THE WORD Thursday, February 22, 6:30 p.m., Parish Hall

THAT MAN IS YOU Friday, February 23, doors open at 6:00 a.m., program at 6:30, ends by 7:30 a.m., Parish Hall

HOLY HOUR, CONFESSIONS Friday, February 23, 6:00, Church

STATIONS OF THE CROSS Friday, February 23, 7:00, Church

LIGHT OF THE WORLD RETREAT February 23-25, Parish Hall

UPCOMING EVENTS

Men's Club Fish Fry

March 8



Pray with the Pope

February 2024
For The Terminally Ill

Let us pray that the sick who are in the final stages of life, and their families, receive the necessary medical and human care and accompaniment.

Weekly Collection

February 11, 2023

		Fiscal YTD
Collections needed.....	\$20,000	\$660,000
Sunday Collections.....	\$10,155	\$442,441
Electronic Collections.....	\$ 6,295	\$129,822
Total Collected.....	\$16,450	\$572,263
Over/(Short).....	\$(3,550)	\$(87,737)

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. Thank you for your support.

Our Sympathy

Please pray for those who have died this week

Baptism Congratulations

Amelia Maria Juvinall, daughter of
Gabriella & Douglas Juvinall

Lucas Matthew Bousek, son of
Nichole & Matthew Bousek



Light of the World
PARISH RETREAT

Registration is open
for our second

Light of the World Retreat on
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.

The retreat takes place at St. Thomas and participants go home to sleep each night. For more details and to register, see the parish website or pick up a flyer in the narthex.



OCIA/RCIA Schedule

DATE	TOPIC
Feb. 21:	Community and Moral Law, grace
Feb. 28:	Ten & Great Commandments, #1-3; Divine/Natural Law
Mar. 6:	Commandments 4, 5, 7, 8
Mar. 13:	Commandments 6, 9, 10
Mar. 20:	History of the Church, Preparation for confession
Mar. 27:	Penance Service, Practice
Mar. 30:	Easter Vigil
Apr. 10:	Mystagogia

Sponsor of the Week



History of Lent

What are the origins of Lent? Did the Church always have this time before Easter?

Lent is a special time of prayer, penance, sacrifice and good works in preparation of the celebration of Easter. In the desire to renew the liturgical practices of the Church, The Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy of Vatican Council II stated, *The two elements which are especially characteristic of Lent — the recalling of baptism or the preparation for it, and penance — should be given greater emphasis in the liturgy and in liturgical catechesis. It is by means of them that the Church prepares the faithful for the celebration of Easter, while they hear God's word more frequently and devote more time to prayer* (no. 109). The word Lent itself is derived from the Anglo-Saxon words *lencten*, meaning *Spring*, and *lencntid*, which literally means not only *Springtime* but also was the word for *March*, the month in which the majority of Lent falls.

Since the earliest times of the Church, there is evidence of some kind of Lenten preparation for Easter. For instance, St. Irenaeus (d. 203) wrote to Pope St. Victor I, commenting on the celebration of Easter and the differences between practices in the East and the West: *The dispute is not only about the day, but also about the actual character of the fast. Some think that they ought to fast for one day, some for two, others for still more; some make their 'day' last 40 hours on end. Such variation in the observance did not originate in our own day, but very much earlier, in the time of our forefathers* (Eusebius, *History of the Church*, V, 24). When Rufinus translated this passage from Greek into Latin, the punctuation made between 40 and hours made the meaning to appear to be *40 days, twenty-four hours a day*. The importance of the passage, nevertheless, remains that since the time of "our forefathers" — always an expression for the apostles — a 40-day period of Lenten preparation existed. However, the actual practices and duration of Lent were still not homogenous throughout the Church.

Lent becomes more regularized after the legalization of Christianity in A.D. 313. The Council of Nicea (325), in its disciplinary canons, noted that two provincial synods should be held each year, *one before the 40 days of Lent*. St. Athanasius (d. 373) in his *Festal Letters* implored his congregation to make a 40-day fast prior to the more intense fasting of Holy Week. St. Cyril of Jerusalem (d. 386) in his *Catechetical Lectures*, which are the paradigm for our current RCIA programs, had 18 pre-baptismal instructions given to the catechumens during Lent. St. Cyril of Alexandria (d. 444) in his series of *Festal Letters* also noted the practices and duration of Lent, emphasizing the 40-day period of fasting. Finally, Pope St. Leo (d. 461) preached that the faithful must *fulfill with their fasts the Apostolic institution of the 40 days*, again noting the apostolic origins of Lent. One can safely conclude that by the end of the fourth century, the 40-day period of Easter preparation known as Lent existed, and that prayer and fasting constituted its primary spiritual exercises.

Of course, the number 40 has always had special spiritual significance regarding preparation. On Mount Sinai, preparing to receive the Ten Commandments, *Moses stayed there with the Lord for 40 days and 40 nights, without eating any food or drinking any water* (Ex 34:28). Elijah walked *40 days and 40 nights* to the mountain of the Lord, Mount Horeb (another name for Sinai) (1 Kgs 19:8). Most importantly, Jesus fasted and prayed for *40 days and 40 nights* in the desert before He began His public ministry (Mt 4:2).

Once the 40 days of Lent were established, the next development concerned how much fasting was to be done. In Jerusalem, for instance, people fasted for 40 days, Monday through Friday, but not on Saturday or Sunday, thereby making Lent last for eight weeks. In Rome and in the West, people fasted for six weeks, Monday through Saturday, thereby making Lent last for six weeks. Eventually, the practice prevailed of fasting for six days a week over the course of six weeks, and Ash Wednesday was instituted to bring the number of fast days before Easter to 40. The rules of fasting varied. First, some areas of the Church abstained from all forms of meat and animal products, while others made exceptions for food like fish.

Cont. next column

History, cont.

For example, Pope St. Gregory (d. 604), writing to St. Augustine of Canterbury, issued the following rule: *We abstain from flesh, meat, and from all things that come from flesh, as milk, cheese and eggs.*

Second, the general rule was for a person to have one meal a day, in the evening or at 3 p.m. These Lenten fasting rules also evolved. Eventually, a smaller repast was allowed during the day to keep up one's strength from manual labor. Eating fish was allowed, and later eating meat was also allowed through the week except on Ash Wednesday and Friday. Dispensations were given for eating dairy products if a pious work was performed, and eventually this rule was relaxed totally. (However, the abstinence from even dairy products led to the practice of blessing Easter eggs and eating pancakes on Shrove Tuesday, the day before Ash Wednesday.)

Over the years, modifications have been made to the Lenten observances, making our practices not only simple, but also easy. Ash Wednesday still marks the beginning of Lent, which lasts for 40 days, not including Sundays. The present fasting and abstinence laws are very simple: On Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, the faithful fast (having only one full meal a day and smaller snacks to keep up one's strength) and abstain from meat; on the other Fridays of Lent, the faithful abstain from meat. People are still encouraged to *give up something* for Lent as a sacrifice. (An interesting note is that technically on Sundays and solemnities like St. Joseph's Day (March 19) and the Annunciation (March 25), one is exempt and can partake of whatever has been offered up for Lent.

Nevertheless, I was always taught, *If you gave something up for the Lord, tough it out. Don't act like a Pharisee looking for a loophole.* Moreover, an emphasis must be placed on performing spiritual works, like attending the Stations of the Cross, attending Mass, making a weekly holy hour before the Blessed Sacrament, taking time for personal prayer and spiritual reading and most especially making a good confession and receiving sacramental absolution. Although the practices may have evolved over the centuries, the focus remains the same: to repent of sin, to renew our faith and to prepare to celebrate joyfully the mysteries of our salvation.

~ Rev. William Saunders

Source: *History of Lent* (catholiceducation.org)



Catholic Women's League

Special Event -
Guest Speaker - Sr. Subha Clare Ramesh
From Corporate Executive to Heading Avenue
Franciscan Sister

Date: Wednesday, February 28, 2024

Time: 1 - 3 pm

Place: St. Philomena Parish Center
1000 W Albany
Peoria, IL 61604

(Park on the North Side of Parish Center as School is in Session)
Bring a friend and enjoy social time and light refreshments

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!

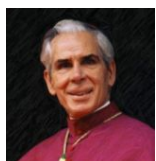


St. Vincent de Paul Helpline
309-264-5815



Prayer Request

A fellow Parishioner, Chad Rutschke, is serving on the team for the upcoming Men's Cursillo weekend, February 22-25. Please pray for Chad and the entire team as they complete their preparation for the weekend. Pray especially during the retreat that they may truly embody Christ to others.



Love is a vicarious principle. A mother suffers for and with her sick child, as a patriot suffers for his country. No wonder that the Son of Man visited this dark, sinful, wretched earth by becoming Man—Christ's unity with the sinful was due to His love! Love burdens itself with the wants and woes and losses and even the wrongs of others.

~ Fulton J. Sheen



Lent

As we do each year we will pray the Stations of the Cross on Fridays during Lent. In addition, each week we will have Holy Hour and Confessions prior to the Stations. All are in Church.

Everyone is invited to participate in this is wonderful addition to your Lenten prayers.

Holy Hour & Confessions

Beginning at 6:00 p.m. on
February 23, March 1, 15, & 22

Stations of the Cross

7:00 p.m. on
February 23, March 1, 15, & 22

March 29th, Good Friday - The Passion of the Lord at 3:00 p.m.

St. Thomas Men's Club

50/50
Drawings



Salad Bar
Is Back!

Friday - March 8, 2024

Serving in the school cafeteria from

5:00 - 7:00 p.m.

Adults (13 and older) \$15

*Gluten-Free Baked Fish \$15 *

*(single trip only and must be pre-ordered after Mass or on the website)

Children (6-12) \$10 (Fish Dinner) \$5 (Grilled Cheese Dinner)

Children five and under free with paid adult

Dine-In

Menu includes: Fried Fish, French Fries, Cole Slaw, Salad Bar, Bread & drink

Children's meal is selection of fish or grilled cheese with same sides

Drive-Thru (Enter back parking lot via Illinois Ave.)

Adult meal: 2 pieces fish, French Fries, Cole Slaw, & Bread

Child's meal: 1 Fish or Grilled Cheese, French Fries, Cole Slaw, & Bread

Deserts provided by the Women of St. Thomas
Proceeds will benefit the installation of the parish outdoor kitchen



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St. Joseph Catholic Church, Pekin

Lenten Parish Mission

March 10-13, 2024 Talk begins at 7:00 PM each night

Why Be Catholic?



Fr. Ken Gerasi
Fathers of Mercy

Sunday ~ What did Jesus Do ~ Church or Spirituality?
Adoration & Confession ~ 6:00 PM

Monday ~ Why Do we do that as Catholics?
Adoration & Confession 5:00 PM
Mass ~ 6:00 PM

Tuesday ~ Two Obstacles to Healing!
Eucharistic Healing Service
Adoration & Confession ~ 6:00 PM

Wednesday ~ How to Pray the Mass
Adoration & Confession ~ 6:00 PM
Solemn close of the Mission ~ Mass 7:00 PM

Fr. Ken joined the Fathers of Mercy in 2006 and was ordained in 2012. Having lived a secular existence, Fr. Ken has a great understanding of the personal and societal pressures that individuals face and knows what it is like to "hate coming to church." This mission is for people of **all ages** and **levels of faith**, from those who are madly in love with Jesus, to those who pretty much cannot stand church or religion. **Regardless of your level of faith come and experience God's Divine Mercy!**

St. Joseph Catholic Church
303 S. 7th St. Pekin, IL 61554
309-347-6108
stjosephpekin.org



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. Under About open the New Parishioner Registration, complete and submit the form.

Last Name _____

First Name(s) _____ Mr ___ Mrs ___ Ms ___

Email _____

Phone _____

Address _____

City _____ ZIP _____

Phone _____

New Parishioner _____ Change of address/phone _____

March Madness Squares

PND is once again selling squares for March Madness! There will be 100 squares on the board, and each square is \$100. Payments are due by Wednesday, March 12 at 3:30.

There are several ways to pay:

- Cash or check mailed or dropped off to the main office
- Online
- Or Venmo to @peorianotredame or use the QR code. **YOU MUST PUT MARCH MADNESS SQUARES IN THE COMMENT FIELD.**

For more information or to pay for squares online, visit <https://www.pndhs.org/march-madness/>.



Kelly Needham Memorial Blood Drive

The Kelly Needham Memorial Blood Drive will be **Saturday, February 24, 2024** from **8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. in the St. Philomena School Gym**. To make an appointment, go online to www.redcrossblood.org and type *stphils* in the box at the top that says *Find a Blood Drive*.

Kelly was a Peoria native and graduate of both St. Philomena School and Peoria Notre Dame High School. In August 2012, at just 21 years old, Kelly was involved in a tragic car accident that took his life. Since the first drive in his memory in 2013, 573 pints have been collected - each pint helping three people. Please give blood in Kelly's memory to help keep his lifesaving spirit going.

The American Red Cross continues to experience critical blood shortages. Please make an appointment to donate if you are eligible.

K of C St. Clement Council Lenten Fish Fries

St. Jude Catholic Church
Hettinger Hall 5:00 p.m.-7:00 p.m.
10811 N. Knoxville Ave
Dine-In or Carry-Out

March 1, March 8, March 15, & March 22
Seafood Meal \$15; Seafood Sandwich \$12;
Kids \$6; Family Deal \$37



How to Submit Bulletin Information

Send information for the bulletin to 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*



You are invited to help support our Parish!
For opportunities to advertise, please call 800-783-1623

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(St. Thomas class of 2026)

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Parishioner Steve Jackson, President
Showroom Hours: M-F 9-5; Sat. 10-3 309-699-9517
203 EASTGATE DRIVE Washington, IL prairiehomealliance.com

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