

## St. Thomas the Apostle Parish Staff

Office Hours: M-F 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m.  
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DeMeulemeester  
OSF Chaplain

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

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

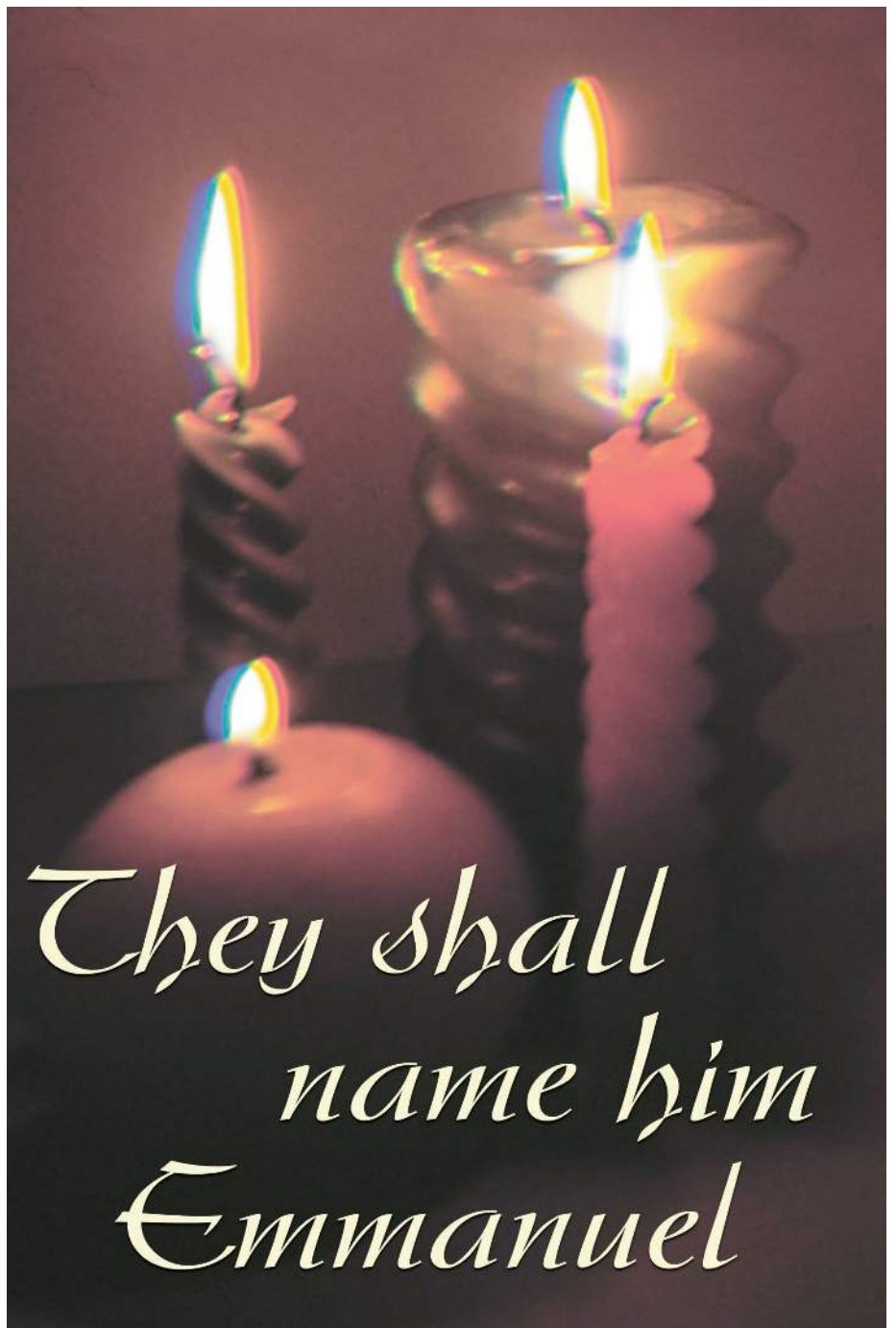
St. Vincent de Paul Society HelpLine.....  
(309) 264-5815

### 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 21, 2025*  
*Fourth Sunday of Advent*





## From Our Pastor

We look forward to the celebration of the Nativity of Our Lord which is just days away. On the Fourth Sunday of Advent, we turn to Joseph and Mary as we prepare for the birth of the Messiah. May Good St. Joseph and the Blessed Mother watch over us in these last days.

As part of our final preparations, I encourage you to make a good confession if you haven't yet done so. Confessions will be heard after all Masses this weekend, so please take advantage of this spiritual preparation.

I am grateful to all those who helped with our Open House last weekend. The added festivities give us the opportunity to express our gratitude for all who volunteer in our parish and school. In addition to the refreshments, I'm glad that we showcased the activities and ministries that exist in our parish. We are always looking for additional volunteers to take part in our parish functions. In particular, the volunteers who serve as part of the St. Vincent de Paul Society or at our Food Pantry provide a direct and needed service to the poor in our local area. If you think you may be called to this work, please inquire and we will connect you with the coordinators.

I think a special thanks is owed to the Franciscan Sisters of John the Baptist for their care of the church and the decorations. At this time of year, in particular, we see the beauty of the nativity scene which complements the entire Christmas season.

Please note the special Mass schedule for Christmas Eve and Christmas Day and the schedule for the following days. Our parish office will close after Christmas and reopen after the new year.

- Msgr. Gray

## Pray with the Pope

December 2025

### For Christians in Areas of Conflict

Let us pray that Christians living in areas of war or conflict, especially in the Middle East, might be seeds of peace, reconciliation, and hope.



## Readings for the Week of December 21, 2025

<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Fourth Sunday of Advent</b> Isaiah 7: 10-14; Romans 1: 1-7; Matthew 1: 18-24
<b>Monday</b>	1 Samuel 1: 24-28; Luke 1: 46-56
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>St. John of Kanty, Priest</b> Malachi 3: 1-4, 23-24; Luke 1: 57-66
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>Vigil of the Nativity of the Lord</b> 2 Samuel 7: 1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Luke 1: 67-79 <i>Vigil:</i> Isaiah 62:1-5; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Matthew 1:1-25 <i>During the Night:</i> Isaiah 9:1-6; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-14
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)</b> Isaiah 52:7-10; Hebrews 1:1-6; John 1:1-18
<b>Friday</b>	<b>St. Stephen, the First Martyr</b> Acts 6: 8-10, 7: 54-59; Matthew 10: 17-22
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>St. John, Apostle &amp; Evangelist</b> 1 John 1: 1-4; John 20: 1a, 2-8
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, &amp; Joseph</b> Sirach 3: 2-6, 12-14; Colossians 3: 12-21; Matthew 2: 13-15, 19-23

## Mass Intentions

### Monday, December 22, 2025

7:00 a.m.	Benefactors of FSJB
8:00 a.m.	Nancy Wilson/Margaret Thomas

### Tuesday, December 23, 2025

7:00 a.m.	Joe Casten/Amy & John Kelly
8:00 a.m.	Genevieve & Joseph Stickelmaier

### Wednesday, December 24, 2025

8:00 a.m.	Paul Hop Nguyen/Tan Tran
5:00 p.m.	Hilda & George Harris/Family
7:00 p.m.	Sonia Gray/The Nelson Family
10:00 p.m.	For the People

### Thursday, December 25, 2025

8:00 a.m.	Sr. Bernadette Kouri, FSJB
10:00 a.m.	Len Kuchan/Family

### Friday, December 26, 2025

8:00 a.m.	Souls in Purgatory/Angela Kenny
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### Saturday, December 27, 2025

8:00 a.m.	Dave Lang/John Crowley
5:00 p.m.	Frank Barbaretta

### Sunday, December 28, 2025

8:00 a.m.	Michael T. Doyle/The Michael J. Doyle Family
10:00 a.m.	Thomas Penn/David & Laurie Williams
5:00 p.m.	Rose & Bill Chase/David & Rose Chase

## Week of December 21

**EXTRA CONFESSIONS** Sunday, December 14, following all Masses

**ROSARY** Tuesday, December 23, 10:00 a.m., Chapel

**WOMEN OF THE WORD** Thursday, December 18, 6:30 p.m., Parish Hall

**CHRISTMAS MASSES** Wednesday, Christmas Eve, December 24, 5:00, 7:00 & 10:00 p.m., Christmas Day, Thursday, December 25, 8:00 & 10:00 a.m., Church

**PARISH OFFICE CLOSED** December 24 through January 1

**CHURCH CLEANING** Saturday following 8:00 a.m. Mass, Church

### UPCOMING EVENTS

Solemnity of Mary, Holy Mother of God	January 1
Adoration	January 2
CCD & OCIA Resume	January 7
Women of the Word	January 8
St. Thomas Holy Hour	January 22
TMIY Resumes	January 23

## Our Sympathy

Barbara Craig

Don Strieder



**Advent Confessions** Before Christmas confession times include:

Saturday, Dec. 20, 4:00 – 4:45 p.m. & 6:00 p.m.  
Sunday, Dec. 21, 9:00 & 11:00 a.m. & 6:00 p.m.

**Christmas Masses** will be offered **Dec. 24**, Christmas Eve at 5:00, 7:00, and 10:00 p.m. and **Dec 25**, Christmas Day at 8:00 and 10:00 a.m. (No 5:00 p.m.)



**ROSARY FOR PEACE**  
Every Tuesday at 10:00 AM  
Where: Small Chapel - St. Thomas Church  
"Where two or three gather in My name, I am there among them." Matthew 18:20  
Prayers offered: Rosary, Chaplet of Mercy, and Few Spontaneous Intercessory Prayers  
Duration: 30 minutes or free to leave early  
All parishioners and friends welcome

### Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God

Masses

**December 31** at 5:00 p.m.  
**January 1** at 8:00 & 10:00 a.m. & 5:00 p.m.

This is a Holy Day of Obligation



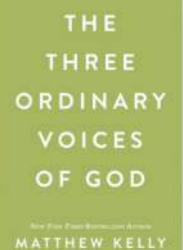
## Weekly Collection

December 14, 2025

		Fiscal YTD
Collections needed.....	\$20,400.....	\$489,600
Sunday Collections.....	\$9,932.....	\$310,996
Electronic Collections.....	\$2,150.....	\$148,699
Total Collected.....	\$12,082.....	\$459,695
Over/(Short).....	\$(8,318).....	\$(29,905)

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.

God yearns to speak to you.  
Will you listen?



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CHRISTMAS BOOK PROGRAM

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**309-693-7200**

Trumpeter



STEUBENVILLE  
CONFERENCES

Registration is now open

The Sheen's Teens are going to Joliet on  
June 26-28<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

Open to all current 8<sup>th</sup> - 12<sup>th</sup> Grade Students!

sign up here!



## OCIA Schedule

**Dec 24:** No Class

**Dec 31:** No Class

**Jan 7:** Liturgical year, Church tour, Mass practice

**Jan 14:** Great Commandments; Divine/Natural Law;  
Commandment 1

**Jan 21:** Individual aspects of the Moral Life

**Jan 31:** Community and Moral Law, grace

## Food Pantry Family Advent Calendar of Giving

In the spirit of the preparation of our hearts for the coming of our Savior, here is a meaningful way to share our treasures with neighbors who are struggling with food insufficiency. Place one food item in a box each day from December 1<sup>st</sup> through December 24<sup>th</sup>. When the box is complete, bring it to the church as a donation to the food pantry. The items below are representative of the canned goods each food pantry family receives each month.

**Merry Christmas to you and yours from the Food Pantry!**

**12/1** Mac and Cheese  
**12/2** Mac and Cheese  
**12/3** Bag of Rice  
**12/4** Boxed Side Dish  
**12/5** Box of Cereal  
**12/6** Box of Saltines  
**12/7** Can of Meat  
**12/8** Pasta Sauce  
**12/9** Can of Fruit  
**12/10** Can of Fruit  
**12/11** Peanut Butter  
**12/12** Skillet Dinner Kit



**12/13** Dry Pasta  
**12/14** Can of Soup  
**12/15** Can of Soup  
**12/16** Can of Veggies  
**12/17** Can of Veggies  
**12/18** Can of Veggies  
**12/19** Can of Veggies  
**12/20** Can of Veggies  
**12/21** Bag of Dried Beans  
**12/22** Jelly  
**12/23** Can of Chili or Stew  
**12/24** Box of Cereal Bars

## St. Thomas - Food Pantry

Items needed at this time are: Rice, Mac and Cheese, Crackers, Pasta Sauce, Cereal, Canned Meat, Peanut Butter & Jelly, Canned Fruit and Vegetables, Pancake Mix, Syrup, Canned or Dry Beans (Legumes), Hamburger/Chicken/Tuna Helper

Thank you!

## The Sheen Experience

*More than just a tribute....*

The Sheen Experience offers an inspiring, interactive look at the life, faith, and legacy of Venerable Fulton J. Sheen. Through storytelling, artifacts, and multimedia, visitors are invited to encounter his profound impact on the Church and the world in a fresh and engaging way.

Watch the Sheen Experience [The Experience — Archbishop Fulton J. Sheen Foundation](https://www.applitrack.com/cdop/onlineapp/default.aspx?Category=Curia)

## Administrative Assistant – Diocese of Peoria

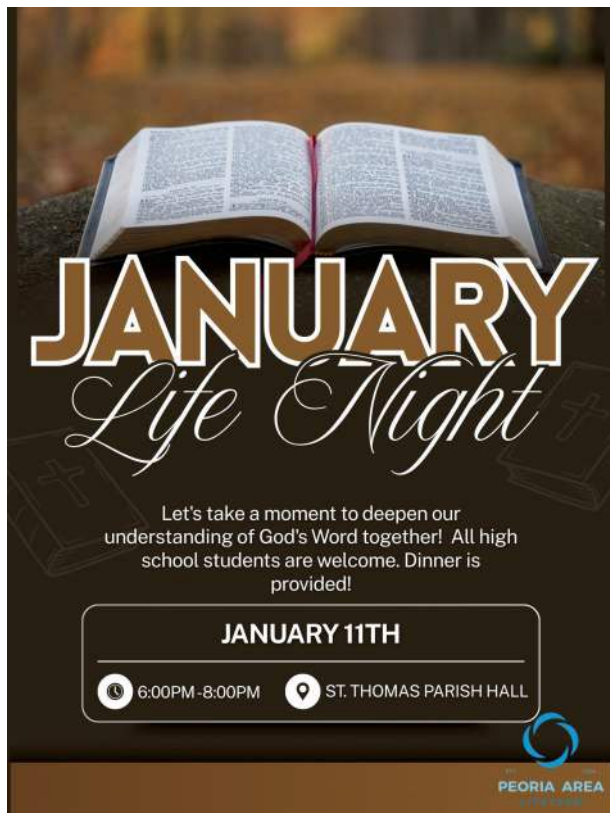
Seeking a detail-oriented Administrative Assistant to support the Diocesan Office of Catholic Schools. Duties include answering phones, event support, recordkeeping, and general office operations. Must be professional, organized, proficient in Microsoft Office/Google Workspace, and supportive of the Church's mission. For further information, go to <https://www.applitrack.com/cdop/onlineapp/default.aspx?Category=Curia>.

## Advent Resources

Catholic Relief Services offers a Prayer Service for blessing the Advent wreath and lighting the candles during the four Sundays of Advent. A Prayer and Reflection Guide can be found below. Please add the prayers and reflections in your bulletin each week.

These resources from Catholic Relief Services are shared by the Peoria Diocesan Council of Catholic Women Care for Creation Committee

View the full Advent Resource Guide:  
[54d51c9a-f266-47a4-b768-f43186d44365.docx](https://www.applitrack.com/cdop/onlineapp/default.aspx?Category=Curia)



# JANUARY

## Life Night

Let's take a moment to deepen our understanding of God's Word together! All high school students are welcome. Dinner is provided!

**JANUARY 11TH**

🕒 6:00PM - 8:00PM 📍 ST. THOMAS PARISH HALL

PEORIA AREA



## COMETS

### Thom's Moms Yoga & Mimosas

#### Saturday, January 10th

#### Clink in the Heights

Take a morning just for you! Join fellow Comet Moms & Friends for a blend of relaxation, connection, and fun at our Yoga & Mimosas event. Come whenever you can — the morning is yours to enjoy!

**Event Schedule**

10:15–10:45 AM — Yoga with Tracy Schendl  
A calming, all-levels session to start your day right. Please bring a yoga mat or a towel.

10:45 AM–12:45 PM — Drinks & Brunch  
Stay for mimosas, brunch, and great conversation.  
(Drinks and food available for purchase — cash or credit card.)

**Cost: \$10.00**  
Please send cash or a check made out to PTO to the school office by January 8th.

Whether you come for the yoga, the mimosas, or simply a moment to breathe, we can't wait to spend the morning with you.  
Friends are welcome!!!

**Clink**  
BAR AND GRUBS

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## ST. THOMAS SCHOOL INVITES YOU TO

# Princesses & Pirates

## AHOY MATEYS

ALL Current & Potential Pre-3, Pre-4 & Kinder Families for the 2026-2027 School Year!

**Saturday, January 24th @ 9-11 am**  
St. Thomas School Cafeteria

- \* Meet the Princess Ballerinas
- \* Face Painting \* Snacks \* Bounce Houses
- \* School Scavenger Hunt & More!

See you there or **WALK THE PLANK! ;)**

THE ZOO LADY AND HER ZOO CREW



## Join Our St. Thomas Meal Train Ministry

### Bringing love and comfort one meal at a time

When someone in our church or school faces illness, surgery, a new baby or any other challenging season, our meal train steps in to provide home cooked meals and encouragement. It's a simple way to show the love of Christ through food, fellowship, and care.

**How you can help:**

1. \*\*Join Our Mailing List:\*\* Sign up to receive email notifications regarding needs within our community.
2. \*\*Respond to Opportunities:\*\* When a need arises, we will send an email detailing the opportunity to help. There is no obligation to sign up every time; simply volunteer when you are able.
3. \*\*Provide Support:\*\* Opportunities often involve delivering a home-cooked meal or sending a gift card to the home being assisted.

*Sign up today!*  
Fill out the form linked [here](#).



## Simbang Gabi Masses



### 2025 Simbang Gabi Masses:

**Sunday, December 14, 5:30pm:** Cathedral of St. Mary, Peoria (Father Bill Miller)

**Monday, December 15, 6pm:** St. Mark, Peoria (Bishop Louis Tylka)

**Tuesday, December 16, 6pm:** St. Monica, East Peoria (Father Matt Deptula)

**Wednesday, December 17, 5:30pm:** St. Vincent, Peoria (Father Willard)

**Thursday, December 18, 6pm:** St. Thomas, Peoria Heights (Monsignor Gray)

**Friday, December 19, 6pm:** St. Jude, Peoria (Father Jack Watt)

**Saturday, December 20, 6:30pm:** Blessed Sacrament, Morton (Father Achilleus)

**Sunday, December 21, 5pm:** St. Anthony, Peoria (Father Charles Klamut)

**Monday, December 22, 5pm:** Holy Family, Peoria (Father Greg Jozefiak)



### Gift Cards for PND Gala

Tis the season... to buy gift cards! The PND gala committee is seeking 150 gift cards or items to use as prizes for the upcoming gala. The prizes must be valued at \$25 or more. During the holiday time, some businesses offer additional gift cards for purchases. While doing your Christmas shopping, please consider picking up a gift card or other item to donate to the auction. Gifts can be dropped off at the Peoria Notre Dame office during school hours. Thank you for contributing!

### 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) \_\_\_\_\_ Mr \_\_\_ Mrs \_\_\_ Ms \_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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

# SAVE THE DATE

**Steubenville  
Conference in Joliet  
June 26-28, 2026**

This year's theme:



Join the Sheen's Teens Group!  
Registration information is coming soon! All high schoolers are welcome.

**SHEEN'S TEENS**



CATHOLIC SOCIETY OF PEORIA  
Growing saints for 100 years!

**GIRLS TEC #381 - JAN 17-19, 2026**

**BOYS TEC #382 - FEB 14-16, 2026**



**Sign up today at [Peoriatec.org](http://Peoriatec.org).**

**All denominations welcome.**

**Scholarships available.**



### Explore our Five Foundations with Bishop Lou

We are delighted to share with you a new series available through the Hallow app: [The Five Foundations](#), led by Bishop Lou.

Get the Hallow app: [#1 App for Christian & Catholic Prayer, Meditation, Bible + Sleep | Hallow](#)

**PEORIA NOTRE DAME**  
Community · Faith · Knowledge · Service

**Read me!**  
scan BELOW!

**HIGHLIGHTS INCLUDE:**

- Homecoming 2025
- Spalding/AOL All Class Reunion
- PND's Student Support Services
- PND Equipment & Facility Updates

**The IRISH LENS**  
Feb 2025

**PRESERVING THE PAST. BUILDING THE FUTURE.**

#### 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 - Tracey - Administrative Assist.
- 1341 - Sheris—Finance & Tuition
- 1310 - Kate—Faith Formation
- 1301 - Peggy—Bulletin

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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Proud mother of Aberdeen  
(St. Thomas class of 2026)

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