

December 13-14, 2025
Third Sunday of Advent



St. Thomas the Apostle Catholic Church

404 W. Jourdan, Tel: 618-783-8741
 Newton, Illinois 62448 Fax: 618-783-8742

E-mail: parishoffice@stthomasnewton.net
Website: www.stthomasnewton.net

Pastor: Fr. Paul Luczak

(Email: revpl.stthomas@gmail.com)

Parochial Administrator: Fr. Tomy Philip
 (Email: frtomysac@gmail.com)

Deacon emeritus: Rev. Mr. Larry Miller

Office Manager: Linda M. Hemrich

Annulment Advocate: Debbie Matson

Office Hours: 7:30 -11:30 am & 1:00- 4:00 p.m. M-F
Masses: 4:30 pm Saturday; 7 & 10.00 am Sunday

8:30 am Wednesday and Friday

Reconciliation: 8:00 am- 9:00am (Except for First Saturday at St. Mary) & 3:30-4 pm Saturdays and upon request at reasonable time.

St. Thomas School Office:

St. Thomas School Principal: Jill Bierman

School Secretary: Lori Smith

306 W. Jourdan, PO Box 26 Tel: 618-783-3517
 Newton, Illinois 62448 Fax: 618-783-2224

E-Mail: jillbierman@stthomassaints.com

Website: www.stthomassaints.com

THANK YOU FOR YOUR OFFERING

December 6-7, 2025 Collection

Envelopes	\$ 10,265.00
Loose	\$ 611.00
Subtotal	\$ 10,876.00
School Fund	\$ 715.00
Centennial Campaign	\$ 1,000.00
Immaculate Conception	\$ 910.00
Other	\$ 86.00
Subtotal	\$ 2,711.00
Grand Total	\$ 13,587.00

Online August PushPay Giving \$ 4,148.33
ACH August Contributions \$ 2,296.00

St. Thomas Church October Tithe

October Tithe Income – \$81,900.00

10% Monthly Tithe Given to Diocese - \$8,190.00

This Week in Our Parish

Monday, December 15, Advent Weekday

Tues., December 16, Advent Weekday

8:00 am Rosary

8:30 am Communion Service at St. Mary's

Wednesday, December 17, Late Advent Weekday

8:30 am Class Mass (Int. Betty Marshall)

9:00 am Rosary Group

5:30 pm Youth Choir

6:30 pm PSR at St. Mary/CYO at St. Thomas

Thursday, December 18, Late Advent Weekday

8:30 am Mass at St. Mary's

5:30 pm St. Thomas is caroling

Friday, December 19, Late Advent Weekday

Early Dismissal – Christmas break begins

7:30 am – 8:15 am Adoration

8:30 am All-School Mass (Int. Rosemary Bergbower)

Saturday, December 20, Late Advent Weekday

8:00 -9:00 am Reconciliation

3:30 pm – 4:00 pm Reconciliation

4:30 pm Mass @ St. Thomas (Int. For the Parish)

Sunday, December 21, 4th Sunday of Advent

7:00 am Mass at St. Thomas (Dave Worman)

8:30 am Mass at St. Mary's

9:30 am Rosary

10:00 am Mass at St. Thomas (Int. Petronilla Volk)

10:30 am Communion Service at Villas

11:15 am OCIA

This Week's Scripture Readings:

Mon.: Nm 24:2-7,15-17a	Mt 21:23-27
Tues.: Zep 3:1-2,9-13	Mt 21:38-32
Weds.: Gn 49:2,8-10	Mt 1:1-17
Th.: Jer 23:5-8	Mt 1:18-25
Fri.: Jgs 13:2-7,24-25a	Lk 1:5-25
Sat.: Is 7:10-14	Lk 1:26-38
Sun.: Is 7:10-14	Rom 1:1-7
	Mt 1:18-24

OPPORTUNITIES FOR RECONCILIATION

Regularly: 8:00-9:00 am Saturdays at St. Thomas (Except for First Saturday at St. Mary's); 3:30-4:00 pm Saturdays at St. Thomas **OR** by appointment

Father Paweł's Address: For those who would like to send greetings for Christmas or just a note:

Fr Paweł Luczak, Sikorskiego, 53rd Street,
 05-250 Radzymin, Poland

St. Thomas CYO

Meeting weekly on Wednesday evenings at 6:30 pm

Dec. 17- Night of Service/Christmas Party

Dec. 24- Jan. 6 – No CYO – Enjoy Christmas Break

St. Thomas Parish Ministry Schedule

Saturday, December 20 @ 4:30 pm

Lector: Beth Ochs

EM: Mark Bolander, Wade Ochs, Ramon Kocher, Linda Hemrich

Servers: Megan Farley, Emmalin Finley, Carissa Barthelme

Gift Bearers: Todd Ochs Family

Musicians: Five for the One

Greeters/Ushers: Brad Ochs

Sunday, December 14 @ 7:00 am

Lector: Sara Bergbower

EM: Gery Ochs, Pam Francis, Eliza Muska, Amy Hartrich

Servers: Will/Emma Hartrich, Jace Bergbower

Gift Bearers: Seth Woods Family

Musicians: Vicki Mullen & Kinsley Kerner

Greeters/Ushers: Chris Bierman

Sunday, December 14 @ 10:00 am

Lector: Ryan Probst

EM: Brad/Annie/Mallory Ochs, Sara Mette

Servers: Luke Bower, Will Mette, Dominic Ochs

Gift Bearers: Tim Bower Family

Musicians: Patsy Leffler

Greeters/Ushers: Mike Geier

St. Thomas CYO... For where two or more are gathered in my name, there am I with them.

Matthew 18:20

Lori and Linda are so thankful for the amazing CYO youth and their commitment to their faith!



St. Thomas Advent/Christmas Décor.

If you would like to contribute in memory of a deceased loved one, please put your name(s) & contribution in an envelope marked "décor." We will publish a prayer sheet that can be used during this Christmas Season.

Please have all names submitted to the Parish Office by Dec. 18.

Special Notes of Thanks!

Thank you, St. Thomas Angels Group, for covering the cost of the parish's new advent wreath and candles! It is beautiful and has added so much to our worship space this Advent season. Thank you for all that you do for our parish and community throughout the year, especially for sharing your homemade goodies with those who are homebound this holiday season. All that you do makes a difference in all the lives that you touch with your kindness.

Thank you, Renee Gier, for starting the Rosary Ministry before the 10:00 am Mass. Praying the Rosary starts at 9:30 am on Sunday mornings before Mass begins. This is a wonderful way to prepare ourselves for Mass. Thanks to all of those who are joining in!

So grateful and blessed to have so many more to thank for all that you do!

St. Thomas Advent Giving Tree

The response so far has been amazing! We are so excited to see this assistance fund growing, so that we can respond generously and with open hearts to the requests for help from our brothers and sisters in need.

Save the Date: Saturday, January 31, 2026

"Kick Back and Relax" this year at the St. Thomas Annual Wine Tasting Event Hosted by the St. Thomas Angels

 **St. Thomas is Caroling!** Dust off those jingle bells and warm up those **beautiful voices**. On Thursday, December 18, please meet in the St. Thomas Church gathering space between 5:30-5:45pm. All are welcome and festive wear is encouraged. Children need to be accompanied by an adult. Contact Julie at 618-553-9072 to learn more. Looking forward to spreading some Christmas cheer!

This Sunday at our 10:00 Mass we are Handing the Creed to our Catechumens and Candidates. In Pope Leo XIV's Apostolic Letter issued November 23, 2025, it emphasizes the importance of Christian unity and the shared profession of faith among believers. It reflects the call for Christians to walk together in harmony, safeguarding and transmitting the gift of faith they have received. This concept is deeply rooted in the Christian tradition as the pope commemorates the 1,700th Anniversary of the Council of Nicaea. The pope states, "*I would like this letter to encourage the whole Church to renew her enthusiasm for the profession of faith.*" Historically the Creed was a profession of faith for early Christians, often a last stand before martyrdom. Let us all enthusiastically profess our faith as the early Christians before us.

St. Thomas & St. Mary Parishes

WELCOME you and INVITE you



Please pray for the Sick: Janet Beavers, Steven Bierman, Chase Zumbahlen, Emma Rose Probst, Dale Harris, Jim Beauchamp, Naomi Shedlebower, Belinda Kubicki, Carson French, Matilda Hemrich, Carol Schafer, Jim/Norma Kocher, Randy Ochs, Ted/Susie Ochs; those in healthcare facilities/Book of Requests.

Soul Food

By Fr. Tomy

Today, on **Gaudete Sunday**, the Church invites us to let one word fill our hearts: **Rejoice**. In the middle of Advent's waiting, the rose candle shines like a soft dawn, reminding us that even when night feels long, God makes beauty bloom in the deserts of our lives.

Christian joy is not built on perfect circumstances, but on one unshakeable truth: **God loves us—completely and personally**. This is the joy of a perfect love that holds us even when life does not.

In the Gospel, John the Baptist, imprisoned and surrounded by uncertainty, sends his disciples to ask Jesus, "Are you the One who is to come?" His question, born from the darkness of a cell, still carries hope. Jesus answers not with explanations but with signs of love: the blind see, the lame walk, the deaf hear, the poor receive Good News. In other words: "*John, rejoice—salvation is already unfolding.*" Jesus brings joy not by removing our struggles but by entering them. Thus, Gaudete Sunday proclaims that joy is not the absence of troubles, but the **presence of God**.

Pope Francis often reminds us, "A Christian is a man or woman of joy. There are no sad saints." True joy is quiet, steady, and rooted in the certainty that God walks with us, guides us, and never abandons us. The rose candle we light today is the candle of **joyful hope**, whispering that Christ has come, Christ is near, and Christ will come again.

Isaiah foretells deserts blooming and fearful hearts strengthened because **God Himself** comes to save us. We rejoice not because everything is already changed, but because **Christ is changing everything**—patiently and faithfully. He came in history, He comes now in grace, and He will come again in glory. This is the joy that animated the early Church, the joy that converted hearts and strengthened martyrs, the joy that reveals the Holy Spirit living within us.

We belong to a Kingdom greater than anything the world can promise. And as Christmas draws near, we remember: **Joy is not a decoration. Joy is the sign that Christ lives in us.**

Three Practical Ways to Live Christian Joy

1. Practice "joyful presence" with someone often overlooked.

Choose one person this week—an elderly parishioner, someone who is lonely, a coworker who struggles silently, or even someone difficult to be around. Give them your full, gentle presence. Not things—**presence**. Joy grows when we make someone feel seen and valued.

2. Create a small "Advent joy corner" at home.

Place a Scripture verse of joy, a small candle, or a Nativity image in a quiet spot. Spend two minutes a day there praying: "*Lord, let Your joy be born in me.*" This makes joy not an emotion, but a daily practice rooted in prayer.

3. Offer one hidden sacrifice joyfully.

Do something difficult or inconvenient—without telling anyone:

*forgive silently, * let go of a complaint, *do an unpleasant chore with a smile, *give quiet alms.

This hidden offering forms the heart and brings the deep joy Jesus spoke of the joy the Father sees in secret.

CONGRATULATIONS!



Our parishes welcome all those who were recently confirmed this past Saturday at the Cathedral.

Congratulations to all and let us keep them in our prayers as their faith journey is just beginning.

2025 Christmas Mass Schedule

Christmas Eve, Wednesday, December 24

5:00 pm Mass @ St. Thomas (Youth Choir)

7:00 pm Mass @ St. Mary's

11:00 pm @ St. Thomas (Five for the One)

Christmas Day, Thursday, December 25

8:30 am Mass @ St. Thomas

New Year's Eve, Wednesday, December 31

6:00 pm Mass @ St. Thomas

New Year's Day, Thursday, January 1

8:30 am Mass @ St. Mary

10:00 am Mass @ St. Thomas

Please sign up for St. Thomas Ministries online at MSP or contact the parish office. Thanks!!

December 13-14, 2025
Third Sunday of Advent



St. Mary of the Assumption

112 W. Embarras Street, P.O. Box 68
Ste. Marie, Illinois 62459
Tel: 618-455-3155

E-mail: stmaryschurch@stmariechurch.org
Website: www.stmariechurch.org

Pastor: Fr. Paul Luczak

(email/text: revpl.stthomas@gmail.com)

Parochial Administrator: Fr. Tomy Philip
(Email: frtomysac@gmail.com)

Deacon emeritus: Rev. Mr. Larry Miller
Office Manager: Denisse Ochs
PSR Coordinator: Marie Wagner

Tribunal Annulment Advocate: Debbie Matson

Office Hours: 8:00 a.m. – 3 p.m. Tues-Wed.-Thurs.

Masses: 8:30 am Sunday

First Saturday of the Month

7:30 am – 8:15 am Eucharistic Adoration
& Reconciliation

8:30 am – Holy Mass

Reconciliation: As Scheduled by request

This Week in our Parish

Monday, December 15th, Advent Weekday

Tuesday, December 16th Advent Weekday

8:00 a.m. – Rosary

8:30a.m. – Communion Service

Wednesday, December 17th, Late Advent Weekday

6:30 p.m. – PSR

Thursday, December 18th, Late Advent Weekday

8:00 a.m. - Rosary

8:30 a.m. - Mass (Int: John & Theresa Ochs+)

Friday, December 19th, Late Advent Weekday

Saturday, December 20th, Late Advent Weekday

Sunday, December 21st, Fourth Sunday of Advent

8:30 a.m. – Mass (Int: Alan R Ochs+)

Thank You!! To the 5th and 6th grade PSR classes for working to change the missalettes in church to begin the new liturgical year. Thank you for sharing your time!

St Mary's Disciples' Stewardship of Treasures		
Collection for the week of December 7, 2025		
Envelopes/Online giving	\$	2,040.00
Loose		204.00
	Sub Total	\$ 2,244.00
Thanksgiving		120.00
	Total	\$ 2,364.00

Mass Schedule

Christmas Mass – December 24, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

New Years Day – January 1, 2026 at 8:30 a.m.

Volunteers still needed for Ministers

Please let the office know as soon as possible

Ministers for 8:30 a.m. – December 21, 2025

Ushers: Marvin Zwilling, John Uebinger, Paul Kaufmann

Servers: Blake Frohning/Clay Frohning/Charlee Hartrich

Lectors: Ron Zwilling/Brianna Zwilling

Gift Bearers: Tony & Martha Strutner

Eucharistic Ministers Lisa Ochs, Elaine Zwilling, Lora Semple

Christmas Décor Fund – If you wish to contribute in memory of a loved one, please have the donation in by December 18th to be listed in the bulletin.

Advent Prayer – 3rd week of Advent – O God, as we faithfully await the birth of your son, Jesus, let us be glad and rejoice. In our families, schools, and lives, help us to share the joy of Christ's love with others, Amen.

Pastoral Council – Thank you to Julie Shamhart and Bridget Matson for volunteering to become the newest members of the pastoral council, your stewardship is greatly appreciated. They will be joining current members – Rose Gangloff, Sarah Boehl, Angie Kocher, Tim Keller, Nancy Zwilling, Jeff Ochs, David Ochs, and Janet Hartrich.

Congratulation – To the 3rd graders of our parish who made their Confirmation and First Holy Communion on December 6th. – **Kennadi Ochs**

Elanor Roberts

Halle Schackmann

Logan Uebinger

Jackson Zumbahlen

Leah Davis - Oblong

MacKenley Coffey - Olney

pray for them as they continue their journey of faith.