

Saint Thomas the Apostle

Roman Catholic Church

Address: 60 Byrd Avenue, Bloomfield, New Jersey

Rectory/Parish Center: (973) 338-9190 • Fax: (973) 338-4224

Religious Education: (973) 338-7400 • School: (973) 338-8505 • Convent: (973) 338-9118

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT: www.stachurchbloomfield.com



Nativity of Our Lord
2008

Masses for the Week

Sunday, December 21

Saturday, December 20

5:00 pm Michael John Melograno - Wife

Sunday, December 21

7:30 am Anna Stevens - Daughter & Family

9:00 am Anthony Zoppi - Friend

10:30 am For the People of the Parish

12:00 pm Jean Niemi - Daughter

Monday, December 22

7:30 am Dorothy Bilotti - Sister

11:30 am Isabella Giordano - Husband

Tuesday, December 23

7:30 am Paul Candido - Friend

11:30 am Martha L. Oliveros - Family

Wednesday, December 24 *Christmas Eve*

8:30 am Jaqueline Sefjack - Husband

4:00 pm (Herron Hall - School) Joseph Bianchi & Ernest & Philomena Cordasco - Family

4:00 pm (Church) Anna Korec - Family

6:00 pm Samuel Galluci - Family

10:30 pm Deceased Members of the Besida Family - Family

Thursday, December 25 *Christmas Day*

8:00 am George J. Poster - Family

10:00 am Jacob Szajkowski - Family

12:00 pm Michael Fitterer - Sister

Friday, December 26

7:30 am Angelina & Ernest Winters - Family

11:30 am Grace Monticello - Son

Saturday, December 27

8:30 am Nancy Rasp - Mother

Sunday, December 28

Saturday, December 27

5:00 pm Charles Ofsak - Family

Sunday, December 28

7:30 am Joseph Pietrowski - Daughter

9:00 am Larry Martin - Friends

10:30 am Joseph Stevens - Daughter & Family

12:00 pm For the People of the Parish

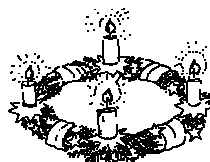
PRAY FOR OUR SICK:

John McCue, Claire Mykowski, Rosabel Sullivan

REST IN PEACE: Filomena Ruccio

CANDLE INTENTIONS:

Church: David Kossack
Convent: Josephine Fiorentino
Rectory: Bridget & Onufre Kochuk



**Fourth Sunday
of Advent**

Advent is drawing to a close: Christmas is near. The liturgy focuses on Mary, whose free acceptance of God's will for her prepared the way for the messiah. On this Sunday, so close to Christmas, we hear the angel's message to Mary with a special urgency. God allows his plan for the salvation of his people to depend upon the decision of a young girl.

Christmas Season Mass Schedule



RECONCILIATION (CONFESSION) SCHEDULE

Saturday, December 20, 2008, at 11:00 a.m.
(at St. Thomas the Apostle Church)

Monday, December 15, 2008 – 7:30 p.m.
Reconciliation (Penance) Service
at St. Valentine Church

...with Individual Confessions heard by the Priests from the Churches of St. Thomas the Apostle, St. Valentine and Sacred Heart Church.

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

Saturday, December 27, 2008 – 5:00pm
 Sunday, Dec. 28, -7:30am-9:00am-10:30am-12noon
Blessing of Families at Masses today!

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

Wednesday, December 31, 2008 - 4:00pm
 Thursday, January 1, 2009
 Masses at 7:30am, 11:30am

SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY

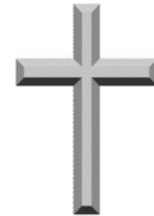
Annual "Bell Sunday" -- Sunday, January 4, 2009

Saturday, January 3, 2009 - 5:00pm Vigil Mass
 Sunday, January 4 - 7:30am - 9:00am - 10:30am - 12noon
 (Children's Epiphany Pageant following 12noon Mass)

**Please note there is a Mass scheduled on Christmas
 Eve at 4pm in our school's Herron Hall.**

**Parish Center will close at 1:00pm on Wed. Dec. 24.
 and will be closed Thurs. & Fri., Dec. 25 & 26.**

From the Pastor's Desk...



Dear Parishioners,

Christmas is a wonderful and holy time of the year. It is when we become more aware of the many gifts God gives us all year - the gift of life, the gift of faith, and the gift of each other. On Christmas God showed how deeply he loved us by taking on flesh and becoming one like us, so that we could become more like Him.

All of us here at Saint Thomas the Apostle, priests and staff, wish you and your family a happy and holy Christmas. My prayer is that the Christ, whose birth we celebrate, may be present in your hearts and in your homes throughout this season of joy!

In the Lord,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Rev. Charles J. Miller". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

*Rev. Charles J. Miller,
Pastor*

The 12 Days of Christmas

The song "The Twelve Days of Christmas" speaks only of gifts for each day. Some families have spread out the Christmas gift-giving to span the Twelve Days, much like the gift-giving at Hanukkah spans eight days.

It seems that this song actually began with Catholics in England as one of the ways they taught the faith to their children during the period (1558-1829) they were forbidden to practice their religion. Several schemas link doctrines to the twelve days:

- The partridge stands for Christ, who gathers his own under his wings-God's first gift.
- Two turtle doves represent the sacrifice of the Jewish family at the birth of a son, or the two Testaments of the Bible.
- Three French hens symbolize the gifts of the Magi; the persons of the Trinity; or faith, hope and love.
- Four calling birds remind us of the four evangelists.
- Five golden rings suggest the first five books of the Old Testament, the Torah.
- Six geese suggest the six days of the week when humanity labors.
- Seven swans remind us of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit.
- Eight maids represent the people saved in the Ark or the eight beatitudes.
- Nine ladies represent the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22) or the nine ranks of angels.
- Ten lords stand for the Ten Commandments.
- Eleven pipers represent the eleven apostles who were faithful.
- Twelve drummers remind us of the articles of the Apostles Creed, the gates of heaven or the tribes of Israel.

SCHOOL, RELIGIOUS ED & SACRAMENTS

**ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE SCHOOL
SHOP RITE GIFT CARD FUNDRAISER**

HELP THE STA HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION REACH THEIR FUNDRAISING GOALS BY PURCHASING SHOP RITE GIFT CARDS.

YOU RECEIVE THE FULL DOLLAR VALUE OF THE CARD & STA SCHOOL RECEIVES 5% OF YOUR PURCHASE (FROM SHOP RITE).

SHOP RITE GIFT CARDS CAN BE USED . . .

- % AT ANY SHOP RITE STORE OR SHOP RITE PHARMACY
- % TO PURCHASE OTHER STORE GIFT CARDS (i.e. DISNEY, KOHLS, SEARS, HOME DEPOT, BEST BUY, RED LOBSTER, OLIVE GARDEN, ETC.)
- % TO PURCHASE CHRISTMAS GIFTS INCLUDING TV'S, DVD PLAYERS, GAME CONSOLES, ETC. (SEE THE SHOP RITE CIRCULAR FOR ADVERTISED SPECIALS)
- % AS STOCKING STUFFERS

THERE ARE 3 EASY WAYS TO PURCHASE SHOP RITE GIFT CARDS:

- % AFTER EVERY MASS (IN THE BACK OF THE CHURCH)
- % FROM JUDY IN THE PARISH CENTER
- % BY CALLING THE STA SCHOOL OFFICE @ 973-338-8505.

Sign up your Target Credit Card so a proceed of any charge helps St. Thomas the Apostle School

One percent of purchases at Target and ½ percent of purchases elsewhere go toward St. Thomas the Apostle School. You can register your card at <http://redcard.target.com> and click on the "Manage My Redcard" link. The school ID is 10369.

You can also enroll at the store by going to the kiosk. You can also enroll your Target credit card by calling toll free 1-800-316-6142.

Session Dates for Baptism for 2008

CATECHESIS PREPARATION

In the St. James Room in the Parish Center

Jan 25	1:00pm
March 29	1:00pm
May 17	1:00pm

BAPTISM CELEBRATIONS FOR 2008

Jan 11	1:30pm
Feb 1	1:30pm
Feb 22	1:30pm
April 18	During Mass at 5:00pm
April 19	1:30pm

STA SOCIETIES, MINISTRIES & EVENTS

↓ GOING ON THIS WEEKEND ↓

Wellness Ministry Cares... Assistance Program

The Wellness Ministry phone line is available Mon-Fri, 9am to 8pm. Call the Parish Center 973-338-9190 ext. 20. A return call will be made within 24 hours. A Parish Nurse will provide limited confidential health counseling & referrals to Community health resources & services. Volunteers are available for errands, home visits and phone contacts.

BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENING – THIS WEEK

Blood pressure screenings will be held this weekend, Saturday, December 20th, after the 5:00 p.m. Mass and Sunday, December 21st, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

**LEARNING TO LIVE
WITH YOUR LOSS**

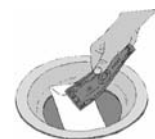
**TODAY Mon. Dec 21st – 1:00 p.m.
in the Parish Center**

*“Although you and your loved one will be apart
May the spirit of Christmas comfort your heart
And may its message of peace be with you each day
To help and guide you along life’s way.”*

**STEWARDSHIP
COFFEE AND CONVERSATION**

Everyone is invited downstairs to the Parish Center for coffee and snacks after the 9 and 10:30 am Masses this Sunday. Take a few minutes to chat with your fellow parishioners over a nice cup of coffee. Religious Education, such an important ministry here at St. Thomas, will be our hosts.

**STEWARDSHIP
OF TREASURE**



The main source of operating funds for St. Thomas the Apostle Parish is our weekly offertory contribution. To assist us in being good stewards of God’s gift of treasure, here is what we contributed last weekend compared to what we need to meet our budget:

Last’s week collection:	\$20,336
Amount Needed:	\$20,000

Next month we will also report on our Christmas collection. This is an important collection for us. In the past, our monetary gift to our parish has been like an extra month and a half of contributions! Please be sure that St. Thomas is on your Christmas list this season.

"THIS WEEK"

Monday - 12/22

**PLEASE SEE PG. 2 FOR OUR
CHRISTMAS SEASON MASS/EVENTS SCHEDULE**
September Club – 11:30am in St. Peter

Next Sunday's Readings:

2 Samuel 7: 1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16

Romans 16: 25-27

Luke 1: 26-38

PLANNED GIVING

Here are some other ways you can help Saint Thomas the Apostle Church continue its mission of serving God's people.

Give a gift of cash or check for general use or a specific purpose.

Give a gift of stocks or bonds. There could be a significant tax advantage to you if there has been appreciation in their value and they are transferred to Saint Thomas the Apostle Church.

A bequest in your will assures that your possessions are distributed as you desire. When making a bequest, use the full legal name and address:

Saint Thomas the Apostle Church
60 Byrd Avenue, Bloomfield, NJ 07003

Make Saint Thomas the Apostle Church partial or primary beneficiary of a life insurance policy that is no longer needed for family security. Ask the insurance company for the forms necessary to change the beneficiary or to transfer the ownership to Saint Thomas the Apostle Church.

Children's Epiphany Pageant

Jan. 4, 2009 after 12:00 noon Mass

There's still time for your child to participate in the Epiphany pageant! Bring your child to dress rehearsal Sat. Jan 3rd at 12:00 noon in Church.

SENIOR HIGH YOUTH GROUP NEWS

MEETINGS EVERY SUNDAY NIGHT IN THE PARISH CENTER FROM 7-9PM. ALL HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH ARE WELCOME

12/21 ADVENT CLOSING MEETING

50-IN-15 PASTA / MACARONI

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT TIM DENNIN AT tdennin@att.net



Right to Life

For every little child:
that we might value the infinite gift
of their life;

We pray to the Lord

The Gift He'll Thank You For in March

Long after most Christmas gifts are forgotten, the man you love will be thanking you for signing him up for Men's Cornerstone. It's a chance for him to take a break and hang out for 26 hours with a great bunch of men from our parish. He'll get to know more about them, about God and about himself. And when it's all over, this is one Christmas gift you'll both be grateful for.

Sign him up for the unique Cornerstone retreat.
March 27 and 28, 2009. Contact:

John Barbetta (973) 338-5086
jbarbetta2@verizon.net

Pat DeCotiis (973) 896-5739
pdecotiis@att.com

William J. Padilla (973) 338-9414
wiji777@aol.com



*Men's Cornerstone.
A gathering of ordinary men
for an extraordinary retreat.*

**To all women of the parish:
Have you attended a Cornerstone Retreat?
Number IV is coming this March 20th and 21st.
Our theme will be:**

“ Be still,
and know
that
God”
Psalm 46:10

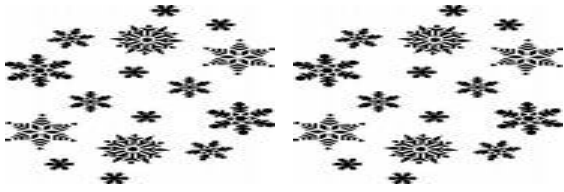


*Give it some thought. You will not be disappointed.
This is an opportunity to spend some time with your
God and to meet other women in our parish
community.*

*If you have any questions, feel free to ask any of the
team members:*

Sister Arleen Crimmins	973-338-9190
Marty Levine	973-566-0416
Alicia von Schaumburg	973-473-6633
Karen Cortese	973-472-4522
Millete Padilla	973-338-9414
Priscilla Trias	973-338-4402
Gerry Neville	973-661-3453
Heidi Kovacs	973-338-0722
Ellen White	973-338-8308
Carol Zieleniewski	973-744-5681

WINTER



Lord Jesus Christ,

You never knew the wonder of winter did you?
Did soft flakes fall on your tiny face as shepherds
rushed through the stable doors to greet you?
Did snow's soft blanket muffle the clop of
donkey's hooves as you walked beneath the
palms towards Egypt?
Did Galilee's waters ever ice over?

No... I suppose winter's chill never tickled your
nose in sunny Palestine.
And so, imagine, as December rolled around, you
had to think back - to remember the day your
Father sculpted the snowflakes and painted
the frost and to thank Him for winter's
wonder as do I.

"Sing Alleluia"



**CHRISTMAS EVE,
DECEMBER 24TH - 4:00 P.M.**

Children of our parish will be leading us in our
Communion song at the Christmas Eve, 4:00 p.m. Mass.

Those interested see Paul DiBianca after the 10:30 a.m.
Mass this Sunday, December 14th or call 732-356-5921.

There will be a rehearsal Tuesday, December 16th at 3:00
p.m. in the St. Thomas Room.

Art Presentation:

Elizabeth Coalition to House the Homeless (ECHH)

Sr. Mary Ann Tracey, S. C., a staff member and modera-
tor of the ECHH's three Hospitality Houses, will be
prepared to answer questions, one-on-one, concerning
the residents' art that will be displayed after the 9:00am
& 10:30am Masses on Dec. 21st in the parish center.

The **Hospitality House Program** provide transitional
apartments to working homeless families, while offering

support services so that those families can achieve
permanent housing.

SAVE THE DATE! SAVE THE DATE!



ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE
Invites you to

PASTA NIGHT

Saturday, January 31, 2009

6:00 – 10:00 p.m.

Herron Hall



*Please join us for a Family-Fun Evening of
Fine Food, Italian Music & Dancing!*



**Three Types of Pastas
Meatballs**

**Antipasto/Salad/Bread
Italian Pastries & Coffee**

50/50 Raffle, Door Prizes, Gift Raffle

*All Proceeds To Benefit St. Thomas the Apostle
Home & School Association*

Ministry of Spiritual Direction

**NEW YEAR - NEW BEGINNINGS
RETREAT DAY**

**Guided Retreat for Men & Women
Saturday, January 10**

9:00am - 3:30pm in the Parish Center

**"Rise up, be off to the potter's house;
there I will give you my message."**

Jeremiah 18:2



Please Register by Jan 14 with Anna – (973) 338-9538
Offering - Light Continental Breakfast - Bag a Lunch

Keep Christ in Christmas.