

# St. Thomas the Apostle Roman Catholic Church

Rectory/Parish Center: (973) 338-9190 . Fax: (973) 338-4224 . Religious Education: (973) 338-7400  
School: (973) 338-8505 . Convent: (973) 338-9118  
Address: 60 Byrd Avenue, Bloomfield, NJ 07003 . Website: [www.stachurchbloomfield.com](http://www.stachurchbloomfield.com)

Rev. Charles J. Miller, M. Div., Pastor

Parochial Vicars: Rev. Philip A. Sanders, S.T.B. • Rev. Andrew N. Onyemaobi, M.Div., M.A.  
Rev. Thomas F. Blind, M. Div., In Residence

## PERMANENT DEACONS:

Deacon Albert H. Tizzano • Deacon Dennis J. Besida • Deacon Thomas J. Coyle

## EUCCHARISTIC LITURGY

Saturday Eve: 5:00pm

Sundays: 7:30, 9:00,  
10:30am & 12:00 Noon

Weekdays: 7:30, & 11:30am

Saturday Mornings: 8:30am Only

Holy Days:  
7:30, 11:30am & 7:30pm

Holidays: 8:30am Only

PASTORAL ASSOCIATE FOR  
ELEMENTARY CATECHETICS:  
Tracey Rennie

PASTORAL ASSOCIATE  
FOR PARISH MINISTRY:  
Sister Arleen Crimmins, O.P.

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL:  
Ms. Joan Ferraer

DIRECTOR OF LITURGICAL  
MUSIC MINISTRIES:  
Nancy A. Cardone

ASSISTANT LITURGICAL  
MUSIC MINISTERS:  
Kimberley Mesiti

PASTORAL ASSOCIATE FOR FAMILY  
& ADULT FORMATION MINISTRIES:  
Robert P. Miller

COORDINATOR OF YOUTH MINISTRY:  
Mr. Timothy Dennin

PASTORAL COUNCIL:  
Eileen Conte, Chairperson  
Jean Barbetta, Vice Chairperson  
Michael Pasquale, Secretary

FINANCE CHAIRMEN:  
Peter Maulbeck, Finance Council  
Patrick DeCotiis, Finance Committee

SACRAMENT OF  
RECONCILIATION:  
(Penance/Confessions)  
Saturday: 11:00am

MARIAN  
DEVOTIONS:  
Mondays  
Novena Prayer  
11:30am Mass

LITURGY OF  
THE WORD  
WITH CHILDREN:  
Sundays: 10:30am Mass  
September - June

CATHOLIC  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICES  
OFFERING SOCIAL  
SERVICE ASSISTANCE  
1(800) CCS-7413  
Fax: 596-3735

December 13, 2009 . 3rd Sunday of Advent

**Masses for the Week**

**Sunday, December 13**

**Saturday, December 12**

**5:00 pm For the People of the Parish**

**Sunday, December 13**

**7:30 am Rev. Robert J. Gordon – Family**

**9:00 am Sister Paula DeRogatis – Sister**

**10:30 am Marie Lataro – Family**

**12:00 pm Joseph Sawicki – Family**

**Monday, December 14**

**7:30 am Deceased Members of McIntyre Family –  
Bequest**

**11:30 am Elizabeth Donatiello – Family**

**Tuesday, December 15**

**7:30 am Julia Becker – Friend**

**11:30 am Louis Occhetti – Family**

**Wednesday, December 16**

**7:30 am Catherine McAlvannah – Friend**

**11:30 am Kathryn L. Barbata & Lonergan Family -  
Bequest**

**Thursday, December 17**

**7:30 am Josephine Said – Friend**

**11:30 am Charles Occhetti – Friend**

**Friday, December 18**

**7:30 am Mary & Fred Roberts – Family**

**11:30 am Charles Occhetti – Friend**

**Saturday, December 19**

**8:30 am Richard Adrian Sause – Family**

**Sunday, December 20**

**Saturday, December 19**

**5:00 pm Josephine B. Ruffalo (5<sup>th</sup> Anniv.) – Son**

**Sunday, December 20**

**7:30 am For the People of the Parish**

**9:00 am Angelo Melia – Family**

**10:30 am Onbalsky Family – Family**

**12:00 pm Michael John Melograno – Wife**

**PRAY FOR OUR SICK:**

Emidio V. Sestillo, Frank Korec, Noelle Angela,  
Sandra Leuhr-Shaw, Dolly Sandoval, George Scott

**REST IN PEACE:**

Michael Scarpelli, Thomas McDermott, Paul Grandmont,  
Sr. Cornelia Agnes Devine, Sr. Margaret DeSales Sullivan

**CANDLE INTENTIONS:**

**Church:** Edna Salierno      **Convent:** Mark Zieleniewski  
**Rectory:** Andrew Young

**Visit our website at:  
[www.stachurchbloomfield.com](http://www.stachurchbloomfield.com)**

*Third Sunday of Advent*



This Sunday has traditionally been called *Gaudete* Sunday, from the first word of the Entrance Antiphon in Latin. Sundays used to be identified by the first word or two of the Entrance Antiphon. Be sure to find a way to use the antiphon from Philippians 4:4,5 that gives this Sunday its traditional name: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again, I say rejoice! The Lord is near." Express that joy in songs and floral arrangements.

**FIRST READING:** Zephaniah proclaims a day of festival to celebrate God's presence in the midst of his people. It is interesting to note that he portrays it from the perspective of God celebrating over his people. God exults, renews, dances, and shouts for joy. We are heirs of God's promise, of God's joy!

**RESPONSORIAL PSALM:** In response to Zephaniah's prophecy, the Church raises her voice in acknowledgment that God saves and dwells among his people. We need not fear, for God is with us.

**SECOND READING:** Paul assures the community at Philippi that he desires their happiness, the gift of peace that accompanies the Lord's presence. When anxiety seeks to rob us of God's peace, Paul counsels prayer. We offer prayers of intercession, for God alone can give us his peace; and we pray in thanksgiving, for we trust that God will provide the gifts we need.

**GOSPEL:** John's ministry penetrated people's hearts to the degree that they wondered about the ways their lives needed to change. As John concretely responds to tax collectors and soldiers, he announces the coming of the one who will baptize in the power of the Holy Spirit. God's word challenges us to new patterns of justice and mercy, while God's Spirit enables us to live this new way of being.

**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 Next Sunday, Dec. 20**

Blood pressure screenings this month will be held on Sunday, December 20, 2009 from 8am to 12Noon in the parish center.

## SCHOOL, RELIGIOUS ED & SACRAMENTS

### Tickets for the 2010 Calendar Raffle are now on sale!

You should have received your tickets in the mail by now. Additional tickets are available on the desk in the Parish Center or by calling Gen Pezzino at 973-771-0463. All proceeds from the Raffle will go directly to benefit the educational programs of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish School.

## STA SOCIETIES, MINISTRIES & EVENTS

### **"THIS WEEK"**

#### Monday – 12/14

September Club – 11:30am in St Peter

#### Thursday – 12/17

SCC Thursday – 7:00pm in St. Matthew

#### Friday – 12/18

SCC Friday – 6:30pm in St. Peter

## 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, our contribution from last weekend is compared below to the amount we need this week to meet our budget. You may have noticed this amount will vary. This is because our budget varies by season, just as yours does.

**DECEMBER 6<sup>TH</sup> COLLECTION:      \$18,098**  
**AMOUNT NEEDED PER WEEK:      \$20,500**

## 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 assure 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.

## St. Thomas the Apostle Church Mass Schedule for Christmas Season



### RECONCILIATION (CONFESSION) SESSION

Saturday, December 19, 2009, at 11:00 a.m. (at St. Thomas the Apostle Church) **Monday, December 14, 2009 – 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's & Sacred Heart Church.

### CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE

#### Thursday, December 24, 2009 (Christmas Eve)

4:00pm (Herron Hall – School)

Christmas Music Prelude and Mass

4:00pm (Church) Christmas Music Prelude and Mass

6:00pm (Church) Mass

10:30pm (Church) Concelebrated Mass with Music  
Prelude at 9:45pm. **(No Midnight Mass)**

#### Friday, December 25, 2009 (Christmas Day)

8:00 a.m. – 10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

(All Masses with traditional Christmas Carols)

### FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

Saturday, December 26, 2009 – 5:00pm

Sunday, Dec. 27, 2009 – 7:30am-9am-10:30am-12noon  
Blessing of Families at Masses today

### SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD

Thursday, December 31, 2009 – 4:00pm (Vigil Mass)

Friday, January 1, 2010 – 7:30am – 11:30am

### SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY

(Annual "Bell Sunday")

Saturday, January 2, 2010 – 5:00pm Vigil Mass

Sunday, January 3, 7:30am, 9:00am, 10:30am & 12pm  
(Children's Epiphany Pageant following 12noon Mass)

## Women's Advent Reflection Group



On Tuesday afternoons, at 12:40 pm, there will be a Women's Reflection group in the St. James room. We'll pray, reflect, and share on the Sunday Readings for this Advent Season. All women are invited. If you attend the 11:30 am Mass, you are most welcome to bring your lunch and eat here in the Parish Center before we gather.



Thank you for supporting the Archbishop's Annual Appeal. In order for our parish to receive a rebate, we must exceed our goal in funds collected by December 31<sup>st</sup>. If you have an outstanding balance on your pledge, please make sure to send it in before the deadline. If you have not yet made your gift, please complete your gift envelope as soon as possible and either send it directly to the Archdiocese of Newark or turn it in at the parish center.

**GIVING TREE**



**This Sunday  
December  
13<sup>th</sup>  
2009**

**At St. Thomas  
The Apostle**

**'Tis the season for giving.**

If you wish to donate a gift and haven't done so yet, please bring your gifts - *unwrapped* - into the church *THIS* Sunday December 13<sup>th</sup> either during any of the weekend Masses or at 2:30pm sharp (*no later*).

Gifts will be sorted and packed at 2:30pm.

*(Baptisms are scheduled for 1:30pm)*

*(Please be sure not to disrupt the sacrament)*

Packages will be picked up on Monday December 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Only gift cards will be accepted after December 14<sup>th</sup>. Bring them to the Parish Center or drop them in the collection basket at Mass.**

***Thanks to all who've donated and helped.***



**VOLUNTEERS  
NEEDED**

**SUNDAY, DEC. 20<sup>th</sup> at 1p.m.**  
We need men to volunteer to help carry in Christmas trees into the Church for our Christmas decorations.

**JOB SEEKERS GROUP**

Looking for a job? Come to a meeting of the St. Thomas the Apostle job seekers on the first and third Thursdays of every month at 7:30 pm in the Parish Center where you will get a chance to network, get some advice, and pray with other members of the parish who are searching for a job. If you're not looking for work, but are looking for a good worker, come to one of our meetings and you'll meet plenty of them!

**SENIOR HIGH YOUTH GROUP NEWS**

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

**12/13 RESPECT LIFE DISCUSSION**

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR:**

- 12/20 6PM ADVENT MASS
- 12/20 CHRISTMAS MEETING
- 01/10/10 KICK-OFF MEETING

**50 IN 15 PASTA**

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT TIM DENNIN AT [tdennin@att.net](mailto:tdennin@att.net)

**RIGHT TO LIFE**



For all physicians and healers: that they may fulfill their obligations to patients with a sense of the sacredness and dignity of human life;

*We pray to the Lord*

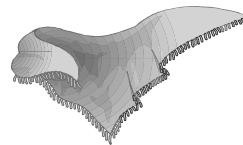
**RESPECT LIFE COMMITTEE**

**The Respect Life Committee needs your help!**

The Respect Life Committee desperately needs disposable diapers and baby supplies. Also Aspirin, Tylenol, ibuprofen, bar soap and used sheets and towels. The latter items are for a container going to Cuba in January.

God bless and thank you for your generous support!

***The Prayer Shawl Ministry***



We will meet Sunday, January 17<sup>th</sup> starting at 11:30-2PM. We meet in the Parish Center. If you cannot attend the meeting but wish to participate please contact Alicia.

We're in need of shawls measuring *at least* 22" x 60". If you have any questions please contact the Ministry: Bernadette at 973-893-0114, Sister Arleen at 973-338-9190, or Alicia at 973-473-6633

**TRUE GRATITUDE**

Let us remember that, as much has been given us, much will be expected from us, and that true homage comes from the heart as well as from the lips, and shows itself in deeds.  
*~ Theodore Roosevelt*

## HOLIDAY BULLETIN SCHEDULE

EARLY SUBMISSION DEADLINES FOR OUR HOLIDAY BULLETINS ARE AS FOLLOWS:

**CHRISTMAS BULLETIN**  
**WAS DUE DECEMBER 11<sup>TH</sup>**

**AND HAS BEEN SENT OUT FOR PUBLISHING**



**DECEMBER 27<sup>TH</sup> BULLETIN DUE:**  
**TUES. DEC. 15 BY 10:30 AM**

**JANUARY 3<sup>RD</sup> BULLETIN DUE:**  
**MON. DEC. 21 BY 10:30 AM**



**PLEASE BE SURE TO SUBMIT ALL BULLETIN INFORMATION TO THE PARISH CENTER BEFORE THE ABOVE DUE DATES.**

**SEND VIA EMAIL TO: [jwgasparini@aol.com](mailto:jwgasparini@aol.com)**  
**DROP OFF AT THE PARISH CENTER,**  
**OR SEND VIA FAX TO 973-338-4224.**

**SIGN UP for the...**

## Children's Christmas Event Epiphany Pageant

OPEN TO ALL CHILDREN OF THE PARISH  
Ages Pre-K4 - Grade 3

Sunday, January 3, 2010  
Immediately following 12:00 Noon Mass

Three Kings Reception in the Parish Center to follow. Angels, Shepherds and Kings are needed to join our Nativity and Epiphany scene. Many costumes will be provided.

Please complete the form below and return to the Parish Center Attention: "Children's Pageant".

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to help with costumes.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to help with the Three Kings Reception.

Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

## St. Thomas the Apostle Mission Statement

The Roman Catholic faith community of St. Thomas the Apostle recognizes God's call to be a sign of His Kingdom in the communities we serve. We respond to this call by:

- † Leading people to a deeper relationship with Christ by providing opportunities for spiritual growth, renewal, education, the celebration of the Sacraments, and the worship of God in the sacred liturgy;
- † Encouraging a commitment to justice and to service of those in need;
- † Promoting good stewardship of our time, talent and treasure;
- † Building a community of hospitality and support in the daily living out of Christian ideals by nourishing mutual respect and understanding within our Church, our families, our community, and other faith traditions.

### **THIS IS MY PARISH**

*It is composed of people like me.*

*We make it what it is.*

*It will be friendly, if I am.*

*Its pews will be filled, if I help to fill them.*

*It will make generous gifts to many causes*

*if I am a generous giver.*

*It will bring other people to worship and fellowship if I bring them.*

*It will be a church of loyalty and love, of fearlessness and faith,*

*and a church with a noble spirit.*

*if I, who make it what it is, am filled with these qualities.*

*Therefore, with the help of God*

*I shall dedicate myself to the task of being all things that I want my parish to be.*

## Moving?



**Please let us know.**

- Within the parish
- to update new address
- Out of parish
- to discontinue mailings

**Please call the Parish Center at (973) 338-9190.**

The Catholic Parishes of Deanery 16  
invite you to

## *Simbang Gabi* 2009

Filipino Christmas Novena Masses

**St. Thomas the Apostle Church**  
**Thursday, December 17, 2009, 7:00 PM**

Fellowship at Heron Hall  
will follow after the Mass.

### Schedule of masses in other parishes:

<b>Dec. 15, Tuesday</b> 7pm	<b>St. Valentine's Church,</b> <b>Bloomfield</b>
<b>Dec. 16, Wednesday</b> 8pm	<b>St. Peter's Church</b> <b>Belleville</b>
<b>Dec. 18, Friday</b> 7pm	<b>St. Anthony Church,</b> <b>Belleville</b>
<b>Dec. 19, Saturday</b> 6:30pm	<b>Our Lady of Mount Carmel</b> <b>Nutley</b>
<b>Dec. 20, Sunday</b> 5pm	<b>Holy Family Church</b> <b>Nutley</b>
<b>Dec. 21, Monday</b> 7:30pm	<b>Sacred Heart Church</b> <b>Bloomfield</b>
<b>Dec. 22, Tuesday</b> 7:30 pm	<b>St. Mary Church</b> <b>Nutley</b>
<b>Dec. 23, Wednesday</b> 7pm	<b>Holy Name of Jesus Church</b> <b>East Orange</b>

### **MEN'S CORNERSTONE – MARCH 12 and 13, 2010**

"I originally resisted attending Cornerstone. Hard to believe, given the wonderful experience it has turned out to be."  
– *Jeff Monacelli*

### **ARE YOU GOING INTO THE HOSPITAL? DO YOU HAVE A FAMILY MEMBER IN THE HOSPITAL?**



We would like to visit our parishioners who are homebound, in the hospital or other health care facility. Because of patient confidentiality laws, however, the only way we can know is if someone informs us. Call the Parish Center at (973) 338-9190, leaving your name and number so we may return your call, or you may leave the information at the Parish Desk on Sunday mornings.

### **HISTORY OF ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS**



The roots of Advent go much deeper than Christianity. They reach deep into the thirsty soil of Israel, and into the dreams of God's chosen people. The word "Advent" itself means "Coming", but it has taken on the nuances of waiting and expectation. And in that sense, we can say that Advent began outside the gates of Eden.

During Advent, we join our voices in a special way with the people of Israel. The Old Testament readings on the Sundays of Advent recall our deepest roots, a people-in-waiting. A great majority of these readings come from one remarkable collection, the Book of the Prophet Isaiah. Isaiah is the poet of the Promise, and his words provide us with a whole treasury of Advent-Christmas images. It was Isaiah who envisioned a "peaceable kingdom", where the lion and the lamb lie down together under a child's leadership. And it was Isaiah who first gave the Messiah the name by which He would be known through all the waiting years: Emmanuel, "God-with-us".

When we look at the roots of Advent in the early years of Christianity, we find a gap. The early Church did not celebrate Advent at all--which is really no surprise, because they didn't celebrate Christmas, either! In those first centuries, Jesus' death and Resurrection were the central experiences of Christianity --especially while Christians themselves were meeting persecutions and death for their beliefs.

In the third century, as Christians was finally allowed to flourish, the Church found room for more light-hearted feasts. No one knew, however, on what day Jesus had actually been born - and to make matters worse, there were many different ways of reckoning time, and no centralized calendar.

In the middle of the fourth century, Pope Julius settled on December 25<sup>th</sup>. It is possible that he chose this date because it fell so close to the Winter Solstice an ancient feast familiar to so many converts to Christianity. The Roman worshippers of Mithras, with whom Pope Julius was familiar, celebrated December 25<sup>th</sup> as "The Birthday of the Unconquered Sun" - a title that certainly suited itself to the Nativity.

Christmas itself didn't come to be called Christmas until much later. Some of the early names for this feast were Epiphany (manifestation), Natale (birth), and interestingly enough - Adventus (the coming).

During the fifth century, Christians in Ravenna, Italy, began experimenting with the liturgy of preparation for Christmas, which they called "Advent". The liturgies developed in Ravenna found their way to Rome in the sixth century, where they were printed in the Celesian Sacramentary, one of the earliest collections of prayers and readings chosen for liturgical use.

In about the ninth century, the first Sunday of Advent became the first Sunday of the Church's liturgical year. The tension between penitence and joy, promise, and waiting which marked the Advent liturgies gave rise to many rich customs and traditions.

The revised Roman Catholic Calendar of 1970 called the Church back to the original Roman understanding of Advent as a period of "joyful and spiritual expectation", not a penitential season