

FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, FEBRUARY 4, 2024

PARISH MISSION & VISION STATEMENTS

Mission (Purpose)

Through the Sacrament of Baptism, we the Catholic Community of St. Thomas More respond to our call to holiness.

Vision (Goals)

Empowered by Baptism, inspired by the Holy Spirit, and formed by the Word of God and the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist, we live out our Mission by working together:

- To structure prayerful, vibrant, participatory, Sunday worship experiences.
- To provide Life Long Faith formation for all age levels.
- To care for the young, the old, the sick, the hurting and the needy, both inside and outside our parish.
- To promote faith sharing, prayer, support, learning and listening to one another as a model for nourishing and sustaining our faith community.
- To welcome back, with hospitality, those who have left our faith community.

VISITATION AND ANOINTING OF THE SICK

Please call the parish office, 424-3212, if a family member is seriously ill or facing/recovering from surgery and would like to see a priest or receive the Anointing of the Sick. Holy Communion is also available to those who are homebound on an ongoing basis.

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Please make arrangements for Baptism in advance through the parish office. Parents and godparents are required to attend a preparatory session.

MARRIAGE

Couples planning to marry will attend a marriage preparation program called Living in Love. Call office for appointment.

RCIA

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is a process of formation for full initiation into the Catholic Church. It is open to those never Baptized; those baptized in another faith; and Catholics who have not received First Holy Communion and Confirmation.

For more information, please contact Sister Ann Byrnes, RSM, Pastoral Associate, 424-3212 ext. 104.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Grades One through Eight - Sunday 9:30 AM—10:45 AM

PARISH MEMBERSHIP

New members are welcome in our community of faith. Please call, 424-3212, or come to the parish

BULLETIN DEADLINE

Please submit hardcopy and/or e-mail by 2 p.m. Monday.

CATHOLIC GRADE SCHOOL

St. John Paul II Regional School - (856) 783-3088
Principal: Mrs. Helen Persing



Merciful God,
there are times when we feel like Job,
when we wonder what is the meaning
and purpose of our lives here on earth.
Help us and others to know
that you are always close to us
even when we do not feel your presence.
Help us to be a healing presence for others.
This we pray through Christ our Lord.
Amen



“If my people, who are called by My Name, **shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek My Face, and turn** from their wicked ways; **then** will I hear from heaven, and will **forgive** their sin, and I will **heal** their land.” *2nd Chronicles 7:14*

The collection for Sunday, January 28, 2024, was \$7,024.00 The budgeted amount was \$8500.

Remember that giving is the ultimate way to ensure the true richness of spirit. Without giving and thus becoming richer in spirit, you become watered down, lost in the flood of your own greed. Give to enrich your life while you are on this Earth so that you may avoid becoming watered down, lost floating in a sea of empty belongings. Giving is the anchor that holds you through a stormy night.



Stewardship Corner: 5th Sunday in Ordinary Time Stewardship Prayer

“Rising very early before dawn, he left and went off to a deserted place, where he prayed... He told them, ‘Let us go on to the nearby villages that I may preach there also. For this purpose have I come.’” - MARK 1:35, 38

In today’s Gospel reading we see a perfect example of Stewardship. Jesus gives His time to do all that God wishes - healing the sick and preaching. But before He begins, Jesus takes time to be alone with God in prayer. It is through prayer, spending time with God, that we are given the graces needed to do what He wishes us to do. Praying before acting is a great habit to develop.

From the Pastor's Desk
Reading Another Pastor's Bulletin Letter

Dear Parishioners,

The following letter was composed by a priest-friend (who attended college seminary with me) to his parishioners back in 2013. He is now deceased after battling some serious illness. I kept his bulletin because I thought it would be a good reflection for me from time to time. I hope he might give you something to think about as well.

Dear Friends in Christ,

Over the past several months, I have received numerous letters and concerned comments regarding poor manners at church. In one sense, we should not be surprised at the lack of proper respect and dress at church, because we live in a very casual world where many people have forgotten manners and discipline. However, manners, whether at Mass or in other situations, reveal the value we place on each other and God: think about the term "Sunday best." With respect to our dress, we live in a society where even corporate America has changed to casual attire. However, some of those companies have or are revisiting this policy because of the psychology of dress: our dress assists us in the ways in which we behave. More and more, I see casual attire at weddings and funerals, which were always considered "dress-up" events. Many people have lost all sense of basic politeness, like holding the door open for someone, especially a lady, particularly an expectant mother or an elderly person. (I was raised to be a gentleman, so call me old fashioned if you like.) Seldom do the words "please" and "thank you" echo in our ears.

While we may not be surprised at such a state of affairs, we should not condone it or lower ourselves to embrace this standard. Each of us should strive for better manners, especially "Church Manners." Therefore, as a Priest and one who was raised by good, diligent parents, I will present what I consider good Church Manners. First, let us start at how we prepare for Mass. People should dress appropriately. In our society, we still consider coat and tie for men and dresses or suits for women appropriate attire for weddings, for special parties (even Christmas parties) and certainly for meeting dignitaries, like the Pope or the President. We should then dress in the same way to meet our Lord, present in the Holy Eucharist. Granted, perhaps in the summer we could be a little more casual, but we can still be neat, clean, and properly clothed. Frankly, shorts and beach wear are an inappropriate form of dress for Church. In deciding what to wear, we should be thinking, "I am dressing to meet my Lord and to participate in the mystery of my salvation."

Before leaving home, we should make sure we go to the bathroom. People going in and out of the pews during Mass for the bathroom is distracting. Granted, there are legitimate reasons for having to use the bathroom during Mass. However, I think that some of us have just gotten into a routine: during the homily, go to the bathroom; during Communion, get the drink of water. Frankly, when I was growing up, I don't think our church even had a public bathroom, because we were taught by the Sisters and reinforced by our parents not leave that pew except to receive Holy Communion.

Next, leave home with time to arrive at church before Mass begins, preferably about five or 10 minutes. Doing so allows everyone to have a few moments for prayer and to be ready to participate in the Mass. Granted, circumstances arise which will delay a family. Such a situation is different from the perpetually late.

When entering the church, be sure to make the sign of the cross with the Holy Water; this gesture reminds us of our baptism and does dispel evil. Before entering the pew, be sure to genuflect, an important act of reverence to the presence of our Lord in the Blessed Sacrament in the Tabernacle. Also, please turn off the cell phones [and other devices], not only to give some undivided attention to God, but also to spare everyone else the distraction of a phone ringing or other electronic devices sounding during Mass.

In worshiping, participate in the songs and prayers, follow the readings and listen attentively to the homily. In all my Priesthood, I have been surprised at those "pillars" that never open their mouths to sing or pray. Parents should help their children: last Sunday, I saw a mother following the readings with her finger so her two young children could more easily and attentively read. In all, everyone should joyfully and reverently participate in the Mass.

Parents need to supervise their children. Jesus loves and welcomes children, but they do need our help. If a child is fussy, then the parent should quickly take the child to the Narthex or to the Children's Chapel to allow the child to calm down before returning. Children should not be allowed to rattle keys, drop toys, kick the pews or run in the aisles. These behaviors are enormously distracting. Parents simply need to be parents, using good judgment and discipline with the little ones.

When receiving Holy Communion, always do so reverently. Remind ourselves that when we receive the Consecrated Host, we should be very conscious that we are receiving the same Lord who was born for us on Christmas Day; the same Jesus who died for us on Good Friday; the same Jesus who rose from the dead on Easter Sunday and now sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven! If receiving on the hand, the hands



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Pastor's Desk, continued

If receiving on the hand, the hands must be clean and held like a throne for the Lord. After receiving, one should consume the Sacred Host before turning around to go back to the pew. Holy Communion must not be reminiscent of a cafeteria line experience, but rather of an encounter with the glorified Lord.

After Communion, each person must give thanks for the precious gift received and allow the grace to fill our souls. How tragic it is to see people leave Mass right after Communion, not because of an emergency, but because they want to get out of the parking lot first. I can only think of Judas, who was the first person ever to leave Mass early. To give the Lord one hour — and usually less — for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass is really not much of a sacrifice. I wonder how these same people would feel if someone left their own home in the middle of a meal without even saying thank you.

Finally, after the Mass is concluded with the blessing, wait until the priest has proceeded down the aisle before leaving the pew. The congregation should disperse only after the recessional hymn has concluded. However, before leaving the pew, be sure to put the hymnal back in its holder and pick up used tissues or other items; otherwise, someone else has to attend to them.

While I am sure that this list is not exhaustive, I have witnessed all of these actions as a Priest. I do not want to seem cynical or condescending, but only teach proper respect for the Mass we love to celebrate. Saint Joseph, pray for us, now and at the hour of our death!

Blessings,

Fr. Ogden, (Former) Pastor, *St. Joseph Church, Mechanicsburg, PA*

Fr. Ed Namiotka, Pastor

THE YEAR OF PRAYER 2024 in preparation for THE JUBILEE YEAR 2025

Pope Francis has asked that **2024 be marked as a Year of Prayer**. He announced its launch on **Sunday 21 January 2024**, on the fifth annual celebration of the 'Sunday of the Word of God'. He Wrote: "From now on, I am happy to think that the year preceding the Jubilee event, 2024, will be dedicated to a great 'symphony' of prayer: first of all, to recover the desire to be in the presence of the Lord, to listen to him and adore him, It is, this year, a year dedicated to rediscovering the great value and the absolute need for prayer in personal life, in the life of the Church and of the world. Jesus Himself, many times in the Gospel, teaches us, by his example, the importance of giving an intimate, daily time to talk to God our dear Father, before and after his very busy days with people that wanted to be healed and listen to his Word, On this Sunday too, we listen in Mark 1,35:"And in the morning, a great while before day, Jesus rose up and went out, and departed into a desert place, and there prayed..." How do I want to organize and live my time of prayer on This Year of Prayer, in communion with the Pope and all Christians all over the World, in preparation of the Jubilee 2025? May our Blessed Mother lead us to a deeper preparation on this prayerful journey toward the JUBILEE 2025!

REMINDERS:

February 10 and March 9, (Saturday) at 9:00 am to 12:00 pm: Confirmation Preparation Classes taught by Fr. Ed our Pastor (bring with you the book "Decision Point").

February 14: ASH WEDNESDAY

February 18: First Sunday of Lent - NO SESSION - (Long Weekend- President Day)

February 24 (Saturday): Celebration of the First Penance in the Chapel - Time 10:00 AM to 11:30 AM for 2nd graders.

Feb.10/11, 2024

| | Presider | Music | Extraordinary Minister | Lector | Altar Server |
|-----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| 4:30 PM | Fr. Namiotka | Music Ministry | Sr. Agnes | K. McFadden | |
| 8:30 AM | Fr. Namiotka | Music Ministry | Sr. Clare | D. Mayfield | E. Bresani |
| 11:00 AM | Fr. Namiotka | Music Ministry | J. Flynn | L. Flynn | N. Flynn L. Vascisin |

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Weekly Intentions



SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 3

4:30 PM Dang Nhat Anh Thu r/b Matilde Estevez

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 4

8:30 AM Intentions of Sr. Clare Sabini, FMIJ
r/b St. Thomas More Parish

11:00 AM John & Xenia Mitchell r/b Greta

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 5

9:00 AM people of the parish

9:30—12noon Adoration in the Chapel

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 6

9:00 AM Intentions of Sr. Maria De Rosa, FMIJ
r/b Franciscan Sisters

9:30—12noon Adoration in the Chapel

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 7

9:00 AM Living and deceased members of
Morgan family in Ireland

9:30—12noon Adoration in the Chapel

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 8

9:00 AM Deceased members of Colbert family
r/b Franciscan Sisters

9:30—12noon Adoration in the Chapel

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 9

9:00 AM Souls in Purgatory
r/b Michael Calingasan

9:30—12noon Adoration in the Chapel

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 10

4:30 PM Fr. Phillip Johnson
r/b Tomas & Marie Manalo

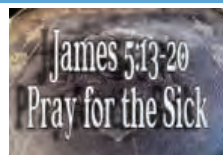
SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 11

8:30 AM Fr. Phillip Johnson
r/b Joanne Wachman

11:00 AM Rose & Patrick McMenamin
r/b Jeannine

PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS: THE SICK...

Kristina Acevedo, Caroline Bancheri, Jim Beaney, Jim Beaney, Jr., Pat Beaney, Joe Centonze, Ray Chuisano, Elva Clark, Grace Cobin, Alex Colon, Tammy Colon, Joseph Console, Marie Corcoran, Mary Cowan, Catherine Diana, Linda Di Giulio, Fr. George Donfurtang, Elizabeth Garber, Eileen Gerie, Eileen Goodwin, Marjorie Graham, Helen Kane, Marion Kapischke, Michael Kapischke, John B. Kennedy, John Lane, Bob Lento, Marie Manalo, Carter Oakley, Tina Petrone, Helen Protzman, Dom Sacca, Carlos Santiago, Teddy Shaffer, Grace Sklencar, Joe Sklencar, Claire Spence, Dick Spence, Dale Strack, Stacia Strack, Michael Suralik, Pat Suralik, Ed Targonski, Sr., Roy Targonski, Ann Vigrass, Joanne Wachman, Sarah Warner, and Nicholas.



PRAY FOR THOSE IN THE ARMED SERVICES...

SPC Jordan Beckman, Captain Patrick J. Bones, USMC, Major Anthony R. Cosentino, USAF, TSgt. John P.

DeYoung, Sam Houston, USN, Lt. Nicholas G. Iannuzzi, SSgt. Kris Knaup, Capt. Jennifer LaSalce, US Army, Capt. Christopher Mawn, Lt. Jacqueline A. McCabe, PFC Sonny Morrison, Lt. Col. Louis J. Papa, Sisi Tyrrell, USMC, SPC Nicole Williams, and all those serving our country.

Eucharistic Revival Quotes from Pope Francis

“In the Eucharist, fragility is strength: the strength of the love that becomes small so it can be welcomed and not feared; the strength of the love that is broken and shared so as to give life; the strength of the love that is split apart so as to join all of us in unity”
Angelus—June 6, 2021



Please pray for the repose of the soul of Richard Kraemer.

Pope Francis' Prayer Intentions February 2024 For the terminally ill

We pray that those with a terminal illness, and their families, receive the necessary physical and spiritual care and accompaniment.

Mall Walk for the Homeless Sunday, February 25, 2024

Voorhees Town Center

Fun Activities begin at 1:30 PM

Walk starts at 2:30 PM Rain, Snow, or Shine

Registration is online at www.ihocsnj.org

Registration fee is \$25 and includes a mall Walk

T-shirt



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Please note that we put the following week's Gospel passage in this space so you can prepare all week for Proclamation of the Gospel the following Sunday. Faith Sharing helps ordinary people connect their faith with everyday life experiences

Excerpt from the Gospel for the Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time, February 11, 2024 - Mark 1:40-45

A leper came to Jesus and kneeling down begged him and said, "If you wish, you can make me clean." Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand, touched him, and said to him, "I do will it. Be made clean." The leprosy left him immediately, and he was made clean... The man went away and began to publicize the whole matter... People kept coming to Jesus from everywhere.

Commentary:

In this gospel the healing hand of Jesus stretches out to an outcast of society - a leper. The leper, having been healed, is compelled "to publicize the whole matter." Both the actions of Jesus and the leper inform our discipleship: like Jesus, we reach out even to outcasts; like the leper, we proclaim the good news.

Questions for Reflection and Sharing:

1. What is God saying to me in this Gospel passage?
2. What word or phrase in this Gospel speaks to me?
3. What word or phrase in the Reflection resonates with me?



Pro-Life Corner: "The fetus, though enclosed in the womb of its mother, is already a human being and it is a monstrous crime to rob it of the life which it has not yet begun to enjoy. If it seems more horrible to kill a man in his own house than in a field, because a man's house is his place of most secure refuge, it ought surely to be deemed more atrocious to destroy a fetus in the womb before it has come to light."— [John Calvin](#), French Theologian, Pastor, and Reformer

Contribution statements for calendar year 2023 taxes will be emailed upon request. Please call the Parish Office (856-424-3212) if you would like your year end statement.

Cornerstone Retreat

Friday, March 15, 2024 5:00pm - 10:30pm

Saturday, March 16, 2024 8:00am - 8:00pm

Christ Our Light Parish Center

Cornerstone is a retreat for all women given by women of the parish. Please join us to build community, make time for spiritual renewal and growth in our knowledge and love of God. **For more information** contact: Kristin Sagedy at 609-217- 0427 or kmsagedy@gmail.com OR Michelle Goetz at 315 -405-5441 or mrgoetz62@gmail.com

Little Flower Girls' Club

Growing Holier One Virtue at a Time

For girls 4—6 years old at Blessed Edmond Childhood Education Center, 1000 Cropwell Road, Cherry Hill, NJ. Informational meeting May 18th at 3:00 PM Cost: \$40 includes sash, patches, materials, workbooks and games. **For more information or to RSVP:** email: emilylminton@gmail.com



Humanity and Justice

Today's wars and conflicts have put humanity on the brink of the abyss, Pope Francis said, calling for a worldwide cease-fire. "I will never tire of reiterating my call, addressed in particular to those who have political responsibility: stop the bombs and missiles now, end hostile stances" everywhere, the pope said in an interview in an Italian newspaper, published Jan. 29. "A global cease-fire is urgent: either we do not realize it or we are pretending not to see that we are on the brink of the abyss," he said. Asked specifically about the situation in Israel and Palestine, the pope said that the **Oslo Accord is "very clear with the two-state solution.** Until that agreement is implemented, real peace remains distant." The pope said the thing he fears most is a "military escalation" in which the conflict might "further worsen the tensions and violence that already mark the planet."



February 14, 2024 Ash Wednesday

is a Holy Day.

Mass Schedule is 9:00 AM & 7:00 PM
Prayer Service at 4:00 PM

There will be a collection for the Church in Central & Eastern Europe.

Volunteers Needed! Cherry Hill Food Pantry Dates:

Tues. February 6 --5:00 pm to 7:30 pm

Thursday February 8 —10:00 am to 1:00 pm

Tuesday, February 13 — 5:00 pm to 7:30 pm

Thursday, February 15 — 10:00 am to 1:00 pm

If you can help, please call Elaine: 856-428-8431

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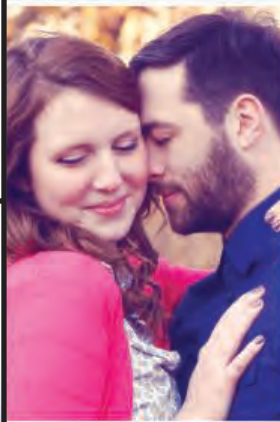
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