

FIRST SUNDAY of LENT- March 9, 2025

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.

OCIA

The Order 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 call 424-3212

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



The Season of Lent is a special time of reflection, praying and listening to God. What do you hear? God does not always speak out of the clouds or in a burning bush. Sometimes His heavenly voice may come to us in a song, in a wisp of wind, or in the recesses of our minds. We may hear, but we don't always listen. This Lent try to take a moment every day and listen for the welcoming voice of God.



The Collection for March 2, 2025

| | |
|----------|-----------|
| Sunday | \$5832.00 |
| E-Giving | \$2062.00 |
| Total | \$7894.00 |

The Second Collection this weekend is for the Catholic Missions among Black and Native Americans.



Here's how to take part in **40 Days for Life** in our Community from March 5-April 13
Vigil Location: Outside Cherry Hill
Women's Center on Kings Hwy.
Vigil Hours can be scheduled from
7 AM-7 PM Tues.-Sat.

Our local Contact is Claire Howson
Claire@helpersnj.org 856-313-986



Please pray for our dear deceased parishioner Teri Bones and her family. May she rest in peace.

STEWARDSHIP CORNER

1st Sunday of Lent Stewards Blessed

*"I have now brought you the first fruits of the products of the soil which you, O Lord, have given to me." -
DEUTERONOMY 26:10*

This line from the Old Testament offers two challenges. First, do you give to God from your "first fruits" - the first and best that you have to offer? Or do you give from what you have leftover? Second, do you realize that everything you have and that everything you are has been given to you by God? We aren't owners of anything, we are merely Stewards of God's gifts. Pray for a grateful and generous heart, every day, in all circumstances.



From the Pastor's Desk

Facing Your Demons

Dear Parishioners,

In today's Gospel (Lk. 4: 1-13) we see Jesus *tempted by the devil*. I think the example of this series of *temptations* is a most valuable instruction for anyone desiring to take Lent seriously. Obviously the Church does as well, since the first Sunday of each Lent begins by recalling these temptations.

First, we see that Jesus was *led by the Spirit into the desert*. Why would the Spirit lead Jesus into the *desert*? The desert is an austere place where a person must confront many harsh realities: severe weather, lack of comfortable amenities, silence and danger, as a start. When we are deprived of creature comforts, remove noisy distractions, and must face harsh realities, we *can* and *should* begin to realize the complete dependence that we have on Almighty God. We are put in a situation where the desert and its silence can become the place where we hear the voice of God more clearly and powerfully. And that is where Satan often begins to interfere as well.

Jesus *fasted for forty days*. Not only was he in the desert, but he also took on bodily penance. *He was hungry*. Why deprive ourselves of anything? If we live only for this world, then self-sacrifice, mortification, and penance seem ridiculous. However, **denying oneself** (and picking up the cross) was given as a condition for discipleship by Jesus (See Mt. 16:24). Discipline and self-sacrifice strengthen a person both physically and spiritually. A person becomes more prepared to live out the sacrificial love Jesus most perfectly demonstrated by His death on the cross.

Why, then, when we are trying to do something spiritually beneficial, do temptations arise? Let's face this harsh reality head on: Satan and his followers hate anyone trying to serve the Lord and grow closer to Him. They will put any possible obstacle in our way to prevent this from happening. We may be tempted to physical, earthly **pleasure** (food, drink, sex, drugs, and anything that makes us feel good or gives us a temporary "high") instead of the eternal, spiritual satisfaction that comes from the love of Almighty God. Basically, it is hedonism to one degree or another. *Command that stones become loaves of bread*.

Temptation can take the form of **wealth or earthly goods**. Material possessions become the reason for my existence. My home, my car, my vacation(s), my boat, my bank account, my jewelry, etc. become my *god*. I think more *things* will make me happy. *All the kingdoms of the world . . . I shall give you*. At what price? This was the second temptation in the desert (materialism).

Finally, we can be tempted by our **ego**. Whenever we are proud (in the sense of **hubris**), boastful, unwilling to seek help (when needed), arrogant, or overconfident in our own ability or skills, we can ascend that *parapet* where we think that we do not need God. Or worse yet, we think that we are *god*. *No one can tell me what to do. I know best. I will not serve*. This type of thinking (egoism) is represented in Jesus' temptation from the parapet of the temple.

Remember, temptation is not sin. In his humanity, Jesus resisted these temptations and did not sin. He faced Satan head on and rejected his false allurements. Jesus showed us that when we focus and direct our actions completely on the love of God, then we have the ability to do the same. *The Lord, your God, shall you worship and Him alone shall you serve*.

Go into the desert this Lent. Face your demons. It is there where they can be confronted and conquered.

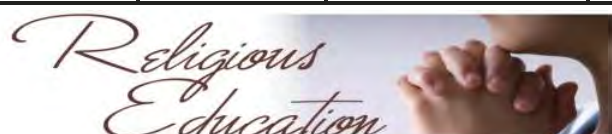
Fr. Ed Namiocka

Pastor

FIRST SUNDAY of LENT- March 9, 2025

Ministry Schedule March 15/16 2025

| | Clergy | Music | Eucharistic Minister | Lector | Altar Server |
|----------|--------------|------------|----------------------|-----------------|--------------|
| 4:30 PM | Fr. Coronado | Len | E. Beckman | C. Betson-Smith | |
| 8:30 AM | Fr. Namiotka | Julie | Sr. Diana | T. Smith | A. Bresani |
| 11:00 AM | Fr. Namiotka | Erin/Choir | J. Flynn | J. Johnson | N & M Flynn |



Lent is a 40 Day Season of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. We seek the Lord in Prayer by reading Sacred Scripture; We serve by Giving Alms; And we practice self-control through Fasting.

What can we do?

March 16—Family Stations of the Cross 9:30 AM in the Chapel

Sock Drive for St Joseph’s House: Please bring in new adult men and women’s sock to class by March 30th.

Rice Bowl to be returned to class by April 6, 2025.

Join us on these dates for

Hospitality and Fellowship

Thursday, March 13th Virtual Journey to Lourdes France. Sign up required.

Stop by after all Masses next **Sunday, March 16** for coffee and donuts sponsored by StVdP.

March 19th St. Joseph Feast Day refreshments after the 9:00 AM Mass.



An invitation to men of the parish from the Cherry Hill Council 6173 Knights of Columbus: If you want more information or to join us, www.kofc.org/joinus with this QR code include “Council 6173” when asked and use the promo code: BLESSEDDMCGIVNEY to join.



“Our Journey United in Hope,”

is inspired by the theme of the Jubilee Year, “Pilgrims of Hope.”

It reflects our collective commitment to walk on the path together with the hope Christ has provided us.

By supporting the *Catholic Ministries Appeal*, you are supporting those who comprise the programs and ministries of the Diocese of Camden. These ministries serve the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of the hungry and challenged. Help us bring the light of *hope* to those in the Catholic community of South Jersey.

Our Goal this year is \$74,300.00 To date we have reached \$15,811.50 / 21.3%. Thank you to all those who already made a commitment.

You are invited to Lourdes Virtual Pilgrimage Experience on Thursday, March 13th.

We will bring Our Lady of Lourdes to those who are not able to make the journey.

Light supper will be provided in the Parish Hall at 5:00 PM.

The “Pilgrimage” will begin at 6:00 PM in the Chapel.

Registration is required and space is limited.

Sign-up at the doors of the Church or call the office at 856-424-3212

A Free Will Offering Graciously Accepted



The Knights of Columbus would like to **THANK** everyone who came out and supported their Fundraiser night at OUTBACK. It was good to see so many people.

MASS Intentions

Saturday, March 8

4:30 PM Int of Reo Vazquez and Michael Buck
r/b Swartz Family

Sunday, March 9

8:30 AM Dolly Staton
r/b St. Thomas More Women's Club
11:00 AM Nella Ferraro r/b Carabasi Cousins

MONDAY, March 10

9:00 AM People of the Parish
9:30—Noon Adoration in the Chapel

TUESDAY, March 11

9:00 AM Kathleen Centonze r/b Brother Joe
9:30—Noon Adoration in the Chapel

WEDNESDAY, March 12

9:00 AM Fr. Phillip Johnson r/b Family
9:30—Noon Adoration in the Chapel

THURSDAY, March 13

9:00 AM Joe Sklencar r/b Pat Byrnes
9:30—Noon Adoration in the Chapel

FRIDAY, March 14

9:00 AM John P. McTigue r/b Byrnes Family
9:30—Noon Adoration in the Chapel

Saturday, March 15

4:30 PM Dee Curns r/b Pat & Nick Kirincic

Sunday, March 16

8:30 AM Dolly Staton r/b Joanne Wachman
11:00 AM Michael Vigrass r/b Family

Pope Francis Prayer Intention for March
For families in crisis

Let us pray that broken families might discover the cure for their wounds through forgiveness, rediscovering each other's gifts, even in their differences.

Spanish Ministry Prayer Group
St. Thomas More Parish

Meeting Dates

Friday: March 14, 21, 28 2025

Join us as we Pray the Rosary, Lectio Divina, and reflect on themes of faith.



PLEASE REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS: THE SICK... Kristina Acevedo, Caroline Bancheri, Jim Beaney, Joe Centonze, Grace Cobin, Joseph Console, Mary Cowan, Catherine Diana, Linda Di Giulio, Fr. George Donfurtang, Elizabeth Garber, Eileen Gerie, Eileen Goodwin, Marjorie Graham, Marion Kapischke, Michael Kapischke, John B. Kennedy, Bob Lento, Marie Manalo, Kelly Moore, Carter Oakley, Tina Petrone, Dom Sacca, Carlos Santiago, Teddy Shaffer, Grace Sklencar, Claire Spence, Stacia Strack, Michael Suralik, Pat Suralik, Ed Targonski, Sr., Ann Vigrass, Joanne Wachman, Sarah Warner, Baby Finley, Arlene Pajic, Cecilia Sim, Barbara Cremean, Mark DeYoung, Felician Lopez.



PRAY FOR THOSE IN THE ARMED SERVICES...

Sgt. Jordan Beckman, Captain Patrick J. Bones, USMC, Major Anthony R. Cosentino, USAF, TSgt. John P. DeYoung, Sam Houston, USN Special Forces, 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, Sgt. Nicole Williams, PFC Timothy Kenny, U.S. Army and *all those serving our country.*

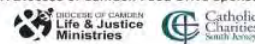
Diocesan Faithful Food Drive will be the weekend of March 15/16. Items will be donated to the Cherry Hill Food Pantry as well as our StVdP Society. Donation bags with suggested items are available at the doors of the Church.



ITEMS IN MOST NEED:

- > CANNED CHICKEN/TUNA
- > CANNED VEGETABLES
- > CANNED SOUPS
- > CANNED FRUIT
- > CANNED BEEF STEW/ CHILI
- > MACARONI AND CHEESE (BOX)
- > PASTA WITH CANNED SAUCE
- > DRIED WASHED POTATOES (BOX)
- > CEREAL/RICE
- > COFFEE AND TEA

A Diocese of Camden Food Drive Sponsored by:



FIRST SUNDAY of LENT- March 9, 2025

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 Second Sunday of Lent, March 16– Luke 9:28b-36

Jesus took Peter, John, and James and went up the mountain to pray. While he was praying his face changed in appearance and his clothing became dazzling white. And behold, two men were conversing with him, Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of his exodus that he was going to accomplish in Jerusalem...While he was still speaking, a cloud came and cast a shadow over Peter, James, and John, and they became frightened...Then from the cloud came a voice that said, "This is my chosen Son; listen to him."

Commentary:

Entering the darkness is always a scary business. Abram did it and encountered the presence of God. The three disciples did it and heard a mysterious voice reveal the true identity of Jesus. The only way to the radiant light of God is by way of the darkness. But it's the way we most fear and resist, because we can't find our own way or control what happens to us there. Loss of control, or what we might call total surrender to God's purposes, is precisely the point. As long as we pursue our agenda and say, "My will be done," we get what we want. We get earth. We get stuff. We also inherit the legacy of a selfish, loveless history. When we pray, "Thy will be done," the landscape changes. We enter the darkness to emerge in a glorious reality we call the reign of God. The light is much better there, and we can finally see rightly.

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?

LENT SCHEDULE

What better time to join a **Small Christian Community** at our parish for Lent.

You can still Sign-up for Lent SCCs in the Gathering Space. Joining is one of the best ways to connect in faith and fellowship at Saint Thomas More parish while strengthening our relationship with God.



Daily Mass is celebrated Monday through Friday at 9:00 AM in the Chapel.

Rite of Reconciliation

Confessions are heard every Saturday from 3:00-4:00 PM as well as First Friday and First Saturday after the 9:00 AM Mass. Make plans to receive the Sacrament of Penance during Lent.



Stations of the Cross will be held every Friday during Lent at 7:00 PM in the Chapel. Come join us.

Eucharistic Adoration is held in the Chapel Monday through Friday after the 9:00 AM Mass until Noon.

Why not invite a friend or neighbor to join you for Mass, a Lenten service, or a faith formation program at our Parish.



Who are the Undocumented?

There has been a lot of talk about undocumented immigrants. The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops published Catholic Social Teaching on Immigration and the Movement of Peoples. In it they say "Jesus reiterates the Old Testament command to love and care for the stranger, a criterion by which we shall be judged: "For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me" (Mt 25:35)."

A 30 year old father of three stood up against unfair and inhumane actions by his Nicaraguan government. Their peaceful protests were met with three of his friends being killed. Threats to him and his family made it impossible for them to remain in their homeland. They sought escape and freedom in the US. He is now facing extreme difficulty obtaining the necessary US documentation because the Nicaraguan government deleted his existence, including records of his college degree. They are neighbors of ours, living in Camden County. He has a full-time job in the US and is barely able support his family.



Patricia, Pamela, Rodman Jr. and Paula would like to extend their sincerest gratitude for all the Masses and prayers of remembrance for their dearly Beloved Mother Mabel Dolly Staton. May she rest in peace.

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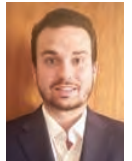
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SAMANTHA JOSEPHSON

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