



# St. THOMAS the APOSTLE

2160 North Edward Decatur, IL 62526 (217) 877-4146 StThomasDecatur@gmail.com

**8th Sunday in Ordinary Time • February 27, 2022**



## **From the fullness of the heart the mouth speaks**

What we say reveals so much about who we are. It discloses what is really going on within us: our integrity, priorities, depth of conscience, level of compassion and understanding of mercy. People whose speech is judgmental or overly critical usually reveal an interior life that is angry, unsettled, defensive, and shallow.

Our speech communicates our sense of right and wrong, the strength of our relationship with God and how we feel about our fellow human beings. We are also quick to point out the faults of others, concentrating on their shortcomings and wrongdoings before our own.

Only God fully understands what is going on inside the human heart. Only God can see the depth of a human soul. Perhaps it would do us well to consider what may be happening inside our brothers and sisters and temper our critical speech of what we see occurring outside.

Looking within will also help us identify our own sins and weakness so that we can be better positioned to offer the type of wisdom and compassionate guidance that can really be of help to our friends. In walking the journey together, we can help each other become the best we can be. Humility is the order of the day and the primary virtue that prevents us from being hypocrites.

## LITURGY SCHEDULE

### *Weekends*

Sunday 10 am

### *Weekdays*

Monday-Thursday 5:15 pm

### **Reconciliation**

Sundays: 9:15 am - 9:45 am

Tuesdays: 4:15 pm - 5 pm

### **Eucharistic Adoration**

First Saturday at 8:30 am

### **Decatur Catholic Radio**

WDCR 88.9/96.5

## CONTEMPLATE

## **Believing in the Resurrection of the Dead**

We have been reading and hearing Saint Paul to the Corinthians since the middle of January. He proclaims the resurrection of Jesus as victory over death. This belief, this word from the creed – “he...rose again on the third day” – is central to faith. It lays the foundation for our own being raised one day because death is not the end of us. We say in faith each Sunday: “I look forward to the resurrection of the dead.”

- Even though November is past, how can I still remember the dead? For whom will I pray? Whom among them will I ask to pray for me?
- How am I preparing now for my own resurrection from the dead?

## Turning Our Minds to Lent

Happy It's hard to believe we're at that time of year already (the older I get, the more often I find myself sounding like my parents...but it seems like Christmas was just yesterday!), but Ash Wednesday is next week!

Ash Wednesday, contrary to popular belief, is actually *not* a Holy Day of Obligation—and yet, after Christmas and Easter, I would say that it's the most well-attended day of the Church year. Don't get me wrong—I'm all about people coming to Mass as much and as often as they can...so my hope is not to discourage anyone from coming to Mass as a pious practice to begin their Lent. But I have to admit, it's the sort of "curious" thing that we priests ask ourselves about: 'why is it that people will come to Mass on Ash Wednesday, but not, for example, on All Saints' Day or the Assumption of Mary...or even, *the following Sunday* (days which *are* "required")?'

The more cynical types will readily speak their answer: "it's because people just come for the ashes!" And while I hope and pray (maybe naively) that that's not the entire answer, I think there is, for some, a little truth to that. Each year, rather sadly, I get questions from people asking if there's a time when they can come by the Church to receive ashes without having to come to Mass, or I see people come to Mass and leave right after getting their ashes (i.e. *before* communion). It bespeaks a certain misunderstanding of what we're all about as Catholic Christians. Shouldn't our reception of communion—the *Body and Blood of our Lord*—rank higher in our minds than a little dirt on the forehead?

To put it less crassly: ashes are a **sacramental**, meaning that they *remind* us of God's grace, in this case, reminding us of our earthly finitude and exhorting us to turn to God again and again for the grace of repentance and conversion, so that we might inherit eternal life. But the Eucharist or



Fr. Friedel,  
Pastor

Confession: these are **sacraments**, the very things which *communicate* (i.e. bestow, give, lavish upon us) grace! Receiving the Eucharist or being granted absolution, in the order of helpful things, is *infinitely* beyond just putting ashes on our foreheads. It's the difference between eating a hot dog and walking around with a picture of a hot dog; they're just not the same thing!

We do harm to the Body of Christ (and to our corporate witness as Catholics) if we walk around one day of the year with ashes on our heads, publicly identifying ourselves as Catholic, but then don't even attempt to live as Catholics the other 364 days of the year. It's for that reason that other Christians might accuse us of being shallow or insincere in our faith, concerned only with the rites and outward rituals and not the real tough work of conversion; and *if* that were entirely the case, they'd be right to exhort us to more!

But my sincere hope is that people aren't just coming for the symbol, but rather out of a genuine desire to take upon themselves what the symbol points to: repentance. That gift—the "clarion call" of the Church's season of Lent—is God's work in us, achieved by humbling ourselves to receive His grace in the Sacraments (cough, confession is a great way to prepare for Easter, cough), and reinforced by every act of prayer, fasting, and almsgiving that we take on during this season.

The exhortation that we hear from Jesus (*on Ash Wednesday after all!*) is not to perform these things so as to be seen or merely in an external way. Don't just come and get ashes so that others will think you're Catholic. Rather, I think Jesus would say—*be* Catholic, every day of the year! When we're fasting or doing penance, Jesus tells us to wash our faces and look alive (my paraphrase). Our Father, who sees what is hidden (not just what we present to the rest of the world) repays us in secret for what we do. Our faith is enriched by these beautiful practices, but only if we allow them to point to something deeper in the order of grace. I certainly pray that this would be true—for all of us!

So absolutely—come receive your ashes this Wednesday! But let's make that a spark that ignites a fire in us this Lent, a symbol for each of us of a new beginning, as we don our sackcloth and ashes and go about the hard work of conversion: crying out in humility for the gift of God's merciful and generous salvation, a gift which He wants for us *always!*

Keep spreading joy!

## Thank you!

The 4<sup>th</sup> Degree of the Knights of Columbus, want to express their appreciation and gratitude for your support of the 13<sup>th</sup> annual St. Teresa Scholarship Dinner.



The event held on February 5<sup>th</sup> was a tremendous success both financially and community spirit-wise. With your support, we served over 765 delicious meals. Meals not picked up that evening were donated to Good Sarmatian Inn and Salvation Army Homeless Shelter. We as Knights feel very proud of this event because it not only funds a worthwhile cause but brings together the entire Catholic community in the Decatur area.

Thank you again for your support of Catholic Youth Education, St. Teresa High School, and the 4<sup>th</sup> Degree Knights of Columbus.

### Host the Vocations Crucifix

Praying for vocations to the priesthood and consecrated life is a great way to pray together as a family during Lent

Why not sign up to host the Vocations Crucifix in your home for a week.

## Parish Office

**Rev. Michael Friedel, Pastor**

[mfriedel@dio.org](mailto:mfriedel@dio.org) (217) 877-4404

**Rev. Michael Trummer, Parochial Vicar**

[mtrummer@dio.org](mailto:mtrummer@dio.org) (217) 877-4404

**Rev. Richard Weltin, Pastor Emeritus**

**Deacon Kevin Richardson**

[deaconkev@gmail.com](mailto:deaconkev@gmail.com) (217) 877-4146

**Vern Wilson, Plant Manager (volunteer)**

### Parish Office

Open Mon-Thurs., 9am-noon

2160 N. Edward Street, Decatur, IL 62526

(217) 877-4146

[StThomasDecatur@gmail.com](mailto:StThomasDecatur@gmail.com)

<http://www.StThomasDecatur.com>

**Office Hours:** 9am-noon, Monday-Thursday

## Mass Intentions for the Week

Sunday, February 27

10 am – **Jerry and Marge Hertel, Janet and Jerry Hill, and Peter Schumacher †**

Monday, February 28

5:15 pm – **Mary Kraus †**

Tuesday, March 1

5:15 pm – **Renee Saunches †**

Wednesday, March 2 – *Ash Wednesday*

5:15 pm – **Rev. David Zimmerman †**

Thursday, March 3

5:15 pm – **Marge and Delmer Collett †**

Friday, March 4

*No Mass*

Saturday, March 5

11 am – Funeral Mass for **Bob Luckenbill †**

Sunday, March 6

10 am – **Gene Althoff †**



## PRAYER REQUESTS

### Please Remember in your Prayers

**All who are Ill at Home or in the Hospital and their Families and Caregivers**

Isabelle Blakeman, Irene Crotser,  
Kevin Henry, Polly Hensley,  
Jim Hertel, Brian Hill, Sawyer Dale Hunter,  
Anonymous, Don Keefner, Kelly McLean,  
Trey McLean, Lucia Molloy, Christina Mooney,  
Lucia Mounce, Rev. Msgr. James O'Shea, Joe Perry,  
Kay Russell, Carolyn Thorpe, Roz Sandage,  
Brenda Sullivan, Virginia Thompson,  
JoAn Wayne, Vern Wilson, Tami Wittenauer

Please call the parish office or email [StThomasDecatur@gmail.com](mailto:StThomasDecatur@gmail.com) to add or remove a name.

## Prayer Shawls Are Available

Do you know someone who is ill or grieving a loss? Perhaps they would enjoy the comfort of a prayer shawl that was created by women of the Prayer Shawl



Group. The shawls have been blessed at Mass. Call Deacon Kevin at the parish office or speak to him after Mass to arrange to pick out a prayer shawl for someone.

### Reporting Allegations of Child

**Sexual Abuse** To report allegations of sexual abuse of a minor by clergy or other church personnel—even if it is in the past—individuals are encouraged to call the Diocese's Child Abuse Reporting and Investigation number at 217.321.1155. Individuals may also contact Illinois Department of Children and Family Services Child Abuse Hotline at 1.800.25.ABUSE.

**BEST LENT EVER**  
2.0

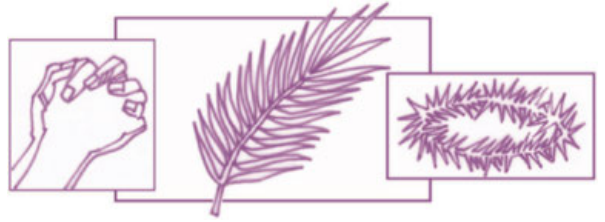
### Feed Your Soul with Prayer this Lent!

Still BEST LENT EVER—Just Even Better. This year...for the first time ever... **Matthew Kelly** is offering TWO options for BEST LENT EVER.

Every day, you will receive two short, practical and inspiring videos in your inbox, each representing a pathway leading toward a better version of you and a closer relationship with God.

Why did he double up? Well, the world has changed. We've changed. And in order to offer a truly transformative experience, he developed two pathways designed specifically to meet you where you are, no matter where you are in your spiritual journey. So this year, have your best lent ever! The program is completely FREE.

<https://www.dynamiccatholic.com/lent.html>



## Penitential Disciplines of Lent

In addition to choosing their own penitential practices, Catholics are also asked to observe the practices of fast and abstinence during the 40 days of Lent. The Lenten Fast and Abstinence Regulations are as follows:

**1.** Everyone 14 years of age or over is bound to **abstain from meat** on Ash Wednesday and all the Fridays of Lent.

**2.** Everyone 18 years of age and under 59 years of age is bound to **fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday**.

(The obligation of fasting ceases with the celebration of one's 59th birthday.)

**3.** Fasting on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday means eating only one full, meatless meal. Two other smaller, meatless meals, sufficient to maintain strength, may be taken according to each one's needs, but together they should not equal another full meal.

Eating between meals is not permitted on these two days, but liquids, including milk and fruit juices, are allowed. When health or ability to work would be seriously affected, the law does not oblige.

**4.** Catholics should not lightly excuse themselves from these prescribed minimal penitential practices.



During this Lenten season, please remember to pray for those in our Sister Parish, Immaculate Conception, in Comapa, Guatemala, as they pray for us.

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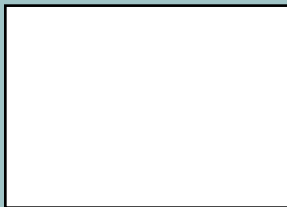
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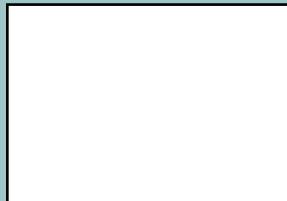
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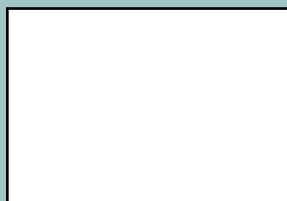
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