

Fourth Sunday of Advent • December 18, 2022



St. THOMAS the APOSTLE

2160 North Edward Decatur, IL 62526

(217) 877-4146

StThomasDecatur@gmail.com



LITURGY SCHEDULE

Weekends

Sunday 10 am

Weekdays

Monday-Thursday 8:15 am

Reconciliation

Sundays: 9:15 - 9:45 am

Wednesdays: 7:30 - 8:10 am

Eucharistic Adoration

First Friday from 9 am - 5 pm

Decatur Catholic Radio

WDCR 88.9/96.5

CONTEMPLATE

How Can This Be?

Words of a visiting angel: Do not be afraid; God has this plan; you are full of grace.

Mary speaks aloud what we all are thinking: "How can this be?" God makes it possible because He makes us holy!



- What should I stop fearing?
- What is God's plan for me just for this day?
- What will I do this week as God's holy person that benefits someone else?

Does the world realize that it is waiting?

The world does not realize any more today than it did over two thousand years ago that it is waiting for a Savior. We need a Savior. We need to see and embrace the God who has broken into history and become one with us. It is this union of God and man that sets us on a straight path, orders our relationships, establishes proper focus and goals, and tells us whose kingdom we really are meant to serve.

The world does not know how truly lost it is. Do you realize how lost you are and that the One you need most is here among us and within your grasp?

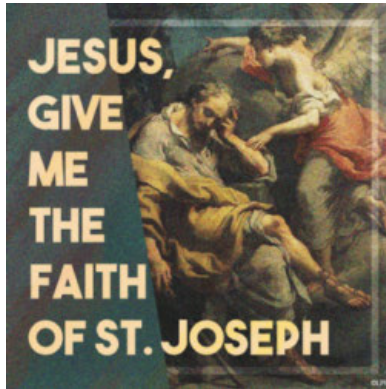
Joseph Speaks to an Angel in his Dream

In our Bible study last Tuesday after morning Mass, we discussed how Joseph's dream encounter with the angel must have left him completely stunned. Maybe he woke up and asked himself, "Did I really speak to an angel? Was it real?"

Ultimately, the simple carpenter from Nazareth let himself be guided by the undeniable will of God: He took Mary as his wife. The ancient prophecy was then fulfilled: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means 'God is with us.'"

Accounts of the Birth of Jesus

We know that the infancy stories of Jesus were among the last parts of the Gospel to be formulated and that only two evangelists considered Jesus' human origins important enough to preserve them in their Gospels.



Matthew begins Jesus' story by acknowledging the scandal: Mary was found to be with child. Matthew adds "through the Holy Spirit" as a note to the reader. Joseph confronts the raw fact of the pregnancy and then receives the offer to interpret it in faith through his actions.

As the Gospel reading this year for the fourth Sunday in Advent, it invites us to join with Joseph in his risky adventure of faith. Perhaps the core of Matthew's narrative is the angel's greeting: "Do not be afraid."

Of what should Joseph not be afraid?

- Of breaking the law, which demanded punishment for a pregnancy outside of marriage.
- Of taking Mary and, of course, her unborn child into his home, and therefore into the rest of his life.
- Of believing the unbelievable and walking confidently into the unknown.

Joseph did what only a man of faith would choose to do. He opened his life to Emmanuel. We receive the same invitation. — Deacon Kevin

BLESSED CHRISTMAS


Next Sunday the world celebrates the Birth of Christ. It is the celebration and remembrance of Christ coming into the world as man to bring all of us the promise of salvation.



What a Gift we have received! No one else could ever have given us this gift. The gift was given to us by a loving Father who wants all of His children to live with Him forever in heaven. So He sent His Son as a baby to bring that promise of salvation to all.

As we open gifts on Christmas Eve/Day we will receive many different things from many different people. Always Remember—This day is being celebrated because of the Birth of Christ. We as Christians always need to keep this in mind. No other gift we will ever receive is as great as the gift we remember and celebrate today.

Please see the CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE in this bulletin.



St. Jude's Novena

May the Sacred Heart of Jesus be adored, glorified, loved, and preserved throughout the world now and forever.

Sacred Heart of Jesus, pray for us.
St. Jude, worker of miracles, pray for us.
St. Jude, help of the hopeless, pray for us. I will never forget thy graces and favors you obtain for me and I will do my utmost to spread devotion to you.

Pray an Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be.
Say this prayer 9 times a day for 9 days.

Thank you, St. Jude, for Prayers Answered.

Citywide Penance Service

THIS AFTERNOON:

St. Patrick Catholic Church
December 18 at 2 p.m.
Five priests will be available for confession

Rejoice in God's love and mercy!



Parish Giving

	Collected	Budgeted
December 11	\$4,051.	\$5,000.

Year-to-Date: \$119,262. \$120,000.

Short/Ahead: - \$738.

R/M Donations.....	\$97.
Sister Parish Donations	\$280.
Christmas Flowers.....	\$7.
All Souls.....	\$5.
Retired Religious	\$138.
Catholic Children's Home	\$25.

Thank you for your continued generosity in supporting the church. Envelopes may be mailed to the parish office, or slipped through the mail slot on the office door.

Bill Pay is offered through many banks. You can schedule a weekly or monthly payment that comes from your checking account. Your bank then mails a check to the parish.

Mass Intentions for the Week

Sunday, December 18

10 am – **Everette and Marie Ryan †**

Monday, December 19

8:15 am – **Christine Kerns †**

Tuesday, December 20

8:15 am – **Norma Wilson †**

Wednesday, December 21

8:15 am – **Helen Dust †**

Thursday, December 22

8:15 am – **Greg Kuse †**

Friday, December 23

No Mass

Saturday, December 24 — *Christmas Eve*

5 pm – **Delmer Collett †**

Sunday, December 25 — *Christmas Day*

10 am – **Lenore “Sug” Lee †**



Parish Office

Rev. Peter Chineke, Parochial Administrator
pchineke@dio.org (217) 877-4146, ext. 20

Rev. Richard Weltin, Pastor Emeritus

Deacon Kevin Richardson
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
http://www.StThomasDecatur.com

Office Hours: 9am-noon, Monday-Thursday



PRAYER REQUESTS

Please Remember in your Prayers

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

Alfred, Betty Althoff, Rachel Flick, Kevin Henry, Jim Hertel, Darlene, Ann-Marie Hillyer, Sawyer Dale Hunter, Anonymous, Amber Johnson, Edwin Jones, Patricia Jones, Kelly McLean, Trey McLean, Lucia Molloy, Christina Mooney, Lucia Mounce, Rev. Msgr. James O’Shea, Joe Perry, Andy Richards, Kay Russell, Carolyn Thorpe, Roz Sandage, Ed Schanuel, Ron Shinall, Brenda Sullivan, Virginia Thompson, JoAn Wayne, Pete Wayne, and Tami Wittenauer

Q: What is the Hispanic Advent custom of “Las Posadas”?



A: “Posada” is the Spanish word for inn or lodging. “Las Posadas” refers to a traditional Advent custom in preparation for the birth of Jesus, beginning on December 16. For nine successive evenings, groups reenact the search of Mary and Joseph for shelter in Bethlehem.

Two children dress as Mary and Joseph, sometimes with Mary riding on an actual donkey. They are usually accompanied by children dressed as angels and shepherds along with the Wise Men. Adults accompany them as they process to designated homes where they sing Christmas songs and request lodging. In the beginning the request is rebuffed. They move to several more homes where the ritual is repeated. Eventually, at the last home, their need is recognized, and they all enter the home where a party ensues. This is repeated in different neighborhoods and homes each of the nine days.

While this custom teaches children an important aspect of the Christmas story, it also emphasizes the need for hospitality to strangers and the continual need we all have to make room for Jesus in our “posada.” As we struggle to arrive at a fair and just immigration policy, it would be good to recall the fact that Mary, Joseph, and Jesus were also immigrants looking for a hospitable place to dwell.

Let the Parish Pray for Your Intentions



The **parish petition book** is located on a stand in the chapel under the icon of Our Lady of Perpetual Help. These intentions will be remembered in our intercessions at all Masses. If

you would like the parish to pray for your intention, please write the intention in the book. Talk to Jesus about your special

Christmas and New Year's Mass Schedule



If you are planning your Christmas and New Year's schedule...

Mass for Christmas Eve

Sat., Dec. 24 — 5 p.m.

Mass for Christmas Day

Sun., Dec. 25 — 10 a.m.

Mass for New Year's Day

Sun., Jan. 1 — 10 a.m. — Solemnity of Mary,
the Holy Mother of God

Delivery of Christmas Cards for Parishioners



This weekend, after the 10 a.m. Mass on Sunday, we will deliver the bags of Christmas cards to our parishioners who are Homebound or in the Nursing Home. Thank you for your time and effort in showing our love to those who cannot join us at Mass each Sunday!

We will need some “elves” to help deliver the bags after Mass. If you have a little time to help drop off the cards to a couple of parishioners please meet at the table with the bags of cards after Mass.

Thank you for
your donations

CHRISTMAS
Food Basket Project

Thank you, St. Thomas Parish Family!

We want to thank you for your incredible generosity for the Christmas Basket Project. Thanks to your generosity, we collected \$2,700 to give families in need \$50 Aldi gift cards through Catholic Charities.

-- Bob and Sheila Allen

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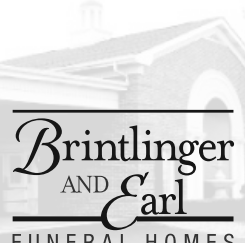
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