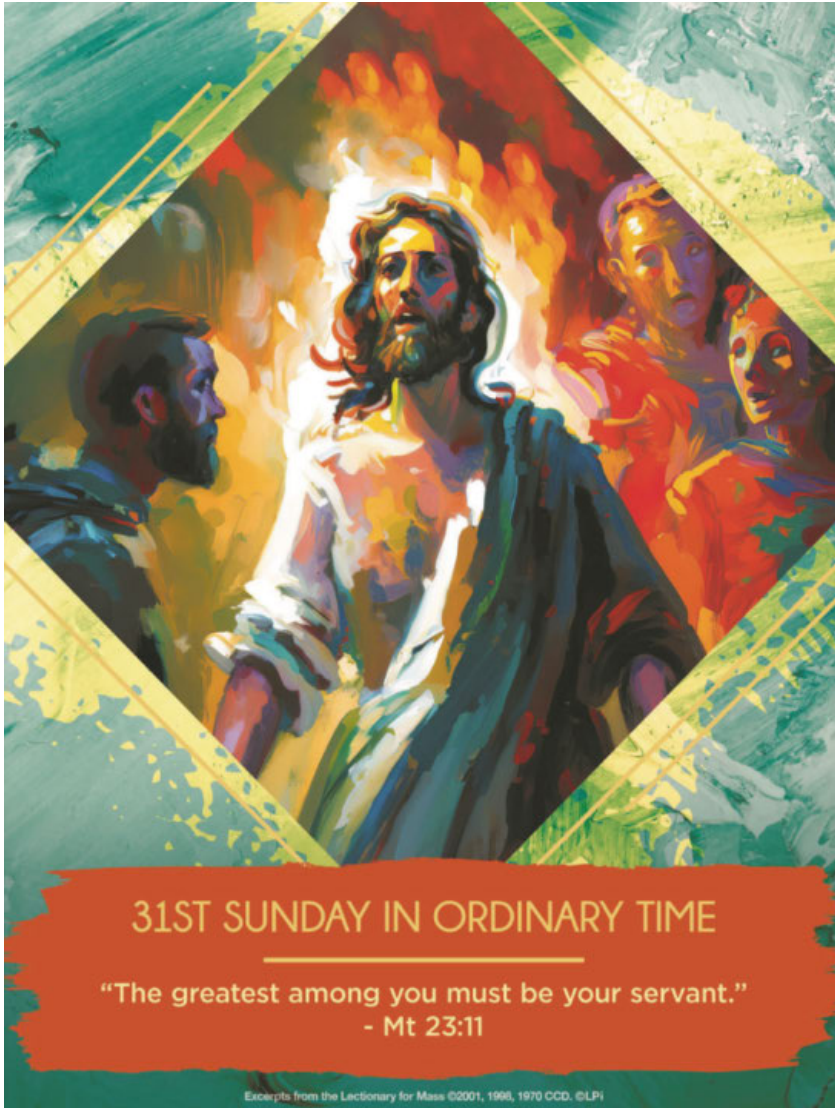


31st Sunday In Ordinary Time • November 5, 2023



St. THOMAS the APOSTLE

2160 North Edward Decatur, IL 62526 (217) 877-4146 stthomasdecatur@dio.org



LITURGY SCHEDULE

Weekends

Sunday 10 am

Weekdays

Monday-Friday 8:15 am

Reconciliation

Sundays: 9:15 - 9:50 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

Last Easter season a new convert to Catholicism at my parish asked me with a grave tone in her voice: "Why do we call priests 'father' if Jesus says, 'Call no man on earth your father, for you have one Father, who is in heaven'?" Thinking myself clever, I asked, "Do you think it's okay to call someone your 'teacher' or 'mister' or 'dad'?" She said, "Yes, I do." I responded, "Well, Jesus seems to forbid that, too. So, it's obviously hyperbole that he's using." She thought for a moment and declared, "Then I will stop using those words, too!" And she walked away. Not the outcome I was seeking.

We shouldn't be too hasty in dismissing this complaint voiced by many non-Catholics. The priest's fatherhood doesn't begin or end in him at all. Rather, the title "father" indicates that he is a sacramental sign of God's Fatherhood revealed in Jesus.

The longer I'm a priest, the more I'm comfortable with people not using the title "father" and just calling me "John." After all, only God is Father in the truest sense. At the same time, Jesus has brought the Father close to us, very close. We honor this closeness in some men with the title "father." Who are the priests in your life whom Christ has sent to you? How wonderful that Christ has surrounded us with humble signs of his Father's love. It's good to celebrate that love with gratitude for the priests in our lives.

— *Father John Muir*

National Vocation Awareness Week, November 5-11, 2023



NVAW, celebrated November 5-11, 2023, is an annual week-long celebration of the Catholic Church in the United States dedicated to promoting vocations to the priesthood, diaconate, and consecrated life through prayer and education, and to renew our prayers and support for those who are considering one of these particular vocations. NVAW began in

1976 when the U. S. bishops designated the 28th Sunday of the year for NVAW. In 1997, this celebration was moved to coincide with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, which fell on January 13 in 2013. Beginning in 2014, NVAW was moved to the first full week of November. (from

<http://usccb.org>)



A WORD FROM FR. PETER

On The Third Anniversary of his Death – Nze Pius Chineke

Last Tuesday evening, the Eve of All Saints, made it three years since my Dad passed into eternity. Talking about him and reminiscing the beautiful memories of life with him while growing up both challenges me to greater ideals of life and instills a unique passion for life in me.

Dad was the breadwinner of a large family of sixteen children within an extended family system of parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins, and other relatives. He was a community leader who championed the affairs of our community for many decades in various capacities. As a pioneer schoolteacher and a school headmaster for over forty years, Dad helped establish several schools in our local government (county) and played a vital role in the building of our town's markets and the first Catholic Church – St. John's Catholic Church, Umuobom. As a visible presence and a leader in our Church during his time, Dad welcomed the priests and seminarians who served in our parish and made ours a home for these men until his last years on earth.



Pius Chineke

Oberembazu, as he was fondly called in our community, was a father and friend to so many, so much so that growing up, many of my friends called him Daddy alongside us (his children). Not long ago, one of my grade school classmates chatted with me on Facebook and complained that Daddy had passed two years ago and that I did not tell her. As I apologized for not reaching out to her, I quickly recalled how Dad bought three beautiful school bags in 4th grade for my younger sister, my classmate, and myself. This was just a few months after the young girl lost her father.

While Dad was loved by many people and looked up to as an exemplary Christian father and community leader, he was unpopular among some people, even in our family. He was a fierce defender of ethical values and fairness and stood for the less privileged in the community. While I learned so much from him, there are two things I got from him that I hope to keep with me for a long time.

First, Dad was very receptive to criticisms as a leader and never wavered in his values and decisions when they were for the common good. Secondly, nothing seemed to ever discourage him in his devotedness to Christ and everything Catholic. The sins and mistakes of Church officials, the challenges he encountered as a person, and the

condemnations and betrayals he suffered from, even among his own, for standing for fairness. During such sufferings, Dad's love for Christ and his absolute trust in the Blessed Virgin Mary shone even brighter.

As I devote the rest of my life interceding for him and the rest of the Christian faithful at the Altar of the Eucharist, I am consoled that when Dad left this world, the number of my guardian angels increased. May his soul and the souls of the faithful departed through the mercy of God Rest In Peace. Amen.

—Fr. Peter

THANK YOU: A special thanks to all the lectors, and those interested in becoming lectors, who attended the meeting on Oct. 25. Fr. Peter was very pleased with the attendance and the feedback he received. We St. Thomas parishioners appreciate your dedication to this ministry.

Mass Intentions for the Week

Sunday, November 5

10 am – **Polly Hensley †**

Monday, November 6

8:15 am – **Marge Collett †**

Tuesday, November 7

8:15 am – **Joe Weaver †**

Wednesday, November 8

8:15 am – **John Morthland, Jr.**

Thursday, November 9

8:15 am – **Norman Hensley †**

Friday, November 10

8:15 am – **Valda Stone,
Virginia & Bob Lees**

Saturday, November 11, *No Mass*
† *Deceased*



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.

Parish Giving

	Collected	Budgeted
October 29	\$ 3,831	\$5,000
Year-to-Date:	\$ 70,790	\$90,000
Short/Ahead:	- \$ 19,210	
R/M Donations	\$ 630 (\$500 for Roof)	
Sister Parish Donations	\$ 34	
WORLD MISSION SUNDAY/PROPAGATION OF FAITH	\$ 35	

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. If interested, you might speak to your bank about the option.

Online giving is also available:
<https://parishgiving.dio.org/stthomasdecaturn>



Food for the Hungry

Just a reminder that we have a Food Drive for Catholic Charities every weekend of the year. A few cans and boxes of food make a big difference to people who may otherwise go hungry (put items in the basket by the coat rack).

Here are some ideas:

- dry pasta, macaroni & cheese, jars of pasta sauce
- canned fish and meat (salmon, tuna, ham, chicken, turkey - pop-top cans are best)
- canned vegetables, fruit, soup, and stew
- instant potato packets
- peanut butter, jam and jelly, cereal
- canned beans, and pork & beans

Thanks for your caring and generosity!

Request a Mass Intention

If you would like to have a weekday or weekend Mass offered for a deceased loved one or friend, or for another intention, please call **the parish office at 877-4146**.



The typical offering for a Mass intention is \$10. Mass Intention Envelopes are now available on the table with the Rosaries in the back of the church.

PARISH OFFICE

- Mrs. Cynthia Hinkle**, *Parish Secretary*
- Mr. Richard Harding**, *Maintenance Manager*
- Mr. Joe Snow**, *Business Manager*
- Mr. Chris Hoffman**, *Communications Coordinator*
- Rev. Richard Weltin**, *Pastor Emeritus*
- Rev. Peter Chineke**, *Parochial Administrator*

Open Mon-Fri, 8am-noon
 2160 N. Edward Street, Decatur, IL 62526
 (217) 877-4146

Email: stthomasdecaturn@dio.org
 Website: <http://www.StThomasDecatur.com>
 Facebook: St. Thomas the Apostle Church,
 Decatur, IL

PRAYER REQUESTS

Please Remember in your Prayers All who are Ill at Home or in the Hospital and their Families and Caregivers

Stan Rothenbuecher, Carol Dilbeck, Rachel Flick, Kevin Henry, Jim Hertel, Ann-Marie Hillyer, Edwin Jones, Patricia Jones, Kelly McLean, Trey McLean, Christina Mooney, Lucia Mounce, Tom Mounce, Rev. Msgr. James O'Shea, Art Richard, Kay Russell, Roz Sandage, Libby Spainhour, Rev. Jason Stone, Ed Schanuel, Ron Shinall, Brenda Sullivan, JoAn Wayne, Pete Wayne, Jan Vandercar, and Tami Wittenauer. Please call the parish office or email stthomasdecaturn@dio.org to add or remove a name.



Thank You, Veterans!



Prayer For Vocations

God our Father, we thank you for calling men and women to serve in your Son's Kingdom as priests, deacons, and consecrated persons. Send your Holy Spirit to help others to respond generously and courageously to your call. May our community of faith support vocations of sacrificial love in our youth and young adults. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever. Amen.



READ THE BIBLE



God in Political Speeches

“Almighty God, we make our earnest prayer that Thou wilt keep the United States in Thy holy protection; that Thou wilt incline the hearts of the citizens... to entertain a brotherly affection and love for one another and for their fellow-citizens of the United States at large.” — George Washington, Prayer after Inauguration, 1789

“God grants liberty only to those who love it, and are always ready to guard and defend it.” — Daniel Webster, Speech, June 3, 1834

"With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in to bind up the nation's wounds..."
— Abraham Lincoln, *Second Inaugural Address*, March 4, 1865

On June 14, 1954, President Dwight Eisenhower signed a bill to insert the phrase “under God” into the U.S. Pledge of Allegiance that children recited every morning in school. Previously, the pledge—originally written in 1892—had contained no reference to religion.

"If we ever forget that we're one nation under God, then we will be a nation gone under." — Ronald Reagan, Speech at an Ecumenical Prayer Breakfast in Dallas, TX, August 23, 1984

-LOVE-

“What the world needs now is love, sweet love
It's the only thing that there's just too little of
What the world needs now is love, sweet love
No not just for some, but for everyone”

—from a song by Jackie DeShannon, 1965



Love for the Blessed Mother

According to Fulton Sheen, if we become less holy, we will lose love for the Blessed Mother. And the more we return to loving the Blessed Mother, the more we will love the Church, because Mary is the symbol of the Church.



Encyclical Quotes of the Week

In 2009, Pope Benedict XVI wrote in *Caritas in Veritate* that “Each person finds his good by adherence to God's plan for him, in order to realize it fully: in this plan, he finds his truth, and through adherence to this truth he becomes free” and also “the humility of those who accept a vocation is transformed into true autonomy, because it sets them free.”

(700 years earlier, the poet Dante Alighieri also praised God's plan for us. In his *Divine Comedy*, Paradiso, Canto III, Piccarda tells the reader that “His will is our peace.”)



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