



St. Thomas

THE **Apostle**

CATHOLIC CHURCH

*"God's people in **Extraordinary** variety"*

Serving Hyde Park's Catholic Community since 1869

December 18, 2016

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Carmelite Community
 Bro. Daryl Moresco, O.Carm., *Prior*
 Fr. Elias O'Brien, O.Carm., *Pastor*
 Fr. Kartolo Malau, O.Carm.
 Fr. Alex Audziayuk, *Assistant*
 Fr. Innocent Rossi

Parish Offices: Hours: 7am-3pm
Located at 55th & Woodlawn
 5472 S. Kimbark Avenue
 Chicago, IL 60615-5297
 Phone: (773) 324-2626
 Fax: (773) 891-0602
parishoffice@stapostleparish.org

Pastor
 Elias O'Brien, O. Carm., ext. 107

Office: Lisa J. Couch,
 (773) 324-2626
 Parish Voicemail box, ext. 0

Director of Parish Operations
 Paula Jones, ext. 109

Treasurer
 Joanne Kiekenapp, ext. 289

Plant Manager
 Joe Fingers, ext. 104

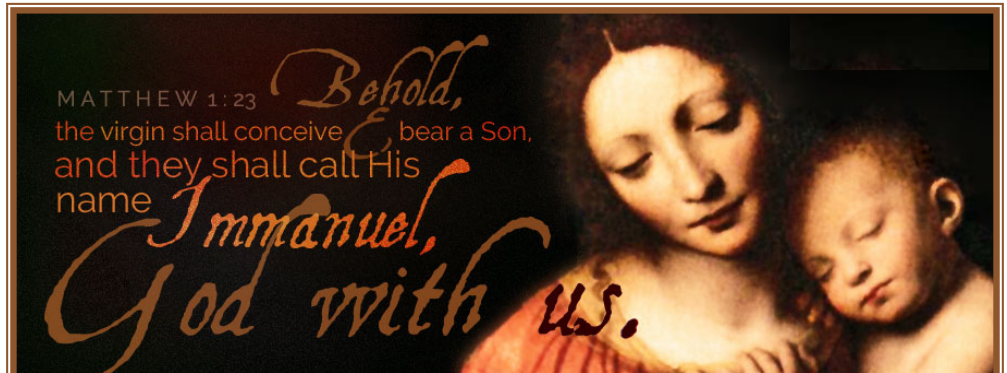
Music Ministry Ed Martin
 Luciano Laurentiu, ext. 105

Liturgist & RCIA
 Jennifer Davis, ext. 102

Bulletin Editor Lissa Romell

Parish School
 Timothy Gallo, *Principal*
 5467 S. Woodlawn Avenue
 Chicago, Illinois 60615-5299
 telephone: (773) 667-1142
 Fax: (773) 891-0602
www.stapostleschool.com

"Carith" Carmelite Pre-novitiate House, 5498 S. Kimbark Ave.
 Chicago, IL 60615
 (773) 322-1222



Holiday Liturgy Schedule

Christmas Eve - Saturday, December 24
 Family Mass: 4 p.m.

Lessons & Carols: 11:15 p.m.

Midnight Mass: Midnight

Christmas Day - Sunday, December 25
 Mass: 10 a.m.

New Year's Eve - Saturday, December 31
 Mass: 4 p.m.

Solemnity of Mary - Sunday, January 1
 Mass: 10 a.m.

St. Thomas the Apostle Parish

Mass Schedule

Sunday
 8:30am & 11am

Monday-Friday
 8:30am

Saturday
 8:30am & 4pm

Holy Days
 8:30am

Confession

Saturdays, 3-3:30pm.

Baptism

Please contact the Parish Office.

Marriage

Please make arrangements eight months in advance.

Membership

Please register at the Parish Office

Come visit us at www.stapostleparish.org

Today's Readings: Isaiah 7:10-14 ♦ Psalm 24:1-2, 3-4, 5-6
Romans 1:1-7 ♦ Matthew 1:18-24

John Kim (Happy Birthday!)

Betty Carol Brewer (Belated Birthday Blessings)

Next Sunday's Readings: Isaiah 52:7-10 ♦ Psalm 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6
Hebrews 1:1-6 ♦ Luke 1:5-25



Join us after Mass in the
Parish Hall for Hospitality
hosted by our
STA Greeters.

Weekday Mass Intentions

Weekday Masses are held in the Daily Mass Chapel at 8:30 a.m.

MONDAY, December 19

Readings: Jgs 13:2-7, 24-25a ♦ Ps 71:3-4a, 5-6ab, 16-17 ♦ Lk 5:17-26

Do not be afraid Zechariah, because your prayer has been heard. Lk 1:13

†Maricar Frazer, †Wm. C. Romell
Prayers for the Marsh Family (s.i.)

TUESDAY, December 20

Readings: Is 7:10-14 ♦ Ps 24:1-2, 3-4ab, 5-6 ♦ Lk 1:26-38

For nothing will be impossible for God. Lk 1:37

†Maricar Frazer, †Wm. C. Romell
All patients at U of C Hospitals
Joanne Glass (Belated birthday blessings!)

WEDNESDAY, December 21

Readings: Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a ♦

Ps 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21 ♦ Lk 1:39-45

Arise, my beloved, my dove, my beautiful one, and come! For see, the winter is past... Sg 2:10-11

†Maricar Frazer, †Wm. C. Romell
Our Departed Sinsinawa Dominican Sisters

THURSDAY, December 22

Readings: 1 Sm 1:24-28 ♦ 1 Sm 2:1, 4-5, 6-7, 8abcd ♦ Lk 1:46-56

He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty. Lk 1:53

†Maricar Frazer, †Dr. Herman Neal
†Rosalia Mota, Romell Family (s.i.)

FRIDAY, December 23

Readings: Ml 3:1-4, 23-24 ♦ Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-9, 10 & 14 ♦ Lk 1:57-66

All the paths of the Lord are kindness and

constancy toward those who keep his covenant. Ps 25:10

†Maricar Frazer, †Thomas Tinley
Cozad & Clement Families

SATURDAY, December 24

Readings: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16 ♦ Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 27 & 29 ♦ Lk 1:67-79

In the tender compassion of our God the dawn from on high shall break upon us, to shine on those who dwell in darkness...and to guide our feet into the way of peace. Lk 1:78-79

†Gwen, Larry & Michael Lewis
†Maricar Frazer, †Wm. C. Romell

†Joan Robbins

†deceased

Reflection on the Gospel

by our Holy Father FRANCIS

Pope Francis in reflecting on the spirit of wonder engendered by this Sunday's Gospel reading recounting Mary's visit to her cousin, Elizabeth, miraculously with child in her old age, speaks of three loci of wonder in our lives: the other; history; and the Church.



The *other* is [the first locus of wonder], in which to discover a brother, for, from the moment in which Jesus was born, every visage carries the features of the Son of God – above all when it is the face of a poor person, because it was as a poor person that God entered the world and it was by the poor that He allowed himself to be approached first.

(Cont'd on p. 6)

This Week's Calendar

Youth Group will be on break Dec. 3 - Jan. 15.

SUNDAY, December 18-Anointing

9:30am: Sunday School

9:30am: Confirmation Class

12:15pm: RCIA

12:30pm: Charismatic Prayer Group, 107

12:30pm: Domestic Violence Outreach, St' Luke

2pm: Knitting Guild Christmas Party, Parish Hall

TUESDAY, December 20

1pm: School Christmas Program, Church

WEDNESDAY, December 21

3pm: Peace Prayer Vigil, Chapel

SATURDAY, December 24

Christmas Eve

3pm: Confessions

4pm: Family

Christmas Mass

11:15pm: Lessons

and Carols

Midnight: Midnight

Mass



SUNDAY, December 25

Christmas Day

10am: Christmas Day Mass

Guests & Visitors

We're so glad you're here and invite you to journey in faith with us. We believe the church is the sacrament of God's saving presence in the world.

Our goal is to provide a spiritual home where all are welcome, where the healing, reconciling, liberating love of God flows through us to all people.

Would you like to become a parishioner? Please call Lisa at the Parish Office, 773-324-2626.



Pastor's Letter

Dear parishioners & friends of Saint Thomas the Apostle,

As we mark the beginning of the winter season, and the fourth Advent Sunday, we draw near to the cave and prepare for the great feast of the Nativity. These extraordinary feasts bring us naturally to holy meditation and prayer; 'God so loved the world that he sent his only Son....' As we enter into the fourth week of our preparations for Christmas, I encourage you to keep your eyes fixed upon the Virgin who is with Child. By her willing obedience she brings our Savior to birth, and we find peace.

I want to draw your attention once again to the special **Christmas Schedule**, which is the same as the past few years, even though this year Christmas falls on a Sunday. Christmas Eve (Saturday) we will have the *Christmas Family Mass* at 4 p.m. There will be the usual *Midnight Mass* (Lessons and Carols beginning at 11:15 p.m.). On Christmas morning, Sunday December 25th there will be just *one Mass* at 10 a.m. On Saturday New Year's Eve (December 31st) there will be Mass at 4 p.m., and on Sunday January 1st there will be just *one Mass* at 10 a.m.

Please note, that on the two Sunday mornings (Christmas December 25th and New Year's January 1st) there will be *only one Mass* at 10 a.m.

Daily Mass will be every day at 8:30 a.m., including Saturday Christmas Eve and Saturday New Year's Eve.

On the feast of the Epiphany (January 8th this year) we will return to our regular Sunday schedule.

Moving from spiritual themes to something much more mundane, may I wear my old pastor hat for a moment? Grumpy old pastors like me always lament whenever the feast of Christmas falls on a Sunday. Of course it is less work for all of us, and quite convenient for the calendar. On the other hand, we potentially lose two weekend collections! So, once again I want to thank you for your great generosity over the holidays. Traditionally the Christmas collection at Saint Thomas the Apostle has been an enormous help as we try to pay our bills at the end of the year. So I ask you to bring both your Christmas gift and your weekly tithe to Church on Sunday, Christmas Day. If you are one of the blessed ones who offer your tithe regularly through *Give Central* may I humbly ask you to consider a special visit to the website and offer what you can at Christmas? If you are considering making charitable bequests or contributions before the end of the calendar year, please consider helping our *Building Repair Fund*.

In this important week, I pray for God's blessing on you and your family. If I will not see you at the holiday, may I wish you a safe journey and every blessing at the Nativity of the Savior, and may the Mother of God enfold you in the mantle of her protection! ~Elias

Fourth Sunday of Advent: Waiting for God

In his book, *No Man Is An Island*, Thomas Merton wrote: "There must be a time of day when the man who makes plans forgets his plans, and acts as if he had no plans at all. There must be a time of day when the man who has to speak falls very silent. And his mind forms no more propositions, and he asks himself: Did they have any meaning? There must be a time when a man of prayer goes to pray as if it were the first time in his life he had ever prayed; when the man of resolutions puts his resolutions aside as if they had all been broken, and he learns a different wisdom: distinguishing the sun from the moon, the stars from the darkness, the sea from the dry land, and the night sky from the shoulder of a hill."

I am at that time of day....

I am at a Kairos time of day, a time when I can give myself a chance to let go of everything I know in order to be carried along by the flow of all I do not know, the very flow of the mystery and true reality of life. Speaking about prayer and the essence of what we truly need, Thomas Merton said, "We have what we seek. We don't have to rush after it. It is there all the time, and if we give it time, it will make itself known to us."

I am going to give it time. I am going to enter the invisible chamber of my soul where I will try to shut out all cares, worries, distractions, idle thoughts . . . shut out all but God as I wait for God. Oddly enough, (Cont'd on p. 5)



Dates to Remember!

December 20

*School Christmas Program
1:00pm*

December 21-January 3

*No School
Christmas Break*

December 25

Merry Christmas!



January 1

Happy New Year!



January 4

School Resumes

January 10

*All School Mass
8:30am*



Thank You!

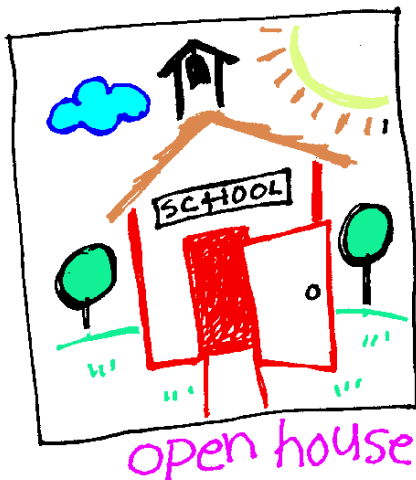
All of us at STA would like to thank those of you who contributed to our Reach for the STArS campaign! We would also like to thank you for your prayers for our school's success. We are nearly at our goal of \$60,000! We are still accepting contributions to our campaign. You can receive a reply card in our school's office or donate online at the following link: <https://www.givecentral.org/location/358/event/12232>.



School Tours and Open Houses

Are you interested in exploring Catholic education at St. Thomas the Apostle School?

We are now hosting weekly tours of the school on Wednesday and Friday mornings at 8:30am and 9:30am. You are also welcome to come to one of our upcoming Open Houses!



Open House dates:

January 31, 2017 at 5:00pm
March 16, 2017 at 5:00pm

If you would like to get any more information about school tours and open houses, please contact our school office 773-667-1142 or e-mail Tareema Jean-Baptiste at tjeanbap@stapostleschool.com. You can also learn more on our school's website: www.stapostleschool.com.

St. Vincent de Paul Christmas Gift Tree!

St. Vincent de Paul thanks everyone who participated in this year's Gift Tree. We're so grateful for all your support of this project! Everyone on the tree got their gifts, thanks to your generosity.

Meeting change: No meeting on Sunday, December 25th. Our next meeting will be Sunday, January 8th, at 12:30.



Waiting for God... (Continued from page 3)

say all the saints and mystics, God is already there. It is I who am missing, hidden in the rubble of my own life, buried under the weight of my countless faults, failures, mistakes, and illusions. Now is the time to cast off the burden of the past with all its missteps, concern for the future with all its sudden uncertainty and seek to see the face of God in this present moment, in this Kairos time of day.

I pray that the emptiness and darkness does not scare me, does not prompt me to seek the false light of the world and all its empty promises and illusions. My past experience has taught me that whenever the light of God truly penetrates my inner being, I am able to see clearly how far I am from God, how great the contrast is between who and what God is and who and what I am. This is a time for renewal, a time for rejuvenation, a time to enter the fullness of life.

We live in dark times, in an age of deep despair. Without an inner sense of depth and freedom we easily become oppressed by the darkness and despair, victims of our circumstances. With God, we can see and move beyond our limitations. God created us for growth, for an ever-expanding realization of the divinity within us. In God, there is true freedom. Outside of God, there is only bondage.

For me, seeing so much suffering in the massive slums of the world forced me to forget myself, my own limitations, and hear the silent voice of God calling me to respond, not only to the shameful injustice, but also to God's endless mercy and love. In seeing so many starving kids with bloated bellies and the overwhelming need of the poor, I became less concerned with my own subjective needs and harmful compulsions, and more aware of the self-emptying love of Christ which I needed to imitate to the best of my ability. But the noise of life sometimes

distracted me and rendered me deaf to God and capable of only hearing my own confused and rambling voice.

Without the stillness and silence of solitude, we easily slip back into the mediocrity of a comfortable Christianity which is no match for the gun-toting, hopeless nihilism of postmodern life where everything is reduced to a commodity for sale, where unbridled greed has caused a catastrophic global economic recession, where materialism without qualification and sex without love are affirmed and championed, where mainstream corporations distribute

pornography without shame or reproach, where dialogue has given way to vitriolic hate speech, where conflicts are settled by violence, where barbarous acts of terrorism threaten all, where blind religious fundamentalism passes for true faith, where drug addiction and alcoholism are rampant, where thousands of kids die every day from hunger, and where selfishness and individualism have created prisons of poverty and are destroying the earth.

In stillness and silence we are able to catch a glimmer of the interconnectivity of all life, to see the sun as our brother and the moon as our sister, to see that all of humanity and all of creation as part of our family.

Even in solitude I am powerless to create (or even merit) the desire of my heart, the desire to see the face of God. It is only by grace that God gives us eyes to see, ears to hear, and a heart to understand. And the lived reality of God's grace and presence leads us, in our own fragility, to greater and greater heights of compassion for others. *[Excerpted from Falling Silent by Gerard Thomas Straub.]*

May you be blessed with God's grace and presence during this holy season.



Receive Communion at Home or in a Nursing Home If you or a loved one are homebound or in a Nursing Home and wish to receive Holy Communion, please contact the parish secretary (Lisa) at 773-324-2626. She will arrange for one of our dedicated and experienced Ministers of Care to visit you. If you need to see a priest, the Minister of Care will be able to help you with that as well.



Visit www.carmelites.net

Offerings

December 11, 2016

Sunday	\$7,232.30
Sunday (Give Central)	\$2,077.03
Christmas	\$955.00
Christmas (Give Central)	\$400.00
Flowers	\$265.00
Building Fund	\$1,180.00
Building Fund (Give Central)	\$400.00
Stipends	\$80.00
Candles	\$179.96
Hospitality	\$107.30
All Souls	\$25.00
Catholic Charities	\$10.00
Retired Religious	\$20.00

Sunday Total	\$219,340.09
Less budget:	\$276,000.00
Under budget:	-\$56,659.91

	Saturday, Dec 24, 4:00 PM	Saturday, Dec 24, 11:59 PM	Sunday, Dec 25, 10:00 AM
	Nativity of the Lord	Midnight Mass	Nativity of the Lord
Eucharistic Minister	Denise Martin-Echols (BC) Teresa Vazquez (CL) Joseph Alulis (CL) Rebecca Gray Smith (CR) Dennis Johnston (CR) Kurt Davis (BL) Sandra Ham (BR) Jennifer Davis (CL) NOT FILLED (CR)	Jacky Grimshaw (BC) Dorothy Bennett (CL) Jennifer Davis (CL) Vida Benn (CR) Kurt Davis (CR) Paula Jones (BL) Michael Wilson (BR) Jacqueline Callery (CL) NOT FILLED (CR)	Brittany McGhee (BC) Lena Williams (CL) Elizabeth Watson (CL) Joanne Glass (CR) Gwen Anderson (CR) Betty Brewer (BL) Yvonne Brooks (BR) Villa Gordon (CL) Judith Lake (CR)
Lector	Rebecca Gray Smith (Lector 1) Seletta Nichols (Lector 2)	Jacky Grimshaw (Lector 1) Vida Benn (Lector 2)	Janet Fair (Lector 1) Vicky Longawa (Lector 2)
Altar Servers	Acolyte-Kurt Davis Kene Jude	Acolyte-Kurt Davis Anna Armelle	Acolyte-Kurt Davis Wanda Jude

Please Remember in Prayer

Parishioners & friends who are ill:

- Estrella Alamar, Lucas Allen, Dorothy Bonds, Romy Crena, Sandra Dammons, Esther Dionisio, Marilyn Epps, Fr. Jack Farry, Lina Garcia, Pamela Graniczky, Effie Hinton, Sr. Jean Marie Hobbs, Gwendolyn Holliday, Wm. G. Howard, Carolyn Jones, Connie Jose, Charlie King, Pat & Tim King, Linda Loggins, Mankowski Family, Gerri Martin, Norma McCall, Theresa McDermott, Anastacia I. Mebane, Clara Morgan, Chris Mureiko, Caridad Neal, Jeffrey Paul, Edmond Peirre, Selwyn Revish, David Nathaniel Robinson, Elizabeth Ruyter, Melba Sales, Bobby Sims, Charles Walker, Sr., Jo Washington, Julia Washington, Richard West, Mavis Willis, Edward Wong, Jr., Marie Bijou Wong

For those who have died:
Ashanti McCall (niece of Lenora Austin)

Pope Francis (Continued from page 2)

Another *locus* of wonder in which, if we look with faith, we feel real wonder, is history. So many times we think we see it the right way, and instead we risk reading it backwards: it happens, for example, when history seems to us to be determined by the market economy, regulated by finance and business, dominated by the powers that be. The God of Christmas is rather a God who “shuffles the deck” – He likes to do it, eh? – As Mary sings in the *Magnificat*, it is the Lord who casts down the mighty from their thrones and lifts up the lowly, who fills the hungry with good things and sends the rich away empty (Lk 1.52 to 53). This is the second surprise, the wonder of history.



The third *locus* of wonder is the Church. To look on her with the wonder of faith means not just considering the Church only as a religious institution – which the Church is – but to feel her as a mother who, despite

her warts and wrinkles – we have so many! – lets the contours of the bride beloved of and purified by Christ the Lord shine through.

At Christmas God gives us all of Himself by giving His one and only Son, who is all his joy – and only with the heart of Mary, the humble and poor daughter of Zion, become the Mother of the Son of the Most High, that we can rejoice and be glad for the great gift of God and for His unpredictable surprise: may she help us to perceive the wonder, these three wonders: the other, history and the Church; so let it be with the birth of Jesus – the gift of gifts – the undeserved gift that brings us salvation, that it might also make us feel this wonder in meeting Jesus. We cannot have this wonder, however, we cannot meet Jesus, if we do not meet Him in the other, in history and in the Church.

EMMY® NOMINATED

MARCO PANUCCIO PRESENTS



WEDNESDAY • 21 DECEMBER 2016 • 7:30 PM

Brian Locke, collaborative pianist

St. Thomas the Apostle Church, 5472 South Kimbark Avenue

\$25 General | \$15 Student

For tickets please visit chicago.brownpapertickets.com or call 1.800.838.3006.

The Holidays are here!

Gift a special person with a commemorative brick for one of our Parish’s two brick walkways. The brick can be engraved with your name or that of someone you wish to honor, such as a special teacher, professor, or classmate. All net proceeds benefit the STA School Endowment Fund.

A standard 4x8 inch brick for \$200 may have 3 lines with up to 13 characters (including spaces) per line. A larger 8x8 inch brick for \$500 may have up to 5 lines with 13 characters (including spaces) per line. Your purchase of one of these bricks will help STA school to continue its tradition of excellence. For more information, please get an application from Lisa Couch at the parish office (773-324-2626) or from Endowment Fund committee chair, Mary Kaess (773-924-6097).



Holiday Calendar Adjustments

There will be **no Hospitality on Christmas Day and New Year’s Day**. Hospitality will resume in the new year on January 8th.

Due to holiday travel, last Wednesday was the last Carmelite vespers of 2016; **Carmelite vespers will return on January 11th** at 5pm.

Our **Youth Group** is on break from December 3 to January 15.

There will be **no prayer meeting** next **Sunday, December 25th**, and the following **Sunday, January 1st**, in observance of Christmas and New Year's Day. We will resume meeting at 12:30 in room 107 of St. Thomas School on Sunday, January 8th.

St. Thomas the Apostle’s Prayer Vigil for Peace in Our City

with exposition of the Blessed Sacrament takes place on **Wednesdays from 3 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.**

We meet each week in the daily mass chapel on the east side of the church at 5472 S. Kimbark.

You are welcome to stay for part or all of this vigil. Questions? Call the parish office, 773-324-2626. Please spread the word.

“Did I offer peace today?
 Did I bring a smile to
 someone’s face?
 Did I say words of healing?
 Did I let go of my anger and
 resentment?
 Did I forgive?
 Did I love?”
 These are the real questions.”
 - Henri Nouwen