

# St. Thomas the Apostle Roman Catholic Church

Rectory/Parish Center: (973) 338-9190 . Fax: (973) 338-4224 . Religious Education: (973) 338-7400  
School: (973) 338-8505 . Convent: (973) 338-9118  
Address: 60 Byrd Avenue, Bloomfield, NJ 07003 . Website: [www.stachurchbloomfield.com](http://www.stachurchbloomfield.com)

Rev. Charles J. Miller, M. Div., Pastor

Rev. Philip A. Sanders, S.T.B., Parochial Vicar • Rev. Thomas F. Blind, M. Div., In Residence

## PERMANENT DEACONS:

Deacon Albert H. Tizzano • Deacon Dennis J. Besida • Deacon Thomas J. Coyle

## EUCCHARISTIC LITURGY

Saturday Eve: 5:00pm

Sundays: 7:30, 9:00,  
10:30am & 12:00 Noon

Weekdays: 7:30, & 11:30am

Saturday Mornings: 8:30am Only

Holy Days:  
7:30, 11:30am & 7:00pm

Holidays: 8:30am Only

PASTORAL ASSOCIATE FOR  
ELEMENTARY CATECHETICS:  
Tracey Rennie

PASTORAL ASSOCIATE  
FOR PARISH MINISTRY:  
Sister Arleen Crimmins, O.P.

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL:  
Ms. Joan Ferraer

DIRECTOR OF LITURGICAL  
MUSIC MINISTRIES:  
Nancy A. Cardone

ASSISTANT LITURGICAL  
MUSIC MINISTERS:  
Paul DiBianca  
Kimberley Mesiti

PASTORAL ASSOCIATE FOR FAMILY  
& ADULT FORMATION MINISTRIES:  
Robert P. Miller

COORDINATOR OF YOUTH MINISTRY:  
Mr. Timothy Dennin

PASTORAL COUNCIL:  
Tom Rossano, Chairperson  
Vincent Lipoma, Vice Chairperson  
Michele Sweetman, Secretary

FINANCE CHAIRMEN:  
Peter Maulbeck, Finance Council  
Patrick DeCotiis, Finance Committee

SACRAMENT OF  
RECONCILIATION:  
(Penance/Confessions)  
Saturday: 11:00am

MARIAN  
DEVOTIONS:  
Mondays  
Novena Prayer  
11:30am Mass

LITURGY OF  
THE WORD  
WITH CHILDREN:  
Sundays: 10:30am Mass  
September - June

CATHOLIC  
COMMUNITY  
SERVICES  
OFFERING SOCIAL  
SERVICE ASSISTANCE  
1(800) CCS-7413  
Fax: 596-3735

**Masses for the Week**

**Sunday, December 14**

Saturday, December 13

5:00 pm Joseph Sawicki & Vincent Lupo - Family

Sunday, December 14

7:30 am Elizabeth Donatiello - Family

9:00 am For the People of the Parish

10:30 am David & Donald Stefanelli - Mother

12:00 pm Rodger Ryan - Friend

Monday, December 15

7:30 am Nancy Quinn - Friends

11:30 am Patrick Martorano - Family

Tuesday, December 16

7:30 am Angelo Melia - Friend

11:30 am George M. Kuhn - Friend

Wednesday, December 17

7:30 am Paul Candido - Friend & Families

11:30 am Angelo Melia - Friend

Thursday, December 18

7:30 am Paul Candido - Friend

11:30 am Nancy Rasp - Mother

Friday, December 19

7:30 am Richard Adrian Sause - Family

11:30 am Wm. Fred & Mary Roberts - Family

Saturday, December 20

8:30 am Mary Ombalsky - Daughter

**Sunday, December 21**

Saturday, December 20

5:00 pm Michael John Melograno - Wife

Sunday, December 21

7:30 am Anna Stevens - Daughter & Family

9:00 am Anthony Zoppi - Friend

10:30 am For the People of the Parish

12:00 pm Jean Niemi - Daughter

**PRAY FOR OUR SICK:**

John McCue, Claire Mykowski, Alex Wessel  
Rosabel Sullivan

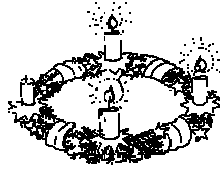
**REST IN PEACE:**

Msgr. Robert Lennon, Edna Salierno

**CANDLE INTENTIONS:**

**Church:** Frank Corsi      **Rectory:** Alice Ferraer

**Convent:** David & Donald Stefanelli



**Third Sunday  
of Advent**

The Third Sunday of Advent, like the Fourth Sunday of Lent, is a day of joy in the midst of a penitential season. We continue our Advent journey, but we come to a vantage point from which we can see what lies ahead - Christmas joy. This Sunday is called Gaudete Sunday (meaning "rejoice") because of the first words of the Entrance Antiphon for today, from St. Paul's letter to the Philippians: "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice! The Lord is near" (Philippians 4:4-5). The word *rejoice* comes up again and again in the readings and prayers for today.

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**LECTIONARY**

■ THE GOSPEL: The Gospel according to John does not mention any of the details about the Baptist which Mark gave us last Sunday - his camel's hair clothing, his leather belt, his unusual diet. In the Gospel according to John, John the Baptist simply comes to give "testimony" (John 1:7) to the light, that is, to Christ. The priests test him - clearly, they are afraid he has come to threaten their hegemony in religious matters. But the Baptist tells them point-blank, "I am not the Christ" (1:20). When they press him, he tells them that he is "*the voice of one crying out in the desert*" (1:23), the forerunner Isaiah foretold. And when they still do not understand, John tells them that there is "one among you whom you do not recognize" (1:26). The one they are looking for, the one they are afraid of is already here.

■ FIRST READING: The First Reading is from Third Isaiah. In the Gospel, Jesus applies this reading to himself. After his baptism and temptation in the desert, Jesus took the scroll and read this passage to the people. The servant of the Lord is both prophet (gifted with the spirit) and king (anointed by the Lord). His mission is to those society looks down on-the poor, the brokenhearted, the captive, the prisoner. He brings a jubilee, a time for forgiveness, a "year of favor" (Isaiah 61:2). The servant is also filled with joy. God will make "justice and praise" (61:11) spring from the earth as naturally as plants grow in a garden.

■ PSALM: Mary's song of rejoicing, the Magnificat.

■ SECOND READING: From Paul's first letter to the Thessalonians likewise urges us to rejoice, to pray, to give thanks, and to listen. We are not to "quench the Spirit" (1 Thessalonians 5:19); rather, we are to test everything and keep what is good. This way we may grow in holiness and be ready for the coming of the Lord.

**Visit our website at  
[www.stachurchbloomfield.com](http://www.stachurchbloomfield.com)**

*Mass Schedule  
for the Christmas Season  
at St. Thomas the Apostle Church*



**RECONCILIATION (CONFESSION) SCHEDULE**

Saturday, December 13, 20, 2008, at 11:00 a.m.  
(at St. Thomas the Apostle Church)

**Monday, December 15, 2008 – 7:30 p.m.**  
**Reconciliation (Penance) Service**  
**at St. Valentine Church**

...with Individual Confessions heard by the Priests from  
the Churches of St. Thomas the Apostle, St. Valentine  
and Sacred Heart Church.

**CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE**

Wednesday, December 24, 2008 (Christmas Eve)

4:00pm (Herron Hall – School)  
Christmas Music Prelude & Mass  
4:00pm (Church) Christmas Music Prelude & Mass  
6:00pm (Church) Mass  
10:30pm (Church) Concelebrated Mass with Music  
Prelude at 9:45pm.  
**(There is No Midnight Mass)**

Thursday, December 25, 2007 (Christmas Day)  
8:00 a.m.-10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon  
(All Masses with traditional Christmas Carols)

**FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY**

Saturday, December 27, 2008 – 5:00pm  
Sunday, Dec. 28, -7:30am-9:00am-10:30am-12noon  
**Blessing of Families at Masses today!**

**SOLEMNITY OF MARY, MOTHER OF GOD**

Wednesday, December 31, 2008 - 4:00pm  
Thursday, January 1, 2009  
Masses at 7:30am, 11:30am

**SOLEMNITY OF THE EPIPHANY**

Annual “Bell Sunday” -- Sunday, January 4, 2009  
Saturday, January 3, 2009 - 5:00pm Vigil Mass  
Sunday, January 4 - 7:30am - 9:00am - 10:30am - 12noon  
(Children’s Epiphany Pageant following 12noon Mass)

**SCHOOL, RELIGIOUS ED & SACRAMENTS**

**ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE SCHOOL  
SHOP RITE GIFT CARD FUNDRAISER**

HELP THE STA HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION REACH  
THEIR FUNDRAISING GOALS BY PURCHASING *SHOP RITE*  
GIFT CARDS.

**YOU RECEIVE THE FULL DOLLAR VALUE OF THE CARD &  
STA SCHOOL RECEIVES 5% OF YOUR PURCHASE (FROM  
SHOP RITE).**

**SHOP RITE GIFT CARDS CAN BE USED . . .**

- % AT ANY SHOP RITE STORE OR SHOP RITE PHARMACY
- % TO PURCHASE OTHER STORE GIFT CARDS (i.e.  
DISNEY, KOHLS, SEARS, HOME DEPOT, BEST BUY,  
RED LOBSTER, OLIVE GARDEN, ETC.)
- % TO PURCHASE CHRISTMAS GIFTS INCLUDING TV’S,  
DVD PLAYERS, GAME CONSOLES, ETC. (SEE THE  
SHOP RITE CIRCULAR FOR ADVERTISED SPECIALS)
- % AS STOCKING STUFFERS

**THERE ARE 3 EASY WAYS TO PURCHASE SHOP RITE GIFT  
CARDS:**

- % AFTER EVERY MASS (IN THE BACK OF THE CHURCH)
- % FROM JUDY IN THE PARISH CENTER
- % BY CALLING THE STA SCHOOL OFFICE @ 973-338-8505

*We welcome into our Community of Faith  
With our prayers and good wishes,  
Our newly Baptized...*



*Sofia Noel Duca*  
*Parents: Amber (Grzywinski) & Joseph Duca*

*Alice Olivia Kas*  
*Parents: Colleen (O’Brien) & Martin Kas*

*Griffin Henry Koenig*  
*Parents: Ann (Benjamine) & Kevin Koenig*

*Madelynn Rose Nolasco*  
*Parents: Jessica (Jernick) & Frayne T. Nolasco*

***Session Dates for Baptism for 2008***

**CATECHESIS PREPARATION**

In the St. James Room in the Parish Center

Jan 25	1:00pm
March 29	1:00pm
May 17	1:00pm

**BAPTISM CELEBRATIONS FOR 2008**

Jan 11	1:30pm
Feb 1	1:30pm
Feb 22	1:30pm
April 18	During Mass at 5:00pm
April 19	1:30pm

**STA SOCIETIES, MINISTRIES & EVENTS**

**“THIS WEEK”**

**Monday - 12/15**

PARISH PENANCE AT ST. VALENTINE CHURCH 7:30PM  
September Club – 11:30am in St. Peter  
No evening meetings.

**Thursday - 12/18**

SCC Thursday - 7:00pm in St. Matthew

**Friday - 12/19**

SCC Friday - 6:30pm in St. Peter

**There will be no meetings scheduled during the evening of Monday, December 15<sup>th</sup> so everyone can attend Communal Penance which will be held at St. Valentine Church at 7:30 p.m. Individual confessions will be heard by the Priests of St. Thomas the Apostle, St. Valentine, and Sacred Heart Churches.**

**Wellness Ministry Cares... Assistance Program**

The Wellness Ministry phone line is available Mon-Fri, 9am to 8pm. Call the Parish Center 973-338-9190 ext. 20. A return call will be made within 24 hours. A Parish Nurse will provide limited confidential health counseling & referrals to Community health resources & services. Volunteers are available for errands, home visits and phone contacts.

**BLOOD PRESSURE SCREENING – DEC 20-21**

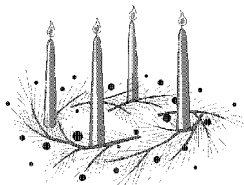
Blood pressure screenings will be held next weekend, Saturday, December 20<sup>th</sup>, after the 5:00 p.m. Mass and Sunday, December 21<sup>st</sup>, from 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 noon.

**Women of St. Thomas parish**

*You are invited!*

We are meeting in the parish center each Tuesday at 12:45pm during the Advent season. Please come join us as we pray and reflect over the Sunday Readings and on on God's Word.

Please contact Sr. Arleen with any questions at (973) 338-9190.



**Next Sunday's Readings:**

2 Samuel 7: 1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16  
Romans 16: 25-27  
Luke 1: 26-38

**LEARNING TO LIVE WITH YOUR LOSS**

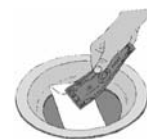
Mon., Dec 21<sup>st</sup>, 2007 – 1:00 p.m.  
in the Parish Center

*“Although you and your loved one will be apart  
May the spirit of Christmas comfort your heart  
And may its message of peace be with you each day  
To help and guide you along life's way.”*

**STEWARDSHIP  
COFFEE AND CONVERSATION**

Everyone is invited downstairs to the Parish Center for coffee and snacks after the 9 and 10:30 am Masses next Sunday. Take a few minutes to chat with your fellow parishioners over a nice cup of coffee. Religious Education, such an important ministry here at St. Thomas, will be our hosts.

**STEWARDSHIP  
OF TREASURE**



The main source of operating funds for St. Thomas the Apostle Parish is our weekly offertory contribution. To assist us in being good stewards of God's gift of treasure, here is what we contributed last weekend compared to what we need to meet our budget:

<b>Last's week collection:</b>	<b>\$20,001</b>
<b>Amount Needed:</b>	<b>\$20,000</b>

Next month we will also report on our Christmas collection. This is an important collection for us. In the past, our monetary gift to our parish has been like an extra month and a half of contributions! Please be sure that St. Thomas is on your Christmas list this season.

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**Right to Life**

For every little child:  
that we might value the infinite gift  
of their life;

*We pray to the Lord*

**SENIOR HIGH YOUTH GROUP NEWS**

MEETINGS EVERY SUNDAY NIGHT IN THE PARISH CENTER FROM 7-9PM. ALL HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH ARE WELCOME

12/14 BOWLING DAY - MEETING - MOVIE NIGHT  
12/21 ADVENT CLOSING MEETING

50-IN-15 PASTA / MACARONI

FOR MORE INFO CONTACT TIM DENNIN AT tdennin@att.net

## PLANNED GIVING

Here are some other ways you can help Saint Thomas the Apostle Church continue its mission of serving God's people.

Give a gift of cash or check for general use or a specific purpose.

Give a gift of stocks or bonds. There could be a significant tax advantage to you if there has been appreciation in their value and they are transferred to Saint Thomas the Apostle Church.

A bequest in your will assures that your possessions are distributed as you desire. When making a bequest, use the full legal name and address:

Saint Thomas the Apostle Church  
60 Byrd Avenue, Bloomfield, NJ 07003

Make Saint Thomas the Apostle Church partial or primary beneficiary of a life insurance policy that is no longer needed for family security. Ask the insurance company for the forms necessary to change the beneficiary or to transfer the ownership to Saint Thomas the Apostle Church.

"I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, make straight the way of the Lord." Are we taking time to put the way of the Lord in our marriage? The next Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekend is March 13-15 For more Information visit our website at: [www.wmme.org](http://www.wmme.org) or call/email (800) 823-5683 [sylvia12@aol.com](mailto:sylvia12@aol.com)

## The Gift He'll Thank You For in March

Long after most Christmas gifts are forgotten, the man you love will be thanking you for signing him up for Men's Cornerstone. It's a chance for him to take a break and hang out for 26 hours with a great bunch of men from our parish. He'll get to know more about them, about God and about himself. And when it's all over, this is one Christmas gift you'll both be grateful for.

Sign him up for the unique Cornerstone retreat.  
March 27 and 28, 2009. Contact:

John Barbetta (973) 338-5086  
[jbarbetta2@verizon.net](mailto:jbarbetta2@verizon.net)

Pat DeCotiis (973) 896-5739  
[pdecotiis@att.com](mailto:pdecotiis@att.com)

William J. Padilla (973) 338-9414  
[wiji777@aol.com](mailto:wiji777@aol.com)



*Men's Cornerstone.  
A gathering of ordinary men  
for an extraordinary retreat.*



## Retirement Fund for Religious Collection This Weekend

Please help support all our brothers and sister in Christ who have dedicated their lives to prayer, ministry and service. When their numbers were vast and their majority young, Religious institutes invested not in pension plans but in ministry and people; in the future of the Church they served. Today, the majority is past age 60 and a significant amount is past age 80. Many institutes simply do not have the resources to meet the dramatically escalating costs of care for their elderly.

Archbishop John J. Myers is asking that we remember the ways that our elderly Religious have nourished our faith and make a donation to the appeal for the Retirement fund for Religious on December 13-14, 2008.

An Annulment Information Evening is scheduled for Wednesday, January 14, 2009. A canon lawyer from the Archdiocese of Newark will discuss the most recent theology, guidelines and requirements for obtaining a Church annulment. The information will be presented in terms that all can understand. A question and answer period will conclude the session. Pre-registration is not necessary. This evening of information will be held at St. Thomas the Apostle RC Church (Lower Church Parish Center), 60 Byrd Avenue, Bloomfield, at 7:30 PM. For additional information, please call the Office of Family Life Ministries at 973-497-4327.



**Moving?**  
Please let us know.  
Within the parish –  
to update new address  
Out of parish –  
to discontinue mailings  
Please call the Parish Center at (973) 338-9190.

## HISTORY OF ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS



The roots of Advent go much deeper than Christianity. They reach deep into the thirsty soil of Israel, and into the dreams of God's chosen people. The word "Advent" itself means "Coming", but it has taken on the nuances of waiting and expectation. And in that sense, we can say that Advent began outside the gates of Eden.

During Advent, we join our voices in a special way with the people of Israel. The Old Testament readings on the Sundays of Advent recall our deepest roots, a people-in-waiting. A great majority of these readings come from one remarkable collection, the Book of the Prophet Isaiah. Isaiah is the poet of the Promise, and his words provide us with a whole treasury of Advent-Christmas images. It was Isaiah who envisioned a "peaceable kingdom", where the lion and the lamb lie down together under a child's leadership. And it was Isaiah who first gave the Messiah the name by which He would be known through all the waiting years: Emmanuel, "God-with-us".

When we look at the roots of Advent in the early years of Christianity, we find a gap. The early Church did not celebrate Advent at all--which is really no surprise, because they didn't celebrate Christmas, either! In those first centuries, Jesus' death and Resurrection were the central experiences of Christianity --especially while Christians themselves were meeting persecutions and death for their beliefs.

In the third century, as Christians was finally allowed to flourish, the Church found room for more light-hearted feasts. No one knew, however, on what day Jesus had actually been born - and to make matters worse, there were many different ways of reckoning time, and no centralized calendar.

In the middle of the fourth century, Pope Julius settled on December 25<sup>th</sup>. It is possible that he chose this date because it fell so close to the Winter Solstice an ancient feast familiar to so many converts to Christianity. The Roman worshippers of Mithras, with whom Pope Julius was familiar, celebrated December 25<sup>th</sup> as "The Birthday of the Unconquered Sun" - a title that certainly suited itself to the Nativity.

Christmas itself didn't come to be called Christmas until much later. Some of the early names for this feast were Epiphany (manifestation), Natale (birth), and interestingly enough - Adventus (the coming).

During the fifth century, Christians in Ravenna, Italy, began experimenting with the liturgy of preparation for Christmas, which they called "Advent". The liturgies developed in Ravenna found their way to Rome in the sixth century, where they were printed in the Celesian Sacramentary, one of the earliest collections of prayers and readings chosen for liturgical use.

In about the ninth century, the first Sunday of Advent became the first Sunday of the Church's liturgical year. The tension between penitence and joy, promise, and waiting which marked the Advent liturgies gave rise to many rich customs and traditions.

The revised Roman Catholic Calendar of 1970 called the Church back to the original Roman understanding of Advent as a period of "joyful and spiritual expectation", not a penitential season

## Bereavement Support Program at St. Mary's Church in Nutley

St. Mary's Church, 17 Msgr. Owens Place, in Nutley, will be holding an eight-week bereavement support group beginning on Wednesday, January 7, at 7:00 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. in St. Mary's parish center. Those grieving the loss of a loved one are invited to attend this series and learn more about the grief process. Experience prayer and support in a spiritual setting and grow in faith and hope for the future. Contact Elaine Tanimura at 973-667-0335 to register.

## "Sing Alleluia"



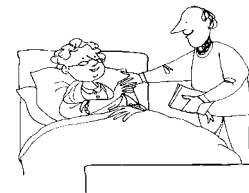
**CHRISTMAS EVE,  
DECEMBER 24<sup>TH</sup> - 4:00 P.M.**

Children of our parish will be leading us in our Communion song at the Christmas Eve, 4:00 p.m. Mass.

Those interested see Paul DiBianca after the 10:30 a.m. Mass this Sunday, December 14<sup>th</sup> or call 732-356-5921.

There will be a rehearsal Tuesday, December 16<sup>th</sup> at 3:00 p.m. in the St. Thomas Room.

## ARE YOU GOING INTO THE HOSPITAL? DO YOU HAVE A FAMILY MEMBER IN THE HOSPITAL?



We would like to visit our parishioners who are homebound, in the hospital or other health care facility. Because of patient confidentiality laws, however, the only way we can know is if someone informs us. Call the Parish Center at (973) 338-9190, leaving your name and number so we may return your call, or you may leave the information at the Parish Desk on Sunday mornings.

*"Rejoice in the Lord always; again I say, rejoice! The Lord is near."*

(Philippians 4:4-5)