

THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD - January 08, 2023



St. Thomas Aquinas - Thomas, West Virginia



Our Lady of Mercy - Parsons, West Virginia

SAINT THOMAS AQUINAS PARISH

Mission: OUR LADY OF MERCY

Pastor: Fr. Martin J. Smay, P.O. Box 300, Thomas, WV 26292 Tel: (304) 463-4488 www.sttsite.com

You may also reach Fr. Smay at the following email: msmay@dwc.org

SACRAMENT OF BAPTISM

Please contact the priest to make arrangements. Instructions for both parents are required. Sponsors from outside the Parish need a letter of eligibility from their Pastors.

SACRAMENT OF MATRIMONY

Arrangements should be made with the Pastor at least six months in advance of the intended date of marriage. Preparation classes with the Pastor are required.



SACRAMENT OF ANOINTING OF THE SICK

If you know of anyone who is seriously ill, hospitalized, shut-in, or about to undergo surgery, please contact the Pastor or the Parish office to let us know.

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE

Saturday 4:00 - 4:50 p.m. at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, and 30 minutes before all Masses and anytime upon request.

HOLY COMMUNION: *We welcome to the Holy Mass all who share our faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. While all are welcome here, we cannot extend to all an invitation to receive Holy Communion. This is not for lack of Christian hospitality. Rather, it is the recognition by the Catholic Church that real divisions of faith and practice do sadly exist among Christians. Practicing Catholics who go to Confession whenever needed are invited to receive Holy Communion. Non-Catholic Christians and those Catholics who should not receive Holy Communion (including those married outside the church and those in need of the sacrament of Penance) are asked to pray for a spiritual communion with the Lord Jesus and for the unity of His Church. Those who are not receiving Holy Communion but who would like to receive a blessing are invited to indicate this desire by crossing their arms across their chests as they approach the priest in the Communion procession.*

EPIPHANY POT LUCK DINNER

Please join us today, Sunday, January 8th, for a pot luck dinner immediately following the 11:00am Mass at Our Lady of Mercy Church. All are welcome to attend.



UPDATE ON 2023 ENVELOPES

The envelopes for 2023 still have not arrived. The envelope company said that the envelopes will be here by the end of January. In the meantime, there are standard envelopes in the back of the church with your name and number on them. Inside are 5 individual envelopes with your envelope number on them to use for the month of January. Please use them as you would your regular envelopes.

ATTENTION OUR LADY OF MERCY WOMEN

The Our Lady of Mercy Women's Guild meeting has been cancelled for the month of January and will resume on February 12th.

KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS

The Knights of Columbus will hold their monthly meeting on Tuesday, January 17th at 6pm at the Our Lady of Mercy Church social hall in Parsons. All Knights please attend.

HOLY HOURS OF REPARATION

There will be two Holy Hours of Reparation next week. The first will be after the 11am Mass next Sunday, January 15 at Our Lady of Mercy. The second will be in Thomas starting at 4pm on Thursday, January 19. These are in conjunction with the St. Monica Prayer Group. To be a member one must simply: 1) recite the Angelus prayer once a day, 2) receive Holy Communion one additional time per week (i.e. in addition to Sunday), and 3) do one Holy Hour of Reparation per month, either in common or by yourself, doing each of the practices for the conversion of the loved ones of the members of the group, and for the conversion of souls in Tucker County.

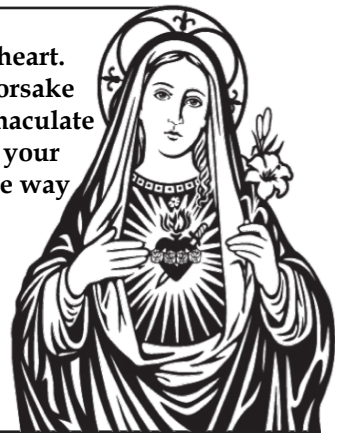
EVENTS ON THE HORIZON

- Jan 08 - Epiphany pot luck dinner after the 11am Mass
- Jan 15 - Holy Hour of Reparation after 11am Mass in Parsons
- Jan 15 - OLM Women's Guild meeting CANCELLED
- Jan 17 - Knights of Columbus meeting in Parsons at 6pm
- Jan 19 - Holy Hour of Reparation at 4pm in Thomas

PRO-LIFE CORNER

"We've distorted things to the point where people believe that anyone who opposes mothers killing their babies is waging a war on women. How can we be so foolish to believe such a thing? One must be able to recognize the depravity to which we have sunken as a society when valuing a baby's life is frowned upon." -Ben Carson

"Do not lose heart. I will never forsake you. My Immaculate Heart will be your refuge and the way that will lead you to God."
~Our Lady of Fátima speaking to Lúcia



CONTRIBUTIONS FOR Jan 01, 2023

St. Thomas: \$3,660.00
Attendance: 5pm - 110; 9am - 69

Our Lady of Mercy: \$861.00
Attendance: 11am - 48

FOOD PANTRY DONATIONS

Don't forget our local food pantries! The Blackwater Ministerial Association Food Pantry in Davis and the Hinkle House Food Pantry in Parsons are accepting food donations. Please bring your food donations to the back of the church and a volunteer will pick them up and deliver them to the proper location.

Rest in Peace, Pope Benedict

by Father Smay

Last Saturday, December 31, 2022 at 9:34am Vatican time, Pope Benedict XVI died. I have a special love for Pope Benedict because he was pope during a crucial period in my life. I was a sophomore in high school when he became Pope and by the time he retired I was finishing up my first year of seminary. During these years I began really practicing the Catholic Faith for myself (as opposed to being Catholic because it's what my parents made me do). It was during that time that I first considered being a priest and, later, took the concrete step of quitting my job and entering seminary.

Born as Joseph Ratzinger about 95 ½ years ago, he became a true intellectual giant. His complete works take up 16 volumes and he was an expert in the writings of Saint Augustine. After being ordained to the priesthood in 1951, he earned a doctoral degree and a license to teach theology. He was sought out by university students because of his talent for communicating the ideas of theology and the teaching of the Church. He went on to become a bishop and was made a Cardinal by Pope Saint Paul VI. Pope Saint John Paul II put him in charge of the Vatican's doctrinal office, the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith. He spent over two decades in this role until the death of John Paul II after which he was elected Pope by the College of Cardinals in 2005.

After his election, Pope Benedict was portrayed as a hardline conservative and was called by some "God's Rottweiler" to disparage him. In reality, Pope Benedict was what he had always been: a classical liberal. The reality of how Pope Benedict conducted himself before and during his time as Pope could be characterized as nothing less than kind and gentle when dealing with people while remaining firmly uncompromising on the teachings of Christ and His Church. Pope Benedict frequently emphasized God's love for humanity and the fact that God wishes to be in a relationship with us. His first letter to the Church was titled *Deus Caritas Est* and was on the topic of Christian love. He had a rare talent for writing about profound truths using simple language.

But being smart or a good teacher or even a pope is not a sign of holiness; actually, they are hindrances to holiness. What is admirable about Pope Benedict was his humility. There are two examples which come to mind. First, after being elected Pope, he wrote a series of books that were published under the title Jesus of Nazareth. In the Forward to the first volume he wrote, "this book is in no way an exercise of the magisterium [i.e. the official teaching authority given to the Church by Christ], but is solely an expression of my personal search 'for the face of the Lord' (cf. Ps 27:8). Everyone is free, then, to contradict me." Pope Benedict was recognizing the truth that, while he happened to be the Pope when he wrote this book, he was not writing the book *as* Pope and therefore he was open to any criticism.

The second instance of humility is his "retiring." In his resignation, Pope Benedict said, "in order to steer the ship of Saint Peter and proclaim the Gospel, both strength of mind and body are necessary, strength which in the last few months has deteriorated in me to the extent that I have had to recognize my incapacity to adequately fulfill the ministry entrusted to me." Pope Benedict was in the habit of recognizing the truth and conforming his actions to it, even if that meant renouncing the most powerful office in the world when such action practically had no precedent.

I would like to finish here by canonizing Pope Benedict; but canonization is not my job. This was a man who, however admirable his virtue, had almost unimaginable responsibilities and thus has much to answer for to the Divine Judge Who cannot be deceived. So we should do as good Catholics do and pray for the repose of his soul.

I close with words from the Spiritual Testament written by Pope Benedict himself: "Jesus Christ is truly the Way, the Truth, and the Life - and the Church, in all her shortcomings, is truly His Body. Finally, I humbly ask: pray for me, so that the Lord may admit me to the eternal dwellings, despite all my sins and shortcomings. For all those entrusted to me, my heartfelt prayer goes out day after day."

MASSES FOR THE WEEK
The Epiphany of the Lord

Monday, Jan 09

The Baptism of the Lord (feast)

7:30am (T) Archbishop John J. Swint †

Tuesday, Jan 10

Weekday

5:00pm (T) Persecuted & Tortured Christians Worldwide †

Wednesday, Jan 11

Weekday

9:00am (P) Richard Bednarz †

Thursday, Jan 12

Weekday

5:00pm (T) Danny Williamson †

Friday, Jan 13

St. Hilary, Bishop & Doctor of the Church (opt)

NO MASS

First Saturday, Jan 14

Weekday

9:00am (P) Thelma Sheeler †

5:00pm (T) John Golder † (ANTICIPATED)

Sunday, Jan 15

Second Sunday in Ordinary Time

9:00am (T) Martha Nichols †

11:00am (P) People of the Parish

12 noon (P) HOLY HOUR OF REPARATION

We offer a hearty welcome to all of our visitors!

If you would like to make a contribution to our parish, please use the visitor's envelope in the pew.

Adoration

Simple Exposition

8:30am - 9:00am
every Wednesday in Parsons

4:00 - 5:00pm
every Friday in Thomas



Adoration & Benediction

Every First Friday

Next:
February 3rd
4:00 - 5:00pm
in Parsons

Let your door stand open to receive Him, unlock your soul to Him, offer Him a welcome in your mind, and then you will see the riches of simplicity, the treasures of peace, the joy of grace. Throw wide the gate of your heart, stand before the sun of the everlasting light. - St. Ambrose

If you would like to place someone on our prayer line call:

Kathy Kotten (304) 866-6243 (T)
Susie Gutshall (304) 478-3217 (P)
or Cindy Long (304) 478-4833 (P)

Let us remember in prayer all of our sick and shut-ins:

Mary Johnson, Joyce Arnold,
Donna Mason, Elaine Watson,
Paula Siler, Anne McVicker,
Madonna DiBacco, Sara Fletcher,
Sarah Nickel, Robert Wheeler,
& Paul Wojtkowski

The Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston maintains an Office of Safe Environment in accordance with the USCCB's Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People. To report an incidence of suspected child sexual abuse, please contact your local law enforcement agency, or you may confidentially contact WV Child Protective Services at 800.352.6513. In addition to civil authorities, to report suspected cases of sexual abuse by personnel of the Diocese of Wheeling-Charleston to the Diocese, please contact one of the Bishop's designees at 888.434.6237 or 304.233.0880: Mr. Bryan Minor, ext. 263; Mr. Tim Bishop, ext. 353; Fr. Dennis Schuelkens, ext. 270 or call the Office of Safe Environment at 304.230.1504. Please visit www.dwc.org under "Accountability" for additional information and reporting methods.