

FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME - January 29, 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.*

THE FEAST OF ST. BLAISE

Friday, February 3rd is the feast of St. Blaise, bishop and martyr. The blessing of throats will be imparted at all the Masses next weekend, and at the end of Mass on Friday.

OFFERING ENVELOPES ARE HERE

The offering envelopes have finally arrived and are available in the back of both St. Thomas and Our Lady of Mercy Churches. Please be sure to pick yours up today.

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED

Christmas decorations will be coming down on Wednesday, Feb 1, in Parsons after the 9am Mass. Any and all help will be greatly appreciated. Father is coordinating the undecorating in Thomas. Anyone interested in helping please talk to him.

Anyone interested in taking a poinsettia home is welcome to take one following this weekend's Masses in both Thomas and Parsons.

DON'T FORGET ABOUT FIRST FRIDAY

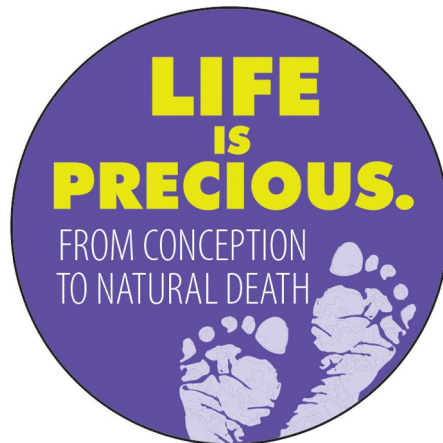
The First Fridays devotion arises from the private revelations of Jesus to St. Margaret Mary Alacoque (1647-1690). One of the promises Jesus made to St. Margaret Mary is as follows: I promise you in the excessive mercy of My Heart that My all-powerful love will grant to those who receive Holy Communion on the First Fridays in nine consecutive months the grace of final perseverance; they shall not die in My disgrace, nor without receiving their sacraments. My divine Heart shall be their safe refuge in this last moment.

So make this devotion a part of your life of prayer, frequent reception of the Sacraments, and works of mercy. Receive Holy Communion on nine consecutive First Fridays with the intention of honoring the Sacred Heart and obtaining the graces Jesus promised. It's easy, with extraordinary rewards!

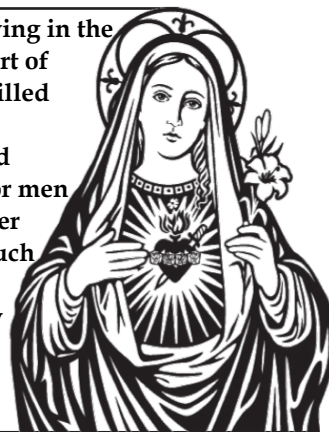
First Friday, Feb 3rd, begins at 4pm at Our Lady of Mercy.

EVENTS ON THE HORIZON

- Feb 4/5 - Blessing of throats after all weekend Masses
- Feb 05 - Ask Father after Mass in Parsons
- Feb 12 - 2nd collection (Church Missions within the US)
- Feb 12 - Women's Guild meeting after Mass in Parsons
- Feb 16 - Holy Hour of Reparation at 4pm in Thomas
- Feb 19 - Mardi Gras covered dish dinner after Mass in Parsons
- Feb 21 - Knights of Columbus meeting at 6pm in Thomas



Even while living in the world, the heart of Mary was so filled with motherly tenderness and compassion for men that no one ever suffered so much for their own pains, as Mary suffered for the pains of her children.



CONTRIBUTIONS FOR Jan 22, 2023

St. Thomas: \$1,305.58

Attendance: 5pm - 65; 9am - 35

Our Lady of Mercy: \$763.00

Attendance: 11am - 51

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.

Technicalities

by Father Smay

Many of you have offered congratulatory remarks to me over the last month since it was announced that the Bishop made me pastor. I imagine that some of you may have been a bit perplexed at this announcement. By the time it was made, I had already been with you for nearly 18 months. So what is the difference between before and after?

For those first 18 months I was technically the parish administrator, which is basically equivalent to being the pastor when it comes to the responsibilities but without all the rights which a pastor has. The law of the Church says that for a priest to be a pastor, "he is to be outstanding in sound doctrine and integrity of morals and endowed with zeal for souls and other virtues; he is also to possess those qualities which are required by universal or particular law to care for the parish in question... his suitability must be clearly evident by some means determined by the diocesan bishop." My best guess is that the Bishop was hesitant to make me pastor from the start due to my youth (can blame him!?) but that after a year and half it was clear to him that I should be pastor. Having been made pastor, the big difference is that now I have been given "a sense of stability" and there are a few minor administrative differences that have little practical bearing on you.

Being appointed pastor has caused me to reflect a bit on the qualities which the law of the Church demands I have. In particular, my mind is frequently drawn to "zeal for souls" - that is, what concrete things we can do to bring people to Christ, to convert persons to the Catholic Faith and bind them more closely to Christ Jesus and His bride, the Church? This is my primary task and one which occupies much of my mental energy. This very quality is the impetus for the formation of the Saint Monica Prayer Group. The reality is that we cannot actually convert a single person, we cannot bring a single soul even one inch closer to Christ without God's grace. God grants grace in response to our prayers and penances. I have been pondering a few different ways that we might reach out to non-Catholics to invite them into the Catholic Church. But for now, I am content to continue to pray and ask for prayers for the conversion of souls in Tucker County.

All that to the side, I have been here about 19 months now. For those of you who were thinking that I would pick up where Father Grassi left off, by now you have figured out that that has not exactly happened. Father Grassi was here for 17 years and he came to know many or even all of you on a deeply personal level. I simply don't have the same relationships that he had. On the other hand, I have changed very little of the schedule, furnishings, etc. I really don't see any reason to change those things, and I am the kind of person who is inclined to continue as things are unless I am really certain about what and how to change something and there are compelling reasons for doing so; as the proverb goes, "if it ain't broke, don't fix it." If I am being really honest, I do not have the best aesthetic sense and do not easily see where things might be changed and beautified.

Since I'm on the topic of technicalities, a number of you have questioned me about the fact that after the intention of the 5pm Mass on Saturdays where the word "vigil" had previously appeared in parentheses, the word "anticipated" now appears. The reason that I changed this word is very simple: technically, a vigil Mass is a Mass which has it's own distinct set of prayers to be used the evening before the feast. There are a number of these very ancient Masses which we celebrate throughout the year. They are: Christmas, Epiphany, Easter, the Nativity of Saint John the Baptist (June 24), the Feast of Saints Peter and Paul (June 29), and the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary (August 15). If it is not one of those feasts, the Mass is technically an anticipation of the following day. Attending an anticipated Mass is essentially the same as attending a vigil Mass and fulfills the Sunday Mass obligation all the same.

Pray for me, your pastor, that I be given the grace to shepherd you according to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. Be assured of my prayers for you.

MASSES FOR THE WEEK
Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Monday, Jan 30

Weekday

7:30am (T) The Goldade Family †

Tuesday, Jan 31

St. John Bosco, Priest (obl)

5:00pm (T) Denise Gibbs †

Wednesday, Feb 01

Weekday

9:00am (P) Tina Manos

Thursday, Feb 02

The Presentation of the Lord - Candlemas (feast)

5:00pm (T) Anton Kotten †

First Friday, Feb 03

St. Blaise, Bishop & Martyr (opt);

St. Ansgar, Bishop (opt)

4:00pm (P) ADORATION & BENEDICTION

5:00pm (P) Francesca Grassi Zimmer †



First Saturday, Feb 04

Blessed Virgin Mary on Saturday (opt)

9:00am (P) David F. Silk †

5:00pm (T) Dan Studer † (ANTICIPATED)

Sunday, Feb 05

Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

9:00am (T) Jennifer Lanthaler †

11:00am (P) People of the Parish

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

The wise men adored this Body when it lay in the manger... they prostrated themselves before it in fear and trembling.... Now you behold the same Body that the wise men adored in the manger, lying upon the altar.

~St. John Chrysostom (c. 400 a.D.)

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 & Dan Ingram

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.