

The Roman Catholic Communities of

St. James the Greater
75 River Road
Montague, New Jersey

and

St. Thomas the Apostle
210 Route 206 North
Sandyston, New Jersey

Office for both parishes is located at
210 Route 206 North
Sandyston, NJ 07826

Parish Office: 973-948-2296
Fax: 973-948-4634
E-mail address: stjamesthomas@aol.com
Website address: saintjamesthomas.org
Rectory: 973-293-7582

Office Hours:
Monday through Friday
8:30 AM – 2:30 PM

PASTOR: Father Wayne Varga
DEACON: Mr. Wayne von Doehren
CRE: Mrs. Mary Flexer
PASTORAL ASSOCIATE: Mrs. Patricia Hope
PARISH SECRETARY: Mrs. Rosemarie Briegel

Mass Schedule at St. James
Sunday: 8:00 AM and 11:30 AM
Saturday: 8:00 AM

Mass Schedule at St. Thomas
Saturday: 4:30 PM – Vigil
Sunday: 9:30 AM
Mon., Tues., Wed. and Fri.: 9:00 AM

Sacrament of Reconciliation
St. Thomas the Apostle - Saturday - 4:00 PM - 4:20 PM or by appointment

Religious Education for children (CCD):
Religious Education/Youth Office and classes are located at the Msgr. Gacquin Youth/ Religious Education Center,
122 Layton-Hainesville Road, Sandyston (mail should be sent to parish office address listed above)
Phone: 973-948-7004 ~ Fax: 973-948-7007

Children's Liturgy of the Word (September through April):
At St. Thomas the Apostle Church as part of the 9:30 AM Mass.

New parishioners are invited to fill out a registration form which can be found in the vestibule of the Church. Often when a Catholic is asked to be a Godparent for baptism or sponsor for Confirmation a letter from the pastor of their parish is requested. This can only be given to registered and active members of the parish.

The Sacrament of Baptism is celebrated during Mass providing that liturgical norms do not dictate otherwise. Please contact the office to schedule a Baptism and to make arrangements for preparations especially for first time parents. Baptisms may be scheduled at other times if extenuating conditions apply. Godparents must be practicing Catholics.

Part of our ministry is to **visit the sick** in hospital or at home. Privacy laws do not allow us to visit or pray publicly for the sick unless permission is given by the individual or their health care proxy. Please inform us of the needs of the sick, and we will be happy to respond as best we can.

Pregnancy Assistance
Call 1-800-395-HELP or Tri-State Pregnancy 570-491-5151
Good Counsel: 1.800.723.8331 for pregnant mothers in need anytime, anyplace.
www.goodcounselhomes.org
Post Abortion Healing:
Project Rachel 973-777-8818, ext. 272
Lumina: Hope and Healing After Abortion: 1.877.LUMINA1 (877.586.4621)
www.postabortionhelp.org
Adoption Services:
Adoption@CatholicCharities.

The Schools of The Catholic Academy of Sussex County
973-729-6125 X225
Rev. George A. Brown School (Pre-K to Gr. 4)
Pope John XXIII Middle School (Gr. 5 to 7)
Pope John XXIII High School (Gr. 8 to 12)

Welcome -We Are a Tithing Parish

Saint Joseph Saves the Day

“Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary your wife into your home.”

Matthew 1: 20

At this moment, at the Fourth Sunday of Advent, the Advent Season of preparation has taken us about as far as it can. We find ourselves on the verge of celebrating the great Feast of Christmas. It is even anticipated in today’s Gospel. In Matthew’s account, we hear of the events surrounding Our Lord’s birth through the eyes of Saint Joseph.

It helps us, I think, to know that Joseph had mixed emotions as the baby was about to be born. He was certainly upset and disappointed that his beloved Mary was already ‘with child.’ Understandably, he would have been very confused about what he should do next. He was certainly hurt that all his future plans with his bride were now on hold. And he was equally perplexed that an angel would speak to him in a dream, and give him a message almost impossible to believe. He is told to go ahead and take Mary as his wife. Should he do it? Or was he just ... dreaming?

Sometimes we find ourselves in confusing and distressing places like Saint Joseph. We too can be perplexed and confused about what to do next. We can doubt that God is with us, or that He’s actually helping us, or that we’re really hearing a message from God in our hearts. It is exactly at these times that we should turn to the example of Saint Joseph for guidance.

Saint Joseph solved his problem by trusting in the message he heard in the dream. Even though it would have seemed impossible, Joseph put his faith in the angel’s words about the child coming from God.

Let us thank God that Joseph did listen and take the message to heart. He did take Mary as his wife; he did accept the child as his own, and committed himself to raising his family in the best way he knew how. Thank goodness he did, for Joseph made possible the coming of God’s Son to earth. He made it possible for God’s own eternal plans to move forward, and made possible the salvation we all count on. Let us not forget Joseph’s crucial role in making possible our celebration of the great Feast of Christmas just ahead.

God bless you,
Father Wayne

FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT
December 22, 2019

St. James the Greater

The Sanctuary Lamp this week burns in
Memory of Dom & Agnes Giordano at the
Request of their Family

TUESDAY, December 24

4:00PM – Charlie Lombaerde
req. by his wife, Carol

WEDNESDAY, December 25

CHRISTMAS DAY

11:30AM – Thomas Quinn
req. by his Family

SATURDAY, December 28

8:00AM – Frank & Rose Reed
req. by their Family

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

December 29

8:00AM – Michael & Patricia Soletro
req. by Bill, Valerie, Kate & Emilia Ricciardi

11:30AM – Ann & Robert Lamb and Richard Gray, Sr.
req. by Peggy Gray

ST. JAMES THE GREATER

\$ 990.00 – Regular Collection – December 15, 2019

\$ 151.00 – Online Giving

\$1,630.00 – Regular Collection – December 16, 2018

\$2,477.00 – Weekly Budget Need

Consider a gift to St. James Parish in your will.

**For On-Line Giving: log onto our website:
saintjamesthomas.org Then go to On-Line Giving link.**

The 8:00am St. James Coffee Hour takes place the first Sunday of the month except for July, August and September.



The Legion of Mary meets every Friday morning at 10:00a.m. in St. Thomas the Apostle Church. Men and women of both parishes are invited to consider Auxiliary or Active membership. For further information, please contact the parish office.

St. James Altar & Floral Society If any ladies in the parish are interested in joining, please call Joan Henn at 973-293-3690 or Linda Spinapolic at 973-293-7031.

TO CHRIST THE DIVINE HEALER WE PRAY FOR:

Agnes Ciesielski, Michael Eiring, Bill & Teresa Mantini, Joshua Murch, Ginny Sabia, Shirley Strong, Barbara Theobald, Jen Vaughn, Tarra Wagner and Ricky Wunder



We ask your continued prayers for the following men and women of our parish who are serving our country in the Armed Forces: Brandon Heimall, Nicholas and Karissa Kealy, Joseph Mannion, Hunter Olenick, Christopher & Ana Sarao, Nicole Sarao, Peter Spinks and James Orr.

Visit the Facebook page for The Parishes of St. Thomas the Apostle & St. James the Greater:
<https://www.facebook.com/StJamesThomas/>

St. Thomas the Apostle

The Sanctuary Lamp this week burns in
Memory of Jimmy Reed at the
Request of his Mom & Dad

MONDAY, December 23

9:00AM – Barbara Kientzler
req. by her son, Charles

TUESDAY, December 24

6:00PM – Cordelia Cafone
req. by her Family
Midnight – Donald & Mary Powers
req. by their Daughters & Grandchildren
-Bill Wagner
req. by his daughter, Tarra

WEDNESDAY, December 25

CHRISTMAS DAY

9:30AM – Joan Spoolstra
req. by her Family

THURSDAY, December 26

No Mass

FRIDAY, December 27

9:00AM – Intentions of Father Wayne Varga
70th Birthday Celebration

SATURDAY, Vigil, December 28

4:30PM – Vincent D'Antonio
req. by the Lodema Family
-Doug Kabbash and Mario Giaccotto
req. by Christine Giaccotto
-Intentions of Jim & Sandy Matthews
Anniversary Blessings
req. by their Family

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY

December 29

9:30AM – Mario Palmieri
req. by George Keshish
-Mary Cunico and Karin Takacs
req. by the Cunico Family

ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE

\$1,575.00 – Regular Collection – December 15, 2019

\$ 443.00 – Online Giving

\$1,870.00 – Regular Collection – December 16, 2018

\$4,410.00 – Weekly Budget Need

Consider a gift to St. Thomas Parish in your will.

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saintjamesthomas.org Then go to On-Line Giving link.**



Pilgrim Virgin of Fatima Statue/Legion of Mary

This beautifully adorned statue is a visible reminder of the love God has shown in the Blessed Mother. Placing such a beautiful image in your home turns hearts to prayer and brings grace to those who open their hearts to any image of God's love. If you would like to have the statue of Our Lady of Fatima in your home, or need any further information about the Legion of Mary in our parishes, please contact Diana, Legion of Mary, at 973-948-7601. *Pray the Family Rosary*



Religious Education Classes

Please be reminded that there will be NO religious education classes from

December 19, 2019 until January 4, 2020. Grades 8, 9 & 10 resume on Saturday, January 4th and grades 6 & 7 on Sunday, January 5th. Grades 1 & 2 will resume on Tuesday, January 7th and grades 3, 4 & 5 on Wednesday, January 8th.



Advent Sacrament of Reconciliation

All Mondays During Advent – Sacrament of Reconciliation for Confirmation Candidates at 7:00PM at St. James Church (Dec. 23rd). Sign in book will be in back of Church.



The Religious Education Inclement Weather

Policy ~ is that the cancellation of classes due to inclement weather will be announced and posted on www.wsus1023.com. If it is not possible for you to check the internet, you can always call the Religious Education Office at 973-948-7004 and listen to any cancellation message there.



The History of the Nativity Scene

St. Francis of Assisi established the first Nativity scene in 1223 in Greccio, a small town in Italy. As he was preparing for Christmas Eve Mass, St. Francis was trying to think of a way to remind people that Jesus came not as a wealthy king but as a poor child born among animals. So he wrote to Pope Honorius III and obtained permission to create a living Nativity scene.

In a cave near town, Francis set up an altar. He brought in a manger filled with hay as well as a live ox and a donkey. He invited the townspeople to come, and he preached about the humble beginnings of the Christ Child.

The idea of re-creating Jesus' birth became very popular. Churches in Italy created displays made out of terra cotta. In the middle of the 1500s, families began to put up Nativity scenes in their homes. And living Nativity scenes like the one that St. Francis started centuries ago remain popular to this day.

This is now a great time to put up your Nativity if you have not already done so. You could wait to put Baby Jesus in the manger until Christmas Eve. Until that time, kids can help create a soft bed for Jesus by putting a piece of hay or golden yarn in the manger each time they do a good deed. You can set up the shepherds a bit away from the crèche, since they were taking care of their sheep until the angel came and told them the good news. Allow your children to move the shepherds around each day, just as the shepherds would have moved in the fields. You can even put the three Wise Men further still and allow your children to move them a bit closer to the Nativity scene every day until Christmas. Blessed Advent.

ADULT CONFIRMATION

Our Parishes will again offer preparation for the Sacrament of Confirmation of adults beginning in January 2020. These preparation sessions are for adults {18 or over} who are Baptized Catholic and who have received the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist, and for whatever reason have not received the Sacrament of Confirmation. Those who present themselves for the Sacrament will have an initial interview and then begin sessions to last for 10 sessions, and will be confirmed during the Easter Season. This Program is free of charge. The Program generally meets for sessions at the convenience of the Candidates. The session topics center on the Sacrament of Confirmation and Church teaching. Parishioners please pass this information on to your family, friends and neighbors.

Please call the Religious Education Center at 973-948-7004 for any questions you might have, leave a message and your call will be returned as soon as possible.

May the Peace of Our Lord Be With You,

Patricia Hope and Alex Sousa,

Co-Coordinators for the Adult Confirmation Program

The Columbiettes are sponsoring a campaign for parishioners to offer one million Hail Mary's for the salvation of souls. If you wish to be a part of this, please write down how many Hail Mary's you have said on the sheets of paper provided. Your name is optional. You may also email your tally to hailmarysforsos@gmail.com. Thank you.

SOUP ON A SATURDAY.... St. James the Greater will again be sponsoring a take-out soup fundraiser on Saturday, January 25, 2020. Order a quart (or more) of Chili by Art & Maria Henn, Manhattan Clam Chowder by Bill & Joan Henn, Italian Wedding soup by Bill Ricciardi, Pasta e Fagioli by Mike & Linda Spinapolice, Split Pea with Ham by Janice Cerra (limited quantities), or Butternut Squash by Janice Cerra (limited quantities). Price is \$8.00 per quart. Please get your orders in early as there will be limits on some choices. **You must order in advance by January 19th**. Pick up is on January 25th from 12:00pm to 2:00pm at St. James the Greater. Fill out an order form found in the back of the church and place in the collection basket OR give to Bill Ricciardi, Art Henn or Mike Spinapolice. You may also e-mail your order to Bill Ricciardi at wjr218@optonline.net.

Rosaries for Peace

Please join us Sundays before 9:30am Mass for recitation of the First Glorious Mystery of the Holy Rosary. The remaining mysteries will be recited immediately after Mass. Rosary beads are available in the Gathering Space. The Saturday eve Mass will also be preceded by a Rosary for Peace, beginning at 4:10 p.m. May we ask our Blessed Mother, Patroness of our Nation, to help us find peace in our nation and in the world.

This Week in Our Parishes

STC – St. Thomas Church or Fr. Lewis Center

SJC – St. James Church or Church Hall

REC – Fr. Gacquin Religious Ed. Center

Sunday, December 22, 2019

4th Sunday of Advent

Monday, Dec. 23

Tuesday, Dec. 24

Christmas Eve

No Morning Mass

See Christmas Eve Mass Schedule, col. 2

Wednesday, Dec. 25

Merry Christmas !

See Christmas Day Mass schedule, col. 2

Thursday, Dec. 26

Friday, Dec. 27

10:00a.m. STC Adoration of Bl. Sac. (till Noon)

10:00a.m. STC Legion of Mary Mtg.

Saturday, Dec. 28

Sunday, December 29, 2019

Feast of the Holy Family

Future Events

Tues. Dec. 31 Montague Seniors New Year's Eve Party, 10 a.m.—1 p.m. at St. Thomas

Masses on New Year's Eve & Day:

See col. 2 (Like regular week-end schedule)

Next Sunday's Readings: Holy Family

1st Reading: *Sirach 3: 2—6, 12--14 7: 10—14*

Resp. Psalm: *Psalm 128*

2nd Reading: *Colossians 3: 12--21*

Gospel: *Matthew 2: 13—15, 19--23*

"Ignorance of Scripture is ignorance of Christ."

--St. Jerome, 347—420 A.D.

Blessing of Your Christmas Manger Scene

Lord, bless all who look upon this manger; may it remind us of the humble birth of Jesus, and raise our thoughts to him, who is God-with-us and Savior of all, and who lives and reigns forever and ever. All: Amen.

—from **Catholic Household Blessings & Prayers**

Merry Christmas to All ! Your parish staff of Saint James and St. Thomas wish all our parishioners and friends a very happy, joy-filled and Merry Christmas ! We hope that you can spend these special days with family and friends. And thank you for all that you do to keep our parishes running throughout the year. Without your generous assistance, things would be very different.

Christmas Mass Schedule. To help with your planning, we announce this schedule of Masses at our churches for 2019. (Remember that we alternate the times of the Christmas Eve Masses each year.)

4:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Mass at St. James

6:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Mass at St. Thomas

11:30 p.m. Lessons & Carols Service at St. Thomas

12 Mid. Midnight Mass at St. Thomas

9:30 a.m. Christmas Day Mass at St. Thomas

11:30 a.m. Christmas Day Mass at St. James

Confessions during Advent. Last Confessions:

Monday, Dec. 23, 7 p.m. till 8 p.m., at St. James

Christmas is an Entire Season. Most of the world doesn't know the beauty and meaning that we attribute to the Christmas Season. It is not just for one day. For us, it includes some beautiful celebrations and traditions, such as the **Feast of the Holy Family**. Then comes that of **Mary, the Mother of God**, on the first day of the new calendar year. Then comes the **Three Kings (Epiphany)** with their gifts. Finally comes the **Baptism of the Lord by John**. Each facet of the season teaches us much, and gives us more reasons to treasure our faith. We hope you enjoy a **happy and joyful Christmas Season !**

The Feast of Mary the Mother of God comes at the very beginning of the new civil year. It reminds us that we have someone to look up to as a model and guide. And we have the greatest of intercessors with Jesus Himself—His Mom. **It is a holy day of obligation.** And it sets the perfect tone for the new year.

New Year's Eve & Day Mass Schedule:

4:30 p.m. Tues. Dec. 31 at St. Thomas

8:00 a.m. Wed. Jan. 1 at St. James

9:30 a.m. Wed. Jan. 1 at St. Thomas

11:30a.m. Wed. Jan. 1 at St. James

**We wish everyone a healthy and blessed
Happy New Year !**