



# More News



The Seasonal Newsletter of  
St. Thomas More Catholic Parish  
Scranton, Pennsylvania



## Advent - Christmas - Epiphany 2020 - 2021

### From the Pastor

Dear Members & Friends,

We have enclosed with this newsletter the materials for our annual Christmas appeal, by which we invite your donations to beautify St. Joseph Church for our Christmas celebration. On the sheet provided, please send to us by December 20<sup>th</sup> your memorials and thanksgivings, which will be published in our Christmas leaflets, beginning with the worship guide for the **Solemn Mass on Christmas Eve, Thursday, December 24, at 7PM.** Said Mass will be offered on **Christmas Day, Friday, December 25th at 7AM**, in addition to the **Sung Mass at 10 that morning**, the intent this year being to offer additional opportunities to celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord, especially for those who would like to avoid crowds in the midst of a global pandemic. Since Bishop Steven Lopes has reinstated the obligation for all Sundays and Holy Days, you may assist at whichever Mass you like, keeping in mind that we expect the Christmas Eve option to be the one most parishioners will choose. Please give generously towards our decorations, so that the joy of the season is accurately reflected in the abundance of our greens and flowers.

In years past we have also used the Christmas appeal to highlight parish projects that also need funding, while not neglecting a general appeal to balance our budget, and this year we will continue this pattern. Below I will describe some of the progress we have seen in our parish over the past year, and you may choose to donate towards these specific necessities to see this progress continue.

#### 119 Ferdinand Street:

Since I wrote you last about the funds needed to acquire another of the properties on our square block, we have received what we need to cover the outright purchase of 119 Ferdinand Street. The house will be given as a memorial to Darrin Bloch, a parishioner who died about this time last year, and whose son, Aidan, served at the 7PM Mass every Sunday,

until the family moved away this past September. Darrin's generous legacy to St. Thomas More Parish includes the first-class relics of Ss. Peter and Paul, which we use to bless the faithful every June 29th. This house, which will provide space for Maria Kaupas Academy (MKA) to expand, as well as apartments for our sacristan and (we hope one day) a sexton, will be a fitting memorial to a man who so dearly loved our church.



Nevertheless, we require additional funds to renovate the house, which suffered abuse from bad tenants last year. Our parish contractor, Gene DeLucy, assures us the issues can be remedied and are not structural but will require a minimum **\$20,000** investment to resolve. If you are able to donate towards this renovation, important both for the parish and our neighborhood, your gift will aid in the long-term stability of St. Thomas More Catholic Church and her mission field here in Providence.

#### Security Cameras and Exterior Lighting:

Our campus is growing and bears a lot of traffic on a normal basis. Plus, with the expansion of MKA, there have not been this many children around St. Joseph Church since the old parish school closed back in 1984. Thus, we believe it prudent to better monitor the traffic here and keep our passageways well-lit at night. With wireless cameras now the norm, wiring will be minimal, so these improvements can be accomplished for about **\$3,000**. If you would like to help us install what our neigh-

borhood officer from the Scranton Police Department recently personally recommended to me, we would be grateful for your help in securing the entrances to all our buildings.

#### Daily Office Prayer Books:

Elsewhere in this newsletter you will learn that Bishop Lopes will soon require us to pray publicly Morning and Evening Prayer each day in St. Joseph Church. This change has been occasioned by the publication of Divine Worship: Daily Office, the form for the Liturgy of the Hours approved by the Holy See for use in our Ordinariate. **Each book costs about \$30**, and we will stock at least thirty in the St. Joseph Church pews. If you would like to give one as a memorial to a faithfully departed loved one, this gift would help us defray the cost of a long-awaited, but nonetheless suddenly mandated, expense. The name you submit with your contribution will be printed on a plaque on the inside cover, once the books arrive sometime in the next few weeks. We intend to begin this new prayer habit for the parish on January 1<sup>st</sup>.

#### Maria Kaupas Academy and General Parish Expenses:

We have recently concluded a successful fruit sale fund-raiser for MKA, but our budget shortfall remains significant, since our in-person money-making events are still impossible. In addition, while parish income is up over last year, we shall still require **\$6,000** to end the calendar year in the black. Whatever you can give to meet the immediate needs of the parish or our school will enable us to continue fulfilling our local mission and bearing the fruit that comes with being reconciled to Holy Mother Church. We are truly blessed. Thank you for being conduits of God's blessings upon us.

In anticipation of, and with gratitude for, the Christmas generosity that annually benefits our parish and those we serve, I am,

Your servant in Christ,

*The Rev. Eric L. Bergman*

# Worship

## Sunday Obligation Returns

Beginning October 1, 2020, Bishop Lopes modified the commutation of the obligation to attend Mass. As of that date, the commutation applies only to those persons who are at higher risk for the Coronavirus: 60+ years of age, or with underlying medical conditions.

Here at St. Thomas More Parish and Maria Kaupas Academy, we have been taking and "informed consent" approach to matters surrounding the pandemic; we have stopped short of one-size-fits-all mandates, but parishioners and families are encouraged to stay informed about the pandemic and to make their own decisions accordingly. To that end, we offer this brief rundown of the issues:

- The pandemic is currently on a substantial increase in our nation, state, and county.
- The Parish continues to post recordings and printed liturgy guides on our website for all Sunday and Holy Day Masses, for home use by vulnerable parishioners whose Sunday obligation remains commuted.
- No household with any member displaying typical COVID-19 symptoms should attend worship, Academy, or Sunday School.



- The virus most readily spreads among (a) groups of people (b) who are frequently speaking or singing (c) in enclosed spaces (d) with poor ventilation (e) for extended periods of time.
- The church is cleaned and sanitized weekly by a group of faithful volunteers prior to the weekend Masses.
- Every other pew in the church is roped off, and households are strongly encouraged to sit in separate pews.
- Kneeling cushions are separated at the altar rail, which is wiped down between groups of communicants. Fr. Bergman sanitizes his fingers between groups of communicants in a manner reverent to the Sacrament.
- While stopping short of a mandate, our Bishop has commended that masks should be worn by worshipers.
- For those concerned about crowding at the 10 a.m. Sunday Mass, there is currently ample pew space available at the 5 p.m. Saturday Vigil Mass and the Sunday 7 p.m. Mass, the latter being sung by Cantor only (no congregational singing).

Armed with this information, we encourage all households to make prudent decisions best suited to their needs and situations.

## First Friday & Saturday Evensong & Adoration

Our monthly First Friday / First Saturday devotions will next be offered **on December 4 & 5. Choral Evensong and Benediction** – sung by our Academy Choir – **will begin at 4:30**



**p.m. on Friday**, with **24-hour Eucharistic Adoration** continuing until that same hour on Saturday. Mass will be offered Saturday morning at 8:00 a.m. Please sign up at the back of the church for a time to adore our Lord.

## Daily Office Book Soon To Be Released

Rounding out the liturgical resources enabling Ordinariate communities to worship in their beloved Anglican patrimony, the long-awaited prayer book for offering the Daily Office – Morning and Evening Prayer, and several minor offices as well – is on the cusp of



publication, perhaps becoming available in Advent. Moreover, once published, the Daily Office will be prayed *publicly every day* at the Parish... at 8:00 a.m. (Morning Prayer) and 4:30 p.m. (Evening Prayer). Please stay tuned to our weekly announcements for further information regarding a start date for this important new chapter in our liturgical life.

## Marian Holy Days

**Tuesday, December 8** is the **Immaculate Conception**, a Holy Day of Obligation. Solemn Vigil Mass will be **Monday at 5:30 p.m.**, with Said Masses **Tuesday at 7 a.m. & 11:15 a.m.**

**Friday, January 1** is the Solemnity of **Mary, Mother of God**, a Holy Day. Solemn Vigil Mass will be **New Years Eve at 5:30 p.m.**, with Said Masses **Jan. 1 at 7 a.m. & 11:15 a.m.**



## Holiday Worship Schedule

Special liturgies for the holiday season are listed below (tempered somewhat this year by the pandemic). In addition to these, *Said Masses and 7 PM Sunday Masses will continue to be offered according to the usual weekly schedule.*

**Mon 12/7 5:30 PM** • Immaculate Conception

>**Tues 12/8 7 & 11:15 AM** • said Masses

**Sat 12/19 9 AM** • Pageant Rehearsal

**Sun 12/20 10 AM** • Christmas Pageant

**Thrs 12/24 7 PM** • Christmas Eve Sol. Mass

**Fri 12/25 7 AM** • Christmas Day Said Mass

**Fri 12/25 10 AM** • Christmas Day Sung Mass

**Sun 12/27 10 AM** • Holy Family

**Thrs 12/31 5:30 PM** • Mary, Mother of God

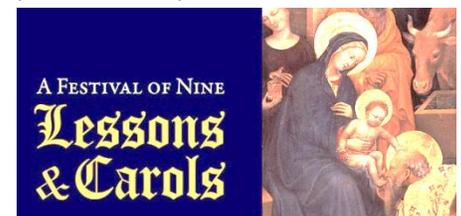
>**Fri 1/1 7 & 11:15 AM** • said Masses

**Sun 1/3 10 AM** • Epiphany Sunday



## Lessons & Carols On Pause This Season

Adjusting to the pandemic, this season the Parish Choir's membership has divided across all three weekend Masses, and Wednesday chroister rehearsals have been on hold. Moreover, the popular fellowship event normally coupled with our annual Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols – the Epiphany supper – is also likely off the table this season.



As the parish continues to grow, there are rumors of strong singers being among our newest parishioners, and we look forward to a brilliant season of a newly refocused and revitalized Parish Choir when COVID is behind us! For now though, we undergo a Babylonian Captivity of sorts, with this season's Lessons and Carols service among the casualties. Deep gratitude is due to all our choir members and families for slogging it out in the meantime, providing beautiful music at our Masses week in and week out, nonetheless!

**Please note: current 7:00 a.m. weekday Mass attendance is sufficiently robust to make use of the Convent Chapel impractical this winter. All Masses will be offered in the church.**

# Discipleship

## Christmas Appeal



Materials for the 2020 Christmas Appeal are being sent to households concurrently with this newsletter. As usual, we have identified a few specific expenses of particular need to the Parish at this time, to which you may choose to target your giving. (As always, you also have the opportunity to give toward the greening of the church for the Christmas season, which you may offer as a memorial or thanksgiving to be printed in the Christmastide liturgy guides.) We thank you for the generous and sacrificial giving

upon which our small Parish has always relied, as we aim to finish the year “in the black” and address some key needs of our congregation at this time. Thank you for your prayerful discernment and for your generous support!

## Academy Advent Retreat

There will be an Advent retreat for all students, parents, and teachers of Maria Kaupas Academy on **Saturday, December 12**, beginning with the 8:00 a.m. Mass. All households participating in our school program are welcome.



## Sacramental Records Update

The Parish is continuing a concerted effort of updating and entering the Sacramental Records of all parishioners in the Ordinariate’s centralized files, a task for which parishioner Sandy Campbell has been contracted. If you



receive a call from Sandy requesting the details of the sacraments you have received in prior congregations, please provide the information to the very best of your ability, so we may comply with the charge of our Bishop to set a high standard for the Ordinariate.

# Fellowship & Outreach

## Many Activities On Hold

Under normal circumstances, St. Thomas More enjoys a buzzing Parish fellowship life, including coffee hour, potluck lunches, neighbor nights, and annual celebrations. And we often engage in activities that reach out to our community. Sadly – while we have prioritized sacramental and discipleship gatherings such as Mass, Confirmation classes, and Sunday School – many of our fellowship and outreach activities are on pause, relying as they do on large indoor gatherings. Events normally held in the coming months that we likely must



forgo this season include our annual family-friendly **New Year’s Eve Party**, the annual **Epiphany Supper**, and **Christmas Caroling** at Scranton Manor assisted living facility. Please continue to pray for the day that the pandem-

ic is behind us, and we can once again engage in the robust Parish life that is such a critical feature of our ministry to a culture starved of authentic human community.

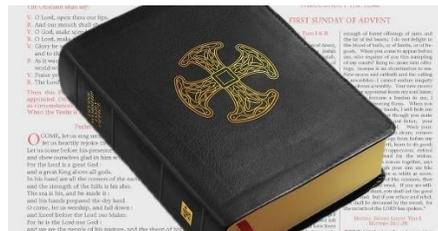
## March for Life

As yet, the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. is still scheduled for Friday, January 29, 2021. As there is much unpredictability with all such events at this time, please stay tuned to our weekly announcements to keep apprised of the status of the March, and our plans to participate.

# Evangelization

## The Daily Office as an Aid to Evangelization

While the beautiful Mass we are able to offer in the Ordinariate Use is surely hospitable to our separated Anglican brethren, some drawbacks persist because (a) on Sunday mornings when our Mass is most impressive, our Anglican friends are in their own churches, and (b) there is the awkward issue of the inability to receive Holy Communion. Neither of these issues, however, comes into play with the Daily Office, particularly Choral Evensong, when offered in the English Cathedral tradition, as it is here each month by our Upper School choir. [A recent interview in the National Catholic Register](#) (this one focusing on the edition



of the Office soon to be released for Britain) addresses the potential for the newly published liturgies to help serve evangelistic role.

**“How will the Daily Office play a role in each Ordinariate’s evangelization and formation of mission-oriented disciples?”**

“Divine Worship: Daily Office will, with the other liturgical books in the Divine Worship series, show forth the riches of the Catholic

Faith, as it is expressed in the language and texts of the Anglican liturgical tradition, that will resonate for many who seek the Truth in Jesus Christ. We have sought to preserve the riches of the Anglican tradition of the Office, whilst also where necessary conforming it to Catholic faith and practice.

**“Who is able to make use of this office?”**

“Divine Worship: Daily Office is offered to anybody and everybody, as a ‘treasure to be shared’ in the words of *Anglicanorum coetibus*. Catholics and non-Catholics, lay and ordained, will find things of beauty and value in Divine Worship: Daily Office, which is first of all a contribution to the worship of God by the whole Church, and by all God’s people.”

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