

More News

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

Michaelmas 2020



In this edition the Pastor's Letter will be mailed separately; watch for it soon!

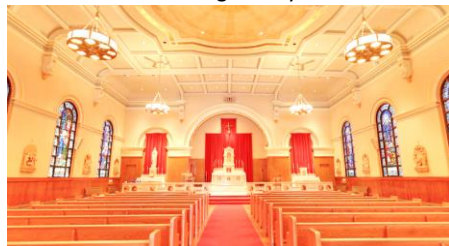
Worship

Sunday Obligation Returns

Bishop Steven Lopes has recently offered the following message to the Ordinariate faithful:

"Cardinal Robert Sarah, Prefect of the Congregation for Divine Worship, has written to the presidents of the Bishops' Conferences to remind them of the urgency of encouraging the faithful to return to in-person Mass.

"Our faith is sacramental, not notional. The Word became flesh, and gives himself to us in the flesh in the Eucharistic sacrifice. This sacramental principle also applies to the Liturgy of the Word, as the liturgical proclamation of the Word is categorically different than



reading the scriptures in our private devotional prayer. The circumstances of these last months have been exceptional, certainly. Given the sacramental character of our worship and life, however, we risk great and lasting harm to the Church and to individual souls the longer people stay away from Mass and Confession.

"Beginning October 1, 2020, I (Bishop Lopes) am modifying 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* (according to the CDC, those who are 60+ years of age, those with underlying medical conditions such as heart disease, diabetes, COPD, kidney disease, or who are immuno-compromised). Persons not in this vulnerable group should be encouraged to return to Mass and the Sacraments."

First Friday & Saturday Evensong & Adoration

With the return of the **Maria Kaupas Academy Upper School Choir**, our monthly First Friday / First Saturday devotions will return to their full observance **on October 2 & 3. Solemn Choral Evensong and Benediction**



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.

The same pattern will be replicated next month on **November 6 & 7**. Please join us!

Bishop's Visitation Scores a "Perfect Ten"

Bishop Steven Lopes visited the Parish – as he does every two years – on August 15 & 16. The busy weekend schedule included Solemn Vigil Mass for the Assumption of Mary on Saturday evening; the conferring of Reception into Full Communion and the Sacraments of Confirmation and First Holy Communion on Sunday morning; and the inaugural Mass of our newly revived mission in the Lehigh Valley at its new location, Holy Ghost Catholic

Church in Bethlehem, on Sunday evening. A comprehensive writeup of the visit appeared in a new weekly Ordinariate newsletter; on-line readers can access the report [here](#) (scroll to p. 5), and a copy will be included in our print edition.

Among many good things that came with the weekend, we are happy to report that our Assumption Vigil Mass was visited by a "Mystery Worshiper" from a website called **Ship of Fools**, which features "reviews" of worship services worldwide by a team of incognito visitors. The full report can be accessed online [here](#); a few excerpts are reprinted below.

"*On a scale of 1-10, how good was the preacher?* 10 — A solid 10. The bishop is a brilliant scholar, teacher and orator, who is able to elaborate on a story we have all heard a hundred times, giving a broader and yet completely orthodox emphasis to that story. In today's homily he drew from all three readings, weaving them together into a consistent whole.



"*Which part of the service was like being in heaven?* Traditional music is what transports me toward the sure hope of eternal life, singing God's praises in heaven. Because of what appears to be a legitimate concern about transmission of the virus, singing by the congregation during this time is restricted, and we instead participate inwardly listening to the cantors. And they sang so well that I barely noticed that my part today was limited to singing the short responses and the Lord's Prayer.

“What happened when you hung around after the service looking lost? Before I could even leave my pew, people were talking to me, making sure that I would come outside where there was an opportunity for a socially-distanced meet and greet with the bishop and the others present.

“How would you feel about making another visit (where 10 = ecstatic, 0 = terminal)? 10 — Ecstatic indeed.

“Did the service make you feel glad to be a Christian? Yes, as does every mass celebrated in the beauty of holiness.”

All Saints Masses

Normally a Holy Day of Obligation, this year **All Saints Day (November 1)** falls on a Sunday, and thus supersedes the normal Sunday propers. All Masses on that weekend – the 5:00 p.m. Vigil Mass on October 31, and 10:00 a.m. / 7:00 p.m. Sunday Masses – will be for All Saints Day.



Daylight Saving Time Ends Sunday, November 1

A reminder that clocks “fall back” on Sunday morning, November 1... don’t forget to reset your clocks the previous night, or you



may be an hour early for Sunday School or Mass that morning!

Thanksgiving Vigil Mass

In keeping with Parish tradition, Vigil Mass for Thanksgiving Day will be celebrated at our normal **5:30 p.m.** Wednesday Mass



time on **November 25**. Come partake in the superlative act of giving thanks – the Holy Eucharist – in anticipation of your family observances the next day!

Verger Team & Training

There is interest in the Parish in forming a team of **Vergers** – men who serve both a ceremonial and a protective role in the liturgy, escorting the clergy and servers in the processions to and from the sanctuary, and also



standing at the ready to stave off any disruptions to the Mass or Office (sadly, a growing possibility in these days of civil unrest which has occasionally targeted Catholic churches and worship). On **first Saturdays of the month after the 8:00 a.m. Mass**, parishioner and self-defense teacher **Corey Comstock** will instruct volunteers in the use of the *virge*, the staff brandished by vergers. Please speak with Mr. Comstock or Fr. Bergman if you are interested in learning to serve in this capacity.

Discipleship

Sunday School Resumes With New Curricula for “Restored Order”

Sunday School for children and youth has resumed on Sunday mornings before 10 a.m. Mass. This year presented a unique challenge, as the Parish moves to be in accord with Bishop Lopes’ vision for a “Restored Order” of the Sac-



OFFER, STRENGTHEN, SUSTAIN

raments, which effectively makes every Sunday School class from age 5 and up a Confirmation Preparation class (excepting those older youth already confirmed). Age-appropriate curricula had to be found which will instruct our pupils in the fullness of the faith over the next two years, in preparation for the confirmation of all children who have reached the age of reason (7) when Bishop Lopes returns in August 2022.

While today we typically think of First Holy Communion as being conferred upon children

and Confirmation being conferred upon teens, this practice has only a brief history in the Church, reversing the age-old pattern in which Confirmation and First Holy Communion are conferred in the selfsame Mass upon children who have reached the age of reason. The [National Catholic Register recently featured an article](#) on Bishop Lopes’ decision, including the excerpt below – which, unsurprisingly for the Ordinariate – makes clear the Bishop’s desire that our young people be strengthened by the Holy Spirit for the mission of evangelization:

“With the recent pastoral letter [Come, Holy Ghost](#), Bishop Steven Lopes revealed the Ordinariate of the Chair of St. Peter would now



become the 14th Latin-Rite diocese to make the reception of Holy Eucharist normally follow Confirmation, something commonly called ‘restored order’ of the sacraments.

“Since the Ordinariate is a diocese with a missionary character and fewer than 10 years old, it has an opportunity to chart a new course for sacramental preparation in its parishes. The bishop explained that the Holy Spirit transforms Christian disciples, imprinting on them the image of Christ himself and transforming their entire relationship to the Body of Christ. The Holy Spirit enables them to bear witness to Christ, sharing his love with others. ‘As the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost transformed a group of disciples into apostles, literally pushing them out of the Upper Room to preach the Gospel of Christ to the nations in unfamiliar tongues,’ he said, ‘so too does the Spirit strengthen the one being confirmed in order to bear personal witness to Christ.’ And in this way, he said, ‘Christ’s mission to preach the Kingdom of God and reveal the love of the Father has become our mission as well.’

Maria Kaupas Academy

Our Academy is back up and running with a higher enrollment than ever, particularly in our Lower School, for which many new families registered over the summer. With a large 8th grade population in the Lower School, we are poised for a substantial increase in our Upper School enrollment next year, as students age



into the next level. (Upper School enrollment did increase this year, a net gain resulting from an enrollment of new students that outstripped a few departures.) "School Masses" on Wednesdays and Fridays at 11:15 a.m. (when both levels are in session) are a sight to behold, with attendance often approaching our Sunday 10 a.m. Masses!

Stewardship 2020

With the season of harvest approaching, our annual stewardship campaign is soon to begin. Many members and friends will receive the annual stewardship mailing in the coming days. Please take time to prayerfully consider what you read there, and discern a pledge for the coming year. Pledge cards may either be

mailed back to the Parish Office, or placed in the offering basket on **Stewardship Sunday, November 1.**



The Parish has seen significant growth in past months, owing to our persistent ministry throughout the pandemic, our Academy enrollment, and our Inquirer's Class. We are deeply thankful that our new households are giving generously to support their new Parish home; at the same time, our burgeoning numbers also increase the financial demands on buildings, ministries, utilities, and staffing; so the support of all of us is still needed, more than ever. New members, we warmly invite you to engage whole-heartedly with our stewardship campaign; and longtime members, we encourage you to maintain or even increase your sacrificial

giving, without which our ministry here could never have been possible. Together, let us all "walk in love, as Christ also hath loved us, and hath given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God." -Ephesians 5:2

Sacramental Records Update

The Parish is updating and entering the Sacramental Records of all Parishioners in a centralized Ordinariate database. If you receive a call from Sandy Campbell requesting the



date(s) and location(s) of your sacraments, please provide the information at your earliest convenience, so we may comply with the charge of the Ordinariate to set the example for other Parishes.

Fellowship

Many Fellowship Activities On Hold

Under normal circumstances, St. Thomas More Parish enjoys a lively array of fellowship activities, including Coffee Hour, Potluck Birthday Lunches, Neighbor Nights, and annual celebrations to mark important parish anniversaries (not least the confirmation of our founding members on October 31, 2005).



Sadly – while we have prioritized sacramental and discipleship gatherings such as Mass, Confirmation, and Sunday School – many of our fellowship activities are on hold, relying as they do on large indoor gatherings. (Happily, we did manage to carry off our annual Parish Picnic at Lackawanna State Park in August, owing to the outdoor location.) In the meantime, as long as the weather remains warm enough, impromptu outdoor gatherings after weekend Masses are the norm, standing in for our dormant Coffee Hour. Please continue to pray for an end to the pandemic, that we may return fully to our robust and cheerful fellowship life as a parish family!

Youth Group to Resume

Given the smaller numbers and frequent outdoor activities involved, one notable exception to the prior column will be our Youth



Group, which will resume its pattern of meeting on the **fourth Sunday of the month on October 25**, and thereafter. New, however, will be the meeting time, which instead of requiring a return to the church later in the day, will now take place after 10:00 a.m. Mass. All young people **ages 12 and up** are welcome at these monthly gatherings, which tend to take the form of fun social outings rather than formal religious instruction.

Outreach

Mission Congregation Update

Our Parish's mission outpost in the Lehigh Valley – now entitled the **St. John Paul II Ordinariate Community** – has re-launched its worship and ministries at its new location, **Holy Ghost Parish** in Bethlehem. The congregation now meets there **every Sunday at 5:00**

p.m. for worship, fellowship, and catechesis. Though it remains a society of our Parish, much of Fr. Bergman's duties there are now delegated to Ordinariate priest Fr. Matthew Hummel (and occasionally, Fr. David Ousley), who will travel up from our sister Parish north of Philadelphia – St. John the Baptist, Bridgeport – to help build the community into a self-sufficient Ordinariate Parish.



Evangelization

Inquirer's Class Underway

The parish's Inquirer's Class – for adults ranging from the curious to those actively seeking confirmation in the Catholic Church – is underway on Sunday evenings at 5:30 p.m. Using an excellent new video-based curriculum called Sycamore, the 20-week course is an excellent introduction to the Catholic faith, directly tied to the Catechism of the Catholic Church. (Participants are issued a copy of the



Compendium of the Catechism, a superb condensed version spearheaded by Pope Benedict XVI). Each class features free supper, a video presentation, lively discussion questions, and filling in a participant's booklet delineating the teachings of the Catholic faith.

As is true every year, the class is small – this year as last, there are two students – but the program forges ahead nonetheless, offering the hospitality of a hot supper and a curriculum carefully formulated to encourage thought-provoking questions and answers in an increasingly secular and skeptical culture.

Ordinations to the Diaconate & Priesthood

With praise and thanksgiving to Almighty God, the Ordinariate of the Chair of Saint Peter joyfully announced the Ordination of Randal



King, Patrick Simons, Arthur Stockstill, Jr., and Scott Woloson to the Sacred Order of Deacon on Monday, August 10, 2020. The Mass can be viewed [here](#).

The Ordinariate also joyfully announces the Ordination of Rev. Mr. Scott Wooten to the Priesthood of Jesus Christ on Wednesday, October 21.

All are ordained through the Imposition of Hands and the Invocation of the Holy Spirit by the Most Rev. Steven J. Lopes S.T.D., Bishop, at the Cathedral of Our Lady of Walsingham in Houston, TX.

Fledgling Ordinariate Community Draws 100+ to Masses in N. Carolina

[The Anglicanorum Coetibus Society blog reports:](#)

“Responding to requests of Ordinariate members, over the past eight weeks three Ordinariate priests have traveled to western North Carolina to offer the region's first series of Ordinariate Form Masses. The response to these Masses has shown that folks in the region are not just drawn to natural beauty, but to the beauty and reverence of Mass according to the Divine Worship Missal. Attendance has averaged around 100, with Masses being offered three times in the last month. This past Sunday saw the emerging community's first full sung Mass with a schola.

“The genesis of the group began with Mr. Joshua Johnson, a former Methodist minister who went to Duke Divinity School and entered the Catholic Church with his wife Katie in 2007.



After two cross country moves to work for Catholic parishes and help found and grow Catholic apostolates, the Johnsons moved back east, settling in the hilly northwest corner of South Carolina, near the North Carolina border in 2014. Blessed with four children, in 2018 the Johnsons learned that they were expecting triplets. About halfway through the pregnancy they learned that one of the three girls, Chiara, had died, and another, Abigail, had a severe heart condition. In order to save her life, they had to temporarily relocate to Charleston where Abigail could receive the heart surgeries she needed.

“As Ordinariate members they quickly connected with Corpus Christi, the established Ordinariate Catholic community in Charleston, South Carolina which became a spiritual home to them in an extremely difficult time. The night before Abigail's first surgeries, Fr. Patrick Allen baptized and confirmed Abigail, along with her healthy sister Bridget, whom Bishop Lopes had given special permission to receive Confirmation. Tragically and unexpectedly, Abigail died in surgery on St. Valentine's Day, February 14, 2019.

In the months following, the grief was heavy, but as Joshua described, their brokenness allowed God to intensify and prioritize a possible priestly vocation and reveal a new mission. After discernment with his spiritual director, he resolved to call the Ordinariate and inquire about the possibility of applying for the priesthood and starting an Ordinariate community. This began a series of conversations and a trip to Houston to meet with Fr. Richard Kramer, the Director of Vocations.

“Last fall, the Johnsons started gathering with Protestant friends to pray Evensong and discuss the Catholic faith. They also began to share the possibility of an Ordinariate parish in the region with Catholic friends and priests of the Diocese of Charlotte. All were supportive, but Fr. Christian Cook, pastor of Immaculate Conception in Hendersonville, North Carolina saw much value in having an Ordinariate community and offered to host the community at his parish.

“After conversations between Bishop Steven Lopes and Bishop Peter Jugis (Diocese of Charlotte), the group began plans for their first Mass. On July 5, Fr. Phillip Mayer of St. James Catholic Church, the Ordinariate parish community in Jacksonville, Florida, traveled to North Carolina and offered Mass at an outdoor pavilion for over 100 people. Fr. Gregory Tipton of St. Aelred's Catholic Church, the Ordinariate parish community in Athens, Georgia, traveled to offer Mass a month later. Most recently, Fr. Armando Alejandro of St. Timothy's, the Ordinariate community in Sykesville, Maryland traveled to offer the group's first indoor Mass at their host parish, again, with over 100 in attendance.



“Along with twenty-two canonical members the group has two Protestant families that have committed to be a part of this community's activities, learn the faith and discern the call to become Catholic.

“At the suggestion of Fr. Kramer, the group has just started a Zoom inquirers/catechism class. On October 4, Fr. Kramer will be celebrating Mass and meeting with the pre-Ordinariate community. In the coming months, the group hopes for continued growth and the establishment of a weekly Sunday Ordinariate Mass offered by Fr. Cook, the pastor of their host parish.”

St. Thomas More Catholic Parish
116 Theodore Street
Scranton, PA 18508

www.stmscranton.org
contact@stmscranton.org
570-343-0634



Still receiving our newsletter by US Mail? Send your email address to contact@stmscranton.org, and receive our electronic version sooner each month, with full-color photos, internet links, and in a format free and easy to forward to family and friends!

Plenary Indulgence available on All Souls Day (Nov. 2nd)

- Piously visit a church to pray for the faithful departed;
- Say one “Our Father” and the “Creed” in the visit to the church;
- Say one “Our Father” and one “Hail Mary” for the intentions of the Pope and worthily receive Holy Communion (ideally both on the same day but may precede or follow by several days);
- Make a Sacramental Confession within 20 days of (before or after) All Souls Day.

Plenary Indulgence available each day in the Octave of All Souls Day (Nov. 1-8)

- Devoutly visit a cemetery and pray for the dead, even if the prayer is only mental;
- Say one “Our Father” and one “Hail Mary” for the intentions of the Pope and worthily receive Holy Communion (ideally both on the same day but may precede or follow by several days);
- Make a Sacramental Confession within 20 days of (before or after) All Souls Day.