

# Summa

## St. Thomas Aquinas Newsletter

January - April 2020

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### Prayer



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## Pastor's Corner

A parishioner stopped to visit with me after Mass to share his frustration. He was lamenting about being unable to share his faith with an atheist he knows. An atheist denies the existence of God. The Word of God became flesh is our Catholic belief. Faith is acknowledging and trusting in the presence of God in our midst for we believe the Lord Jesus Christ rose from the dead. Faith is a pure gift from God.

When we were youngsters our parents seemed like giants and carried us around. Then they went and acted like there was something bigger than they were. Maybe it was the first glimmerings of faith for us. Recently our second graders had twenty questions for me when I went into their classroom. One of their questions was: How does God make stuff? That God is the Creator wasn't the issue. Two cells unite in our mother's womb and here we are years later. An acorn ends up in the ground and then we eventually see a huge oak tree that wasn't there before. How God makes stuff may seem to be beyond our comprehension. It delves into theology and philosophy and the sciences.

One of the books I really liked in my younger days was Bernard Lonergan's Music That Is Soundless. Basically, we humans are full of desire. Desire is intentional to fill a need. What's the root of it all? The question reveals the answer. We are looking for understanding, unlimited understanding. This act of understanding is alive, spontaneous, and self-authenticating. This act of understanding at its deepest level is God because only God can satisfy us. The music that is soundless is the harmony that goes on in our minds. It is transcendent. What steps do we make to get to correct understanding and live by the truth?

*What steps do we make to get to correct understanding and live by the truth?*

Another way of encountering God has to do with what Scripture calls love. God is love (1 John 4:7-12). God supplies the energy to live in relationships and that would make relationships seem somewhat effortless for us if we let love motivate us. I remember some of Bishop Robert Barron's thoughts about family bonds being stronger when together the family members fall in love with God. Someone once said that love is not two persons facing each other, but two persons facing in the same direction and living in the same spirit. Ultimately that is what makes family. And what makes for church is a gathering around the person of Christ and a common sharing of one Spirit—the spirit of charity, joy, peace, patience, goodness, long-suffering, fidelity, gentleness, faith, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). Home and family are the everyday business of staying together, eating together, praying together, sharing material things together, celebrating occasions together, being mutually accountable to each other, challenging and correcting each other, and carrying each others' pathologies and weaknesses.



# St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church

Pastor's Corner from page 1

Such are the functions of home and family. Such too is the function of church. In the end, family life and church life are part of the same thing; in both we participate in God's life. To be in a family is perhaps the most important church many of us will ever experience. Family is called "domestic church" for it's the place where we learn to be church. You cannot just tell a child about God, you must give a child a sense of reverence, a sense of praying and worshipping God's loving presence and celebrating the rituals of the sacraments. By abiding in family—by sitting down with each other around a table, by sharing the frustrations of life, by celebrating each others' joys and sorrows and everyday life, by offering each other consolation and correction, and by putting up with each others' fears and sins—we experience church. In both family life and church, our lives break open beyond ourselves and God can enter. We share our faith to support one another on life's journey whether we are a Catholic or an atheist.

All of the liturgical colors have a significance. When we go to Mass the changing colors remind us that something is happening. The General Instruction of the Roman Missal states: "The purpose of a variety in the color of the sacred vestments is to give effective expression even outwardly to the specific character of the mysteries of faith being celebrated and to a sense of Christian life's passage through the course of the liturgical year."

The Church year begins each First Sunday of Advent with violet, which symbolizes preparation, peace and sacrifice. On the third Sunday in Advent (Gaudete Sunday) the rose color is added. Gaudete means "rejoice" and it is a softening of the violet/purple color leading us to the white that is used at Christmas. During Lent we again see the violet color and on the fourth Sunday of Lent (Laetare Sunday, also meaning "rejoice") the rose color appears in the environment leading us to the white color of Easter time. While the violet is described as dark and penitential, in ancient times it also represented royalty and wealth. Through Baptism we have been given royalty, the life of God has come to dwell in our souls; we have been redeemed.

The color white is used also on Holy Thursday, the solemnity of the Most Holy Trinity, the feasts of Our Lord, (excluding those relating to His passion), the Virgin Mary, the angels and saints who are not martyrs; and the feasts of All Saints, St. John the Baptist, St. John the Evangelist, the Chair of St. Peter and the conversion of St. Paul. It is used at nuptial Masses, baptisms, and at funerals. The white symbolizes purity, joy, light and glory.

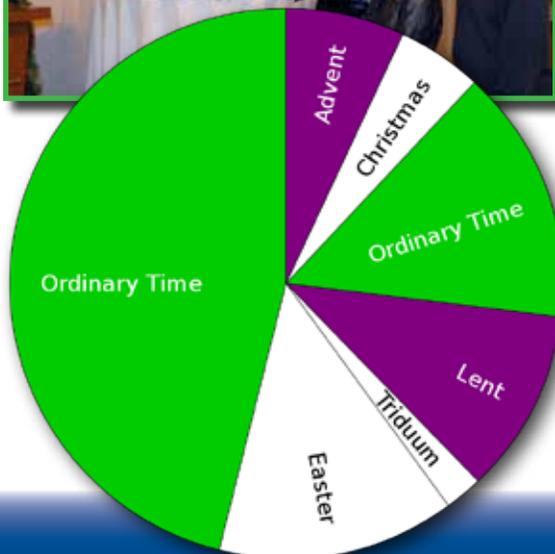
Fr. Stephen Meyer



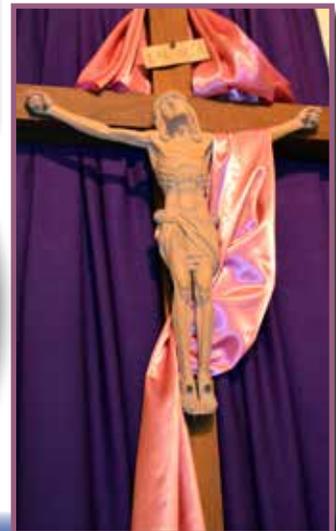
## Liturgical Colors

by Marty Doerning, Director of Liturgy & Music

At Friday Mass on December 13, Father Meyer was vested in red. That was during the second week of Advent when violet vestments are usually worn. He asked the children why they thought he was wearing red and then explained to them that it was the memorial of St. Lucy, a martyr, who had served the Church faithfully.



The liturgical color, red, symbolizes blood, fire, and passion. It is assigned to Palm Sunday, Good Friday, the celebration of the Lord's passion, the feast days of apostles and evangelists, and the



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celebration of martyred saints. As a symbol of the holy Spirit and the burning fire of God's love, it is used on Pentecost Sunday, the sacrament of confirmation and the votive Masses of the Holy Spirit.

Green symbolizes hope, life, anticipation. It is used in Ordinary time, a season focused on the Lord's three-year public ministry, His teachings and miracles; a reminder that our mission is to share the hope and life of Christ with the world.

So, the next time you come to Mass, look around. The environment and the vestments worn by Father Meyer and Deacon Dan Hurt have a meaning. Even the altar servers wear a rope on their alb of the matching color. Something is happening and the colors speak to us. They help to lead us through the course of the liturgical year from the beginning of the Church year at Advent to the end on the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ the King.

## Lent A Time for the Love of Christ to Shine

By Deacon Dan Hurt

It is hard to believe that the season of Lent is right around the corner. It begins on February 26th this year! Lent is so much more than no meat on Fridays and giving up candy or sweets. It is a time of reflection and growth. We look within ourselves; we look at the problems in the world and find ways to help; and we find ways to help us grow closer to God. When we give up something for Lent, it should be an attachment of some sort. For some, maybe that is sweets. For others, maybe it is a certain app or game we are addicted to; maybe it is electronics in general; maybe it is snacks throughout the day; maybe it is something we drink; or maybe it is some other addiction. Making these sacrifices brings us closer to God through prayer. Giving up an addiction is not easy; we cannot do it alone, so we turn to God. When choosing to give something up, it is a good idea to spend extra quality time with our Lord by reading scripture or spending extra time in prayer. This does not have to be hours; setting aside 10 or 15 extra minutes will immensely strengthen our relationship with the Lord.

Besides giving something up, Lent is a great time for us to intentionally help others. This is a great time to focus

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on the Corporal and Spiritual Works of Mercy. By no means does someone have to focus on all of them, but I have listed some ideas for each:

### Corporal Works of Mercy

**Feed the Hungry:** Donate to a charitable organization that fights hunger around the world such as Mary's Meals; prepare and serve a meal for a homeless shelter; volunteer at the Iowa Food Bank (at St. Thomas or St. Paul); or volunteer at a local food pantry.

**Give Drink to the Thirsty:** Donate to the Sister Water Project (this is our Lenten charity program this year); make an effort to not waste water to raise awareness for those that are suffering from drought or those that have little access to running water; or donate bottled water to the homeless shelter.

**Shelter the Homeless:** make blankets or buy blankets for the homeless shelters; volunteer at a shelter; or research extreme poverty in the United States or around the world and help raise awareness.

**Visit the Sick:** Volunteer at a nursing home; visit shut-ins; donate blood; or make a meal for someone who is sick or unable to leave their home.

**Bury the Dead:** visit the cemetery and pray for those you have lost; send a card to someone who has recently lost a loved one; or spend time planning your own funeral to make things easier for your family members.

**Give Alms to the Poor:** Give up eating at your favorite restaurant during Lent and donate that money to the Sister Water Project or another charity that helps the poor; skip your morning coffee or cappuccino and donate that extra money to the Church; or volunteer at a local charity event.

**Visit the prisoners:** Get involved with a jail or prison ministry; pray for people in prison; volunteer time or donate items to charities that help children who have a parent in prison.

### Spiritual Works of Mercy

**Counseling the Doubtful:** Read scripture, so you can share your faith with others; allow others to see Christ at work in your life by following His example; share a good Catholic book with a friend or family member; or read the bible together as a family.

**Instruct the Ignorant:** Donate to the Seek and Serve Pilgrimage/Mission Trip; volunteer to help with the Religious

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# St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church

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Education Program; invite someone to go to Mass with you; attend a service trip; or attend a Lenten Retreat.

**Admonishing the Sinner:** Do not judge others for their mistakes; we are all sinners, and we are all in need of God's loving mercy. Go to confession, and bring your children to confession.

**Comforting the Sorrowful:** Be present to someone who is going through a difficult time by being a good listener; write a letter to a shut-in or someone in the nursing home; or make a meal for someone who is going through a difficult time.

**Forgiving injuries:** Forgiveness transforms our hearts, so forgive family members who have hurt you; forgive people who have wronged you in some way; let go of grudges; and say sorry to those that you may have wronged.

**Bearing wrongs patiently:** Pray to God and ask for patience when you need it. It is really easy to let people or the things of this world bother us. Getting frustrated with others is human, so it is good to remember to step back and take some deep breaths once in awhile and turn to God in prayer.

**Praying for the Living and the Dead:** Request a Mass for a loved one who has passed away; call the Church and ask the prayer chain to pray for friends or family members who are sick or going through a difficult time; ask others if there is anything that they would like you to pray for; read about the saints and ask them to pray for you or loved ones; or go to the cemetery and pray for the souls who may not have anyone to pray for them.

During Lent this year, we will once again be offering opportunities to grow closer to Christ. On February 26, we will have Mass for Ash Wednesday. On March 11, we will have a weeknight Mass during RE for everyone. We will once again be offering Prayer Stations on April 01. This is

a special night to come and spend time in Adoration, celebrate the Liturgy of the Hours, and visit several different Prayer Stations. Some Prayer Stations are geared towards adults and families, while some are geared towards children. It is a great opportunity for all ages. A Lenten Retreat for adults is also being planned, and we will get details to you as soon as possible.

During Lent, we are all asked to take time and reflect on how closely we are modeling Jesus

*During Lent, we are all asked to take time and reflect on how closely we are modeling Jesus Christ in our own life.*

ACT JUSTLY  
LOVE MERCY  
WALK HUMBLLY  
MICAH 6:8



Christ in our own life. Pope Francis stated that "Lent is a favorable season for opening the doors to all those in need and recognizing in them the face of Christ." Are we able to see the face of Christ in all those we meet, and can others see the face of Christ in us? During this Lenten season, strive to let the love of Christ shine brightly in your life, through all your words and actions.



## From the Desk of the Principal

By Theresa Schleisman, Principal,  
St. Thomas Aquinas School

### SWITCH

The new year will begin with a 12 week program that will allow students and families to monitor what they DO, CHEW and VIEW in order to learn how to make healthier choices about physical activity, nutrition and screen time.

### CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

**January 25th - 31st**

Plans are currently underway to celebrate Catholic schools across the U.S. STA will kick off this celebration with a Chili Supper on Saturday, Jan. 25th after Mass.

### PRAYER PARTNERS

February will highlight another opportunity for students to celebrate Mass and share social time with their long-term prayer partners.

### MEALS FROM THE HEARTLAND

STA students will get the opportunity to do a service project with WCCD high school students to prepare food packages for needy people across the nation.



Christmas Concert 2019 - Angels Aware



New St. Thomas School Mass Polos



First and second graders entertained the Webster City Women's Club with some popular Christmas songs during their annual Christmas Party at the Jane Young House.



STA students share some holiday cheer by caroling with residents at Southfield and Crestview Health Care Facilities.



Thanks to all the parents who gifted us a special Christmas Meal on December 20, 2019! We are blessed to have you as part of our STA family.



All classes at St. Thomas were able to see the stars via the Star Lab. John Laird, Hamilton County Conservation Officer, recently brought the lab to our school to teach students more about the night skies.

## Important Dates:



- January 6 - Classes Resume
- January 14 - Superintendent Roundtable
- January 25-31 - Celebrating Catholic Schools Week
- February 17 - No School; All day Professional Development
- February 26 - Ash Wednesday

- March 10 & 11 - Parent/ Teacher Conferences
- March 16-20 - Spring Break
- April 10 - Good Friday/No School
- April 12 - Easter Sunday
- April 19 - 1st Communion
- May 2 - St. Thomas Annual Ball



## Feasibility Study Results

by Heidi Tesdahl, Development Director

Dear Parishioners,

We would like to thank all the families who participated in our feasibility study in early December. Whether you have been involved with the Project Committee, the Task Force, Parish Council or were interviewed for the study, we thank you! It was encouraging to see the amount of families that took time to offer their opinions and questions surrounding the proposed projects. The primary purposes of the study were to determine: the climate for fundraising, volunteer and volunteer leadership potential, financial potential and the best way to prepare for and proceed with a campaign effort to achieve optimal results and ultimate success. Overall, we received a positive response from those that took part in this endeavor and we have the necessary support for a capital campaign. Your input has been essential in providing a direction for the future of our parish. It has aided us in determining which projects are of priority.

Below, we have provided general results from the feasibility study, for your review. The final feasibility study report and results are available in the parish office if you would like to review its entirety.

- **96%** of the respondents were either very satisfied or satisfied with the programs and services the church provides.
- **69%** of the respondents felt well informed about the church's needs and plans to make various improvements to the church, parish center, school and grounds.
- **93%** of the respondents felt it was very important or important to address the needs.

- Individual needs by area rated very important or important are as follows:

- **Church improvements - 96%** - A clear and almost unchallenged priority.
- **Parish Center improvements - 60%**
- **School Improvements - 88%** - Here too, the need for the improvements posed (with the exception of the proposed addition) were of and by themselves almost entirely unchallenged.
- **Grounds Improvements - 41%** - The only part of the plan that did not receive majority acceptance at this time. This is not to say that people were not in favor of this part of the project, but rather, they felt the other components of the plan were higher priorities and should be addressed first.
- **94%** of the respondents were aware that the church was considering a major fundraising campaign to address these needs.
- **66%** of the respondents felt the acceptance level among parishioners for a fundraising campaign to address the needs would be excellent or good.
- It is encouraging to note that **100%** of the respondents said that they would either make or consider making a gift to the campaign. This further demonstrates that a high level of supportiveness for the project and campaign effort already exist which underscores the importance of moving forward relatively immediately.

There was some concern and discussion during the interviews that centered around the continuation and affordability of the school with some people not wanting to invest in an entity and edifice that may no longer be viable. The report goes on to say "The problem with this outlook and attitude though, is that it can become a self-fulfilling prophecy with possible adverse consequences for parish families and the parish overall. In fact, studies have shown that parishes with schools tend to do better financially than those without schools and that in parishes where their schools have closed (especially in small towns), many have actually lost



members and are less well off financially than before the school was closed. People also need to know that students that attend Catholic schools (as well as their parents) tend to be among the most active and generous members of their Catholic parishes later in life. So, in some ways, what some see as an over investment in Catholic education now, can actually pay for itself many times over to your church and the Catholic Church overall, especially later on down the road, when those impacted by Catholic education are in a position to give back more substantially in gratitude for the Catholic education they and/or their children received.” Fortunately for our parish, many people already see this and many comments on the value of the school and the exceptional education to our local young people were received.

There were many additional comments captured during the interviews on each area and these have been provided in the report with no individual names attached to any comment. These will be helpful for the Project Committee as they work through the project and prioritize the needs.

The study shows that a majority of those interviewed (53%) believe that at least \$1,500,000 can realistically be raised over a three-year pledge period and the consultants concur with a possible increase to \$2,000,000.

*The Project Committee along with Father Meyer will use the results and recommendations in this study and from continued feedback from parishioners to move forward.*

The Project Committee along with Father Meyer will use the results and recommendations in this study and from continued feedback from parishioners to move forward. We are currently in the process of planning the campaign which we are preliminarily targeting to kick off at the end of April. You will receive more information on the final case statement in the upcoming months. We are grateful for your continued love and support of our parish and community. We look forward to working with all of you on this endeavor. Please be assured of our prayers and may God continue to bless you and your family.

## New Parishioners

Phillip & Else Cochran

Welcome to Our Parish!

### St. Marys Financial Update

Month	Net Income/(Loss)	Year to Date
August 2019	\$1,550.63	(\$1,367.20)
September 2019	\$2,311.71	\$944.51
October 2019	\$658.92	\$1,603.43
November	\$9,549.11	\$11,152.54

St. Mary Fall Festival - Net income \$7,127.71  
(Not all bills for expenses have been received)

### St. Thomas Aquinas Financial Update

Month	Net Income/(Loss)	Year to Date
August 2019	\$13,827.04	(\$755.72)
September 2019	(\$298.11)	(\$904.73)
October 2019	\$7,924.34	\$658.92
November	\$6,563.48	\$13,583.09

St. Thomas Harvest Raffle - Net income \$16,316.02  
(Not all bills for expenses have been received)

## St Mary Cemetery and Calvary Cemetery (St Thomas) Directives

All cemetery lots are required to have a marker or headstone or monument, within reason. The monument company **must** contact the church PRIOR to installing it.

It is prohibited to:

- Erect decorative structures on cemetery lots, (including 12' flagpoles)
- Plant trees or shrubs on cemetery lots without prior permission from the Cemetery Board
- No private excavation. The contracted grave digger used by Calvary Cemetery only will be used.

# St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church

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## Upcoming

Events

### January

- 1-6 School Resumes from Christmas Break
- 1-12 Rite of Enrollment at 10 am Mass
- 1-13 to 1-24 Fr. Meyer on vacation
- 1-25 Chili Supper after Mass to kickoff Catholic Schools Week
- 1-26 to 2-1-19 Catholic Schools Week (special events to be announced)

### February

- 2-16 Cluster Family Fun Day at St. Mary 1-3pm
- 2-26 Ash Wednesday
- Fridays of Lent - STA Stations of the Cross and Fish Dinners

### March

- Tuesdays of Lent - SM Stations of the Cross and Soup Suppers
- 3-7 Middle School Lock in
- 3-13 Spring Break starts-thru 3-22
- 3-22 SM Full Breakfast to benefit St. Mary Cemetery

### April

- 4-6 to 4-11 Holy Week
- 4-12 Easter Sunday
- 4-19 1st Communion
- 4-23 to 4-26 Possible campaign kickoff
- 4-26 KC's Omelet Breakfast 10-12:30

### May

- 5-2 Friends of STA Ball - We Believe!



Lighting of the Advent Wreath