

Summa

St. Thomas Aquinas Newsletter

May - August 2020

Hospitality



Prayer



Formation



Service



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Pastor's Corner

Storms happen. The global pandemic of the coronavirus is still happening. It caused much turmoil. Everything was shook up and changed. It's an age of social distancing and concern for our safety and the safety of others. Things will be different afterwards. Storms end and life resumes.



What happened to Jesus Christ was like a storm for his followers too. They had gone home despairing, not understanding his death and resurrection, and what it meant for us. The life of the risen Lord is memorialized in the Eucharist. The bread and wine find their fulfillment in giving life to others. When Catholics grow uncertain of the Eucharist, their sense of identity is shaken. For attendance at the Eucharist is not just a sign of our attachment to the Church: it is how we are Church. One cannot have Catholic faith without a strong commitment to that faith's deepest expression --- the Eucharist.

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Thomas Aquinas wrote, "In this sacrament the whole mystery of our salvation is held." The Eucharist, more than any other sacrament, symbolizes the Church and each member of the body of Christ joined with one another. The Catholic Church brings into Holy Communion the whole spectrum of the community out there. Pope John Paul II in one of his encyclical letters of 2003 wrote: "The Eucharist is the greatest gift Christ left his Church, a gift that makes the sacrifice of his life present for all time and gives strength and hope to the world. It unites heaven and earth. It embraces and permeates all creation. The Church draws her life from Christ in the Eucharist; by him she is fed and by him she is enlightened." He reminded us that it is not enough to gaze upon the body of Christ, not enough even to receive the body of Christ. We are invited to become the body of Christ. It is the Lord who is giving us in the Eucharist a special way to participate in divine life. It is the Lord who is sanctifying us.

One of our greatest Catholic spiritual writers, Karl Rahner, wrote: "Very soon, all Christians will be mystics – or they will not believe at all." Christ himself comes to us in the Eucharist and imbues within us his very presence. The Eucharist is the divine spark within us. Saints, who were mystics, throughout history have understood that and it might do us well to hear some of them speak to us today.

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church

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St. Therese of Lisieux said: "Our Lord does not come from heaven every day to stay in some golden ciborium. He comes to find another heaven, the heaven of our soul in which He loves to dwell."

St. Thomas Aquinas wrote: "The proper effect of the Eucharist is the transformation of ourselves into God's presence."

St. Anthony Claret put it: "On approaching the Most Blessed Sacrament I feel such a lively faith that I can't describe it."

Maybe during this storm you've hungered for the Eucharist and are ready to come back to celebrate it.

Fr. Stephen Moyer



Where is God...in Ordinary Time?

by Marty Doerning, Director of Liturgy & Music

When asked where God is, we traditionally answer, "God is everywhere." Where did you encounter God today? Where did you encounter God yesterday? Maybe those questions are good starting points for us as we begin the liturgical season of Ordinary Time.

In Ordinary Time we celebrate the public life and ministry of Christ's life. The Sundays of Ordinary Time follow the Solemnity of Pentecost, the celebration of the gift of the Holy Spirit. By our own Baptism and Confirmation, we became disciples - called to carry on the work of Jesus Christ in our everyday lives.

It is at Sunday Mass that we are fed and nourished by the Word and Eucharist to carry on that mission. Keeping Sunday holy is good for ourselves and sets us on a path each week for greater awareness of God's holy presence in all aspects of our lives and the lives others.

How do you carry on that mission? Look around, and you don't have to look very far. Who needs you to be totally present to them? Is it a family member, a friend, neighbor, workmate, elderly person, a stranger needing

assistance in the grocery store, or someone who needs a phone call? When and where did you see God's beauty in all of creation?



Coming together at Mass with our faith community strengthens us for our task as missionaries. In

this unprecedented time when all of us experienced the closing of Churches, we glimpsed what many people, historically and in the present know in the absence of the treasure of Sunday's Eucharistic feast. Our Sunday Eucharist is the core and the kernel, the source and the summit of parish life and all the activities flow from that gathering. The empty pews were an eye opener to what Church may look like if current trends continue. It is a good time for all of us to be

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Growing in Faith during COVID-19



By Deacon Dan Hurt

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missionaries with a role to play in continually building up the Church and promoting God-centered living.

Come to Mass; invite someone else to come with you. Reach out each day to those who need us. Then at the "end of the day" ask ourselves when or where we have encountered God. Where was God present? The Spirit is constantly breathing new life. Where were we fully aware of the extraordinary in this Ordinary Time? How are we consciously professing that God is everywhere?

The Spirit is constantly breathing new life.

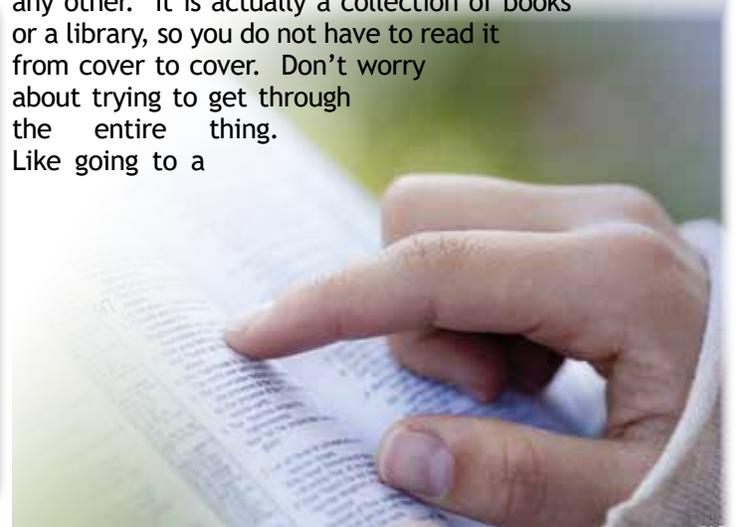
This is not a time to fear, but a time to turn to God and allow his beauty to flow through us.

Our way of life changed very drastically in a very short time. It used to be easy to just get in the car and go shopping for fun, hang out with your family at a zoo or museum, go to the theater to enjoy a movie, or just let your children enjoy the playgrounds. To make matters worse, we cannot gather for Mass, Faith Formation, or any Church related activity. This evil coronavirus is even preventing families from gathering. All of this can be overwhelming and disheartening, but we cannot focus on only the negatives. We have to remember

that our God is a God of love and mercy, and he has always worked through difficult circumstances. He has a way of taking the ugliness that exists in our world and turning it into something beautiful. This evil is an invisible enemy that seems to be lurking all around us, but we are stronger and more resilient. This is not a time to fear, but a time to turn to God and allow his beauty to flow through us. Each of us has a beautiful opportunity

to grow more in love with God, our family, and each other during this time of isolation.

If you do not read the Bible daily, I encourage you to dust off that big book and make reading it part of your daily routine. Scripture is the living Word of God. Jesus is the Word that took on flesh, so every encounter you have with scripture is an encounter with Jesus Christ. The words written in the Bible are just as relevant to our time as they were during the time of the early Christians. A Bible is not a book like any other. It is actually a collection of books or a library, so you do not have to read it from cover to cover. Don't worry about trying to get through the entire thing. Like going to a



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library, choose a book to read. Instead of trying to get through it fast, read it with a purpose. Take a chapter, read it, think about what you read, ask God for clarity and understanding, and reread it. Try to see how it fits into your life, and try to understand how God is speaking to you through the words you read. If it has been a long time since you have read scripture, the Gospels are a great place to start. Reading scripture allows us to listen to God and get a better perspective of how he is working in our lives.

Besides reading Scripture, there are many ways to grow more in love with Jesus Christ and His Church.

Besides reading Scripture, there are many ways to grow more in love with Jesus Christ and His Church. Praying the Rosary or Divine Mercy, reading a good Catholic book, taking advantage of the several free Catholic resources being offered during this pandemic, watching a good Christian movie, praying the Liturgy of the Hours, or just setting time aside to just sit in silence are all great ways to increase your faith life. Making a sacred prayer space in your home is a great way to stay more focused and to be more intentional. Several Churches are live-streaming or recording Mass during this time. At St. Thomas Aquinas, we are live-streaming Sunday Mass. Though we cannot yet gather and celebrate together in the Church, we can bring the Church into our homes and still celebrate with a great sense of togetherness.

A group of 17 children were supposed to celebrate their First Communion on Sunday, April 19, but due to the circumstances,



they now have to wait until we can all celebrate Mass together again. It is extremely difficult for all of us when we cannot receive Jesus in the Eucharist. The children in First Communion only had two classes, a retreat, and practice left as part of their preparation for this great sacrament, so they were getting excited.

To help them along, with much thanks to the curriculum companies, the remaining materials were emailed to the

parents. Parents are first and foremost the greatest teachers of the faith that their kids will ever have. Along with all the materials to finish the remaining classes at home, an at-home retreat was developed and sent out as well. This allowed these parents to see what their children have learned, and they got to continue preparing their kids. This not only builds anticipation for receiving the sacrament, it makes the sacrament even more special for the family. This is bringing the Church into the home. Religious Education curriculum has also been emailed to families along with additional supplemental lessons and ideas.

Families living under the same roof and parents with children at home have a terrific opportunity to grow closer together while spending more time at home. It is recommended that



all families find times to pray together. Praying together models the importance of prayer to each other, helps bring the needs of each family member to light, builds a stronger connection to each other, and helps everyone grow closer to God together. Besides praying together, this is such a great time to strengthen the family bond within the household. Playing games give us a great opportunity to have fun and learn more about each other. Preparing dinners together, watching movies together, enjoying the outdoors together, and playing games together build memories and bring us closer. This may be a time of isolation from society and from so much that we were used to, but I really do believe that families will grow closer together, and that is a beautiful thing.

We have to remember that we are all members of the Body of Christ. Even though we cannot be together physically, we can still reach out to each other. The children and teens of St. Thomas Aquinas are sending cards and letters to shut-ins and parishioners during this time. It is greatly encouraged

From the Desk of the Principal



By Theresa Schleisman, Principal, St. Thomas Aquinas School

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that everyone reaches out to others in some way. Call old friends, call an elderly person who cannot get out, call people you used to see at Church every week, set up Zoom meetings with family members or have an online family reunion, or send cards to people to let them know that you are thinking of them. Several people have lost their jobs; depression is skyrocketing; people are lonely; and some cannot even leave their homes because of health issues. We are the Church, so it is greatly encouraged that we come together, reach out, and brighten the lives of others during this time.



This is a time of opportunity: a time to grow, a time to learn, a time to love, and a time to reach out.

COVID-19 has changed our world, but we will endure and get through this. This will make us stronger; it will bring us closer together; and it will increase our love for God and His Church. In the first letter of Peter, St. Peter reminds us that we have this great promise of everlasting life. He goes on by explaining that we may have to endure various trials so our faith, "which is more precious than gold," may prove to be for His glory and we can attain the "salvation of our souls." This is a time of opportunity: a time to

grow, a time to learn, a time to love, and a time to reach out. We will be back together soon, and things will go back to normal. Until that time, we can keep finding unique ways to stay connected. God bless all of you, and remember that beauty will come from this suffering!

If you need to talk, if you need additional resources, or if you need assistance during this time, please call me (Deacon Dan Hurt) at 515-832-1190 or 515-835-9972. I am here for all of you, and you are all in my prayers.

We find ourselves in some very unusual circumstances for this particular SUMMA publication. As confirmed on April 17th, the governor has decreed that all Iowa schools be closed for the remainder of the school year.

Although we are saddened that we will not be able to physically be with our students we need to remember our theme for this year---We Believe. We Believe:

- We Believe we will all be together again soon.
- We Believe this pandemic cannot defeat our love of God and family.
- We Believe that somehow this crisis will make us all stronger and more appreciative of what God has given us.

Our list could easily go on and on.

Due to limited school information, I would like to share our most recent revisions in our school mission and vision statements crafted by staff, parents, school board and our strategic planning committee.

Mission

St. Thomas Aquinas serves Webster City and surrounding communities by offering a Preschool-6th grade education. Our school incorporates faith and values through daily learning in a safe and nurturing environment. With support from parents and families, St. Thomas develops the spiritual, academic, physical and emotional growth of students who will be future leaders in our ever-changing world.

Vision

In a Christ-centered environment, St. Thomas empowers young people to build their personal foundation for lifelong learning and service to others.

Praying for all to stay safe through the summer. Asking for your prayers as our teachers continue to deliver distance learning via many different medias/virtual avenues in order for our students to keep growing and engaged during this time.



St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church



Update from the Director

by Heidi Tesdahl, Development Director

New Website for our Parishes

Be sure to check out the new website for St. Thomas Aquinas and St. Mary!

stthomaswc.org

Our site is provided by eCatholic, the same company that now hosts the website for our Archdiocese. This easy to navigate, mobile friendly site has many new features. We are now able to accept online donations and payments, register new parishioners online, accept faith formation family registrations and payments, accept school tuition and fee payments with the potential to add more features as needed. Other features available previously such as access to the weekly bulletin, monthly calendar, monthly school newsletter and menus are also still available. Visit our site to easily send a message to the parish or school office or any church or school staff member. Give us a shout to let us know that you checked it out and what you think! We would love to hear from you.

New Giving Online

Our new online giving service is as easy as 1, 2, 3

Just visit stthomaswc.org/give-to-st-thomas on any device for these easy steps:

1. Choose a One-time or Recurring donation
2. Select a preferred method of payment (electronic check or debit/credit)
3. Enter your information and submit!

Your gift will immediately process, and you'll receive an email confirmation receipt.



Select recurring gift option? Great! Follow the instructions in your confirmation email to easily set up your own online donor account and determine the frequency and amount that you'd like to automatically give. And then stop having to remember those weekly envelopes!

This online giving service has already been a proven success for many parishes, schools, and dioceses. And it makes for safer record-keeping, faster processing, and more efficient communication for the parish office.

New Site Features

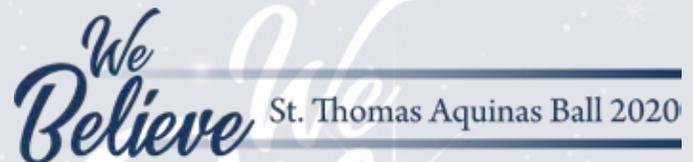
On the home page of the website, scroll down to find links to Word on Fire's daily Mass from Bishop Barron's Chapel, live broadcasts from the Archdiocese of Dubuque and other updated Catholic news sources.

From the very start we have been impressed with the support team at eCatholic. They took everything from our old site and transferred it to the new site and guided us through the development of our online content. Many thanks to Kent Bailey from OHP Marketing for his assistance and guidance in the process.



The capital campaign to address the needs of our parish and school that was planned for kickoff at the end of April is currently being put on hold. The Campaign Cabinet met in late March and the decision

was made to push the start of the campaign to a later date that will be determined as we navigate through these next couple of months. Our needs still exist, and it is our hope that we will be able to do this campaign yet this year. We will post updates as we have them in the bulletin and on our website.



The annual fundraising event for our school, originally scheduled for May 2, 2020 has been postponed. While a virtual "no show" event was considered, the planning committee decided that we would rather wait and gather with our "Friends of St. Thomas" at a later date. We are hoping for a late summer or back to school event. We will still have sponsors for our event, have the raffle, auctions, food and entertainment. We are anxious to get back into our normal routines and look forward to the time when we can celebrate our amazing school with our supporters!



Church Office Update

By Rita Wolfgram, Secretary/Bookkeeper
- St. Thomas & St. Mary

Coronavirus Update:

As you all know the coronavirus has caused everything to shut down, many people are laid off work, businesses are closed. Due to those hardships the State & Federal governments have released several programs to help those affected. St Thomas Aquinas & St Mary parishes have also been hit hard since we are not able to meet for Masses. The Archdiocese has sent information for those loans/grants to all parishes and I have filled out, collected all required data, and submitted for both parishes. St Thomas was contacted Wed, April 8 to let us know that we have qualified for the Payroll Protection Program (PPP) loan and will receive 2.5 times the monthly average payroll.

The Small Business Relief Grant through Iowa Economic Development was not granted for either parish.

Many Thanks!

A HUGE THANK YOU to the Sadler family for stripping & waxing the gym floor during this quarantine break, it looks just like NEW again!!! Thank you for your HARD work on the floor and also the whole parish center, we are truly blessed to have you working for us. God Bless You!



We Appreciate Your Generosity!

Thank you to all who have been mailing, dropping off or using the new online donation option for your tithing, we truly appreciate your generosity. Also, to those who have sent little notes in the envelopes, they are a nice "pick me up" during this unusual time. Prayers to all!! -Rita

Thank you to the Hindt & Kadolph children who sent Easter pictures to put up on the doors of the church!



St. Thomas Aquinas Financial Update

December 2019	Income	Expense	Income/Loss
Month	\$97,189.58	\$72,495.14	\$24,694.44
Year to Date	\$415,860.64	\$377,583.11	\$38,277.53
January 2020			
Month	\$39,564.28	\$54,944.23	(\$15,379.95)
Year to Date	\$455,424.92	\$432,315.05	\$23,109.87
February 2020			
Month	\$38,671.38	\$73,002.20	(\$34,350.82)
Year to Date	\$494,096.30	\$509,837.25	(\$15,740.95)
March 2020			
Month	\$40,377.91	\$65,036.48	(\$24,658.57)
Year to Date	\$534,474.21	\$574,873.73	(\$40,399.52)

Your
Time and
Talent is
Appreciated!

St. Thomas Aquinas Catholic Church

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Upcoming Events

April

- All scheduled activities/events have been cancelled.
- Pastoral Council, Finance Committee and School Board meetings were all held by Zoom Meetings.
- Capital Campaign - Faith In Our Future has been POSTPONED to Fall

The following scheduled events are subject to change as we continue our "shelter at home" status.

May

- 5-2 Friends of STA Ball - We Believe!
POSTPONED to August

June

- 22-28 Rita gone on vacation

July

- 9-12 Youth Fund Raiser - Rummage Sale
- 17-18 2nd weekend of Rummage Sale

August

- 3-7 Adult Pilgrimage "Encounter the Ark"
- 8-9 Mission Appeal

It's all on-line!
Calendars-News & MORE!
www.stthomaswc.org