

ST. THOMAS AQUINAS PARISH

DECEMBER 18, 2016

Fourth Sunday of **ADVENT**



MASS SCHEDULE

St Thomas Aquinas Church

Sunday Mass

Saturday Vigil | 4:00 p.m.

Sunday | 7:45, 10:00, a.m., 12:00 p.m.

Daily Mass

Monday - Friday | 7:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m.

Saturday | 9:00 a.m.

St Basil Chapel

Sunday | 10:00 a.m.

5:00 p.m.

PARISH INFORMATION

St Thomas Aquinas

Rev. Bill Devine, Pastor

Rev. Tom Olson, Parochial Vicar

Sr. Deacon Jerry Ryan

Parish Office Staff

103 Center St. Bridgewater, MA 02324

Hours | Mon. - Fri. 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Peter Vitagliano, Business Manager

Rob Ruth, Administrative Assistant

E-mail | stthomasaquinas@comcast.net

Phone | 508 697 9528

Fax | 508 279 1859

Website

www.stthomasaquinas.com

Religious Education Office Staff

Phone | 508 697 3652

Debbie Hill, Cord. of Religious Ed.

Marie Masaitis, Cord. of Religious Ed.

St Basil, The Catholic Center

122 Park Ave. Bridgewater, MA 02324

Hours | Mon. - Fri. 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

Phone | 508 531 1346

Fax | 508 531 6188

Chapel Staff

Rev. Tom Olson, Campus Chaplain

Marlene DeLeon, Campus Minister

Phone | 508 531 1412

marlene.deleon@bridgew.edu

Rita Garufi, Administrative Assistant

rita.garufi@bridgew.edu

Welcome

To visitors of our Parish, and to those who have recently moved into the area, and to those comfortable and nourished here - Welcome. Regardless of your status in the Church, marital state, your ethnicity, your prior religious experience, your personal history, background, or sexual orientation, we hope that you will continue to worship with us each week.

If you are new to the parish please introduce yourself to one of our priests and ask how you can become a registered parishioner

Our Mission is to be a welcoming community of believers continually growing in our faith and in our love of Jesus Christ through worship, education, evangelization and service within our local and broader community.

Our Mission

Christmas Flower Offering

Every Christmas the Altar Guild group decorates the altar with flowers in celebration of the holiday, for all to enjoy. In the past we have offered envelopes for those who are interested in making a donation towards these flowers in memory of a loved one. It was well received, and once again we have placed envelopes at the entrances of the church and the chapel for those of you that are interested.



Schedule of Christmas Masses

CHRISTMAS EVE - December 24

4:00 p.m. - St. Thomas Aquinas Church

4:00 p.m. - St. Basil Chapel

4:00 p.m. - Parish Center (at St. Thomas)

Midnight - St. Thomas Aquinas Church

CHRISTMAS DAY - December 25

10:00 a.m. - St. Thomas Aquinas Church

10:00 a.m. - St. Basil Chapel

Noon - St. Thomas Aquinas Church

REDISCOVER CATHOLICISM

We all know people who have left the Church for different reasons. Many did not realize what they turned their backs on. Why? Because most Catholics have never had Catholicism presented to them in a way that is inspiring, compelling, and relevant to their daily lives.

When Catholicism is truly understood and lived, it elevates every human activity, every human person, and every human environment that it touches. It transforms the way we approach our work and the way we parent. It transforms our marriages, our relationships, and the way we interact with people every day.

Testimonial:

"I go to church every Sunday, but I never really got it. First I went to please my parents and then my wife, but then I received a copy of Rediscover Catholicism as I was walking out of Mass. Wow! I have to say, you really make it so accessible. I have given twelve people a copy of the book already, and I am not done. Thank you for the work you and your team are doing."

This Christmas, after every Christmas Mass, every family and/or individual will receive **a Free Copy of the book, "Rediscover Catholicism"** by Matthew Kelly.

Thank You for your generosity

I would like to thank all who contributed to the different requests we had to assist others over the past few months. Because of your generosity we were able to provide gifts for Troops and Veterans at the VA Hospital, winter clothing and Christmas gifts to be distributed by My Brother's Keeper, hundreds of presents requested on our Giving Tree ornaments which will be given to Bridgewater residents and gifts for the inmates and patients at Bridgewater State Hospital. I also thank many who made financial donations or gave Market Basket gift cards so that we could honor requests for food. Your understanding of the needs of others and your desire to help them is a reflection of your Christian faith, your blessings and the Lord's love reaching out to others through you. Thank you!

Fr. Bill

Those who have lost a loved one....

While the upcoming holidays are a joyful time for most, it can be a difficult time especially for those who have recently lost a child, spouse, parent, relative or friend. Even though our faith in the Lord's promise of eternal life is strong and our prayers for them are heard, their absence during this time of year can bring sadness during the holidays. There are so many memories of past Christmases, New Year celebrations, dinners and family get-togethers. These memories are often brought to life by the empty chair and the different mementos around the house. Although surrounded by their family and friends and consoled by their faith for those who have lost someone.....there's something.... someone missing. Those who have lost someone may have a smile on their face but often have sadness in their heart.

The Lord knows and understands your sorrow and how much you miss and love the person those who have died. I believe that those who have died know your love and prayers for them. The memories you have which bring both sadness and love are important to accept, embrace and bring you closer to them and to the Lord.

Often those who have lost someone believe that they can manage by themselves when in all honesty, they need the support and help by others. These others are often not the members of their family or friends but those who have gone through the same emotional challenges. Please note in this week's bulletin two opportunities where you can be supported, understood and strengthened during your grief by others. If this is not for yourself, then maybe it's for someone you know.

GOSPEL MEDITATION - Encourage Deeper Understanding of Scripture

"She will bear a son and you are to name him Jesus." Joseph heard these prophetic words in a dream. They were words of anticipation, of what was to come. And in a sense, they ushered in a kind of Advent for Joseph. With this divine message, Joseph began a period of holy waiting. He now knew that the Messiah was going to be coming into his own home, and he had just nine months to prepare! We can only imagine how Joseph might have spent these precious days. Most likely he did more than prepare a physical home for his soon-to-be-born Son; he must have also used these days to prepare his heart, mind, and soul for such a tremendous mission.

Today, we stand in a position not all that different from St. Joseph. We also know that the Messiah will be arriving--not just in remembrance at Christmastime, but in reality at the second coming. But unlike Joseph, we don't have an exact timeframe. We don't know when Jesus will return. We just know that we need to be ready!

During the season of Advent we are challenged to recall this fact and strive to get our hearts in order. The days are short now until Christmas, and for all we know they might be short until Christ's return as well. What remains to be done? Aside from wrapping presents and planning parties, where do we yet need to tidy up our habits to properly celebrate the real meaning of this festive season? How can we make sure that we don't get swept away in the external preparations, forgetting the work that needs to be done in the invisible silence of our souls?

God may not speak to all of us directly in our dreams, but he does speak to us clearly through his word. May we recognize today the mission he has laid before us.

SUNDAY CHILDREN'S LITURGY

There will be no Sunday Children's Liturgy at the 10:00 a.m. Mass on December 25th and January 1st.

EVERYDAY STEWARDSHIP

Recognize God in your Ordinary Moments

The name Emmanuel means, "God is with us." This is a title we use for Jesus frequently during the Advent and Christmas season, but its impact should stay with us throughout the year. The Incarnation, God becoming human in the person of Jesus Christ, broke into our world in a profound manner that means that God is not only with us, God is us. The relationship offered to you and I by God is now more intimate and meaningful because of the birth of Jesus Christ.

God is truly with us and our goal is to be truly present to him at all times. To be prayerful is an important characteristic of an Everyday Steward. It means more than reciting prayers and setting aside ten minutes a day. Our goal is to experience the presence of God throughout the day in the ordinary and extraordinary moments of living. Offering all the actions and moments of the day to God as we awake, and then examining our day before we go to sleep at night, help lead us closer toward that goal.

When we begin to sense God's presence at all times, and we realize that being with God does not mean one of us has to be talking all the time, then we can truly attest to our reality in a quiet voice at any time, "Emmanuel, God is with us."

Tracy Earl Welliver, MTS

A SPECIAL THANK YOU

The beautiful Christmas postcards you received with this year's Christmas Mass schedule were made possible by a generous gift from Russell & Pica Funeral Home. Thank you Dave Russell.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT - THANK YOU

Thank you to the many parents, who in the midst of all the hustle and bustle of preparing for Christmas, volunteered their time and talents to make the Christmas Pageant a success. The Christmas pageant was an undertaking that required a lot of organization and without your help it wouldn't have been possible. It is only with help, such as yours, that such events can take place.

Marie Masaitis

YOUTH GROUP - THANK YOU

The St. Thomas Youth Group would like to thank everyone for their support this past year. We wish everyone a very merry and blessed Christmas!

Please watch here for many exciting events coming your way in 2017!!

CONFIRMATION

Confirmation I - Class resumes on January 8th. Students have plenty of time to work on their Challenge of the Week and should come to class prepared to share about one of the following:

1. Ask someone about feeling the presence of God in their life.
2. The Catholic Church is so organized that it is unmatched worldwide in reaching out to the poor, the sick, and those in need of disaster relief. Post a link on social media about a Catholic charity that interests you.
3. Read 1 Corinthians 12 and pray for the Holy Spirit to be with you. Which part of the "Body of Christ" do you think you represent?

Confirmation II - Students will be attending Adoration in the church Sunday December 18. Drop off and pick up will be at the church. The next class for Confirmation II will be January 22nd.

FORMS - Both grades should be completing their community service projects and handing their sheets in. Confirmation II students should have passed in their name forms. If your student's sponsor is a college student, have them complete the Sponsor Form while they are home on Christmas break. All forms are available online.

WHY DO WE DO THAT?

Catholic Traditions Explained

Question: How were the prophets able to predict the coming of Jesus, the Messiah?

Answer: For the most part, the first reading for the Sundays of Advent is taken from Old Testament prophetic literature. These passages, along with most other prophetic literature, weren't intended by the prophets themselves as predictors of Jesus' birth, life, and mission; a more accurate way to understand prophetic literature is to see it as addressing social, political, and religious issues of the day. God, speaking through the prophets, calls his people to more faithful covenant living.

However, the Church teaches that, within the Old Testament, "the mystery of our salvation is present in a hidden way" ("Dei verbum," 15). The Passion and Resurrection of the Lord led to the reinterpretation of prophetic texts by his followers who understood these texts in a new light; the original texts, written at a specific time to address specific issues, were later understood to contain other meanings. The process continues to our own day as we strive to apply the Scriptures to our twenty-first-century faith reality. This is what makes the Bible a living text through which God continues to speak. Let us listen with open minds and hearts.

LIVE THE LITURGY - Inspiration for the Week

As we gather on this Fourth Sunday of Advent our anticipation for the coming of the Messiah heightens and intensifies. Our desire to connect with the source of who we are, God himself, takes on greater fervor. We anticipate the salvation Christ brings, which promises us a renewed spirit and freedom. We all long to be free. What binds us and prevents us from embracing what God desires to give? If we desire, we can taste this freedom now and then possess it fully when Christ comes!

Bereavement Ministry

The St. Thomas Aquinas/St. Basil Bereavement Ministers are pleased to announce our next series of Bereavement meetings to begin on **Wednesday, January 11 at 3 P.M.** They are expected to run for approximately 9 to 10 weeks.

The meetings will be at St. Thomas Aquinas Parish Center. With St. Thomas Aquinas & St. Basil, this ministry is co-sponsored by Prophet, Chapman, Cole & Gleason Funeral Home.

Participants in the present Bereavement Ministry session are willing to speak with anyone who would like more information. All who are grieving the loss of a loved one are invited to join this Christian based Bereavement Support Group. Please contact Roberta Gesner at 508 697 4184 ggesner@aol.com, Carol Martin 508 697 2281 caroljimmartin@verizon.net.

Loss of a Child

Have you lost a child? of any age, by any means, no matter how long ago? With the searing loss of a child a parent's world becomes radically and dramatically changed. Friends and family often do not know how to console a parent because they may say the wrong thing. Grieving parents may begin to withdraw or become distant from each other. While counseling and activities provide some degree of healing, the spiritual needs are not addressed. Parents need a place where they can express their anger, confusion and need for God's help and healing. Please consider attending **Emmaus Ministry** for grieving parents on **January 28th at St. Peter's Catholic Church, 86 Court St., Plymouth.** If you or if you know someone who has lost a child and is grieving give them is announcement or get more information www.emfgp.org or call **Caroline Bertozzi at 508-747-1928.**

The 2nd Collections

- **This week** - December 18 **No 2nd Collection**
- **Next week** - December 25 **Clergy Health and Retirement Trust**

This Christmas, the collection will once again benefit the **Clergy Health and Retirement Trust** which cares for the needs of our priests. Our priests are always there for us; they share Christ's good news, perform good works, and build communities of good faith. All are welcome to learn more and make a gift online at clergytrust.org. And don't forget to find the Trust on Facebook by searching "@ClergyTrust." Thank you in advance for your prayers and support.

Below you will find your parishes 2015 Christmas collection and what a 5% increase from last year's collection would look like. It may seem a little overwhelming, especially with the financial struggles parishes are facing and the responsibility of multiple parishes. The current and future needs for you and your brother priests are a reality we need to address.

Parish	2015 Christmas Collection	5% Increase	2016 Christmas Goal
St Thomas Aquinas Parish Bridgewater	\$10,834	\$542	\$11,376

FINANCIAL BLESSINGS

Summary of Collections for: 12/6-12/12

Weekly Collection

	St Thomas	St Basil	Total
1st Collection	\$6,306	\$1,111	\$7,417
Online Giving			
WeShare	\$1,925	\$660	\$2,585
Parish Pay	\$25	-	\$25
Total	\$1,950	\$660	\$2,610
Grand Total	\$8,256	\$1,771	\$10,027

WEEKLY MASS INTENTION

Saturday, December 17

4:00 p.m. Joseph, Josephine & Joseph B. LeAndres

Sunday, December 18

7:45 a.m. Jose Coelho

10:00 a.m. Gilbert Luiz & Adele Gene Matevia

10:00 a.m. *St Basil* - Margaret Perkins & Marjorie Mendez

12:00 p.m. Ralph Scopa

Can we pray for you?

If you would like to add someone to our *prayer list* please contact Rob at the parish office. Individuals are prayed for by name every Saturday morning during Mass.



"A time to be born..."

Cora Diane Derby, Ryan Katherine Ayers,
Autumn Paisley Smith, Lincoln Wayne Ellis,
Nora Kathleen Scully, Bradley George Childs

"A time to die..."

Karen Snow, Arlene Morin, Frances Couet,
Dianne Kent, Walter H. Welch, Thelma Doucette,
Allen Arruda, Kathleen Vacher

"A time to heal..."

Olga (Cassiani) Alberghini, Edward Albert, Jean Andrade,
Christopher Barbosa, Jeffrey Bean, Jim & Jean Brennan,
Kim (Sweetman) Carnello, Sandra Cable,
Teresa Capachione, John Conley, Jacquie Cordaro,
Matthew Costantino, Michael Costantino,
Baby Mychal Joseph Cotone, Joanna Crabtree,
Michael Crowley, Jannine Dawicki, Joseph DeAndrade,
Mary DeLeon, Marty Dickerman, Paul D'Olimpia,
Andrea Fitzgerald, Lee Fuller, Joanna Gale, Jesus Galindo,
Florence Galligan, Beverly Giuffre, Tim Johnson,
Daniel John, Ava King, Jessica Kamaniski, Jessica King,
Debbie Kulick, Fred Laham, James LaFranchise,
Howard Larsen, Kevin Looney, Bob Mackey,
Beverly Mitchell, Mary McClay, Taylor McLean,
Kaleena McHardy, Marjorie Mello, Chase Miceli,
Charles Monestere, Arlene Morin, Anna Nakouzi,
Lloyd Nelson, Antonio Nunes, Tom O'Donnell,
Bob O'Hare, Glenn O'Neil, Kevin O'Neill,
Ann Paulino, Carolyn Perry, Elaine Phaneuf,
Josephine Trocchi Picone, Richard Piantoni,
Dorothy Pope, Maria Presti, Andrea Proffetty,
Rich Quigley, Camden Rivers, Ginny Rothwell,
Matthew Ryan, Dan Sante, Paul Segreve, Sarah Silvia,
Deana Spingel, Linda Sullivan, Kim Sullivan,
Donna Sullivan, Betty Tarentino, Jennifer Tosches,
James Toy Jr., Patrice Tuffo, Peggy Yanuskiewicz,
Don Weiner, Mary (Sweetman) Zunino,
Alexis, Jason & Nicole Zutaut

"A time for peace..."

General Joseph F. Dunford, USMC
Captain Vincent Chiappini, USA
1st LT. Karen Chouinard Holliday, USMC
2nd LT. Jeffrey Boyle, USMC
Captain John Costantino, USA
SGT, Brandon Jamieson, USA
PFC, Christopher Ahl, USA
CPL Kelly O'Leary, USA
PFC Peter O'Leary, USA
PVT D.J. Jamieson, USA

Christmas Gala Concert

Sunday, December 18th, 7:00 p.m.

Join the chorus of BSU faculty, alumni, and town residents under the direction of Professors Steve Young and Jacob Liberles at St. Basil Chapel for Handel's Messiah and traditional Christmas carols. The admission price of \$5 plus two cans of food will be donated to the BSU Food Bank and the Catholic Center Food Pantry.

Christmas Card Addresses

As the holidays approach and we start sending out our Christmas cards, you might want to remember some of our wonderful Shepherds that are no longer assigned to St. Thomas Aquinas Parish.

Fr. Adrian Milik: Our Lady Help of Christians Church
573 Washington Street, Newton, MA 02458 -1494

Fr. Joseph Raeke: St. Edith Stein Church
71 East Main Street, Brockton, MA 02301

Fr. Mark Murphy: St. Paul's Church
29 Mount Auburn Street, Cambridge, MA 02138

Fr. Tom Sullivan: St. Catherine of Siena Church
547 Washington Street, Norwood, MA 02062

Fr. Jwon Yoon: St. Margaret's Church
111 Winn Street, Burlington, MA 01803

Deacon Jerry Ryan
48 High Street, Hanson, MA 02341

Deacon Will Sexton: St. John's Seminary
127 Lake Street, Brighton, MA 02135

Seminarian Bill Robinson: St. John's Seminary
127 Lake Street, Brighton, MA 02135

Fr. Edward Serena
46-6 South Meadow Village, Carver MA 02330

Fr. Michael Regan
600 O'Connell Way, Regina Cleri, Boston, MA 02114