



More News



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



Advent - Christmas - Epiphany 2018

From the Pastor



Dear Members & Friends,

Last year I began this letter by assuring you that our prayers, united with the sacrifices of our pilgrims who went to Rome in 2017, would issue in graces for our parish, and in anticipation of those gifts from God, I thanked you. In the year since, we have seen the establishment of the Maria Kaupas Upper School, the beginning of major restoration work on the convent to house the school, and perhaps most importantly, the articulation by Bishop Steven Lopes, our ordinary, of an educational mission for the entire Ordinariate. I believe that these blessings, unforeseen just one year ago, are indeed the fruits of our sacrifices and prayers that together we undertook on the 12th anniversary of our founding members' reception into the Church. The manner by which all came together was truly God's work, as I did not – nor could I – coordinate all the elements necessary for us to begin a parish high school in such a short amount of time. As we begin a new Church year with the onset of the Advent season, I again, on behalf of the entire parish, thank you for your prayers that have been so abundantly answered.

[You will find enclosed the materials we send each December for our Christmas Appeal](#), and this year we have maintained the adjustment we made last year. We have included the yearly paper on which you may write memorials and thanksgivings that will be listed in our liturgy guides after our church has been beautified with poinsettias and a Christmas tree. And you may again designate on what your gift to the parish will be spent, using the enclosed form. I hope you will consider helping us in these three particular areas of need.

First, we require improvement to one area of our campus that is experiencing far more regular use than in previous years. As noted above, the convent houses Maria Kaupas Academy Upper School, our comprehensive educational program for high school age students, which in September began meeting three days per week. Lavatories that had hardly been visited now must accommodate twelve students, their parents, and our teachers and staff. We have designated one for girls and another for boys, but both are worn out and need renovating. With a little more than two thousand dollars, our in-house contractor, Gene DeLucy, ensures us that the work our downstairs half-bath needs could be completed over the three-week Christmas break. Additional funds would go towards the upstairs bathroom. Please consider giving to this priority, as contributions here will make a significant difference in the daily lives of our students, as well as make our Upper School more inviting to visitors.

Our second appeal relates to Maria Kaupas Lower and Upper Schools, but the benefits from this improvement would extend to many other programs within the Parish. Eileen Hanisch, our drama teacher at our school, has pointed out that our stage in the Parish Hall does not have proper lighting, a necessity as we quickly approach the time our classes will offer productions for public admission. She has solicited quotes, suitable to our circumstance, that show we could for less than two thousand dollars have stage lights for the events we anticipate. This improvement will, of course, make our drama classes more attractive, but they will enhance presentations such as we had last year with our friend, Bishop Robert Morlino, who passed from this life last week, and for whom I ask your prayers. As we contemplate similar events in our future, or even rentals for things like wedding receptions, gifts that enable us to afford better lighting will help us use our space for that which it was designed.

Three, we again have not reached the goal set for us for the annual Bishop's Appeal, and we owe nearly \$4,000, with about \$6,000 already sent to Houston. Our shortfall in this regard is especially ironic this year, since our parish has benefitted so greatly from these

contributions to the chancery budget. I am referring, you may have surmised, to the ordination to the transitional diaconate of Deacon Joshua Davis, assigned to assist at St. Thomas More Parish for the foreseeable future. A prison chaplain at the federal penitentiary in Lewisburg, Deacon Davis will be with us at least once a week, serving as the Deacon of the Mass, preaching, and bringing Holy Communion to the sick and homebound. His work here is a continuation of the mentorship Bishop Lopes assigned to me two years ago, and is a sign of the trust our chief shepherd has placed in our parish to help form the future priests of our far-flung diocese. Sending this money directly to the chancery in Houston is therefore an integral part of our mission to reconcile our separated brethren to Holy Mother Church, as we prepare the priests who will administer the sacraments to new and old converts alike. To give in this way is to help pay for Deacon Davis' education, his travel, and even his ordination, both to the diaconate and priesthood, which, God willing, will occur June 29th next year. Please assist us in meeting the goal Bishop Lopes as set for us, for the practical reasons I've enumerated above, but also to demonstrate our gratitude for his leadership that is raising up vocations for the future life of the Church. When you do, we won't have to take money out of our operating expenses so that our chancery can operate.

As we prepare to celebrate the birth of Him who was born in a stable, it is helpful to remember our own parish's humble beginnings, how we started out with nothing but ourselves and a copy of the Book of Divine Worship. Yes, we have \$20,000 of obligations to retire before the end of this year, but that is only because of the astonishing growth we've witnessed these past fourteen years. We're paying for what God has blessed us with, and by His grace we've managed to fulfill the duties He's placed upon us. Please give that the growth may continue.

In anticipation of, and with gratitude for, the Christmas generosity you always demonstrate, I am,

Your servant in Christ,

The Rev. Eric L. Bergman

Worship

Eucharistic Adoration

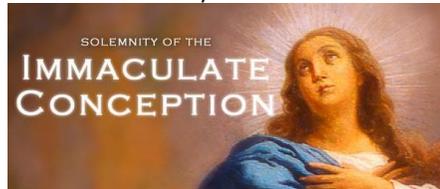
Upcoming opportunities for Eucharistic Adoration include Sundays, December 2 and January 6, from the conclusion of 10:00 a.m. Mass until 1:30 p.m.; and 24-hour adoration on Fridays & Saturdays, December 7-8 and January 4-5 (beginning Fridays at 4:30 p.m.).



All are welcome and encouraged to avail themselves of these opportunities to worship and pray in our Lord's very presence.

Immaculate Conception

The Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception – a Holy Day of Obligation – will be observed at the Parish in two different liturgies. **Choral Evensong on the Vigil of the Immaculate Conception** will be sung by our Maria Kaupas Academy Choir on **Friday evening, December 7 at 4:30 p.m.**, kicking off our 24-hour First Friday Eucharistic Adoration.



Adoration will then be punctuated the next day by **Said Mass at 7:00 a.m.**, and **Solemn Mass for the Immaculate Conception on Saturday, December 8.** A *Holy Day of Obligation regardless of its proximity to a Sunday*, all Catholics in good standing are obliged to assist at Mass on that day.

Evensong to Feature Monastic Choir Setup

While the placement of choral singers in a choir loft is entirely appropriate for the Catholic Mass – preventing distraction from the Holy Sacrifice – the daily monastic office of Evensong provides an ideal opportunity for choristers to sing at the front of the church, albeit in an antiphonal arrangement, with op-



Monastic-style choir stalls, Westminster Abbey, London

posing rows of choir stalls facing each other, perpendicular to the congregation. Such will be the case for all future services of Choral Evensong sung by our Maria Kaupas Academy Choir. Two spare pews have been removed from the choir loft and brought to the main level of the church, and parishioner Jacob Campbell is at work building choir desks to hold the choristers' music. The arrangement will be easily removable and stored out of the way when not in use. Come check out the new arrangement on Friday, December 7!

2019 Parish Calendars

Handsome 2019 Ordinariate liturgical calendars with our Parish contact information and updated weekly schedule are again available at the church for \$5. These calendars are



an excellent tool for maintaining an awareness of the Church's seasons and saints' days, as well as sharing our Parish worship and ministry information with friends and family. And, they make great stocking stuffers as we approach the Christmas season!



Holiday Worship & Events

Special liturgies and other major events for the holiday season are listed below; please mark your calendar! In addition to these, *Said Masses and 7 PM Sunday Masses will be offered according to the usual weekly schedule.*

- Sun 12/2-12/23** • Advent Adult Education
- Fri 12/7 4:30 PM** • Choral Evensong
- Sat 12/8 11:30 AM** • Immaculate Conception
- Sat 12/22 TBA** • Pageant Rehearsal
- Sun 12/23 10 AM** • Christmas Pageant
- + 12 PM** • Christmas Cookie & Bake Sale
- Mon 12/24 7 PM** • Christmas Eve Mass
- Tues 12/25 10 AM** • Christmas Day Mass
- Sun 12/30 10 AM** • Holy Family
- Mon 12/31 5:30 PM** • Mary, Mother of God
- + 7 PM** • Family New Years Eve Party
- Sun 1/6 10 AM** • Epiphany Sunday
- + 4 PM** • Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols
- + 5:30 PM** • Three Kings Supper



Parish Organ to Be Replaced

For almost three months, the Parish has languished on without the use of its organ (a digital instrument of considerable quality) due to damage incurred by a lightning strike on Labor Day. We are now pleased to report that after many weeks of due diligence and second opinions from multiple technicians, our insurance company has finally agreed that the organ must be replaced, due to the unpredictable latent issues that can plague organs for years to come when they incur such damage, even after repairs.



New organs of this size do not simply sit on shelves waiting to be purchased, so having tested the patience of our worshipers to this point, we must beg your indulgence a bit longer as the new instrument is built; as yet we have no time frame to report. Nevertheless, it is our hope that finally having this light at the end of the tunnel will strengthen our endurance to utilize the piano just a bit longer, and possibly to squeeze some marginal capability out of the damaged organ – a possibility we learned of from one of the technicians who examined the organ.

Christmas Decorating

This year, Christmas Eve falls on a Monday, leaving a tight window for decorating, the prior day's Masses still being for Advent IV (though not as tight as last year, when Advent IV and Christmas Eve were the selfsame day!). Therefore, all local members and friends are warmly encouraged to aid in the adornment of the church for Christmas on Monday morning, December 24, following 7:00 a.m. said Mass.



Mary, Mother of God

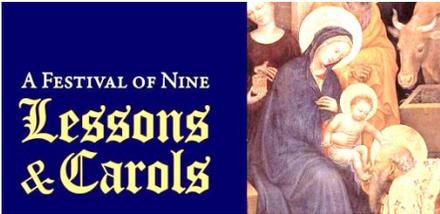
New Years Day (Tuesday, Jan. 1, 2019) is the Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God – a Holy Day of Obligation. Our principal observance will be **Solemn Vigil Mass on Monday, December 31 at 5:30 p.m.**, to be followed by a family-friendly Parish New Years Eve Party in the Parish Hall (see our



“Fellowship” section); Said Masses will be offered on January 1 at 7:00 a.m. and 11:30 a.m. Please be sure to take one of these opportunities to celebrate this joyful Holy Day in honor of our Blessed Mother.

Lessons & Carols

In keeping with our now-established annual pattern, our annual Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols will be offered at **4:00 p.m. on Epiphany Sunday** – which this year falls on



the day of Epiphany itself, **January 6**. Please join us in this beautiful tradition borne of our Parish’s Anglican patrimony, followed by our traditional Three Kings Celebration Supper in the Parish Hall afterward!

Convent Chapel: Winter Schedule and New Upgrades

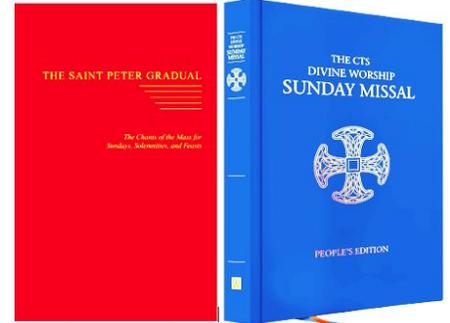
Effective Monday, January 7, the Parish will enact its annual practice of holding 7 a.m. weekday Masses in the Convent Chapel during the winter months, affording a substantial savings in lighting and heat costs over the main church building. This year, however, we have more to report than a simple location change; the Convent Chapel has undergone



important recent improvements, including the removal of the unattractive false ceiling, painting of the new ceiling, improved (and efficient LED) lighting, and the installation of a private confessional in the Convent Sacristy, allowing penitents anonymity they have not heretofore enjoyed. If the poor lighting, stained ceiling, and lack of privacy for confession have kept you away from 7 a.m. weekday Masses in the Convent Chapel, come benefit from these improvements after January 6!

Important Ordinariate Liturgical Books Published

Two important liturgical resources for Ordinariate worship are now (or soon to be) available. The first is the **Saint Peter Gradual**, a book of the musical settings of the chanted Minor Propers (Introit, Gradual, Alleluia, Offertory, & Communion) for all Sundays and Solemnities.



Perhaps more immediately pertinent to the average worshiper in the pew, however, is the publication of the **Divine Worship Sunday Missal People’s Edition**, the official pew version of our missal, containing the order for Mass and all propers and readings for the Sundays and Holy Days of the Church year. The Parish has pre-ordered 100 copies with the hope and expectation that they will be purchased or given for our pews and/or for home use by you, our members and friends. More information to follow!

Discipleship

Advent Adult Education: Holy Land Pilgrimage Report

Our last newsletter was published even as Fr. Bergman and several of our Parishioners were midway through the **Ordinariate Pilgrimage to the Holy Land**, joining Bishop Steven Lopes and 100 other pilgrims on a journey through the lands once trod by our Lord. Our **Advent Adult Education Series – beginning Sunday, December 2** – will feature a detailed recounting of the journey, and hundreds of slides projected on the “big screen” in the Parish Hall. Please join us for **light potluck**



lunch immediately after 10:00 a.m. Mass, with the presentation following thereafter.

Christmas Appeal



[Materials for the 2018 Christmas Appeal are enclosed \(or linked online\)](#) with this newsletter. Our members and friends have always shown extraordinary generosity at this season of giving, and we humbly hope for the same this year. Three items in particular are in need of our attention:

- **The General Operating fund.** We have been deferring payments totaling over \$20,000 on a number of obligations which we must now

pay by year’s end (in addition to sustaining our normal day-to-day operations) in order to finish the year in the black.

- **The Bishop’s Annual Appeal**, for which the Parish still owes around \$4,000 to meet the goal set by the Ordinariate; if we do not, the Parish will simply be billed for the balance, which would come from the Operating fund.
- **The Convent bathroom(s)**, which desperately need a facelift to bring them to reasonable condition for our Maria Kaupas Academy students and teachers.
- **Stage Lighting** for our Parish Hall Stage, enhancing anticipated performances by our Maria Kaupas Academy drama classes (\$2,000).

The latter three items are exempt from the *cathedraticum*, the ecclesiastical tax paid to the Ordinariate by all Parishes to fund its operations. Contributions that exceed the required costs of those items will be redirected to the Operating fund, in the order received.

Fellowship

Neighbor Nights

Upcoming Neighbor Nights – offered on the third Saturday of each month at 6:00 p.m. – include **December 15** and **January 19**. While of course open to all members and friends of the Parish, these open-door events are intended not to be merely insular, but to serve as a low-threshold opportunity for us to



invite our non-Catholic or non-Christian friends and neighbors into our fellowship in an informal setting outside Sunday worship. Happily, through various means – our outdoor banner, and invitations via our flyer – we continue to welcome many visitors each month. Bring a friend, and join us for free supper, pool, ping-pong, board games, wi-fi, conversation, and a movie on the big screen!

Family New Years Eve Party

Following **Solemn Vigil Mass** for the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God (**5:30 p.m. on Monday, December 31**), all members and friends desiring a more temperate and family-friendly New Years Eve gathering than may be available elsewhere are welcome to the Parish Hall for potluck supper, fellowship, games, and a movie on the big screen (on a sacred theme, unlike our monthly Neighbor Nights). Participants are welcome to stay up for the midnight New Year celebration, though of course there is no obligation to do so. Please join us!



Three Kings Supper Jan. 6

The Parish's annual Three Kings Celebration Supper will be held on **Sunday evening, January 6 at 5:30 p.m.**, immediately following the **Festival of Nine Lessons & Carols** which precedes it at 4:00 p.m. A potluck affair, please bring a main dish, side dish, or salad; drinks and dessert will be provided. The three



guests who discover a dime under their pound cake will regale us all with a verse of "We Three Kings, but will be rewarded for their efforts with gifts from the Parish. Please join us for this delightful pair of events, which also offers the opportunity to invite non-Catholic friends to a beautiful non-Eucharistic expression of our worship, and to a warm and welcoming fellowship meal afterward.

Outreach

Christmas Cookie Sale

Repeating a successful event established last year, the Parish will again offer a **Christmas Cookie and Bake Sale** on **Sunday, December 23**... a date whose close proximity to Christmas ensures the freshest possible goods for holiday



entertaining. **Orders will be taken**, with forms distributed at the Parish **and due the preceding Sunday, December 16**. Please plan to take advantage of the delectable treats that will be available, while supporting the Parish to boot!

Christmas Caroling Dec. 30

The Parish's annual Christmas Caroling outing to **Scranton Manor Assisted Living** will take place, as always, at **2 p.m.** on the Sunday after Christmas: **Sunday, December 30**. All



members and friends are welcome, not just choir members! Come lend your voice to our Lord's praise as we engaged in this Corporal Work of Mercy, bringing Christmas cheer to the aged and lonely.

March for Life Jan. 18

The 2019 March for Life will take place in Washington, D.C. on **Friday, January 18**. The Parish typically sends a large contingent to this important witness, and we hope this year will be no exception. The Ordinariate is stepping up its participation this year, with Bishop Lopes attending, and an Ordinariate Mass being held that morning at St. Luke's, our community in the Nation's Capital. Stay tuned to our weekly announcements for further details regarding schedule and transportation options.



Evangelization

Joshua Davis Received, Confirmed, & Ordained

We are pleased to report that **Joshua Davis** – (now) a former Anglican clergyman serving in Lewisburg whom Fr. Bergman has been mentoring for two years – was received and confirmed in the Catholic Faith here at St.

Thomas More on **Sunday evening, October 28**, and ordained to the Transitional Diaconate by Bishop Lopes at our Cathedral in Houston on **Tuesday, November 6**. Deacon Davis will frequently serve alongside Fr. Bergman at the Altar and preach during the coming months, primarily at our 7:00 p.m. Sunday Masses. Welcome home, Deacon Davis!



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