

# ***Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish and School***

***FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT***

***FEBRUARY 22, 2026***

**Pastor:**

Rev. Jerome A. Johnson

**Parochial Vicars:**

Rev. John M. Rozembajgier, JCL  
Rev. Jojappa Thippabathini

**Deacons:**

Robert Bonfante, Sr.  
Patrick W. Hearty  
Scott D. Titmas, Sr.  
Joseph C. Tobin

**School Principal:**

Michele Racavich

**School Vice Principal:**

Diane Zarate

**PREP Director:**

Andrea Madonna

**Director of Sacred Music/Liturgy:**

Daniel Neff

**PARISH MISSION STATEMENT**

**"To make disciples, as we know, love and serve God and one another"**

**CELEBRATION OF MASS**

**Weekend:**

**Saturday Vigil: 4:00pm**

**Sunday, 8:00am, 10:00am & 12:00 Noon**

**Weekday:**

**Monday - Friday: 8:00am and 12:15pm\***

**Mondays: Celebrated in Church with  
Miraculous Medal Novena.**

**Parish Office: Telephone -732.251.4000**

**Fax - 732.251.4946**

**Website: [www.saintthomasob.com](http://www.saintthomasob.com)**

**PEACE AND WELCOME**

**Whatever your status in the Church, whatever your family/marital situation, whatever your religious affiliation, whatever your personal history, age, background, race or color, sexual orientation, you are invited, welcomed, accepted, loved and respected here in the Catholic Community of Saint Thomas the Apostle!**



# MASS INTENTIONS

## FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT FEBRUARY 22, 2026

### SATURDAY FEBRUARY 21

8:00am Gerald Frances Donoghue r/o Chris Doyle  
4:00pm Robert Higgins r/o Debbie & Tom Yesis

*Priest of the Day: Rev. John Rossi*

### SUNDAY FEBRUARY 22 - FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT

8:00am Rosa Alfaro r/o DeSello Family  
10:00am Helen Malkiewicz r/o Irene Geipel  
12:00pm Lorraine McKinney r/o Rosemarie Gentile

*Priest of the Day: Rev. Robert Sinatra*

### MONDAY FEBRUARY 23

8:00am For Our Parishioners  
12:15pm Monthly Memorial

*Priest of the Day: Rev. Dennis Sullivan*

### TUESDAY FEBRUARY 24

8:00am Janet Vassale r/o Joan & Larry McGrath  
12:15pm Frances Kreczkewich r/o Carol Jarvis

*Priest of the Day: Rev. Jon-Peter Thomas*

### WEDNESDAY FEBRUARY 25

8:00am Martha & Robert Salmon r/o daughter, Kathy  
12:15pm Anthony Manney r/o sister, Barbara Medvetz

*Priest of the Day: Rev. Ruben Valdes*

### THURSDAY FEBRUARY 26

8:00am Eddie O'Leary r/o Dolores Hoffmann &  
Carmella Cavezza

12:15pm Eleanor Kobryn r/o Chris Doyle

*Priest of the Day: Rev. Joseph Wallace*

### FRIDAY FEBRUARY 27

8:00am Tan Ching Suan DeJesus r/o Reynie & Gerrie  
Co

12:15pm Joseph Ungrady r/o Fillimon Family

*Priest of the Day: Rev. Matthew Weber*

### SATURDAY FEBRUARY 28

8:00am William J. Luke r/o Madeline Luke  
4:00pm Vicente & Teresita Manalastas r/o Carmen  
Valerio & Family

*Priest of the Day: Rev. Robert Weber*

### SUNDAY MARCH 1 - SECOND SUNDAY IN LENT

8:00am Mildred & Leonard George r/o Grace & Chet  
George

10:00am Charlotte Simon r/o Tim & Maryanne Donoghue

12:00pm For Our Parishioners

*Priest of the Day: Rev. Frank Agresti*

### DECEASED + LOVED ONES

*Vito Esposito  
Marie Mammano*

## Welcome to the Parish Family of St. Thomas the Apostle Church!

If you are new to the community, *Welcome!* We are grateful to the Lord for your presence with us, and look forward to including you in all areas of parish life. Please take a moment to stop by the Parish Office and register with us. After Mass, please introduce yourself to Father Jay, Father John or Father Joseph. Registering and using your envelopes makes it easier for us to provide documentation, such as a certificate for sponsoring a child for Baptism or Confirmation or to arrange for a wedding.

**Parish Office :** One St. Thomas Plaza, Old Bridge, NJ 08857

**Telephone:** 732.251.4000 **Fax:** 732.251.4946

**Office Hours:** Monday-Friday 9:00am-4:00pm

Saturday-Sunday 10:30am-1:30pm

Tuesday and Thursday 9:00am - 7:00pm

(Lunch 12:30pm-1:30pm )

**School Telephone:** 732.251.4812

**PREP Telephone:** 732.251.1660

### Contact Information:

**Website:** [www.saintthomasob.com](http://www.saintthomasob.com)

**Facebook:** [www.facebook.com/pages/St-Thomas-the-Apostle-Church-Old-Bridge-NJ](https://www.facebook.com/pages/St-Thomas-the-Apostle-Church-Old-Bridge-NJ)

### Parish Office Staff:

Business Administrator: Ms. Michelle Loney

Parish Secretary: Ms. Lisa Sorrentino

Reception/Bingo Coordinator: Ms. Jennifer Bachonski

## Sacramental Information

### **BAPTISMS:**

Sundays: 1:30pm, twice a month. The Church calls GODPARENTS, to be practicing Catholics, examples of Christ-centered living today. All Godparents should submit Sponsor letters from their Parish ASAP. PARENTS must attend a Baptismal Preparation Session. (Registration is required.)

### **MARRIAGES:**

Arrangements must be made at least one year in advance - before any social plans. Either the bride or groom must be a registered member of our parish. Once the marriage questionnaire is completed and returned, a Parish Priest or Deacon will then contact the couple.

### **ANOINTING OF THE SICK:**

In case of serious illness or accident, phone the Pastoral Center. A communal celebration of the Sacrament is held each year in the Spring.

### **RECONCILIATION:**

Individual Confessions Saturdays, 12:30pm in the Church or by appointment by calling the Parish Office.

**HOMEBOUND PARISHIONERS:** Parishioners desiring the Sacraments, please contact the Parish Office.

### **REMEMBERING LOVED ONES . . .**

**Sanctuary Candle/Mary Candle,** lit for one week in Church, available during daytime by contacting the Parish Office.

**Wall of Remembrance:** Honor your Loved ones with a candle that burns for one year and has a plaque under the candle in the Church.

## PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK

Richard Allen, Bianca Aresta, Joseph Ciminiello, Cynthia Czarnecki, Nicky DeFonte, John Derenoski, Jack DeRuvo, Maragret Gallagher, Christopher Horn, Sina Indelicato, Anatoli Karnicki, Harriet Kunzman, Maria Lim, Laura Magee, Pat & Rudy Maurer, William Mendez, John McDevitt, Frank Miller, Florence Picco, Angela Principe, Frank Ranelli, Patricia Richi, Lynda Savickas, Richmond Sesay, Thomas Smith, Migdalia Soto, Irene Sutton, Jean Swinarski, Tristan Thompson, Mary Yu.

*Please pray for all the sick. (Names will remain on our sick list for **one month**, after which time they will be removed, unless we are notified to the contrary.) The Clergy will be happy to visit parishioners confined to their home or local*

### PARISH SUPPORT

*Here at STA we encourage you to be Christian Stewards, using everything God has given us: time, talent, treasure—to serve Him gratefully.*

**You may mail in your weekly donation to:**

*St. Thomas Church, One St. Thomas Plaza  
Old Bridge, NJ 08857*

*Online Giving... Visit our website to get started:  
[www.sainthomasob.com](http://www.sainthomasob.com) or other ways to give:*

- visit <https://giving.parishsoft.com/App/Giving/P1381>
- Scan the QR code below
- Use your envelopes



*Collections for February 15th....\$15,740*

**THANK YOU!**

*The **Sanctuary Candle** in the Church for this week burned in loving memory of: **Martha & Robert Salmon***



*r/o daughter, **Kathy***

*The **Mary Candle** in the Church this week burns in memory of: **Lorraine McKinney***



*r/o **The FUNraising Committee***



## Eucharistic Adoration



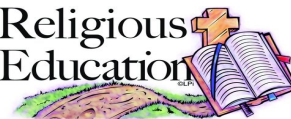
Eucharistic Adoration is the act of worshiping God as He is present in the consecrated Eucharist. Since the Last Supper, when Jesus broke the bread and distributed the wine saying, "This is my Body" and "This is my Blood," Catholics have believed that the bread and wine are no longer merely baked wheat and fermented grape juice, but the actual living presence of the Second Person of the Trinity—Jesus Christ. Spending time before the Blessed Sacrament, in prayer and devotion, is exactly the same as spending time before the Living God. Adoration occurs whenever someone kneels in front of a tabernacle that contains the Blessed Sacrament, genuflects toward a tabernacle, bows before receiving the Blessed Sacrament at Mass, or, in a more focused way, when the Blessed Sacrament is exposed for Adoration. **Join us on March 6th for Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament** Please come and embrace Jesus in which you say to Him: "I am yours, and I ask you, please stay with me always."

-Pope Benedict XVI

### 2026 Lenten Obligations

- The days of both fast and abstinence are Ash Wednesday (February 18<sup>th</sup>) and Good Friday (April 3<sup>rd</sup>).
- The other Fridays of Lent (February 20<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup>, March 6<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>) are days of abstinence.
- Fasting in the Roman Catholic tradition means to limit oneself to one full meal with two smaller meals which together do not equal the size of your full meal. The obligation of fasting applies only to Catholics between the ages of 18 and 59.
- Abstinence in the Roman Catholic tradition means to abstain from eating meat (beef, chicken, pork, turkey). The obligation of abstinence applies to all Catholics who have reached the age of 14.

## Religious Education



### Children's Liturgy of the Word

Every Sunday through Lent starting on February 22 at 10:00am Mass.

**PREP students** only next Confirmation session will be on February 23rd at 6:45pm.

### Confirmation:

Confirmation Rehearsal is Monday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:00pm. Rehearsal is mandatory and each candidate must be accompanied by a parent or their sponsor.

**Confirmation** will be celebrated on Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup> at 4:30pm in St. Thomas the Apostle Church.

### THANK YOU!!

Thank you to all our St. Thomas families for their generous pantry food donations for Super Bowl Sunday!!

## ST. MICHAEL the ARCHANGEL PRAYER



St. Michael the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our safeguard against the wiles and wickedness of the devil. Restrain him O God, we humbly pray, and do thou O Prince of the Heavenly Host, by the power of God, cast into hell Satan, and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin and destruction of souls. Amen.

## **OCIA (Order of Christian Initiation of Adults)**



### **February 22, 2026 - First Sunday of Lent**

Today, on the first Sunday of Lent, in every diocese throughout the world, catechumens celebrate, with their Bishop, the Rite of Election. **Our Catechumen, Adam, will join catechumens from other parishes in the Diocese on Sunday afternoon at the Cathedral with a bishop.**

Every first Sunday of Lent we hear of Our Lord's temptation in the desert, close to the beginning of our own forty-day journey. Jesus was led into the desert for an express purpose: "to be tempted by the devil." God permits temptation for a greater good. Temptation is a battleground where we can exercise virtue and rely more firmly on Him. In the first temptation, the devil tells Jesus to turn a stone into bread—a temptation for power. However, Jesus reminds us that we were created for more than our bodily desires: We are body and soul. Last, the devil dares Jesus to throw Himself off the temple in Jerusalem—a temptation to show His glory as the Son of God. The devil has the audacity to quote the Word of God to the Word Himself. The devil also knows Scripture . . . and recognizes the power of it and Jesus counters the devil each time by quoting Scripture. The devil presents temptations dealing with kingdoms, power, and glory, but these do not ultimately belong to him. At Mass, we proclaim, "For Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, now and forever." May we glorify God in all that we do today! Please pray for our Catechumen and Confirmation candidates this week, those who are actively seeking His love and truth,

## 2025 CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

Please complete and return this form to the Parish Office, place in the collection, or mail to: St. Thomas Church One Saint Thomas Plaza, Old Bridge, NJ 08857 Attn: Jennifer Bachonski.  
**PLEASE DO NOT CALL THE OFFICE!**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

DAYTIME PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

ENVELOPE #: \_\_\_\_\_



Parents who are having their first child baptized are required to attend a Baptism Preparation session in advance. **Next class: Tuesday, February 24th - 7:00pm** in the Parish Room of the Pastoral Center. **Registration required.** The Sacrament of Baptism is a sacred event regulated by Church (Canon) Law. Any questions - call 732.251.4000.

## SPONSOR LETTERS FOR BAPTISM & CONFIRMATION

To receive a sponsor letter to be a Godparent for a Baptism or Sponsor for Confirmation, the Sponsor must fulfill the following requirements:

1. Have received Baptism, Communion & Confirmation in the Catholic Church.
2. If married, you must have been married in the Catholic Church.
3. If divorced, you must not be remarried without having received an annulment for the first marriage.
4. Be a **registered and practicing** member of St. Thomas the Apostle Parish.

**If you have moved out of the parish, and no longer live within our parish boundaries, we CANNOT give you a Sponsor Letter, even if you grew up here and made all your Sacraments here and your family still lives here. You are given a Sponsor Letter from the parish whose boundaries you live within currently.**

## **Table at St. Thomas the Apostle**



**Saturday, March 14, 2026  
St. Thomas the Apostle Church  
333 Highway 18, Old Bridge, NJ**

We will be distributing dinners to take home.  
Come and pick up your dinner at  
St. Thomas the Apostle Church  
Please RSVP to [chrisdoyle167@gmail.com](mailto:chrisdoyle167@gmail.com)

## **DEACONS TABLE**



**March 18, 2026  
4:00pm - 6:00pm  
St. Thomas the Apostle Church  
333 Highway 18, Old Bridge, NJ**

We will be distributing dinners to take home.  
RSVP: [sttmas@sttaob.com](mailto:sttmas@sttaob.com)



**SAVE THE DATE**

The Parish Community is invited to mark a joyful milestone as we celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Priesthood Ordination of

Rev. Jerome A. Johnson

Saturday, May 30, 2026  
(details to follow)

We look forward to gathering in appreciation and celebration of Father Jay's years of faithful service

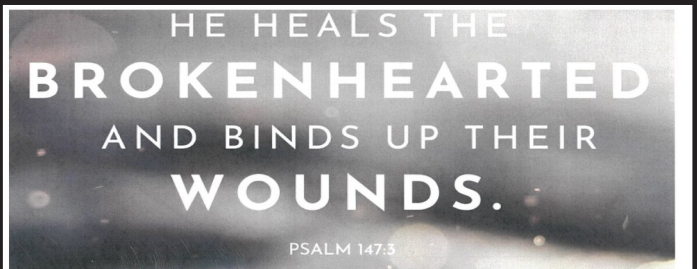
*Presented with gratitude by the*  
St. Thomas the Apostle FUNraising Committee



**CATHOLIC SCHOOL 2026-2027  
TUITION ASSISTANCE**

**ONLINE APPLICATION PROCESS OPEN**

Families interested in applying for tuition assistance to attend an eligible Diocese of Metuchen elementary or high school may apply online now through FACTS Grant & Aid Assessment at <https://online.factsmgmt.com/aid>. Online applications must be completed (including all required documentation) by no later than **March 31, 2026**. A signed **Parish Verification Form** is also required by the Diocese, and should be signed by your Pastor, and submitted to the school or schools your children attend. Eligibility requirements, instructions and forms can be found at <https://diometuchen.org/tuition-assistance>. Applications are available in English and Spanish.



**SUPPORT GROUP FOR ANYONE SEPARATED OR DIVORCED!**

*It doesn't matter if you are contemplating divorce, newly separated, going through the divorce process, recently divorced or divorced many years. You could have been married 4 years or 40 years, it doesn't matter....this program offers **hope and healing** for anyone that attends!*

To learn more about our upcoming program, please join us for an **INFORMATION NIGHT** on Monday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7 p.m.

**Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament Shrine Basement**  
(access from Shrine parking lot)  
26 Leonardville Rd, Middletown, NJ 07748

*To register, RSVP to Elaine Anzalone at [healingheartsfromdivorce@gmail.com](mailto:healingheartsfromdivorce@gmail.com) and include your phone number as well!*

**Our Lady of Victories**

**Parish Mission**

Led by the Franciscan Friars of the Renewal  
[www.franciscanfriars.com](http://www.franciscanfriars.com)

*All are welcome!*

The Franciscan Friars from the Most Blessed Sacrament Friary in Newark will lead us in three evenings of prayer, Eucharistic Adoration, and reflection on the mission of the Church.



February 23–25, 2026  
Mon • Tues • Wed @ 7:00 PM

**Evening Schedule**

Monday: Adoration & Reflection  
Tuesday: Adoration, Reflection & Confession  
Wednesday: Adoration & Reflection  
*A free will offering will be collected*

Come and be renewed through prayer, worship, and reflection.

*Youth Track option Sunday Evening*



**Our Lady of Victories**

[www.olvsayrenj.com](http://www.olvsayrenj.com)

42 Main Street  
Sayreville, NJ 08872  
(732) 257-0077

Catholic Men For Jesus Christ  
**2026 MEN'S CONFERENCE**  
Spiritual Warriors for Christ  
**SAVE THE DATE**

**DATE** February 28, 2026    **TIME** 8:30 - 3:00 PM    **LOCATION** SAINT MARY, MOTHER OF GOD CHURCH, MIDDLETOWN, NEW JERSEY



DOUG BARRY US Soccer Coach    FR. GLENN SUDANO, OFM Franciscan Friar of the Renewal    COACH GREG SCHIANO Rutgers Head Football Coach    BISHOP DAVID W. O'CONNELL, CM The Diocese of Trenton

HOLY NAME SOCIETY  
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# CASINO TRIP


Monday March 2nd, 2026

## WIND CREEK CASINO



Wind Creek Casino in Bethlehem, PA  
Bus Trip Leaving 9:15 am to 7:00pm  
\$50 per person getting back \$20 Casino Voucher

George Szymanski      John Thornton  
732-238-5743              732-763-3280




# Choices Matter

A CRITICAL LIFE ISSUES CONFERENCE

## Saturday March 21, 2026

St. John Neumann Pastoral Center, Piscataway, NJ  
Opening Mass at 9 a.m., Conference 10:15 a.m. to 3 p.m.  
Exhibits, Eucharistic Adoration and Confession

### "Safeguarding Human Dignity ... Shining a Light on Human Trafficking"



Human Trafficking Awareness Through  
the Lens of a Subject Matter Expert –  
A Survivor's Journey from Trauma to Triumph


Gina Cavallo  
Author, Speaker, Consultant in Anti-Trafficking Movement

Other speakers/topics include:

**The Role of the Church in  
Combating Human Trafficking**  
Maria Celina Márquez  
Policy Advisor U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops

**Survivor Informed  
Human Trafficking Prevention**  
David M. Ryan  
(Retired Police Chief), Coordinator,  
Westchester County Anti-Trafficking Task Force

General Admission \$35, Student Admission \$15  
Admission includes lunch and hand-outs  
Register at [www.diometuchen.org/choicesmatter](http://www.diometuchen.org/choicesmatter) or scan QR code here →



REMEMBER THE LORD, WHO IS GREAT AND AWESOME, AND FIGHT FOR YOUR FAMILIES.

# Courage that Builds

Women standing with God for our  
Faith, Families, Identities, and Restoration.



Saturday, March 7th, 2026  
8:30am-4:30pm

St. Mary Mother of God Church  
19 Cherry Tree Farm Road, Middletown  
\$25 Registration

QR Code Registration:




ENCOUNTER  
SCHOOL OF MINISTRY







Amanda O'Sullivan      Jean Vandervoort      Francine Mautone      Lisa Shimko      Anna Brunetti

### Bereavement Group at St. Thomas

A weekly bereavement group held on Wednesday's in the Parish Room at 7pm. All are welcome to attend. To find out more information or to register, please call Lisa at 732.251.4000 ext.8218.

### LOST and FOUND

There will be a Lost and Found Box in the Ushers room. Should you leave or lose an item in Church, please check with an usher or check in the usher's room. for your item.

### TO THE PARENTS OF YOUNG CHILDREN, MAY WE SUGGEST...

- +Relax! God put the wiggle in children; do not feel you have to suppress it in God's house. ALL ARE WELCOME!
- +Sit toward the front where it is easier for your little one to see and hear what is going on at the altar. They tire of seeing the backs of other's heads.
- +Quietly explain the parts of Mass and actions of the priest, altar servers, etc. Sing the hymns, pray, and voice the responses. Children learn liturgical behavior by copying you.
- +If you have to leave Mass with your child, feel free to do so, but please come back. As Jesus said, "Let the children come to me."
- +Remember that the way we welcome children in the church directly affects the way they respond to the Church, to God and to one another. Let them know that they are at home in this house of worship.

### TO THE MEMBERS OF OUR PARISH

The presence of children is a gift to the church, and they are a reminder that our parish is growing. Please welcome our children and give a smile of encouragement to their parents!

# Healing Mass & Resource Fair

For those experiencing or affected by family brokenness



March 14, 2026  
10:00 A.M.  
(Resource Fair to follow  
until 1:00 P.M.)

St. John Neumann Pastoral  
Center  
146 Mettars Lane  
Piscataway, NJ

Representatives will be present from the following programs: Surviving Divorce, Retrouvaille & Life-Giving Wounds

Registration is Required:  
<https://diometuchen.org/events/family-brokenness-mass>

Questions:  
[rachelle.hanna@gmail.com](mailto:rachelle.hanna@gmail.com)

or scan here: 

**Ponte Vecchio**  
*Italian Seafood Grille*  
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 at Village Town Center  
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 autumnlakeoldbridge.com

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