



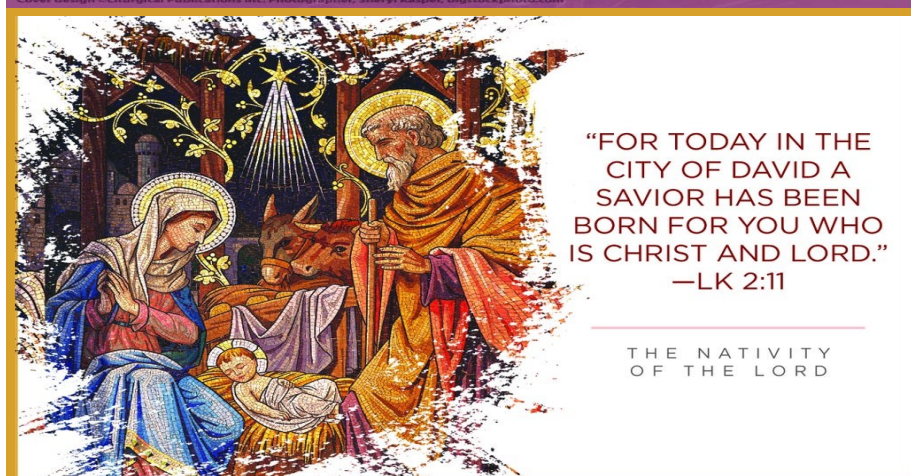
Saint Thomas the Apostle Church
203 W. Washington Street
Corry, PA 16407

THE PARISHES OF ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE AND ST. TERESA OF AVILA



Saint Teresa of Avila Church
9 Third Avenue
Union City, PA 16438

December 24, 2023



Rev. Thomas J. Whitman
Pastor

Rev. Mr. Randy Kondrlik
Deacon
rkondrlik@eriercd.org

Rev. Mr. William Saborsky
Deacon—Retired

Melissa Silka
Business Manager and
Director of Faith Formation
business@stparish.org

Susan Johnston
Secretary
secretary@stparish.org

Rhonda Pierce
Coordinator of St. Thomas &
St. Elizabeth Cemeteries
cemetery@stparish.org

Chris Slocum
Coordinator of St. Teresa Cemetery
814-462-6375

Saint Thomas the Apostle Parish
www.stthomastheapostle.church

Saint Teresa of Avila Parish
www.st-teresa-unioncity.org

Partnered Parish Offices
203 W. Washington Street
Corry, PA 16407
814-663-3041

Partnered Parish Office Hours
Monday: 12:30pm—3:30pm
Tuesday & Wednesday: 8:30am—3:30pm
Thursday: 8:30am—12:00pm (noon)
Friday: Closed

NEW PARISHIONER REGISTRATION FORM

NAME _____
STREET _____
CITY & ZIP _____
PHONE _____

☐ St. Thomas the Apostle ☐ St. Teresa of Avila

Please drop this information into Offertory Basket or mail to Parish Office.

Notes from the Pastor

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE: On behalf of the parish staff, I would like to wish you and your family a very Blessed and Joyful Christmas Season. Our prayer is that the peace the Christ child brings will be the peace that dwells with you each and every day of the New Year.

Often when we think of the meaning of Christmas, we tend to think of it in terms of God sending Jesus to die for our sins. That Jesus came to be the “ransom” for our sins and failings. In some sense that is certainly true, but I believe there is a deeper significance to the Incarnation, or the birth of Jesus.

The real purpose of creation is for the Incarnation to happen. God wants to share in the life and love of his people in a unique and definitive way. God becoming human is not an afterthought, an event to make up for our sinfulness. Incarnation is God’s first thought, the original design of creation. Jesus becomes flesh in order to fulfill God’s eternal longing to become human, to be one with us.

This gives us a wonderful image of God, a gracious God, sharing divine life and love with us. Like parents sharing their love in the life of a new child. God wants to be so much a part of our lives that he is willing to enter into every moment of our human existence, from birth to adolescence, from joy to sorrow, and even from life to death. God wants us to know that he is Emmanuel, “God with us,” because he is indeed with us in every moment of our lives.

Maybe the words of the great thinker, Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, say it best: “No, God does not hide himself to make us search for him, of that I am sure, much less to let us suffer in order to increase our merits. On the contrary, bent down over his creation which moves upward to him, he works with all his power to give us happiness and light. Like a mother he watches over his newly born child. But our eyes are unable to see him yet. Is not precisely the whole course of centuries needed in order for our gaze to accustom itself to the light?”

May you come to experience and know in this season the closeness of our loving God. May the light from his eyes be your guide in moments of darkness. May the warmth of his breath increase the warmth of your heart. May the gentle touch of his hand calm your every fear. May the strength of his embrace give you courage in all your endeavors. And may the assurance of his presence bring you his peace.

– Fr. Tom



THANK YOU to all of our bulletin sponsors!

We appreciate their support of our parishes and ask our parishioners to please patronize these business.



Sunday, December 24—4th Sunday of Advent / Christmas Eve

- 8:00a.m. †Deceased Members of the Cragg & Sullivan Families (St. Thomas, Corry)
 10:00a.m. †Steven Paul Mongera by Steve & Cheryl Mongera (St. Teresa, Union City)
 4:30p.m. †Deceased & Living Members of our Parishes (St. Thomas, Corry)
 9:00p.m. †Deceased & Living Members of our Parishes (St. Teresa, Union City)

Monday, December 25—Christmas Day

- 8:00a.m. †Deceased & Living Members of our Parishes (St. Thomas, Corry)
 10:00a.m. †Deceased & Living Members of our Parishes (St. Teresa, Union City)

Tuesday, December 26

No Mass or Service today at either St. Thomas or St. Teresa

Wednesday, December 27

- 8:00a.m. †The Morris & O’Brien Families by the Estate of Anna O’Brien (St. Thomas, Corry)

Thursday, December 28

No Mass or Service today at either St. Thomas or St. Teresa

Friday, December 29

- 8:00a.m. †Annie Ranyak by David & Linda Wethli and family (St. Teresa, Union City)

Saturday, December 30

- 4:30p.m. †Josephine Knight by Tim & Pam Ashoff-Roberts (St. Teresa, Union City)

Sunday, December 31—Feast of the Holy Family

- 8:00a.m. †Walter & Margaret Komenda by their estate (St. Thomas, Corry)
 10:00a.m. For the Peoples of Sts. Thomas & Teresa Parishes (St. Teresa, Union City)

WELCOME

If you are new to our Parishes, we extend a warm welcome and hope you will find here a place where your faith will be nourished.

PARISH MEMBERSHIP

New Parishioners are welcome to register by completing the form on the front of the bulletin and returning it to the Offertory Collection or the Parish Office.

BAPTISM

Please contact the Parish office to schedule a Baptism.

MARRIAGE

Please contact the Parish office at least ten (10) months in advance to schedule a Wedding.

SACRAMENT OF THE SICK

Please let the Parish office know of anyone in need of Anointing of the Sick, or anyone who is unable to get to Mass and would desire Holy Communion to be brought to them.

SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION

Confessions are 3:30pm—4:00pm on Saturdays at St. Thomas Church, Corry and/or at St. Teresa Church, Union City (when Mass is celebrated that evening); and other times by request made to the parish office.

St. Thomas Parish News

FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP: December 17, 2023

The Financial Stewardship Report for the weekend of December 16/17 will be published in an upcoming bulletin. Today's bulletin had to be submitted to our publisher prior to the weekend Masses due to the holiday season. Thank you to all who regularly use your church offertory envelopes and/or give to the parish collection. We appreciate it and are grateful for your support.

Please write checks to St. Thomas Church.

If checks are to go to our parish cemeteries—please make them to St. Thomas Cemetery or St. Elizabeth Cemetery.

Thank you.



Please know that you can now give all your donations online by visiting our parish website at

www.StThomasTheApostle.Church and click 'Donate Online'.

Prayer for Peace in Our World

God our Creator, You call blessed, those who work for peace.

Help us to work without ceasing for that justice which brings true and lasting peace.

Banish war and violence from our world and keep us safe from weapons of hate, so that all people might rejoice in Your love and live in Your peace.

We ask this through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

"Question of the Week" - Fourth Sunday of Advent

Question for Children: If you were to tell someone one thing about Jesus' mother, Mary, what would you say?

Question for Youth: Gabriel's greeting to Mary was, "Hail, favored one! The Lord is with you." This is God's greeting to each of us – he loves us just as we are. What are some of your personal strengths that God rejoices in?

Question for Adults: Name one area of your life where God has surprised you with love, abilities, or even a pregnancy. How is God's Spirit upon you in this dimension of life?



PRAYER LINE... call: Gerrie (814-665-6944), Pam (814-664-7459), or Diane (814-663-3753).

Since prayer is an important ministry of trust, know that all requests are kept confidential.



The SANCTUARY CANDLE at St. Thomas Church for the week of December 24th burns in honor of our Lord and in memory of Jack Brigham by Nancy, Tammy, Debbie, and John.

Thank You to Our Music Ministry

We wish to thank everyone who participated in the choir at St. Thomas Church for the Advent and Christmas season. We are blessed by your voices, which helped enhance our liturgies. A special 'THANKS' to Joan Allen and Gary Johnston who brought the choir together and who continue to faithfully serve our parish in music ministry throughout the year. We appreciate ALL of you!



Pro-Life Breakfast Coming in January 2024

Get ready to be inspired and enlightened at this year's Pro-Life Breakfast on Saturday, January 13 at the Bayfront Convention Center. Tickets are \$26 for ages over 12; \$18 for ages 3-12. Doors open at 8:00am, program begins at 9:00am and concludes by 11:30am. Guest speaker is Sherif Girgis. We would like to have a full table of 10 people from Sts. Thomas & Teresa. If interested in attending, please contact Barbara Wascak (814-665-2313) as reservations fill quickly.

**THE WORD
BECAME FLESH
IN ORDER
TO DIALOGUE
WITH US.**

POPE FRANCIS



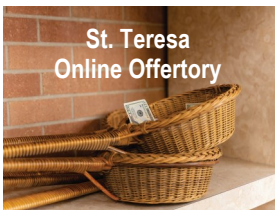
Saturday Morning Rosary

All are invited to join us on Saturday mornings at St. Thomas Church at 9:00am as we pray The Rosary together in community.

St. Teresa Parish News

ST. TERESA FINANCIAL STEWARDSHIP: Dec. 16 & 17, 2023
The Financial Stewardship Report for the weekend of December 16/17 will be published in an upcoming bulletin. Today's bulletin had to be submitted to our publisher prior to the weekend Masses due to the holiday season. Thank you to all who regularly use your church offertory envelopes and/or give to the parish collection. We appreciate it and are grateful for your support.

Please write checks to St. Teresa Church or Our Lady of Fatima Church.



Please know that you can now give all your donations online by visiting our parish website at www.st-teresa-unioncity.org OR by scanning the QR code here.



Thanks for your generosity to our parish!

St. Teresa Rosary Altar Society—No Meeting until January

Members of the Rosary Altar Society are reminded that we will not hold a meeting in the month of December. We will next meet for our Epiphany Dinner on Sunday, January 7, 2024 in Saint Teresa Parish Center. All members are encouraged to attend. *We hope you will join us.*

Is Your Family Planning a Wedding in 2024?

Please consider giving a gift that helps couples plan for lifelong marriage. Give your children the gift of Engagement Encounter. The next EE weekend will be held on January 19-21 at St. Mark Catholic Center in Erie. Space is limited and early registrations are encouraged. Contact the Family Life Office at 814-824-1261 or email familylife@eriercd.org. Visit <https://www.eriercd.org/familylifeoffice/> for more information and registration. Remember, "A wedding is one day, but marriage is for a lifetime."

St. Teresa Church Organizations / Groups

- Rosary—Altar Society**
Meets the first Monday of each month at 4:30 PM
- Knights of Columbus**
Meet every third Wednesday at 7:00 PM
- Religious Education Guild**
Meets during the school term



Submission Deadline for Bulletin Items

Generally, items for publication in our bulletin must be sent to the parish office by Monday afternoon the week prior to when you wish your item to appear. Please email written content to secretary@stparish.org. Please note that during holiday seasons, bulletin deadlines are moved up as much as one week earlier, so the earlier you provide the office with your bulletin items the better. All bulletin items are subject to approval and editing for content and space. If you have any questions, please call the parish office. Thank you.



The SANCTUARY CANDLE at St. Teresa Church for the week of December 24th burns in honor of our Lord and in memory of Steven Paul Mongera by Steve & Cheryl Mongera.



Rev. Casimir Wozniak, Rev. Thomas Tyler, Rev. Christopher Singer, Rev. Paul Siebert, Rev. Edward Walk, and Rev. Brian Vossler, as well as to continue to *Pray for the Pastoral Planning in the Erie Diocese.*

Advent Family Prayer

Dear God, thank you for giving us these four weeks to prepare to celebrate the birth of your Son.

We are so thankful for all the people that help us along this path we're traveling to welcome Jesus.

God, bless our family and prepare our home and hearts to welcome your Son, Jesus Christ, into the world.

Amen.

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth
peace to those on whom His favor rests. Luke 2:14



Readings for the week of December 24, 2023

Sun.: 2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16 ♦ Psalm 89:2-3, 4-5, 27, 29 ♦ Romans 16:25-27 ♦ Luke 1:26-38
Mon. (Christmas): Vigil: Isaiah 62:1-5 ♦ Psalm 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29 ♦ Acts 13:16-17, 22-25 ♦ Matthew 1:1-25 or 1:18-25
Night: Isaiah 9:1-6 ♦ Psalm 96: 1-2, 2-3, 11-12, 13 ♦ Titus 2:11-14 ♦ Luke 2:1-14
Dawn: Isaiah 62:11-12 ♦ Psalm 97:1, 6, 11-12 ♦ Titus 3:4-7 ♦ Luke 2:15-20
Day: Isaiah 52:7-10 ♦ Psalm 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6 ♦ Hebrews 1:1-6 ♦ John 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14
Tue.: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59 ♦ Psalm 31:3cd-4, 6 and 8ab, 16bc and 17 ♦ Matthew 10:17-22
Wed.: 1 John 1:1-4 ♦ Psalm 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12 ♦ John 20:1a, 2-8
Thur.: 1 John 1:5—2:2 ♦ Psalm 124:2-3, 4-5, 7cd-8 ♦ Matthew 2:13-18
Fri.: 1 John 2:3-11 ♦ Psalm 96:1-2a, 2b-3, 5b-6 ♦ Luke 2:22-35
Sat.: 1 John 2:12-17 ♦ Psalm 96:7-8a, 8b-9, 10 ♦ Luke 2:36-40
Next Sun.: Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14 or Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3 ♦ Psalm 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 or Psalm 105:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9 ♦ Colossians 3:12-21 or 3:12-17 or Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19 ♦ Luke 2:22-40 or 2:22, 39-40

Faith Formation & Religious Ed. News



Successful Joint PURPOSE Night

On Sunday, December 10th, our students in the confirmation classes at both Sts. Thomas and Teresa came together for a night of fellowship, food, and fun at the St. Teresa Parish Center. Thank you to all who attended and those who helped with the event. Special thanks to Deacon Randy and Shelley Tomcho for planning and organizing the evening. Everyone had FUN!

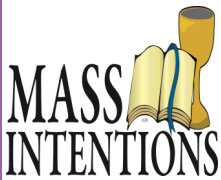


Congratulations to St. Teresa Third Grade Class: Students in this class brought in the most food donations for the St. Teresa Thanksgiving Food Baskets. Their class enjoyed a special treat during Religious Education. Good job!



Calendar Reminders for Religious Education: There will be **NO Classes this weekend and next (December 24 & 31)** due to the Christmas holiday so that students may enjoy time with their families. We encourage all of our students and their families to attend one of our Christmas Masses to celebrate the birth of Jesus. *Merry Christmas!*

Sunday, January 7, 2024—Classes resume for all Religious Education students at both Sts. Thomas & Teresa this week.



Mass Intentions for Our Parishes

Contact the parish office at 814-663-3041 to schedule Mass intentions for loved ones. We will do our best to accommodate date requests. **The stipend is ONLY \$10 per Mass.** Please do not send extra money as it causes our books to be out of balance. Thank you. We suggest that you make a donation to the church with any 'extra' funds you wish to give towards Masses.

Be Sure to See Today's Bulletin Inserts

Don't forget to read the inserts in today's bulletin: **'Human Celebrations—Spiritual Celebrations'** for the Fourth Week of Advent, as well as the **Christmas Flower Memorials** for our parishes. We are grateful to everyone who donated to the flower memorials, which covers the cost of the beautiful poinsettias you see in both of our churches. Thank you!

Parish Office Closed this Week for the Holidays

Our Partnered Parish Office will be closed for Christmas from Monday, Dec. 25 through Monday, Jan. 1, 2024 so that our staff may spend time with their families during the holiday season.



Our Office will reopen to the public on Tuesday, January 2 at 8:30am. Should an emergency arise, please leave a voicemail or email, which may be checked periodically during our closure. *Wishing you a blessed Christmas season and Happy New Year!*

Special Retreat for Young Adults (Ages 19—35)

The Diocese of Erie is sponsoring a 5 day retreat for college-age and young adults under the age of 35 from January 3-7, 2024. The retreat will take place at the Villa Maria Education and Spirituality Center, 2067 Evergreen Rd, Pulaski, Pennsylvania. Space is limited. For information, contact either of the retreat organizers, Jillian Zaczyk, at jzaczyk@eriercd.org or Dave Roncolato at droncola@allegheny.edu.

2023 CSA Pledge Reminder

As the end of the year draws near, please consider paying off any remaining balance on your 2023 CSA pledge. We would greatly appreciate having all pledges paid in full before December 31, 2023. Thank you for your continued generosity to our parishes!



Christmas Mass Schedule

We hope your family will join us at one of our Masses for Christmas as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, our Savior.

Sunday, Dec. 24—4:30pm Vigil Mass of Christmas
at St. Thomas Church, Corry

Sunday, Dec. 24—9:00pm Vigil Mass of Christmas
at St. Teresa Church, Union City

Monday, Dec. 25—8:00am Christmas Day Mass
at St. Thomas Church, Corry

Monday, Dec. 25—10:00am Christmas Day Mass
at St. Teresa Church, Union City