

The Roman Catholic Parishes of

St. Thomas the Apostle

in St. Thomas

St. Cecilia

in Meta

www.stthomasapostle.net

PO Box 146
St. Thomas, MO 65076

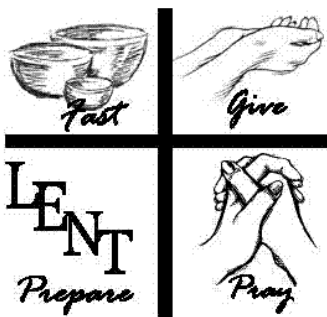
FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT

February 14, 2016

Pastor: Father Jeremy A. Secrist
jasecrist@yahoo.com
Rectory Phone: 573-477-3315

St. Thomas Bookkeeper:
Mrs. Jenny Becker
jbeckeroffice@gmail.com

St. Cecilia Bookkeeper:
Mrs. Doris Stumpe
dorisstumpe@att.net



School Principal: Mr. Leroy Heckemeyer
lheckemeyer@embarqmail.com
School: 573-477-3322 Fax: 573-477-3700

St. Thomas Secretary:
Mrs. Diane Lueckenhoff
stthomasoffice@embarqmail.com

School Website:
www.stthomasapostleschool.net

St. Thomas Parish Office hours: Tuesdays 8:30 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.; Thursdays 8:30 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

School Office hours during school year: Monday - Friday 8:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Confessions: Saturdays 4:00 - 4:45 p.m. at St. Thomas; Sundays 7:30 - 7:50 a.m. at St. Cecilia;
or anytime by appointment, just call Father.

Saint Thomas the Apostle

Mass Schedule for the Week of February 14-21:

Saturday 5:00 p.m. – Andy & Pat Luebbering 50th Wedding Ann.
Sunday 10:00 a.m. – Alan & Germaine Strope
Tuesday 7:45 a.m. – Roy & Ludwina Brockman
Wednesday 7:45 a.m. – Wm. & Rufina Boessen
Thursday 7:45 a.m. – L&D Lawrence & Caroline Herigon Fam.

Stations of the Cross immediately following Thursday Mass

Friday 7:45 a.m. – Ida Schellman

6:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross

Saturday 5:00 p.m. – Joe & Teresa Kaiser 70th Wedding Ann.
Sunday 10:00 a.m. – People of our Parishes

Your Sunday Offering:

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| Offertory Budget for 2015-2016: | \$305,000.00 |
| Offertory Goal through Month End: | \$203,336.00 |
| Actual Collection for 2015-2016: | \$175,716.03 |
| Offertory Difference Year to Date: | -\$27,619.97 |
| Offertory Goal per month: | \$ 25,417.00 |

Collection in Church:

| | |
|-------------|------------|
| February 7 | \$4,023.00 |
| February 14 | \$ |
| February 21 | \$ |
| February 28 | \$ |

Collection Online: \$4,284.00

February total to date: **\$8,307.00**

Difference for February: **-\$17,110.00**

St. Thomas the Apostle Expansion & Building Fund

Total Expansion Project expenses paid: \$2,273,475.34
Income from parishioners for fiscal year 2015-2016

| | |
|--|----------------------------|
| (via the yellow "Building Fund" envelope): | \$18,318.00 |
| Loan payments to date for FY 2015-2016: | \$73,821.92 |
| (Principal) \$58,163.20 (Interest) \$15,658.72 | |
| Parish Building Expansion Debt remaining: | <u>\$525,890.34</u> |

St. Thomas Cantor / Organist

Saturday 5:00 p.m. –
Sunday 10:00 a.m. – Doug Luebbering/Jackie

St. Thomas Reader/ Petitions

Saturday 5:00 p.m. – Al Kaiser
Sunday 10:00 a.m. – Kristin Buschjost

St. Thomas Altar Servers

Weekday: Savanna Wieberg & Ethan Rackers
Saturday 5:00 p.m. – Noah & Ethan Luebbering.
Abby Hoecker
Sunday 10:00 a.m. – Kadence Kliegel, Madi Buschjost, Clara Lackman, Josh Henson

Saint Cecilia

Mass Schedule for the Week of February 14-21:

Saturday 7:00 p.m. – Victor Bruemmer
Sunday 8:00 a.m. – People of our Parishes
6:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross before Wednesday Mass
Wednesday 6:30 p.m. – Vic Otto

Saturday 7:00 p.m. – Josephine Werdehausen
Sunday 8:00 a.m. – Catherine Hurst

Your Sunday Offering:

| | |
|---------------------------------|--------------------|
| Offertory Budget for 2015-2016: | \$60,471.51 |
| Collection Total for 2015-2016: | \$38,046.01 |
| Offertory Goal per month: | \$ 5,039.29 |

Collection in Church:

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| February 7 | \$1,282.00 |
| February 14 | \$ |
| February 21 | \$ |
| February 28 | \$ |
| February total to date: | \$1,282.00 |
| Difference for February: | -\$3,757.29 |

Please remember your parish in your last will & testament.

St. Cecilia Collection Counters

February – Dale & Margie Helton
March – Marie Lueckenotto & Pam Libbert

St. Cecilia Reader / Petitions

Wednesday – Cathy Borgmeyer
Saturday 7:00 p.m. – Doris Stumpe
Sunday 8:00 a.m. – Don Wansing

St. Cecilia Altar Servers

Saturday 7:00 p.m. – Zachary & Alex Even,
Ben & Henry Schroeder
Sunday 8:00 a.m. – Will & Melina Derkum,
Sophie Bock

LENTEN REFLECTION

"We need silence to be alone with God, to speak to Him, to listen to Him, to ponder His words in our hearts, to be renewed and transformed. Silence gives us a new outlook on life. In it we are filled with God's life, which makes us do all things with joy."

- Blessed Teresa of Calcutta

St. Thomas Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
February 20-21

Saturday 5:00 p.m. – Leeroy Budnik, Mark & Barb Graessle
Sunday 10:00 a.m. –Jan Carter, Mattheuw Prenger,
Keith Kliethermes, Randy Buschjost, Rob Henson

February 27-28

Saturday 5:00 p.m. – Lora Boessen, Mark Luebbering,
Pat Kaiser

Sunday 10:00 a.m. – Keith Kliethermes, Randy Buschjost,
Rob Henson, Rosalyn Wieberg, Emily Luebbering

March 5-6

Saturday 5:00 p.m.–Paul & Jenny Becker, Marshall Boessen
Sunday 10:00 a.m. –Richard & Jan Heckemeyer, Janet
Lueckenhoff, Linda Lueckenhoff, Glenn Prenger

St. Thomas Greeters/Ushers

February 20-21

Saturday 5:00 p.m. – Mike Groner & Dave Luebbering
Sunday 10:00 a.m. – Arthur McManus & Alan Reinkemeyer

February 27-28

Saturday 5:00 p.m. –Steve Schellman & Gilbert Schellman
Sunday 10:00 a.m. –Doug Stockman & TJ Loethen

March 5-6

Saturday 5:00 p.m. – Richard Schellman & Fred Luebbering
Sunday 10:00 a.m. – Mattheuw Prenger & Keith Kliethermes

St. Thomas Presentation of Gifts at Mass

February 20-21

Saturday 5:00 p.m. – Ralph & Kathy Graessle
Sunday 10:00 a.m. – Travis & Kathy Rackers Family

February 27-28

Saturday 5:00 p.m. – Paul & Jenny Becker
Sunday 10:00 a.m. – Tom & Carol Backes Family

March 5-6

Saturday 5:00 p.m. – Gregg & Susan Boessen Family
Sunday 10:00 a.m. – Eugene & MaryPat Luebbering

St. Thomas Collection Counters:

February 20-21 – Jennifer Schroeder & Stephanie Cortvrient
February 27-28 – Rosalyn Wieberg & Donna Schellman
March 5-6 – Sonya Henson & Millie Wieberg

Rosary before Mass at St. Thomas

Tuesday 7:25 a.m.– Alex & Joann Heckman- Sorrowful
(Shelby Christian)

Wednesday 7:25 a.m. – Pat Loethen – Glorious
(Sarah Luebbert)

Thursday 7:25 a.m. – Celeste & Martha Strobe – Luminous
(Samantha Christian)

Friday 7:25 a.m. – Gilbert & Hermina Strobe- Sorrowful
(Jessica Schulte & Kalib Christian)

Saturday 4:40 p.m. – Marilyn Herigon- Sorrowful
(Kaycie Christian)

Sunday 9:40 a.m. – Tina Stockman –Sorrowful
(Meghan Rackers)

SNACK FOR ST. THOMAS QUILTERS:

Thursday, February 18 – Rose Mary Buschjost & Cindy Buschjost Thursday, February 25 – Shara Buechter & Lauren Buechter
Please bring snacks to hall by 1:00 p.m.; snack served at 3:00 p.m. If you have questions, please call Kathy Strobe or Emily
Luebbering. Wednesday night quilting at 7:00 p.m.

SCRIP SALES (February 20-21) Visit www.stthomasapostleschool.net/scrip for more information about the Scrip program.

Saturday 5:00 p.m. – Kelley Buschjost Sunday 10:00 a.m. – Sara Otto

A NOTE OF THANKS

St. Thomas CYO would like to thank everyone that supported our CYO fundraiser this past weekend. Because of your support we raised \$1,100. This money will help support the youth activities in our parish. A very special thank you to Mike & Trish Green & Lucy Suthoff, without them, this fundraiser would not be possible.

ST. THOMAS/META K of C BABY BOTTLE CAMPAIGN has collected \$1,528.00 to date! Thanks to everyone!!

70th WEDDING ANNIVERSARY: If you want to congratulate Joe & Teresa Kaiser on their 70th Wedding Anniversary. Please send a card to Teresa Kaiser, Jefferson City Nursing & Rehabilitation Center LLC 1221 Southgate Lane, Jefferson City, MO 65109. Joe Kaiser, Golden Living Center, 3038 West Truman Blvd. Jefferson City, MO 65109

GIVING STATEMENTS FOR FISCAL YEAR 2015 are available in the back of St. Thomas the Apostle and St. Cecilia Churches. Please pick them up to aid your tax preparation.

2015-2016 CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP APPEAL (CSA): The Catholic Stewardship Appeal (CSA) is our opportunity to come together as the Church in the 95 Catholic Parishes and 15 missions of our diocese.

The 2016 CSA goal for **St. Cecilia Parish** is **\$3,363.00 (18 individuals** have pledged **\$1,730** so far).

The 2016 CSA goal for **St. Thomas Parish** is **\$7,945.00 (46 individuals** have pledged **\$6,935.00** so far).

ST. THOMAS CYO meets the first Monday of every month at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Cafeteria. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 1 at 7:00 p.m.

St. Cecilia Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion
February 20-21

Saturday 7:00 p.m. – Bonnie Kampeter, Lou Kloepfel,
Brenda Wansing

Sunday 8:00 a.m. – Dominic & Mary Plassmeyer,
Janice Schanzmeyer

February 27-28

Saturday 7:00 p.m. – Doris Stumpe, Jennifer Even,
Betty Hagenhoff

Sunday 8:00 a.m. – Gerald & Phyllis Rehagen,
Pam Libbert

St. Cecilia Greeters/Ushers

February 20-21

Saturday 7:00 p.m. – Darin Even, Randy Hagenhoff,
Tom Gragert, Lou Kloepfel

Sunday 8:00 a.m. – Leon Schanzmeyer, Kenny Otto,
Dominic Plassmeyer, Larry Lueckenotto

Rosary before Mass at St. Cecilia

Wednesday: No Rosary during Lent, due to Stations of the Cross

Saturday 6:40 p.m. – Alice Hake– Sorrowful Mysteries (John Christian)

Sunday 7:40 a.m. – Mary Plassmeyer– Sorrowful Mysteries (Angie Christian)

VOTIVE CANDLES: The requested donation for lighting a votive candle in church is **\$2.50.**

***IF YOU ARE NOT ABLE TO FULFILL
YOUR LITURGICAL MINISTRY,
IN YOUR KINDNESS & CHARITY,
PLEASE FIND A REPLACEMENT.***

BAPTISM PREPARATION: Please call Fr. Secrist to schedule a meeting and date for Baptism.

MARRIAGE PREPARATION: Please call Fr. Secrist at least six months prior to the desired date.

THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION will be conferred on **Thursday, May 12 at 7:00 p.m.** in St. Cecilia Church.

** The names listed after the mysteries of the rosary to be prayed before Mass are those who are preparing to be baptized or become Catholic at the Easter Vigil. Throughout this season of Lent, please keep them in your prayers as they prepare to receive the Easter Sacraments.*

MINISTRY TO THE ILL & INFIRM: If you are preparing for surgery, recovering from surgery, homebound or ill, please let Fr. Secrist (477-3315) and/or MaryPat Luebbering (477-3476) know so that you have the opportunity to receive the Sacraments and pastoral care.

ST. THOMAS PRAYER LINE REQUESTS should be emailed to Jenny Becker at jbeckeroffice@gmail.com or by calling (573) 690-0642. The Prayer Line exists to communicate prayer intentions for those in need of healing. Out of respect for individuals' privacy, only necessary information is communicated.

MASS INTENTIONS...

The specific Mass intentions for each scheduled Mass are regularly published in this bulletin and are specifically requested by individual request. Every reasonable effort is made to accommodate particular times and dates, when so requested. However, when on occasion the date or time request cannot be met, the intention will be rescheduled for the next earliest date available.

ADULT SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION: The next meeting will be **Sunday, February 21 at 6:00 p.m.** in the Vitae House at St. Thomas. This meeting is for those who are becoming Catholic. Questions? Please contact Fr. Secrist at 477-3315.

CONFIRMATION PREPARATION: **Wednesday, February 17, 7:30 p.m.** in St. Thomas School library.

PENANCE SERVICES AROUND THE AREA DURING LENT

Tuesday, February 23, 7:00 p.m. – Argyle

Wednesday, February 24, 7:00 p.m. – St. Cecilia, Meta

Thursday, February 25, 7:00 p.m. – Rich Fountain

Tuesday, March 1, 7:00 p.m. – Chamois

Wednesday, March 2, 7:00 p.m. – Frankenstein

Tuesday, March 8, 7:00 p.m. – St. Thomas

Wednesday, March 9, 7:00 p.m. – Loose Creek

Tuesday, March 15, 7:00 p.m. – Folk

Tuesday, March 15, 7:00 p.m. – Linn

Wednesday, March 16, 7:00 p.m. – Westphalia

OPERATION RICE BOWL: This Lent, our community will have the opportunity to participate the Catholic Relief Services Operation Rice Bowl. Operation Rice Bowl is a faith-in-action program that helps us experience Lenten spirituality by living in solidarity with people in need around the world. Proceeds raised will help our less fortunate brothers and sisters in our diocese and around the world. Be sure to pick up your cardboard Rice Bowl at the entrances to church.

ST. THOMAS CEMETERY DUES FOR 2016 ARE DUE: Dues are **\$3.00** per family this year. Anyone who turned 21 in 2015 or became a separate household, or newcomers in their first full year of residence, now owe dues for 2016. You may put your dues in the collection basket in an envelope marked "Cemetery Dues" or mail it to the St. Thomas Cemetery Assn., Attn: Lisa Lackman, 2222 Upper Bottom Rd., St. Thomas, MO 65076. Please call or text Lisa with questions at 573-338-2703.

ST. THOMAS PSR CLASSES are held on Wednesday evenings 7:00-8:00 p.m. for grade & high school students. Everyone involved in the PSR program is asked to please sign up for the Remind text messaging. This is the primary form communication we will use should classes need to be cancelled. Text @stthomaspsr to 81010 to receive messages. Follow our "St. Thomas the Apostle PSR" page on Facebook for messages and notifications of events.

WEDNESDAY EVENING TRAFFIC PATTERN AT ST. THOMAS: Because of the number of people attending PSR, Confirmation Preparation and Quilting on Wednesday evenings at St. Thomas, **all drivers are asked to please enter via the lower driveway from Park Street and exit from the upper parking lot onto Highway B only.**

ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE SUNDAY SCHOOL: Sunday School is for children preschool age (2 years prior to Kindergarten) and meets on Sundays from 9:00 to 9:45 a.m. in the St. Thomas School Kindergarten room. Please contact Daffiny Tallent at 573-694-4408 or ddtallent@embarqmail.com for more information.

ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE YARD SIGNS & WINDOW STICKERS: Show your support for our local Catholic school by purchasing a sign for your front yard and a window sticker for your vehicle, boat or tractor. Yard signs and window stickers are \$5.00 each. Please contact the School Office at 573-477-3322.

ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE SCHOOL ARCHERY TOURNAMENT will be Sunday, February 21, beginning at noon in the Parish Center. Hamburgers, hotdogs & other concessions will be served. Please come support our school archers!!

BOX TOPS: Please continue to save Box Tops for Education, Coke Points & Best Choice labels. **Please send in Box Tops by February 21 for submission.**

ST. THOMAS SCRIP: Please contact Lindsay Luebbering at 573-680-4920 or Karen Luebbering at 573-301-5835 for any questions about the scrip program or for any special orders.

CONGRATULATIONS to the St. Thomas the Apostle School students participated in the St. Martin's Archery Meet on February 6-7. They all did a tremendous job at the meet and we had several students who received medals. Cameron Luebbering took home the 1st place medal (Middle School boys) and Kenzie Libbert the 2nd place medal (Elementary School girls). The Middle School team took 4th Place & the Elementary School team took home 2nd Place. Outstanding job to all our archers and coaches!!!

PENNY WAR: Thank you to our students and anyone else who helped support our "Penny War" that was held at St. Thomas the Apostle School during Catholic Schools Week. Our school collected a total of \$500.00. The money collected will be given to the Pregnancy Help Center in Jefferson City.

CONGRATULATIONS to the following students who won our **Catholic School Week Essay Contest** – "Why I Love My Catholic School"! 8th – Bruno Puleo, 7th – Ethan Rackers, 6th – Leon Wolken, 5th – Ethan Luebbering, 4th – Ava Morris, 3rd – Carson Libbert, 2nd – Courtney Luebbering, 1st – Jack Libbert, Kindergarten – Rowan Buechter

"I love my school and I love learning about Jesus." **Rowan Buechter, Kindergartener**

"We say prayers every day. We work hard and play. We have a small class to help us learn." **Jack Libbert, 1st Grader**

ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE SCHOOL UPCOMING EVENTS

- February 16 – Home & School Meeting 6:30 p.m.
21 – St. Thomas the Apostle School Archery Tournament (noon)
25 – NAEP Test for 8th grade students
March 3 – Early Release 1:20 Car riders, 1:30 Bus Riders
4 – First Friday, Adoration & Confessions
5 – Diocesan Regional Speech Meet here at St. Thomas

ST. THOMAS PARISH BALL PARK is looking for concession manager for 2016 ball season (May-July). If interested, please contact Gina Luebbering for more details at 573-694-1863 or sparkboard@gmail.com

PERPETUAL ADORATION HOURS OPEN AT ST. STANISLAUS: Sunday 3:00-4:00 p.m. 2nd Sunday only, Thursday noon - 1:00 and 1:00-2:00 p.m.; Saturday 11:00-12:00 (noon); Saturday 1:00-2:00 p.m.; Saturday 10:00-11:00 p.m. (2nd, 3rd, 4th & 5th Saturdays). Please contact Donna at 573-680-1470 or 573-635-2095.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

THE WILLIAM SIMON SCHOLARSHIP FUND awards scholarships to Catholic students in the Jefferson City Diocese who are in financial need for attending an accredited college of the student's choice. The scholarship is \$1,000 per semester. Please see Fr. Secrist at the rectory for details and application. Students from St. Thomas have been awarded this scholarship in the past. Applications must be returned to the Chancery by March 31, 2016. All applicants will be notified of the results by May 1, 2016.

ST. ANTHONY KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS BREAKFAST is this Sunday, February 14, serving ham & sausage, biscuits & gravy & scrambled eggs from 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in the St. Anthony Parish Hall. Adults \$8.00, children 6-12 \$4.00.

WARDSVILLE/OSAGE BEND K OF C COUNTRY HAM & SAUSAGE BREAKFAST is this Sunday, February 14 at St. Stanislaus gym. Serving country ham, sausage, biscuits & gravy, scrambled eggs, coffee, milk & orange juice from 7:30 a.m. to 12:00 (noon). Adults \$10.00, children 5-12 \$4.00.



ST. THOMAS / META KNIGHTS of COLUMBUS FISH FRY is **NEXT FRIDAY, February 19**, serving (gluten free) fish fillets, hushpuppies, French fries, baked potatoes, baked beans & coleslaw **4:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.** Adults: \$10.00, children 6-12: \$5.00. All you care to eat. Carry-outs available in the St. Thomas Parish Center. Proceeds to benefit the repair of parish buildings at St. Thomas the Apostle.

ST. THOMAS / META SOFTBALL & BASEBALL REGISTRATION: will be held Saturday, February 20 from 6:00 to 7:00 p.m. and Sunday February 21, from 11:00 a.m. to noon in the St. Thomas School cafeteria. Boys & girls ages 6-15 are eligible. Registration fees are \$50.00 for first child, \$30.00 for second child, and \$10.00 for third child with a cap of \$90.00 per family. After March 14 there will be a \$10.00 late fee per child. Registration for Fun League will also be held for boys & girls ages 5-6 at this time. If you are unable to make it to one of the registration times or have any questions, please contact Amy Luebbering at 573-619-6325 or raluebbering@embarqmail.com You may also send questions to sparkboard@gmail.com

ARGYLE VFW Post 8045 ANNUAL BREAKFAST is Sunday, February 21, serving sausage, fried eggs, pancakes, morning pastries & drinks from 7:30 – 11:30 a.m. in the Argyle post home. Adults \$8.00, children 6-12 \$4.00. Carry-outs available.

CITIZEN'S CIVIC BLOOD DRIVE META is Thursday, February 25 from 3:00-7:00 p.m. in the Meta Citizen's Civic League Hall, Meta. To make an appointment please visit redcrossblood.org, sponsor keyword: CivicLeagueMeta

NFP (Natural Family Planning): Want to give your beloved the perfect gift? How about the gift of total, self-giving love! Natural Family Planning allows a couple to give of themselves to each other, freely and totally, without physical, emotional, or spiritual side effects, while allowing couples to space children according to their need. Not sure how your beloved will react? Ask them to simply *consider* NFP. Do your research and tell them why you think it is a good idea, or contact a NFP Provider to request a free introductory class or for more information. You never know, maybe they were hoping you would ask! For more information, Diocesan NFP Provider contact information, and ongoing class schedules, visit www.MidMoNFP.org or call (573) 449-8342.

24 HOURS OF CONFESSION & ADORATION OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT: beginning at 4:00 p.m., March 4 at St. Joseph's Church, Westphalia. A priest will be available for Confession throughout the 24 hours

2016 BLAIR OAKS PROJECT GRADUATION CHICKEN DINNER is Sunday, March 6 at the Wardsville Lions Club. Serving from 2:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. \$10.00 per person. To purchase advanced tickets, please contact Brenda Schell at 573-301-4907. A silent auction will also be held.

ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE ANNUAL HAM BREAKFAST is **Sunday, March 13**. Serving country ham, sausage, scrambled eggs, hash browns, applesauce, biscuits & gravy **8:00 – 11:30 a.m.** Country store, craft stand, raffle and much more. Adults: \$9.00, children 6-12: \$4.00, children 5 & younger: free.

ST. CECILIA ANNUAL PARISH PICNIC is **Sunday, July 10, 2016**

ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE ANNUAL PARISH PICNIC is **Sunday, August 21, 2016**

LENTEN LETTER FROM THE BISHOP: February 13-14, 2016

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The season of Lent is a special time within the Church year when the liturgy causes us to experience sorrow for our sins, and with the help of God's grace, to undergo a conversion of heart. This focus is particularly accentuated this year, as we turn our thoughts to the Jubilee Year of Mercy and its motto: *Merciful like the Father*.

On the Fourth Sunday of Lent, we will hear the parable of the prodigal son from the Gospel according to Luke (cf. Lk 15: 1-32). Despite the younger son's terrible choices, his father longs for the opportunity to show his unending love for his wayward son. Pope Francis has remarked on how this parable reveals the power of God's mercy, which is a force capable of overcoming even the most grievous sins we commit. It helps us to understand that the death freely accepted by Christ on the Cross is not a sign of weakness, but a manifestation of omnipotence, because His power is perfectly displayed in the act of forgiving sins.

Let each of us, then, open the door of our heart through our Lenten practices of prayer and self-denial, just as we opened the Holy Doors of Mercy, to encounter the powerful, healing grace of God. Let us resolve to be transformed into effective witnesses of the Father's enduring compassion, and so practice the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

With my best wishes and personal regards, I am sincerely yours in Christ, Most Reverend John R. Gaydos Bishop of Jefferson City