

**The Roman Catholic Parishes of**  
**St. Thomas the Apostle**  
in St. Thomas

**St. Cecilia**  
in Meta

[www.stthomasapostle.net](http://www.stthomasapostle.net)  
[www.stthomasapostleschool.net](http://www.stthomasapostleschool.net)

[www.stceciliameta.net](http://www.stceciliameta.net)

PO Box 146  
St. Thomas, MO 65076

**FOURTH SUNDAY OF LENT**  
**MARCH 22, 2020**

**Administrator: Fr. Leonard Mukiibi**  
[frleonardmukiibi@gmail.com](mailto:frleonardmukiibi@gmail.com)  
Rectory Phone: 573-477-3315

**St. Thomas the Apostle Bookkeeper:**  
**Mrs. Jan Heckemeyer**  
[jheckemeyeroffice@gmail.com](mailto:jheckemeyeroffice@gmail.com)

**St. Thomas the Apostle Admin. Secretary:**  
**Mrs. Jenny Becker**  
[jbeckeroffice@gmail.com](mailto:jbeckeroffice@gmail.com)



**School Principal: Mr. Leroy Heckemeyer**  
[lheckemeyerstacs@gmail.com](mailto:lheckemeyerstacs@gmail.com)  
School: 573-477-3322 Fax: 573-477-3700

**St. Thomas the Apostle Secretary:**  
**Mrs. Diane Lueckenhoff**  
[dlueckenhoffoffice@gmail.com](mailto:dlueckenhoffoffice@gmail.com)

**St. Cecilia Bookkeeper:**  
**Mrs. Doris Stumpe**  
[dorisstumpe@att.net](mailto:dorisstumpe@att.net)

St. Thomas Parish Office hours: Tuesdays 8:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.; Wednesdays 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

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

St. Cecilia Rectory Office hours: Wednesdays 2:00 – 5:00 p.m. or by appointment

**Confessions:** Saturdays 4:00 - 4:45 p.m. at St. Thomas; Wednesdays 5:00 – 6:15 p.m. and  
Sundays 7:00 - 7:45 a.m. at St. Cecilia; or anytime by appointment, just call Father.

**Saint Thomas the Apostle**

**Mass Schedule for the Week of March 22-29:**

As per direction from Bishop McKnight, all Public Masses are SUSPENDED until at least APRIL 3. Fr. Leonard will have private Masses this week. Mass intentions for this week will be as follows: Fred & Bertha Beck, Bob Luebbering, Albert Plassmeyer, Geneva Plassmeyer, People of our Parishes, Antonia Schwartz

**Your Sunday Offering:**

Offertory Budget for 2019-2020: \$305,000.00  
Offertory Goal through Month End: \$228,753.00  
Actual Collection for 2019-2020: **\$207,649.02**  
Offertory Difference Year to Date: – \$ 21,103.98  
Offertory Goal per month: \$ 25,417.00

**Collection in Church:**

March 1 \$ 11,153.05  
March 8 \$ 2,633.00  
March 15 \$ 2,795.00  
March 22 \$  
March 29 \$

**Collection Online:** \$ 5,602.00

**March total to date:** **\$ 22,183.05**

Difference for March -\$ 3,233.95

**Saint Cecilia**

**Mass Schedule for the Week of March 22-29:**

As per direction from Bishop McKnight, all Public Masses are SUSPENDED until at least APRIL 3. Fr. Leonard will have private Masses this week. Mass intentions for this week will be as follows: Leo & Alberto Wieberg, Lawrence "Dick" Rehagen.

**Your Sunday Offering:**

Offertory Budget for 2019-2020: \$62,000.00  
Collection Total for 2019-2020: **\$43,526.25**  
Offertory Goal per month: \$ 5,166.67

**Collection in Church:**

March 1 \$ 1,414.00  
March 8 \$ 806.00  
March 15 \$ 1,142.00  
March 22 \$  
March 29 \$

**March total to date:** **\$ 3,362.00**

Difference for March: -\$ 1,804.67

**PLEASE REMEMBER YOUR PARISH IN YOUR  
LAST WILL & TESTAMENT**

**St. Thomas the Apostle Expansion & Building Fund**

Total Expansion Project expenses paid: \$2,273,475.34

Income from parishioners for FY 2019-2020

(via the yellow "Building Fund" envelope): **\$22,363.20**

Loan payments to date for FY 2019-2020: **\$64,594.18**

(Principal \$59,635.10 Interest \$4,959.08)

Parish Building Expansion Debt remaining: **\$141,103.75**

**SCRIP:** Visit [www.stthomasapostleschoolnet/scrip](http://www.stthomasapostleschoolnet/scrip) for more information about the Scrip program. Please contact Daffiny Tallent at 573-694-4408 to purchase anytime. A large variety of cards in various denominations are in stock and available for purchase.

**BISHOP MCKNIGHT'S MARCH PRAYER INTENTION:** For the gifts of wisdom, knowledge and understanding as our local church discerns a new pastoral plan.

**PASTOR'S MEDITATION:** 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Lent: **TO LIVE AS A CHRISTIAN IS TO SEE, TO HAVE CLEAR VISION ABOUT GOD, ABOUT OURSELVES AND ABOUT OTHERS.** We join in prayer to pray for our brothers and sister that have been affected by the Corona virus pandemic, for this case we also pray for the scientists to make innovations that complement human life. We need to find a way to continue practicing our Christian values of Love, mercy, support, care and praying for the affected members at the same time staying safe ourselves.

The Fourth Sunday of Lent is known as "Laetare (Rejoice) Sunday," expressing the Church's joy in anticipation of the Resurrection of our Lord. Today's readings both remind us that it is God who gives us proper vision in body as well as in soul and instruct us that we should be constantly on our guard against spiritual blindness.

By describing the anointing of David as the second king of Israel, as we read in the first reading (Sam.16:1-13), illustrates how blind we are in our judgments and how much we need God's help.

In the second reading (Eph.5:8-14), St. Paul reminds the Ephesians of their new responsibility as children of light, *to live as children of the light, producing every kind of goodness and righteousness and truth.*"

In today's Responsorial Psalm (Ps 23), we celebrate the care of God, our Good Shepherd, who keeps us safe in the darkness of this world.

Today's Gospel (Jn. 9:1-41), Presenting the miracle of Jesus' giving of sight to a man born blind, teaches us the necessity of opening the eyes of our mind by Faith, and warns us that those who assume they see the truth are often blind, while those who acknowledge their blindness are given clear vision. In this episode, the most unlikely person, namely the beggar born blind, receives the light of Faith in Jesus, while the religion-oriented, law-educated Pharisees remain spiritually blind.

To live as a Christian is to see, to have clear vision about God, about ourselves and about others. Our Lenten prayers and sacrifices should serve to heal our spiritual blindness so that we can look at others, see them as children of God and love them as our own brothers and sisters saved by the death and Resurrection of Jesus.

Dear friends we need to allow Jesus to heal our spiritual blindness. We all have blind-spots in our lives, in our marriages, our parenting, our work habits, and our personalities. We are often blind to the presence of the Triune God dwelling within us and fail to appreciate His presence in others. Even practicing Christians can be blind to the poverty, injustice and pain around them.

Let us remember that Jesus wants to heal our blindness. We need to ask him to remove from us the root causes of our blindness: for instance, self-centeredness, greed, anger, hatred, prejudice, jealousy, addiction to evil habits and hardness of heart. Let us pray, "God our Father, help us see Christ more clearly, love him more dearly and follow him more closely." wish you a blessed 4th week of Lent and please STAY SAFE. *Have a blessed week. Fr. Leonard Mukiibi*

#### **STATEMENT FROM BISHOP W. SHAWN MCKNIGHT – DIOCESE OF JEFFERSON CITY:**

Dear sisters and brothers in Christ,

I know you join me in concern for all who are being affected by the rapid spread of the coronavirus. Today, I am announcing that all public Masses will be suspended in the Diocese of Jefferson City, beginning on Wednesday, March 18 until at least April 3.

This is in keeping with the federal directives and other public entities in our area. We offer this decision as part of our effort to help stem the spread of the coronavirus.

This means all Catholics are dispensed from the obligation to attend Sunday Mass in person. Online opportunities are listed at [diojeffcity.org/public-health](http://diojeffcity.org/public-health) and some local parishes will be able to provide online Masses. Catholics are encouraged to check with their local parish regarding online Masses.

In addition, parishes have been instructed to make the following changes, beginning March 18: All public gatherings are cancelled or postponed. This includes public weddings. More information on baptisms, funerals and other liturgical protocols can be found at <https://diojeffcity.org/blog/2020/03/13/liturgical-protocols-for-public-health-safety/>. Confirmation Masses will be rescheduled to be celebrated after Easter Sunday. During this time, Churches will remain open as places of prayer and comfort. Priests will be available in the parishes to offer anointing of the sick before you go to the hospital, if possible. I ask you to be mindful of your responsibility to serve the community, in your time, talent and treasure in this extraordinary hour of need. You may register your volunteer capacity at <https://diojeffcity.org/parish-diaster-responders-team-volunteer-form/>. Parishes are organizing disaster responder teams to serve those immediately impacted by the coronavirus pandemic. Please continue your tithes to your parishes by postal mail or online, if the parish offers that option.

Diocesan schools, which are suspending in-school instruction from March 18-April 3, are providing ongoing instruction either online or packet-based, on a case-by-case basis. While diocesan offices and parish offices will remain open, some employees may work remotely or need to take leave to care for themselves or their families. Some parishes may reduce office hours. Regardless, all diocesan and parish employees will continue to receive compensation. I am grateful to all who are working tirelessly to mitigate the effects of the pandemic. I pray the efforts we are doing, as a people of faith, will provide tangible support, encouragement and spiritual hope to our communities.

With prayers for the protection of the Immaculate Heart of Mary, I am,

Sincerely yours in Christ,

**Bishop W. Shawn McKnight**  
**Diocese of Jefferson City**  
**[www.diojeffcity.org](http://www.diojeffcity.org)**

#### **ST. THOMAS BETTER TOGETHER PASTORAL PLANNING:**

In light of Bishop McKnight's request that we cease public gatherings, the diocese has asked that:

1) Groups participating in the Better Together pastoral planning consider using other alternatives for discussion, such as social media platforms or group calls.

2) Individuals fill out the discernment reports. Any parishioner, not just those in established groups, can participate.

The discernment reports can either be mailed to the parish office, or submitted online on the diocesan website. To find the discernment reports, or for more information regarding the Better Together program, please visit [www.diojeffcity.org/better-together](http://www.diojeffcity.org/better-together) or contact Brian Luebbering at 913-951-7222 .

**St. Thomas FORMED movie night** has been cancelled due to the stopping of public gatherings. Parishioners are encouraged to utilize our parish's FORMED subscription to enhance their Lenten experience.

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#### **CONFIRMATION PREPARATION CLASS - CANCELLED**

**ST. CECILIA AND ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE EASTER FLOWERS:** Anyone interested in making a monetary donation for Easter flowers in memory of loved ones is asked to place the donation along with **PRINTED names** to be remembered in an envelope and mailed to the Parish Office by **April 5**. The names will be published in the Easter Sunday bulletin, April 12.

**ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE SCHOOL:** ALL EVENTS HAVE BEEN CANCELLED

**ST. THOMAS CEMETERY DUES:** The dues are \$10.00 per family (\$5.00 for single persons). Family members becoming the head of a separate household are not covered under their parent's membership. Also, anyone after their 21<sup>st</sup> birthday must pay their own dues of \$5.00. Please note: Anyone falling in areas over 5 years must pay \$100.00 to rejoin plus current dues. Please put your payment in the collection basket marked "Cemetery Dues" or mail to St. Thomas Cemetery Association, c/o Lisa Lackman, 2222 Upper Bottom Road., St. Thomas, MO 65076. You may contact Lisa, if you have questions about your current or past dues, at 573-338-2703.

**ST. THOMAS CHURCH CLEANING TEAM ROTATION FOR UPCOMING WEEKS**

Week of March 22<sup>nd</sup>: Lynne Reinkemeyer, Linda Boessen, Lauri Luebbering & Lisa Lackman

Week of March 29<sup>th</sup>: Sonya Henson, Susan Buechter, Jackie Prenger & Amy Buechter

*Thanks to all who volunteer to help keep our Church looking beautiful! Anyone else interested in helping out, please contact Lynne Reinkemeyer at 573-690-7113 and we can add another group.*

**ST. THOMAS KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS FISH FRY** HAS BEEN CANCELLED

**ST. THOMAS PARISH PARK BOARD DUELING PIANOS** HAS BEEN CANCELLED

**SAVE THE DATES ON YOUR CALENDAR:**

**Confirmation** – Wednesday, April 22, 7:00 p.m. St. Cecilia Church

**TOTUS TUUS** – June 14-19, 2020

**St. Cecilia Parish Picnic** – July 12, 2020

**St. Thomas the Apostle Parish Picnic** – August 16, 2020

**IMPORTANT LETTER FROM FR. LEONARD**

Dear Parishioners of St. Thomas the Apostle and St. Cecilia,

The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic is affecting our nation and parish communities in many ways. In an effort to help slow the spread of this virus, the St Thomas the Apostle and St. Cecilia parishes are following the guidance and recommendations being put forth by Bishop McKnight of the Diocese of Jefferson City.

Bishop McKnight's message can be found at <https://diojeffcity.org/public-health/>

Please make note of the following:

Information can be found on the St Thomas Parish website at <http://www.stthomasapostle.net/> and St. Cecilia website at <http://www.stceciliameta.net/>

**Church:** Our churches will remain open during normal hours (St. Thomas 6:00 AM to 7:00 PM and St. Cecilia 7:00 AM – 5:00 PM) and remain as a place of prayer and comfort. Private stations of the cross, prayer and adoration are welcome. Please use social distancing of 6 to 8 feet from others, refrain from handshakes and cover mouth/nose when coughing or sneezing.

**Masses:** Effective immediately, all public Masses have been suspended. Bishop McKnight has provided a dispensation for attendance of Sunday Mass, but we have not been dispensed of honoring the Lord's Day. Join the weekend Mass online at 10:00 AM each Sunday at St. Thomas the Apostle Church facebook page at [https://www.facebook.com/St-Thomas-the-Apostle-Church-109903037307741/?modal=admin\\_todo\\_tour](https://www.facebook.com/St-Thomas-the-Apostle-Church-109903037307741/?modal=admin_todo_tour). The link is also on St. Thomas the Apostle parish website. Mass is also available on the EWTN channel.

Fr. Leonard will be praying the Sunday and daily Masses privately for scheduled intentions. Please watch the bulletin for those weekend/other Mass intentions that have to be rescheduled.

**Parish Offices:** If you need to reach Father Leonard, contact him at 573 477-3315 or [frleonardmukiibi@gmail.com](mailto:frleonardmukiibi@gmail.com). St. Thomas the Apostle parish office will be staffed as normal, but closed to outside visitors until further notice. Jenny Becker may be contacted at 573-477-3315 or 573-690-0642 or [jbeckeroffice@gmail.com](mailto:jbeckeroffice@gmail.com). Jan Heckemeyer may be contacted at 573-477-3315 or 573-619-8432 or [jheckemeyeroffice@gmail.com](mailto:jheckemeyeroffice@gmail.com). Doris Stumpe may be contacted at 573-619-6125 or [dorisstumpe@att.net](mailto:dorisstumpe@att.net).

**Baptisms and Weddings:** Are postponed through April 3 and will be dealt with on case by case basis following current recommendations of the Diocese.

**Funerals:** Funeral will be restricted to immediate non-symptomatic family members with gatherings no larger than 10 persons. Funeral lunches are suspended at this time.

**Parish Small Groups** participating in the planning process are encouraged to have conference calls with members, use social media or individually answer questions and submit to the group leader for compilation. In addition, we are allowed to postpone meetings until a later date after April 3. Information and on line forms are available at <https://diojeffcity.org/better-together-pastoral-planning-process>

**Confessions and Anointing:** The obligation of Lenten Confession has been dispensed but confession and/or anointing will be available at the regular scheduled times at St. Thomas the Apostle (Saturdays 4:00 – 4:45 PM) and St. Cecilia (Sundays 7:00 – 7:45 AM and Wednesdays 5:00 – 6:15 PM). The communal Lenten penance services have been cancelled but Father Leonard will be available for individual confessions on March 24 from 7:00 – 9:00 PM at St. Cecilia and on March 31 from 7:00 – 9:00 PM at St. Thomas the Apostle. All confessions will be private/behind a screen until further notice.

**Parish Events:** All parish events scheduled through April 3 are postponed or cancelled.

**Parish Hall/Center Rentals:** If you have the parish hall/center rented during this time, you will be contacted you about rescheduling or refunding the hall rental deposit and fee.

**St Thomas the Apostle School** is suspending in-school instruction and all extracurricular activities are cancelled until April 6 when school reopens. <https://diojeffcity.org/blog/2020/03/16/diocese-of-jefferson-city-closing-catholic-schools-march-18-april-3/>

**Tithe/Financial Commitment:** Please strive to keep up with your financial commitment to the parish during this time when public worship and events have been suspended. The work of our parishes and staff continues with ongoing expenses and financial obligations. St. Thomas the Apostle parishioners can mail contributions to the parish office at St. Thomas the Apostle Church, PO Box 146, St. Thomas, MO 65076. Or you may sign up for electronic giving through ACH payments. Blank ACH forms are available in St. Thomas the Apostle Church entrances and on the parish website. Call or email the St. Thomas the Apostle parish office if you have questions about ACH payments. St. Cecilia parishioners can mail contributions to St. Cecilia Church, Attention: Doris Stumpe, PO Box 146, St. Thomas, MO 65076.

**Outreach to our parish community/vicinity:** Please contact the parish offices, Father Leonard or a PPC member of your needs or the needs of others. If you wish to volunteer, the Diocese enrollment is at <https://diojeffcity.org/parish-disaster-responders-team-volunteer-form>. If you know of a someone needing assistance, please don't hesitate to call.

**Updates and Communications:** Ongoing updates will be communicated through the following: St. Thomas the Apostle and St. Cecilia parish websites, St. Thomas the Apostle Parish and School Facebook pages, marquee signs at both churches, and church bulletins.

**Other Information:** The CDC's COVID-19 page is an accurate, credible source that is consistently updated with directives from the Whitehouse. The webpage is found at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>

We encourage all parishioners to pray,

***O Immaculate Heart of Mary, we entrust ourselves to you, Health of the Sick.  
Bring under your mantle of protection all who provide care for the sick and minister to their needs, as your Son implores us to do for one another.  
We seek refuge under your protection, O Holy Mother of God.  
Amen.***

Sincerely Yours in Christ,

Fr. Leonard Mukiibi  
Pastor, St. Thomas the Apostle Parish and St. Cecilia Parish