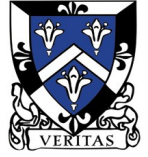




# St. Thomas Aquinas Church

January 4, 2015, The Epiphany of the Lord



## Pastor's Corner

*Hodie Christus natus est! Gaudeamus omnes!* Christ was born today! Let us all rejoice!

A very blessed and merry Christmas to all, from all us friars. We're blessed to be here, and we hope you can say the same.

What a remarkable thing we celebrate at Christmas! God becomes man. The infinite makes himself finite. He whom the world cannot contain is contained in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and ultimately placed in our hands, and on our tongues, in the sacrament of his body and blood (the very same body that was born of Mary and hung on the cross).

And what a remarkable greeting we use for Christmas—I mean of course *merry Christmas*, and it's remarkable because it's the only situation I can think of in contemporary English in which we use the word "merry." It used to be used more widely (even in the 19th century) but it has fallen into desuetude with this one exception: "merry Christmas!" What does it mean, and why do we use it?

Well, it means something like "happy," but not exactly the same. There are many words in our language which express related ideas, but they're not all the same. Some linguists claim that there is no such thing in a given language of two words meaning *exactly* the same thing—I'm not sure that's true, but in the case of mysterious matters I'd like to think we have a wealth of words to account for the depth of reality.

Now, with something as important as the matter of human happiness, there are bound to be riches that require a variety of words to express it. In English we have (among others) words such as peace, contentment, joy, mirth, gladness, merriment, and happiness. And the greatest of these is happiness. Happiness means *perfect*, final, beatitude—that which can't be improved upon. And that's something that only comes with the vision of God. The annual celebration of Christmas here on earth doesn't give us quite *that*—not the way the angels and saints have it. It gives a foretaste of Heaven but not the full perfection of Heaven. So, while we certainly can say "happy Christmas" (and some do) it has become con-

ventional in English-speaking lands to say "merry Christmas!"

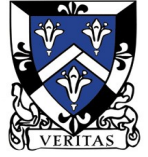
So what's different about the word "merry" that makes it so apt for this greeting? If it's not quite the same as "happy," how is it different? Well, most definitions I've seen mention *lightheartedness* as one of the distinctions of this word. We've all felt it. A bit of good news comes your way, or when someone doing something extremely kind for you or your family, or you see a YouTube video of some priceless physical comedy—it takes you out of yourself, at least momentarily, and gives a lift. It's a feeling of giddiness, only not silly but brought about by the Holy Spirit: clean, pure, enduring, and free of meanness and bitter aftertaste. For the message of Christmas is the message of something we good modern rationalists think ought to be much, much too good to be true—and yet there it is. It's truth itself: the touchstone of Christian orthodoxy is the true human flesh of Jesus Christ: *Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are of God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit which confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is of God, and every spirit which does not confess Jesus is not of God* (1 Jn 4: 1-3). Not to confess Jesus in the flesh—i.e., to refuse him or to apostatize from this faith—is so great a sin because it is to mock the humility of God, and to join the jeering crowd of Good Friday. God the Son, in obedience to the Father, loved us tenderly and matchlessly by taking on himself our infirmity, all to save us from our sin. He who was born of Mary existed first as God, and became man, without ceasing to be God. Divinity has stooped to our lowliness, to rescue us by his mighty power, even though the manifestation of that power seems so powerless to our way of thought.

This is truly cause for *merriment*. We will not be perfectly happy until we, like the saints, have finished the race and persevered through life. Only when we know as we are known can we have a possession of blessedness that can't be lost. Until then, we have to keep moving along the way, anxious for our own sinfulness, yet assured beyond doubt of God's love. Because he paid us the high compliment of becoming one of us. And that should lift us off our feet. *Merry Christmas! Happy new year!*



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## MASS INTENTIONS

<b>Sun, Jan 4</b>	<b>EPIPHANY OF THE LORD (S)</b>
5:00pm	People of the Parish
7:00am	James Leo Burkhart
9:00am	Lynn Woodward
11:00am	Sam Rosta (+)
<b>Mon, Jan 5</b>	<i>St. John Neumann, bishop</i> (OBL)
8:00am	Jeremy Haley
Noon	Patricia Rubeck (+)
<b>Tue, Jan 6</b>	<i>St. André Bessette, religious</i> (Opt. M.)
8:00am	Vera Marsh (+)
<b>Wed, Jan 7</b>	<i>St. Raymond of Penyafort, priest</i> (Opt. M.)
8:00am	Viola Blackstone (+)
Noon	Tri Nguyen (+)
<b>Thu, Jan 8</b>	
8:00am	Dorothy Butler (+)
<b>Fri, Jan 9</b>	
8:00am	Ron Frame (+)
Noon	Souls in Purgatory
<b>Sat, Jan 10</b>	
9:00am	Sharon Luman McGee (+)
<b>Sun, Jan 11</b>	<b>THE FEAST OF THE BAPTISM OF THE LORD</b>
5:00pm	Pollice Family
7:00am	People of the Parish
9:00am	Thanksgiving to St. Michael
11:00am	Edwin Sawyers (+)

*(Incense will not be used at 7:00am Masses; it may be used at other Sunday Masses, as well as evening Masses on Holy Days of Obligation.)*

### Parish Finances

#### Week of December 15, 2014

Envelopes (256).....	\$8,957.80
Loose.....	875.03
<b>Total .....</b>	<b>9,832.80</b>
Weekly Budget.....	11,538.00
<b>This week's deficit.....</b>	<b>1,705.20</b>
<b>Year-to-date deficit: .....</b>	<b>\$36,775.83</b>

### Please pray for the home-bound of the parish:

Margaret Gladys Abbott, Maxine Anders, William & Jan Barry, Josephine Basalla, Mary Battiger, Dorothy Beaver, Gertrude Bell, Madelyn Bronkar. Mathilda Clark, Mary Cowden, Michael Curtis, Jeanne Dittmar, Ralph Dosch, Paul & Marcy DuBeck, Betty Fedor, Jenni Finnen, Beverly Foley, Isabel Gilchrist, Mary Ellen Grafton, Nancy Hamler, Florence Herbert, Gabrielle Hinkle, Patricia Huck, Mary Imlay, Mary Caroline Johnson, Eileen Johnston, Henry Long, David Macenko, Farida Mach, Gerald Marshall, Josephine Marshall, Alice McGonagle, Betty Mercer, Michael Overstreet, Loretta (& Charles) Paynter, Patricia Perone, Glenna Pfeifer, Alice Pitcock, Mary Polascak, Mary Postlewaite, George and Barb Ridenour, Barbara Schumacher, Charles & Mary Lou Scott, Loretta Silfko, Theresa Tracey, Teresa Woods, Terri Woods

### Please pray for the recently deceased:

## Weekly Calendar

### Sun, Jan 4

Coffee and doughnuts (Rosary Hall)  
10:00 a.m. CCD (school)  
6:00 p.m. Youth Group - Christmas Caroling

### Mon, Jan 5

7:00 p.m. Children of God prayer group

### Tue, Jan 6

6:00 p.m. Rosary for Life (Church)  
7:00 p.m. RCIA

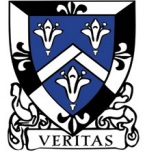
### Wed, Jan 7

12:30—8:00 p.m. Eucharistic exposition



# *St. Thomas Aquinas Church*

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## A History of St. Thomas Aquinas Church Part XXIII - Cyclone Part 6



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## Around the parish

*[Dear parishioners: Please continue to keep the Spiker family in your prayers, and read the following update —Fr. Peter]*

Thank you for your prayers for Cassie Spiker. The family has received the good news that the cancer has not spread. It is only in one location. In addition, Cassie's medical bills have been covered. God is good! Many continue to ask what they can do to help. The immediate needs are gas cards for the many trips back and forth to Children's Hospital in Columbus. Some have asked about providing meals, and we are collecting frozen meals for them that can easily be reheated. Please label the meal with the Spiker family name and drop them off at the Parish Center to be placed in the freezer, or if you need to have someone pick them up, please call Marsha Parmiter at (740) 452-0879 or Mary Clare Pieczynski at (740) 221-4786.

An account has been opened at Century National Bank for Cassie. If you can aid the family financially you can make deposits directly into the account at any of the bank's branches in Cassie's name.

We are also organizing a benefit for Cassie. Anyone interested in getting involved and helping with this benefit may once again call Marsha Parmiter or Mary Clare Pieczynski. Thank you for your prayers and generosity to Cassie and the Spiker family.

**Youth Group** will have an Epiphany party on Sunday January 4 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the St. Nicholas Teen Center. Students should bring a \$5.00 gift (suitable for a boy or girl) for the gift exchange. Come and enjoy games, music, fun and good food. All high school students are welcome!

**March for Life 2015** Muskingum Valley Right to Life is chartering a bus to Washington, D.C. for the March For Life. The cost is \$55.00 per person; you may sponsor another traveler if you can't go yourself. The bus will be departing from St. Nicholas on Wed evening, January 21, 2015. Reserve your seat by calling Bob Fedorke at (740) 454-7529 or Bernie Kuhn at (740) 454-1882.



**Daughters of Isabella** will host a guest speaker from the American Red Cross who will discuss Disaster Preparedness on Tuesday January 13 at 6:00 p.m. at the St. Nicholas Parish Office. All ladies 16 and up are invited to attend.

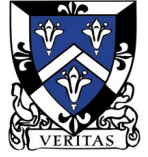
Also, the Daughters are collecting the following items for Transitions (a home for abused women and their children). The wish list includes: toiletries, soap, tooth brushes, tooth paste, deodorant, shampoo, toilet tissue, laundry soap, dryer sheets, Kleenex, dish soap, paper towels and other cleaning supplies. Items can be brought to the meeting January 13, or left in the St. Nicholas Parish Office for pick up.





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**Medical updates:** I'm writing this a week before Christmas, due to bulletin deadlines. My mom got home Thursday, December 18, three days after her surgery. We consider this a kind of miracle and are crediting it to the prayers of so many. From the bottom of my heart: thanks to everyone who has been praying. I told my mom of the many who have been lifting her up, and she too is deeply grateful. She was blessed to have a great medical team at Georgetown, including a wonderful surgeon. God be praised. They're expecting her to make a full recovery, and quickly, without any need of chemo or radiation.

Please also keep up the prayers for the Spiker family—and see p. 4 of this bulletin for an update on her situation.

But there's another something that has struck the parish that calls out for your prayers: Tiffany Branson, daughter of Sheila (our secretary), was in a horrific car accident on December 14th—it's amazing she's alive, but I talked to Sheila this morning and she tells me they removed the ventilator and Tiffany is now communicating by gestures. They're hopeful for a full recovery. Throughout this all, Sheila has been assuring me of prayers for my mom when her own daughter came within an ace of death. Please lift Tiffany up in prayer as you have been so good to pray for my mom, and others as well. This must be a very scary time for the Bransons, but they're full of faith in the Lord.

## A Sign of God's Presence: Our Marriages

This Incarnation reminds us of how Christ becomes present in the world through the sacraments, including marriage. At a **Worldwide Marriage Encounter** weekend, you'll learn how to make your home a stronger sign of the Lord's presence. Plan ahead for one of the next two weekends in Columbus: in the new year on February 13-15 and April 10-12. For more information or to register, contact Paul & Marilou Clouse at (614) 834-688 or visit the website at [www.wmecolumbus.org](http://www.wmecolumbus.org).



The Good Samaritan Nurses Alumni are collecting new or used blankets for Eastside Ministry. They can be dropped off in the lobby of Genesis/Good Samaritan or Genesis/Bethesda from 8 a.m.– 8 p.m., 7 days a week. Call Helen Steil at 453-9415 for more information. Thank you in advance.

