



December 14, 2025 | VOLUME 55 NUMBER 50 | Third Sunday of Advent

Those whom the LORD has ransomed will return and enter Zion  
singing, crowned with everlasting joy;



they will meet with joy and gladness, sorrow and mourning will flee.  
Isaiah 35:10

A photograph of four lit candles in a red wreath. There are three purple candles and one red candle. The red candle is lit, with a bright flame visible. The purple candles are also lit. The wreath is made of red ribbon and green pine branches. The background is a blurred green, suggesting a Christmas tree.

# *A Letter From Our Pastor*

## **REJOICE IN THE LORD ALWAYS!**

For we are the luckiest people in the world. Stop to think about all that is offered to us... adopted into the family of God, promised eternal life, and the opportunity to be God's hands and legs in bringing these same gifts to others. Life-changing, supernatural gifts entrusted to you and me!



Gaudete (Latin for "rejoice") Sunday is a day set apart near the middle of our Advent journey to pause and rejoice in the reason for our joy... the coming of Jesus: past, present, and future. Our focus shifts from "The Lord who is to come" to "The Lord who is close at hand."

Isaiah speaks of a day when deserts bloom and the lame leap! Not only hinting at the miracles Jesus will later perform - and offer as proof of his identity in our Gospel, confirming He is indeed the one to come - but of the paradise that awaits us all in the next "age!" So sad the "Nones and Dones" have nothing more than the hollow, fleeting, temporary pleasures of this world to look forward to. YUCK!

Now let's look at John the Baptist's predicament. He sits in jail, knowing his end is near. He must have wondered what more he could have done? He did all the Lord asked of him, lived on locusts and wild honey, slept on the desert floor, and turned Israel upside down with his baptisms that prepared the way of the Lord! Check, check, check - nothing left undone. His cuz, Jesus, has worked miracle after miracle for total strangers and nonbelievers; what is he waiting for with me?! "Come on, Jesus, hurry up with some of that Savior Stuff! Get me out of here. Has anyone else given more than I have to your cause? Is it possible you aren't the MAN? Is this any way to treat your most loyal follower?"

Jesus had one more task for him, to witness with his life. And now that he has accomplished the mission God entrusted to him, why would Jesus do anything to prolong his trials on this earth and delay his reward of eternal life in Paradise?

We can all feel abandoned by God when things don't go as we think they should. Try to imagine what the Jews must have felt and how much they must have doubted God's existence during Nazi Germany!

The enduring truth we must focus on in such times of despair is the Life waiting for us after this one ends. Stay focused on the gift no one can take from us, Eternal Life! The worst anyone can do is hasten our arrival in Paradise! Herod didn't just take John the Baptist's life; he sent him on to Paradise! Who enjoyed the last laugh there? And until our portal to eternal life opens, we get to live with the gifts and JOY of those things in the opening paragraph above!

Have a blessed, JOY-filled week!

*Fr. Eddie*

Christmas is a Holy Day of Obligation, and the faithful are required to attend Mass either Christmas Eve, Wednesday, Dec. 24, or Christmas Day, Thursday, Dec. 25.

## *St. Thomas More Christmas Mass Schedule*

### **VIGIL OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD**

Wednesday, December 24 @ 4:00 pm & 6:00 pm



### **THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD**

Thursday, December 25 @ 9:00 am

Our week begins with "Gaudete Sunday." Gaudete means "rejoice" in Latin. The spirit of joy that begins this week comes from the words of Paul, "The Lord is near." This joyful spirit is marked by the third candle of our Advent wreath, which is rose colored, and the rose-colored vestments often used at the Mass.

We focus this week on feeling the joy. We move through this week feeling a part of the waiting world that rejoices because our longing has prepared us to believe the reign of God is close at hand. And so, we consciously ask:

*Prepare our hearts and remove the sadness that hinders us from feeling the joy and hope which his presence will bestow.*

We may experience the Light shining into dark places of our lives and showing us patterns of sinfulness, and inviting us to experience God's mercy and healing.

Perhaps we wish to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation this week. We may want to make gestures of reconciliation with a loved one, relative, friend or associate. With more light and joy, it is easier to say, "I'm sorry; let's begin again."

Each night this week we want to pause in gratitude. Whatever the day has brought, no matter how busy it has been, we can stop, before we fall asleep, to give thanks for a little more light; a little more freedom to walk by that light, in joy.

### **Thank You for Supporting Our Angel Tree Project**

Thank you to all our parishioners who so generously supported this year's Angel Tree Project. Because of your kindness, we were able to provide gifts and necessities to individuals and families in need, reminding them that they are seen, loved, and supported by their parish community.

Your compassion brought hope and joy to many this season. Whether you selected an angel tag, donated funds, or helped with organizing and distribution—your generosity made a real difference.

Thank you for being a parish family that gives from the heart.



# GAUDETE REJOICE





# Advent NIGHT OF MUSIC

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Friday, Dec. 19, 2025  
7:00 pm in the church

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## Thank You to Our Generous Donors

On Giving Tuesday 2025, our parish family came together in a meaningful way. To everyone who contributed to our I Give Catholic campaign—thank you.

Your generosity is a true blessing to our community. Because of your support, we will be able to enhance church security, ensuring that our parish remains a safe and welcoming place for all who come to worship, pray, and gather in faith.

We are deeply grateful for every donation, every prayer, and every act of support. Your kindness strengthens our mission and helps protect our parish family.

**Thank you for giving Catholic,  
and thank you for making a meaningful difference.**

**STM MEN'S CLUB**

# **ANNUAL MEETING & GUMBO COOKOFF**

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**SATURDAY, JAN. 10  
6:30 PM  
ACTIVITY CENTER**

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**RSVP TO ATTEND/REGISTER YOUR GUMBO:  
[STMBR.ORG/NEWS/GUMBO-COOKOFF](http://STMBR.ORG/NEWS/GUMBO-COOKOFF)**

**Who will win the golden ladle this year?**

## Support Our Elderly Religious This Weekend

### Special Collection Dec. 13-14

This weekend's special collection supports the Retirement Fund for Religious, which aids more than 20,500 elderly sisters, brothers, and religious order priests who spent their lives in service. Many communities now struggle to provide for their basic care and daily needs.

Your gift helps them age with dignity. Thank you for your generosity. Place the envelope in the regular offertory or **donate online at <https://retiredreligious.org/ways-to-give/donate/>**.



### SANCTUARY LIGHTS

The sanctuary light in the church will burn in memory of Juanita Coutee the week of Dec. 14 as requested by Cheryl and Chris Valentine.

### MASS INTENTIONS

**Tuesday, Dec. 16 - 6 p.m.:** Lou and Emery Bares, Harold Cannon, James Parent

**Wednesday, Dec. 17 - 6 p.m.:** Denver Denison

**Thursday, Dec. 18 - 8:45 a.m.:** Denver Denison

**Friday, Dec. 19 - 12 p.m.:** Denver Denison

**Saturday, Dec. 20 - 4:30 p.m.:** Albert Chaplain

**Sunday, Dec. 21 - 8 a.m.:** STM Families, Friends, and Neighbors; **10 a.m.:** Carol Speyrer, Leonce Lemoin Family, Edward Rabalais Family, Mitch Rabalais, Anthony Pinchon, Carolyn and John Perkins, Mickey Deville, Mark Midboe; **5 p.m.:** Holy Souls in Purgatory

### PRAYER LIST FOR THE SERIOUSLY ILL

Please remember in your prayers the following persons: Becky Cline, Buddy Vidrine, Baron Lacour, Laurie Bolanoff, Diane Green, John Pecoraro, Jr., Hunter Pecoraro, Loressa Watts, Destiny Kelley, Marcia Sells, Byron Ellis, Tim Bonin, Joe Bonin, Lloyd Hebert, Bubba Howell, Frank DePaula, Julie Zerbst, Geraldine Gauthier, Wendall Blouin, Camilla Barlow, Kathy Moise, Allyce Trapp Alexander, Sharon Mann, Louis LaBauve, Melani Cagle

### PRAYER LINE FOR IMMEDIATE PRAYER REQUESTS

For serious or urgent prayer requests, call Sharon Hebert at 225.978.1246 (leave your name and phone number if there is no answer), or send a request by email to [kennyshar69@att.net](mailto:kennyshar69@att.net).

### ACTIVE DUTY MILITARY PRAYER LIST

Please remember in your prayers: Capt. Austin Starks, PFC Alyssa Richardson, SSG Brian Edwards, SPC Havyn Henley, PO3 Tytan Henley, MAJ Nate Conlon (To add/edit names: [email receptionist@stnbr.org](mailto:receptionist@stnbr.org).)

## CHURCH STAFF

### Pastor

Rev. Eddie Martin

### Permanent Deacon

Rev. Mr. Joe Scimeca

### Permanent Deacon

Rev. Mr. Paul Soileau

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### Music Director

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### Sacristan

Mrs. Kay Fetterman

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Mr. Alex Ho

### Custodial

Mr. Roosevelt Hamilton

Mr. Rommell Richard

## OUR PARISH FAMILY

### BAPTISM

We extend a warm welcome into the Church family to the following children who were baptized at St. Thomas More during the month of November.

**Adrian Mark Antony**, child of Antony Bilavendran and Silvia Robert;

**Steven James Calverley**, child of Steven and Stefanie Calverley;

**Elizabeth Ray Calverley**, child of Steven and Stefanie Calverley;

**Caroline Lee Gaspard**, child of J P and Allyson Gaspard; and

**Noah Joseph Vegas**, child of Russ and Briana Vegas

### IN SYMPATHY

We extend our heartfelt condolences and prayers to the families of **James Parent**, **Anthony Gauthier**, **Roy Tucker**, **James Blouin**, and **Ned Dufour**. Eternal rest grant unto them, O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them.

### PARISH MISSION STATEMENT

*In a caring environment  
dedicated to celebrating the Catholic faith  
and modeling the life of Jesus Christ,  
St. Thomas More Church provides worship,  
education, ministerial and social opportunities  
for the spiritual growth of the parish family.*

Cover photo credit: Ranyel Paula

## Stay connected!



STM website: [stmbr.org](http://stmbr.org)



[facebook.com/stmchurchbr](https://facebook.com/stmchurchbr)



Sign up for the e-newsletter  
on our parish website, under  
Links/Resources



[youtube.com/  
stthomasmorebatonrouge](https://youtube.com/stthomasmorebatonrouge)

### ST. THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC CHURCH

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#### Office Hours:

Mon.- Thurs.: 8 am - 12 pm and 1 - 5 pm;

Fri.: 8 a.m. - 12 pm

#### DAILY MASSES

Tuesday: 6:00 pm, Wednesday: 12 noon (w/Rosary @ 11:30 am);  
Thursday: 8:45 am, Friday: 12 noon

#### WEEKEND MASSES

Saturday: 4:30 pm Vigil; Sunday: 8 am, 10 am, and 5 pm

#### RECONCILIATION

Wednesdays from 11:15 - 11:45 am; Thursdays from 8:00 - 8:30 am  
Saturdays from 3:15 - 4:15 pm; and by appt.

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