

Dear Parishioners of St. Thomas the Apostle,

The Lenten Season will soon be upon us. To help us plan for the Lenten Season, St. Thomas is hosting a retreat evening on Wednesday, February 7<sup>th</sup>. It begins at 6:00 pm with dinner followed by reflections for adults, teens and children. Plan to come as it could be a boost for your Lenten practices.

This Saturday our parish will host a Chili Cook-off. It follows the 5:00 pm Mass. Everyone can vote on their favorite chili. The parish will provide cornbread. In addition, we will have a cake-walk. It should be a fun evening.

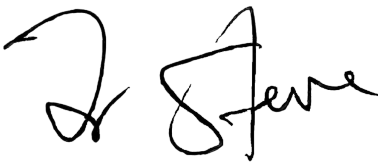
Ash Wednesday falls on February 14<sup>th</sup> this year. Masses will be at 7:00 am, 9:00 am (with St. Francis School) and 7:00 pm. Please make plans to attend one of them as we prepare to enter the holy season of Lent, a season of conversion. We walk with several candidates and catechumens, who are preparing to receive their Sacraments of Initiation at the Easter Vigil.

The parish will host Adoration and Benediction on Wednesday's of Lent at 6:00 pm. It will be approximately 30 minutes of prayer. On Fridays during Lent we will have Stations of the Cross followed by soup and bread. It begins at 6:00 pm as well. I encourage you to celebrate the Sacrament of Penance this season. St. Thomas will host a communal penance service on Wednesday, March 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 pm. These practices can help us deepen our relationship with the Lord as his disciples. This liturgical season has proven to be a great gift for us as Catholics. It helps us to renew our focus on the importance of the spiritual life and where we are at within it.

The three traditional practices of Lent are: Prayer, Fasting and Almsgiving. You will have plenty of opportunities for increased prayer, fasting and the giving of alms as you can see from above. Thank you again for your support of the Annual Catholic Appeal, which supports our diocese and its ministries. Thank you as well for your support of our Easter Food Baskets. Our parish takes seriously the call to serve and help others.

Finally, thank you for your continued support of St. Thomas. You are important and appreciated.

Let us together *"Stay Alive in Christ"*,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve", with a stylized initial "S" and "Z" at the beginning.

Fr. Steve Zabrocki, Pastor