GLORY TO JESUS CHRIST!



GLORY FOREVER!





ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE BYZANTINE CATHOLIC CHURCH

19 W. Bruce Ave. Gilbert, AZ 85233
Mailing Address: *P.O. Box 667 • Gilbert, AZ 85299-0667*
Office Hours 10:00 AM to 3:00 PM • Monday, Wednesday & Friday
Please give a courtesy call or send an email before coming to the parish to make sure someone is in the office.
Office: (480) 497-6726 • Fax: (480) 907-7819 • Pastor's Email: saint.thomas.pastor@gmail.com
PARISH WEBSITE: www.stabcc.org



Served by:
Father Michael Bezruchka, Pastor • Deacon Michael Sullivan

Parish Advisory Board:
Vince Antonios • Danny Forbes • Emma Gilsdorf • Cal Karnya
Cathy McCormick • Charlie Rawlins • Jeff Sims • Liz Zackowski

Sunday Divine Liturgy:
Vigil Vesper Liturgy (Saturday) at 5:00 PM
Sunday Divine Liturgy at 10:00 AM • Divine Praises at 9:45 AM

Holy Mystery of Penance:
Confessions are heard starting one hour before the scheduled Divine Liturgy is to begin for a total of 35 minutes. Confessions also available by appointment.

Chaldean Catholic Holy Liturgy: Sunday at 6:00 PM

WELCOME TO ST. THOMAS THE APOSTLE!

Our parish community welcomes all those visiting with us today. We thank you for joining our community in praising the Lord as we remember His great love and mercy for us. We hope that you will join us again soon and bring a friend. If, per chance, you are looking for a spiritual home based on the Sacred Scriptures, the teaching of the Apostles, the ancient Church Traditions in the context of a liturgical life and fellowship, please consider our parish! Speak with Father Michael or Deacon Michael if you would like more information.

Liturgical Schedule

Saturday **December 3**
Vigil Vespers Divine Liturgy 5:00 p.m.
Intention - + Fr. Wes Izer by Fr. Wes' estate

29th Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday **December 4** **Tone 4**
Third Hour 9:45 a.m.
Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Colossians 3:12-16 & Luke 17:12-19
Intention- Parishioners of St. Thomas
Advisory Board meeting after Divine Liturgy

30th Week after Pentecost
Monday **December 5**
Our Holy Father Nicholas, Archbishop of Myra in Lycia, the Wonderworker
SOLEMN HOLY DAY
Matins 8:00 a.m.
Vigil Vespers Divine Liturgy 7:00 p.m.
OT Readings: 1) Proverbs 10: 7, 6, 3: 13-16, 8: 34-35, 4, 12, 14, 17, 5-9, 1: 23 & 15: 4;2) Proverbs 10: 31-32, 11: 1-2, 4, 3, & 5-12; 3) Wisdom 4: 7-14
Hebrews 13:17-21 & Luke 6:17-23
Intention- For health & wellbeing of Elijah Chabrier by Martin Nagy



Friday **December 9**
Maternity of the Holy Anna, mother of the Theotokos (transferred from Dec. 8)
SOLEMN HOLY DAY
Festal Matins 8:00 a.m.
Divine Liturgy 7:00 p.m.
Galatians 4:22-31 & Luke 8:16-21
Intention- + Mary Rasic by Liz Zackowski

Saturday **December 10**
Vigil Vespers Divine Liturgy 5:00 p.m.
Intention - For successful surgery for Joan Lucas by Mike Hrynik

Sunday of the Forefathers
Sunday **December 11** **Tone 5**
Third Hour 9:45 a.m.
Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Colossians 3:4-11 & Luke 14:16-24
Intention- Parishioners of St. Thomas
St. Nicholas Dinner after Divine Liturgy

31st Week after Pentecost
Monday **December 12**
Our Lady of Guadalupe
Matins 8:00 a.m.
Divine Liturgy 7:00 p.m.
Hebrews 9:1-7 & Luke 1:39-56
Intention- + Peter & Anna Broznak by Peter & Anna Broznak

Saturday **December 17**
Vigil Vespers Divine Liturgy
5:00 p.m.
OT Readings: 1) Genesis 14: 14-20; 2) Deuteronomy 1: 8-11, 15, 17; 3) Deut. 10: 14-21
Intention - For health & wellbeing of Elijah Chabrier by Martin Nagy

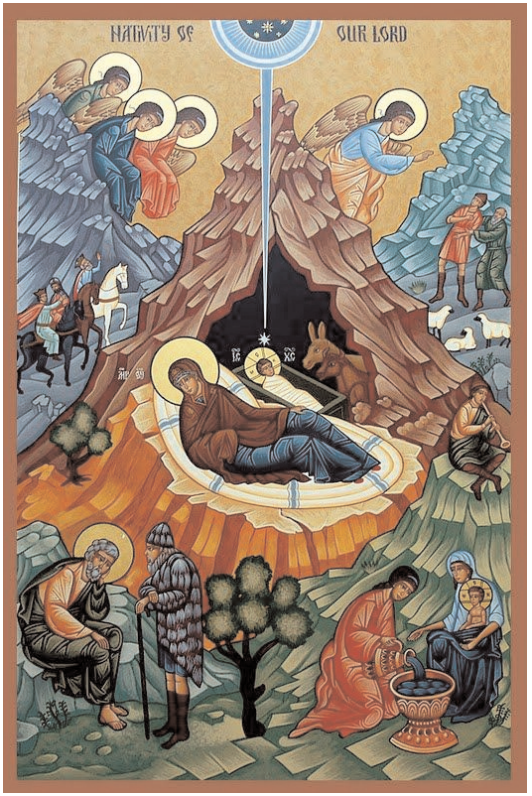
Sunday before Christmas, of the Holy Fathers
Sunday **December 18** **Tone 6**
Third Hour 9:45 a.m.
Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Hebrews 11:9-10, 17-23, 32-40 & Matthew 1:1-25
Intention- Parishioners of St. Thomas

32nd Week after Pentecost
Friday **December 23**
Matins 8:00 a.m.
Royal Hours in preparation for Christmas 7:00 p.m.
Micah 5: 2-4; Jeremiah (Baruch) 3:36-4:4; Isaiah 7: 10-16, 8: 1-4, & 8-10; Isaiah 9: 6-7; Hebrews 1:1-12; Galatians 3:23-29; Hebrews 1:10-2:3; Hebrews 2:11-18
Matthew 1: 18-25; Luke 2: 1-20; Matthew 2: 1-12; Matthew 2: 13-23
By Tradition, a day of strict fast and abstinence transferred from Christmas Eve

Saturday **December 24**
Vigil Vespers Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 5:00 p.m.
All eight listed Old Testament readings taken.
Hebrews 1:1-12 & Luke 2:1-20
Intention- Parishioners of St. Thomas

CHRISTMAS

Sunday **December 25** **Tone 7**
CHRISTMAS, the Birth of our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ
HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION
Singing of Christmas Carols 9:45 a.m.
Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Galatians 4:4-7 & Matthew 2:1-12
Intention- Parishioners of St. Thomas



33rd Week after Pentecost
Monday **December 26**
Synaxis of the Mother of God. Memory of the Holy and Just Joseph, husband of Mary; of David, Prophet and King; and of the Holy Apostle James, Brother of the Lord
SOLEMN HOLY DAY
Festal Matins 8:30 a.m.
Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
Hebrews 2:11-18, Galatians 1:11-19 & Matthew 2:13-23
Intention- + Marge Bobick by Fr. & Mrs. Michael Kirila

Tuesday **December 27**
Holy Apostle, First Martyr and Archdeacon Stephen
Simple Holy Day
Acts 6:8 - 7:5, 47-60 & Matthew 21:33-42
Divine Liturgy 7:00 p.m.
Intention - Mary, Salem, & Lawrence Qardahji
by Lawrence Qardahji

Saturday **December 31**
Vigil Vespers Divine Liturgy of St. Basil 5:00 p.m.
OT Readings: 1) Genesis 17: 1-2, 4-8, 3, 9-12, & 14; 2) Proverbs 8: 22-30; 3) Proverbs 10:31-32, 11:2, 4, 3, & 5-12
Intention - John & Barb Stafira & family
by Andrew Regalla

33rd Sunday after Pentecost
Sunday **January 1, 2017** **Tone 8**
Circumcision of Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ. Holy Father Basil, the Great, Archbishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia
Third Hour 9:45 a.m.
Divine Liturgy 10:00 a.m.
2 Timothy 4:5-8; Colossians 2:8-12; Hebrews 7:26-8:2; Mark 1:1-8; & Luke 2:20-21, 40-52; Luke 6:17-23
Intention- Parishioners of St. Thomas

34th Week after Pentecost
Thursday **January 5**
Vigil of Theophany
Royal Hours 9:00 a.m.
Vigil Vespers Basil Divine Liturgy
with Blessing of Water 7:00pm
All thirteen listed Old Testament readings taken.
1 Corinthians 9: 19-27; Luke 3: 1-18
By Tradition, a day of strict fast and abstinence
Intention- Martin Nagy & family by the Bullock family

Friday **January 6**
Theophany of Our Lord, God and Savior Jesus Christ
HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION
Festal Matins 9:00 a.m.
Divine Liturgy 7:00 p.m.
Titus 2: 11-15, & 3: 4-7; Matthew 3: 13-17
Intention- Parishioners of St. Thomas



ANNOUNCEMENTS

PHILIP'S FAST (aka. NATIVITY FAST): Last month, I described some technical and historical information regarding this 'optional' fast which I will not repeat here. Fasting does not just include abstinence from certain foods. "Fasting" is the length of time we do without eating food while "abstinence" is the type of food(s) we do without eating. Most people say the word "fasting" when they mean to say "abstinence." So "fasting" is an umbrella term to include "abstinence" and/or "fasting." Beyond food, fasting might include abstaining from certain morally good or neutral activities in order to make more room for prayer and God's presence. Let's reflect on how we are "preparing the way of the Lord" (Matthew 3: 3) for the remainder of this fast which concludes on the Holy Supper of December 24.

WHAT TO EAT ON DECEMBER 23 & JANUARY 5? By tradition, we do not eat meat or dairy (strict abstinence) on Christmas Eve or Theophany Eve. Though this is "optional," we become more authentic Christians when we do some optional things that benefit our spiritual life. Since Christmas Eve lands on a Saturday this year, it is naturally more festive since it is the original Sabbath day. Therefore, it is recommended we take that strict abstinence on December 23 instead of December 24.

AFTER THE FAST COMES THE FEAST!! After fasting faithfully, the Church traditionally calls us to feast for a time. December 25 to January 4 is a time of such celebration and feasting. Therefore, do not eat like a glutton but feel free to eat well, including meat on all of those days including Fridays.

"OH FATHER MICHAEL, YOU GOT THE DATE WRONG" That was very observant of you! But no, that was intentional. We are celebrating the feast of the Maternity of Holy Anna on December 9 instead of December 8 even though our wall calendar has it listed on December 8. We did this for two reasons. The Eastern Churches were the first to celebrate it before the Western Church. The Eastern churches have traditionally celebrated it on December 9 but our Ruthenian Metropolia switched to celebrating it on December 8 to match the same day as the Roman Catholics celebrating the Immaculate Conception in the Roman Church. It's basically almost the same feast day in East and West but contains a different emphasis. Both have affirmed that Mary was without sin her whole life. Why did the Eastern Churches celebrate the feast one day shy of a full nine months between December 9 and September 8? This is to contrast it with the perfection of Jesus Christ as God whose conception is celebrated on March 25, a perfect nine months before celebrating His birth. Similarly, John the Baptist's conception is celebrated one day off from an exact nine months in the womb¬¬--on September 23 while his birth is celebrated on June 24. The other reason we transferred the feast was to give a little more space between two solemn feast days: St. Nicholas (celebrated this year at St. Thomas on the vigil: Dec. 5) and the Maternity which we will celebrate on Dec. 9. Please join us for both of these important feasts.

KEEPING DOORS CLOSED.....helps keep those pesky mosquitoes outside! Please do not keep doors propped open anymore at our church and hall. On a spiritual parallel, prayer and fasting helps shut the door of our hearts to the sinful passions and demons while allowing our life with God to grow abundantly.

CLASSES IN THE PARISH HALL: Online classes continue in the parish hall on Tuesday nights at 8pm: Dec. 6 and Dec. 13. Special note: On Thursday, Dec. 15 at 8pm, Fr. Michael will give his class in the hall on the Traditions of Christmas and Theophany while it is broadcast online.

SILENT AUCTION AND OKTOBERFEST - Our numbers for Oktoberfest have come in. An earlier email went out explaining we raised $2,923.16. In looking at our QuickBooks report since then, it turns out we raised a little more than that and hit just over the 3k mark at $3,020.38!!! Again, a GCU partial matching funds grant is pending which will provide an additional $1,500 to our fundraiser when it arrives. Thank you again to all who helped out and all who came to this fun event in October!

HOLY SUPPER: The traditional Holy Supper is a special meal eaten on Christmas Eve containing delicious foods which are free from meat or dairy. Our parish Holy Supper potluck will take place earlier on December 17 after the Vesper Divine Liturgy. A sign up sheet for our Holy Supper with different food items will be posted in the hall. Please don't be afraid to try a new recipe. See Liz Zackowski for ideas.

PRIEST MEDICAL INSURANCE COLLECTION: Our parish collected $2,220 for the priests' medical collection. To those of you who gave to this, we are grateful for your donation to the eparchy to offset the monthly insurance premium deficits.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

SPECIAL COLLECTION--RETIRED RELIGIOUS: Every year, aging monks and nuns need your help. They have intensely prayed for us for decades. Many have also spent years working in Catholic schools, hospitals, and agencies--often for little pay. As a result, many of these religious communities do not have adequate savings for their senior retired religious. Your gift to this collection helps provide prescription medications, nursing care, and more for Eastern and Western Catholic monks and nuns. Please give to those who have given a lifetime. This special collection will be collected on the weekends of December 10/11 and December 17/18. Please indicate this special collection on an envelope and write your check to our parish of St. Thomas and clearly mark "RFR," Retirement Fund for Religious" or "Retired Religious" in the memo line. Please be generous. Thank you.

ST. NICHOLAS GENEROSITY: Let us remember to be generous to the poor and vulnerable of our local communities. For those desiring to give clothing or toys, we are collecting unwrapped toys, new clothing, and shoes for the Gilbert Fire Department who are gathering these things for Gilbert youth this Christmas season. For those who desire to give money or "non-perishable" food, we are giving to Paz de Cristo which provides meals and mentoring job search assistance for homeless and other needy people in the East Valley. Checks can be written to "Paz de Cristo" or to St. Thomas in a clearly marked envelope saying "St. Nicholas Charity" or "Paz de Cristo." All donations must be received at St. Thomas no later than December 18. Thank you



MARK YOUR CALENDAR:

- Saturday, Dec 10: *Church cleaning & decorating (8:30am - 3:00pm): need 15-20 helpers. Lunch provided.*
- Sunday, Dec. 11: *Dinner Potluck; St. Nicholas visits.*
- Saturday, Dec 17: *Holy Supper with Nativity Play*
- Friday, Dec. 23: *Royal Hours - 7:00 pm*
- Saturday, Dec 24: *Christmas Eve vigil - 5:00 pm*
- Sunday, Dec 25: *CHRISTMAS DAY- Divine Liturgy - 10:00 am.*
- Monday, Dec. 26: *Festal Matins at 8:30am; Divine Liturgy- 10:00am.*
- Tuesday, Dec. 27: *Divine Liturgy - 7:00 pm.*
- Saturday, Dec. 31: *New Year's Celebration after Liturgy.*
- Thursday & Friday, Jan. 5 & 6, 2017: *Feast of Theophany (Holy Day of Obligation)--See calendar)*

MATINS: For those of you who want to pray more with the Church, we are offering Matins services on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday of every week at 8:00 am. These are morning services of the Church traditionally meant to be prayed at sunrise though most churches and monasteries celebrate Matins at a fixed time in the morning. Although these services can take a long time, we are praying a one-hour version and Fr. Michael looks at his watch to make sure that happens. The Matins service contains at least 70% of the theology and catechesis of each feast day and "normal" day. The Matins services are not listed individually in the monthly liturgical calendar except when there is another liturgical service such as a Divine Liturgy taking place. Occasionally, there is an exception to the start time. Two such exceptional entries for this bulletin period are on December 26 at 8:30am and January 6 at 9:00 a.m.



Remember Those Who Request Our Prayers

O Divine Physician of Souls and Body, rest your healing and protecting hand upon your servants:

Joan Lucas, Robert Hernandez, Teresa Smith, †Joseph & Anna Hrynik, †Walter Hrynik, †John Hrynik, Luisa Garcia, Linda Garcia, Nena Desantos, Russell Hook, Deacon Michael Melnick, †Wilma Ihnat, Jason & Joshua Kowalczyk, Beth Hicks, †Patty Prestash, Olga Silva, Ted Bronson, Ana Maria Olvera † Msgr. Michael Nestor and Lawrence Ybarra, †Fr. Wes Izer, Art Krueger, Ilija Seat, Elaine E. and Fr. John Coleman & Carrie Thornton, †Barbara Bronson, Eleanor Shields, Teresa Rojero, Rosemary Ziarkowski, Helen Fellin, Lou Fellin, James Devlin, †Pete Nelson, Terence J. Faust, Clementina Mendoza, James Young, Cathy Simpson, †Marge Bobick, William Glenn, Dorothy Imlej, †Rev. Michael T. Bell, Mark Stefanski, Helen Dinegar, Paul John Hetherington, Hannah Joes, Fr. Fausto, Eric Shark, Kay William, Mary Ada, OFM, B.K. Burnette, Bob Sherman, Mary Kowalczyk, Kevin McBride, Lisa Kirila Mendez, Jonathan Coonrod, Sylvia Gutierrez, Elaine Brown, Linskey Family, Viviana Rodarte, Renata Paloian, OSBM, Monica Harris, Mike Little, Olga Chapkevich, Jerrine Sauntry, Alwyne Holder, Fr. Phil Acquaro, Fr. Chris Zugger, Alexandra, †John Bacovcin, Anita Batean, Bonnie Bennett, Mark D. Chapa, Michael Chapa, Ed Corwin, Gerald & Helen Dunn, Elizabeth Glenn, Nikki Heminway, Virginia Hill, Sonny Hopkins, Jaclyn Lentz, Anne-Marie Krytiuk, Erica Lupe, Richard Marchant (Al & Helen Ferencz' son-inlaw), Alice Posivy (Bullock), Lara Sparling-Ott, Carley Spears, Lorraine Teeling, Henry Zugger, Yoshiko, and all in the service of our country, especially from our parish family: Scott Karnya, Sam Karnya, Adam Young, Brandon Eyres (Michael & Anne Bacovcin's grandson), Patrick Whalen (Doreene Stacy's grandson), and the Mother of Reg Parker,



Birthdays & Anniversaries

BIRTHDAYS

Thomas McDonald	Dec 1
Bryan Matthysse	Dec 6
Damian Forbes	Dec 10
Max Bronson	Dec 12
Joshua Anderson	Dec 17
Jan Person	Dec 19
Dr. Nick Kowalczyk	Dec 22
Emma Bronson	Dec 26
Yellow Schreiber	Dec 26
Jaqueline Noelle Aguayo	Dec 30

ANNIVERSARIES

Reg & Diane Parker	Dec 27





Nativity Wordsearch



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angel	donkey	Jesus	Joseph
kings	manger	Mary	
shepherd	stable	star	

