

**Pastor:**  
 Rev. Thien Nguyen, SVD  
 tdnguyen@dwc.org  
 Phone: 304-364-5895  
 More information on our parish website:  
<https://stthomasgassaway.org>

**LITURGY SCHEDULE**  
 SATURDAY: 5:00 p.m.  
 SUNDAY 11:00 a.m.  
**WEEKDAY: Tue, Wed, Thu at 5:00 p.m.**  
 Friday Mass Mass at 8:00 am  
*Holy Day of Obligation at 6:00 p.m*  
**EUCCHARISTIC ADORATION:**  
 Every Tuesday at 5:00 p.m prior to Mass  
**RECONCILIATION:** Any time 30 minutes  
 before or after daily Mass, After Sunday Mass  
*Other days by appointment*  
**MASS INTENTIONS**  
**SUNDAY MAY 18**  
**FOR PARISHIONERS OF ST. THOMAS**  
**TUE MAY 20**  
**Wed, May 21 Mass at 8:00 am since Fr.**  
**Dominic and I help Food Pantry in Clay**  
**Thu, May 15 For Benefactors of parish**  
**Friday, May 22**

**Sharing God's Blessings**

Date	Collection
May 10 & 11	\$ 1502
<b>Catholic Sharing Appeal Raised \$4040 (76%) of \$5,300 with 13 gifts.</b>	
<b>Thanks for your contribution</b>	

**Happy Birthday**  
 Athena Barnette May 18  
 Matthew McLaughlin May 19  
 Kari Friend May 21  
 Heinrich Harman May 25

- Please contact Fr. Dominic Pham for:**
- Anointing of the sick; Holy Communion to the sick or homebound.
  - Baptism of infants and Children under 7. RCIA/RCIC is for adults and children older than 7.
  - + Sacrament of Marriage: Arrangements should be made with the pastor at least Six months before a wedding. Please, do not set a wedding date before contacting your pastor. Preparation classes with the pastor are required.

**Dear my brothers and sisters in Christ,**  
 Today, we encounter one of the most intimate and profound scenes in the Gospels: Jesus speaking to His disciples at the Last Supper, just before His Passion. His words are filled with deep love and tender concern—not only for those gathered around Him that night, but for all who would come to follow Him. He says, ***"I give you a new commandment: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you also should love one another."***

These are not words of fear or sorrow. They are words of hope, instruction, and enduring love—spoken at a moment of impending departure, yet grounded in the promise that love will remain. As we hear these words today, I find myself reflecting on my own journey—especially in this time of transition.

As I prepare to leave this cherished parish community, with whom I've shared so many meaningful moments, and begin a new chapter as a formator at the SVD Theologate house in Chicago, I am reminded of the power and necessity of love in times of change.

Jesus' command is simple, yet radical: to love as He has loved us. And in this moment of parting—His and mine—the message is clear and comforting. **Though we may go our separate ways, the love we've shared in Christ remains.** It continues to bind us, guide us, and call us forward.

Jesus' words in this passage come at a moment of great uncertainty for the disciples. They had followed Him, walked with Him, seen His miracles, and experienced His companionship. But now, Jesus is preparing to leave them. The reality of His absence was imminent. And yet, in that moment, He doesn't simply comfort them with words of reassurance about His return. Instead, He gives them a commandment. **"Love one another."**

This love that Jesus speaks of is not merely an affection or fondness; it's a deep, sacrificial love—a love that will be the defining mark of who they are. It's a love that will outlast His physical presence, a love that will bind them together even when He is no longer there. This new commandment reveals that love is not dependent on proximity, not confined by space, but is a living reality that transcends presence.

As I reflect on my nine years here, I think about the many ways we have lived this love together: in the joys of baptisms, confirmation, weddings, and celebrations of life, but also in the sorrows of loss, illness, and hardship. Through every high and low, the love we share has been the constant thread that has woven us together as a community. That love has been the face of Christ in this parish. And just as it has been present through our time together, it will continue long after I have left.

As I prepare to leave this parish, these words of Jesus strike me with new depth. Love has been at the center of everything we have shared together. I know this love will not end; it will continue, growing deeper in your community and in your relationship with Christ.

Jesus tells His disciples, **"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."** It's as if He's saying, "This is the marker of true discipleship. It's not about your titles, your achievements, or your rituals. It's about love." This love is the true witness to the world of who we are as followers of Christ.

**As I leave, I encourage you to continue living that love.** It's a love that calls us to put others first, to forgive without measure, to show mercy and compassion. It's a love that binds the community together in ways that words or physical presence cannot. In moments of change, when things seem uncertain, this love remains a constant, unshakeable force.

I have been blessed to serve as your pastor, to walk with you through different seasons of life. I have seen your love for each other and for Christ in action. Now, even though I will no longer be physically present with you, that love remains. It's stronger than any change, more enduring than any transition. "Love one another," Jesus said. And this love will continue to be the bond that holds you together.

When Jesus says, **"Where I am going, you cannot come,"** He acknowledges His imminent departure. But rather than dwelling on the sorrow of His absence, He points them to the enduring power of love. Jesus' leaving is not the end; it's the beginning of a new kind of presence through love. In His absence, He sends the Holy Spirit to continue His work, to continue His presence among them through the love they share.

**Similarly, as I leave, I trust that the Holy Spirit will continue to guide and sustain you.** My departure is not the end of our relationship, but a shift in how we experience Christ's presence. Through the love you show one another, you will continue to encounter Christ. In your prayers, in your support of each other, and in your care for the community, Christ will remain present, even in my absence.

Finally, I want to leave you with this: **The legacy of a Christian community is love.** It is love that transforms lives. It is love that builds communities. It is love that bridges divides and makes us one. In times of transition, we can be tempted to focus on what is changing—who is leaving, who is coming, what will be different. **But the one thing that remains unchanged, the one thing that we are called to above all else, is love.**

So, as I leave, I do so not with a sense of loss, but with gratitude for the love we've shared, and hope for the love that will continue to flourish here. **"By this everyone will know**



I leave you with these words from St. Paul's letter to the Philippians:  
*"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus."* (Philippians 1:3-6)

**that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."**

So, as I leave, I do so not with a sense of loss, but with gratitude for the love we've shared, and hope for the love that will continue to flourish here. **"By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."** Let this be the mark of who you are as a community of faith: **not bound by my presence, but defined by the love that continues to bind you to Christ and to one another.**

As I leave, I want to encourage you to continue being a community defined by this love. Your love for one another is what will keep this parish strong, what will keep you united in mission, thru our food pantry, backpack program, walking with moms in need, Utility assistant... and what will continue to draw people to Christ. The love that we have shared here is not limited to my presence as your pastor, but is rooted in Christ, who is always with you—through the Holy Spirit, through the love you continue to share. **Please continue to support and love Father Dominic as you have been love and support me!**

So, my dear my brothers and sisters, as I prepare to leave, I ask you to remember Jesus' words: "Love one another, as I have loved you." Know that my love for you remains. Know that I carry each of you in my heart. And **most importantly, know that the love of Christ will never leave you. It will sustain you, guide you, and carry you into the future with hope and peace.** May you and our parish continue to love one another with the same love that Christ has shown to all of us, and may that love be the light that guides you forward.

**May you have a blessed week. I remain,  
 Yours in Christ, Father Thien Nguyen, SVD  
 I am leaving our parish on May 22, 2025**  
 Since many of you ask my new address. Here it is:  
 Fr. Thien Nguyen, SVD  
 SVD Theologate  
 5342 S University Ave,  
 Chicago, IL 60615  
 My cell phone number is the same

**The SVD's Sesquicentennial (150th Anniversary)**

**Theme: "Witnessing to the Light: From Everywhere for Everyone"**

On May 5th, 2025, ten SVD priests currently serving in West Virginia, along with many of their parishioners, joined us for this special celebration. Our parish, St. Thomas, is truly blessed to be the first parish in West Virginia served by the Society of the Divine Word (SVD), beginning in 1973. THANK YOU to all who helped make this celebration possible, especially Mrs. Connie Moore.



**"To proclaim the Good News is the first and greatest act of love of neighbor."**  
(St. Arnold Janssen)

Congratulations to **Joshua, Robin, Molly, William, Mathew and Ciaran McLaughin; Caleb, Shaina, Beva, Fiona Shaver; Victoria Grose, Damion and Summer Shanafelter** who are baptized and received into the Catholic church at our parish at the Easter Vigil 2025.

