

## Dear Friends at St. Thomas the Apostle,

The word radical can sound a little intimidating. It might make us think of something extreme or overwhelming. But at its heart, radical simply means rooted. It comes from a word that points us back to what is essential, life-giving and true. That is the spirit of Lent — and the invitation we are sharing together this season at St. Thomas the Apostle.

Lent is a time to slow down and return to our roots in faith. It is not about doing everything perfectly or taking on more than we can manage. It is about remembering who we are as disciples of Jesus and allowing Him to guide our steps, one day at a time. Following Jesus shapes how we treat one another, how we care for those in need, how we forgive and how we trust God — even when life feels uncertain.

Throughout Lent, our parish will reflect on The Radical Way of Discipleship through a five-week homily series. Each week focuses on a different aspect of following Jesus: Radical Integrity, Radical Transformation, Radical Compassion, Radical Vision and Radical Trust. These themes are not meant to challenge us all at once, but to gently invite us to grow — at home, at school, at work and in our parish community.

The cross stands at the center of our Lenten journey. This year's Lenten image places the cross front and center, formed from images of life and ministry here at St. Thomas. You will see familiar faces — people praying, serving, gathering and caring for one another. These images remind us that discipleship is already happening among us. It is lived out in small acts of kindness, quiet faithfulness and everyday love.

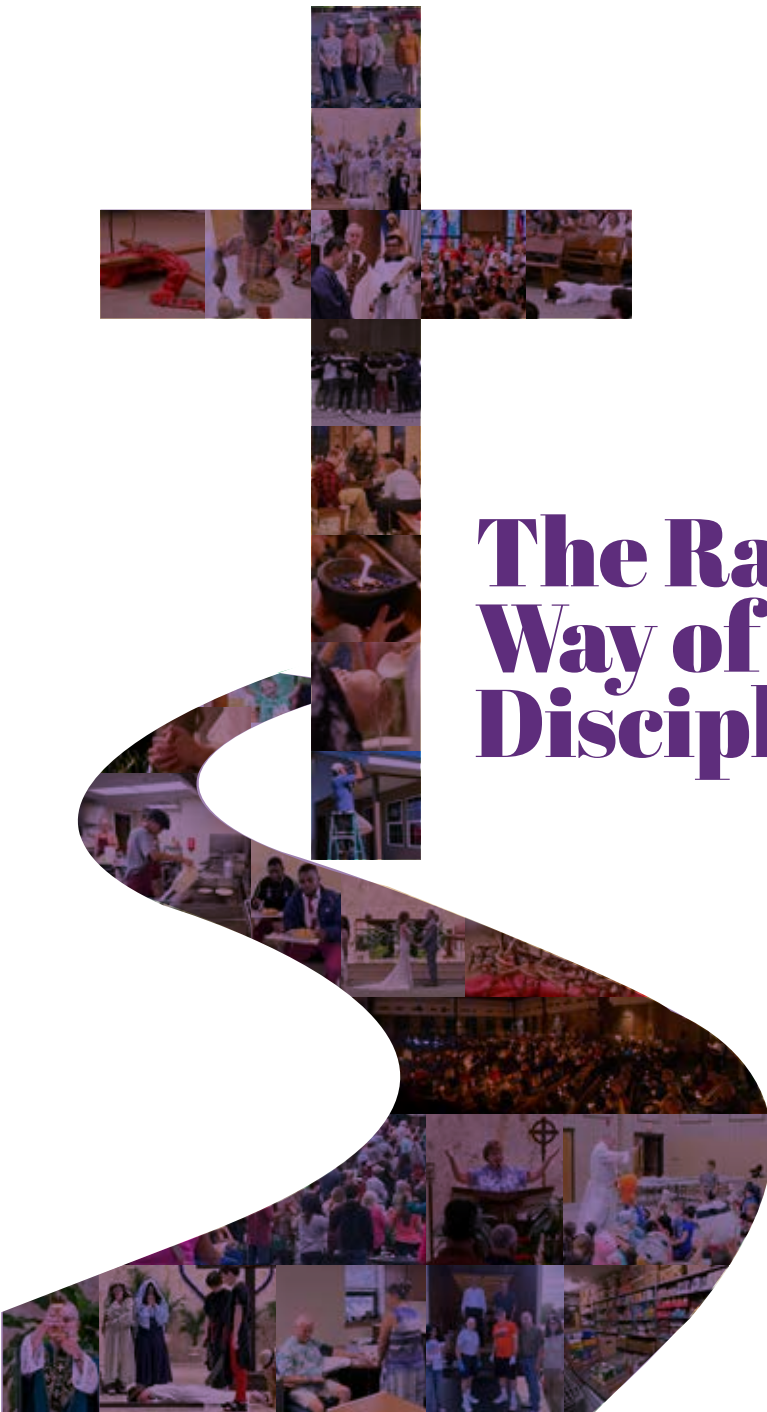
On Ash Wednesday, we invite each person — young and old — to take a small cross. This cross is meant to be something you can hold, keep nearby and return to throughout Lent. It is a gentle reminder that we walk with Jesus each day, and that the cross is not just something we look at, but something that shapes how we live and love.

Lent is a journey we take together. We do not walk it alone, and we do not walk it perfectly. We walk it with Jesus, trusting that God is at work in our lives and in our parish. As we follow the path toward the Cross this Lent, may we discover once again the joy of being rooted in faith, growing in love and walking together as disciples.

**After the Heart of Jesus!**  
**Father John**

# The Radical Way of Discipleship

Lent 2026



## Ordinary People ... Radical Servants

In keeping with the St. Thomas Lenten homily series theme of The Radical Way of Discipleship, the office of Outreach and Social Justice will share the stories of ordinary people who embraced the principles of Catholic Social Teaching and became radical servants. One story will be shared each week. May hearing their stories inspire us as we live our own story of radical servanthood.

## Knights of Columbus Friday Fish Dinners

The Knights of Columbus are sponsoring two Friday Fish Dinners. The dinners will take place February 27 and March 27, in the Gym, from 5:00–7:00 pm. Come enjoy a delicious meatless meal and a chance to experience community with others.

More information can be found in the bulletin or online at [stapostle.org](http://stapostle.org).

## Food Donations for Care Pantry

Drive-thru donations will be collected Tuesday, March 10, from 9:00–10:00 am and 5:00–6:00 pm.

Food items most needed are:

- cereal
- pasta
- pasta sauce
- canned fruit
- Jell-O
- cake mix
- Jiffy Mix
- Ramen
- side dish

Place the items in the trunk or the back of your vehicle, stay in your vehicle and we will remove the items for you. Items will be collected outside Door C, which is across from the labyrinth.

## Faith Opportunities During Lent

We are pleased to offer a variety of faith opportunities during Lent. All are welcome to attend. If an activity is age specific, it is noted in the descriptions below. Please join us!

### Ash Wednesday Family Prayer Service

Wednesday, February 18 | 4:30 pm | Church/Gym

Begin your Lenten journey at the Ash Wednesday Family Prayer Service. The service includes song, Scripture readings and the distribution of ashes. Immediately following, your family is invited to the gym to participate in a family faith activity and pizza. Sign-up required.

### Ash Wednesday Faith Family Activity

Join us after the Ash Wednesday Family Prayer Service from 5:15–6:15 pm for pizza, fellowship and a family craft. You will assemble a box with symbols representing the Stations of the Cross, one of the simplest, yet powerful ways to prayerfully walk alongside Jesus and encounter Him during Lent. All are welcome!



Scan the QR code or visit [stapostle.org](http://stapostle.org) to sign up by Monday, February 16. Cost is \$5/person or \$20/family (payable at the door or online).

### Stations of the Cross

Fridays of Lent | 7:00 pm | Church

The Way of the Cross has been a powerful and popular part of the faith tradition and devotional life for Catholics throughout the ages. The early practice of Christians attempting to retrace and walk the path of Jesus has always been a treasured way to commemorate the Passion and Death of Christ.

### Taizé Prayer

Monday, February 23 | 7:00 pm | Lighthouse

Gather in prayer with other members of this faith community to worship in a Taizé style – with scripture, song and silence.

### Mid-day Meditation

Tuesdays February 24, March 3, 10, 17, 24, 31 | 12:00–12:30 pm | Chapel

Quiet the mind. The quieter you are the more you hear. Listen in silence for a word from God.

### Fish Dinner and Family Stations of the Cross

On Friday, February 27, enjoy the Fish Dinner in the Gym from 5:00–7:00 pm directly followed by Stations of the Cross at 7:00 pm in the Church. The Faith Formation team will partner with Fr. John for this prayerful evening, which will be geared toward families.

### Grief Support – Hope Café

Wednesday, March 11 | 10:30 am–12:00 pm

For those experiencing loss/grief, the Pastoral Care Team is offering the “Hope Café” where anyone can drop in for sharing, prayer and reflection with a warm drink and pastries. No reservation needed. For more information contact Jane Zimmerman or Annette Kubalanza at 630.355.8980 in the Pastoral Care office.

### Mass in Celebration of St. Patrick

Wednesday, March 11 | 7:00 pm | Church

As the only celebration of St. Patrick in the Diocese of Joliet, the West Suburban Irish community invites all to celebrate the good deeds of St. Patrick at the Irish Mass. It is a beautiful liturgy in the Irish and English languages, featuring a concert of traditional Irish music beginning at 6:30 pm.

### St. Joseph Table

Saturday, March 14 | 5:00–7:00 pm | Gym

Come celebrate the feast of St. Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus and patron of God's family, with a feast of superbly delicious Italian foods. The meal is free but free-will offerings will be gladly and gratefully accepted to benefit the St. Thomas Food Pantry, St. Thomas Cares and the St. Vincent DePaul Society.

More information as well as sign-up available online at [stapostle.org](http://stapostle.org).

### CREW: Connect, Reflect, Energize, Witness

Sunday, March 15 | 4:15–5:45 pm | Gym

CREW is an opportunity for all 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders to build community, share faith and be energized by each other. Join us Sunday, March 15, from 4:15–5:45 pm in the St. Thomas Gym for games, pizza and an activity with a focus on Lent. Please RSVP using the QR code.



### PrimeTime

Tuesday, March 17 | 10:00 am | Lighthouse

Fr. John will be speaking on Mercy and Discipleship.

### Sacrament of Reconciliation

Wednesday, March 18 | 7:00 pm | Church

This is an opportunity for God's healing mercy. Through this form of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, all gather in prayer and an examination of conscience as a community, then individually receive penance and absolution after confession one-on-one with a priest.

### Pause for Prayer

Wednesday, March 25 | 5:30–6:30 pm | Lighthouse

All students in grades 6–12 are invited to come together to build community and to reflect deeper on our Lenten theme, The Radical Way of Discipleship. The evening will include faith sharing, quiet individual prayer experiences and an activity. Stay for the soup and bread night dinner following our time together (parents/family are welcome to join in the dinner as well). Please let us know you are attending by scanning the QR code.



### Living Stations of the Cross

Good Friday, April 3 | 3:00 pm | Church

Middle school students are invited to be a part of the Living Stations of the Cross prayer service on Good Friday, April 3. The stations are prayerfully portrayed with still poses. This is an opportunity to come into a deeper understanding of the gift of Christ's ultimate sacrifice for us. Practices will be held weekly on Sundays beginning March 8, from 12:30–1:30 pm, in the Church. Please sign up by scanning the QR code or contact Ann Cotner at [acotner@stapostle.org](mailto:acotner@stapostle.org), for more information.



### Hallow Lenten "Pray 40"

Join us this Lent for Hallow's "Pray 40" journey, themed "The Return," inspired by the story of the prodigal son and our call to return to Christ. Hallow is offering a 60-day free trial with daily readings and reflections – sign up and join the Pray 40 waitlist. Then come to our weekly Lenten discussion group on Monday nights starting February 23 at 6:30 pm to share insights from the week's reflections. Newcomers welcome! Scan the QR code to watch a short video and download the free trial.



### Social Justice Stations of the Cross

The Stations of the Cross "Toward Justice and Peace" will be posted on the St. Thomas website at [stapostle.org](http://stapostle.org). The stations follow the final journey of Jesus while highlighting 14 women and men who walked in his footprints, including St. Kateri Tekakwitha (Native American) and Archbishop Oscar Romero.

### Soup and Bread Night

On Wednesday, March 25, the St. Thomas Lector Ministry will sponsor the 31<sup>st</sup> Soup and Bread Night from 6:30–8:00 pm in the St. Thomas Gym.

The concept behind offering a simple meal of soup and bread is to return to the basics and to show solidarity with those who may only have soup and bread, or less.

Come for a simple Lenten meal. A free-will offering will be taken.

### Easter Ham Collection

The Easter ham collection is Palm Sunday weekend, March 28–29. The goal is 700 hams for the Naperville, Aurora and Joliet areas. The truck will be in front of the church. Volunteers will accept hams and monetary donations at all Masses Saturday, March 28 and Sunday, March 29 (except 6:00 pm).

### Easter Flowers

You are invited to make a donation toward Easter Environment/Flower Fund in recognition of a loved one. The names of these individuals will be on display at the Easter Masses. A suggested donation of \$10 per name (exact change or check made payable to St. Thomas the Apostle) should be remitted with the order form (available online or in the Main Office). Donations due Wednesday, March 25.

# St. Thomas the Apostle Lenten Schedule

Monday–Saturday: 8:30 am Mass | Wednesday: 6:30 am Communion Service

## February

- 18 Ash Wednesday**  
6:30 am Communion Service with distribution of ashes  
8:30 am Mass with the distribution of ashes  
12:00 pm Prayer Service with the distribution of ashes until 1:00 pm  
4:30 pm Prayer Service with the distribution of ashes, led by the Faith Formation Program  
7:00 pm Mass with the distribution of ashes
- 18** 5:15 pm Ash Wednesday Faith Family Activity  
**20** 7:00 pm Stations of the Cross  
**23** 6:30 pm Hallow Lenten “Pray 40”  
**23** 7:00 pm Lent Taizé prayer  
**24** 12:00 pm Mid-Day Meditation  
**27** 5:00 pm Knights of Columbus Friday Fish Dinner  
**27** 5:00 pm Fish Dinner and Family Stations of the Cross  
**27** 7:00 pm Stations of the Cross

## March

- 2** 6:30 pm Hallow Lenten “Pray 40”  
**3** 12:00 pm Mid-Day Meditation  
**6** 7:00 pm Stations of the Cross  
**9** 6:30 pm Hallow Lenten “Pray 40”  
**10** 9:00–10:00 am and 5:00–6:00 pm Drive-Thru Food Donations for Care Pantry  
**10** 12:00 pm Mid-Day Meditation  
**11** 10:30 am Hope Café  
**11** 7:00 pm Mass in Celebration of St. Patrick  
**13** 7:00 pm Stations of the Cross  
**14** 5:00 pm St. Joseph Table  
**15** 4:15 pm CREW  
**16** 6:30 pm Hallow Lenten “Pray 40”  
**17** 12:00 pm Mid-Day Meditation  
**17** 10:00 am PrimeTime  
**18** 7:00 pm Sacrament of Reconciliation  
**20** 7:00 pm Stations of the Cross  
**23** 6:30 pm Hallow Lenten “Pray 40”  
**24** 12:00 pm Mid-Day Meditation  
**25** 5:30 pm Pause for Prayer  
**25** 6:30 pm Soup and Bread Night  
**25** Easter Flower contributions due  
**27** 5:00 pm Knights of Columbus Friday Fish Dinner  
**27** 7:00 pm Stations of the Cross  
**28–29** Easter Ham Collection  
**30** 6:30 pm Hallow Lenten “Pray 40”  
**31** 12:00 pm Mid-Day Meditation

## Holy Week Liturgies

### Palm Sunday of the Passion of the Lord

*Saturday, March 28 – Mass of Anticipation*

4:30 pm Mass

*Sunday, March 29*

7:30 am Mass

9:30 am Mass\*

11:30 am Mass

6:00 pm Mass

### Monday, March 30–Wednesday, April 1

8:30 am Mass

### Thursday of Holy Week (Holy Thursday)

*Thursday, April 2*

**NO** 8:30 am Mass

7:00 pm Mass of the Lord's Supper\*

*Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament will follow the conclusion of the Mass, ending with Night Prayer at midnight*

### Friday of the Passion of the Lord (Good Friday)

*Friday, April 3*

**NO** 8:30 am Mass

3:00 pm Living Stations of the Cross\*

*Dramatized by the youth of St. Thomas the Apostle*

7:00 pm Celebration of the Passion of the Lord\*

*Liturgy includes communal adoration of the Holy Cross and distribution of the Eucharist*

### Holy Saturday

*Saturday, April 4*

**NO** 8:30 am Mass

12:00 pm Blessing of Easter Food baskets

**NO** 3:30 pm Reconciliation or 4:30 pm Mass

7:00 pm The Easter Vigil in the Holy Night\*

### Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord

*Sunday, April 5*

7:30 am Mass

9:30 am Mass\* (Church and Gym)

11:30 am Mass

*Weekday Mass schedule resumes Monday, April 6.*

*\*liturgy will be livestreamed*