



JANUARY 2021

ST. PETER

CATHOLIC CHURCH

Monthly Newsletter

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK AT ST. PETER SCHOOL

CELEBRATING THE GIFT OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Excitement is building, as the countdown begins to one of the most anticipated events of the New Year – Catholic Schools Week. And while our festivities may look a bit different this year, we can still look forward to sharing in a wonderful celebration here at St. Peter School.

“In a nutshell, it is a celebration of Catholic education,” says Assistant Principal Jenn Tran of Catholic Schools Week.

This year, Catholic Schools Week takes place the week of Jan. 31. Each day has a particular focus on a different aspect of Catholic education, from vocations and careers, to students and their families. Although likely to be modified this year, one of the highlights of the week is Grandparents’ Day, a day of honoring our loved ones and inviting them to attend Mass, a special brunch, morning classes with their students, and lunch in the cafeteria.

“My favorite part of the week is Grandparents’ Day,” Mrs. Tran says. “The students are always ecstatic to share their daily experiences and accomplishments with their grandparents, and their grandparents simply beam with pride. It’s such a great sight to see!”



As we look back at this presentation from Catholic Schools Week 2020 (pre-COVID), we are disappointed our celebrations will be modified this year due to COVID-19 safety precautions, but celebrate the fact that Catholic Schools Week is always a chance to remember the gift and blessing of Catholic education in our community.

As someone who benefited from Catholic education as a child, our Mrs. Tran recognizes the unique value of Catholic schools, and their significant role in the formation of our young people.

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CATHOLIC SCHOOLS WEEK

CONTINUED FROM COVER

“Having a unified faith brings the school and community together,” Mrs. Tran says. “There is a culture of love and perseverance in our school that I don’t think would be present without having God at the helm.”

And as Mrs. Tran points out, our school’s mission statement reflects this important concept: “Responding to God’s call, we the community of St. Peter’s Catholic School dedicate ourselves with love to the spiritual growth, academic excellence, and service of neighbor as we prepare for the journey through this life to the Kingdom of Heaven.”

Our school community is grateful for the support of our parishioners, as we fulfill our mission of sharing God’s love with the children who have been entrusted to us, preparing them to live as faithful Catholics today and for years to come.

“Our parishioners are not only investing in students’ future jobs, but they are investing in building a child of God that will discern a vocational path,” Mrs. Tran says.

Mrs. Tran encourages parishioners and school families to support our students during Catholic Schools Week by being engaged in what’s going on and inviting their students to share about their experiences. Families can help their students by being aware of the theme of each day and encouraging students to participate. Parishioners are invited to appreciate the art and work on display in the hallways between Masses on Jan. 31



Whether we’re dressing up, praying or sharing our school with loved ones, Catholic Schools Week is a celebration of Catholic education.

and call the office to volunteer in service during the week’s special events.

Although our celebrations may be modified this year, Mrs. Tran hopes that Catholic Schools Week will be a reminder of the blessing that we have in being a part of the community at St. Peter School, and an encouragement to stay close to God and our parish and school community amid these unprecedented times.

“I hope that students and teachers feel both blessed and appreciated for attending or working at a Catholic school,” Mrs. Tran says. “It wouldn’t be a successful and faithful school without students and teachers.”

“Our faith brings us together,” she adds. “It helps us go forward with hope, in the midst of challenges.”

“Having a unified faith brings the school and community together. There is a culture of love and perseverance in our school that I don’t think would be present without having God at the helm.”

— Mrs. Jenn Tran, Assistant Principal

If you would like more information on Catholic Schools Week at St. Peter, please call our school office at 402-421-6299 or visit our website at www.saintpeterslincoln.com/school.



A Letter from Our Pastor

FORGET THE RESOLUTIONS...

SEIZE THE OPPORTUNITIES!

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

One of the most unforgettable years in our lifetimes is finally over and 2021 is here! With the new year, I recommend we forget the notion of making resolutions. This new year presents us with opportunities to practice faithful stewardship – that is, to view the start of 2021 as a time for opportunities instead of resolutions, and to choose to be the disciples we are called to be.



what we believe, using our time, talents and treasure to reach others around us.

Therefore, as we close out one of the most eventful years in modern history, and are at the start of a new year filled with promise and hopefulness, I ask you to join me in celebrating the opportunities that will present themselves during 2021. We need to keep our eyes, ears and hearts open to them. They will be there when we least expect them. Our Lord's call to be faithful stewards of the gifts we have been given is already echoing

The choice is ours, as it always has been. I know all too well that each New Year's Day on Jan. 1, we do more than just begin a new calendar year. We make all kinds of promises, articulate expectations, and express hopes, desires and dreams. I don't know who started that custom, but I do know I have spent years attempting with the best intentions to follow my own resolutions, only to become disappointed that most are forgotten all too soon. Therefore, it occurred to me that this year, I need a new and fresh approach to this. Perhaps we all need a new perspective. After all, isn't that what faithful stewards are best at?

in our hearts as we have concluded a season of giving in which God's gift to us, Jesus Christ, remains the perfect gift that keeps on giving to each of us. If we continue to receive our Lord with grateful hearts, we can respond in our own way of giving time, talent and treasure back as opportunities to become Christ for others.

The to-do list for 2021 should be seen as a list of opportunities to practice the discipleship intended by Jesus – not just at the beginning of each year, but each day throughout the year when presented with opportunities to be a Christian disciple. In doing so, we are practicing the stewardship way of life. Maybe this year, each of us will be open to embracing the connection between discipleship and stewardship.

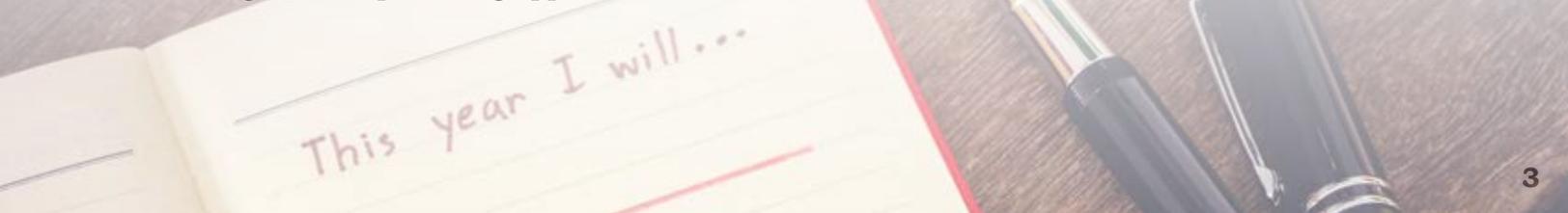
I know that 2021 will be a year of great interest in what will happen in the world around us, and new opportunities will abound. Wait for them. Look for them. Treasure them when they become known.

Discipleship and stewardship are indeed closely linked, so much so that it clearly defines our Catholic spirituality and touches every aspect of the life of the Church. I hope that the same vision is clearly in your sight – the moment of discovery that stewardship is a way of life, a defining moment presenting opportunities to live

While resolutions always seem to be good ideas, opportunities are often what God has chosen for us to experience so that our lives may be more whole and fulfilling. Can you think of a better way to start a new year than to forget the resolutions, and instead seize the opportunities God has waiting for us?

In His Mercy,

Fr. Eric Clark,
Pastor





BEING A VOICE FOR THE VOICELESS THROUGH THE



On the First Saturday of March 2016, Mike Davis joined other parishioners on a Rosary walk from our parish to Planned Parenthood, following morning Mass. As they were praying together in union with Our Lady against the heinous crime of abortion, he took a photo. Later, when he looked at how the photo turned out, he was astounded at what he saw.

“The picture was supposed to be in full color, but it wasn’t – it was only in blue and red,” Mike says. “The sky above the abortion clinic and the words ‘Planned Parenthood’ showed up blood red, even though they were actually blue. All of us who were praying the Rosary showed up blue as well, even though one of us was wearing a bright red jacket. I have had this phone for eight years, and have taken thousands of photos with it and none of them have ever shown up like this one. I have shown the photo to a number of priests and no one can just explain this away.”

After some reflection, the small photo spoke large volumes to his heart and soul, changing his life dramatically.

“Through this photo, I believe God was revealing to us that we were definitely Our Lady’s Blue Army fighting in a spiritual war, and that the babies being killed at Planned Parenthood were a literal sacrifice to Satan,” Mike says. “God and the Holy Spirit were saying to me, ‘Mike, you need to be involved with the pro-life movement!’ I had just retired from being the superintendent of schools for 30 years and had been wondering what God wanted me to do, so it was all perfect timing.”

Thus inspired, Mike heeded God’s call and began working intensely to protect the lives of the unborn in danger of abortion. He currently serves as the President of the Lincoln Right to Life chapter, as well as Coordinator of St. Peter’s Parish Right to Life Ministry, as every parish in the Diocese of Lincoln has a coordinator who organizes their parish’s efforts to help out with Lincoln Right to Life.

Twice per year, Lincoln Right to Life promotes 40 Days for Life, a peaceful effort through which local parishes and churches take turns fasting and praying



Lincoln Right to Life founded Women’s Care Center directly across the street from Planned Parenthood.

Matt Tapling (from left), George Olmer, Cathy Turner, Mike Davis and Gary Bouc (not pictured, Sarah Kroner).

If you would like further information on how to help share God’s mercy through these beautiful pro-life efforts, please contact Mike Davis at davism72@gmail.com, refer to upcoming parish bulletins, or visit www.lincolnrighttolife.org/40days.



Right to Life Ministry

in front of Planned Parenthood in Lincoln. During 40 Days for Life last fall, St. Peter's Parish covered Mondays from noon to 8 p.m. Furthermore, every Tuesday of the year, as Planned Parenthood is performing abortions, sidewalk advocates volunteer to be present in front of the clinic. The advocates are trained by Cathy Turner, and come from various area parishes, including our own. They give out information about adoption, alternatives to adoption, and the pro-life Pregnancy Center in Lincoln.

Furthermore, Lincoln Right to Life is working tirelessly to found a Women's Care Center directly across the street from the Planned Parenthood abortion clinic.

"This is really big!" Mike says. "We have been working with parishes all throughout the diocese to make this happen. I and several others bought the building — three of whom are St. Peter's parishioners. We named our cooperation after Matthew 2:18, which tells the story about Rachel, who was overcome with mourning because her baby was killed by Herod. A few other parishioners from our parish have donated tens of thousands of dollars as well. The building costs \$250,000, and it will be about \$190,000 to operate the center each year."

The center will be open every hour that Planned Parenthood will be open, and will offer ultrasounds, pro-life counseling, parenting classes and financial support for new mothers and their child.

"There are 32 Women's Care Centers around the nation, and the model they use is very successful," Mike says.



On March 5, 2016, a group of 33 men walked from the church to the Planned Parenthood building, praying the Rosary as they went. Mike Davis took this photo, as he explains, "The picture was supposed to be in full color, but it wasn't — it was only in blue and red. The sky above the abortion clinic and the words 'Planned Parenthood' showed up blood red, even though they were actually blue. All of us who were praying the Rosary showed up blue as well, even though one of us was wearing a bright red jacket." After some reflection, the photo spoke to Mike's heart and soul, changing his life dramatically.



Mike Davis took this photo just hours after he captured the image of the men praying in front of the Planned Parenthood building, using the same camera with the same settings in place.



THE PATRON OF CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN AMERICA

ST. ELIZABETH ANN SETON

As the first American-born canonized saint, Elizabeth Ann Seton's entrance into history was guided by Divine Providence. Born on Aug. 28, 1774, just months after the Boston Tea Party, Elizabeth's childhood witnessed pivotal events in the formation of our country – the Continental Congress, the Declaration of Independence, and the American Revolution. At the time of the foundation of the new Republic, in a society predominately hostile toward Catholicism, a flower blossomed that would forever change the shape of education in the United States.

Elizabeth Seton was born into a wealthy Protestant family in New York City. Her life, although materially blessed, was not without suffering. Elizabeth's biological mother died when she was only 3, and her younger sister, Catherine Josephine, died at the age of 2. A spark of faith, however, was visible even in her early childhood. When questioned about her sadness concerning her sister's death, Elizabeth simply responded, "Kitty is gone up to heaven. I wish I could go there too."

Elizabeth grew into a beautiful woman, courted lavishly by handsome young men from prominent New York families. At the age of 19, she met a charming New York financier, William Seton, and the couple was wed in 1794. They remained in high society until her father-in-law's passing, which left them to care for William's seven younger siblings, along with three children of their own. Consequently, the Seton finances crashed.

The couple traveled to Italy – it was here that William's health failed him, and he died in December 1803. Providentially, Elizabeth was left in the company of a strong Catholic family where she witnessed the practice of the faith. In a letter to her sister, Elizabeth wrote, "My



sister dear, how happy would we be, if we believed what these dear souls believe, that they possess God in the Sacrament, and that He remains in their churches..."

After an eight-month stay, Elizabeth returned to America, and she began to investigate Catholicism more deeply. She was besought by Protestant friends who hoped to dissuade her. At this time, Elizabeth prayed repeatedly, "If I am right, Thy grace impart, still in the right to stay. If I am wrong, oh teach my heart to find the better way."

In 1805, after much interior struggle, Elizabeth became Catholic. Abandoned entirely by her family and friends, she resolved her financial difficulties through teaching.

In 1807, Elizabeth was invited to establish a Catholic school for girls in Baltimore. The task was daunting, and Elizabeth labored intensely, explaining how "from half past five in the morning until nine at night, every moment is full – no space even to be troubled." After winters spent in continual hardship and sacrifice, the school flourished and, within years, Mother Seton planted the seed from which sprang the parochial school system – along with hospitals and orphanages.

Before her death in January 1821, she was the active mother of five – although two of her daughters died young – and the spiritual mother of a full-fledged religious congregation known as the Sisters of Charity. She was canonized in 1975, and her feast day is celebrated on Jan. 4.

Thanks to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, the Catholic parochial school system remains vibrant and active. And as we celebrate Catholic Schools Week, we are thankful for the sacrifice of this loving wife, devoted mother, foundress and all-American saint.

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ANNUAL TASTE AND SEE EVENT MOVES TO THE SUMMER

CHANGE DESIGNED TO ENSURE A FUN AND SAFE GATHERING

For several years, our annual Taste and See event has provided parishioners and friends with a fun evening of food, wine and fellowship. This year, the fundraiser promises to be an even more cherished time for our parish as we all gather socially as a community for the first time in over a year! On Friday, June 11, the St. Peter gym and basement will be transformed into a beautiful setting for a food and wine tasting, with plenty of room both indoors and out for parishioners to mingle as they meet new people and catch up with old friends.

The tradition of an annual fundraiser at St. Peter goes back more than 20 years. The original format of a chili cook-off was revamped four years ago to become a food and wine tasting event with both a live and silent auction. Parishioners may even participate in the silent auction online from their own homes! Money raised through the sale of tickets and auction items go to the general parish fund and are often used for equipment or building updates and maintenance.

In addition to raising important funds for our parish, the Taste and See event provides parishioners with a valuable opportunity for fellowship.

“It started as a fundraiser and still is, but now we are putting less emphasis on the fundraising and more on the social gathering,” says Eric Schafers, Chair of the Taste and See planning committee. “It’s about giving adult parishioners a place to get together outside of Mass to mingle and socialize. I like that social aspect of it — being involved with the people who do a great job of putting it on and just being at the event. It’s a great opportunity for being together.”

Attending events such as the Taste and See is also a great first step for parishioners who are interested in getting more involved in parish life.

“When my wife and I joined the parish back in 1994, we didn’t know anyone,” Eric says. “As you get more involved in the parish, you get to know other families, and it helps you feel like you’re a part of something. And the more you’re a part of something, the more you feel comfortable

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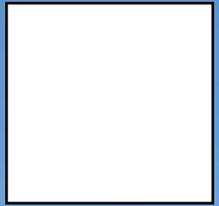
The annual Taste and See fundraiser is a food and wine tasting event paired with an auction for a fun evening of fellowship for parishioners and friends.



Both the live and silent auctions add to the fun — and the fundraising — at our annual Taste and See event.



ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH



4500 Duxhall Dr. | Lincoln, NE 68516
402-423-1239 | www.saintpeterslincoln.com

MASS SCHEDULE:

Saturday: 4:00 p.m.

Sunday: 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m.

DAILY MASS

Monday-Friday: 6:30 a.m., 8:15 a.m.

Saturday: 8:15 a.m.

CONFESSION:

Monday & Friday: 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.

Saturday: 3:00-4:00 p.m.

ANNUAL TASTE AND SEE EVENT *continued from page 7*

participating and being active, and the more willing you are to be a part of a parish's stewardship."

During a year marked by the necessity of social distancing, the tremendous importance of community became clear to people around the world. As the Body of Christ here on earth, we were created to come together to work, worship and play. God willing, our parish will be able to do just that as we celebrate another wonderful Taste and See event this summer!

"If there was ever a year that people have felt like they want to be a part of something and participate, this is the year," Eric says. "So I hope our June event is going to be very timely and successful."

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It's about giving adult parishioners a place to get together outside of Mass to mingle and socialize. I like that social aspect of it — being involved with the people who do a great job of putting it on and just being at the event. It's a great opportunity for being together."

— Eric Schafers



Taste and See is the largest social gathering of the year for our parish.