



APRIL 2020

ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

Monthly Newsletter

TASTE AND SEE FUNDRAISER SERVES UP WIDE-RANGING SUCCESS

With the final results tallied, the Taste and See fundraiser held Jan. 31 was not only an outstanding financial success, but most importantly, it also successfully brought together our parishioners to help from start to finish.

“We wanted to make the event not only a fundraiser, but also a social gathering and a parish-wide event that no one ministry was in charge of,” says Eric Schafers, Committee Chair. “Therefore, we had great participation from the whole parish.”

Taste and See raised about \$75,000 – an increase from last year – and drew about 370 attendees, also an increase. Sponsorships were up, as well as donations, with 160 silent auction items offered along with 28 live auction prizes.

“We had more volunteers to help with all the different aspects of the event, all from set-up, working the kitchen, and clean-up,” Eric says. “We had clean-up on Saturday morning, instead of Friday night, and we had between 25 to 30 show up. It was great!”

The event committee used SignUpGenius to keep track of the volunteers. This brought about support



It was an evening of camaraderie and fun during our Taste and See fundraiser.

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Cultivate Your Personal Garden for Christ this Spring

Everyone loves springtime. The weather is warmer and beautiful flowers are blooming all around us.

But anyone with a beautiful garden will attest that the flowers do not magically appear as if the season change itself miraculously makes the flowers bloom. Beautiful flowers and lush gardens are the result of the gardener's hard work.

Imagine that a man is given some flower seeds. The man then buries the seeds in the ground and leaves them on their own. As the months pass and rain falls, some seeds may receive enough nourishment to bloom. But simply burying seeds in the ground will hardly make for a gorgeous garden. Rather, if the man truly wants to enjoy many beautiful flowers, there is much care and work ahead. Recognizing the hidden beauty within these simple seeds, he must cultivate the ground, plant the seeds in a solid foundation, then water and fertilize them throughout the year — only then will he see the proper fruit these seeds were made to bear.

This simple illustration speaks to the heart of us this season — not only as we look around at the flowers, but more importantly as we reflect on the springtime of the Church. We are celebrating the great feast of Easter when, through His death and Resurrection, Christ offers us the greatest gift of all — eternal life with Him forever. This celebration leads us to reflect on the many gifts

God has given us in this life and the fruit they will bear, especially as we look to life eternal.

He has given each of us a multitude of gifts so that we can better serve Him and bring others to Him. Do we notice the hidden potential of our gifts? Do we see them, like the seed — as seemingly small, yet so full of fruit? Everything we have — our time, talents and treasure — is a gift from the Lord. Do we accept gifts in gratitude, then put them to use by cultivating and nourishing them so they will bear the proper fruit?

Just like springtime flowers that we enjoy, our time, talents and treasure need to be cared for. Our gifts need to be cultivated and nourished. It is only then that will we see them for what they are — wonderful gifts given by God meant for His greater glory.

Like the seeds, if we use our gifts flippantly, we may see some fruits here and there. But we are called to so much more — we are called to build a beautiful garden. We are called to offer God the most beautiful flowers of all.

This season, as we look at all the beautiful flowers around us and enjoy God's creation, let us think about the seeds in our own lives. Ask yourself if you have accepted the gifts God has given you — your time, talents and treasure — and have cultivated and cared for them properly. Or, do they just sit dormant within you yearning to bloom?



A Letter from Our Pastor

EASTER: *THE FOUNDATION OF CHRISTIAN STEWARDSHIP*

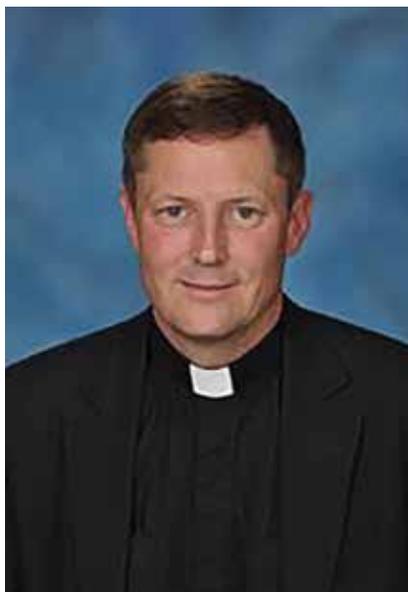
Dear Parishioners,

How do you feel at the end of the Palm Sunday Mass each year? Have you ever noticed the abrupt shift of tone during the course of that liturgy? It begins with great joy as we celebrate Jesus' entry into Jerusalem to the acclamation of the crowds. But, then, the mood swings to sorrow when the Passion Gospel is read, for we hear those same crowds shouting, "Crucify Him! Crucify Him!" a few days later.

Palm Sunday begins Holy Week, the most important week in the Christian year. The confusion of conflicting moods is spread through the week, especially during the Easter Triduum from sundown Holy Thursday to sundown Easter Sunday.

Holy Thursday offers us the glorious Mass of the Lord's Supper celebrating the institution of the Eucharist before we pass to the sadness of the betrayal and arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. The next day brings us the Good Friday Liturgy of the Passion with our recognition of what our sins did to the Incarnate Son of God. Then, after a day of waiting as we mourn Jesus' burial and repose in the tomb, we celebrate His victory over sin, Satan and death at the Easter Vigil on Saturday night or at the Masses the next day. If we have participated in all the main services of the Triduum, we arrive at Sunday evening exhausted, but joyful.

This year Palm Sunday falls on the first Sunday in April, so we observe Holy Week and Easter Sunday early in the month. That means we will spend most of April in the Easter Season, a period filled with joy and thanksgiving. Our gladness comes not only because Christ rose from the dead, but also because we



benefit from it. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* puts it, "The Paschal mystery has two aspects: by his death, Christ liberates us from sin; by his Resurrection, he opens for us the way to a new life" (CCC, 654).

In other words, Christ's Resurrection is the source of our own future resurrection. St. Paul wrote about it to the Romans in the following words: "For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection" (Rom 6:5).

Eternal life in union with Christ – a hope for a new life beginning now and extending on into heaven

– is the result of Jesus' Resurrection. What greater grounds for thanksgiving can there be than this Easter hope?

How do we show our joy and gratitude to God for this amazing gift? We unite our lives and every blessing to Christ's offering of Himself at Mass. We share the Good News of Jesus' victory over death with our family, friends and neighbors. And we offer back to the Lord a portion of the time, talent and treasure He has entrusted to us. Yes, the Easter message that we share in the benefits of Christ's Resurrection is the ultimate foundation for all Christian stewardship.

The Lord is risen, alleluia.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Craig Doty,
Pastor



Springtime at St. Peter:

IMPLEMENTING THE



Results from last fall's parish survey are an invaluable tool for determining where God is inviting our parish in this stage of our journey together.



Many members of our parish staff and volunteers have been hard at work, determining how to best incorporate the feedback of our parishioners into the growth of our parish family.

As the signs of spring slowly begin to pop up all around us, we're reminded of the beauty and excitement of new life and growth. Here at St. Peter Catholic Church, not only do we look forward to the spring flowers and chirping of baby birds, but also to the exciting changes taking place in our parish community as a result of the parish survey, which took place last fall.

In the months since the survey results were published in this newsletter, our priests, members of our staff, council members and countless volunteers have been hard at work to determine how to best integrate the needs of our parishioners into our community.

"Our parish survey gave us a chance to express how much we value everybody's input," says Sue Ray, our Stewardship and Volunteer Programs Coordinator.

"St. Peter is a faith community, a family of families," says John Kuchta, our Stewardship Council Chair. "The parish survey tells us where our family is wanting help to grow in their faith and discipleship."

The parish survey covered many different areas of parish life – from liturgy and formation, to parish life, the school, outreach and stewardship. Some of the initial action, based on survey responses, included increased opportunities for adult faith formation, including the fall retreat, and our Lenten Parish Mission, focusing on prayer, both for couples and families. In addition, we offered an adult book study, reading *Be Transformed: The Healing Power of the Sacraments* by Bob Schuchts, during the season of Lent, with over 80 people participating.

Feedback regarding the liturgy was very much appreciated. Greeters and ushers will also be included in helping to create a more hospitable environment, as well as the establishment of a new Welcome Committee and the possibility of Welcome Gatherings for new parishioners. A few of our staff members' offices will be moving to a more visible



RESULTS OF OUR PARISH SURVEY

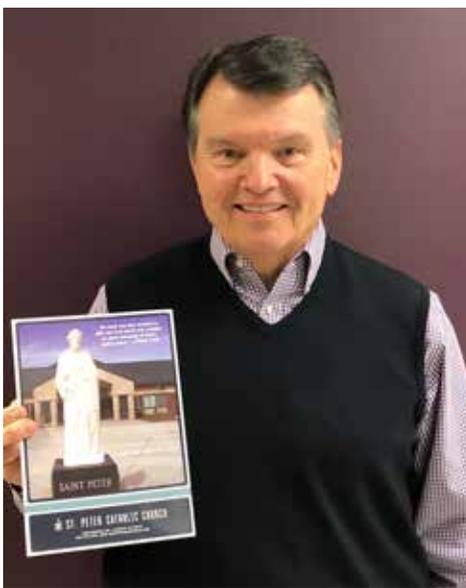
and accessible location. Our priests are also meeting with various ministry leaders to share results of the survey and begin the process of incorporating feedback.

“Our hearts are opening to listen,” Sue says. “We are really seeking to understand – not just to hear – the comments. Our biggest goal is seeking to understand.”

The Parish Council and Stewardship Council have also been assisted by the establishment of a new Ad Hoc Committee consisting of staff and volunteers, which will draft a parish survey action plan.

“It is my hope that the results of our parish survey and the subsequent changes made in response to parishioners’ feedback will help us become an even more welcoming and spiritually encouraging parish,” says Anne Hubbell, a volunteer on our Ad Hoc Committee for the Survey Action Plan. “We currently have lots of wonderful opportunities for spiritual growth and community building. But with feedback from the survey, we can be more responsive to the needs of our parishioners and build an even stronger parish.”

Those working to implement change in our parish



Parishioner John Kuchta serves as our Stewardship Council Chair, playing an important role in implementing growth based on our parish survey results.

– from our clergy, to our staff, and volunteers on councils and committees – hope to ensure that the survey results do not merely become a document that sits on a shelf, but instead serve as a guide to continuous growth of the parish. While some changes will take place immediately, others will require more long-term planning and continual assessment.

“This is just the beginning,” Sue says. “Our survey results are leading us on a journey. The survey action plan is a living document that will continue to be a testament of our desire to do God’s mission in our St. Peter community.”

Fr. Doty asks us to continue to pray for our parish and our efforts, as we move into this new season of growth and change.

“Please pray that with God’s grace and guidance, we will use these results to prioritize the particular needs of our parish, at every level and at every stage of our journey,” Fr. Doty says. “Through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, may we especially find more and more ways to draw others into a personal, everlasting relationship with the blessed Trinity, in communion with all the Saints!”

If you would like more information on the results of the parish survey, or if you have questions about how you can become involved in helping our parish to grow and flourish by volunteering your gifts and talents, please contact Stewardship and Volunteer Programs Coordinator Sue Ray at 402-423-1239 or sue-ray@cdolinc.net.



RECEIVING THE GRACE TO BECOME TRUE

Each year, parish youth are invited to make a pivotal step in their faith journey through their reception of the Sacrament of Confirmation. This final Sacrament of Christian Initiation binds the recipient more firmly to the life of the Church, infusing them more fully with the gifts of the Holy Spirit and strengthening them to go out and preach the Gospel.

“It also endows us with special charisms which are given to us individually, but are meant for the building up of the Kingdom of God,” says Director of Religious Education Lynette McArdle. “This way, whatever need may arise in the community at large, another member will possess a special gift to help meet that need. This is one way that God provides and cares for us. None of us individually contains all of the gifts, but as a whole community, we do.”

In preparation for this sacrament, parish youth participate in a two-year program designed to help them more fully understand the teachings of the Church and the sacrament itself, as well as to cultivate a more personal relationship with the Lord. This is accomplished through religion classes at St. Peter School, weekly CCD classes for those attending public schools and participation in a Confirmation retreat. The youth also choose both a

sponsor and a Confirmation saint whose example they wish to follow.

“In this way, the youth have their sponsor here on earth to help them along their journey through this life while their saint becomes their special intercessor in heaven,” Lynette says. “A Saint may be chosen because of the role they play – as a patron of mothers, or doctors, or whatever role or occupation that a candidate may aspire to – or because of a special family connection. This year, out of the 60 total students we had preparing for the sacrament, 38 different Saints were chosen.”

One newly confirmed parishioner, fifth-grader Maggie O'Donnell, says learning about the Saints was one of her favorite parts of the preparation process.

“I really liked learning about all of the different Saints and choosing one for my Confirmation,” Maggie says. “I chose St. Gemma Galgani because she was super hopeful and always trusted in God throughout her suffering. I'm really excited to now have another saint watching over me.”

Maggie and her fellow candidates had planned to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation from Bishop Emeritus Fabian Bruskewitz on Tuesday, March 17, but it was postponed. Yet, rather than being an end or “graduation,” as Confirmation is



Confirmation students renew their Baptismal promises.



Sister Mary Clare teaches the students some of their class material.



DISCIPLES THROUGH *Confirmation*

often mistakenly viewed, this will in fact be a new beginning for the parish youth — an opportunity to more fully embrace their lifelong membership as a disciple of Christ.

“Being confirmed is not the end of religious education, but rather a beginning to becoming a lifelong learner of the faith,” Lynette says. “It is a commitment to following Christ and His Church in thought, words and actions.”

Maggie has experienced the truth of these words personally, saying that the Confirmation preparation has helped her draw closer to the Lord. Through it, she has gained a much deeper understanding of the Holy Spirit’s role in our lives and feels that her overall trust in the Lord has deepened tremendously.

“I’ve been reading a little book on how to get stronger in

virtues, and every night in prayer I ask for a deeper trust in the Father’s love for me, especially in different situations,” Maggie says. “I feel that this experience has really helped me understand more how to receive God and the Holy Spirit into my heart.”

Of course, these graces aren’t limited to the newly confirmed. They’re present in each one of us who have received this sacrament, no matter how long ago. All that’s needed is for us to recognize and utilize them.

“We are each called to follow Him to the best of our ability — to pray, to avoid the occasions of sin and to be a witness to Christ,” Lynette says. “Our Confirmation has given us the grace and ability to do so — we only have to know it is there and choose to use it.”

“I’ve been reading a little book on how to get stronger in virtues, and every night in prayer I ask for a deeper trust in the Father’s love for me, especially in different situations. I feel that this experience has really helped me understand more how to receive God and the Holy Spirit into my heart.” — MAGGIE O’DONNELL



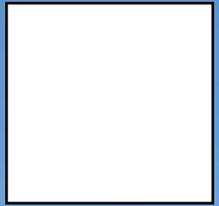
Fifth-grade students proudly display their Saint reports.



Sister Mary Clare helps students prepare for the Confirmation ceremony.



ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH



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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: 6-6:15 a.m., 7:45-8:00 a.m.

Saturday: 3-3:45 p.m.

TASTE AND SEE FUNDRAISER *continued from front cover*

from the parish ministries, to parishioners in general and the parents of St. Peter School students.

“With all those areas, we had volunteers from all areas of the parish,” Eric says. “This is what we wanted to achieve.”

This year, the proceeds are going to the parish General Fund. Within that \$75,000, the event raised \$5,000 to replace the score board in the gym, as well as \$3,500 for the Women’s Care Center.

During the evening, guests had the opportunity to sample donated foods from nine different restaurants and grocers. There were three wine bars and three beer bars.

“We had about 20 different wines everyone could try and all three of the beer booths were from local breweries,” Eric says. “One of the popular beers was from Boiler Brewing Co., ‘You Got Peanut Butter In My Chocolate.’ It was a big hit.”

Planning committees will be organized this summer for the 2021 Taste and See event.



Stacy Brass won a diamond cross pendant.

Anyone who is interested in helping for next year’s event should contact Nancy Alder at the Parish Office at 402-423-1239 or Eric Schafers at 402-432-6243.