



DECEMBER 2018

ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

Monthly Newsletter

THE MEANING OF ADVENT:

"A Time of Expectant Faith"

Take a moment for stillness in the midst of busy preparations for Christmas. Surely we will prepare with a tree, presents, family, friends and food. But beyond the secular standards of the season, we are called to look to the real meaning of Christmas.

"Advent is our time to experience again the excitement of anticipation, expectant hope, the longing of a promise fulfilled," says Lynette McArdle. "It is a time to experience the renewal of our faith and the wonder of the Good News that Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior has arrived."

In her wisdom, the Church has given us the liturgical year to create routines and establish seasons for reflection and renewal, and in Advent we begin another new liturgical year.

"Advent is a great time to grow spiritually and develop new habits," Lynette says. "Just as Christ gave us His Son, we are to also give of ourselves. This includes giving to both God and neighbor. Stewardship is about giving of our first fruits and recognizing that everything is a gift from God."

Individually we can intentionally take time to pray, reflect and adore Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. One resource that can help us re-center on Christ is *Best Advent Ever*, available through dynamiccatholic.com, offering daily inspirational videos and reflections from Allen Hunt and Matthew Kelly.

As a faith community, join other parishioners for St. Peter's Advent Prayer Series that will take place on four consecutive Thursdays, beginning on Nov. 29, from 7 p.m. until 8:30 p.m.

"Pray the Rosary, especially the Joyful Mysteries, get rid of grudges and receive the Sacrament of

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This Advent, we have many opportunities to create moments for prayer and stillness. How might you embrace this wonderful time of expectant faith?



GOT TALENT?

BRING IT TO THE SPOTLIGHT!

The word “talent” often conjures up images of stage performers in the spotlight, captivating awestruck audiences with their impeccable musical or acting skills.

While these talented performers are certainly deserving of applause, the majority of the population sits hidden in the shadows, staring on in amazement while feeling overlooked – and perhaps wishing to possess such talents themselves. But even when we feel overlooked and untalented, God knows better. As Christians, we are all called to dig deep and trust that we are specially blessed with valuable talents and abilities, even if our talents aren’t so obvious or don’t garner applause and accolades.

Along with “time” and “treasure,” “talent” is one of the “three Ts” of stewardship. Exploring our natural inclinations and preferences, especially when guided by the intricacies of our unique personalities, can unearth God-given talents.

“There are different kinds of spiritual gifts, but the same spirit,” writes St. Paul in his First Letter to the Corinthians. “There are different forms of service, but the same Lord.”

Some people have the gift of working peacefully with children. Equipped with patience and gentleness, they are able to guide young souls to the Lord. Yet, others shudder at the thought of a classroom full of

5-year-olds, and instead seek the quiet solace of behind-the-scenes tasks – cleaning the church, sewing altar cloths or stuffing envelopes.

Our interests and abilities are varied, and our volunteer options are endless, as we are called to give our talents back to God in loving service. Examine your heart and prayerfully discern your gifts, then direct those gifts towards serving the people of God.

H. Jackson Brown, Jr., author of *Life’s Little Instruction Book*, once said, “Talent without discipline is like an octopus on roller skates. There’s plenty of movement, but you never know if it is going to be forwards, backwards, or sideways.”

If our gifts of talent are not guided by the discipline of prayer, just like an octopus on roller skates, we will get nowhere fast! Yet, if we keep our eyes on the goal of heaven and serve the Lord with joyfulness, our efforts will produce a bountiful harvest. In the words of St. Paul to the Corinthians, “Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will reap bountifully.”

The next time you sit quietly in the shadows behind a glaring stage spotlight, rest assured that your talents are no less impressive in the eyes of God, and will always be “applauded” when directed to the service of His people.

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A Letter from Our Pastor

STEWARDSHIP POSSIBILITIES ARE ENDLESS AT CHRISTMAS

Dear Parishioners,

When I think of December, the first thing that comes to mind is Christmas. While that may seem to be the obvious topic, there really are a number of other possibilities. I could think of *Advent*, a season of preparation. I could think of the *Immaculate Conception*, as we celebrate God's gift to the world in Mary. I could think of *Our Lady of Guadalupe*, whose popularity has spread far beyond the Hispanic community. Of course, December also holds the first day of *winter*. And because December marks the end of the civil year, I might be developing my resolutions for the New Year!



But instead, I think about Christmas. It is when we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Babe in the manger in Bethlehem, who is the eternal Son of God made man.

The basic truth of Christmas — celebrating the birth of Jesus the Messiah, God Incarnate — is plenty of reason for us all to rejoice and worship. But we've piled such an additional load onto our Christmas observance that worship may be lost in the shuffle.

Think about what weight Christmas has to bear. We have to put up the decorations, or make travel plans to visit relatives. There is also the Christmas dinner to plan and cook. And then, we still have Christmas presents to buy. No wonder the Christ Mass becomes an afterthought!

Yet, we still have a wonderful opportunity this season — an opportunity to combine our Christmas activities with our stewardship commitments. Treasure, although challenging, is the simplest. Shouldn't the most expensive Christmas present we give be the one to Jesus, Whose birthday we're celebrating? Risen and glorified, He needs nothing we have. But His Body, the Church, continues Jesus' mission here on earth and always needs additional resources.

Time and Talent may be a little more complicated, but can't we spend a little more of our time in worship and prayer? Maybe you can attend Mass each day of the Christmas Octave. Have your family gather for prayers together in the morning or at dinner, in preparation for Christmas Day and through the Christmas season.

And there are so many opportunities to share our Talent! Sing in the choir for the Christmas Masses. Help decorate the Church. Cook or bake for someone who is shut-in. Invite someone who will be alone to share Christmas dinner with your family. Offer to work in a soup kitchen. The possibilities are endless.

With a little planning, we can make this hectic time one of real blessing both for ourselves and others. Pray for me that I can keep Christmas properly, and I'll pray for you. And by the way, have a merry Christmas!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Craig Doty,
Pastor





ANNUAL PARISH FUNDRAISER LOOKING FOR

Our annual parish fundraiser is coming up in February, and volunteers are needed to help make it a resounding success!

Eric Schafers, general Chair for the event under the Fundraising Ministry, says the various subcommittees are looking for willing hands for the Wine and Beer Tasting, set for 6:30-10 p.m. Friday, Feb. 1. The Parish Council of Catholic Women and the Knights of Columbus already are lined up to help.

"The different subcommittees are running different parts of the event," Eric says. "We're looking for help with those committees. One is staffing, and we're needing servers, or bartenders. Since Lincoln has a server/seller permit requirement, you can do the process online and we'll help you do it. We handed out 'save the date' flyers during our Trunk or

Treat, and the flyers listed different things volunteers can help to do."

Two new features have been added to the Tasting – the Speakeasy Room and the Moscow Mule Room that each will remain open until 11 p.m. Entry to each will be an additional charge. The Speakeasy Room will feature bourbons and higher-end wines, while the Moscow Mule room will offer different flavors of the popular Moscow Mule.

Local restaurants and grocery stores are providing the foods for the event.

"It's going to be like an open house," Eric says. "When the people come in there will be three wine booths and three beer booths along with food tables. Everyone can try different wines and beers. This is a social gathering – not a sit-down dinner. It's a very open house-style event."

Guests can also take part in a silent and live auction, as well as a Poker Run game. Participants will buy a poker hand of five cards for \$5. Each player will draw a card at the various booths, and when the live auction begins, the player holding the highest hand wins half the proceeds from the Poker Run.

While the goal of the Wine and Beer Tasting is to raise funds – last year's event brought in \$60,000 – the major goal this year is to build parish connectivity through a social event. The event is for adults 21 years of age and over.

"We want to get more parishioners involved and provide a social opportunity for them to mingle and talk," Eric says.

Previous fundraisers had been chili cookoffs, but the attendance





VOLUNTEERS TO SHARE TALENTS AND GIFTS

began dropping. The tasting event was started last year in order to develop more parish involvement.

“We needed more young people involved,” Eric says. “Craft beers are popular and wine is also popular. Being the second year, it should grow. We have three local breweries involved with nice craft beers. It’s nice to sample a lot of varieties.”

Taking part in the fundraiser is one way we as parishioners can exercise stewardship.

“The parish really is run by the parishioners and needs them to participate, giving their time, talent and treasure,” Eric says. “The only thing that is important is that we need to have all involved. The more you are involved, the more you can be active with other ministries.”

Anyone wanting to volunteer for the event may contact Eric Schafers at 402-432-6243, or by email at eric@brstores.com. Tickets are \$50 for the tasting, and this includes all the foods and tastings. The Speakeasy and Moscow Mule rooms are an additional \$20 each. Tickets will be available for purchase on the parish website at www.saintpeterslincoln.com. In addition, the Silent Auction bidding will be available on the parish website 10 days before the event.

OUR CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR'S MASS SCHEDULE

Christmas Eve — Dec. 24

4 p.m. and 10 p.m.

New Year's Day — Jan. 1, 2019

8 a.m., 9:30 a.m.

Christmas Day — Dec. 25

8 a.m., 9:30 a.m.

New Year's Eve — Dec. 31

5:30 p.m.





A SIGNIFICANT MOMENT IN OUR PRAYER

THE PRESENTATION OF THE GIFTS

Occasionally, you might hear someone jokingly refer to “halftime” during Mass – the interval following the Prayers of the Faithful, as the Liturgy of the Eucharist begins. It can be easy, even tempting, to zone out as you sit, waiting for the collection basket to make its way to your pew.

But if you pay attention, you’ll have the opportunity to enter into something deeper – a significant moment in our prayer.

It’s mentioned by St. Justin Martyr, one of the earliest Christian writers, when describing the Mass in the second century, “Bread is brought up and wine and water...”

This practice, of people bringing up the gifts, has been part of our Catholic tradition from the very beginning. Although we might think of this action as being merely practical, in reality, it serves a much deeper spiritual purpose.

Each Sunday Mass, someone is chosen, whether an usher, or another member of the parish, to bring forward “the gifts” – bread, wine, and in many cases, the collection of money that has been gathered moments before, from the generosity of the congregation. These gifts not only symbolize, but also in reality, are the work of human hands. The bread and wine are fruit of God’s creation, which, through the effort of human hands, are made into the gifts that we present to the Lord.

Certainly, the collection that is presented to the priest also serves to represent the work and sacrifices of the previous week. Sharing our monetary “treasures” is one of the ways that we embrace stewardship. It’s an opportunity to generously give back to the Lord, from the fruit of our work.

In his book *What Happens At Mass*, Fr. Jeremy Driscoll, OSB explains, “...We should not think of the collection of money at this point as some sort of banal, dirty but necessary affair. Money is our work. Money is hours of our lives. And now we give it away, we sacrifice it, for the work of the Church.”



In his letter to the Romans, St. Paul instructs Christians to “offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God” (Romans 12:1).

The physical act of carrying the gifts forward to the priest is meant to serve as a tangible reminder of the fact that we are all called to stewardship. We are all called to present to God our lives – our work, our talents, the struggles and victories of the past week – as an offering and gift to God.

Those who bring forward the gifts each week have the privilege and responsibility of remembering what their action represents – that we are called to give generously of our time, talent and treasure to God, who gives us His very self, at Mass. And for those sitting in the pews, tempted to “check out” for a few minutes, seeing the gifts being brought forward should serve as a powerful reminder to offer our lives back to God, through serving and honoring Him.

So next week, don’t just sit back and wait for the “halftime show.” Come to Mass a few minutes early and approach an usher to ask if you and/or your family may bring up the gifts that week. Don’t be surprised if you start to notice a change in your heart and a desire to be even more generous with God in the coming week!



BE HEALED:

AN OPPORTUNITY TO ENCOUNTER THE DIVINE PHYSICIAN

No matter who you are or your particular life's story, we all bear wounds, be they physical, spiritual or emotional. Sadly, this is just part of our human condition, the natural consequence of living in a fallen world. Yet, sometimes in our acceptance of this we forget about the hope that comes from Jesus Christ, the Divine Physician and Healer of hearts.

"Oftentimes the first person that we go to when we need physical healing is a doctor, and yet we forget to look to Jesus as our Physician," says parishioner Jeannie Moxley. "But if you look in the Bible, when people needed healing they went to Jesus. That's why we want to help change this mindset – to remind people that Jesus is our Healer and that He is wanting to have an intimate relationship with each one of us."

Jeannie is one of several parishioners helping facilitate the upcoming "Be Healed" program for St. Peter Parish. Based on Catholic therapist and John Paul II Healing Center founder Bob Schuchts' program for spiritual restoration, this Scripture-based book helps guide individuals on an intimate journey of healing and rejuvenation. It's a journey designed to help people encounter Jesus Christ in a personal and life-changing way.

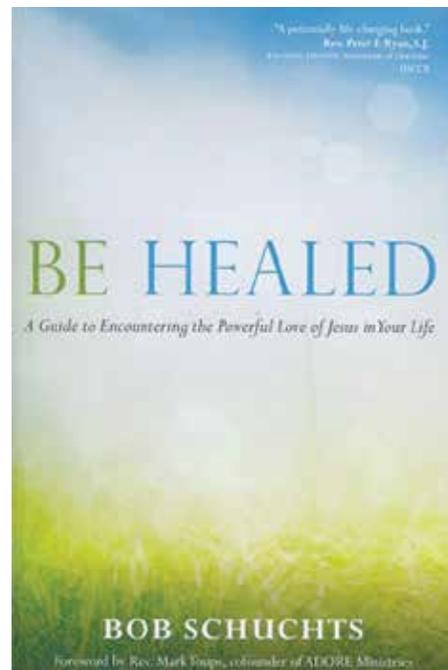
"Basically, what we are hoping is that through this program, people will encounter Jesus in a new way – that they will experience Him as being alive and truly part of their everyday life in a new way, especially through healing be that spiritual, physical, or emotional," Jeannie says.

Beginning this January, the program will last for 12 weeks. Each week, participants will read and reflect upon a chapter of the book privately at home before gathering in a small-group setting to share and discuss the book's impact on their lives.

"It's meant to be just an opportunity for people to share how the book has touched them and what insights they've gleaned through the chapter," Jeannie says. "It's all about how God is working in their lives – about how they are encountering Christ through the book and how He is bringing healing to their hearts and minds through it."

Only by taking time to understand the root of our wounds and, more importantly, by inviting Christ in as the Divine Physician can we receive the healing and peace for which our hearts are longing. This in turn, Jeannie says, equips us to better go out and preach the Gospel, living out our personal stewardship calling.

"There is no doubt in my mind that the people who go through this program with open hearts and minds will receive some sort of healing – either physically, spiritually or emotionally," Jeannie says. "My hope is that this program will remind people that Jesus is our Healer and that it will show them how desperately He wants to have a relationship with us. And that it will encourage us, in return, to reach out to those around us in a more physical way, taking the time to show them the love and mercy of Christ."

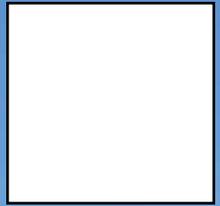


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Please refer to the parish bulletin for more information on Be Healed registration and dates. For more information, contact either the parish office at 402-423-1239 or Jeannie Moxley at 402-421-1730.



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

Saturday: 3-3:45 p.m.

THE MEANING OF ADVENT *continued from front cover*

Confession," Lynette says. "Start a new habit and then make that part of your daily life."

In our domestic churches, there are so many things we can do as a family. Different resources offer prayers to accompany our lighting the candles on the Advent wreath. Advent calendars, especially those with Scripture readings, tangibly teach our children about waiting and hoping for Christmas.

"Set up your Nativity without baby Jesus in it and read the story of the Nativity on Christmas Eve," Lynette says. "You can go to Confession as a family to prepare our hearts and souls for a Blessed Christmas and even celebrate Jesus' birthday with a cake and birthday party!"

Advent is also a time of sharing with those less fortunate. We have many opportunities to give through local food pantries and toy and clothing drives. We can also visit a nursing home or go Christmas caroling.

Another way to give with our families during this

season is through the Advent tree in the church foyer. Anyone can take a tag, go shopping for the gift listed and bring it back to the church. All the gifts go to Catholic Social Services, which distributes them to those in need.

"Advent can help us change our giving of time, talent and treasure by helping us recognize the needs of those around us," Lynette says. "Our response to a need should be to help alleviate that need. We can also offer these special gifts of time, talent and treasure as a birthday gift to Jesus."

This Advent create moments for prayer and stillness. Contemplate the empty manger waiting to be filled and prepare your heart for the arrival of Jesus.

"Advent is a time of expectant faith," Lynette says. "We know that Christ is coming! So in the midst of your busyness, take time to sit and gaze at your decorated tree and see the wonder of the gift of eternal life."

If you would like more information about Advent and celebrating this liturgical season at St. Peter's, please reach out to Lynette McArdle at lynette-mcardle@cdolinc.net.