



JANUARY 2019

ST. PETER

CATHOLIC CHURCH

Monthly Newsletter

STUDENTS READY TO FEED JESUS' SHEEP DURING *Catholic Schools Week*

Jesus said, "If you love me, feed my sheep." Every day, Catholic schools across the nation show the love of Jesus by feeding His sheep in the form of a quality education. During Catholic Schools Week – Jan. 27 through Feb. 2 – students at St. Peter School will take those words to heart as the theme "Feed My Sheep" carries them through a week of fun activities.

"It's a great opportunity to celebrate who we are as a Catholic school," principal Sr. Mary Michael says. "We're pretty serious about the business of education, so we let a little fun slip in on us."

Sr. Michael says the theme of Feed My Sheep was chosen in part to fit with the sixth grade's annual tradition of hosting a mission carnival during Catholic Schools Week. An animal is usually chosen as the carnival's theme – chickens and pigs have been hits in the past – and the class who raises the most money for the carnival's charity will get to see their teacher kiss a live sheep as the highlight of the event.

"The sixth-graders will do the games and the younger kids bring a bag of change so they can play



Children perform a song together as part St. Peter School's annual celebration of Catholic Schools Week.

to support the missions," Sr. Michael says. "A lot goes to Mary's Meals. They work in countries where kids have little to no food and they provide meals at school. They provide every meal a kid would need for one year for \$19 and we try to feed 70 or 80 kids. It's good for us and they have a lot of fun doing it."

Part of that fun will include a visit from author and illustrator Bruce Arant. An Omaha native, Arant's

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Catholic Schools Week

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“I want to say to our parishioners in all caps, THANK YOU! The families who use our school are the least equipped in our parish to pay for it, so we count on people using our school and then working at funding it for the rest of their lives, and that’s what makes it work. Without the people in the pews, it wouldn’t work.” — Sr. Mary Michael, Principal

books *Simpson’s Sheep Won’t Go to Sleep* and *Simpson’s Sheep Just Want to Sleep* teach children about day and night routines and entertain kids of all ages with fun rhymes.

Other activities will include special dress days, early dismissal on Friday to allow the teachers to enjoy a luncheon together, and a special Mass for Parent and Grandparent Day.

“People come in from out of town and we usually have about 700 people at Mass that day,” Sr. Michael says, adding that parents and grandparents can enjoy donuts afterwards with their student.

For parishioners who don’t have a child in the school, Sr. Michael says the week is also a time to reflect on the generosity of those who have kept the school running.

“I want to say to our parishioners — in all caps — THANK YOU!” Sr. Michael says. “The families who use our school are the least equipped in our parish to pay for it, so we count on people using our school and then working at funding it for the rest of their lives, and that’s what makes it work. Without the people in the pews, it wouldn’t work.”



Everyone has a reason to love St. Peter’s School! During last year’s Catholic Schools Week, the first-grade class made 100 hearts on the 100th day of school, each listing a reason to love their school.



Catholic Schools Week is on the horizon for St. Peter School. One event students and families alike look forward to each year is Parent and Grandparent Day. Families enjoy Mass and donuts together as part of the day’s celebration.

***If you would like to learn more about St. Peter School,
please visit www.saintpeterslincoln.com/school
or call the school office at 402-421-6299.***



A Letter from Our Pastor

NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS



Dear Parishioners,

As we arrive at the New Year, it is customary that we make resolutions, which hopefully will be carried out during the course of the year. So many times these resolutions pertain to our physical lives – we resolve to exercise more, build a healthier diet, become more organized, etc. These resolutions may also involve

the mental aspect of our lives – reading more, attending more cultural events, and so forth.

Too often we forget about the spiritual part of our lives. Our souls need to be tended to, and we need to make sure that we are deepening our relationship with God throughout the entire year.

I would like to give you a list of possible spiritual resolutions. While it might seem difficult for one person to undertake all of these, hopefully anyone can try several of these resolutions at one time or a number of them throughout the year.

- Attend Mass once a week over and above weekend liturgies.
- Spend an hour (or any amount of time) in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament once a week.
- Pray the *Liturgy of the Hours* (the *Divine Office*) at least once a day.
- Read and meditate on a chapter of Scripture a day.
- Take up a devotion of the Church (e.g. Rosary, Stations, novena, other prayers, etc.) and pray it daily.
- Read a spiritual book once a month.

- Make a morning offering as you begin your day, then an examination of conscience as you end your day.
- Offer a prayer of blessing/thanksgiving before/after a meal.
- Take time to pray daily with your spouse/family.
- As an individual or a family, take time once a week to do some form of charitable work – visiting those who are homebound or in a nursing home, do some work for an elderly friend or neighbor, bring food to someone in need, etc.

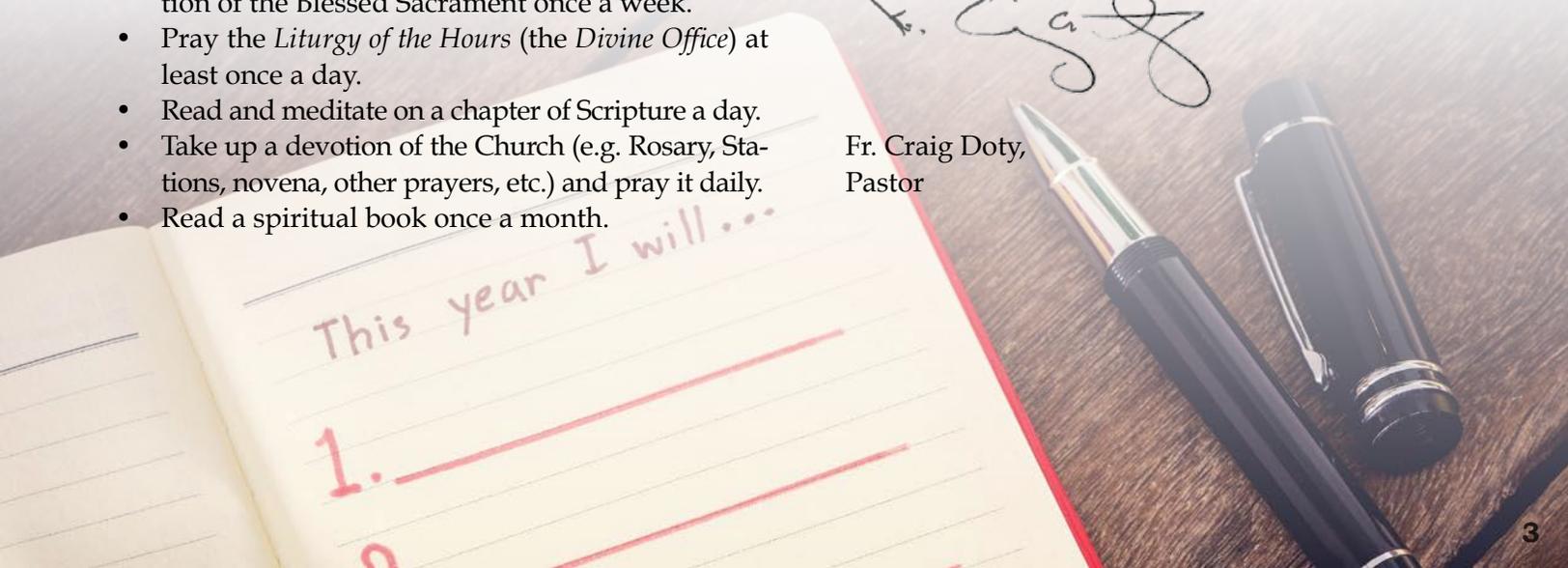
This is not an exhaustive list, but hopefully it gives you an idea that the small things done with great love can make a world of difference – both in your life and the lives of others.

Do not try to overdo any of these, but build up to doing them on a regular basis, thus laying a reasonable foundation upon which to build. Enjoy doing these resolutions, and see what a blessing they are for you and others.

Let us pray that 2019 will be a year of grace and favor from God. I wish you and yours a very happy New Year!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Craig Doty,
Pastor





The Lector Ministry

RAISING UP FAITHFUL

“It has helped me to understand God’s great plan of salvation history, which is so deeply rooted in the Old Testament. Secondly, it has helped me spiritually in that since I have become a lector, I have gained a better appreciation of the Mass and what it means. I have come to understand the Word of God in a deeper way.” — Michael Messineo

One of the most sublime treasures Mother Church desires to share with her children is the Sacred Scriptures. Lectors, who proclaim the Scriptures during Holy Mass, serve as stewards of this most precious gift, which illuminates the soul with God’s light and truth.

“Being a lector is a great way to help serve your parish and be a faithful steward of God’s Word,”

Lector Coordinator Michael Messineo says. “One of the greatest gifts you can be given is to be able to serve in some way at Mass, because the Mass is the highest form of the praise of God. It strengthens me as a Catholic Christian to serve in this unique way.”

Our parish utilizes installed male lectors, as well as female readers. There is usually one lector and

one reader serving at each of our weekend Masses. Michael sets them up on a four-week rotating schedule.

“Lectors can edify all those who are listening, and strengthen their belief in God,” Michael says. “They can help the congregation to understand God’s plan in sending His Son into the world to save each one of us.”

The lectors are faithfully trained by Michael, who works with them

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Ministry:

LECTOR MINISTRY: STEWARDS OF GOD'S WORD



and emails them a guide explaining the details on how to serve as a lector. Further, the lector schedule he distributes includes information about links to websites that explain the proper pronunciation of words in the Bible, as well as some of the history behind Scripture stories. Michael also invites new lectors to read with him or another senior reader for a few Masses before they read by themselves at Mass, if they prefer to do so.

"It is a good idea to prepare yourself to read not just by rehearsing the readings themselves, but also by studying to understand the meaning of the readings," he says. "I encourage the lectors to refer to a good Catholic Bible which includes

notes and explanations in it."

As generous servants and stewards of God's Word, lectors realize that by founding their ministry on prayer, they can be successful.

"I always invoke the saints, such as St. Peter and the apostles and prophets, right before I walk up to the podium," Michael says. "I ask them to enlighten me and help me to understand what I am about to read. I tell them to pray for me, that I would read well. When I lector, I try to read as the saints would have done. This helps me get the meaning across better."

Those who serve in the Lector Ministry find it to be an enriching and rewarding experience.

"It has helped me to understand God's great plan of salvation history, which is so deeply rooted in the Old Testament," Michael says. "Secondly, it has helped me spiritually in that since I have become a lector, I have gained a better appreciation of the Mass and what it means. I have come to understand the Word of God in a deeper way."

More lectors are needed to bring God's Word to life in a powerful way for our parish family. For more information, please contact Michael Messineo at 402-430-6080 or email him at michaelm@valscorp.com.



STEWARDSHIP OF TREASURE

GIVING TO GOD FIRST

Have you ever wondered why no one really becomes uneasy when someone brings up the first two “Ts” of stewardship – giving of your time or talents – but when the third “T” comes up, many of us become uncomfortable?

That third “T” is treasure, and some people simply become so annoyed by the subject, they tune out the words from the pulpit.

Why is there seemingly such an adverse reaction?

Our finances are such a personal subject. Discussing money issues with others is not easy, and having someone tell us what to do with our finances is even worse. We earn the money, after all. So shouldn’t we decide what to do with it?

Of course, the answer is “yes” – we decide every day how to spend our hard-earned dollars. Indeed, the monetary choices we make will either keep our finances in check, or put us into the red. The average American family has about \$7,000 in credit card debt – so finances certainly represent a challenge to our current society. Tight budgets, trying to “keep up with the Joneses” or poor financial management may be to blame for our tight

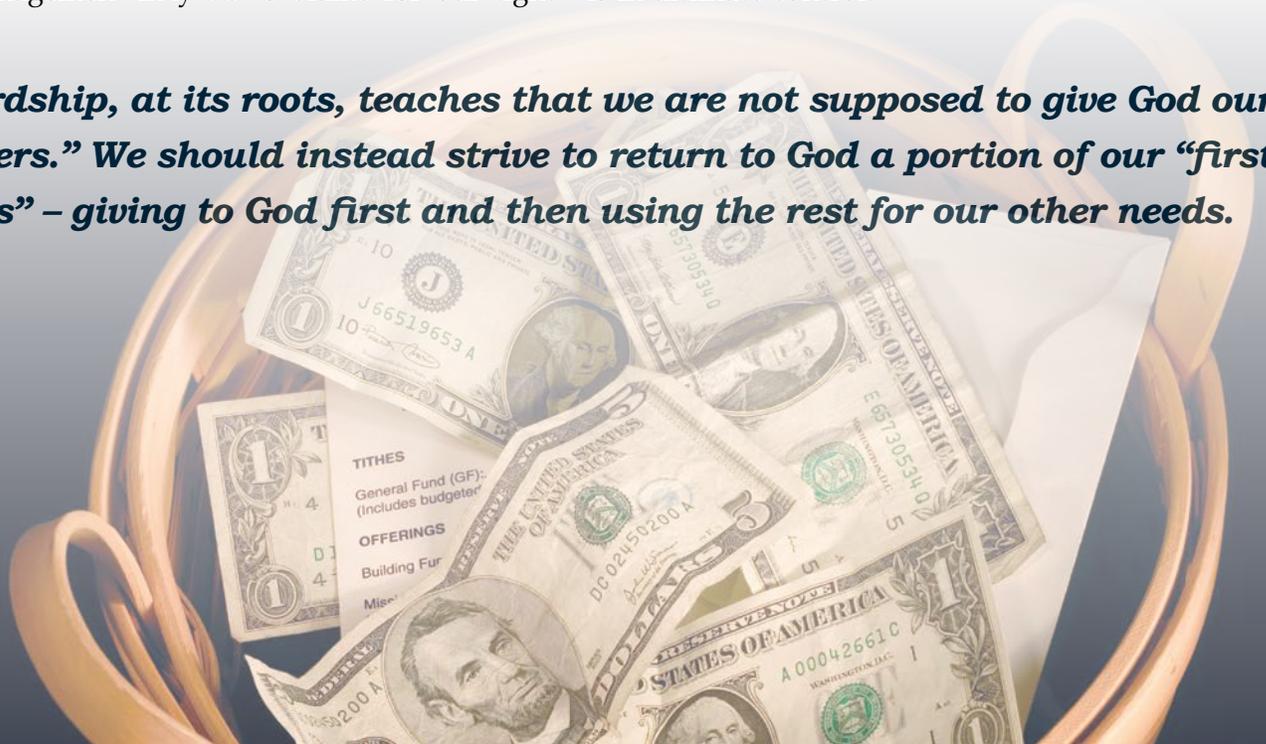
resources. Does this mean we do not have anything left over for God?

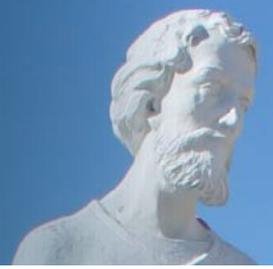
Stewardship, at its roots, teaches that we are not supposed to give God our “leftovers.” We should instead strive to return to God a portion of our “first fruits” – giving to God first and then using the rest for our other needs. God gave us our talents that help us earn a living, after all. He should come first.

This idea can be worrisome for many. If our finances are already strained, how will we ever find enough to give back to God? Or, if we do try to give God our “first fruits,” will there be enough left over to cover our required expenses?

Taking the correct financial steps toward good stewardship simply boils down to trust – believing that God, who takes care of all of His creation, will take care of us. Trust that in giving to God first, we are both acknowledging that our multitude of blessings come from Him, and that we are thankful He chose to give them to us. And finally, trust that if we give to Him first, that all else will fall into place – because He is in ultimate control.

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PARISH COUNCIL

HELPS OUR PASTOR SHEPHERD THE FLOCK

Here at St. Peter, we are blessed to have a pastor who is dedicated to helping parishioners grow closer to the Lord. Indeed, our new pastor, Fr. Doty, is doing a wonderful job of nurturing our spiritual growth! With him, there are both staff and volunteer parishioners working faithfully to help make the pastoral vision for St. Peter a reality. One group – our Parish Council – provides a particularly important behind-the-scenes service to our parish.

Fr. Doty shared how he views the Parish Council regarding its advisory and consultative role. “Our overall goal is the salvation of souls,” he says. “How can we get more people to know Jesus Christ? The Church exists to go out and proclaim the Word. Our Lord is looking for an open heart, not perfection. As we ponder what our Mission Statement is, be reminded of Jesus, as stated in Matthew 28:19: ‘Go and make disciples of all nations.’ If we are not relying on the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, along with the Saints, then we’re sunk.”

Serving on the Parish Council are the coordinators of our various parish ministries, four parishioners filling officer roles – President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer – and one additional parishioner who serves as a member at large.”

Jerry Meyer, who had participated on various parish councils before



moving to our area and joining St. Peter almost four years ago, greatly enjoys serving as the current president of our Parish Council.

“It’s an opportunity to be a part of the leadership team that helps the parish function, not only on the day-to-day basis, but from a visionary standpoint,” he says. “I think any time you can be part of a consultative group for the pastor, to help lead and direct and point the parish in the right direction, it’s a fun role to be in.”

Each of the council’s quarterly meetings begins with a prayer led by Fr. Doty before moving on to the financial report and looking at the operations of the parish and our various ministries. The Parish

Council members are there primarily to provide a lay perspective on the ways that our parish can best continue to fulfill its mission.

For Jerry, this opportunity for parishioners to work together with our priests is invaluable to the development of our parish.

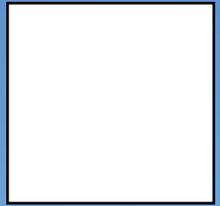
“A parish does not function without the laity,” he says. “The pastor is the authority and has the final say over things, but a good pastor will tell you that he is here to shepherd the flock, and the parishioners help set the agenda, the tone, and the direction of the parish in a consultative way.”

Another role of the Parish Council is to keep communication

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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.

PARISH COUNCIL *continued from page 7*

flowing between the pastor and all church members. Council members are able to bring the suggestions and concerns of parishioners to the church leadership at the meetings. As Jerry points out, open channels of communication allow for a parish as large as ours to remain open to the ideas of individual members.

In addition to helping make the voice of each parishioner heard, the Parish Council also strives to help all members of St. Peter actively engage in parish life.

“At the end of the day, the council is a consultative body that is always concerned with the financial health of the parish,” Jerry says. “But we also have to make sure that we’re encouraging people to give of their time and talent, whether it be something as simple as singing in the choir or volunteering with a CCD class. There are

plenty of people who have been a part of the parish for years that may not have been approached, and those are the ones we want to reach.”

Ultimately, one of the greatest rewards to serving on the Parish Council is the opportunity to get a behind-the-scenes look at what is happening in the parish and help our parishioners and pastor work as a team to make St. Peter a truly wonderful place to come together in worship.

“Serving on the Parish Council gives you an appreciation of what it takes to run such a large parish and school, and what role the pastor and laity combined provide,” Jerry says. “It doesn’t work unless the pastor is in tune with the laity’s direction, and it’s neat to see them work together with one goal – strong parish, strong school.”