



MAY 2019

ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

Monthly Newsletter

ANSWERING THE CALL TO SERVE:

ACOLYTES AND EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

Serving as an acolyte and Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, longtime St. Peter parishioner John Kuchta takes the scripture passage, 1 Samuel 12:24, to heart – “But you must fear the Lord and serve him faithfully with all your heart, for you have seen the great things the Lord has done among you.”

“It is spiritually rewarding to be able to serve God in this way,” says John, who serves as coordinator for the acolytes and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion.

Attend any Mass at St. Peter and you will witness the ministry of our acolytes. Currently, 36 acolytes serve at St. Peter – this affords men, ages 21 and older, the opportunity to more fully experience the Mass.

“You’ve got an intimate ministry right there at the holy sacrifice of the Mass,” John says. “You are assisting the priest with a holy and reverent service.”

Acolytes prepare and clean up before and after Mass to allow the priest to greet parishioners or focus on his homily. They also serve as Eucharistic Ministers and assist in various ways during the celebration of the Mass. Acolytes can also distribute ashes on Ash Wednesday

continued on back cover





THIS MONTH, WE REFLECT ON MOTHERS AND STEWARDSHIP

We celebrate the month of Mary during May, and during this month, we also celebrate Mother's Day. It seems fitting that we honor our mothers during May, since Mary is given to us by God as the example of true Christian motherhood.

Those who are called to be mothers have been blessed by God and called to fulfill a very important responsibility. Mothers are the vehicle through which God brings new life into this world. When we talk about Christian stewardship, we talk about sacrificially returning to God what we have been given. What can more clearly be a demonstration of complete sacrifice than the relationship between mother and child during the nine months of growth in the womb? During these nine months, the child's life depends on the actions of the mother as her energy and nourishment goes directly to the growing baby.

Although this relationship may change to some extent after the child is born, a mother's sacrifice for her child is far from over after the birth. The role of the mother is



critical in the child's development – both spiritually and physically – throughout life. Mothers provide the comfort, nurture and support necessary for their children to become productive citizens and responsible Christians.

The job of a mother is not an easy one. This is a fact that Mary, the mother of Jesus, knew very well. She worried when her young Son appeared to be lost, only to find Him later in His Father's House. She was probably concerned

as Jesus began His public ministry – not knowing what difficulties and rejections He would encounter along the way. And Mary must have experienced great anguish as she watched her Son's body being crucified to a cross.

May all mothers look to Mary as their model for motherhood and ask her intercession as they strive to fulfill their God-given role in their children's lives. During the month of May, let us all take some time to express our appreciation to our mothers for allowing us to come into this world, for loving us, and for serving as an example of what it means to be a steward for life.

Healing the Whole Person

Experience Jesus in His mission of healing! Physical, spiritual and emotional healing, central to the Church's life and 2,000 year tradition, come to life today. This seminar provides the opportunity to learn about and experience the healing power of God in the wholeness of body, soul and spirit. Teachings are augmented by private activities for personal application and healing, including journaling, prayer ministry, the Sacrament of Reconciliation, Adoration and Eucharist.

JULY 11-13 at ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH Lincoln, NE

Early Registration opens April 8! Early bird pricing ends April 29th.

REGISTER NOW: www.jp2healingcenter.org

Scholarships, student & missionary discounts available: contact LincolnHealandEquip@gmail.com

"We are not the sum of our weaknesses and failures, we are the sum of the Father's love for us and our real capacity to become the image of His Son Jesus." - Pope St. John Paul II



JOHN PAUL II Healing Center
Transformation in the Heart of the Church



A Letter from Our Pastor

HONORING OUR LADY IN MAY

Dear Parishioners,

As people of faith, we often refer to May as “the month of Mary.” For centuries, Catholics throughout the world have included special devotions to Mary in their activities during this month. Best known, I’m sure, is the widespread and ever-popular practice of May Crowning – crowning an image of Our Lady with flowers.

May is certainly a beautiful time – it is, after all, a month full of renewal and celebration. For many Americans, cold March winds and dreary April showers have given way to blooming flowers and trees. Yet, it’s not only flowers and trees that reflect the newness and joy of May. Many students in junior high, high school

and college are celebrating their graduations, and will soon be moving on to new phases and exciting opportunities in their lives. And of course, it is the month when we celebrate Mother’s Day, honoring and extending our gratitude to the

women who have faithfully raised and nurtured us.

And May is most certainly a month of joy for all of us who claim the Church as our spiritual home. This year, we spend the whole month in the Easter season, which closes with Pentecost in June. Thus, the joy of the Resurrection and the glory of the Ascension are the themes which fill our Christian calendar this month.

As we rejoice with Mary at her Son’s triumph over sin, Satan and death, we also remember her faithfulness to God’s will throughout her life. Indeed, she can be viewed as the model of Christian stewardship. The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops pointed to her in their pastoral letter on stewardship: “After Jesus, it is the Blessed Virgin Mary who by her example most perfectly teaches the meaning of discipleship and stewardship in their fullest sense. All of their essential elements are found in her life: she was called and gifted by God; she responded generously, creatively, and prudently” (*Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, 41).

As we enter into the month of May, let us take the time to gratefully reflect on the newness and joy that surrounds us. And in doing so, let us follow the Blessed Mother’s example of total dedication to God as we rejoice in the blessings He gives us, this month and beyond!

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Craig Doty,
Pastor





SITTING IN THE LORD'S PRESENCE:



Many adorers spend their quiet time in front of the Eucharist to pray the Rosary.

Imagine if the risen Christ were to appear to us at the altar of St. Peter – wouldn't we all go running to meet Him? More likely than not, millions of people would travel from around the world just to sit at His feet and soak in the incomparable graces of His presence. It may be hard for us to picture this scenario – and yet, the reality is that we indeed have a chance to rest in Christ's true presence any time of the day or night!

It is one of the greatest blessings of the Catholic Church to have the real presence of Jesus dwelling in our midst in the form of the Holy Eucharist. And here at St. Peter, in addition to receiving the Eucharist at all of our Masses, we may also partake in one of the most sacred and life-changing experiences our Catholic faith has to offer – Eucharistic Adoration. Adoration before the exposed Eucharist is available every weekday morning and until 3 p.m. on first Fridays. At all other times, parishioners are welcome to come pray before the tabernacle in our sanctuary.

Jeannie Woodrich is the coordinator of adoration at our parish. With the help of Marcia Merboth and Maryann Spahni, she manages a schedule of adorers, ensuring that the exposed Blessed Sacrament is never left unattended in our sanctuary.

Jeannie knows from experience that the blessings of a regular adoration hour are many. Thanks to her own commitment to adoration,

she has found herself on a closer walk with Christ.

"The Mass is the ultimate form of worship, but adoration is an extension of that, where we can sit for more time in worship of Him," she says. "It has taught me to have a personal relationship with Jesus and has shown me an intimacy that I didn't know was available to me. This is where I really learned how to let God love me."

In today's busy world, it can be intimidating to commit time each week to Eucharistic Adoration. One of the greatest blessings of perpetual adoration is that anyone can drop in to our sanctuary for however long they are able, at any time of the day – scheduled adorers are provided with a key code for night entry. The Lord is always right there waiting!

"We offer this opportunity so that people can come to know Christ more, love Him more, and worship Him more," Jeannie says. "Putting that first makes everything else in life better and sweeter. And not just we benefit from adoration – we console the heart of Jesus when we're here and we satisfy His thirst. So I encourage people to come any time – stay for five minutes or stay for an hour."



Students from our parish school come to pray in front of the Eucharist.



PERPETUAL ADORATION BRINGS ABUNDANT BLESSINGS

Whether you decide to spend your time in adoration reading Scripture, saying a Rosary, or simply spending time in quiet, meditative prayer, the rewards of this time with the Lord are great.

“I don’t just like adoration — I crave it and I long for it,” Jeannie says. “It’s where I do most of my surrendering to God — where my worries, struggles, heartaches and grand ideas are surrendered to Him and His will. It’s where I praise and worship Him the most, too.

“There’s an undeniable something sacred that people notice, and that is the real presence of Jesus in the tabernacle,” she continues. “It’s calming and inviting and loving and sometimes even convicting.”

We are so blessed that our parish offers this opportunity to experience the special graces that flow from a devotion to the Holy Eucharist. Let us

embrace this truly precious gift and go now to sit and rest in His presence!

“I’m just overwhelmed with the desire for people to know what’s waiting for them here,” Jeannie says. “My biggest desire is to fill our adoration schedule and fill our church so He’s never alone.”

“We offer this opportunity so that people can come to know Christ more, love Him more, and worship Him more. Putting that first makes everything else in life better and sweeter. And not just we benefit from adoration — we console the heart of Jesus when we’re here and we satisfy His thirst. So I encourage people to come any time — stay for five minutes or stay for an hour.”

— JEANNIE WOODRICH



Parishioners and visitors pray in front of the exposed Eucharist during adoration at St. Peter.

Adoration with the exposed Eucharist takes place at St. Peter every weekday morning beginning after the 6:30 a.m. Mass and continuing until the 8:15 a.m. Mass, and on the first Friday of each month beginning after the 6:30 a.m. Mass and continuing until 3 p.m. Parishioners are encouraged to come pray before the tabernacle at any other time during the week. Those who would like to experience the blessings of a regular adoration hour should contact Jeannie Woodrich by email at jeanniewoodrich@yahoo.com, or by telephone at 402-310-0323.



ST. ISIDORE'S SIMPLE STEWARDSHIP

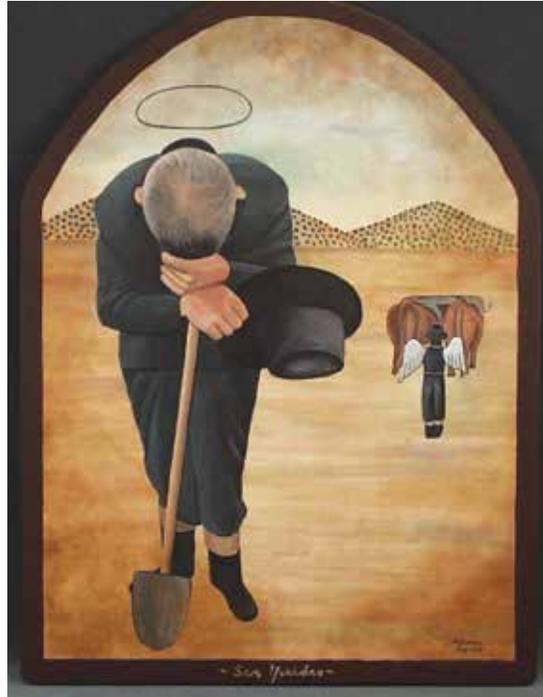
When we consider the lives of the saints, the first that usually come to mind are more than likely classed into four categories — martyrs, priests, religious, and great miracle workers. St. Isidore was none of these, and yet he is revered in Spain as one of “the five saints,” which include St. Ignatius of Loyola, St. Teresa of Avila, St. Francis Xavier, and St. Philip Neri, all of whom were canonized with him in the same year. His feast day is May 15.

The life of St. Isidore is a great testimony to how, with God’s grace, we can take the occurrences of a simple, mundane, and even sometimes difficult life and use them as opportunities for sanctification.

Isidore was born near Madrid, around the year 1070, into a peasant family. While still a young boy, he began working as a day laborer on the farm of Juan de Vergas, a wealthy landowner, just outside of Madrid.

Despite the hard work on Vergas’ farm, where Isidore spent the rest of his life in service, he did not complain and always tried his hardest to meet the tasks requested of him. Above all things, he upheld his relationship with Jesus. As he walked behind his plow, he would talk to God, offering up his work as a prayer. He rose up extra early each day before work to attend daily Mass. He would even spend his vacations touring the different churches of Madrid and the surrounding areas.

As hardworking as Isidore was, his fellow workers complained to Vergas that the pious laborer always arrived late for work because he attended Mass every day. Isidore could not deny the accusation, but he assured his employer that he always made a special effort to compensate for the extra minutes he spent in prayer.



One day, Vergas decided to see for himself whether Isidore was really slacking in his work. Hiding in the bushes, he watched as Isidore came out of church, went directly to the fields, and began his plowing. To Vergas’ astonishment, he saw a “man” with another plow beside Isidore, driving a team of white oxen. When he ran toward the mysterious team, it disappeared and Isidore only looked puzzled when Vergas asked him about it. “Sir, I work alone and know of none save God to whom I look for strength,” Isidore said. No doubt, God had sent His angels to help ensure that Isidore’s work would not suffer because of his placing the spiritual above the temporal.

While working for Vergas, Isidore fell in love with and married a young woman, Maria Torribia, who shared his devotion and faith. They had one child, a son, who died while still a boy. A model of sanctity herself, Maria — also a canonized saint — served her husband faithfully all her life. Together, Isidore and Maria would look for ways to serve the poor, even though they had very little themselves. One story says that when Isidore brought a number of hungry people home with him one day, Maria realized as she scraped the bottom of the pot that there was no more stew. Isidore asked her to check one more time, and she was able to spoon out enough to feed everyone. They could not refuse an act of kindness to anyone.

At times, we might be tempted to think that we do not have the talents or the assets to be good stewards. But St. Isidore shows us by his simple, humble example that we can live out the call to discipleship in the smallest actions of charity and piety — that we only need do as much as we can, and trust that God will do the rest.



COMMUNITY RESPONSE TO CHURCH CLEANING MINISTRY BUILDS SENSE OF PARISH OWNERSHIP

Before our Stewardship Renewal took place, Chad Hartwick, parish manager for maintenance and janitorial duties at St. Peter Church and School and his staff were working to keep the church building clean. But when the renewal took place, the response from parishioners to join the Church Cleaning Ministry was nothing short of overwhelming.

Chad has a current list of 44 members, including families, who signed up for the ministry. They began their work in January.

"I've set up about four times a month for the ministry members to come in and clean the church," Chad says. "They clean the entryway of the church, sweep and mop under the pews and around the altar, vacuum the aisles and cloth upholstery on the pews, dust the statues and stained glass windows, and mop the tiles in the entryway."

A janitorial company owned by a parishioner also comes in on the second Friday of each month to clean, and the members of the Parish Council of Catholic Women come in on one Saturday a month to clean.

"We make sure all the cleaning is done by First Fridays and sometimes we have two cleanings a week, and it will be weather-related," Chad says.

Chad has been able to use an online app, Signup Genius, to schedule the ministry members. He sets the dates for cleaning, assigns the number of slots to be filled for cleaners, and ministry members can sign up accordingly. With the number of ministry members available, no one member will be likely to work more than once a month.

"Ideally, six is kind of the best number to have per crew," he says. "But we have had three to eight sign up, so it depends on how many I get."

When he saw the numbers of parishioners joining the ministry, it gave him pause — but only briefly.

"I was overwhelmed by the response," Chad says. "I thought, 'Now what?' But it's been good."

Chad is certain that the ministry members' participation helps build their sense of ownership of the church.

"I'd think it should do that a lot," he says. "They're able to come in and clean and take pride that they did what helps out the church and the beauty of it. If I'm in the church cleaning I also pray, so I'm not only working. From a spiritual aspect, the cleaning lends to it, as well."

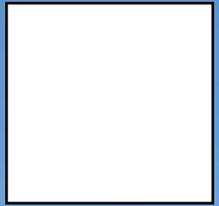
Chad has also observed the camaraderie that has grown among the ministry members as they work.



There is always room for additional ministry members! Anyone interested may call the school office at 402-421-6299, or the parish office at 402-423-1239, and ask for Chad Hartwick.



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.

ACOLYTES AND EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION

continued from front cover

and assist with Baptisms.

Acolytes are formally installed through the Diocese of Lincoln, after a diocesan training process.

"Everyone has found this to be a fulfilling ministry for them and those they serve," John says. "I would say the majority of acolytes keep serving their whole life until they can no longer physically serve. It is such an honor and privilege."

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are designated by the diocese to distribute Holy Communion in the absence of a priest. The 34 Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion at St. Peter serve an important role. Each Sunday, on a rotating schedule, four ministers go

out in the area and deliver Holy Communion to members of St. Peter who are homebound and in assisted living facilities.

"For some, this is the only person they see that week," John says. "They really appreciate that we are taking care of their spiritual need."

Six parishioners have recently answered the call to serve in this ministry. For John, serving as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion has had a positive spiritual impact.

"Being an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion has helped me develop a much closer understanding of the Gospel and teachings of the Church," he says.

If you would like to serve the Lord with all your heart as an acolyte or Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, please contact John Kuchta at 402-730-8833 or jkuchta@solutiononenow.com.