



NOVEMBER 2018

ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

Monthly Newsletter

MUSIC MINISTRY INVITES US TO JOIN IN PRAYER THROUGH THE GIFT OF SONG

When we join the members of our Music Ministry in song during the celebration of the Mass, we are taking part in a beautiful prayer – a joining with God – created through the power of music.

Mary Odgaard, Music Director, passionately believes so.

“All of us are given gifts,” she says. “God plants the desire in our hearts to join with Him, but we don’t always recognize it. If God has given you that gift, there is no better way to use it than to give back that gift to He who gave you that gift. God created music, and it is the most robust way to connect our hearts to His. We connect our hearts through this incredible combination of sound and air.”

Between 30 to 35 parishioners take part in our Music Ministry. The Saturday Vigil Choir is led by Jenn Creager, while the 9:30 a.m. Sunday choir is led by Joy Bartsch. Mary leads the 11 a.m. Sunday Choir. Accompanists include Katy Dornbos, Dylan McDermott, Jeremy Murphy and Kirsten Downey.

As Mary has worked with the ministry members, she has come to know that they share her feelings about the power of music in strengthening our faith.

“We feel passionately about it,” she says. “When you’re doing music, there is no fading off. You have to be involved, engaged. It takes great focus, energy and concentration and you are really being engaged in the Mass. It’s very hard work. This is a very big parish, and it’s really hard to get to know others unless you’re



Mary Odgaard leads our talented Music Ministry.

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TIME: THE FOUNDATION OF STEWARDSHIP

The U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops has told us that stewardship is part of discipleship and is a way of responding to God's call in every aspect of our lives. We refer to the three facets of stewardship as "Time, Talent and Treasure," and when we consider the importance of these three Ts of stewardship, the "time" component comes first by design.

When we talk about stewardship of time, we are referring to prayer time. Prayer is of the utmost importance in a disciple's life, and it serves as the fertile ground from which the gifts of talent and treasure blossom. Only by spending time in prayer each day and receiving the sacraments are we able to consistently and generously donate our talent and treasure to the Church.

When looking for examples of how to live our lives as disciples of Christ and as stewards of God's gifts, we can always turn to the great saints of our Church to guide us. And when it comes to the Stewardship of Time, the life of St. Damien is just one example of how prayer, or "Time," is the foundation for our lives of stewardship.

Shortly after being ordained a priest, St. Damien volunteered to serve a colony of lepers isolated on the island of Molokai, Hawaii. From May 1873 until his death in 1889 (at the age of 49) St. Damien worked to restore within the lepers a sense of personal worth and dignity.

Although for some time St. Damien took the necessary precautions to ensure that he did not contract leprosy, he knew that physical touch was necessary to communicate his love and concern to those afflicted with the disease. He embraced the lepers, dined with them, cared for them, and anointed them in the sacraments. With

great humility and sacrifice, St. Damien offered his own life in order to save the lives of others.

From where did St. Damien draw his strength? What was the source of his inspiration? "Were it not for the constant presence of our divine Master in our humble chapel, I would not have found it possible to persevere in sharing the lot of the lepers in Molokai," St. Damien wrote. "The Eucharist is the bread that gives strength... It is at once the most eloquent proof of His love and the most powerful means of fostering His love in us. He gives Himself every day so that our hearts as burning coals may set afire the hearts of the faithful."

St. Damien found his strength in the Mass, the greatest prayer of the Church. Prayer was the impetus behind the generosity of this faithful servant of God, and is the fuel that ignites every heart to flame in love. Without prayer, without the grace that flows from the sacraments, we are incapable of leading lives of service and responding to God's call!

How much time do you dedicate to prayer each day? One hour? Fifteen minutes? None at all? Before you consider joining a parish ministry or volunteering your talents in service, and before you discern your gifts of treasure to the Church, be sure that prayer is your foundation. Identify a prayer schedule that is manageable. This may entail arising 20 minutes early each day to offer your work to the Lord, or attending daily Mass once a week. Every prayer commitment is unique and personal. Yet, no matter what, this time offering, this dedication to prayer, is the key to serving the Lord with faithfulness, generosity and joy.



A Letter from Our Pastor

NOVEMBER:

A TIME OF FAITHFUL CELEBRATION AND SHARING IN THANKS

Dear Parishioners,

As I look over the calendar for November, my mind is filled with thoughts of thanksgiving. These aren't just thoughts about Thanksgiving Day, although I look towards it with happy anticipation – more than that, they are thoughts filled with a variety of reasons for why we should be thankful.

The month began with a great celebration that should be a day of thanksgiving for all of us – All Saints' Day. This is a great feast celebrating the great company of Christians now in heaven – a company we shall eventually join, whether or not we're formally canonized, if we remain faithful to Christ.

And the communion of saints – the sharing of spiritual goods by those in heaven to us who are still in our pilgrimage – is a great cause for thanksgiving. We read the lives of the saints to be encouraged and inspired by their examples. Plus, we are strengthened by their fellowship in the Body of Christ, and we are aided by their prayers.

And then, the very next day, we celebrated All Souls' Day. Although this day commemorates all the faithful departed who are being purified in Purgatory, it is natural for us to concentrate on the members of our own family and our friends who have died. While we pray for them, that they may soon experience the joys of heaven, at the same time we also are thankful for the love they gave us and for the faith they passed on to us.

Then, later in the month comes Thanksgiving Day, the national holiday celebrating all the things for which we are thankful. The fact that it comes toward the end of autumn reminds us that it was originally a



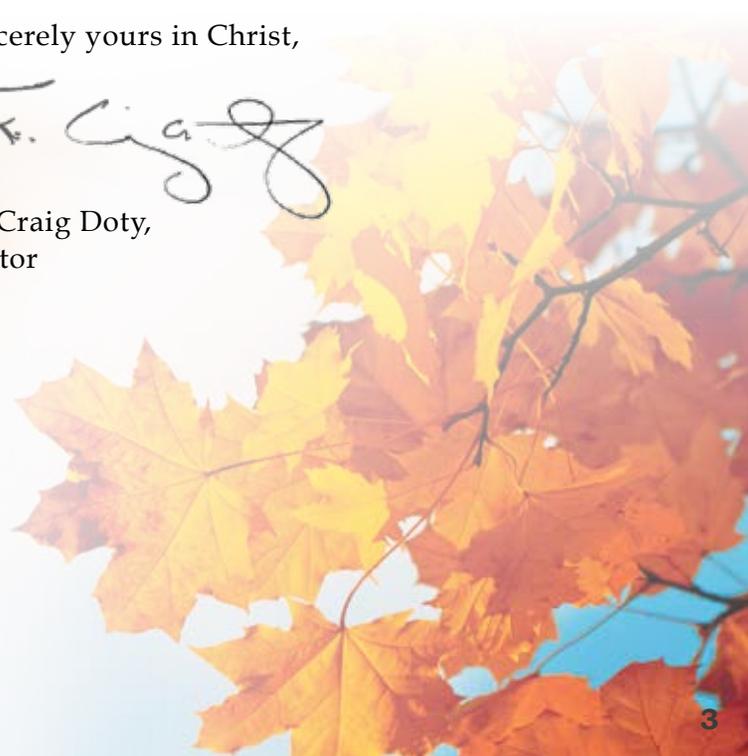
harvest festival. For Christians today, it's a wholesome reminder that we should thank God for everything we receive, especially the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ. Why not participate in the Church's Great Thanksgiving, the Holy Eucharist, on Thanksgiving Day? It's the ultimate way to give thanks.

A reminder – while much of our attention this month may be drawn to the often contentious goings-on in our country, we need to remember that God is in charge of the universe, even though He has given us free will. If we trust in His loving care, demonstrated by returning to Him a portion

of the time, talent and treasure He has entrusted to us, we can withstand the troubles of life. It's a good principle to follow in this month of thanksgiving.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Craig Doty,
Pastor





THE ST. VINCENT DE PAUL SOCIETY: “BOO



One of the St. Vincent de Paul members manning the phones at the Society's Ozanam Warehouse and Call Center.

During her many years overseas, parishioner Miriam McCornick has personally witnessed the varied degrees of poverty. She's seen young emaciated girls, wearing filthy, ill-fitted garments held together by sticks, and families living in tiny huts with barely enough food to survive. And yet even these extreme cases, Miriam says, are nothing compared to the poverty she has witnessed here in Lincoln through St. Peter's St. Vincent de Paul Conference.

“Though these people were economically poor, they still had a tremendous joy — a rich faith that was truly extraordinary to witness,” Miriam says. “Whereas here, I feel like we really live in a false-front society. We have this beautiful outside glamour, but when you walk into the actual homes I think what you see is the most devastating — a sense of hopelessness. You can just feel the hopelessness in your client and that spiritual depravity, to me, is the true poverty.”

While the St. Vincent de Paul Society exists primarily to provide relief for immediate physical needs, there is also a deep spiritual aspect to the ministry, as members seek to bring the love and mercy of Christ to the hopeless and destitute. Described by Miriam as “the boots on the ground,” the Society maintains a 24-hour help line where individuals and families can seek emergency relief.

“We are, quite simply, faith in action,” Miriam says. “When there is an emergency, we go out immediately and meet the needs of those who are in a strait. So if someone's electricity is about to be cut off and it's freezing outside, it's our helpline that they call. They could be in a phase in their life where they have just had a little blip. So we're there to give them help to get over that hump. Other times, we help recommend them to other organizations where they can receive more long-term care and assistance.”

Always seeking to maintain the dignity of the person, clients are personally met by St. Vincent de Paul members once the initial call for help has been made. This allows for a “silent evangelization” as Society members get to know the person's particular situation, allowing for a more personalized care.



TS ON THE GROUND” PROVIDE COMPASSIONATE CARE

“It’s very important that we are the walking Gospel,” Miriam says. “We are the hands of Jesus, we are the face of Jesus. That personal interaction is oftentimes the most important part of what we do. It’s a form of evangelization through service, reminding the person that they are loved and cared for.”

Relying entirely on donations from others, the Society of St. Vincent de Paul is then able to offer immediate relief to their clients. This help can take many forms, Miriam says – from paying medical and utility bills,

to providing food, clothing or shelter, to assisting with transportation. Yet, no matter the particular circumstance, the goal is always to empower the client, helping them take control of their situation once again.

“When we go do a home visit, we assess the needs,” Miriam says. “We have a budget in each case, a ceiling of what we can give toward that particular cause. Then, when necessary, we try to find the extra funds. We try to get the client to be empowered, helping them come up with ways for additional funds.”

Parishioners can support the St. Vincent de Paul Society by becoming either active or associate members. St. Peter’s Conference gathers the third Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. You can also donate funds through the monthly envelopes or electronically through the parish website, allowing the ministry to continue meeting the often-hidden needs of our community. For more information, please contact Miriam McCornick at either mbmccornick@yahoo.com or 402-560-9717.

NOVA ADVENT PRAYER SERIES

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR PREPARATION

As we prepare for the celebration of Christmas, we have an opportunity to fully prepare for this joyous occasion through the Advent Prayer Series that will be led by Matt Simmons, Diocesan Director of Evangelization, Katy Dornbos, parishioner at St. Peter, and Fr. Doty.

The series will begin Nov. 29 and will be held from 7-8:30 p.m. on Thursday evenings. There is no cost to attend, and one may attend each or any of the sessions. There is no registration.

The topics will be: Nov. 29, Living in Relationship with God – the fundamentals of relational prayer; Dec. 6, Praying with the Word of God – the transformative power of Scripture; Dec. 13, How to Pray when God seems far away – praying with desolation and distraction; Dec. 20, Praying with Your Spouse and Family – the power of intercession and blessing.

Each session will include a talk on an aspect of prayer, and time for Eucharistic Adoration by candlelight.

“We want to give people an opportunity to learn about prayer, but most importantly to give people time for prayer, time in adoration,” Fr. Doty says. “All are welcome.”

“I’m hoping that the series will help people have a deeper relationship with God, to live in intimacy with God,” Matt says. “I want them to have a relationship with Him that affects their whole life, that orients what they do and how they love. I hope for a relationship that brings a sense of peace and security in their life.”

“I want people to experience the freedom that comes from sharing everything with God in prayer,” Katy says. “Life becomes more beautiful in prayer. God desires to reveal Himself to us, in every aspect of our life.”

Babysitting is available. For more information, please call the Parish Office at 402-423-1239.



THE BLESSINGS OF THE CATHOLIC MASS

It is ironic that today, with all of the freedom of religion that we enjoy in the United States, many of us wonder why we must go to Mass on Sunday.

However, if we really understood what the Mass is and how we participate in the celebration, we would instead be asking why we are, as sinful human beings, blessed with the opportunity to participate in the holy Mass. If we simply understood and recognized that God's infinite goodness allows us to do so, we would be eager to go to Mass on Sunday and every other day of the week.

It is true, however, that all Catholics are obliged to "Keep holy the Lord's Day" by sharing in the Mass. But why are we obliged?

The Eucharistic Liturgy is the center of our faith. It is "the summit toward which all activity of the Church is directed" and it is "the font from which all her power flows" (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy* 10). It does not exhaust the activity of the Church, but is most certainly her greatest work.

The sacrifice of Christ on the cross is literally re-presented to the Father during Mass, and Christ allows us to join with Him in offering that sacrifice. Imagine our Lord and Savior dying on the cross for us right up the street. Imagine knowing that Mary is sitting at the foot of the cross with St. John, witnessing her Son giving Himself to the Father for the sake of all of us. Would we not run to be there? Would we not desire to share in His sacrifice, just as Mary did?

Believe it or not, the sacrifice of Calvary is really, truly happening at our parish, every time the Mass is offered.

Our participation in Mass gives us the strength and

the graces we need to live our lives as Christ's disciples. So, what does this mean for us?

This means we have a front row seat to the sacrifice of Calvary. Given such a gift, how can we not accept it?

We also have a chance to join in Jesus' sacrifice by offering our own prayers and petitions. As an example, what better gift could we give deceased loved ones than the offering of prayers for their souls in purgatory?

Most importantly, we have the opportunity to *receive* the Eucharist, followed by quiet time, when we offer sincere thanks and allow God's graces to fill us. Think of all you are missing when you do not properly prepare yourself to receive the Holy Eucharist.

We ought to joyfully head to Church each Sunday, eager to give God glory in the greatest way we can! Attending and actively participating in Mass every Sunday is our obligation as Catholics. But we should not allow the fact that our attendance is "required" to stop us from going. Nor should we allow our laziness to overshadow the amazing privilege and the many blessings that lay before us in the Mass.

The pope and the bishops direct us to participate in the Eucharistic Liturgy every Sunday because they know there is no better way to keep holy the Lord's day — giving God thanks for all He has done for us in the most powerful way possible. They know that, through the Mass, we gain the graces necessary to live our lives in this world.

Our ability to participate in the Mass is a wonderful gift, not a great burden. May Christ enlighten our minds and hearts to clearly see the wonders of the celebration, and give us great enthusiasm and eagerness to participate.





CSS FOOD PANTRY

FILLING HEARTS AND STOMACHS ALL YEAR LONG

We are told in Scripture that faith without works is dead. In our daily lives, it can be difficult at times to see where these works – the actions that give life to our faith – fit into our routine. The Catholic Social Services Food Pantry is making it possible for parishioners to practice their faith and put it into action at a time of year when we celebrate our blessings.

The CSS St. Francis Food Pantry is located in the St. Joseph Center on O Street in Lincoln. A family or individual can come to the pantry and receive a week's worth of food free of charge, no questions asked. To help support this mission, the St. Peter Parish Council of Catholic Women's St. Anne Circle has dedicated themselves to making it easy for parishioners to donate needed items to the CSS Food Pantry.

"Those that help feel called to feed the hungry," says St. Anne Circle chairperson Sharon Hoffman. "It's a work of mercy. It's a small part that we can do to help other people."

Twice each year, Sharon and other women from the circle hand out grocery sacks after weekend Masses. Parishioners can then take those sacks home to fill with non-perishable food items and return the sack to church the following weekend. The food is then loaded into a van and taken to the CSS Food Pantry.

"The church is very generous when we do these drives," Sharon says. "That sack is a reminder to donate and sometimes people bring us three or four sacks, or they'll give us money and we'll go buy the food or give it directly to CSS so they can buy the food. People are very generous when you ask them."



Sharon Hoffman leads our Catholic Social Services Food Pantry. This is her last year as leader. Thank you Sharon for your service to the Lord!

A cause that's close to her heart, Sharon spends each Monday volunteering at the CSS Food Pantry.

"Since I'm down there, I kind of know when we're short of food," she says. "We used to do our drives in May and October, but this past May we had a lot of food still, so we did one in the middle of June and one for October. Once the holidays come, we usually get a lot of donations from the churches and schools, so we do the drives when we do to fill the gap. The need never changes. There are always people who need food."

In addition to the biannual food drives, parishioners can also bring food in items to be placed in the large box at the back of the church any time of year. The box is emptied twice each week as food is taken to the pantry.

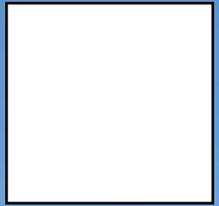
"It's a work of mercy. It's a small part that we can do to help other people."

—Sharon Hoffman

If you would like more information on how you can help through this mission of mercy and compassion, please contact Sharon Hoffman at jhofman@neb.rr.com.



ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH



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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.

MUSIC MINISTRY *continued from front cover*

in a ministry. The Music Ministry is one of creativity. When you are worshiping and creating, it allows you to draw the community to you, and pass that relationship on to God. Through that relationship, we grow in our relationship with God."

There is a need for additional musicians in the ministry – singers of all varieties and men in particular.

"We want anyone who has musical gifts, and if you can sing parts, all the better," Mary says. "We want anyone who can sing, especially for the 9:30 a.m. Sunday and the Saturday Vigil Mass. We'd like to have more men involved and we have great ones."

Mary especially would like to have parishioners who would like to sing the "Passion" on Good Friday.

"And we have five Masses to cover for Christmas with three groups," she says. "We'd love to have someone to help share those Masses."

"All of us are given gifts. God plants the desire in our hearts to join with Him, but we don't always recognize it. If God has given you that gift, there is no better way to use it than to give back that gift to He who gave you that gift. God created music, and it is the most robust way to connect our hearts to His. We connect our hearts through this incredible combination of sound and air."

— Mary Odgaard, Music Director

If you would like to contact Mary Odgaard about joining the Music Ministry, simply send her an email at mzodgaard@gmail.com. Or, ask one of the choir members after Mass and you will be sent in the proper direction!