



SEPTEMBER 2019

ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

Monthly Newsletter

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD

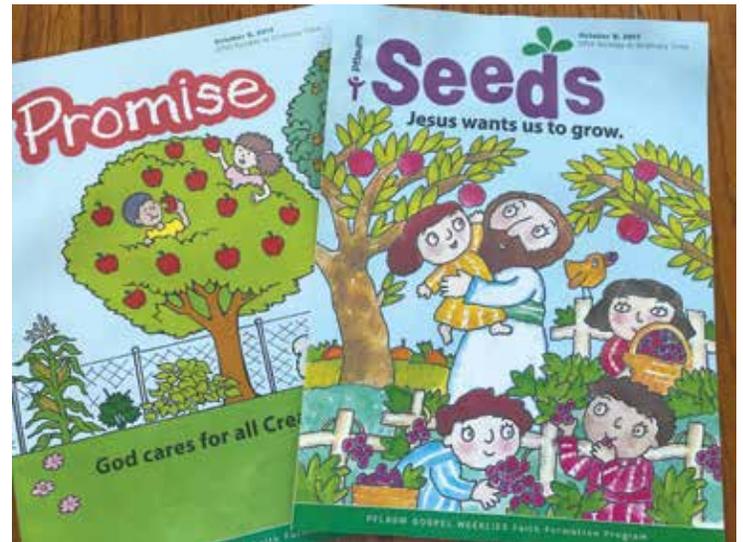
A PLACE FOR THE LITTLE ONES

It's OK to admit it. If you're a parent, there has probably been at least a Sunday or two when you've dreaded going to Mass. Maybe it's after a particularly difficult liturgy with an ornery preschooler, or maybe it happens when you start to doubt that your 6-year-old is getting anything out of the Mass each week. But, sooner or later, if you have children, it will probably happen to you.

It can be a challenging – and sometimes daunting – task to keep young children engaged, or even just limit the fidgeting for an hour in the pew.

Here at St. Peter, we want Sunday Mass to be an opportunity for all our parishioners to pray and grow closer to God and their parish community. And we're aware that, for many young children, trying to sit still for an hour may not be the best way to do that.

With this in mind, our young parishioners are invited to join us for Children's Liturgy of the Word each Sunday, September through May, at the 9:30 a.m. Mass. Children who want to participate are given name tags at the counter in the church narthex each week before Mass.



Children's Liturgy of the Word helps our littlest parishioners understand the Sunday readings using these guides.

Children's Liturgy of the Word is designed to give young children – generally ages 4-6 – an opportunity to listen to and learn about the Mass readings, on their level. Each week, catechists lead the children in age-appropriate reflections, prayers

continued on back cover



THE SPIRITUALITY OF STEWARDSHIP

FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE SAINTS

The word “stewardship” has long carried with it the association of a financial obligation to the Church. Many believe that stewardship means “giving my time and money to the Church in support of its work, lest it is unable to survive and thrive.”

Indeed, stewardship does often require sacrifice of some kind. But the reality is that stewardship is not simply a guilt-laden obligation, or a “bill.” Nor is stewardship in any way comparable to a tax payment or a charitable networking opportunity at work. Instead, stewardship is a spiritual way of life – an active response to Christ’s invitation to unreservedly “come after me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Mt 4:19).

Stewardship is about how we respond to God’s call to discipleship, and there are many different ways we can respond to His call. We can, in turn, live the stewardship way of life simply by making small choices in our daily lives, under normal, everyday circumstances.

Nowhere in Christian history is there a more archetypal example of the variety of ways we can respond to God’s call, than in the lives of the saints. The saints represent a wide cross-section of individuals – old and young, rich and poor – living in different times in human history. Some were called to the religious life, focusing their lives on spirituality and material simplicity through prayer, and helping to form the tenets of faith. Others were individuals focused on charitable outreach, dedicating their whole lives to feeding the hungry and clothing the naked. Still, others faced great adversity and challenges to their faith, and ultimately suffered death and martyrdom in loyalty to Christ and His Church.

However, the commonality that all of these individuals share is that they responded to God’s call to discipleship by utilizing the unique talents that God had given them. They did so in ways that were conducive to their individual personalities, and that actively influenced the circumstances presented to them in their respective days and times. Contemplative spirituality, charitable giving, great courage – all of these roads have led to canonization and, ultimately, eternal life with God



in His glory. We are all called to do the same.

As the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops states in its pastoral letter on stewardship, *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, “The challenge, then, is to understand our role – our vocation – and to respond generously to this call from God” (43). When thinking about the spirituality of stewardship, take some time to discern your talents, and how you can best respond to God’s call by naturally and effectively using the gifts He has given you. If you are a gregarious person, this might mean reaching out to a co-worker you don’t know very well, thus helping to create a hospitable work environment. If you are an individual who is often “on the go,” perhaps this means praying the Rosary while you are driving from place to place. If you have recently experienced a financial windfall or unexpected increase in income, this might mean sponsoring a little league team in your community by paying for their uniforms.

God has provided many roads to the Kingdom of Heaven, and in the saints, we see examples of the many roads that have been taken. Choosing the one that is best for us means that we can live stewardship as a spiritual practice and a way of life, and that we may answer His call to discipleship.



A Letter from Our Pastor

GETTING OUR PRIORITIES IN ORDER

Dear Parishioners,

I know that many people are not on a school year calendar. But for many of us, September brings a livelier rhythm to our schedules. Life just seems to get busier after Labor Day. Therefore, this month seems to be a good time to think about our priorities and to pray for God's guidance.

It has been said that the truly important is often pushed aside by the merely urgent. So, as you review your priorities, please make sure that you include what's really important!

First of all, be sure to include time for God, as well as for job, family and recreation. Of prime importance, make sure that Mass on Sundays is a top priority – that's the most important event of the week. In addition, reserve some time for personal Scripture study, as well as prayer with your family or a prayer group – then incorporate that into your daily and weekly routine.

There are many forces pulling at us as we decide where to use our talents. For most of us, our jobs claim the lion's share of our efforts and sometimes threaten to engulf our whole lives. We also have responsibilities to our families and legitimate calls for service to the community – that obviously includes the Church. We have lots of areas for service right here in our own parish – religious education, music, serving as an usher, or any one of the many ministries in which you may use your



talents to grow closer to God.

Finally, we have to set priorities for using our money. As Christians, we are responsible to God for the use of the financial resources He has entrusted to us – no matter if it's a lot or a little – and to make a return to God in thanksgiving. In this regard, Scripture gives us the tithe as a goal. Working toward a tithe may mean some changes in your priorities, but I can tell you from personal experience that those who have adopted this as their standard of giving experience a joy rooted in the spiritual growth that occurs as we continually live out the "three Ts" of stewardship – time, talent and treasure.

Priorities are certainly a part of life. As you review your own priorities, especially now that many regular routines are starting up again, ask yourself how you will use the time, talent and treasure entrusted to you by God.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Craig Doty,
Pastor





WITNESSING GOD'S AMAZING G

Through the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults, or RCIA, God's amazing grace works wonders. Searching souls come "home" to the loving embrace of Mother Church, longtime Catholics rediscover the marvelous truths of Catholicism, and hearts are inspired by the traditions of our sacred faith.

"Through their experience with RCIA, I hope our participants gain a greater understanding of our faith, and a deeper love for Jesus and the Church," says Director of Religious Education Lynette McArdle, who coordinates the RCIA process at our parish. "To be truly Catholic, you have to have a love for Jesus, *as well* as the Church He has established. In RCIA, we help people see that Jesus established His Church on earth a couple thousand years ago, and it is guided by the Holy Spirit. Whatever trials it faces, it will prevail, because God will take care of it."

By listening to enlightening talks, RCIA participants often undergo a profound renewal of faith. The talks are presented by the RCIA team, which includes

Vern Steiner, Chad Steiner, Dennis Kellogg and Lynette along with our parish priests. RCIA sessions will begin on Sept. 5 and wrap up in early April, before the Easter Vigil, when RCIA catechumens (non-baptized persons) and candidates (baptized persons) will come into full communion with the Catholic Church by completing their Sacraments of Initiation. The sessions take place each Thursday from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in the Music Room.

Coming from various stages along the spiritual journey, RCIA members find the sessions to be comfortable, inviting and refreshing.

"Our sessions are open to anyone who is interested in learning more about the Catholic faith," Lynette says. "Our program offers both a deep exploration as well as a general overview of Catholicism. There is plenty of time for discussion, and for participants to express their concerns and questions. RCIA is helpful for cradle Catholics who didn't learn a lot about their faith as they were growing up, or didn't receive all of the Sacraments of Initiation. It is also helpful for those who are thinking



Fr. Craig Doty, Fr. Caleb La Rue and Deacon Christian Huebner celebrate with those who received sacraments at the Easter Vigil.



Fr. Doty baptizes one of the RCIA candidates.



GRACE AT WORK THROUGH RCIA

about becoming Catholic, or those who simply have questions about the Catholic faith.”

Generally, the RCIA presentations cover the following topics – the Seven Sacraments, the Ten Commandments, the Creed, Personal and Liturgical Prayer, Grace, Divine Revelation (Scripture), Morality, God’s Plan for Sexuality, Holy Week, Blessed Virgin Mary, the Papacy, and the Structure of the Church.

There are a few sessions designed for converts only that are offered towards the end of the RCIA year. These include ‘how-to’ sessions on receiving the Sacraments of Confession and Holy Communion and also gives the converts a final opportunity to ask questions about any area of confusion or concern prior to being received into the Church.

“We also take them on a tour through the parish building and show them how everything there is to enhance our prayer life and help us worship,” Lynette says.

Throughout the sessions, resources such as the official *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the *Holy Bible*, and personal faith testimonies are drawn upon.

“We use the best resources we can so that our RCIA members can see the proof of what we are presenting to them,” Lynette says. “They need to see that we don’t make this ‘stuff’ up!”

Those that are coming into full communion with the Church have a sponsor to accompany them throughout the RCIA process.

At various points during the RCIA year, catechumens and candidates receive different rites according to where they are at along their faith journey. For example,

catechumens receive the Rite of Election.

“The Rite of Election is like a ‘statement of intent’ through which catechumens express that they want to become Catholic,” Lynette says. “It includes all of the catechumens from all over the diocese.”



Fr. Doty administers the Sacrament of Confirmation with the words “Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Those who have questions about the RCIA process or would like to join in on the sessions may contact the Parish Office at 402-423-1239, or call Lynette McArdle at 402-328-2866 or email her at lynette-mcardle@cdolinc.net.



UNDERSTANDING THE ROLE OF SACRAMENTALS IN OUR FAITH

Most Catholics are familiar with the idea of *sacraments* in the Church, of which there are seven. Sacraments are the foundation of the spiritual life for an individual and the Church. Sacraments are sources of grace – God’s very presence in our lives and unmerited favor from God. They are signs of God’s love, and these signs make present what they signify. Although a person benefits – receives the gift of grace – from the sacraments regardless of whether he or she is well disposed to them, one must cooperate with what the Spirit is doing in the sacrament to receive its full benefit.

Sacramentals are different. These are also sacred signs that can build holiness, but they do not work on their own. One must be aware and fully conscious of the sacred action. Sacramentals sanctify us to get the most benefit from the Sacraments (*Catechism of the Catholic Church* 1667). Sacramentals are given to us to make holy certain actions in life and life’s circumstances. There are many such sacred signs that are reminders to us of God.

The sign of the cross is perhaps one of the most fundamental of these signs, and for Catholics, this invocation is done at the start of every sacred action and prayer. Holy water is a sacramental, as it reminds us of our Baptism. By dipping our fingers into holy water and making the sign of the cross, we are combining two foundational symbols of the Christian life and the Paschal Mystery – the passion, dying and rising of Christ – and bringing them to life in us.

The exchange of peace in the Mass – and at other Catholic rites – is another example of a sacramental. By making some kind of meaningful sign of peace, we are giving the peace of Christ to another person. The chalice and other sacred vessels at Mass also are sacramentals, as they remind us of what they are to contain – the very Body and Blood of Christ.

It might be helpful to organize the types of sacramentals into categories, as author Michael Pennock lists in *This Is Our Faith: A Catholic Catechism for Adults*:

“*Actions* (blessings; genuflections; the sign of the



cross; bowing one’s head at the name of Jesus; church processions); *Objects* (candles; holy water; statues and icons; holy pictures; blessed ashes; palms; rosaries; relics; incense; vestments; scapulars; church buildings; crosses; religious medals); *Places* (the Holy Land; Rome; Fatima; Lourdes; the National Shrine in Washington, D.C.; and other places of pilgrimage; chapels, retreat centers, and even Catholic cemeteries); *Prayers* (short prayers we say throughout the day; grace before and after meals; prayers at rising and going to bed; praying the rosary, praying a host of other traditional Catholic prayers and devotions); *Sacred Time* (liturgy; holy days; feasts of saints; your saint’s name day; special days of prayer; fasting and abstinence; retreats, etc.)” (*This Is Our Faith: A Catholic Catechism for Adults*, 176-177).

“Sacramentals...prepare us to receive grace and dispose us to cooperate with it” (CCC 1670). In a word, sacramentals, through the prayer of the Church, bring us to holiness in Christ. All devotions of piety, including sacramentals, should point us toward the liturgy of the Church, a connection to a local parish community, and to the Eucharist (CCC 1675).

The Church, through Christ’s passion, death and resurrection, has given us these sacred signs to lead us in holiness, and to better recognize an authentic Christian life. How many sacramentals can you recognize in your life? Probably more than you think.



SCHOOL AND PARISH OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

KEEP LIFE RUNNING SMOOTHLY

Volunteers have been a part of parish and school life here at St. Peter from the beginning, with their efforts coming from a true sense of stewardship and “giving back” to God. Their giving of their time, talent and treasure has meant that our parish and our St. Peter School have been able to grow and thrive.

Margaret Aldridge, St. Peter School secretary, and Carolyn Lieb, parish secretary, work closely with the volunteers.

Parents and grandparents make up the group of volunteers at St. Peter School. They begin their work in mid-September, and help in the classrooms and cafeteria in a variety of ways, but especially with one very important task.

“They listen to the prayers for the teachers,” Margaret says. “There is a list of required prayers that the students have to know by their grade level. It’s a requirement of the sacramental program.”

The volunteers also help the students with their reading in the lower grades.

Margaret sees the value of having the parents and grandparents volunteering in the school.

“The kids enjoy it,” she says. “They benefit from seeing people they know – ‘oh, this is Susie’s grandmother.’ It’s a big benefit for the kids.”

As for the office volunteers, their work depends on whatever special projects arise. They may be called to help with filing, folding papers, printing the bulletins and processing items for mailing. “They don’t come in every day,” Carolyn says. “We have between four to five volunteers who come in for about one hour or two, once a week.”

Although their tasks may vary, the reason the

volunteers come forward is singular.

“They see the value in volunteering and they get a chance to come in and help,” Margaret says. “They appreciate the teachers and the work they do. They appreciate all that.”

The volunteers, from Margaret’s and Carolyn’s perspectives, are living in stewardship with their work. And their fervor does not diminish, even when they move from another parish.

Carolyn related the story of a woman who had moved here from another town, and came forward to volunteer at St. Peter. She was looking for some way to give back, after working for a long time as a volunteer at her former parish.

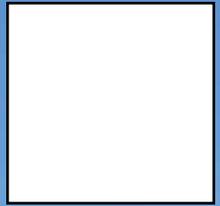


Marjorie Maney, a long time office volunteer at St. Peter

If you would like more information, or if you want to volunteer at St. Peter School or in the parish office, please call the parish at 402-423-1239 or the school at 402-421-6299.



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.

CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD *continued from front cover*

and activities, all designed to help them understand and apply Scripture in their lives, while gaining a positive experience of Mass.

"We tell the Gospel story in a way that is easier for the children to understand," says Barb Lockhart. "The teacher asks questions and they do activities that support and explain the Gospel message. Their answers are precious and sometimes surprise me, as they explain things with such innocence and love. Our main message is that Jesus loves them, and this is accomplished through crafts, acting out the Gospels and giving examples."

Barb encourages parents who may be hesitant about having their child attend Children's Liturgy of the Word to attend alongside them.

"I would encourage them to join their child for the first lesson or two and see what it is about, and make sure that their child is comfortable," Barb says. "I hope that it helps them as they introduce their Catholic faith to their children."

"It also may allow parents to focus on the homily a little easier," she adds, with a smile.

Barb hopes that the experience of Children's Liturgy of the Word will be a positive one that gives children a foundation in loving both Jesus and the Mass.

"I hope that it will give them the message that they are an important part of our Church and God's family," Barb says. "Hopefully they learn and become more excited about their faith."

*If you would like more information about Children's Liturgy of the Word,
or if you would like to volunteer with this ministry,
please contact Barb Lockhart at 402-202-2372 or barblockhart2@gmail.com.*