

# SAINT PETER

CATHOLIC CHURCH

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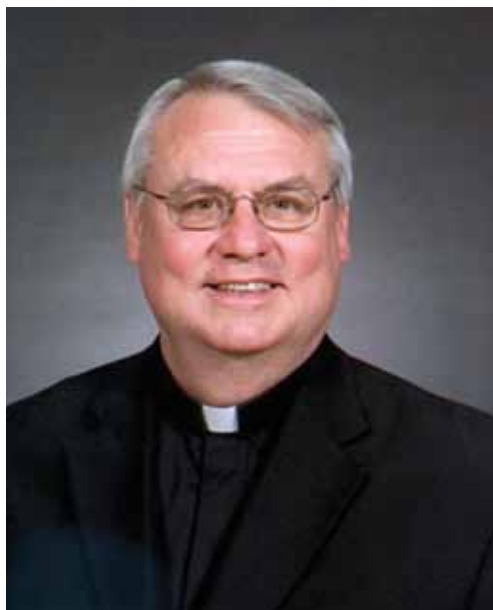
November/December 2011

*A Letter from Our Pastor*

## The Gift of God's Love

Dear Parishioners,

One of the practices that I have always maintained as a pastor of a parish is to write to all my parishioners during the Advent season. It is during this season that we prepare our hearts and our lives for the coming of Christ. I hope and pray that you are using this time in a productive manner, tearing down the mountains of pride and selfishness, filling in the valleys of disappointment and despair, so that Jesus finds in our hearts and lives a readiness to receive Him. For those who have been away from the Church for any length of time and for varying reasons, I want to extend an invitation to you to come back and celebrate with us. It is not the same without you, for the Body of Christ, this Church, is lacking your presence. To all of our parish family, I want to extend my heartfelt Christmas wishes and blessings. Christmas is that special time that we realize the

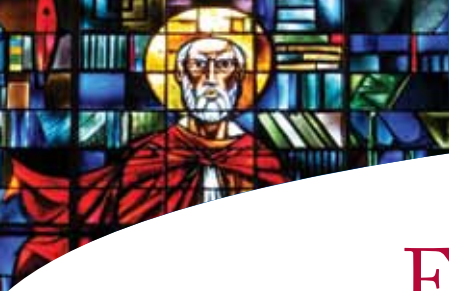


love that God has for all of us. May the love of God, which became incarnate that first Christmas, remain close to each of you this Christmas and in the New Year to come.

Christmas is also a time that we reflect upon God's blessings for all of us. As your pastor, I want you to know that I consider each of you a special blessing from God. It has taken me awhile to adjust to this change in my life and I thank you for your patience and understanding. But in these past 11 months, I have grown to appreciate you more and more and truly feel at home with you. You are really a Christmas gift to me and I thank you.

Christmas is also a time for gift giving. God gave us His only Son, the ultimate gift to humankind. We can never out-give our God in such generosity. But I am asking you to remember St. Peter Church in your Christmas giving this year.

*continued on back cover*



## Feast of the Holy Family

### *Christmas Doesn't End Dec. 25*

It's Dec. 26, and we've celebrated Christmas, opened all of our gifts and practiced all of our Christmas traditions.

What do we do now?

The Christmas season is far from over. In fact, the octave of Christmas has just begun, and the Holy Solemnity of the Nativity of our Lord on Christmas Day is directly followed by the Feast of the Holy Family of Nazareth, which is celebrated this year on Dec. 30.

After giving birth in a stable, Mary and Joseph were now charged with a great responsibility. Their home would be the place where our Lord grew up! Do you ever stop and think about what it must have been like for Mary and Joseph to raise the Savior of the Universe? They changed His diapers, fed Him His meals, and helped Him learn to walk.

No doubt, Joseph taught Jesus how to safely work a saw, and Mary probably helped Him mend His clothes. This puts all of our parenting duties into perspective. Can you imagine caring for Our Lord as He was a vulnerable and helpless child? In fact, contemplating the Holy Family in this way gives us a new-found appreciation for family life — with all of its trials and triumphs.

Though little is known about Jesus' early years, we know He grew up just like any human child, and Mary and Joseph were chosen to parent Him. The Lord chose the family as the place for His birth and His growth, thereby sanctifying the fundamental institution of society. From then on, the Fam-



ily was much more than just a group of people living together.

With the Holy Family as our example, all Christian families are called to be small domestic churches. As was the humble home of Nazareth, the family is an authentic school of the Gospel, wherein we live our faith on a daily basis. John Paul II explains that “recollection and prayer, mutual understanding and respect, personal discipline and community asceticism and a spirit of sacrifice, work and solidarity are typical features that make the family of Nazareth a model for every home.”

As Christian families, we must follow the example of the Holy Family and be lights to shine the Truth in the midst of a sometimes dark world. Through their humble existence, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph remained united to one

another and to the Father, working always to remain close to Him and to show His love to the world. So also must we do. As Christians, we are called to show the world “convincingly that it is possible to live marriage fully in keeping with God’s plan and with the true good of the human person — of the spouses and of the children who are more fragile” (NMI 47). Then, amidst all of the spilled milk and temper tantrums, all of the birthdays, graduations, and marriages, we will serve as a sign of God Himself — three persons united in love!

May Jesus, Mary, and Joseph bless and protect all families so that they will extol the peace, joy, justice, and love that the newborn Christ has given us as a gift to all of humanity!

## Coming Together in Love of Scripture *The Tuesday Morning Bible Study*

Parishioner Barb Holtmeyer always had an interest in learning more about Sacred Scripture, and she had attended Bible studies at different faith communities in the past. So when she heard about the formation of a Tuesday Morning Bible Study group at St. Peter, she knew that it would be a perfect opportunity to study God's Word while learning more about how it relates to our Catholic liturgical practices and traditions.

"Before that, I was going to a Bible study at a Presbyterian church, so when they offered one at St. Peter's, I wanted to attend that one in order to kind of get to know more about my Catholic Faith," she says. "As we've done different studies, it's just amazing how the Mass has come to life for me, because we can see the tradition and history, and why we do things we do. Before, I never knew why."

The Tuesday Morning Bible Study brings together approximately 20 women from different walks of life each week to study Sacred Scripture from a Catholic perspective, enjoy fellowship with one another, pray together, and share reflections. Jen Dyer, who facilitates the group, says that its diversity is one of the things that make this group unique in comparison to other Bible studies in which she has participated in the past.

"Our group has definitely grown from the beginning, and we now incorporate someone from every parish in Quincy," she says. "We have so many different age groups, too: brand new moms who are newly-married, ladies who are in their 80s, and we even have non-Catholics who join us, which is extremely exciting for us. They come because they have friends who invited them, and they are learning right along with us about our Catholic Faith. It's such a diverse group that it makes it very fun and exciting to be there, and it's a very comfortable group."

The Tuesday Morning Bible Study meets in a semester-based format, and utilizes curricula such as Jeff Cavins' *Great Adventure* series that incorporates video lectures, at-home reading, reflection questions and group discussion. The group discusses biblical events chronologically, how stories from the New Testament fulfilled prophecies from the Old Testament and, most importantly, the scriptural basis for many of our Catholic beliefs.

"One of the reasons I got involved with the group is that I wanted to be able to defend my faith and get involved in conversations, rather than sit back or not participate because I'm not sure of the basis for things," says Angela Lepper. "Our



call as Catholics is to evangelize others, and when you're involved in other organizations and different groups are talking, you just want to be able to say, 'I know the answer to that, or I will find out, because I know where I can find it in the Bible.'"

Through their experiences studying the Bible, the members of the group have grown close to one another outside of the classroom. They send prayer requests to each other via e-mail and enjoy having friendly faces to greet when they see each other at Mass.

"We've had older ladies kind of take younger ladies under their wings, and it even gets as specific as if one of us is ill, or has a sick child or new baby, our group coordinates meals to bring to each other," Jen says. "We just take care of each other."

Currently, the Tuesday Morning Bible Study is discerning ways it can add a service element to its ministry. The group recently took its first steps toward outreach when it adopted a family in need at Christmas, purchasing gifts and necessities to help make their Christmas a little brighter.

"This is a tangible way that we can put love into action, and put into practice some of the things we've learned in our group," Jen says. "This couple we adopted is not Catholic, but is truly getting a taste of who we are and what we're all about. Somebody recently said to them, 'Are you members of St. Peter?' And they responded, 'Not yet!' I thought that was really profound, and that's an exciting part of what we're going to be doing moving forward."

The Tuesday Morning Bible Study is starting a new program of study on the Book of James in January, and everyone is welcome and encouraged to become involved. Jen points out that it is never too late to join the group, and members get something out of it even if they can't be there every week.

For more information on the Tuesday Morning Bible Study, please contact Jen Dyer at 228-3148 or [dyer123@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dyer123@sbcglobal.net).

# Stitches

## *Unique Quilt Honors L*

### *Raises Money for His C*

**A**s St. Peter Parishioner Joyce Shipp read the weekly bulletin after Mass one Sunday last summer, a small item caught her eye: The parish was seeking volunteers to create a quilt that would be auctioned to raise money for the Cause of Beatification and Canonization of one of its former parishioners, Augustus Tolton, the United States' first black Catholic priest.

Born a slave and baptized into the Catholic faith shortly after his birth in 1854 in Brush Creek, Missouri, Augustus Tolton lived by faith and his mother's motto, "Never forget the goodness of the Lord," under circumstances that would have crushed most people.

Joyce, an accomplished quilter who has gleaned insight into what it might mean to live under the cloud of racial discrimination from family and friends, immediately responded to the bulletin invitation. Over the next four months, she and St. Peter Parish Nurse Marty Venvertloh, also a talented quilter, designed a one-of-a-kind art-piece that captures the spirit as well as the struggles that challenged, but never defeated, the man proposed for sainthood.

St. Peter Pastor Msgr. Leo J. Enlow conceived the idea of the quilt when he learned that the Fr. Tolton Guild, a group appointed by the Archdiocese of Chicago to promote the cause of canonization, was planning an auction. Fr. Leo is a member of the Guild.

#### **Designed to Tell a Story**

From the beginning, the quilters knew they wanted to capture the essence of Augustus Tolton's life, from birth, to priesthood, to premature death at the age of 43 and burial in St. Peter's Cemetery in Quincy. Retired St. Peter Pastor Fr. Roy Bauer, an historian who authored a biography about Augustus Tolton, agreed to take the quilters and a photographer on a tour to Tolton sites in Northeastern Missouri and the Quincy area.



*Joyce Shipp, Marty Venvertloh, Fr. Leo*

The tour began at Brush Creek's St. Peter Church some 41 miles from Quincy on a hot, cicada-July day. Located near the farms where Augustus' parents Peter Tolton and Martha Jane Chisley labored, the now-unused church was built from large stones that were carried and put in place by slaves. The church was the locus of life for the young Tolton family and the place where the religious formation of a proposed saint began.

"It is powerful walking up the winding stairs to the church's slave gallery," Marty says. "You can imagine what it might have been like to attend Mass in that air-less space on a hot summer's day."

"I kept thinking, 'I'm walking where the Tolton family walked,'" Joyce observes.

Signs of slavery extend to the church's cemetery. Although white slave-owners were buried in central, monument-marked graves, the slaves who served them were relegated to unmarked graves at the perimeter of the church's grounds. (More recently, white crosses to mark the anonymous graves were added.)

# of Faith

## *Life of Augustus Tolton; Cause of Canonization*

### **Escape from Slavery**

Even under the best of masters, life was difficult for slaves. “By age 7, Augustus already was working as a field slave,” Joyce says. “It was hot, hard work, and the young boy was not spared from lashes.”

Life for the Toltons became even more unbearable when Augustus’ father Peter ran away from Brush Creek to serve in the Union Army during the Civil War. Many years would pass before his wife Martha Jane learned Peter had perished in St. Louis from dysentery.

“Before he left, Peter had told his wife that their children must be free – that they must learn to read and write and keep the faith,” Joyce says. In 1862, Martha Jane Tolton resolved to flee for freedom to Illinois with her three small children, Charley, Augustus and Anna.

Leaving Brush Creek, the family made its way to Hannibal, Missouri, crossed the Mississippi River into Illinois, and traveled the 21 miles to Quincy.

### **The Challenge of Education**

Taking her husband’s wish to ensure their children were educated and kept the faith to heart, Martha Jane enrolled her children in St. Boniface School. After only a month however, the children were forced to leave the school when parish staff members were threatened and harassed. Eventually, young Augustus found a protector and a patron in St. Peter Parish’s Pastor Fr. Peter McGirr, an Irish priest who stood firm in the face of criticism.

Augustus remained a student in St. Peter School until the age of 18, attending school when he wasn’t working at a Quincy cigar family.

“At the age of 16, on the day he received his First Communion and probably his Confirmation, Augustus realized he wanted to be a priest,” Joyce says. With the help of Fr. McGirr and a Franciscan priest on the faculty of St. Francis College (now Quincy University), he received preparation to enter the seminary.

### **Journey to the Priesthood**

There was only one problem: No seminaries in the United States would accept a black candidate to the priesthood. Eventually Augustus was accepted at Propaganda Seminary

in Rome, which prepared priests for missionary service. He began his seminary training in 1880.

After ordination on April 24, 1886, Fr. Tolton returned to Quincy and was assigned to St. Joseph Parish. After 3 ½ years however, and as the result of maneuverings of another priest who was jealous of Fr. Tolton’s success in attracting both black and white Catholics to St. Joseph Church for Mass, the young priest was removed from service in Quincy. Near the end of 1889, he received an assignment in Chicago.

Assigned first to St. Augustine Church and later to St. Monica Chapel, he developed a friendship with Katharine Drexel. Over the years this future saint contributed \$36 thousand to Fr. Tolton’s parish.

On July 7, 1897 at only the age of 43, Fr. Tolton died of heatstroke in Chicago. As he had requested, his body was returned to Quincy for a funeral Mass at St. Peter Church and burial in the priests’ section of the Parish’s cemetery.

### **Biography in Stitches**

The finishes quilt conveys Fr. Tolton’s story graphically and artistically in thread. Joyce chose Civil War-era fabrics, which were reproduced to mark the War’s 150th anniversary. Joyce designed the quilt, arranging pictures and letters from Fr. Tolton’s life – from Brush Creek church and baptismal certificate photos to escape from slavery and priesthood struggles to priest mentors and to a letter from (now-Saint) Katharine Drexel – are mounted.

“There is a lot of grace behind this work,” Joyce says.

Marty – recovering from bilateral knee replacement surgery – “did the math,” converting Joyce’s design into a pattern and stitching together the pieces. “I’m very proud of the quilt,” Marty says. “I prayed through Augustus Tolton while I was working on it. He and I became good friends.”

Designed as a wall-hanging, the quilt raised hundreds of dollars to support the cause of canonization and now belongs to one of Fr. Tolton’s descendants. A second identical quilt is being made for display in the St. Peter Church narthex.

In addition to Joyce, Marty, Fr. Leo and Fr. Bauer, others involved in the project include Jenny Miller, who did the binding and edging; Mary Ann Bauer of A-to-Z Quilting, who did the quilting; Jane Nolan, Martha Rapp, and the women of St. Peter Church.

# 50 Years Ago: Remembering



*Leanne and Mark Schell*



*Paul Meyer*

**B**ob Musolino remembers it vividly: On the evening of Dec. 24, 1961 after 11 p.m., he and other invited servers donned white cassocks with red trim, lined up in the basement of the “1949” school building that had served as the worship site for St. Peter Church for more than a decade, and, carrying ceremonial, torch-like candle holders, processed over to St. Peter Church for Solemn High Christmas Midnight Mass.

Fr. Joseph O’Brien, who became St. Peter pastor on Aug. 5, 1959 and led the parish through the construction project, was the main celebrant. Bob remembers at least two other priest-concelebrants as well.

It was the first Mass celebrated in a “real” St. Peter Church after more than 16 years – since April 12, 1945, when the former church at the corner of 8th and Maine Streets was struck by a devastating tornado.

“The Mass was in Latin and celebrated on the high altar (where the tabernacle is),” Bob recalls. He’d become a server in fifth or sixth grade and recalls the excitement of being invited to take part in this Mass as an 8th Grader at St. Peter School. “It was an honor to serve,” he says, “and servers who failed to show up when scheduled were severely reprimanded.”

A son of Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Musolino, Bob remembers practicing for this Mass. “It was very holy,” he says.

The honor of serving would stay with Bob for life. Today he is a member of the St. Peter RCIA team and an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion. Now, 50 years later, Bob will serve this Christmas Midnight Mass as well.

Among those at the first Mass were Mr. and Mrs. Paul Meyer and their four children. Their eldest child Sharon (now Zehnle) had graduated from St. Peter School the previous spring and was a student at Notre Dame, the Catholic girls’ high school. She recalls that this Mass on a very cold Christmas Eve was a very big deal. “The Mass was very regal, with lots of gold and red and white,” Sharon says. “It was so nice to be in this gorgeous building!”

Still, there were some who had misgivings. “Not everyone was pleased,” Sharon says. “I think a lot of people thought the new church building was too modern. It wasn’t just a traditional church with a steeple anymore.”

“We’d been having Mass in the school basement,” Sharon’s father Paul says. Although he has special memories of liturgies in the make-shift area, including the baptism of his youngest son on Easter as the 5-day-old infant and his wife were on the way home from the hospital, Paul welcomed the new church: “It was so big and beautiful!”

From a practical standpoint, Paul – who served as president of the Holy Name Society (the men’s organization) – was also thankful for the cafeteria in the lower level of the church. He recalls the group’s planning a chili supper fundraiser before the cafeteria was available, and being grateful to St. Francis Parish for the use of its space.

Paul would continue to serve the parish in numerous capacities over the years, and today, at age 90, is an usher. Committed to Catholic life in Quincy, he also volunteers for Quincy University, has participated in the Annual Fund drive

## the 'New' St. Peter Church

there for 40 years, and has established a scholarship fund. Among his other honors, Paul was awarded an honorary doctorate's degree from QU. Sharon is one of the founders of our Eucharistic Adoration Chapel (along with Jan Faler and Diane Wagner) and active in St. Peter Singers.

As parents of a young family, Leanne and Mark Schell did not attend the first Mass. "We were home celebrating Christmas," Leanne remembers.

The Schell family proudly watched their church being built. Mark has a movie of the process, including the setting of the cornerstone on Aug. 20, 1961. "It's one of the first buildings with brick-beam construction – a brick arch with no pillars, and there's so much symbolism," they recall, citing light fixtures shaped like the Pope's miter, upside-down crosses representing how St. Peter was crucified, and the stars and crosses on the green wall at the back of the sanctuary representing Jesus' birth and death.

"One of our questions was, 'Where are we going to get the money to do all of this,'" Leanne remembers. The parish put together a fund-raising team. "It was a big organization," Mark recalls. "I wasn't a leader of it, but was involved in going out and talking to people to raise money." (The campaign successfully raised the \$350,000 needed to build the church, rectory and convent.)

While the church building was under construction, the Schells were building the parish in other ways. Among other things, Leanne was president of the PTA. In those years, the primary function of the group was money-making, with bake sales, mother-daughter banquets and big

card parties that would fill the cafeteria with tables. Mark ushered, coached 5th and 6th grade basketball and was a Scout leader. "In those days, the PTA wasn't involved in academics or decision-making," she remembers.

Later Leanne, a pre-school teacher for 24 years, would initiate the idea of a parish Pre-school to Fr. Bauer and, when he gave her the go-ahead, recruit a board and get the Pre-school launched. Mark built much of the furniture and cork-boards and was behind the process all of the way. "It was a family project," she remembers.

Merle and Joan Hellhake, who joined the parish in 1955 right after they got married, were so busy with their growing family that they don't remember much about the move to the new church. As busy parents, Merle says, "We were put right in it." Their activities focused on their young family – Joan, with the St. Peter School PTA and serving as a den mother, and Merle with the men's organization and later as a Scoutmaster. Yet they also would maintain their love for the parish and the church. Indeed, Merle designed and built the large crèche that is being used in church this Christmas season.

The stories and the memories surrounding the first Mass in our church building touch the heart, but they are only a beginning. Over the past 50 years, the walls have witnessed the most important milestones in the lives of thousands of parishioners: over 2,700 baptisms, over 500 converts and nearly 1,200 funerals and 1,200 weddings.

As Leanne Schell says, "This parish is our home."



*Bob Musolino*

Join us for  
Christmas  
Midnight Mass...  
50 years since  
the first Mass  
was celebrated  
in our church  
building.



# St. Peter Catholic Church

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Quincy, Illinois 62301

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## **New Mass & Reconciliation Schedule**

### **Sunday Masses**

Saturday: 5 p.m.,

Sunday: 8, 9:30 and 11 a.m.

### **Weekday Masses**

Mon-Sat: 8:00 a.m., except for

Wednesdays during the school year:

8:30 a.m.

### **Reconciliation**

Saturday: 7:30-7:50 a.m.,

3:30-4:30 p.m. or by appointment

## The Gift of God's Love

*continued from front cover*

You are truly the stewards of this parish family. As stewards, you give of your time, talents, and treasures. These are vital elements that make a parish strong and viable. And I thank you for all that you have done. But I do invite you to consider St. Peter Church with your Christmas generosity this year. May God bless and strengthen all of you with God's love and presence.

Merry Christmas,

Rev. Msgr. Leo J. Enlow  
Pastor

St. Peter's will Observe the  
50th Anniversary of the First Mass  
in its "New Church" at Christmas  
Midnight Mass.

## **Christmas Mass & Music Schedule:**

### *Christmas Eve*

4 p.m.: Melissa Citro & Ensemble

5:30 p.m.: Family Mass—

Jubilation and Handbell Choir

7 p.m.: St. Peter Singers

### *Christmas:*

Midnight: Chorale

8 a.m.: Cantor & Organist

10 a.m.: Cantor & Organist