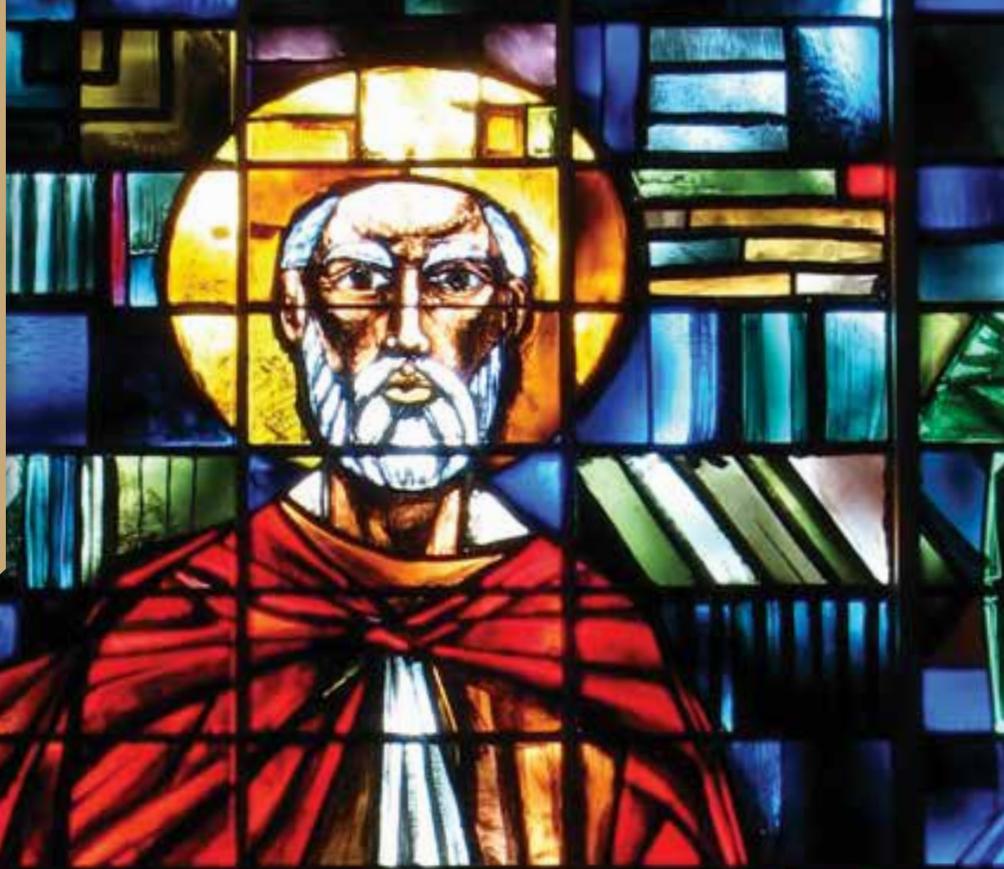


Church of St. Peter, Quincy III

MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER



FINE ARTS COMMITTEE BRINGING MANY BENEFITS TO STUDENTS

One of God's greatest gifts to us is the ability to create. Whether it's a finely crafted poem, a small child's precious scribblings, or even an impromptu happy dance, using our minds and our bodies to express what we feel is one of the best parts of being a human.

At St. Peter School, the Fine Arts Committee is responsible for ensuring that our children develop a respect and appreciation for the arts as a larger part of a well-rounded education.

"At school, we have music, but the committee takes care of anything that has to do with theatre or art," explains committee coordinator Stephanie Weis.

Using grant monies, the Fine Arts Committee has enabled the school to provide arts education that otherwise might be missed by St. Peter students, such as theatre workshops and fine art assemblies.

This coming school year, the fourth through sixth grades will be gaining a new art teacher, hired by the committee. Students in kindergarten through third grade will participate in the smART Kids Program through the Quincy Art Center, which provides visual arts education to students throughout area schools. Seventh and eighth-graders will also be able to take advantage of the art education of their choice through a new elective program.

"Throughout the year, we try to bring in outside resources to do assemblies, or if there are classes a teacher wants, we apply for grants which help fund these classes," Stephanie says.

A report by Americans for the Arts found that art education helps children develop problem-solving abilities and critical thinking skills. Young children benefit from art as they develop motor and language skills and

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The Quincy Community Theatre recently brought their "American Fairy Tales" assembly to St. Peter with help from the Fine Arts Committee. Assemblies such as this one are made possible by grant monies.

ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S WILL

Forming a Conscience and Moral Code

As Christians, it is important that we recognize the difference between right and wrong – both morally and ethically. Sometimes, though, this line can become blurred.

Many situations we encounter in our lives include variables that can leave us internally conflicted and unsure of how to move forward in accordance with God's will.

So, how do we work through these moral conundrums? One way is to develop a solid Christian conscience.

A moral conscience exists in the heart of every individual. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, "When he listens to his conscience, the prudent man can hear God speaking. Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act that he is going to perform, is in the process of performing, or has already completed" (1777, 1778).

Think of your conscience as the "angelic" version of yourself sitting on your shoulder, giving you sound advice.

While everyone is blessed with a conscience, each individual has a responsibility to develop this conscience from the time they are young. Parents obviously play an important role in developing their children's consciences. As the primary educators of their children on ethical issues and the



Catholic faith, parents have a responsibility to teach virtue to their children and help them to avoid fear, selfishness and pride. As we grow older, we take on the lifelong challenge of continually forming our own consciences, and establishing a moral code that enables us to make the proper judgments.

One valuable tool in forming a conscience is the practice of introspection. "It is important for every person to be sufficiently present to himself in order to hear and follow the voice of his conscience" (CCC 1779). In contemporary society, where there are so many distractions and routines, it is extremely important that we take the time to look inward and truly listen to what our inner voice is telling us.

Another way to ensure we are developing a good moral code is by conforming to the mind of Christ. God the Fa-

ther gave us Christ, physically present on this earth and recorded in Sacred Scripture, as the ultimate example of what to do and how to behave according to God's will. As Donald Cardinal Wuerl aptly states in *The Teaching of Christ*, "To conform to the mind of Christ is to conform to the mind of the Father" (p. 244). In other words, when we act in loving imitation of Christ, we are certain to make practical judgments of conscience.

The next time you are faced with a moral dilemma, take some quiet time to look inward, weigh the positive and negative outcomes, and listen to the voice of your conscience. Read the Gospels for examples of Christ's teachings. By making this a regular practice, you will find that the voice of your conscience will come in louder and more clearly than you may have initially expected.

SUMMER VACATIONS ARE COMING TO AN END... NOW WHAT?

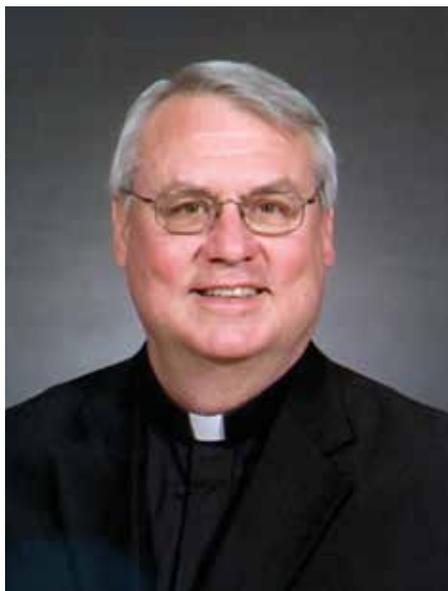
Dear Parishioners,

The month of August really does seem to return us to reality, doesn't it? Summer is coming to an end – maybe not officially on the calendar, but in terms of our lives and the life of the Church, it does. The children may view it as the end of something appealing – the start of summer vacation seems like a long time ago – and their parents may be breathing sighs of relief. For those involved in parish ministries, it might be a time when we say, “Now, it's time to work.”

Perhaps this is a time when we get back into the routine of things. However, we all know the truth – that faith and the Church are not seasonal. For that matter, stewardship is not seasonal, and it's not something that is done a few times a year. Rather, stewardship is something we should be thinking about each and every day.

There are many definitions of stewardship, but at its very basis, it means using the gifts God has given us to do the things God asks – calls, expects – us to do. Stewardship is discipleship. We may tend to think of stewardship as a question: “What is mine and what is God's?” The truth is that all that we have and all that we are belongs to and comes from God – absolutely everything!

We may hear that stewardship is using and sharing our time, our talent, and our treasure. In terms of time, the secret is not learning how to use it or how to get more of it – the secret is knowing how best to use it. Talent and treasure are given to each of us in different amounts. Nevertheless, the bottom line is that we have to trust God before we really share those things. Relying on God and living a God-centered life are fundamental to a relationship with Him –



and, for that matter, with one another. Being contented is not the fulfillment of what you may want. Rather, it is the realization of what you already have.

So, we are back to the reality of this time of year. You may have heard the statement that stewardship people are grateful people. Perhaps this is a time to be grateful for the summer that has passed. But it is a time for us to recommit ourselves to doing better, especially as we enter a time of year that provides a return to routine. Importantly, it is also a time filled with celebrations, thanksgiving, hope, and maybe even better stewardship on each of our parts.

Sincerely in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rev. Msgr. Leo J. Enlow". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Msgr. Leo J. Enlow
Pastor



PARISH PICNIC OFFERS STEWARDSHIP

The planning began right after last year's Parish Picnic. And now, our Seventh Annual St. Peter Parish Picnic is ready to open at 5 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 26, behind the church with live music, games, a raffle, silent auction, snacks, food – and Msgr. Leo Enlow's famous brats!

Sarah Stegeman and her husband, Jeremy, are chairing the picnic this year, and are excited and honored to be able to bring our parish family together for this traditional event.

"When you come to the picnic, you will find fellowship, and just being part of our church community," Sarah says. "Seeing the wonderful support of the picnic is pretty amazing. We have a raffle we do every year, and a silent auction."

The picnic was organized seven years ago by a group of parishioners.

"It was a group of parents who felt it would be a good way to bring together the parish as a family with stewardship, and at the same time, have a good fundraiser for the parish," Sarah says.

There are three couples that share the picnic

organizing, and there are five committee Chairs.

"The planning starts shortly after the last picnic," Sarah says. "After we close the books, we have a wrap-up meeting."

The funds raised by the picnic mainly go to the parish, with some funds allocated to our school.

"The overall parish budget supports the school, as well," Sarah notes.

Stewardship opportunities abound for those volunteering at the picnic.

"We do have volunteer opportunities," Sarah says. "School families are able to volunteer. Each family is asked to give 10 hours per year back to the school, and this is one way to do it. It's also a good way to work with other people you might not otherwise know – you can meet new people and work with others in the parish. All who are picnic Chairs and all who volunteer their time are really amazing to me. My husband and I shadowed the Chairs last year, and the unspoken stewardship within the parish really resonated with us. People just showed up, and they came. It's really cool to see how it



Volunteers work the day before to set up everything for our Parish Picnic.

SHIP AND COMMUNITY FOR ALL

all gets done.”

There are a number of picnic sponsors – companies in the community – who help make the event a success.

“We have picnic games, a Kids’ Zone, and all kinds of cool prizes for the kids,” Sarah says. “We work all year round to find decent prizes for the kids.”

Volunteering for the picnic was an easy decision for Sarah and Jeremy.

“We’ve been members of the parish, and our kids go to St. Peter School,” she says. “We were looking at ways to give back as part of our time, talent, and treasure. I know one of the previous Chairs that had been doing

it for about five years. Each year, someone new takes on as Chair. We knew one of the couples and I was comfortable in following them, and believed we’d be able to pick up from them. We truly want to give back to our church. My parents were picnic Chairs one time at our parish growing up. It feels good to be able to give back.”

There is no admission for the picnic – just plan to attend, come hungry, and have a great time!

“It’s a very inviting, fun place to come, with lots of great family activities,” Sarah says. “It’s a very happy, great place to come and check out. There’s good food, music and fellowship.”

Anyone wishing to volunteer may contact the parish office at 217-222-3155.

Fine Arts Committee Bringing Many Benefits to Students continued from front cover

explore the world around them through visual learning. Studies have also found that students who regularly participate in the arts are more likely to excel in other areas of academic performance and showed a greater interest in participating in school events.

“Arts are very critical,” Stephanie says. “I want to ensure that every child has exposure to a form of art, along with the music program that’s provided at school. For me, fine art, as well as theatre, is pretty important at our school. It broadens their horizons.”

Stephanie, who studied art in college and says she is passionate about painting and

sketching, has passed her love for visual arts onto her children, Timothy, a third-grader, and Sophia, who is in seventh grade.

“Timothy is interested in drawing and Sophia is into photography,” Stephanie says.

For those in our parish who may have an interest in the fine arts, or in ensuring that students at St. Peter get to enjoy them, Stephanie says the committee is always looking for volunteers.

“If anyone has ideas for bringing fine arts to our school or knows how to write grants, we can use the help,” she says. “What we do is not as glorious as what you would think, but it’s worth it because that’s how important it is to the school.”

If you would like to learn more about the Fine Arts Committee, or for information about volunteering, please contact Stephanie Weis at 314-348-9988.

TRANSFORMED BY THE SACRED LITURGY

The Celebration of the Paschal Mystery

In a limited way, the liturgy can be compared to a story or a film – upon a first reading or viewing, we might understand the basic outline of the narrative, yet through every subsequent encounter, the story further unfolds before us, becoming richer and more complex.



Often, inquisitive children teach us about how to understand a story or the Mass. As a child inquires about the priest's green vestments, the foregrounded wreath or the presence of palm branches, we might pause to recall the symbolism undergirding the rich rituals of the liturgy.

There is a sense of the sacred in the liturgy, but its rituals and ceremonies can appear as empty pantomimes when divorced from their meaning. Far from empty signs, the liturgy is the celebration of the Paschal mystery, of Christ's passion, death, resurrection and glorification by which He "accomplished the work of our salvation" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1067).

From the Greek *leitourgia*, meaning public service or worship, liturgy in the Christian tradition refers to the communal participation of the people in the work of God, and God is always present and at work in the liturgy, acting in and with the Church through the sacraments.

Annually, the Church's liturgical year is structured around the Paschal mystery, which we observe every Sunday. We begin each year with a season of anticipating Christ's birth, and following a celebration of Christ's Incarnation, we gradually enter a period of preparation for the Easter Triduum, for His passion, death and Resurrection. The year closes with a period of ordinary time – a time to grow in our faith and in living out the Gospel.

Daily, the Liturgy of the Hours unifies the Church Militant in prayers said by the clergy and increasingly by the laity. As the liturgical calendar structures our year, the Liturgy of the Hours structures our day, offering us an opportunity to consecrate each present moment to Christ.

Ultimately, the liturgical life of the Church "revolves around the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments" (CCC 1113), for we receive God's grace to fortify us in our spiritual lives and as His disciples through the sacraments, particularly the Holy Mass.

The Mass nurtures us spiritually, inviting us to reflect on the Paschal mystery and to lift our hearts to God as individuals and a community through spoken and sung prayer.

The Mass moves us corporeally, drawing us to sit as we listen to the Word, to stand as we unanimously profess our faith, and to kneel as the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ.

The Mass inspires us apostolically, sending us out to proclaim the Gospel and to share Christ with our brothers and sisters.

Though the "source and center" of all prayer, the liturgy and a sense of the sacred has, in some ways, become marginalized in the American Church. Once robust parishes are seeking to rebuild, but they frequently overlook the connection between the empty pews and the decentralization of the liturgy, which was underscored by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI.

"I am convinced that the crisis in the Church that we are experiencing today is, to a large extent, due to the disintegration of the liturgy," Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI wrote in his autobiography *Milestones*.

Something in the simplicity of the child's experience of the liturgy teaches us to return to what we might call the basics of the faith – meaning a love for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the sacraments and the rituals of the Church. Only through the liturgy are we nurtured on our stewardship journey and inspired to proclaim the Gospel.

As Archbishop Alexander Sample from the Diocese of Portland, Ore., writes, "If we are transformed by the sacred liturgy, then we, as believers, can help transform the culture."

THE SOCIAL CONCERNS COMMITTEE

Showing Our Love for God in Service of Others

Our faith is not supposed to exist just on a personal level. By the nature of our Baptism, we are each called to go out and share the Gospel, spreading the love of Christ to others by our words and deeds. And, much like ripples in a pond, this love should be ever expanding, beginning with our families and growing to include our parish, community and, finally, the world at large.

“That’s what Jesus asked us to do – to show our love for others and to serve other people,” says parishioner Sharon Mays. “Through the Social Concerns Committee, we’re trying to take a social responsibility for continuing the mission of Jesus – to create concrete ways that we as a parish can do our part for the community and make one another more aware of these issues.”

Founded many years ago within the parish, the Social Concerns Committee works tirelessly throughout the year to foster a greater awareness and to help care for the needs of others. Committee members meet monthly on the third Friday of each month at 8:30 a.m., reporting on various topics and planning upcoming Social Concerns events.

“We have standing committees and hear from all of those different people during our meetings,” Sharon says. “Each committee focuses on a different social concern area that we are focusing on in our church.”

Together, committee members organize the monthly food collections that take place the first Sunday of each month, are involved in various pro-life activities, raise money for unmet needs through the United Way, support local crisis pregnancy centers, offer financial support to parishioners and visitors in need, and provide scholarships for youth events such as Catholic HEART Workcamp and the March for Life. These charitable endeavors are only made possible, however, through



By providing opportunities for the entire faith community to help those in need, the Social Concerns Committee continues to put the mission of Jesus Christ into action here at St. Peter.



Each first Sunday of the month, members of the Social Concerns Committee organize a food collection for local food banks.

parishioners’ generosity at the periodic fifth Sunday collections and during annual fundraisers like the Christmas Cookie Exchange.

The Social Concerns Committee also works hard to provide periodic opportunities for learning, creating a greater awareness in the parish family for external needs. Last year, for example, the committee hosted

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ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

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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: 8:30 a.m.

Reconciliation

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

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

The Social Concerns Committee continued from page 7

a theology professor from Quincy University, who spoke to the parish in a two-night lecture series “designed to help enrich our members’ faith.” The Social Concerns Committee also hosts the annual Red Beans and Rice Dinner on Palm Sunday, featuring a dynamic speaker on some social justice issues relevant to the Quincy area.

“These whole parish events are designed to help foster a greater awareness of social concern issues here within our parish,” Sharon says.

By working to become the hands and feet of Christ to others, the Social Concerns Committee members end up blessing not only our community, but also each other. Through their commitment toward social justice and the generosity of others, committee members can’t help

but be encouraged in their own faith journey.

“I’ve truly learned so much from the people of this committee and about the needs of our community,” Sharon says. “My faith has grown tremendously in seeing the generosity of our parishioners and members. I’ve been blessed over and over again by watching the commitment of our volunteers, who give of their time and service to both our church and committee so faithfully. They are truly committed to showing their love for God and their service to others.”

Meetings are always open and the committee welcomes new members. We encourage parishioners to consider getting involved and to continue supporting this ministry in whatever means possible.

If you would like to learn more about the Social Concerns Committee, please contact Sharon Mays at maysfam2@comcast.net or 217-224-5169.