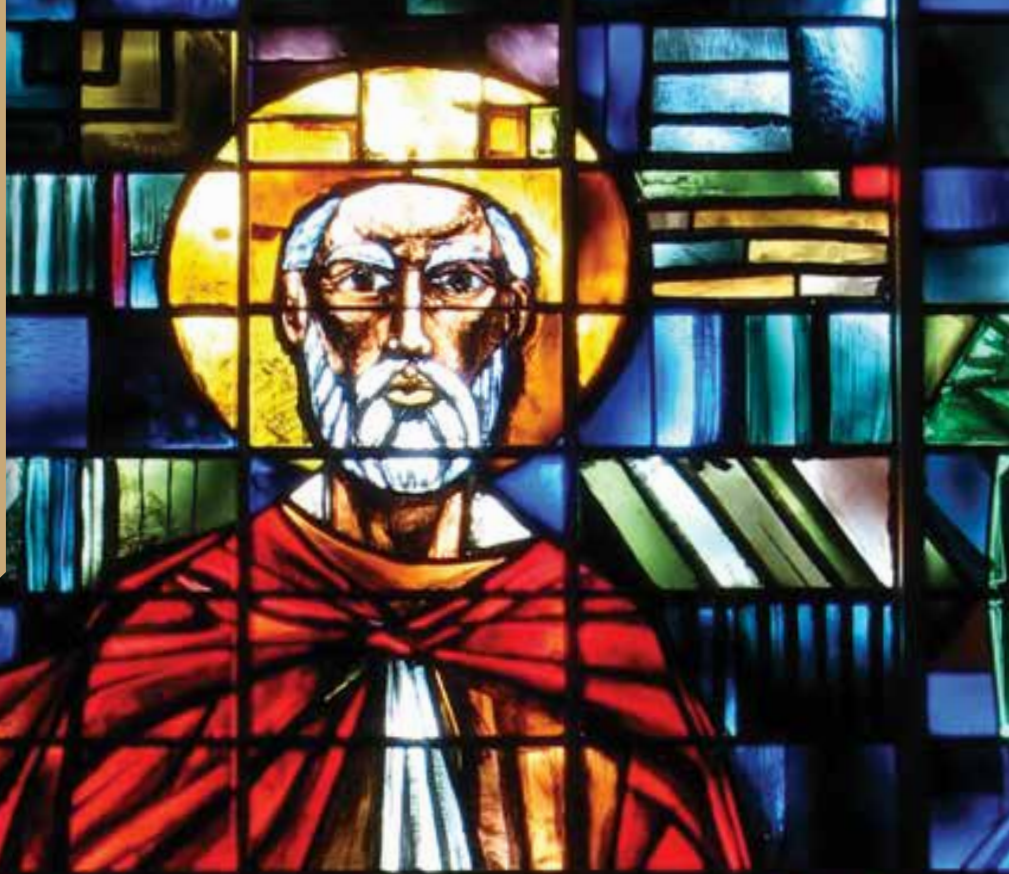


Church of St. Peter, Quincy III

MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER



DRAWING GRACES DOWN FROM HEAVEN THROUGH THE ROSARY

Several years ago, when D.J. Venvertloh was diagnosed with terminal cancer, a faithful group of his friends stormed heaven with prayer. After pleading time and time again for a miracle with believing hearts, their prayers were answered — though not in the way they expected.

“Even though D.J. did succumb to cancer in the end, his situation is what brought us to start our Rosary Group,” Jim Citro says. “We prayed to Fr. Tolton for a miracle for D.J., and we really believed it could happen. Although he was not healed, we still continue to meet regularly to pray together.”

Currently, the Rosary Group meets in various locations and at various times throughout the year. This Lent, they are meeting each Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. before the 7 p.m. Mass at the back of our church. In the past, they have met from time to time at Fr. Tolton’s gravesite, and may do so again in the future.

“I really love our prayer group,” Jim says. “It has such a great bunch of people. We open our meetings with a beautiful prayer to Fr. Tolton, lift up

continued on back cover



“We have all grown to love the experience of praying it. The repetitive nature of it puts you in a meditative state as you contemplate the mysteries and the intentions. It is very comforting, especially to those who are struggling with the trials of life.” — Jim Citro

ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

A SIGNIFICANT MOMENT IN OUR PRAYER *The Presentation of the Gifts*

Occasionally, you might hear someone jokingly refer to “halftime” during Mass – the interval following the Prayers of the Faithful, as the Liturgy of the Eucharist begins. It can be easy, even tempting, to zone out as you sit, waiting for the collection basket to make its way to your pew.

But if you pay attention, you’ll have the opportunity to enter into something deeper – a significant moment in our prayer.

It’s mentioned by St. Justin Martyr, one of the earliest Christian writers, when describing the Mass in the second century, “Bread is brought up and wine and water...”

This practice, of people bringing up the gifts, has been part of our Catholic tradition from the very beginning. Although we might think of this action as being merely practical, in reality, it serves a much deeper spiritual purpose.

Each Sunday Mass, someone is chosen, whether an usher, or another member of the parish, to bring forward “the gifts” – bread, wine, and in many cases, the collection of money that has been gathered moments before, from the generosity of the congregation. These gifts not only symbolize, but also in reality, are the work of human hands. The bread and wine are fruit of God’s creation, which, through the effort of human hands, are made into the gifts that we present to the Lord.

Certainly, the collection that is presented to the priest also serves to represent the work and sacrifices of the previous week. Sharing our monetary “treasures” is one of the ways that we embrace stewardship. It’s an opportunity



to generously give back to the Lord, from the fruit of our work.

In his book *What Happens At Mass*, Fr. Jeremy Driscoll, OSB explains, “...We should not think of the collection of money at this point as some sort of banal, dirty but necessary affair. Money is our work. Money is hours of our lives. And now we give it away, we sacrifice it, for the work of the Church.”

In his letter to the Romans, St. Paul instructs Christians to “offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God” (Romans 12:1).

The physical act of carrying the gifts forward to the priest is meant to serve as a tangible reminder of the fact that we are

all called to stewardship. We are all called to present to God our lives – our work, our talents, the struggles and victories of the past week – as an offering and gift to God.

Those who bring forward the gifts each week have the privilege and responsibility of remembering what their action represents – that we are called to give generously of our time, talent and treasure to God, who gives us His very self, at Mass. And for those sitting in the pews, tempted to “check out” for a few minutes, seeing the gifts being brought forward should serve as a powerful reminder to offer our lives back to God, through serving and honoring Him.

So next week, don’t just sit back and wait for the “halftime show.” Come to Mass a few minutes early and approach an usher to ask if you and/or your family may bring up the gifts that week. Don’t be surprised if you start to notice a change in your heart and a desire to be even more generous with God in the coming week!

MARCH — A TIME TO TAKE A CLOSE LOOK AT THE EXAMPLES WE FOLLOW

Dear Parishioners,

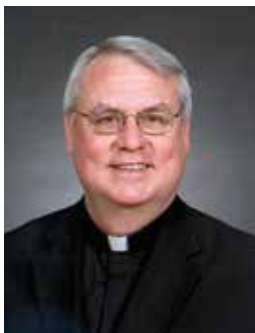
This month of March is a significant time for us as Catholics. We are in the midst of Lent, and then we celebrate Holy Week, with Easter occurring just after the end of the month, on April 1. In addition, many may point to the month of March as a time we celebrate the Irish on March 17, the Feast of St. Patrick.

However, two days after that is the Feast of St. Joseph on March 19 — and for many in the world, that is more important. St. Joseph was, of course, the husband of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the foster father of Jesus Christ.

Everything we know about Joseph comes to us from Holy Scripture. It might be said that, in order to understand him completely, we must read between the lines. The Catholic Church has designated the month of March as the month of St. Joseph. Yet, there is not a single example of Joseph saying something that can be quoted in the Bible. We can assume he was a man of few words — in turn, we may consider that he speaks to us through his actions. It is also clear that he was a humble man. Many point to him as an example of what a good father is and should be.

St. Joseph provides an example to all of us. Think of some of his strengths — he was obedient; he put his own needs aside to assure that Jesus and Mary were cared for; he surely trusted in God, even when God's will may not have made complete sense to him.

Those traits give each of us some idea of what we need to do in life. Do we only embrace those



parts of our faith that make sense to us or that we find agreeable? Do we put the needs of others before our own? Our lives are filled with crosses and challenges, but do we trust in the Lord as Joseph did? Do our actions show us to be good Catholics and Christians? What kinds of examples are we setting?

Lent and Easter are times for us to look closely at the answers to these questions. Joseph was a carpenter, a worker — and he obviously was not a man of wealth or prestige. By the time Jesus' public ministry begins, Joseph seems to disappear. Nevertheless, he was a man of royal origins. When St. Luke introduces him to us in Luke 1, he calls him "Joseph, of the house of David."

All of this leads us to know and believe that Joseph was someone we would classify as a "good steward." Who do we look up to? Do we seek to be like people who are like Joseph, or are our models more worldly and more successful in the eyes of others? St. Joseph is a wonderful example for us. We all need to be like him in many, many ways.

God bless you during this holy time.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Msgr. Leo J. Enlow
Pastor



SAVE THE DATE!

Please join us for a free professional photography session and be included in the new Church of St. Peter Directory. We need you to help make our directory complete! Photography will be June 19-23, July 10-14 and July 17-21. You will receive a free 8x10 portrait, a free printed directory, and have the opportunity to purchase additional portraits. We will announce more details in the bulletin, when they become available.

ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

FOR ASSOCIATE PASTOR FR. VALERY BUSURU

There is a popular saying that “life is a journey,” and this is certainly true for all of us as we learn, grow and change over the course of our lives. However, this expression carries a special meaning for our associate pastor, Fr. Valery Busuru. His middle name, Safari, means “Journey” in his native tongue of Swahili. The name was inspired by the circumstances of Fr. Valery’s birth — his parents, who had already fled the violence in their native Rwanda, were leaving the Republic of Congo to seek asylum in Tanzania when Fr. Valery was born. Over the years, Fr. Valery’s life has continued to take him on many journeys, both literal and spiritual.

Fr. Valery and his 12 brothers and sisters grew up as refugees in Tanzania. Although their family eventually found land to farm and settled near a village, they prayed that peace would one day come to their homeland of Rwanda so that they could return. In the meantime, daily life in Tanzania carried on, with the children helping on the farm and attending school in the village.

Fr. Valery’s parents were devout Catholics, and he received a strong education in the faith from his earliest years.

“My father used to go to church every day,” Fr. Valery recalls. “So, he would wake me up in the morning and say, ‘Wake up to go to church’. He was chairman for the Parish Council for a long time. With his faith, knowledge and wisdom, I grew up knowing Christ and knowing that going to church was important. We also had a very holy priest in the village who was close to me, and we also (had a woman in our family who was a nun), and she also contributed to my vocation.”

After completing his primary school education, Fr. Valery applied to continue his studies at junior seminary. When he graduated and went on to seminary to take philosophy and theology courses, he began to consider a vocation to the priesthood — in contrast to the students who



would choose to attend a secular university after completion of the high school seminary. With the encouragement of a few close friends, including several priests and bishops, he finished his theological studies and was ordained a priest in 1992.

Fr. Valery’s first assignment was as a social pastoral minister for the Diocese of Sumbawanga in Tanzania. In 1994, Rwanda was liberated, and in 1995, Fr. Valery’s parents, brothers and sisters returned to their native land. Three years later, the bishop from his family’s home diocese asked Fr. Valery’s bishop to allow him to go serve in Rwanda, as the country had lost many priests during the 1994 genocide.

For Fr. Valery, there is no way to fully describe the experience of arriving in Rwanda.

“I felt a joy that I couldn’t explain,” he recalls. “It is like when you’re having a baby, or when you’re returning to your promised land. Being a refugee is a bad experience. Tanzania gave us the status of nationality, and I have to thank the people there who received us. But there were always some who wanted to humiliate us or

JRU, *Life Truly is a Journey*

blame refugees when bad things happened. So, growing up I always said I had to go home one day.”

During the five years that he served the diocese in Rwanda, Fr. Valery filled the roles of associate pastor, pastor, and chaplain to the hospital and prison. Feeling ready for something new, he decided to return to Tanzania to study clinical pastoral education for two years. He did so well in the program there that his American supervisor suggested he study here in the United States.

And so, in 2004, Fr. Valery’s life took him on yet another journey — this time, from sunny Africa to chilly Chicago, where he earned a master’s in Pastoral Studies.

“It was a cultural shock,” Fr. Valery chuckles, remembering his arrival in Illinois. “Coming from Africa and the country to the city of Chicago was overwhelming, but I met very good people who accommodated me and tried to be patient with my language.”

Following completion of his four-year program of study in Chicago, Fr. Valery spent seven years in Joplin, Mo., as a hospital chaplain. Wishing to return to parish ministry, he was thrilled when the Diocese of Springfield invited him to serve as an associate pastor in the diocese.

Since arriving at St. Peter in summer 2017, Fr. Valery has been thankful for the kindness and support of our staff and parishioners, and feels that he is learning so much from the inspiring hard work of Msgr. Leo Enlow. He is

especially grateful for the patience that has been shown him as he continues to improve his fourth language, English — Swahili, French and Latin are his first three languages!

In all his experiences, Fr. Valery has discovered that the best way to move forward in faith is to stay open about the ways we can learn and grow.

“I’m a positive man,” he says. “I stopped complaining because it does not help me to grow. Instead, I’m going to think of positive things because that helps me to grow. I try to see things with an open mind and listen with the heart. Listening with my heart — without having an agenda — is how I learn to do things like supporting our people, visiting them in the nursing home or hospital, serving in the church, or preaching. I try to learn so that I can offer deep spirituality to others, and I’m trying to use my whole heart.”

Whether he is studying for the online courses he is taking for his doctorate, biking or exercising at the YMCA, or practicing his American English, Fr. Valery is always seeking to learn and grow mentally, physically and, most of all, spiritually. After all, these are the true fruits of the journey!

“I think I have a gift of perseverance and also I always want to learn new things,” Fr. Valery affirms. “Yes, life is a journey. I’ve been in the refugee camp, in Tanzania, then home — and then I came here. I studied secular classes, I went to seminary, I studied clinical pastoral education, and now I’m in the doctorate program. So, I’m still on a journey!”

“I try to see things with an open mind and listen with the heart. Listening with my heart — without having an agenda — is how I learn to do things like supporting our people, visiting them in the nursing home or hospital, serving in the church, or preaching. I try to learn so that I can offer deep spirituality to others, and I’m trying to use my whole heart.” — Fr. Valery Busuru

Stewardship

THE WISE MEN'S GIFTS SYMBOLIZE

We experience great joy when we celebrate the coming of the Magi at Epiphany each year. For many of us, it is the completion of Christmas. Yet, the gifts offered by the Magi — gold, frankincense and myrrh — can serve to guide us as we observe Lent this month.

It may seem strange to connect the joyful celebration of Epiphany with the penitential season of Lent. Yet, our spiritual life should not be divided into separate bits having no connection with each other. In the same way, the Church's liturgical year should also flow from one season to another. The different feasts and seasons certainly have different emphases, but they are intended to build on each other. So let's see if we can connect what the Magi gave Jesus with what we're going to offer Him this Lent.

The basic ingredients for our Lenten rule normally come from what are termed the Three Notable Duties — prayer, fasting and almsgiving. These in turn come from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7).

How do we connect the wise men's gifts with the notable duties? Actually, what the gifts symbolize matches up surprisingly well.

Frankincense is the basic ingredient in the incense used in the worship of God, in the

ancient world and in the Church today. Offering it to Jesus points out His divine nature, and so it symbolizes prayer. Our Lenten rule needs to include prayer and worship. Of course, we are bound to worship at Sunday Mass year-round. Maybe during Lent, we might add a weekday Mass. Perhaps we can increase the time we devote to private prayer at home or at adoration. Devotional reading from the Bible or another appropriate book can be added. In addition, don't forget the possibility of adding family devotions during Lent, so that the whole family prays together.

When we offer our gold to Christ to build His Church and to help His poor, we are engaged in almsgiving. While giving from the treasure God has entrusted to us is a duty throughout the whole year, maybe this Lent we can practice being a little more generous than usual. If our giving is a thankful response to the gift of eternal life that God has given us, we will find that the giving is indeed a means of grace.

For centuries, myrrh has been associated with fasting. Although myrrh comes from the same family of plants as frankincense, it has a more pungent scent and bitter taste. In the ancient world, it was regularly used in

Gold, frankincense and myrrh were indeed valuable gifts for the wise men to present to the Child Jesus. When we look at their symbolism, we can see their relationship to the three notable duties of almsgiving, prayer and fasting. What gifts are we going to offer to Jesus this Lent?

OUR LENTEN OBLIGATIONS

embalming. Generations of theological writers have seen the gift of myrrh as a foreshadowing of Christ's sufferings. And fasting strengthens us in holiness and prepares us to come into God's presence after our own deaths. St. Thomas Aquinas himself linked myrrh with repentance and fasting when he wrote that myrrh represents the penance by which we preserve our souls from the corruption of sin.

Fasting may be the most difficult of the three notable duties for modern Americans. After all, most of the advertising and many of the magazine articles we see are devoted to making us more, not less, comfortable. We usually think of fasting only under the heading of dieting to lose weight. Instead, try to think of fasting as a way to become more spiritually fit. Body and spirit affect each other. The whole sacramental system is built on the truth that we can receive spiritual grace through material things and physical actions. Our specific requirements of fasting are limited – abstaining from meat on Fridays during Lent, and a reduction in the quantity of food we eat on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. But discipline of our physical bodies for our spiritual well-being does not have to be limited to Lent!

Gold, frankincense and myrrh were indeed valuable gifts for the wise men to present to the Child Jesus. When we look at their symbolism, we can see their relationship to the three notable duties of almsgiving, prayer and fasting. What gifts are *we* going to offer to Jesus this Lent?

ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

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MASS & RECONCILIATION SCHEDULE

Sunday Masses

Saturday: 5:00 p.m.,

Sunday: 8:00, 9:30 and 11:00 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

DRAWING GRACES DOWN FROM HEAVEN THROUGH THE ROSARY

continued from front cover

specific intentions, and then pray the Rosary.”

With compassionate hearts, they pray for parents who have lost children.

“It is an extraordinarily powerful experience when we pray together,” Jim says. “Last October, we went to the gravesites of five different children who died and prayed a decade of the Rosary, along with their parents.”

They also pray for all of those suffering from cancer and for their families.

“We try to lift up and support those who are in a constant battle with this disease — that God will fill the hole in their lives that only He can fill,” Jim says.

By turning to Our Lady, Queen of the Most

Holy Rosary, group members find a profound sense of solace in this “valley of tears,” discovering the treasure of contemplation.

“We pray the Rosary because it was Fr. Tolton’s favorite prayer,” Jim says. “He prayed it every night with his mother. We have all grown to love the experience of praying it. The repetitive nature of it puts you in a meditative state as you contemplate the mysteries and the intentions. It is very comforting, especially to those who are struggling with the trials of life.

“Being part of our prayer group is so wonderful, and I encourage more people to come,” he continues. “All are more than welcome to share this great experience of prayer and fellowship!”

If you would like more information on this ministry, please contact Jim or Kathy Citro at 217-653-2201. See future parish bulletins for upcoming Rosary Group meeting times and locations.