

Church of St. Peter, Quincy, Ill.

MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER



EIGHTH-GRADE GRADUATION: “OPENING A DOOR TO HIGH SCHOOL”

On the evening of May 21, the 33 members of the St. Peter School eighth-grade class will receive their diplomas and step into their future as high school students. Teachers Hannah Metz and Amanda Martin will send them off with the knowledge that these students have been given a strong formation and foundation in their faith through the benefits of Catholic education.

It will be a time of mixed emotions for all, as their teachers wish them farewell and their parents acknowledge that this is one more step toward adulthood.

The day will begin with the 10 a.m. Awards Ceremony at school, when awards will be presented to the students holding the highest cumulative averages in the subjects of religion, reading, math, English, history and science. In addition, service awards and Christian Attitude awards will be presented.

Following their class photo in their caps and gowns, the students will enjoy lunch at The Patio. The commencement ceremony will begin at 7 p.m.

A highlight of graduation will be our choir’s performance of songs chosen by the class.

Miss Metz and Mrs. Martin will each shake



Several of last year’s eighth-grade graduates are all smiles during their commencement ceremony. This year’s class is preparing to follow in their footsteps as they move on to their high school years with the solid foundation of Catholic education.

the students’ hands as they come forward to receive their diplomas from Fr. Leo. This moment will have a personal touch for Mrs. Martin as her niece is one of the graduates.

“It’s exciting,” Miss Metz says of the ceremony. “We do a speech toward the end of the ceremony after the diplomas are awarded. We always do it off that particular class to kind of guide them as they go on their next step in their journey of education. Both Mrs. Martin and I give a talk and

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ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH



STEWARDSHIP *Living in Love*

“God is love, and he who abides in love abides in God and God in him” (1 Jn 4:16). As Christ’s disciples, we are called to live lives of love. When asked which commandment is the most important, Jesus answered, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might.” He immediately followed this command with, “Love your neighbor as yourself. No commandment is greater than these” (Mk 12:29-31).

The life of a Christian is, essentially, all about love! This doesn’t mean that Christ preached an abstract Gospel, or that we need to love simply because “it feels good.” The reality is quite the opposite. Indeed, Christ’s Gospel of love is one of dramatic action, and living in that love calls each of us to action.

What is this love, then, of which Christ speaks? How are we to live it out today?

Christ, the God who, as John tells us, “is love” Himself, came to Earth out of pure love for us. So that we might have everlasting life, Christ took the punishment for our sins. He, the Lord of all creation, was mocked, scourged

and ultimately murdered on the cross to atone for the sins that we, His creatures, have committed. Now, that’s love! And it is the love that we are called to imitate throughout our lives.

Notice the selfless nature of Jesus’ act. He gained nothing in return for what He did, and He calls us to love in the same manner. How do we do that here and now? Do we die on our own personal crosses? The answer, in a way, is “yes.” We don’t necessarily die on the wood of the literal cross as Christ did, but we must die to self for the sake of others. That is the love of Christ, and that is the love He calls us to every day. If we want to truly love God, we must love others. God Himself showed us the reality of this need when he commanded that we love our neighbor just as we love Him. And then Christ explained, “Whatever you do to the least of those, you do to me.” If we are called to love God, then we are called to love our neighbor, for Christ resides in each one of us. It must be a love like Christ has shown us – one of selflessness. We should want for nothing more than the good of our neighbor.

There are many ways that we can show our love to others, particularly through prayer and service. Here at our parish, there are many ministries that offer us the opportunity to serve our neighbors. If we offer a little bit of time, we can help out in the parish office doing seemingly menial yet important tasks, such as stuffing inserts into the bulletins so that fellow parishioners are aware of news and events within the parish. Those of us with an aptitude for teaching may be called to serve others through RCIA or our Religious Education program. There is also always a need for more lectors and Eucharistic Ministers to aid the priest in bringing Christ to other parishioners at Mass.

These are but a few of the countless opportunities we have to serve our parish and local community. However we are called to do so, one thing is for certain: the love of Christ calls us to action. How will we show our love for God this year? Remember, “Whatever you do for the least of those, you do for me.”

THE MONTH OF MARY: *A Time for Celebration and Joy*

Dear Parishioners,

In the Catholic Church, we designate a particular devotion for each month — and May is when we honor our Blessed Mother Mary. Thus, this is a good time for us to think about and concentrate on our devotion to the Mother of God. Perhaps we can add a few more Marian prayers to our daily routine. Praying the Rosary might be even more important. Of course, that assumes that daily prayer is part of our daily routine — which it should be.

Our Blessed Mother is important to our faith and to our Church. Her willingness to serve in a way that allowed the Lord to take human form really made our salvation a possibility. Because of her complete trust in God, she lived her life free from sin, and after her life, she was assumed into heaven by the power of God and crowned Queen of Heaven and Earth.

She is, of course, not divine. We worship only our Lord Jesus Christ, but we honor Mary as a saint and in many other ways. We honor God when we remember the role of Mary in our salvation. Devotion to Mary always leads to Jesus Christ Himself.

Mary was joyous when she said “yes” to God. That is the kind of joy we need to seek — and we, too, must say “yes” to the Lord. Let



us be grateful to Mary for bringing us her Son. This is why we crown her on our Catholic version of Mother’s Day. Through Mary, we are given an invitation into the Catholic fold. Her feminine presence and the safety of her motherhood may help us grow.

For most of us, this time of year is a month of growth in relation to nature. It is difficult not to have May as one of our favorite months for so many reasons. May is a beautiful time. We are called to make it even more beautiful, and we can do that as we serve and love one another.

I am deeply blessed to be your pastor. I may say that often, but it is true. My priesthood has been a blessing, and serving you all has made that blessing even more significant. I pray for you daily. Please pray for me. God bless you and keep you always.

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Rev. Msgr. Leo J. Enlow". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style. The background of the page features a large, faint, grayscale image of a statue of the Virgin Mary holding the Christ Child, which is partially obscured by the text and other elements.

Rev. Msgr. Leo J. Enlow
Pastor

GETTING READY FOR THE BIG DAY:

Do you remember your First Communion? Dressing up, walking up reverently to receive the Precious Body and Blood of the Lord for the very first time. Each year, a group of students prepares to have the same experience, as they receive the Eucharist for the first time.

“There’s just a glow,” says Mrs. Sandy Gallaher, of the big day. “The excitement beforehand, when we’re waiting, watching as they come up one at a time — they’re just glowing.”

Mrs. Gallaher, a teacher at St. Peter School, who also serves as a second-grade catechist in our PSR program, has been a teacher for 28 years and a catechist for the past ten.

The preparation process for First Communion takes place over the course of a year, with children meeting with their catechists weekly, for an hour on Wednesday evenings.

“I want them to understand more about the different parts of the Mass,” says Mrs. Gallaher of the topics covered in class. “We talk a lot about



There are two family meetings during the course of the year, designed to include and empower parents in sharing their faith with their children.

the Mass, understanding the Old Testament, New Testament, Gospel, and helping them understand that in the Liturgy of the Eucharist, (the bread) is becoming Jesus’ Body.”

Parents also play an important role in preparing their children. There are two family meetings during the course of the year, designed to include and empower parents in sharing their faith with their children. The family meetings include a teaching from our

pastor, learning about the True Presence in the Blessed Sacrament and interactive activities for parents and children to do, together.

“They are the primary educators of their children,” Mrs. Gallaher says. “We’re a resource to continue what’s going on in the home.”

Mrs. Gallaher thinks that many of us could learn from watching the children who are receiving the Eucharist for the first time.

“When I’m watching these

“I hope receiving the sacrament draws them closer to Jesus. Jesus met with His close friends and shared that meal, and we’re gathering as a whole family doing that same thing He asked us to do, to remember Him. We’re all part of a family, sharing that meal together.” — Mrs. Sandy Gallaher

First Holy Communion

kids go up there, watching the reverence and the respect they have on that day, it makes me think,” Mrs. Gallaher says. “We need to take a step back and refocus, and ask, ‘Are we giving the Eucharist the reverence it deserves?’”

“I see the excitement in them,” she adds. “It makes me appreciate the Eucharist more, that Jesus gave us this gift and sacrificed for us.”

It is Mrs. Gallaher’s hope that receiving the Sacrament of the Eucharist will strengthen children in their faith and help them to stay close to Jesus and their parish community.

“I hope receiving the sacrament draws them closer to Jesus,” she says. “Jesus met with His close friends and shared that meal, and we’re gathering as a whole family doing that same thing He asked us to do, to remember Him. We’re all part of a family, sharing that meal together.”

She recalls one of her favorite moments at the celebration of the children’s First Communion celebration, after Communion.

“They will sing ‘Lord prepare me to be a sanctuary, pure and holy tried and true, with thanksgiving, I’ll be a living sanctuary for You,’” Mrs. Gallaher says. “I tell them that once that bread becomes Jesus, it can’t go

back to being bread, so it has to be kept in a special place. They are receiving Jesus into their hearts and now Jesus is in you. You’ve taken Him in — He’s a part of you now. We need to live with Jesus in us and act as Jesus would.”



The preparation process for First Communion takes place over the course of a year.

For more information on our Sacramental Preparation Program at the parish, please contact the parish office at 217-222-3155. First Communion practice will be on Thursday, May 3, at 6 p.m. First Holy Communion will be celebrated Sunday, May 6, at 2 p.m.

ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

MASS REVERENCE AND ETIQUETTE

For many of us, when we are invited to a wedding, one of our first considerations is “what am I going to wear?” We wouldn’t think of showing up at a formal event in our workout clothes. How many of us search for just the right outfit to wear to our annual office party or on a date? Compare that to how much thought we put into what we wear to Mass on Sunday.

How we dress for an occasion indicates the importance that we place upon that particular celebration. At Mass, we encounter God through the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. Dressing

appropriately for Mass is one way that we show respect both for God and for our faith family. And this respect is important at all Masses – no matter what time of day or night.

Think about what you are teaching your children when you all wear your “Sunday clothes” to Mass. You are reminding them that Mass is a special celebration. After all, we are going to Jesus’ house.

Some people may quickly point out that Mass shouldn’t be a fashion show – a place to show off your finery – and they are right! We also know that some parishioners come to Mass on their way home

from work, and they certainly should not feel embarrassed about arriving at Mass in their work clothes. And no one should ever stay away from Mass because of simplicity of clothing.

But one rule should apply in all instances – our attire at Mass should always be modest. Our clothing should never distract others from what we are gathered together to celebrate – the life, death and resurrection of our Lord.

The celebration of Mass is always a holy occasion and thus should be treated in the most holy manner – in body, mind and spirit.

YOU’RE INVITED! SIGN UP TO BE PART OF OUR PARISH DIRECTORY

It’s time to schedule your family’s photo session for the Parish Directory. All families who participate receive a free 8x10 portrait and a copy of the directory. Portraits will be taken June 19-23, July 10-14, and July 17-21. You can sign up online at appt.lifetouch.com. If you need assistance in scheduling an appointment, we will be available after all Masses to help! Our directory will not be complete without you!



LADIES OF CHARITY HELPING LOCALS FIND COMPASSION

As the patron saint of all works of charity, St. Vincent de Paul was an ordinary person who did extraordinary things in the name of helping the poor. Four centuries later, his legacy lives on in the members of the Ladies of Charity of the United States of America — LOC — who help thousands of people each day, all over the country.

At our parish, some of these ladies walk among us as volunteers with the Quincy chapter of the LOC. Supported by St. Peter, dedicated parishioners who have embraced the opportunity to grow in faith and friendship while helping others, spend time volunteering at either at the LOC Center or thrift store.

Local organization President Jane Hass says helping both our struggling neighbors and people we may never meet are at the heart of what the LOC does. On average, 2,250 individuals benefit from services provided by the LOC.

“We provide food and clothing and household items free of charge to anybody who needs it,” she says. “A lot of



Volunteers help a woman check out at the Ladies of Charity Thrift Store. Run entirely by volunteers, the organization relies on people who generously give of their time to serve the disadvantaged in our community.

people like the idea that we give things to the poor people — we don’t charge for things — which is why we have a lot of support. We have a longstanding presence in Quincy.”

“I try to volunteer a few hours at a time,” says St. Peter parishioner Judy Nelson. “They call me, and I come down when I can. It’s a very dedicated group of women who really help the poorest of the poor in our town.”

Open Mondays and Fridays, the LOC Center provides food-insecure households in Adams County with monthly

prepackaged bags of food, many of which are filled with items St. Peter parishioners have generously donated through parish food drives.

“We definitely appreciate the parishioners’ donations and thank them on behalf of our clients,” Jane says. “We’re able to provide more than we used to. We can put an extra protein item in every bag thanks to them. We really couldn’t get along nearly as well without their donations.”

For Judy, the chance to interact with those who receive the food and other donations is an opportunity to show compassion to those who need it most in our community.

“I like to work with the people, so as they come in the door, I’ll help them sign in or help at the counter counting or boxing up what they’ve chosen that day,” she says. “It’s really a reminder of how difficult it is for so many people who are trying to make ends meet, people who have nothing, and I always think, ‘this is Jesus.’ You have to be nonjudgmental and very compassionate. It makes you feel very grateful for what you have.”

If you would like to lend your time with the LOC, either at the center or at the thrift store, please contact Jane at 217-222-6359 or 217-222-3541.

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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

EIGHTH-GRADE GRADUATION *continued from front cover*

Principal Cindy Venvertloh gives one.”

“We’re at the end of this chapter of their lives,” Mrs. Martin says. “To me, it’s opening a new door when you go on to high school. We’re closing the elementary and junior high experience and moving on to high school.”

With this being her 13th year of teaching at St. Peter, Mrs. Martin will be sending off some students she has known since first grade.

And the emotion among the students?

“At that point, they are ready to go on,” Miss Metz says.

Of course, a whole range of emotions will be sweeping over the parents watching their children graduate from St. Peter School.

“Some are in tears, especially if the graduate is their ‘baby,’ and they have no other students at St. Peter,” Miss Metz says. “Some graduates are their parents’ oldest child and they find it hard to believe that they have a high school student. It is mixed emotions that day!”

St. Peter School offers preschool through eighth grade. To schedule a school visit for prospective students, please call Sara Bradfield, administrative assistant, at 217-223-1120.