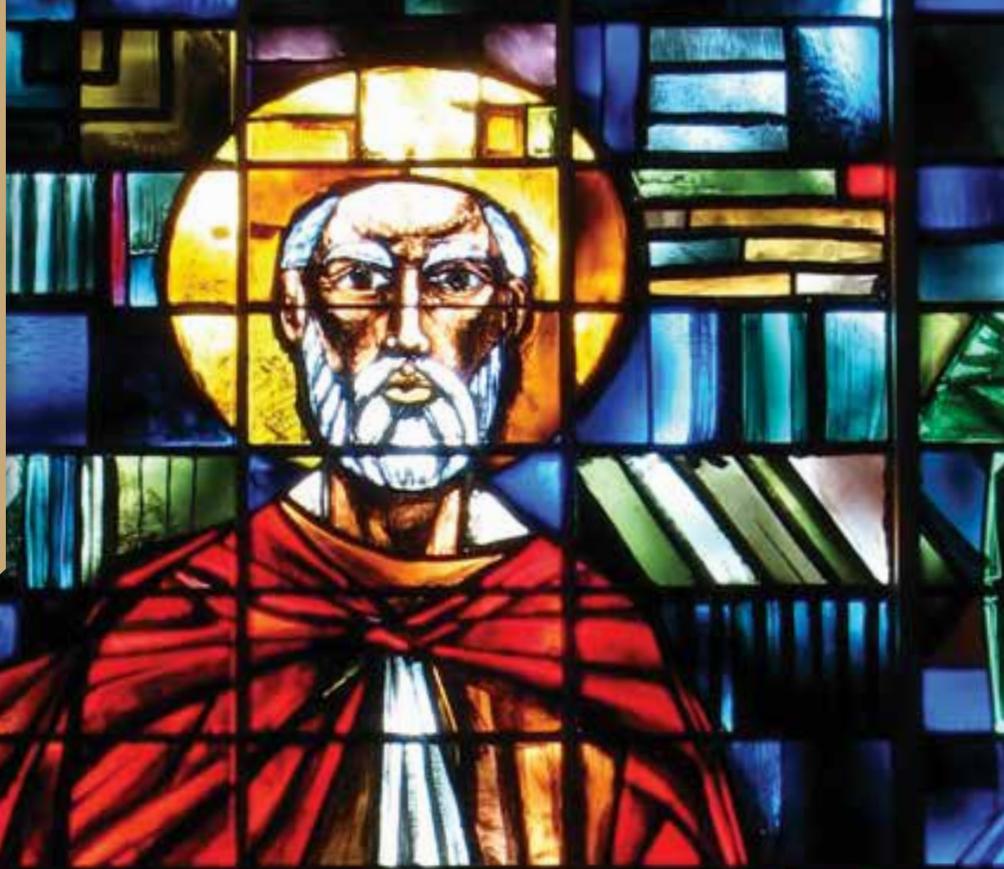


Church of St. Peter, Quincy Ill

MONTHLY
NEWSLETTER



SAINTS ALIVE YOUTH GROUP

A Place to Belong

The sense of belonging — it's a basic human need. We all want to feel like we have a place, to know we're part of something and have a purpose to fulfill. The same is true, in a special way, with our young people. And as Catholics, we want to ensure that, before anywhere else, our youth know that they belong in our community, that there is a place for them in the Body of Christ.

Unfortunately, in many cases, youth ministry programs don't begin until middle school or even later — a time when many young people have already begun to fall away from the practice of their faith. However, here at St. Peter's, we're taking special care to make sure that none of our youth fall through the cracks. For the past seven years, Saints Alive Youth Group has provided an opportunity for our students in fourth through sixth grades to connect with their peers in a fun and engaging environment, showing them that they have a place in the Communion of Saints.

Parishioner Jen Dyer serves to coordinate Saints Alive, which meets once a month, on a



Saints Alive Youth Group is a chance for students to grow in their faith and have fun at the same time.

Sunday evening. The nights typically include games, activities, a short teaching and a snack. The meetings follow a liturgical theme, with the upcoming event on Sunday, Dec. 8, being an Advent party, and Jan. 12 celebrating the Baptism of Jesus, with water games. There is also a significant focus on the lives of the Saints.

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ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

Saints Alive Youth Group continued from front cover

By learning about the stories of those who have gone before us, living lives of faith, Jen hopes that the students will embrace the saints as both role models and intercessors.

“It’s okay to have role models here on earth, but how much more important is it to have heavenly role models?” Jen says. “That’s why we emphasize the saints. They were sinners just like us, they lived lives just like us, but they are now where we want to be. We’re all called to be saints. We talk about how to rely on them and ask for their intercession.”

Saints Alive also gives Catholic youth a chance to spend time learning and having fun with Catholic peers. Especially as the influence of friends increases at this age, there is great value to spending time with those who share similar beliefs.

“Belonging becomes very important to them,” Jen says. “We talk about being inclusive of all our friends and I try to encourage them to embrace everybody. Friends are so important and I want them to know they’re not alone and it’s okay to really get excited about faith. It’s important to share it with friends and not feel self-conscious.”

Jen encourages other moms and dads with children in fourth through sixth grades to consider helping out with the program. She hopes that, as her own children age out of the youth group, that there will be other parents who step up and take the reins. Jen also reminds parents that supporting their children in attending youth group is a great way to model prioritizing their faith.

“We think nothing of spending the whole



Saints Alive gives our youth a chance for fellowship, faith and fun.

weekend going to a soccer tournament and spending money on that, but we have to show our kids that our true loyalties don’t lie on the soccer field or the basketball court,” Jen says. “Our true loyalties are to our Lord, and an hour and a half at youth group is a short ‘sacrifice’ to show our kids that this is really important to us.”

At the end of the day, Jen hopes that Saints Alive will help our young people to know that they have a place in our community and in the Church.

“I hope to transform their minds to feeling ‘Not only do I belong here on earth, but I belong to this Communion of Saints,’” Jen says. “We’re all in this together, and I can ask [the saints] to pray for me. I hope they feel this community, not just here on earth, but universally.”

If you would like more information on the Saints Alive Youth Group for students in fourth through sixth grades, please contact Jen Dyer at 217-440-9766 or 2jdyers@gmail.com. Upcoming youth group events can be found in the weekly bulletin.

A Letter from Our Pastor

A STEWARD'S RESPONSE TO THE *Ultimate Christmas Gift*

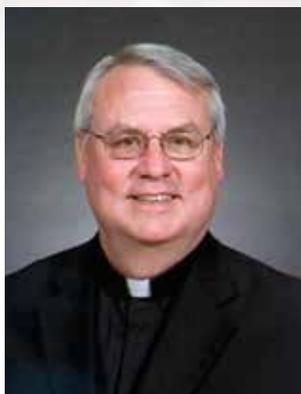
Dear Parishioners,

Christmas is America's favorite holiday. Consider for a moment the amount of effort we put into the holiday — decorating our homes with ornate light displays, buying boxes upon boxes of presents, addressing Christmas cards and attending seasonal get-togethers. When taken all together, it staggers the imagination. Whatever might happen to be next on the list of “favorite holidays” — Valentine's Day, Halloween or Thanksgiving — it can't hold a candle to our investment in Christmas.

Don't get me wrong — I love Christmas, too. But I'm afraid that many of us somehow miss the main reason for our Christmas celebrations.

I've sometimes heard people say things like, “Getting everything ready for Christmas becomes so hectic, I don't want to do it every year. But, you know, Christmas is really for the children.” And occasionally, I've heard or read in a letter to the editor that Christmas is about the hope that a newborn baby brings to the world. Even in the early winter, when the days are short, we can celebrate babyhood, a new human life.

Both those sentiments are wrong because they're too limited. Of course, it's true that many of our Christmas customs are for the children — we might not get to hang our stockings to be filled by Santa Claus otherwise. And it's true that the birth of a baby, any baby, brings joy and hope to all those around. Yes, many of our Christmas celebrations are centered on the children, and the birth of a child offers a promise for the future.



At Christmas, we celebrate not just any baby, but a particular baby. We celebrate His birth not because it's cute to see a baby in a manger filled with hay and surrounded by farm animals — instead, we celebrate this birth because of Who this baby is and what He did as an adult, for *all* of us.

A human baby is certainly a wonderful creation, made in the image of God. But Jesus is more than that, not less, for He is God the Son who took on human nature in order to redeem us from the results of the sin into which we had fallen. He didn't stay a baby. He grew up and taught and preached and healed. Finally, He was put to death “for our sake” as the Creed affirms and rose from the dead. That's why we celebrate His birth more than 2,000 years later. That's why normal routines are suspended for a few joyful days each year.

In response to the gift the Father gave us with the birth of His Son, we joyfully exchange gifts with each other, share with the poor, and offer our gifts of time, talent and treasure to the Church. God gives to us — and as stewards, we must do our best to faithfully use those gifts.

A joyful and blessed Christmas to all of you!

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

THE WARM AND W

Extending the Love of Christ

Hospitality — it's one of the Four Pillars of Parish Stewardship. And as such an essential principle of our faith, St. Paul emphasizes hospitality in Scripture: "Do not neglect hospitality, for through it some have unknowingly entertained angels" (Hebrews 13:2).

Parishioner and new coordinator Mary Jo Reed says that this particular Scripture verse captures the mission and purpose of St. Peter's newly revitalized Warm and Welcoming Team. Taking on a more active approach than in years past, Mary Jo and her fellow team members hope to cultivate a greater feeling of welcome and hospitality for every person — be they a parishioner or visitor — who walks through our parish doors.

"We are hoping to get parishioners together socially more often and are trying to think like a visitor to our church so that we can develop creative solutions to some of the practical challenges they may face when walking into our facility," Mary Jo

says. "This is so important because no church wants to inadvertently hinder a family's or person's faith journey. We want to be warm and welcoming — to really extend the love of Christ to others."

Historically, the Warm and Welcoming Team has been responsible for greeting newly registered parishioners with a friendly phone call, later meeting with them personally with a plate full of cookies and a pictorial directory of the parish. The team has also helped host receptions for special occasions and periodic parish events. Yet mindful of our stewardship calling, Mary Jo says that the team now feels that they can do still more to foster an overall spirit of community here at St. Peter.

"We are learning that parish life can be much more life-giving when we find ways to gather with one another in addition to the attendance of Mass on Sundays and Holy Days," Mary Jo says. "That could be the blessing of meeting a new friend in



Some of the volunteers who make up this newly revitalized ministry (from left): Kevin Williams, Karilyn Williams, Gina Bergman, Judy Nelson, Mary Jo Reed, Cathy Gill, Nick Paul, Megan Paul, Amy Looten, Judy McCourt, Alana Flynn, Lacey Hauk, Evelyn Hauk and Fr. Aaron Kuhn.

WELCOMING TEAM

to Others through Hospitality



Some of our Warm and Welcome Team members at a planning meeting this summer — (from left) Judy Nelson, Jay Grawe, Megan Paul, Tamy Cassady, Judy McCourt and ministry coordinator Mary Jo Reed.

the form of someone entirely new to our parish or who just attends a different Mass service than we do. It also allows us to participate more in the lives of other people attending here, and to learn from one another. A community of faith must be given time to mingle!”

Still in the process of recreating themselves, the Warm and Welcoming Team hopes to facilitate this parish mingling by more regularly offering what Mary Jo describes as “no strings attached” social events — gatherings designed purely to bring people together, helping them form new connections while also strengthening old ones. An example of this would be the ministry’s recently hosted Trucks and Treats, which included a food truck, treats for our parish children, and information on parish ministries and events for adults.

“The Trucks and Treats event was something we just wanted to try as a new way to get people together where they could have fun and

hopefully get more plugged into the church,” Mary Jo says. “The more people we are able to get involved in our committee, the better ideas perhaps we’ll come up with as we continue to grow and develop this ministry.”

Not only will this increase the overall spirit of hospitality within the parish, but in time, Mary Jo says, it will also grow our overall parish involvement.

“There is a reason that hospitality is a pillar of stewardship,” Mary Jo says. “If people feel welcomed, they’re much more comfortable getting involved. So if you have a truly warm and welcoming parish, that’s always going to inspire people to get involved in all the various other parts of stewardship — prayer, formation and service.”

Doing this successfully, however, requires the collaboration of our entire faith community. All parishioners — whether they are an official team member or not — can assist this ministry first and foremost through their prayers. They can also go out of their way to smile to an unfamiliar face or even to sit in a different spot in the church so as to meet new parishioners. And then, of course, parishioners can always support the ministry by actually joining, sharing new ideas on how to continue fostering a warm and welcoming environment.

“The Warm and Welcoming Team is open to new members all year long,” Mary Jo says. “We can utilize the support of anyone, whether or not they have the ability to attend our meetings. Persons can always be included in our email listings so that they can lend ideas, or at least make sure they are getting our events on their personal calendar to enjoy or volunteer at. If you have a spirit of hospitality in your home life, please bring your talents to this parish! Being a part of our warm and welcome ministry is such a rewarding way to serve.”

If you would like more information about the Warm and Welcoming Team, please contact Mary Jo Reed at mjoreed@gmail.com, or call the parish office at 217-222-3155.

MEET THE SEELEYS

Following Christ with Joy

For Dwight and Barb Seeley, there is one true joy in life — Christ. Living for God’s glory and bringing others to His merciful heart is what keeps them going, day in and day out.

“When we look at our commitment to stewardship, we do not just look at the treasure we give, but also the time and talent,” Barb says. “We believe that stewardship is really a matter of being Jesus ‘with skin on’ — being His hands and feet. Anyone we encounter knows we are not only Christian, but also Catholic.”

Dwight and Barb grew more involved with their Catholic faith about 19 years ago, when they had their first Cursillo weekend experience. Currently, they are the Cursillo weekend contacts for our parish.

“Going on the Cursillo weekend changed how we pray,” Barb says. “We learned to really talk to God, rather than just say prayers. Over the years, being involved with Cursillo has enriched our circle of friends and strengthened our Catholic faith. It has guided us to become more active in our parish, as well as in stewardship events.”

After drinking from this “wellspring” of deep prayer and conversion, Dwight and Barb have lived out the stewardship vision in the midst of their six children and 13 grandchildren, embracing their vocation generously and wholeheartedly.

“Whenever our grandchildren come over for dinner, they know that they are not to pick up their forks until we say our meal prayer together,” Barb says. “When they stay overnight at our house, we read them a bedtime story and a prayer from a book of blessings.”

Furthermore, they serve as greeters as well as in various liturgical ministries. Barb also participates in a Bible study and sings in the Resurrection Choir. Dwight enjoys going to Eucharistic Adoration every week, and finds it to be a profound source of spiritual nourishment and strength.



Dwight and Barb Seeley celebrate the birth of Christ at Christmas.

“Dwight enjoys going alone to Eucharistic Adoration because it gives him one whole hour with Christ to pray, listen to Him silently, and be absorbed by His presence,” Barb says. “He really looks forward to spending this quiet time with Our Lord and letting Him into His heart.”

Throughout the years, the Seeleys have been very involved with the Quest and Teens Encounter Christ (TEC) programs. Currently, their daughter Laura Evans is on the Board for TEC, as well.

“These programs are powerful weekend experiences for youth designed to bring them further along on their faith journey,” Barb says. “They include spiritual talks and Christ-centered fun. Overall, they help young people realize that God made them just the way they are, and that He loves them just how they are.”

When asked what stewardship means to them, Dwight has some meaningful insights to share.

“Stewardship is a way of sharing our faith with others, supporting each other, and being in a Christian community,” he says.

PERPETUAL ADORATION

Invites Us to Spend Prayerful Time With Christ

Sometimes our schedules get in the way of keeping up with friends and loved ones. Days can whisk by without making a phone call or even dropping a note. Life just gets so hectic, that time just slips away.

But what about spending time with our Lord?

St. Peter's provides the Perpetual Adoration Chapel that invites us to quiet ourselves, step back from our hectic lives, and spend an hour in prayer in the presence of the Lord, before the Blessed Sacrament displayed in the monstrance.

Mary Voorhis and Gina Wolf coordinate Perpetual Adoration at the Chapel. Perpetual Adoration in itself is 24 hours and seven days a week of constant hourly prayer.

"When the Israelites were in the wilderness, a tent was erected to offer prayer and sacrifice to God," Mary says. "When our Lord was in the Garden of Gethsemane, He prayed to God the Father in His agony of what was to come. Jesus had several apostles with Him waiting while He prayed. He would go back to them, and finding them asleep, asked, 'Can you not spend one hour with me?' The Adoration Chapel answers that question with the adorers spending that hour with the Lord."

"To be present with our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, there is no other reason needed to participate in adoration," Gina says. "He is truly there, there with you, beside you in the Chapel listening and perhaps revealing to you the journey He wants you to travel."

There also is the question of how to spend that hour in the Adoration Chapel. There are a variety of ways to offer prayer during that time: pray the Psalms or the Liturgy of the Hours; recite the "Jesus



Gina Wolf offers 12 Biblical reasons for wanting to spend one hour with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament:

- 1. He is really there!*
- 2. Day and night, Jesus dwells in the Blessed Sacrament because of His Infinite love for you!*
- 3. The specific way that Jesus asks you to love Him in return is to spend one quiet hour with Him in the Blessed Sacrament.*
- 4. When you look upon the Sacred Host, you look upon Jesus, the Son of God.*
- 5. Each moment that you spend in His Eucharistic Presence will increase His Divine Life within you and deepen your personal relationship and friendship with Him.*
- 6. Each hour you spend with Jesus will deepen His Divine Peace in your heart.*
- 7. Jesus will give you all the graces you need to be happy!*
- 8. Jesus is infinitely deserving of our unceasing thanksgiving and adoration for all He has done for our salvation.*
- 9. For peace in our country!*
- 10. Each hour you spend with Jesus on earth will leave your soul everlastingly more beautiful and glorious in heaven!*
- 11. Jesus will bless you, your family, and the whole world for this hour of faith you spend with Him in the Blessed Sacrament.*
- 12. Each moment you spend with Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament brings joy, pleasure, and delight to His Sacred Heart!*

continued on back cover

ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

2600 Maine Street
Quincy, Illinois 62301



Return Service Requested

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

Perpetual Adoration continued from page 7

prayer”; meditate using Scripture; read the life of a saint and pray with him or her; pour out your heart to Christ and adore Him; ask for forgiveness and intercede for others; pray the Rosary, or listen and pray along to the Rosary on CD; sit quietly and just “be” in the presence of God.

Those who have practiced Perpetual Adoration have found that they have grown closer to Christ as they spend time being exposed to the Holy Eucharist in the monstrance. They are helped to enter into a prayerful and peaceful state in which they can listen and speak to God more closely.

“I know I am in a holy place, and feel God’s presence,” Mary says. “The peace comes as

soon as you walk into the Chapel. I feel all my problems slip away. When I leave the Chapel, I am refreshed and ready to face the day.”

The Perpetual Adoration Chapel is open for anyone to enter from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday; from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturday; and 7 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Sunday. All other hours the doors are locked, and assigned adorers coordinate with one another to gain access to the Chapel.

“This is done for their safety and wellbeing,” Gina says. “This is not to say that one cannot ‘drop in’ at any time, but it is left to the discretion of the assigned adorer.”

Anyone wanting to take part in Perpetual Adoration may call either Gina Wolf at 217-257-9966, Mary Voorhis at 217-653-3127 or the church rectory at 217-222-3155.