



# CATHEDRAL of SAINT PETER

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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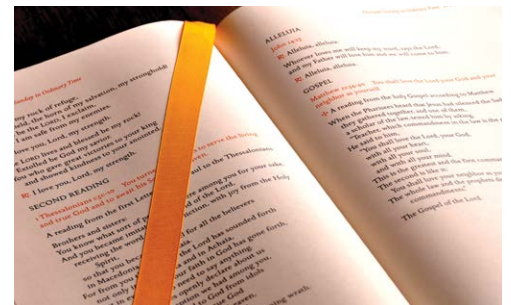
## Lectors Bring the Word of God to Life During the Liturgy

*“We Are Not Performing — We Are Proclaiming the Word”*

The Word of God — Scripture — is fundamental to our faith. Wisely, the Church incorporates Scripture throughout the Mass. The Liturgy of the Word presents to us three readings, generally one from the Old Testament, one from the New Testament, and one Gospel passage. Using a three-year cycle means that just by attending Mass, we hear a large portion of the Bible. Our lectors are key to bringing Scripture to life before us.

Nita Weissert trains lectors and she certainly has the experience needed, having served as a lector for 46 years herself. Nita even recalls serving as a lector when she was in grade school at the cathedral. At the time, she simply thought it was something she could do and a way for her to serve.

Even after 46 years of proclaiming the Word, Nita finds herself making new



discoveries in the Scripture she prepares to read. With a prayerful approach and using the workbook that lectors are given, she takes time during the week before Mass to practice and prepare.

“I always read through the workbook during the week a few times,” Nita says. “It explains how to pronounce words and goes into the background of the reading. I usually practice it out loud. Then on the weekend, right before I read, I say a prayer to the Holy Spirit to let me

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## Embracing Stewardship During

# Lent

**L**ent, the 40-day season of reflection and preparation leading up to Easter, is a time of spiritual growth, self-examination, and deepening one's relationship with God. Central to the Lenten experience is the connection to stewardship and recommitting to our commitments of time, talent, and treasure during Lent, so that we can truly embody the spirit of this season of sacrifice and renewal.

Time is one of God's most precious gifts to us. During Lent, consider how you can commit more of your time to prayer and service. This could involve setting aside a specific time each day for prayer and reflection, attending daily Mass, or participating in additional religious activities such as Stations of the Cross or adoration. By dedicating more of your time to God during Lent, you deepen your connection with Him and grow in your understanding of what it means to be a steward of the gift of time.

When it comes to talent, each of us possesses unique skills, and these gifts are to be used for the greater good. Lent is an excellent time to reflect on how you can commit your talents to serve others and glorify God. Consider volunteering at your parish or a local charitable organization, sharing your skills with those in need, or using your talents to enhance your church community. This act of giving not only benefits those you serve, but also strengthens your own sense of purpose and connection to your faith.

Stewardship of treasure is also an integral part of living a faithful life. Lent provides an opportunity to evaluate how you use your financial resources and make commitments to give generously. You might choose to increase your contributions to your parish or donate to a charitable cause that aligns with your values. Also, consider making financial sacrifices during Lent, such as giving up a luxury or non-essential expense, and redirecting those funds towards acts of charity and kindness. These

financial commitments reflect your understanding that all your material wealth is a gift from God, and you are called to use it responsibly and generously.

As you make these Lenten commitments of time, talent, and treasure during Lent, it's crucial to incorporate prayer and reflection into your journey. Spend time in prayer, asking God for guidance and strength to fulfill your commitments. Reflect on your progress, celebrate your successes, and acknowledge areas where you can improve. This self-examination is a fundamental aspect of Catholic stewardship and is an integral part of the Lenten experience.

Lent is traditionally a season of sacrifice, symbolizing the 40 days that Jesus spent in the wilderness. By committing your time, talent, and treasure, you are making a conscious choice to embrace sacrifice as a path to renewal. The sacrifices you make during this season help you grow closer to God, and in the process, you experience a spiritual rebirth that prepares you for the celebration of Easter.

Acts of mercy and kindness are a tangible expression of your commitments during Lent. By giving your time in prayer, sharing your talents with others, and sharing your treasure with the parish and those in need, you embody the love and compassion of Christ. Your actions become a testament to the principles of stewardship, and they have a positive impact on your community and the world at large.

By focusing on stewardship with your commitments of time, talent, and treasure, you can fully embrace the spirit of Lent and grow in your faith. This approach transforms the season into a time of deeper self-examination, spiritual growth, and a genuine connection to God's gifts. It is a reminder that living as a faithful steward is not a one-time commitment, but a way of life — one that extends far beyond the Lenten season.

*A Letter From Our Cathedral Rector*

# Celebrating Valentine's Day Through Acts of Stewardship

Dear Parishioners,

I hope this letter finds you well as we approach a unique and spiritually significant moment in our faith journey. Feb. 14 not only marks Valentine's Day, but also Ash Wednesday, the first day of Lent, a time of reflection and renewal. As we navigate this intersection of love and penance, I want to shed light on the Catholic teachings behind Valentine's Day and how we can celebrate it with a focus on stewardship.

Valentine's Day is named after St. Valentine, a third-century Roman martyr who upheld the values of love, self-sacrifice, and Christian faith. He defied the Roman Empire's ban on marriage for young soldiers, believing in the sanctity of love and the Sacrament of Marriage. His devotion to love, even in the face of persecution, serves as an inspiration to us all.

This year, Valentine's Day coincides with Ash Wednesday, a day of fasting, prayer, and repentance. We can celebrate this unique alignment of love and devotion by embracing Catholic stewardship. Here are ways to do so:

- **Lenten Sacrifice of Love:** Instead of traditional Valentine's Day gifts, consider giving something more meaningful. Make a Lenten sacrifice, such as giving up a favorite treat, luxury, or habit, and donate the money saved to a charitable cause. This act of almsgiving, rooted in love, reflects St. Valentine's commitment to those in need.
- **Acts of Love and Kindness:** Throughout Lent, perform daily acts of love and kindness. These gestures need not be grand; a simple act like calling a friend in need, helping a neighbor, or showing appreciation to a family member can be a profound expression of love and stewardship.
- **Prayer and Reflection:** On this Ash Wednesday, attend Mass and receive ashes as a visible sign of your commitment to repentance and renewal. Dedicate time



to prayer and reflection, considering the ways you can deepen your relationship with God and with one another.

- **Service to the Community:** Serve our community by participating in charitable activities or volunteering your time. Lent is a time for selflessness and giving. Join initiatives in our parish or engage in community service to extend your love to those in need.
- **Marriage and Family Enrichment:** On this day of love, focus on enriching your marriage and family relationships. Attend marriage counseling, pray together as a couple, or engage in family activities that promote unity and love.
- **Renewal of Stewardship Commitments:** Use this time to review and renew your stewardship commitments of time, talent, and treasure to our parish community. Reflect on how you can contribute to the growth and vibrancy of our faith family.

By celebrating Valentine's Day on Ash Wednesday through acts of stewardship, we can infuse this day with the deep love and commitment that our faith encourages. This unique confluence reminds us that love and self-sacrifice are at the heart of our faith, as exemplified by St. Valentine's dedication to love and Christian values.

May this Valentine's Day be a profound and spiritually rich experience, allowing us to renew our love for God, one another, and our commitment to stewardship as a way of life.

Peace,

*Fr Godfrey OSB*

Very Rev. Godfrey Mullen, OSB  
Cathedral Rector

# Looking Ahead

Preparing for the Celebration of the



In just a few days, the Church will embark on our 40-day transformation in the season of Lent, preparing our hearts, minds, and souls for the Easter season. We will give up some earthly desires like meat, sweets, or social media – all in an effort to focus ourselves more fully on the mystery of our salvation and, in a very real way, to unite our sufferings with Christ on the cross. And as the Easter season approaches, the Church in her goodness gives us a whole week in which to focus our hearts and minds even more intensely on the reality of Christ’s passion, death, and resurrection.

Easter is the greatest celebration of the liturgical year! It is the highest feast we celebrate! Yet, Easter didn’t happen without the cross, and Holy Week offers us a time to recognize that more fully.

“The season of Lent is meant to be a retreat for the whole Church as we prepare for new life at Easter,” Fr. Godfrey says. “For 40 days, we strive to listen and watch more faithfully, to hear the voice of the Lord calling us to holiness. As these 40 days reach their zenith, Holy Week is an opportunity to move toward holiness as much as possible, as the necessary precursor to the new life Christ has in store for us. We celebrate the resurrection with a week of weeks — 50 days of Easter! How right, then, to spend the week before in intense preparation — for the good of our own souls and the good of the world!”

Holy Week, of course, will culminate with the celebration of the Easter Triduum — Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday — when we celebrate the passion and death of our Lord without which the resurrection would not be possible.

“The Easter Triduum celebrates the Passover of the Christian people, where death no longer has the last word,” Fr. Godfrey says. “In one respect, the Paschal Triduum is one event over three days — from the beauty of the Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday evening, with the washing of feet and the remembrance of the institution of the Eucharist, through Good Friday and the recalling

**“It all points to the mercy of God and the outpouring of His love upon us in Jesus Christ. There is no more important liturgical celebration than those events lived by the Church each year.”**

**— FR. GODFREY**

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# ...to Holy Week:

## The Greatest Mystery of Our Faith

of Christ's passion and death and the horror of the Cross, to the gathering of the Church in the night, as the light of Easter dawns and the new life of the Church is made manifest in the newly initiated — it all points to the mercy of God and the outpouring of His love upon us in Jesus Christ. There is no more important liturgical celebration than those events lived by the Church each year."

So come, spend some time this Holy Week intentionally preparing your heart and mind to enter the Easter season in a place of utter gratitude for the goodness of our God. Take the time to celebrate the Paschal Triduum! It will leave you a changed person.

"These liturgies, while not required by the Church, can have a wonderful impact on our faith, on our understanding of Divine Mercy, and upon our call to follow after Jesus, the King who became the servant," Fr. Godfrey says.

On Holy Thursday, the Mass of the Lord's Supper will

be at 7 p.m. This liturgy is celebrated in the evening because it is when Jesus gathered with His disciples for the Last Supper. It is when Christ instituted the Eucharist and the priesthood! On Good Friday, we will celebrate the Service of the Lord's Passion at 3 p.m., the traditional time of Jesus's death. At 7 p.m. that evening, we will commemorate the Burial Service, during which we approach the tomb in musical reflection and offer our lives to God along with Jesus. Then, at 8 p.m. on Holy Saturday, we will celebrate the great Easter Vigil, when we welcome candidates and catechumens into the Church, and recall and rejoice in God's tenacious desire to save His people.

Holy Week and the Easter season that follows offer us a particular opportunity to recognize the goodness of God! May we make a concerted effort this year to enter into the celebrations in a way that brings honor and glory to Him!

## Lectors *continued from front cover*

read in a way for people to understand how God wants it to be heard."

While proclaiming the Word takes some intention and practice, and it helps to be comfortable speaking in front of a crowd, a lector's purpose is different from any other kind of public speaking. Nita even used some of the skills she learned for the public speaking she did in her professional life. Still, the ministry of a lector is unique.

"It's the Word of God, and my hope is that people hear it and understand it the way the writer intended," Nita says. "Each time I go through a reading, I get a little more understanding or context in what was being said. I think that helps with being a lector. We're not trying to just read through and get to the end, and we are not acting or performing, but we are proclaiming it."

Nita schedules one-on-one training with new volunteers. She shares her own experience along with the practicalities

such as using the microphone and dealing with acoustics. Sister Tess schedules the lectors and is able to accommodate individual schedules and preferences. Lectors generally serve once or twice a month — having a larger pool of lectors helps to give everyone a little more freedom and flexibility to serve when it works best for them.

"If you are willing to get up in front of the congregation and read and that wouldn't make you too nervous, we can use you," Nita says. "And if you have a special talent in terms of speaking, that's a skill that lends itself well to lectoring."

*To be trained to proclaim the Word of God at Mass,  
contact the parish office at 618-234-1166.*



# Strengthening Your Catholic Faith:

## *A Guide to Spiritual Growth and Faith Formation*

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**T**he journey of faith is a lifelong commitment, a continuous process of deepening our relationship with Christ and understanding the teachings of the Church. To improve your faith life and foster a closer connection with Christ, it's essential to engage in meaningful practices and explore Catholic literature that can provide spiritual nourishment. Here are some ideas to help you enhance your faith and some insightful Catholic-based books to read.

### ■ DAILY PRAYER AND REFLECTION

Building a strong connection with God starts with prayer and reflection. Setting aside time each day for prayer, whether it's the Rosary, the *Liturgy of the Hours*, or simply speaking from the heart, allows you to commune with the Divine. To complement your daily prayer, consider reading *The Imitation of Christ* by Thomas à Kempis, a classic work that guides Catholics in developing a deeper prayer life and drawing closer to Christ.

### ■ ATTEND MASS REGULARLY

The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Catholic faith. Regular attendance at Mass is crucial to growing closer to Christ. It's not just about fulfilling an obligation — it's an opportunity to receive the body and blood of our Lord and Savior. For a deeper understanding of the Mass, *The Lamb's Supper* by Scott Hahn offers insights into the biblical roots of the Eucharist and its significance.

### ■ STUDY THE BIBLE

The Word of God is a rich source of spiritual growth. Dive into the Scriptures, attend Bible studies, or join a Catholic reading group to explore the teachings of the Church. *The Catholic Study Bible* with commentary is an excellent resource for gaining a deeper understanding

of the Bible's teachings and how they relate to your faith. Utilize the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops' New American Bible online at [www.bible.usccb.org/bible](http://www.bible.usccb.org/bible).

### ■ ENGAGE IN FAITH FORMATION PROGRAMS

Your local parish may offer faith formation programs, which can provide a structured way to learn about the teachings of the Church. These programs can include courses on Catholic theology, morality, and the history of the Church. Ask your parish for information about available opportunities to deepen your faith and understanding.

### ■ READ CATHOLIC LITERATURE

Immersing yourself in Catholic literature is a powerful way to improve your faith formation. *Introduction to the Devout Life* by St. Francis de Sales is a classic that offers practical guidance for leading a life of holiness. *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis is a thought-provoking work that explores the Christian faith from a broader perspective.

### ■ SEEK SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE

Having a spiritual director or mentor can be immensely beneficial in your faith journey. They can offer guidance, support, and insights that help you grow spiritually. Consider reading *Spiritual Direction: A Guide for Sharing the Father's Love* by Fr. Thomas Acklin and Fr. Boniface Hicks to understand the role of a spiritual director in your life.

Improving your faith life and growing closer to Christ is an ongoing process. By incorporating these practices and exploring Catholic literature, you can deepen your understanding of Church teachings and develop a more profound relationship with our Lord. Remember that faith formation is a personal journey, and it is never too late to start or continue on the path to spiritual growth.

# THE FEAST OF ST. PETER DAMIAN:

## *A Celebration of Catholic Stewardship*



**T**he Catholic Church is replete with saints whose lives and contributions have left an indelible mark on the faith. Among them, St. Peter Damian stands as a shining example of Catholic stewardship, and his feast day, celebrated on Feb. 21, serves as a reminder of the importance of this virtue in the life of a devout Catholic.

St. Peter Damian was born in Ravenna, Italy, in 1007. He lived during a time when the Church was facing challenges, including corruption and a need for reform. Peter Damian, initially a hermit, later became a Benedictine monk, a cardinal-bishop, and a renowned theologian. His contributions to the Church and his commitment to reform and spiritual renewal made him a significant figure in the Catholic tradition.

The feast of St. Peter Damian holds a particular significance in the Catholic Church for several reasons:

### **CHAMPION OF MONASTIC REFORM:**

St. Peter Damian's life was characterized by his dedication to monastic reform. He recognized the need to restore the discipline and spiritual fervor within monastic communities. His works, such as *The Book of Gomorrah*, addressed issues of clergy misconduct and moral decay within the Church, advocating for a return to the monastic way of life. His feast day reminds us of the importance of reform, both within the Church and in our personal lives.

### **DOCTOR OF THE CHURCH:**

In recognition of his theological writings and profound insights into the faith, St. Peter Damian was honored with the title of Doctor of the Church. His theological contributions continue to shape Catholic doctrine and spiritual practices. His feast day is an opportunity for Catholics to reflect on the wisdom of this great theologian and the continued relevance of his teachings.

### **EXEMPLAR OF CATHOLIC STEWARDSHIP:**

St. Peter Damian's life exemplified the principles of Catholic stewardship. He understood that everything, including his talents and gifts, came from God. He lived a life of simplicity and humility, choosing to use his talents for the betterment of the Church and the world. His commitment to monastic life, prayer, and theological scholarship reflected his acknowledgment of God as

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## The Feast of St. Peter Damian *continued from page 7*

the ultimate source of all gifts. This is a powerful lesson in stewardship: to recognize our gifts as blessings to be shared with others.

### **ADVOCATE FOR THE POOR AND MARGINALIZED:**

St. Peter Damian's commitment to stewardship extended to his care for the poor and marginalized. He used his influence to advocate for the less fortunate, demonstrating the importance of generosity and compassion. His feast day is a reminder of the Catholic call to serve those in need and to use our resources for the well-being of others.

### **A LIFE OF SACRIFICE:**

St. Peter Damian's life was characterized by sacrifice and self-denial. He chose a life of austerity and penance,

demonstrating the virtue of self-sacrifice for the sake of spiritual growth and the service of God. His feast day serves as an inspiration for Catholics to embrace a life of sacrifice, aligning their actions with the principles of stewardship.

In conclusion, the feast of St. Peter Damian in the Catholic Church is a celebration of a remarkable saint whose life exemplified the principles of Catholic stewardship. His commitment to monastic reform, theological contributions, advocacy for the poor, and a life of self-sacrifice continue to inspire Catholics to this day. By reflecting on his legacy and the importance of stewardship in his life, Catholics can draw lessons for their own spiritual journeys and contributions to the Church and society. St. Peter Damian's feast day is a time to honor his memory and recommit to living lives of faith, service, and stewardship in the modern world.

### **MASS TIMES**

*Saturday Vigil Mass: 4:00 p.m. | Sunday: 8:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 5:00 p.m.*  
*Weekdays: Monday-Wednesday & Friday 6:45 a.m., Thursday School Mass 8:15 a.m.*

### **SACRAMENT OF PENANCE (CONFESSIONS)**

*Monday-Wednesday & Friday: 7:15-7:30 a.m. | Thursday 6:00-7:00 p.m. | Saturday 3:00-3:45 p.m.*