



# CATHEDRAL of SAINT PETER

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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## Children and Families Prepare for First Communion April 28

*Joyous Occasion as Young Parishioners Draw Closer to Christ*

When St. Therese of Lisieux wrote about her experience of first Holy Communion, her words painted a vivid picture of a young girl utterly ecstatic to receive the Savior — Body, Blood, Soul, and Divinity.

“The most wonderful day of my life arrived, and I can remember every tiny detail; how lovely it was, that first kiss of Jesus in my heart. It was truly a kiss of love. I knew I was loved and said, ‘I love you and I give myself to you forever.’”

These words emphasize for us just how transformative Holy Communion should be for us every time we receive it — we are united with Christ in a deeply intimate way. So, as we help our children prepare for their First Holy Communion, we do so with joy and excitement. We cannot wait for them to experience for themselves that “first kiss of Jesus.”

That will happen Sunday, April 28, as 16 children from both the Cathedral and St. Augustine of Canterbury Parish will receive their First Communion at the Cathedral during the 10:30 a.m. Mass. The children have been preparing throughout the year and are ecstatic that the day is almost here.

The children have been attending faith formation classes either as students of Notre Dame Academy or through our Parish School of Religion. Sister Tess Markus, who serves as director of both Religious Education programs, says that the children have been well prepared.

“Students from the Parishes’ School of Religion attend classes weekly on Sunday morning or Wednesday evening,” Sr. Tess says. “Students who attend Notre Dame Academy attend Religion

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# *Msgr. Thomas McGread:* **The Father of Catholic Stewardship in America**

In recent U.S. Catholic history, few figures stand out as prominently as Msgr. Thomas McGread, known as the “Father of Catholic Stewardship in America.” His visionary leadership and commitment to the principles of stewardship transformed not only his parish but also the entire Diocese of Wichita. Msgr. McGread’s pioneering efforts continue to influence the Catholic Church, emphasizing the importance of stewardship as a way of life.

Msgr. Thomas McGread was born in Ireland in 1928 and his early life was marked by a strong sense of faith and a desire to serve the Church. He was ordained a priest in 1953 in Dublin, Ireland, and came to America shortly thereafter, serving in various capacities within the Diocese of Wichita.

Msgr. McGread’s journey to becoming the Father of Catholic Stewardship began when he was appointed pastor of St. Francis of Assisi Parish in Wichita in 1968. At the time, the parish was struggling financially, and he faced the daunting challenge of revitalizing it. Msgr. McGread was guided by a profound sense of faith and a deep belief in the principles of stewardship.

He introduced a unique approach to parish life, emphasizing the three Ts of stewardship: Time, Talent, and Treasure. Msgr. McGread encouraged parishioners to dedicate their time and talents to the church community, not just their financial resources. This shift in perspective was a significant departure from the prevailing model of merely focusing on financial contributions.

Under Msgr. McGread’s leadership, St. Francis Parish experienced a remarkable transformation. The principles of stewardship became central to the parish’s mission, with parishioners actively participating in various ministries and



volunteering their time and skills. The result was not only a revitalized sense of community, but also financial stability.

Msgr. McGread’s innovative approach to stewardship at St. Francis Parish did not go unnoticed. One of his crowning achievements was leading the economically challenged St. Francis of Assisi parish school out of the depths of debt to become one of the best and biggest parochial grade schools in the state. In 1968, the school had about 50

students and by 1999 had grown to 800. Msgr. McGread taught that stewardship is a way of giving, not out of a need, but rather a need to give. Because of the success of stewardship giving at St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Bishop Eugene Gerber introduced the concept to the diocese, and it was eventually adopted by other dioceses throughout the nation.

Msgr. McGread’s stewardship model gained national recognition. He was invited to speak at the first International Conference on Catholic Stewardship. His presentations and teachings left a lasting impression on the Catholic Church, leading to further adoption of stewardship principles across the country.

While he passed away in 2013, Msgr. McGread’s legacy lives on. His life and work serve as a testament to the transformative power of stewardship when applied with faith, dedication, and a commitment to the well-being of the Church community. His leadership at St. Francis of Assisi Parish and within the Diocese of Wichita has left an indelible mark on the Catholic Church. His life and work continue to inspire Catholics to embrace stewardship as a way of life, strengthening both their faith and parish communities.

*Msgr. McGread’s life and legacy is chronicled in the 2011 book,*

**Grateful and Giving: How Msgr. Thomas McGread’s Stewardship  
Message Has Impacted Catholic Parishes Throughout the Country,**

*by Deacon Donald McArdle. The book is available on Amazon and at [www.grateful-and-giving-company.site](http://www.grateful-and-giving-company.site).*

*A Letter from Our Cathedral Rector*

# The Joy of the *Paschal Mystery* this Easter Season

Dear Parishioners,

As we rejoice from the celebration of Easter at the end of March, April brings us into the Easter season: 50 days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost in the Catholic Church. This extended period is a time of immense joy, hope, and spiritual renewal, reflecting the exhilarating experience of the disciples witnessing the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Paschal mystery, encompassing Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection, is the heart of our faith. In the resurrection, we find the ultimate victory over sin and death, promising new life, and eternal salvation. The 50 days of Easter serve as a continuous celebration of this life-altering event.

Celebrating the Paschal mystery throughout the Easter season is crucial for several reasons.

Let's begin with the joy of Jesus' resurrection, the cornerstone of our faith, which offers us all hope. The extended Easter season allows us to bask in this joy, inspiring us to live in the light of the risen Christ.

The Paschal mystery signifies not only Christ's victory over death but also our potential for renewal and transformation. The Easter season reminds us that through Christ, we can experience spiritual rebirth and profound life change.

Celebrating the Paschal mystery throughout the 50 days allows us to deepen our faith. We can contemplate the meaning of the resurrection, explore the rich symbolism of the Easter liturgy, welcome our newest



Catholic brothers and sisters, and experience a profound connection with Christ's sacrifice and victory.

The Easter season is a prime time for evangelization, an occasion to share the joy of the resurrection with others and invite them into the fold of the Church. By living out the Paschal mystery, we can become beacons of hope and share the Good News with the world.

The 50 days of Easter culminate in the celebration of Pentecost when the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles. It is a reminder of the vital role the Holy Spirit plays in our

lives and the mission of the Church. Celebrating the Paschal mystery throughout the season prepares our hearts to receive the Holy Spirit with renewed vigor and openness.

As we journey through the Easter season, let's immerse ourselves in the Paschal mystery, reflecting on the transformative power of Christ's resurrection and allowing it to permeate every aspect of our lives. May these 50 days be a time of renewal, deepening faith, gracious hospitality, and evangelization as we continue to celebrate the joy of Easter.

Peace,

*Fr Godfrey OSB*

Very Rev. Godfrey Mullen, OSB  
Cathedral Rector



# Adopt- Coming Together to Create Be



Often, the outside gardens are the first area that parishioners and visitors see when visiting a church. It will give them their first impression of the church and is their first welcome into the parish. Maintaining the gardens to keep them beautiful and welcoming is one way that parishioners can get involved to help invite other people into the parish family.

The Adopt-a-Spot Ministry strives to help create this beautiful and welcoming environment for all who visit the Cathedral. It encourages parishioners to get involved with the beautification and upkeep of the many spaces on the grounds that make our spiritual home so welcoming.

Josie Weier has helped with the ministry since it started in September 2022. For Josie, it was both a practical and spiritual need that led to her desire to ensure that the space was well maintained.

“I coordinate with those who are working to adopt one of these areas,” Josie says. “I provide them with some of the resources they may need, and I give them encouragement on the good work they are doing.”

The ministry helps parishioners have more of a sense of ownership in maintaining the grounds that God has blessed the Cathedral with, just as they would their own homes. It is open to everyone including families, individuals, parish staff, and ministry groups such as the Knights of Columbus or St. Vincent de Paul.

“Many people may often wonder how they can contribute to the parish in a meaningful way,” Josie says. “This ministry has opened the door to new ways of serving their Church. It has addressed many areas that have been previously neglected. It is a way for parishioners to share their God-given gifts and to



# Adopt-a-Spot: Beauty on the Cathedral Grounds

put their green thumb to work for the good of their partners in faith.”

Since the ministry’s inception, there have been a few areas in particular that have been beautified and looked after. There was a previously neglected area outside that was growing over, and the landscaping budget couldn’t cover the cost of restoring the area. A family chipped in and removed old growth, replaced bushes, and provided ground cover. This area is now a model for what can happen within this ministry.

“There are still many areas in need of attention,” Josie says. “The rose garden requires much ongoing care to keep unwanted growth from taking over. There is an area where some overgrown shrubbery was recently removed — this area would be a prime location for some groups to come together for beautification.”

The Adopt-a-Spot Ministry is a wonderful way for parishioners to live out their baptismal call to service in Christ’s mission and to uphold one of the major themes in Catholic social teaching — to care for God’s creation. The efforts of ministry participants are enjoyed by everyone who visits the cathedral and is an expression of resounding hospitality towards parishioners and guests.



*Questions about Adopt-a-Spot? Contact  
Josie Weier at 618-234-1166.*



# ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA

## *Living a Life of Stewardship and Discipleship*

As Catholics, we often look to the lives of saints for inspiration and guidance in our own faith journeys. St. Catherine of Siena, whose feast day is celebrated on April 29, stands as a remarkable example of someone who not only embraced her faith but also exemplified Catholic stewardship and discipleship in profound ways.

Catherine Benincasa, later known as St. Catherine of Siena, was born in 1347 in Siena, Italy. From an early age, she displayed a deep devotion to God and a remarkable sense of piety. Her life's journey was marked by an unwavering commitment to the Catholic faith, love for Christ, and a strong desire to serve others.

One of the most significant aspects of St. Catherine's life was her dedication to serving the poor and marginalized. She tirelessly cared for those afflicted by the bubonic plague, demonstrating selfless love and compassion for the suffering. This act of charity and service to the needy resonates with the Catholic principle of stewardship — using one's resources and talents to help those less fortunate.

In our modern context, St. Catherine's example challenges us to actively engage in acts of charity, volunteerism, and social justice. By following her lead, we can transform our communities through service and outreach, reflecting the love of Christ to those who need it most.

Catherine's life was deeply rooted in her faith and unwavering obedience to the teachings of the Church. She played a pivotal role in convincing Pope Gregory XI to return the papacy to Rome from Avignon, France, during a tumultuous period in the Church's history. Her dedication to the Church, even when it meant confronting powerful figures, exemplifies the essence of true discipleship.

Today, we can draw from St. Catherine's example of being obedient to the teachings of the Church and supporting its mission. By actively participating in our parish communities, sharing our faith, and upholding the traditions and teachings of the Church, we continue her legacy of faithful discipleship.

St. Catherine was known for her profound mystical experiences and deep prayer life. She had a strong personal connection with God and often received spiritual insights and guidance. These experiences remind us of the importance of nurturing our own prayer lives and seeking a closer relationship with God.

In our fast-paced, modern world, St. Catherine's devotion to prayer serves as a reminder of the significance of contemplation and spiritual growth in our faith journey. By prioritizing our prayer life, we can strengthen our relationship with God and better discern our role in serving others as Catholic stewards.

St. Catherine of Siena's life is a testament to the enduring values of Catholic stewardship and discipleship. Her dedication to service, unwavering faith, and spiritual depth continue to inspire Catholics worldwide. As we celebrate her feast day, let us reflect on her example and strive to live out the principles of stewardship and discipleship in our own lives, strengthening our bond with God and enriching our faith communities.



## Cantors Share Talents in Bringing Prayerful Music to Mass

Music is an incredibly powerful form of prayer, showing God's love for us and our love for Him. In *Sing to the Lord: Music in Divine Worship*, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops laid out what music should be like during the Mass: "God has bestowed upon his people the gift of song. God dwells within each human person in the place where music takes its source. Indeed, God, the giver of song, is present whenever his people sing his praises."

Here at the Cathedral of St. Peter, we are blessed with six cantors who sing the psalm and Gospel acclamation and help with congregational singing if needed. Cantors take on the role through their involvement in the choir.

Richard Thompson leads this ministry here at the Cathedral. He believes the cantor's role is essential in the celebration of the liturgy.

"If it's done well, it allows the people to experience the psalm clearly and prayerfully," he says.

Laura Veach has served as a cantor since the late 1980s. She's been involved in music for most of her life.

"To be able to share that marvelous gift with others is such a blessing," Laura says. "I feel closer to God. I love cantoring because it allows me to see how the congregation responds to the proclamation of the Word. This is my small way to return to the Lord what He has given me."

During her 36 years of serving as a cantor, Laura has learned that not everyone sings, but they are listening. She enjoys being part of that.

Liz Stock was inspired to serve as a cantor by her mother, Greta Stock. Liz has been a cantor for about two years and enjoys actively participating in the Mass this way. She finds that she has memorized so many of the psalms because singing them makes them easier to remember.

"The psalm for the Mass will occasionally emphasize what the Gospel or readings were about, which always sticks out to me," Liz says.

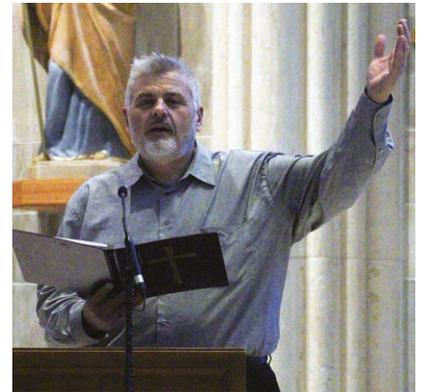
Jane Ohl Richie has been a cantor for about two years and has been singing in the choir much longer. She loves to use her involvement as a cantor to get people in the congregation to sing.

"I love singing and am grateful for the opportunity to do so at the Cathedral," Jane says. "I am also very grateful to Richard for his support."

Richard would encourage those with musical talents to get involved in this ministry.

"If they have the talent and discipline needed, this is a good way to exercise it," he says.

Even if you don't have musical talents, consider another way you might get involved — we are blessed with many ministries for a wide range of talents!



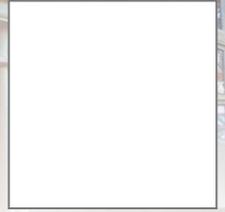
Cantors (from top) include Laura Veach, Rob Stock, and Jane Ohl Richie

To become a cantor, contact Richard Thompson at 618-558-7465 or [rthompjd@gmail.com](mailto:rthompjd@gmail.com).



# CATHEDRAL of SAINT PETER

200 W Harrison St • Belleville, IL 62220  
(618) 234-1166 • [cathedralbelle.org](http://cathedralbelle.org)



## First Communion April 28 *continued from front cover*

Classes each day as well as attending Mass on Thursday as a whole student body.”

In addition to their regular faith formation classes, the children came together on March 9 at Notre Dame Academy for an activity day in anticipation of First Communion. There, they made banners to be hung on the pews during the First Communion Mass. They tasted the unblest hosts and wine, and they watched a Brother Francis video about First Communion.

“The activity day allows the children to meet all of those who will be receiving First Communion with them,” Sr. Tess says. “The Notre Dame Academy students and the Parishes’ School of Religion students all came together that day. It is always so special for me to see them all so excited to receive their First Communion and to fully participate in that preparation.”

For her part, as the Director of Faith Formation for both the parish and the school, Sr. Tess held a parents’ meeting for

the parents of all first communicants, ensuring that everyone is ready for the celebration. Sr. Tess says she feels honored to be such a big part of the children’s and their parents’ preparation for First Communion, and she is eager to watch them finally receive Jesus in the flesh!

“It is always special to see them so excited about First Communion and to participate in their preparation,” Sr. Tess says.

What a grand celebration that will be! We are all so excited for our first communicants. May they offer their hearts to Jesus as they receive Him, and may they always treasure the Eucharist as the great gift that it is — the source and summit of our faith!

*To learn more about formation and sacramental preparation, visit [cathedralbelle.org](http://cathedralbelle.org)*

### 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.*