



CATHEDRAL of SAINT PETER

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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How We Can Make the Most of the Advent Season *A Time for Preparation and Waiting with Joyful Hope*

As we enter into the season of Advent, Fr. Godfrey offers us some valuable encouragement.

“Listen,” he says. “Expect great things. Be open to God’s majestic plan. Pray. But mostly, listen!”

Advent is a season of waiting, but that waiting isn’t meant to be passive — quite the contrary. As we await the birth of Christ and the feast of His incarnation, the Church invites us to open our hearts anew to His presence and to grow in our relationship with Him.

“The opening prayer (the Collect) for the first Sunday of Advent speaks clearly of the purpose of the season,” Fr. Godfrey says. “Grant your faithful, we pray, almighty God, the resolve to run forth to meet your Christ with righteous deeds at His

coming. So that gathered at His right hand, they may be worthy to possess the heavenly kingdom.”

“Advent is about preparing for the coming of Christ in the incarnation, becoming holier as we prepare for Him, carrying out righteous deeds, and then awaiting His coming again in glory,” Fr. Godfrey adds.

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CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS WITH A SPIRIT OF STEWARDSHIP

SHARING THE GIFT OF CHRIST

As Catholics striving to be faithful disciples, we must remember to find ways to keep the true meaning of Christmas — the celebration of the birth of our Savior Jesus Christ. Beyond the exchange of gifts and festive decorations, Christmas is a time to embody the spirit of stewardship. Stewardship involves sharing our time, talent, and treasure to reflect the love and generosity of Christ. Let's explore how to celebrate Christmas well and reverently in the spirit of stewardship.

Stewardship of Time: A Gift of Presence

Christmas is a season to be fully present with loved ones and with Christ. Make time for prayer and reflection, not just amidst the hustle and bustle but as a daily practice. Attend Advent and Christmas Masses, immersing yourself in the profound liturgy. Consider participating in Eucharistic Adoration, contemplating His Real Presence in the Eucharist. Sharing your time in prayer and reflection helps deepen your relationship with Christ and your family.

Stewardship of Talent: Sharing Your Gifts

Christmas provides an opportunity to share your unique talents and skills in service to others. You can create handmade gifts, such as cards, crafts, or baked goods, to show your love and care. Singing, playing instruments, or joining the church choir can enhance the beauty of Christmas liturgies. Additionally, consider volunteering your talents at local charities, shelters, or organizations that serve the less fortunate. Your talents can be a source of joy and comfort to those in need during the Christmas season.

Stewardship of Treasure: Generosity and Charity

Christmas is an ideal time to practice generosity and charity. Rather than focusing solely on the material aspect of gift giving, emphasize the true meaning of giving by sharing your treasure

in ways that benefit others. Support your parish and other charitable organizations financially. Consider donating to a local charity, sponsoring a family in need, or contributing to missions that serve vulnerable populations. Your financial contributions can make a significant impact on the lives of those less fortunate.

We also must remember that stewardship isn't limited to just one day; it's a way of life that can be lived throughout the Christmas season:

- **Advent Preparation:** Use the Advent season to prepare spiritually for the coming of Christ. Incorporate prayer, acts of kindness, and almsgiving into your daily routine.
- **Family Traditions:** Create family traditions that emphasize stewardship, such as volunteering together, making charitable donations as a family, or collectively choosing gifts for less fortunate children.
- **Sharing the Nativity Story:** As you gather with family and friends, take time to share the Nativity story and its profound significance. Encourage others to embrace the spirit of stewardship and share in the joy of Christ's birth.

By sharing your time, talent, and treasure, we can live out the teachings of Christ, deepen our faith, and make a meaningful impact on the lives of others. Embracing stewardship during the Christmas season transforms the holiday into a truly joyous and spiritually fulfilling occasion.



A Letter from Our Cathedral Rector

The Incarnation of



Dear Parishioners,

For weeks now, the Christmas decorations on Main Street have been up. The stores have had Christmas decorations available for purchase for months. And just now, the Church engages in the important work of preparation for the Incarnation of Love, the birth of Compassion, the dawning of the Eternal Daylight of the newborn Christ. In our preparation, let's remember a simple but helpful practice.

For those who still write letters, we know the common closing of a letter to a family member or dear friend. "Love, Mom." Or "Love, Jimmy."

As we wrap up the message, whether to someone far away in the military or to someone celebrating a birthday, signing the letter that way reminds writer and receiver alike of the reason for the writing: the love that we share.

Christmas is our Christian celebration of that central mystery of our faith: God the Father's love for us takes flesh and dwells among us. In a concrete and sacrificial way, God signs His eternal message to us with the signature of Christ's presence.

God's love is expressed in the Incarnation of Christ, but it was also poured out in Creation. God shows the depth of His magnificent love when darkness gives way to light, chaos gives way to order and beauty, plants and animals welcome the ones created in the image and likeness of God. Again, love is shared by Creator and Created.

In preparation for Christmas then, let's reflect on just how beautifully God loves all those who reflect



His majesty in the world. Let's also consider writing a heartfelt letter or note to someone we genuinely love, expressing that love and sharing it more freely. Maybe we could pull out the Bible and read St. Paul's magnificent words about love in 1 Corinthians 13. And when we might be tempted to be overcome by the demands of the season, maybe we could just quietly repeat to ourselves, "Love. Love. Love."

There are many opportunities for charity in this season of grace. Let's love that way. There are opportunities for extra praying. Let's love that way. There is reason to marvel at how the darkness of the early evening seems to be swallowing up the light. In hope, let's love!

As people made after the image of God, we need to be reminded that we are loved — through forgiveness, mercy, compassion, and affection. As people made after the image of God, we also need to be that reminder for others — that they are loved by God and by us. As we await Love Incarnate, our beautiful Baby Jesus, let us love one another with cheerful hearts.

Love,

Fr Godfrey OSB

Very Rev. Godfrey Mullen, OSB
Cathedral Rector

Meet the Contemporary Choir

Blessed to Share Talents and Energies

We all know how important music is during Mass. The choir, instruments, and hymns assist us in prayer and help us recognize the sanctity of our worship.

It is also no secret that everyone has their individual musical preferences. Some appreciate traditional hymns, others, contemporary songs, and still others prefer simple chant. Although it is difficult to appease everyone's preferences within the same Mass, the beauty of our Catholic worship is that there is a place for all types of worship music within the liturgical rite.

Here at the Cathedral of St. Peter, a variety of worship music is offered at different Mass times. For example, the 5 p.m. Sunday Mass has featured contemporary music for several years.

Our Contemporary Choir is directed by Paul Lindaur, and his small but talented group plays upbeat Christian hymns and Mass parts. Their group typically features three guitar parts and two singers. However, they are accompanied by the occasional piano, brass, percussion, and stringed instruments as well.

Paul has played music at Mass since he was in high school. Over the past 22 years, he has had the opportunity to lead music at several parishes and even the Air Force base.

“Our members get to use their talents to create music at Mass,” Paul says. “We believe we are helping others grow in their faith and connect to the Mass in a deeper way.”

“We play all sorts of music from traditional to current songs, but generally, the music is upbeat and more rhythmic than the traditional hymns played on the organ,” he adds.

The Contemporary Choir rehearses together for about an hour before Mass starts. Paul typically creates a song list that shares themes with the Mass readings and sends it to the members ahead of time.

“Our group is talented and picks up songs very quickly, and our lead singer can sight read,” Paul says.

“Our members get to use their talents to create music at Mass. We believe we are helping others grow in their faith and connect to the Mass in a deeper way.”

— Paul Lindaur

Contemporary Choir Energy at the 5 p.m. Sunday Mass

For a long time, the Contemporary Choir has been made up of young people and high school musicians. Paul likes to mentor young musicians and teach them how to play at Mass.

“I remember how difficult it was when I was first learning how to play at Mass,” Paul says. “You have to learn when to come in and be attentive to all the cues of the priest. It takes time to develop the timing, but it helps us, as choir members, to be more in tune with the Mass and participate more intentionally.”

Intentional participation during Mass is the ultimate goal of the Contemporary Choir. They hope to play music that connects with parishioners and helps them more fully enter into prayer.

“The greatest reward is when people come up and tell us how the music positively impacted them,” Paul says.

“I am amazed at how people sing at the 5 p.m. Mass,” he adds. “They sing well and loud. There is a power to singing, and St. Augustine says singing well is praying twice because it includes your whole being.”

To join the Contemporary Choir, contact Paul Lindaur at 618-910-3504.

There is a low-pressure audition that Paul will conduct with you to discern your strengths and talents.

How We Can Make the Most of the Advent Season

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So, this Advent, as we look forward to the Christmas season and to Christ’s coming again at the end of time, Fr. Godfrey encourages us to spend time focusing on the true reason for the season.

“In our day, a strong challenge is to allow all of the preparations for Christmas to become intertwined with the spiritual preparations for the incarnation,” Fr. Godfrey says.

On a practical level, Fr. Godfrey encourages us to pray the Magnificat every day throughout Advent (Luke 1:46-56). With these words, Mary praised God for His goodness and His favor upon her. Praying this daily helps us to follow her lead, both recognizing her place in salvation history because of God’s goodness and rejoicing at the goodness God sees in her and in us.

“In its own way, Advent is not only preparation for the birth of Christ, but a walk with the Blessed Mother in those last weeks of her expectancy,” Fr. Godfrey says.

“I encourage parishioners to pray the Magnificat each day. The Church prays it each evening in Evening Prayer.”

Additionally, Fr. Godfrey encourages us to reflect on the “O Antiphons” (usccb.org/prayers/o-antiphons-advent) that the Church prays during the last week of Advent.

“Some of the best reflections I recall about Advent circle around the ‘O Antiphons’ sung as part of Evening Prayer from Dec. 17 to Dec. 24,” Fr. Godfrey says. “They remind us, in beautifully descriptive language, just what is about to happen. These help focus me on God’s good grace — the beauty of the season.”

Indeed, Advent is preparing us to celebrate one of the greatest mysteries of our faith. God became flesh and dwelt among us so that He might break the chains of sin and death, and welcome us into eternal glory. He is why we prepare. He is why we celebrate. He is why we wait — with joyful hope! Make this Advent a fruitful one.

“Advent is about preparing for the coming of Christ in the incarnation, becoming holier as we prepare for Him, carrying out righteous deeds, and then awaiting His coming again in glory.” — Fr. Godfrey

The Feast of St. Francis Xavier: *A Model of Missionary Zeal*

The Feast of St. Francis Xavier, celebrated on Dec. 3, commemorates the life and work of one of the Church's revered saints, St. Francis Xavier, a missionary and co-founder of the Society of Jesus.

St. Francis Xavier was born in 1506 in the Kingdom of Navarre (modern-day Spain). He studied at the University of Paris, where he met St. Ignatius of Loyola, with whom he co-founded the Society of Jesus, or the Jesuits. St. Francis Xavier is particularly known for his missionary work during the Age of Exploration. He traveled to India, Japan, and other parts of Southeast Asia to spread the message of Christianity. His tireless efforts and dedication to sharing the Gospel earned him the title "Apostle of the Indies."

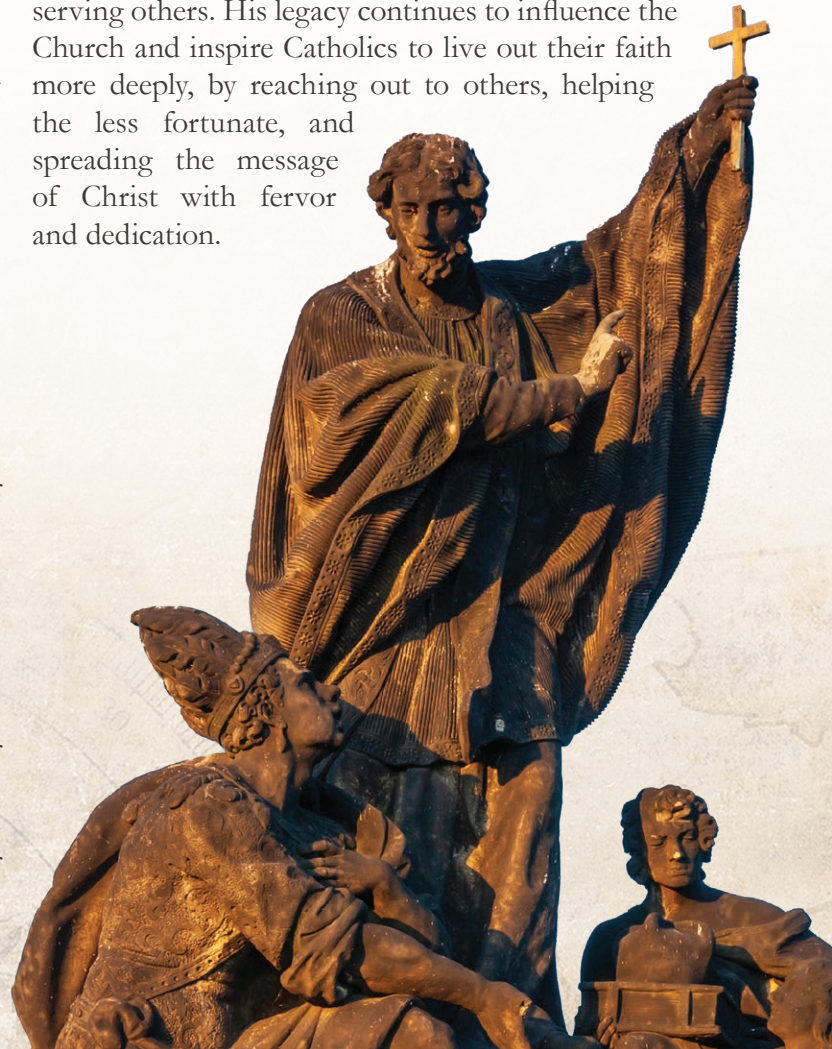
St. Francis Xavier's life and work are important for Catholics for several reasons:

- **Missionary Zeal:** St. Francis Xavier's unwavering commitment to evangelization and the spread of the Christian faith serves as a model of missionary zeal. His journeys to distant lands to share the Gospel inspire Catholics to be proactive in their faith and to reach out to those who have yet to hear the Good News.
- **Compassion and Service:** St. Francis Xavier was known for his deep compassion for the marginalized and the poor. He worked tirelessly to alleviate suffering and bring comfort to those in need. His example reminds Catholics of the importance of service and charity in the Christian life.
- **Faith and Sacrifice:** The saint's life was marked by sacrifice and selflessness. He endured significant personal hardships and challenges in his missionary work, all while remaining steadfast in his faith. St. Francis Xavier's dedication teaches Catholics the value of faith and commitment, even in the face of adversity.
- **International Impact:** St. Francis Xavier's missionary efforts have left an enduring legacy, with millions of people in Asia having been introduced to Christianity through his work. His influence reaches far beyond

his own time and place, emphasizing the universal nature of the Church and the Catholic faith.

Catholics can celebrate the Feast of St. Francis Xavier by attending Mass and reflecting on the saint's exemplary life and legacy. Prayers and novenas dedicated to St. Francis Xavier can be offered, seeking his intercession for missionaries and those in need.

St. Francis Xavier's feast day is a time to rekindle our own missionary spirit, whether through personal evangelization, supporting missionary efforts, or engaging in charitable works. It is a day to be inspired by his dedication to the faith, his selflessness, and his commitment to serving others. His legacy continues to influence the Church and inspire Catholics to live out their faith more deeply, by reaching out to others, helping the less fortunate, and spreading the message of Christ with fervor and dedication.



Prayer Chain Upholds Foundation of Our Faith Community With Great Compassion

Praying for one another is one of the key foundations for a community of faith. Prayer is not only a way of communicating with the heart of God, but it's also a way of connecting with one another and sharing our burdens. All it takes is a little organization and one person's prayer request can be taken up by so many others. Here at the Cathedral of St. Peter, the Prayer Chain serves to connect parishioners and bring their needs to the feet of our Heavenly Father.

Jennifer Schaefer has relied on intercessory prayer for a long time. It has been a comfort to her in times of need and a way to bring connection to her fellow parishioners. Jennifer had frequently used the Prayer Chain at the parish and when someone was needed to take over, she stepped up.

"This ministry gives me a really good feeling," Jennifer says. "I feel good that I can offer this service and really all I'm doing is typing out an email and praying. I think that often people forget that we do this."

Jennifer has found great comfort in intercessory prayer. She often turns to the Poor Clares as another means of sharing prayer needs. When she has shared her needs with the Poor Clares in Belleville, knowing that a community dedicated to continual prayer is remembering her intentions has been a source of consolation. Jennifer hopes that the Prayer Chain brings others that comfort as well.

Being part of the Prayer Chain is simple because you can take those prayer intentions with you anywhere.

"I think you can pray anywhere that you are at any time," Jennifer says. "One of my favorite spots to go



Jennifer Schaefer

to is the Our Lady of the Snows Shrine. There are so many beautiful places to sit to pray or think."

When Jennifer receives a prayer intention over the phone or email, she sends out an email to her Prayer Chain list. If anyone on her list doesn't use email, Jennifer gives them a quick phone call instead. Some people prefer to keep their prayer intention anonymous, so Jennifer doesn't include their name.

Prayer requests can be for almost any need. Often Jennifer hears prayer requests for those who are sick or going into surgery, but no need is too small for the Prayer Chain. Most of the time, Jennifer doesn't receive any follow-up about the results of what they were praying for, but she would love to hear more of that.

"I am just a huge believer in the power of prayer," Jennifer says. "I've seen it work and I believe that it gives people comfort."

"This ministry gives you a really good feeling. I feel good that I can offer this service and really all I'm doing is typing out an email and praying. I think that often people forget that we do this."

— Jennifer Schaefer

To share a prayer request or to be added to the Prayer Chain email list, contact Jennifer Schaefer at 618-791-1726 or jls4acclaim@aol.com.



CATHEDRAL of SAINT PETER

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Christmas and New Year's Schedule

Christmas Eve

Tuesday, Dec. 24 – 4 & 10 p.m.

Christmas Day

Holy Day of Obligation

Wednesday, Dec. 25 – 9 a.m.

Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God

Holy Day of Obligation

Tuesday, Dec. 31 – 4 p.m.

Wednesday, Jan. 1 – 9 a.m.

MASS TIMES

Saturday Vigil Mass: 4:00 p.m. | Sunday: 8:00 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 5:00 p.m.

Weekdays: Monday-Friday 6:45 a.m.

SACRAMENT OF PENANCE (CONFESSIONS)

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