



CATHEDRAL of SAINT PETER

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

IN THIS ISSUE:

2

New Year's Resolutions
for Faithful Stewards

3

A Letter from Our
Cathedral Rector

4

The Notre Dame Center
Offers Hope and Growth in
Our Parish's Future

6

Hospitality Extends to Our
Family at Home and in Our Parish

7

The Pastoral Council
Serving Together to Uphold
the Pillars of Parish Stewardship
in Our Faith Community

An Inside Look at the Stewardship of

OUR GIFT BEARERS

Helping to Prepare the Lord's Table

Immediately following the petitions at Mass, the Offertory takes place. During this time, the bread and wine are brought up to the sanctuary, and the bringing of these gifts represents an offering of oneself to our Lord. Those who are gift bearers represent the entire parish coming to return to God a small portion of the many blessings He has bestowed.

Sister Tess Markus, S.S.N.D., oversees assigning the gift bearers at the Cathedral of St. Peter.

"I receive their request through the stewardship brochure or sometimes people will stop me at Mass and ask if they can sign up," Sr. Tess says. "I take



Rick and Susan Cutler

their name, information, and which Mass they would like to be scheduled and then put them on my list. When I receive information from the stewardship card, I call them to thank them for signing up and ask them which Mass they would like to be signed up for in the parish. I also send them

an e-mail about what they are to do when they bring the gifts forward."

Parishioners Rick and Susan Cutler have found that serving as gift bearers is a very rewarding part of stewardship.

"Partaking in gift bearing affords the community to be one in Christ," Rick and Susan say. "You feel that you can be a steward to the Catholic faith

continued on page 5

New Year's Resolutions for *Faithful Stewards*

As we usher in the new year, it's common for people to make resolutions, setting goals and intentions for the year ahead. These resolutions often revolve around personal growth, health, or career aspirations. However, for Catholics, the new year can be an excellent opportunity to connect these resolutions to living stewardship as a way of life. Stewardship is the practice of recognizing that everything we have is a gift from God and, in return, we are called to be responsible caretakers of those gifts by sharing our time, talent, and treasure with God and our parish. By aligning our resolutions with this principle, we can live a more faithful and purposeful life.

One of the core tenets of stewardship is gratitude for the gifts we have received from God. It's essential to recognize that our resolutions are, in themselves, opportunities to give thanks. When setting goals related to personal health, for example, we can be grateful for our bodies and resolve to take better care of them. When it comes to finances, we can acknowledge the financial blessings we have and make resolutions to manage them wisely and generously.

Stewardship extends to our spiritual lives as well. Many resolutions center on personal growth and self-improvement, which can easily align with our faith. Consider setting resolutions to deepen your spiritual life, such as attending Mass regularly, praying daily, or volunteering at your parish. These actions not only enhance your own faith journey, but also contribute to the spiritual growth of your community.

Another vital aspect of stewardship is the call to be generous and charitable. In your New Year's resolutions, consider how you can integrate acts of charity and service. You might resolve to volunteer more, donate to charitable organizations, or simply try to be more compassionate and understanding in your interactions with others. These small acts of kindness reflect God's love and grace.

The stewardship way of life must begin at home with our family — our Domestic Church. Consider setting resolutions that prioritize spending quality time with your loved ones, committing to family prayer, nurturing your



relationships with each other and Christ, and strengthening your community. Building and sustaining these connections is a powerful expression of stewardship, as it promotes unity and mutual support.

Our financial well-being is another area where stewardship principles can be applied. Make resolutions to manage your finances responsibly, budget wisely, save for the future, and share your treasure with God, the parish, and community. By doing so, you are acknowledging that your financial resources are a gift from God and that you are called to manage them prudently.

Stewardship calls for self-reflection and accountability for our actions. As you work towards your resolutions, periodically assess your progress, and reflect on how well you are honoring your stewardship commitment. Consider seeking spiritual guidance or accountability from a mentor, priest, deacon, or fellow parishioner, to help you stay on track.

Incorporating stewardship into your New Year's resolutions is not just a way to set goals, but a profound way to live out your faith. It transforms ordinary resolutions into sacred commitments that align with your core beliefs as a Catholic. By being mindful of the gifts God has bestowed upon you and actively seeking to be a good steward of those gifts, you can approach the new year with a sense of purpose, gratitude, and a stronger connection to your faith.

A Letter from Our Cathedral Rector

A New Year, New Challenges, New Opportunities

Dear Parishioners,

It is a new year, and it is my prayer for all of you — and for me, as well — that we can take new steps on our faith journeys and seek new ways to live out discipleship and stewardship.

Pope Francis once commented on his perspective of our modern approach to life. He said, “Certainly, possessions, money, and power can give a momentary thrill, the illusion of being happy, but they end up possessing us and making us always want more, never satisfied. I have learned that the most important thing is to put on Christ in your life, place your trust in Him, and you will never be disappointed.”

The pope has been called “the world’s parish priest.” As we pray for one another in this New Year, may we all ask the Lord to help us appreciate Pope Francis’ approach to life, his simple way of seeing things, and his very basic way of appreciating things. I would hope that we see this year as a time for opportunity, a time to deepen our relationship with Christ, and for that matter with one another.

If we wish to change our lives and the lives of others, there are two easy ways to do it. We are blessed with many opportunities in this parish to pray, but as much as we need to take advantage of those, we also need to develop a strong personal prayer life. Recall the young Samuel, who



was not quite sure what to do with his life, or what direction to go. When he finally settled on that one important prayer, “Speak, Lord, for I am listening,” Samuel gave us the hint as to what we need to do. Prayer is a two-way street, and part of that is taking the time to listen to God.

The second important way is to exude joy. Christ certainly called us to do that. Pope Francis has had much to say about joy, as well. The Holy Father says, “Joy cannot be held at heel; it must be let go. Joy is a pilgrim virtue. It is a gift that walks — walks on the path of life, that walks with Jesus... proclaiming joy, lengthens and widens that path.” We must seek that joy and then we need to share it. That is truly our call. Joy translates quite easily into “love your neighbor.”

Yes, there may be challenges ahead in 2025, but we must focus on the opportunities, and then exert the effort to benefit from those opportunities. Happy New Year!

Peace,

Fr Godfrey OSB

Very Rev. Godfrey Mullen, OSB
Cathedral Rector

THE NOTRE D

Offers Hope and Growth



At the end of the last school year, we closed our parish school. After over 175 years of parochial education in our community, the school's closing marked the end of an era. But it didn't mark the end of us! While Notre Dame Academy is no more, our parish is still very much alive and at work, and as we look ahead to what God has in store for our future, we are excited for the Notre Dame building to be a part of that.

"When the school was opened over 175 years ago, the parish was responding to its current needs," Fr. Godfrey says. "For all that time, the school buildings did just that. Our hope is to continue to do the same. The Pastoral Council is busy at this time trying to consider how to best engage all of our parish resources for the purpose of evangelization, hospitality, and service."

With this particular focus, the Notre Dame Academy building will soon be turned into the Notre Dame Center, housing our parish offices as well as space for ministries to meet.

"The building, built in the 1950s, is solid," Fr. Godfrey says. "To demolish it would be very expensive. Repurposing is to use what we've been given by previous generations and leaves open the possibility for new ministries — especially as we seek to be a good neighbor in the city."

Work on restructuring the building has not yet begun, but plans are in the works.

"We are still awaiting bids for the work, but we are subdividing a few of the classrooms and hoping to install reliable heating and air conditioning," Fr. Godfrey says.

Fr. Godfrey is excited to see how the Notre Dame Center will impact our parish life.

"Since the beginning of the parish, the offices have been contained in the rectory building," he says. "We're hoping to allow for better coordination of the space and availability by moving all the parish offices to the Notre Dame Center. We'll also be using some of the classrooms for parish meeting space and for diocesan formation programs — freeing up the undercroft for parish events."

NOTRE DAME CENTER in Our Parish's Future

“We will continue to use the undercroft for Adult Faith Formation and other events since it’s more easily accessible,” he adds. “But the Notre Dame Center will be available for parish ministries to meet and work.”

Fr. Godfrey anticipates work beginning soon and the Notre Dame Center being open as such in the beginning of 2025.

“The hard work of clearing out 70 years of ‘things’ from the school building was carried out by our parish staff, Wednesday Work Crew, and many volunteers,” Fr. Godfrey says. “That in itself was a massive undertaking.”

Now that it is done, we can begin to solidify plans for the building’s future.

As work on the building gets underway, and the hope for our parish’s future continues to shine bright even amidst the sadness of closing our school, we ask

that you pray for the work that lies ahead. May the Notre Dame Center be a blessing to our parish community, and may God continue to use us to show forth His glory!

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Our Gift Bearers *continued from front cover*

and to your community. Bringing up the gifts is a central and essential part of the Catholic Mass which contributes to the celebration at the Lord’s table.”

Anyone is able to participate in carrying the gifts forward — families, single adults, and even those who are not Catholic.

“Our church is large, so our gift table is in the center of the Cathedral,” Sr. Tess says. “Gift bearers can go to the back of the Cathedral and walk forward to the table, take up the gifts, and bring them to the priest or deacon. They can also stand by the table and wait for the ushers to come behind them and move forward to the priest or deacon.”

Scheduling is done one month at a time, which allows for flexibility. If no one is able, the ushers are happy to fill in — however, with enough notice Sr. Tess would have the opportunity to reach out to others and help find a replacement.

The importance of this simple ministry was summed up by Pope Benedict XVI when he said, “This humble and simple gesture is actually very significant: in the bread and wine that we bring to the altar, all creation is taken up by Christ the Redeemer to be transformed and presented to the Father. In this way, we also bring to the altar all the pain and suffering of the world, in the certainty that everything has value in God’s eyes.”

Those who wish to participate as gift bearers may contact Sr. Tess Markus at tmarkus@ssndcp.org.

Hospitality Extends to Our Family at Home and in Our Parish

As Catholics, we are members of two very important family units. First, there are our own families, which consist of our spouses and children. And as a parish community, we are members of a larger “family of faith,” along with our clergy and fellow parishioners. Of course, both types of units share in the Catholic faith, as we gather to celebrate Mass each Sunday.

Yet, all does not appear to be well. The modern media unfortunately seems to place a heavy emphasis on the destruction of both types of family units. Indeed, every day, we are bombarded with disconcerting stories about the various issues that threaten the vital bonds of the family — divorce, abuse, gay marriage, and abortion, just to name a few. At the same time, the “families of faith” in our own parishes have also been threatened by a number of issues, from scandals and mismanagement of resources, to drops in Mass attendance and school enrollment.

All of these threats and issues most certainly promote a hostile environment for today’s American Catholics. In turn, we may feel that there is little we can do to counter the negativity that is so pervasive within our country towards those practicing the Catholic faith.

The good news is that finding the solution to such seemingly insurmountable problems often begins in the most simple and basic of places — at home. In this particular case, it begins in two homes — that of our own family, and in the parish home of our “family of faith.”

Certainly, we would like visitors in our own homes to feel welcome, whether they are extended family, familiar friends or new acquaintances. Therefore, we do whatever we can to make these visitors feel appreciated — we might prepare a homemade meal for our guests, or serve them a fresh cup of coffee, all while we initiate a friendly and insightful conversation.

Of course, this effort to make visitors to our home feel welcome is a wonderful example of providing hospitality, one of the four key pillars of stewardship.

So, if we consider our other family unit — the “family of faith” in our own parish — the same can be applied to those entering our church for worship and fellowship. Whether we make an effort to get to know some of the familiar faces we see at church each Sunday, reach out to someone who is new to the community, or extend a warm welcome to those visiting our parish, we are following Jesus’ example of hospitality at its most foundational and engaging level.

Of course, while hospitality serves to enhance worship and fellowship for the entire parish family, it also impacts our community on a day-to-day basis. If we foster a welcoming environment in our parish home and present the many opportunities to minister and serve, involvement will only increase throughout the community! Therefore, if hospitality continues to flourish throughout the parish and its many ministries, so will the stewardship way of life!

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The Pastoral Council

Serving Together to Uphold the Pillars of Parish Stewardship in Our Faith Community

As a parish family, we are constantly striving to be a stewardship people — a people actively living out Christian discipleship, a parish whose foundation is the four stewardship pillars of hospitality, prayer, formation, and service. And as Fr. Godfrey seeks to pastor us accordingly, he leans heavily on the help of our Pastoral Council.

“The purpose of the Pastoral Council is to investigate pastoral matters, to consider them thoroughly, and to propose practical conclusions about them,” Fr. Godfrey says. “The council conducts pastoral planning by studying those matters brought to its attention and shedding light on them, reflecting on them thoroughly to discern their true nature in order to draw sound conclusions. Then, the council presents these conclusions to the pastor in the form of recommendations.”

Simply put, the Pastoral Council is a group of 14 parish leaders who use their expertise and wherewithal to help Fr. Godfrey serve our parish.

“The council is important for two reasons,” Fr. Godfrey says. “First, having the input of all these people who come from various backgrounds and have various lengths of membership in the parish is invaluable. Second, they are an active council. It’s not just thinking, but lots of doing as well.”

The council members meet with Fr. Godfrey once a month. During the meetings, they discuss their current

Members of our Pastoral Council



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focus for the parish and offer Fr. Godfrey any insight and advice they have in that regard.

Currently, the council is focused on how to best improve our parish’s stewardship practices. They are spending a great deal of time and energy reflecting on where we are as a parish and offering Fr. Godfrey their advice on what can improve.

“We are focused particularly on stewardship for these three years,” Fr. Godfrey says. “They have helped

identify our strengths and other areas of improvement. We are using the recently completed survey to plan strategically for the next few years.”

As part of that strategic planning, the council is working to shape a vision for the parish.

“Using the survey and the formation leadership already in place, we have worked toward shaping a stewardship vision for the parish,” Fr. Godfrey says. “That’s crucial for stewardship to become a way of life.

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CATHEDRAL of SAINT PETER

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The Pastoral Council *continued from page 7*

We will be working in committees of the council to address each pillar.”

The 14 members of our Pastoral Council were appointed a year ago, and they have been working diligently ever since. They will continue their work and their focus on implementing stewardship for the next two years before it is time for another group of 14 to take over.

“Nominations happen every three years,” Fr. Godfrey says. “If someone is interested in serving, he or she can volunteer when it’s time for nominations again in a few years.”

In the meantime, let us all pray for the work of the council. Its members are heavily invested in seeing our parish flourish and grow. May we all support their efforts through our prayers as we all strive to live stewardship as best we can here at the Cathedral of St. Peter.



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.