



# CATHEDRAL of SAINT PETER

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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## A LOOK AT OUR

# Funeral Attendance Ministry

*Performing Compassionate  
Works of Mercy and Hospitality*



**F**unerals are undoubtedly difficult and emotional times for the family and friends of the deceased. Recognizing the need for compassion and presence during this period of grief, a new ministry at the Cathedral of St. Peter has formed to offer support to those mourning the loss of a loved one. This ministry will accompany families through the funeral liturgy, helping them feel the care and prayers of the parish community.

The Funeral Attendance Ministry's mission is simple — the ministry asks its members to show up at parish funerals and participate in the Mass.

“Funerals can be a disorienting time for families,” says Fr. Godfrey Mullen. “Remembering the responses at Mass and knowing when to kneel, sit,

or stand can be easily forgotten. With other members of the parish present at the funeral Mass to support the grieving simply by presence, our goal is to help them in this time of sorrow.”

Those who can attend funerals are asked to watch Flocknote for obituaries to see the funeral information and then come to the funeral.

In our Catholic faith, we recognize burying the dead as a Corporal Work of Mercy.

“By attending to the grieving family by simple presence, we embrace them with the care and kindness of our parish community,” Fr. Godfrey says. “As members of the parish, though, we are also rightly considered survivors of the deceased. It's right for us to pray for the dead and the grieving as brothers

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# Stewardship Through the Eyes of the First Disciples

In today's world, it is easy to become distracted. Work, family responsibilities, technology, and the constant busyness of life can pull our attention in many directions. In the midst of it all, we sometimes lose sight of the One who is meant to be at the very center of everything — Jesus Christ.

This is why it helps to look back at the first disciples. By walking with them through the Gospels, we can better understand what it means to be a disciple and how we are called to live as faithful stewards today.

One day on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, Simon Peter and his brother Andrew were busy fishing when Jesus called out to them: *“Come after me, and I will make you fishers of men”* (Mt 4:19). Fishing was not just their occupation — it was their livelihood, their identity, their way of life. Yet when Christ called, they left everything behind.

Luke's Gospel makes the radical nature of discipleship even clearer: *“If anyone comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple”* (Lk 14:26). Jesus is not calling us to reject our families, but to understand that true discipleship requires complete selflessness. Nothing — not even our closest

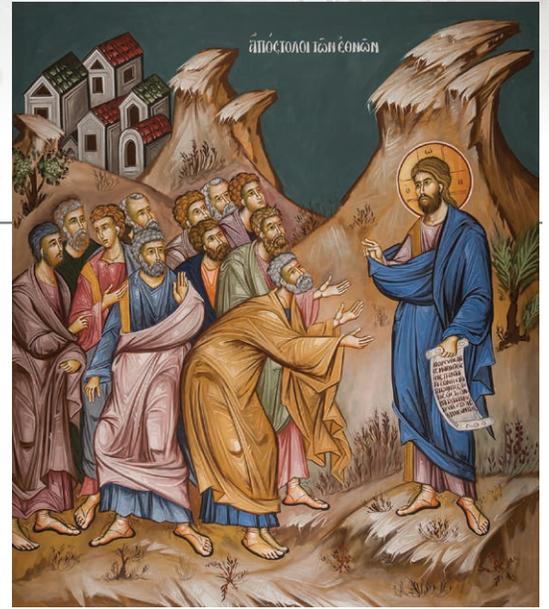
relationships — can come before Him.

Still, Peter and Andrew didn't hesitate. Matthew tells us simply: *“At once they left their nets and followed him”* (Mt 4:20). No lengthy deliberation. No second-guessing. Just a wholehearted yes.

Soon after, the disciples gathered with Jesus on a mountainside and received His teachings — the Beatitudes, the call to be salt and light, the command to pray, fast, and give alms. Jesus urged them to depend entirely on God: *“Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given you besides”* (Mt 6:33).

Strengthened by this encounter, the disciples set out to proclaim the kingdom: *“As you go, make this proclamation: ‘The kingdom of heaven is at hand.’ Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons. Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give”* (Mt 10:7-8). Their lives were transformed, and they went on to transform the world.

Jesus also promised them a reward: *“Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me”* (Mt 10:40). Through their faithfulness, the apostles drew countless souls to Christ. Today, we



honor their witness as saints who now enjoy the eternal reward of heaven.

What does this mean for us? If we long for the same eternal reward, we too must embrace a life of discipleship — a life of stewardship. That means giving the Lord our **time** by making prayer a daily priority. It means offering our **talents** — whether fishing nets, teaching skills, or a gift for music — for the glory of God and the good of others. And it means sharing our **treasure**, recognizing that where we place our resources, we also place our hearts (Mt 6:21).

Just as He did on the shores of Galilee, Christ is calling us by name today. He walks the streets of our towns, inviting us to follow Him. The only question is: how will we respond?

May our answer be as immediate, courageous, and faithful as Simon and Andrew's — a resounding yes to the life of discipleship and stewardship.

*A Letter from Our Cathedral Rector*

# *A Season to Renew Our Hearts in Christ*

Dear Parishioners,

Each year, the season of Lent invites us to slow down, to reflect, and to draw closer to the heart of Jesus. It is a sacred time when we are called to conversion — to turn away from whatever distracts us from God and to renew our commitment to living as faithful disciples. Lent is not simply a time of giving something up; it is a time of giving ourselves more fully to the Lord.

Through prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, we are reminded that everything we have is a gift from God and that we are stewards of His abundant blessings. Prayer deepens our relationship with Him, fasting teaches us discipline and dependence on His grace, and almsgiving opens our hearts to generosity and compassion. These three practices — lived with sincerity and faith — lead us to a renewed awareness of God’s presence and a greater love for others.

As we reflect on stewardship during this season, we can see Lent as a time of spiritual “spring cleaning.” It’s an opportunity to clear away what clutters our hearts so that we can make more room for Christ. Perhaps this means setting aside more time for daily prayer, attending daily Mass, or receiving the sacrament of Reconciliation. Maybe



it means serving in a ministry, reaching out to someone in need, or being more intentional in our giving. Each small act of faith draws us closer to the life God desires for us.

When we live stewardship as a way of life, we learn that true conversion is not a one-time event but a continual turning toward God. Lent reminds us that every day is an opportunity to begin again, to walk more closely with Jesus, and to share His love through our words and actions.

May this holy season renew our hearts in gratitude and strengthen our resolve to follow Christ with humility and joy. As we prepare for Easter, let us embrace this time of grace with open hearts, trusting that the Lord will use our sacrifices and our generosity to bring about new life in us and in our parish family.

Peace,

*Fr Godfrey OSB*

Very Rev. Godfrey Mullen, OSB  
Cathedral Rector



# *How We Can* EMBRACE THE SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION *Knowing the Truth*

The Sacrament of Reconciliation is often misunderstood both by other denominations and, sometimes, even by Catholics. As Catholics, we believe in in-person confession because Jesus gave the apostles the authority to forgive sin in His name. When we say our sins to a priest, he is acting as Christ. When he gives us absolution, it's a way for us to understand we have truly been forgiven. It's a beautiful sacrament that we should experience as much as possible, especially around Christmas and Easter.

Past Reconciliation services had poor attendance, so Fr. Godfrey Mullen has added more times for confession. He wants to make it more convenient for people to come before Easter. Confession will be available Thursday, March 5, from 4 to 7 p.m.; Saturday, March 7, from 1 to 3:45 p.m.; Monday, March 16, from 4 to 7 p.m.; Thursday, March 26, from 1 to 2 p.m., and Wednesday, April 1, from 4 to 7 p.m. Regular confession times — as listed on the back of this newsletter — will also continue.

If you haven't been to confession for a long time, take this as your prompt. There is an examination of conscience and a how-to page available. There are also ample resources online. You can also ask the priest to help walk you through.

"Sometimes, especially when a person hasn't been to confession for many years, it is difficult to work up the courage,"

Fr. Godfrey says. "Regularly, people recount how a compassionate voice in the confessional helps make that less frightening. To know the forgiveness of our sins is to know the mercy of the Lord. I think these moments help people know God's goodness and set us free from guilt and shame."

It can be hard to force yourself to go to confession. But Fr. Godfrey hopes people will push themselves. It's a truly beautiful place to meet Jesus.

"Our need for reconciliation is so clear — no one is perfect," he says. "The priest is not there to act as judge — he has his own sins — but as a physician of the soul. The penance is meant to serve as a medicine for the temptations that have us in their control. The sacrament as a whole helps us know the forgiveness of God and the Church, whose members also suffer from our sins."

As you consider how you might observe Lent this year or live out your penance, think about prayer, fasting, and almsgiving. Fr. Godfrey likes to embrace almsgiving during Lent — it boosts his mood to help others. Your



# SACRAMENT OF RECONCILIATION *This Lent*

## *Mercy of the Lord*

penance can be as simple as giving to and helping those around you.

“Choosing a penance that brings about good for ourselves and others is really important,” he says.

Fr. Godfrey wants us to use Lent to focus more on prayer and deepening our prayer life.

“God has given us each minute of our lives and understandably expects a good return on that investment in us,” he says. “In a concrete way, the Sacrament of Penance helps free us from the blockage that comes from sin and opens for us more completely the line of communication, of prayer, with God.”

Get to confession before Easter. Check out the above added times. Take a last prompt from Fr. Godfrey.

“If it’s been a while, we’ll help you along!” he says.

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*“In a concrete way, the Sacrament of Penance helps free us from the blockage that comes from sin and opens for us more completely the line of communication, of prayer, with God.”*

— Fr. Godfrey Mullen

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## A Look at Our Funeral Attendance Ministry

*continued from front cover*

and sisters of ours.”

Fr. Godfrey noticed that volunteers do a great job of being hospitable during funeral meals. He wants that same hospitality to spread to the funeral Mass.

“The ministry has started to offer another expression of hospitality to families who are grieving,” he says. “Having parishioners present shows a new level of care — another aspect of welcoming others as Christ Himself.”

Practically, it’s helpful to have people fill in the responses and then sing. Maybe the deceased doesn’t have many Catholic family and friends, and this ministry can be invaluable in those instances.

“With a church the size of ours, having parishioners present helps with the liturgy, but it also provides evidence of hospitality and support,” Fr. Godfrey says.

One talent you or someone you know might have is a listening ear — being there for people. That’s the beauty of

this ministry — most people can provide the simple gift of presence.

“Parishioners are simply asked to be a supportive presence, to offer a memory informally to the family if they knew the deceased, and to support the family and friends of the deceased in prayer,” Fr. Godfrey says.

Although this ministry is relatively new, a few volunteers have noted that attending funerals has helped them process their own grief.

“This ministry is really one of mostly quiet presence in prayer,” Fr. Godfrey says. “What a great gift.”

*Watch Flocknote for upcoming funerals and be there if you can.*



# THE FEAST OF ST. PETER DAMIAN:

## *A Celebration of Stewardship in Action*

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

Born in Ravenna, Italy, in 1007, St. Peter Damian lived during a time when the Church was facing challenges, including corruption and a need for reform. Initially a hermit, he 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 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 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.

The feast of St. Peter Damian is a celebration of a remarkable saint whose life exemplified the principles of stewardship. His commitment to monastic reform, theological contributions, advocacy for the poor, and a life of self-sacrifice continue to inspire us 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.





# CATHEDRAL of SAINT PETER

200 W. Harrison St. • Belleville, IL 62220  
(618) 234-1166 • cathedralbelle.org

## *Ash Wednesday: A Catholic Tradition of Reflection and Renewal*

**A**sh Wednesday falls 40 days before Easter Sunday, excluding Sundays, and serves as a period of penance, fasting, and prayer, mirroring the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert. Rooted in centuries-old traditions, this observance is laden with symbolism and significance, providing a profound opportunity for spiritual reflection and renewal. The name itself is derived from the practice of placing ashes on the foreheads of the faithful in the sign of the cross. This year, it falls on Feb. 18.

The history of Ash Wednesday can be traced back to the ancient Jewish tradition of penance and fasting, symbolized in Judaism by the sprinkling of ashes on the head. This practice was later adopted by early Christians as a public expression of repentance.

The liturgy of Ash Wednesday is profound and poignant, emphasizing humility and mortality. The priest

applies ashes in the shape of a cross to the foreheads of the faithful, uttering the words, “Remember that you are dust, and to dust, you shall return,” or a similar phrase. It heralds the beginning of Lent, a period of self-examination, prayer, and fasting.

The 40 days of Lent are symbolic of the time Jesus spent fasting in the desert, facing temptations from the devil. Through prayer, fasting, and acts of charity, we seek to emulate Christ’s journey, fostering a deeper connection with their faith.

Ash Wednesday serves as a powerful reminder of the transformative journey toward Easter, where the faithful celebrate the resurrection of Christ. In this season of Lent, we are encouraged to embrace the call to repentance, turning away from sin and towards a life of holiness and grace.

### **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., Thursday 12:00 p.m. (beginning February 19)*

### **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.*

### **ADORATION**

*Tuesday 12:00-1:00 p.m. | Thursday 6:00-7:00 p.m.*