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CATHEDRAL of SAINT PETER

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Parishes School of Religion

Working Together to Provide Strong Formation in Our Wider Faith Communities



Under the tutelage of Sister Theresa (Tess) Markus, S.S.N.D., all eight Belleville parishes combine for faith formation — called Parishes School of Religion, or PSR. It's a model that Sr. Tess says has been working well. This past school year saw this collaboration of all eight parishes — five parishes had been working together since 2017. Each parish pays its portion of costs based on the number of students. There are about 100 children in the program for kindergarten to eighth-grade students.

Families can choose to meet on Wednesday nights or Sunday mornings. When the program was established, some parishes were meeting on Wednesday nights and others on Sunday mornings — Sr. Tess decided to keep both to make it more convenient for families. If something comes up on their normal class day, families can switch for the week.

Sr. Tess is thankful to the 12 teachers who keep this program going. The teachers receive a stipend, and many are retired schoolteachers. They meet at the former St. Augustine School building.

"Having this school has been a big blessing to the program," Sr. Tess says. "The teachers can create more interactive learning spaces, like a prayer corner and craft area. Our teachers are truly amazing."

This upcoming school year, there will be two reconciliation services for the students. They also have a family gathering around Christmastime. Families bring donations for the Pregnancy Care Center of Belleville. There is also a family Mass on Ash Wednesday, where the children and youth serve in many of the ministries.

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Living According to God's Will

Forming a Conscience and Moral Code

As Christians, it is important that we recognize the difference between right and wrong — both morally and ethically. Sometimes, though, this line can become blurred.

Many situations we encounter in our lives include variables that can leave us internally conflicted and unsure of how to move forward in accordance with God's will.

So, how do we work through these moral conundrums? One way is to develop a solid Christian conscience.

A moral conscience exists in the heart of every individual. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* states, "When he listens to his conscience, the prudent man can hear God speaking. Conscience is a judgment of reason whereby the human person recognizes the moral quality of a concrete act that he is going to perform, is in the process of performing, or has already completed" (1777, 1778).

Think of your conscience as the "angelic" version of yourself sitting on your shoulder, giving you sound advice.

While everyone is blessed with a conscience, each individual has a responsibility to develop this conscience from the time they are young. Parents obviously play an important role in developing their children's consciences. As the primary educators of their children on ethical issues and the Catholic faith, parents have a responsibility to teach virtue to their children and help them to avoid fear, selfishness, and pride. As we grow older, we take on the lifelong challenge of continually forming our own consciences and establishing a moral code that enables us to make the proper judgments.

One valuable tool in forming a conscience is the practice of introspection. "It is important for every person to be sufficiently present to himself in order to hear and follow the voice of his conscience" (*CCC* 1779). In contemporary society, where there are so many distractions and routines, it is extremely important that we take the time to look inward and truly listen to what our inner voice is telling us.

Another way to ensure we are developing a good moral code is by conforming to the mind of Christ. God the Father gave us Christ, physically present on this earth and recorded in Sacred Scripture, as the ultimate example of what to do and how to behave according to God's will. In turn, when we act in loving imitation of Christ, we are certain to make practical judgments of conscience.

The next time you are faced with a moral dilemma, take some quiet time to look inward, weigh the positive and negative outcomes, and listen to the voice of your conscience. Read the Gospels for examples of Christ's teachings. By making this a regular practice, you will find that the voice of your conscience will come in louder and more clearly than you may have initially expected.

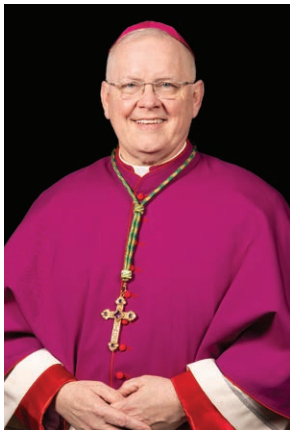


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A Letter from Our Bishop and Pastor

Avoiding Spiritual Drift

Dear Parishioners,



By the time August arrives, many of us are caught between two seasons. Summer is still present, but signs of a busier time are beginning to appear. Vacations begin winding down, schools prepare to reopen, and routines that relaxed during the summer slowly start returning.

This transition happens every year, and with it comes a spiritual challenge that is easy to overlook. During the slower pace of summer, it can become easier to drift in our faith without fully realizing it. Prayer becomes less consistent. Mass attendance can become irregular while traveling. Parish involvement gets temporarily pushed aside. Most of the time, these changes are not intentional — they happen gradually.

That is why August is such an important time to pause and refocus. Stewardship calls us to live intentionally, not simply by habit or convenience. It reminds us that our relationship with God should remain steady in every season of life, including the less structured months of summer.

Living stewardship as a way of life means recognizing that our faith is not something separate from daily living. It influences how we spend our time, how we use our gifts, and how we respond to the needs around us. Even during busy or changing seasons, we are still called to remain faithful disciples.

This month provides a good opportunity to recommit ourselves to the practices that keep us grounded — daily prayer, regular participation in Mass, and involvement in the life of the parish. These simple habits strengthen our relationship with God and help us remain connected to the community of faith around us.

It is often in ordinary moments that God does His most important work in us. A consistent prayer life, faithful Mass attendance, and small acts of generosity may not seem dramatic, but over time, they shape who we are becoming.

As summer begins to draw to a close, let us take time to reflect on where we may have drifted and where God may be calling us to grow. May we move into the months ahead with renewed focus, grateful hearts, and a deeper commitment to living our faith each day.

Peace,

+ Godfrey Mullen, OSB

Bishop Godfrey Mullen, OSB
Bishop and Pastor

FUN-RAISING
Connects Parishioners, Families, and





Our parish community is much more than seeing folks at weekly Mass. We need to feel connected, get to know each other, and have fun together. Who better to help that along than our very own Fun-Raising Committee? Greta Stock is one of the points of contact for the Cathedral of St. Peter's Fun-Raising Committee.

"It's to encourage people to enjoy time together, to promote fellowship and connection among people of all ages in our parish," Greta says. "We have about eight on the committee and keep in contact via email."

The group organizes activities and trips throughout the year to allow parishioners to engage in fellowship opportunities.

"We have open gym nights," Greta says. "People bring their kids. We've had a truck fest. We recently participated in Cities in Harmony in Belleville. We sponsored an inflatable for kids and gave out information about our church."

The group has also organized caroling trips to nursing homes, craft nights at Christmas coordinated with the Knights of Columbus, trips to see the Way of Lights, and a video game tournament at The Cave on June 13. These and various other events bring folks in the community together. Some events are simple and secular fun, like seeing a movie, but some also promote our Catholic faith.

"We've had some people doing a Rosary out in the Rose Garden at church on a Saturday, just to open invitations for people to get together," Greta says. "We've also had game nights. We have games set and ready to go. Whoever shows up can play."

The Saint Meinrad Young Adult Initiative is a Lilly Endowment-funded program designed to help Catholic parishes engage adults ages 23-29. The Fun-Raising Committee works with them periodically.

"We're coordinating with other groups too," Greta

"We want things where people feel they can show up and do what they can do and get connected, find other people they can talk to. It's a way for there to be something to do with people we're connected to." **— Greta Stock**

COMMITTEE

Youth in Wonderful, Exciting Ways





says. "I'm also on the Pastoral Council. My kids are all young adults. I'm trying to keep them connected. We're trying to put together people who want to do fun things to promote fellowship."

Another group they work with is Luke 18.

"My daughter is very involved with Luke 18," Greta says. "It's a retreat for sixth to eighth-graders run by high schoolers. It's a cooperative effort across the diocese. The older kids who are serving on Luke 18 would like to be able to get together and just spend time together, but it's hard to do because they're all in different parishes."

That's why the Fun-Raising Committee puts these events together. Connecting parishioners, families, young adults, and children while promoting fellowship beyond the Mass is important. When we build fellowship in our parish community, we build our faith family.

"I hate that young families — a lot of times with babies — feel very isolated and don't feel connected," Greta says. "They think they need a babysitter to go somewhere to be involved. We want things where people feel they can show up and do what they can do and get connected, find other people they can talk to. It's a way for there to be something to do with people we're connected to."

The Fun-Raising Committee doesn't have a fund or budget. They rely on volunteers and those involved giving their time, talent, and treasure.

"Some of the people on the committee volunteer to the max and provide refreshments and things," Greta says.

In turn, Greta sees the effects of having this committee serve our parish.

"There's more life in the parish," she says. "More people feel welcome. I see more people at church."

It's important for people to feel connected, to know they have resources, people who want to help them, people who want to know them and share their journey.

"We have an extended group of people, connecting with those who want to help, giving a sense of community whenever those challenges in life jump up at us," Greta says. "It's not just us against the world."

To get involved or learn more, contact Greta Stock at 618-444-4572 or rngstock@yahoo.com.

ST. BARTHOLOMEW THE APOSTLE

Stewardship and the Courage of Discipleship

St. Bartholomew displayed tremendous courage in the face of trial and tribulation. He serves us as an amazing example of strong faith and a real commitment to live Christ's call — even in the face of death.

The Church celebrates the feast of St. Bartholomew the Apostle on Aug. 24. Although Scripture provides only limited details about his life, Bartholomew's willingness to follow Christ and dedicate his life to the Gospel offers an inspiring example of discipleship and stewardship.



Bartholomew is traditionally identified with Nathanael, whom Jesus called after a simple but profound encounter. When Nathanael first learned about Jesus, he approached with skepticism. Yet after meeting Christ personally, he responded with faith and became one of the Lord's closest followers.

This response illustrates an important truth about stewardship. Stewardship begins with an encounter with God's love. As we come to know Christ more deeply, we recognize that our lives are gifts from Him. Gratitude naturally leads us to place those gifts at His service.

Like the other Apostles, Bartholomew left behind familiar routines and embraced a new mission. He answered Christ's call with courage, trusting that God would guide him even when the path ahead was uncertain. His example reminds us that discipleship often requires faith, sacrifice, and a willingness to step beyond our comfort zones.

Many Catholics experience similar moments in their own lives. God may call us to serve in a ministry, support a charitable effort, deepen our prayer life, or use our talents in new ways. These invitations may feel challenging or unexpected, but stewardship encourages us to respond generously rather than allowing fear or uncertainty to hold us back.

The life of St. Bartholomew also reminds us that every disciple has a role to play in the mission of the Church. Not all contributions receive public recognition, yet each person's gifts are valuable in God's plan. Stewardship is not about comparing ourselves to others. It is about faithfully using the gifts God has entrusted to us.

Tradition holds that Bartholomew remained faithful to Christ throughout his life and ministry, ultimately giving his life as a witness to the Gospel. His commitment demonstrates the depth of trust and devotion that can grow from a personal encounter with Jesus.

As we celebrate the feast of St. Bartholomew, we are invited to reflect on our own response to Christ's call. Are we willing to place our gifts at His service? Are we open to the opportunities He places before us?

By following Bartholomew's example of faith and courage, we learn that stewardship is not simply about what we have to offer. It is about trusting Christ enough to use those gifts for His glory and the good of others.

Forming Faith at Home

Preparing Children for a Lifetime of Discipleship

As a new school year begins, many Catholic families are preparing for another season of religious education, youth ministry, sacramental preparation, and parish faith formation programs. These opportunities play an important role in helping young people grow in their relationship with Christ. Yet the Church has long taught that the home remains the primary place where faith is formed.

Parents are the primary educators of their children in the faith. While parishes provide valuable support, the foundation of discipleship is built through the daily witness of family life. Children often learn more from what they see than from what they are told. The example of parents and grandparents frequently becomes one of the most powerful influences on a young person's faith journey.

Stewardship offers an important perspective on this responsibility. Children are among God's greatest gifts, entrusted to families with the mission of helping them grow in faith, character, and discipleship. Stewardship calls parents to nurture those gifts with intentionality, recognizing that faith formation is not limited to a classroom or parish program.

Simple practices within the home can have a lasting impact. Praying together before meals, attending Mass regularly, discussing Scripture, celebrating the liturgical seasons, and serving others as a family all help create an environment where faith can flourish. These moments teach children that faith is not something reserved for Sunday mornings but a way of life that influences daily decisions and relationships.

The beginning of a new school year provides a natural opportunity to establish or renew these habits. Just as families organize schedules around academics, sports, and activities, they can also make room for prayer, worship, and faith-filled conversations. Doing so communicates that a relationship with Christ is a priority.

Faith formation at home also prepares children to recognize and use their own gifts. Stewardship teaches that every person receives unique talents and blessings from God. Parents help children discover those gifts and learn how to use them in service to others. This understanding lays the foundation for a lifelong stewardship way of life.

No family lives this calling perfectly. Every household experiences busy seasons and challenges. What matters most is the commitment to continue growing together in faith and seeking opportunities to place Christ at the center of family life.

As a new school year begins, families have an opportunity to strengthen the foundation upon which lasting discipleship is built. By embracing their role in faith formation and creating a home where Christ is present, parents help prepare their children not only for academic success but also for a lifetime of faithful stewardship and discipleship.

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CATHEDRAL of SAINT PETER

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

Parishes School of Religion

continued from front cover

Sr. Tess is proud of the collaboration between parishes that makes this program happen. She enjoys getting to know the teachers and students from each of the Belleville parishes.

"You also get to know the kids well because their classes are fairly small," she says.



The PSR program includes sacrament preparation beginning in seventh grade for eighth-grade Confirmation, as well as first-grade preparation for First Holy Communion in second grade. Sr. Tess has also worked to accommodate children and youth who have not received their sacraments at the usual time, helping them get caught up and filling an important gap for families.

Sr. Tess believes PSR is a beautiful model of collaboration and finds great joy in seeing the parishes work together for this program.

"I think the more we can work together as parishes is important," she says. "Having this program, I've really gotten to know a lot of parents from all those other parishes. That's another thing that I like about it."

Sr. Tess says one reason the model has worked so well is that it was designed with the future in mind. As parish partnerships continue evolving, she believes having one centralized PSR program already established helps the Belleville parishes work together more smoothly and strengthens connections between families across the city.

Watch the parish bulletin for information on PSR sign-up for the upcoming school year.

MASS TIMES

Saturday: *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.*

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.*