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CATHEDRAL of SAINT PETER

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

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Knowing the Care of Our Blessed Mother

Devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Help has drawn Catholics to the Blessed Mother's intercession for centuries. The beloved icon depicting Mary holding the Child Jesus was venerated in Rome as early as 1499. In 1866, Pope Pius IX entrusted the icon to the Redemptorists and encouraged them to "make her known throughout the world." The Redemptorists embraced that mission, spreading the devotion far and wide.

The tradition of a weekly Perpetual Help novena came later. In 1922, the first widely recognized weekly novena began at St. Alphonsus Church in St. Louis, Mo. The practice spread quickly, giving Catholics a regular opportunity to bring their prayers and petitions to Mary and seek her intercession.

Unlike a traditional nine-day novena, the Perpetual Help novena is prayed weekly. Through traditional prayers, Scripture, petitions, and prayers of thanksgiving, the faithful ask for the Blessed Mother's intercession while entrusting their personal intentions and

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Sharing Our Blessings *With Others*

Generosity as a Response to God's Gifts

One of the most visible expressions of stewardship is generosity. Yet Christian generosity is about far more than financial giving. It begins with recognizing that everything we have comes from God and responding to His blessings with grateful and open hearts.

Every person has received gifts from God. Some gifts are material, while others include time, talents, relationships, experiences, and opportunities. Stewardship invites us to view these blessings not as possessions to be guarded but as gifts entrusted to us for a purpose. God calls us to use what He has given us to serve others and help build His kingdom.

Generosity flows naturally from gratitude. When we recognize how much we have received, sharing becomes less about sacrifice and more about thanksgiving. We begin to see opportunities to help others not as interruptions but as invitations to participate in God's work.

The Gospels repeatedly demonstrate the importance of generosity. Jesus praised those who gave from the heart and encouraged His followers to care for those in need. He taught that love of God and love of neighbor are inseparable. Generosity allows us to put that love into action.

Sharing our blessings can take many forms. A parishioner may volunteer in a ministry, mentor a young person, prepare a meal for a family experiencing hardship, or offer encouragement to someone facing challenges. Others may support charitable efforts, contribute to the mission of the Church, or simply make themselves available to help when needed. Every act of generosity reflects God's love and strengthens the community around us.

Generosity also has a way of transforming the giver. As we share our gifts, we become less focused on ourselves and more attentive to the needs of others. We grow in gratitude, compassion, and trust. Stewardship becomes less about managing resources and more about participating in God's generosity.

Parishes thrive when generosity becomes part of their culture. People feel supported, ministries flourish, and the mission of the Church moves forward. The gifts of many individuals combine to create something far greater than any one person could accomplish alone.

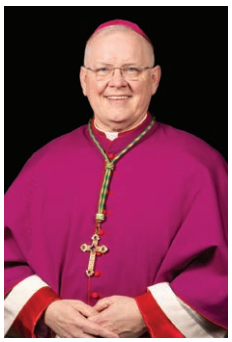
The Thanksgiving season provides an opportunity to reflect on the many blessings God has placed in our lives. It also invites us to consider how we are sharing those blessings with others. Gratitude and generosity are closely connected. One naturally leads to the other.

As Christian stewards, we are called to recognize God's gifts and respond with generous hearts. By sharing our blessings with others, we express our gratitude, strengthen our communities, and help make God's love visible in the world around us.

A Letter from Our Bishop and Pastor

Remembering the Gifts That Matter Most

Dear Parishioners,



As Thanksgiving approaches, many of us will take time to consider the blessings for which we are grateful. We may think of our families, our health, a home, meaningful work, or the many people who have enriched our lives. This annual tradition is a good one because it reminds us to stop for a moment and recognize how much we have received.

Yet some of God's greatest gifts can also be the easiest to take for granted.

Consider the gift of our Catholic faith. Through no merit of our own, we have been given the opportunity to know Jesus Christ, to hear His Word, and to receive Him in the Eucharist. We have the grace of the sacraments, the wisdom of Scripture, and a Church that has handed down the faith from one generation to the next. These are treasures beyond anything the world can offer.

We have also been given one another. God places people in our lives who love us, challenge us, forgive us, and walk beside us. Our parish community is part of that gift. Here, we worship together, celebrate life's joyful moments, support one another through times of sorrow, and grow together as disciples of Christ.

Recognizing these blessings is at the heart of stewardship. A Christian steward first understands that everything is a gift from God. Our response is gratitude, but gratitude cannot remain simply a feeling. It should influence how we live and how generously we share what has been entrusted to us.

When we are grateful for our faith, we make time for prayer and the sacraments. When we appreciate our parish, we look for ways to participate in its life and support its mission. When we recognize the people around us as gifts, we become more generous with our time, more willing to forgive, and more attentive to those who may need our help.

This November, as we gather around our Thanksgiving tables and reflect on God's goodness, let us remember the blessings that cannot be wrapped, purchased, or measured. Let us thank Him especially for the gift of faith, for the people He has placed in our lives, and for the privilege of belonging to His Church.

May that gratitude remain with us long after Thanksgiving Day has passed, shaping the way we live and inspiring us to return God's generosity through lives of faithful and loving stewardship.

Peace,

+ Godfrey Mullen, OSB

Bishop Godfrey Mullen, OSB
Bishop and Pastor

Meet Parishioner *Iona "Onie" Hemmer*

Living the F

At 93 years old, Iona "Onie" Hemmer has spent a lifetime rooted in faith, family, and the Cathedral of St. Peter. A lifelong parishioner known for her kindness and welcoming spirit, Onie has quietly lived her faith through the way she has cared for her family, served her parish, and treated those around her.

Onie's parents were Cathedral parishioners, and from childhood, parish life was woven into her family life. She and her beloved husband, Joseph, continued that tradition as they raised their 10 children, attending Mass every Sunday and enrolling them in the parish grade school. Her daughter Denise Hemmer says the Cathedral and her Catholic faith have always been foundational in her mother's life.

"She always felt like the parish was home," Denise says. "When we were kids, we were weekly churchgoers. And she said the Rosary at 7 p.m. every night with Fr. Rocky on Relevant Radio. She knew everybody at the parish, and she loved to pray for people."

Onie and Joe were married for more than 50 years and shared not only their family life, but also their commitment to the parish. Both served as Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and were among the Cathedral's first EMHCs when the ministry began. Denise remembers that the couple enjoyed doing just about everything together — even dressing up as Santa and Mrs. Claus at Christmastime.

"They were deeply in love," Denise says. "They truly loved each other."

Onie's nurturing spirit extended beyond her own family. For more than 20 years, she worked as a housekeeper at St. Elizabeth Hospital, cleaning

At 93 years old, Iona "Onie" Hemmer has lived nearly a century of faithful stewardship within her family and parish community. She has been a parishioner at the Cathedral of St. Peter her entire life.

"My mother lived out her faith, that's for sure. She's always been known as a good person. She always had a kind word to say. It was just what she did. She loved Christ, and she loved sharing that with others every day." **— Denise Hemmer, Onie's daughter**

Faith and Spreading Kindness for Nearly a Century

rooms in the obstetrics department. Denise says her mother enjoyed spending time with new mothers and offering them encouragement.

"She supported the families when she was there," Denise says. "She was just a nurturing, loving mother to everyone. She got to welcome a lot of babies into the world."

Over the years, Onie has watched her own family grow as well. Today, she has 10 children, 13 grandchildren, and eight great-grandchildren. Her family's connection to the Church also spans generations. Her brother, known affectionately by parishioners as Fr. Ed, served as a priest in the diocese for many years, while her grand-nephew, Fr. Thomas Lugge, was ordained to the priesthood at the Cathedral in 2022.

Onie recently moved into a nursing home, and although she is no longer out and about as much as she once was, the kindness, warmth, and faith she has shared throughout her life continue to touch those who know her. In many ways, her life offers a simple example of stewardship lived day by day — loving God, caring for others, and sharing the gifts she has been given.

"My mother lived out her faith, that's for sure," Denise says. "She's always been known as a good person. She always had a kind word to say. It was just what she did. She loved Christ, and she loved sharing that with others every day."

The Our Lady of Perpetual Help Novena

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the needs of others to her.

At the Cathedral, the novena has been a part of parish life for at least several decades. According to parish history, former rector Msgr. James R. McCormick had a devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Help and is believed to have begun the novena at the Cathedral.

"The prayers remind us of the example of Mary, who has helped so many people through the centuries," says Bishop Godfrey Mullen, OSB. "We ask for help for our world, for our Church, our parish, our families and loved ones, for the sick, the dead, and for an outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon us all."

The novena takes about five minutes and is prayed each Tuesday following the 6:45 a.m. Mass. Afterward, those gathered sing a verse of a Marian hymn.

"Tuesday is our biggest day for attendance at the 6:45 a.m. Mass, very likely because of the novena," Bishop Godfrey says. "The novena is a weekly reminder of the power and presence of the Communion of Saints in the lives of believers. Their prayers assist us, show us comfort and hope, and sustain us in the difficult times of life."

That reminder is meaningful to Bishop Godfrey personally. In bringing his own prayers and concerns to Mary, he finds comfort in knowing that she intercedes for him and leads those prayers to her Son.

> ***"The prayers remind us of the example of Mary, who has helped so many people through the centuries"***
>
> **— Bishop Godfrey Mullen, OSB**

"Even in my own life, I find the prayers comforting, to realize that I'm not the only one entrusting the sick and suffering to the Lord," he says. "Mary assists with that. Especially for people whose children no longer attend Mass or whose families are faced with difficulties, the prayers help us know the care of the Blessed Mother."

Join in the novena to Our Lady of Perpetual Help after the 6:45 a.m. Tuesday Mass.

Preparing Our Hearts for Advent

Making Room for Christ Through Stewardship

As November draws to a close, the Church stands on the threshold of a new liturgical year. Advent is approaching, and Catholics are invited to begin preparing for the celebration of Christ's birth. While much of the world focuses on decorations, shopping, and holiday activities, the Church encourages a different kind of preparation — one that takes place within the heart.

Advent is a season of anticipation. It invites believers to reflect on Christ's coming at Bethlehem, welcome His presence in their lives today, and look forward to His return in glory. This preparation involves more than marking days on a calendar. It calls for prayer, reflection, and a renewed focus on what truly matters.

Stewardship provides a helpful framework for entering into this season. Stewardship begins with gratitude for God's gifts and encourages Christians to respond with faith and generosity. As Advent approaches, stewardship invites us to examine whether our priorities reflect our desire to make room for Christ.

The weeks leading up to Christmas can easily become filled with activity. School events, family gatherings, shopping trips, travel plans, and holiday obligations often compete for attention. While these activities may be enjoyable and meaningful, they can also crowd out opportunities for prayer and spiritual preparation.

Advent encourages a different approach. It calls Christians to slow down, create space for God, and prepare their hearts to receive the greatest gift ever given — Jesus Christ. Stewardship helps us do this by encouraging intentional use of our time, attention, and energy.

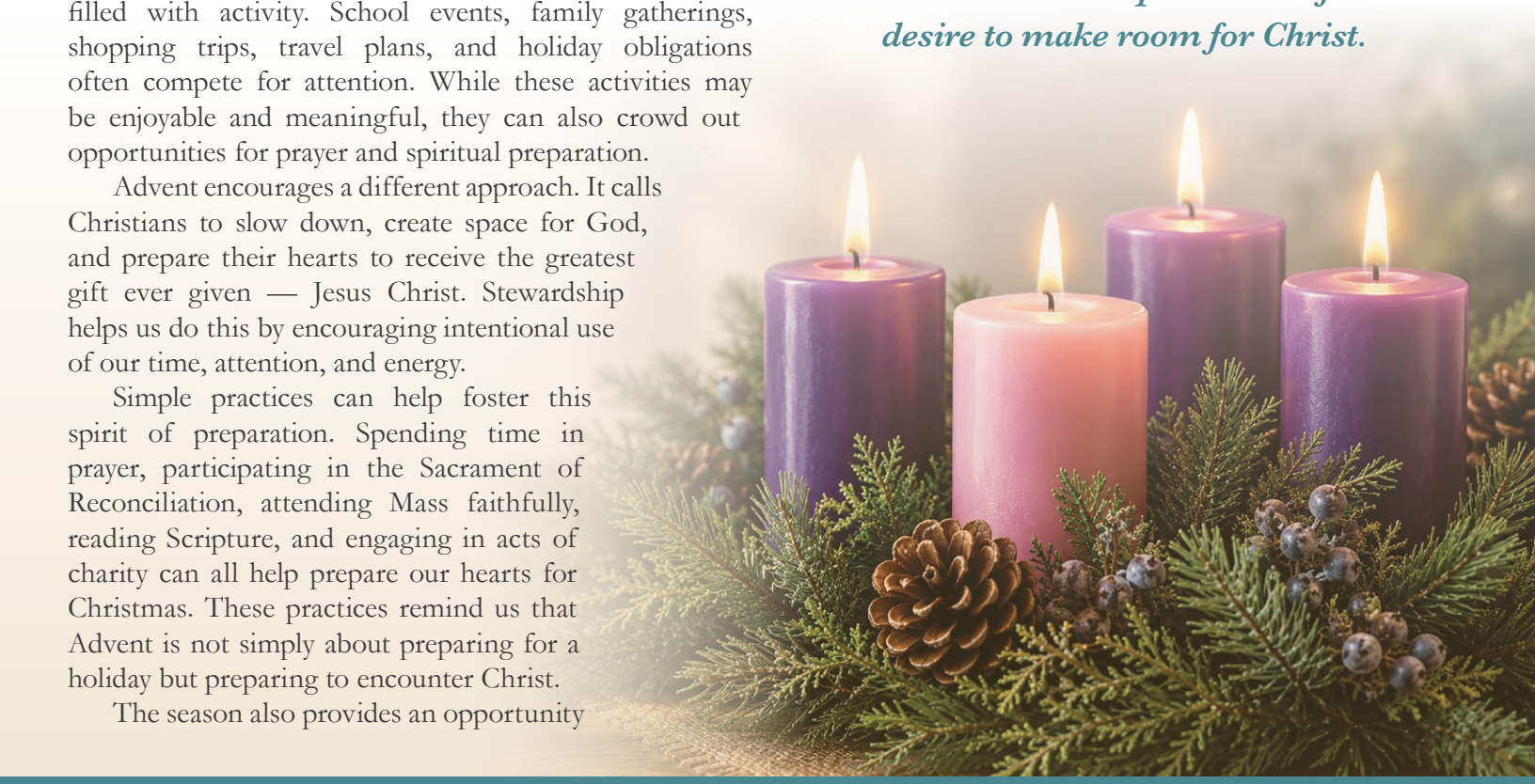
Simple practices can help foster this spirit of preparation. Spending time in prayer, participating in the Sacrament of Reconciliation, attending Mass faithfully, reading Scripture, and engaging in acts of charity can all help prepare our hearts for Christmas. These practices remind us that Advent is not simply about preparing for a holiday but preparing to encounter Christ.

The season also provides an opportunity to evaluate priorities. Are we making room for God in our schedules? Are we focusing on what is most important? Are we using our gifts in ways that reflect gratitude for His blessings?

The answer to these questions can shape not only the Advent season but the entire year ahead. Stewardship calls us to place Christ at the center of our lives and respond generously to His presence.

As Advent approaches, we are invited to prepare our hearts with purpose and intention. By making room for Christ through stewardship, we can enter the season with greater faith, deeper gratitude, and a renewed awareness of God's love for His people.

Stewardship begins with gratitude for God's gifts and encourages Christians to respond with faith and generosity. As Advent approaches, stewardship invites us to examine whether our priorities reflect our desire to make room for Christ.



Greeters Ministry Offers a Warm Welcome to All Who Enter Our Cathedral

Each week, parishioners and visitors arrive at the Cathedral to worship together — and sometimes, a warm smile and a friendly greeting can make all the difference in helping someone feel at home. Through the Greeters Ministry, volunteers offer that simple gesture of hospitality while helping everyone who enters know they are welcome.

Chris Augustine has served as a greeter for the past few years. While she knows the ministry can brighten someone else's day, she has also experienced firsthand the difference a welcoming presence can make.

"I've been to other churches where they have a welcoming group outside, and it made me feel better about going to church — we are all there for the same reason," Chris says. "A lot of us at the cathedral are seniors, and some of us seem lonely. I think that a nice 'hi' in the morning or a welcome is nice, especially when you are there to worship as a group."

The role involves more than simply greeting people. Greeters assist those who need help entering the church, answer questions, direct visitors to restrooms or Cathedral tour guides, and occasionally give tours themselves after Mass. They also distribute bulletins and help tidy the church so it is ready for the next Mass.

That welcoming presence can be especially meaningful for visitors and newcomers. While serving as a greeter, Chris once met a woman who was new to the area and looking not only for a church, but also for a place to stay. Their encounter gave Chris an opportunity to help her get settled and experience the care of the Cathedral community.

"We're connected in a way," Chris says. "She was looking for a church and a place to stay. Any other time, I wouldn't have done that, but I was a greeter, and I was there in that moment. I think she felt good about it."

Because greeters serve at the Mass they already attend, the ministry offers parishioners a simple way to take another step in their involvement at the Cathedral. Sr. Tess Markus coordinates and schedules the volunteers, who generally serve at their regular Mass. Over time, those familiar faces can also help strengthen a sense of community.

"As people see you more often, I think they feel that you're genuine," Chris says. "They line up and are personable. For a lot of us, church might be our only social event of the week. It's nice to know that you're welcomed."

Sr. Tess trains new greeters and prepares them to

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***"For a lot of us, church might be our only social event of the week. It's nice to know that you're welcomed."* — Chris Augustine**

CATHEDRAL of SAINT PETER

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Greeters Ministry Offers a Warm Welcome to All Who Enter Our Cathedral

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answer common questions they may encounter. Although there are practical responsibilities to learn, the heart of the ministry is much simpler — recognizing each person who comes through the doors as someone worthy of kindness, dignity, and a sincere welcome.

"You have to be smiling and have a warm attitude because you never know what happened to them before they entered the church," Sr. Tess says. "In fact, the person you are welcoming is really Jesus."

If you're interested in serving as a greeter, contact Sr. Tess Markus at tmarkus@ssndcp.org or 618-234-1166.

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.*