



# ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

Monthly Newsletter



## In This Issue:

- 2** An Inside Look at Our Junior High School Retreats
- 3** A Letter from Our Pastor
- 4** Parish Community Celebrates Long-Awaited Return to Our Newly-Renovated Church
- 6** The Way Providing Guidance and Support on the Path to the Catholic Faith  
*Jonathan Hasse and Tyler Simpson Reflect on Journeys into the Church*

APRIL 2024



# ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

## AN INSIDE LOOK AT OUR **JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL RETREATS** **HELPING OUR STUDENTS TO ENCOUNTER CHRIST**

Finding time for silence, prayer, and reflection can sometimes be difficult. We live in a busy and noisy world, and that can make it challenging to stay focused on the faith and on how God is speaking to us. We must teach our children how to seek out Christ and His call for them. St. Peter Catholic School has recently decided to expand its retreat program to help more students learn about and encounter our faith.

The junior high school retreats are for students in sixth through eighth grades. This is the first school year that these retreats have been taking place, and they are designed to expand upon the First Communion and Confirmation retreats that students attend in second and fifth grade. Each grade level will have a theme that builds upon previous learnings of the faith.

Assistant Principal Janna Walkowiak participated in the eighth-grade retreat as a small-group leader and witnessed the impact of the retreats firsthand.

"I enjoyed the excitement the students had when getting on the bus at the beginning of the day, then hearing the excited conversations at the end of the day when they talked about their favorite parts of the retreat," Ms. Walkowiak says. "Being a small-group leader, I was able to witness and share in conversations where students were reflective and spoke honestly about their faith."

This year, the eighth-grade retreat was held in December 2023 at Our Lady of Good Counsel Retreat House in Waverly. Their theme was "Live by a Calling," and students were encouraged to listen for Jesus' call. The seventh-grade retreat took place in February at the Villa Regina Motherhouse with the theme "Needful Prayer and Discernment." The objective was to deepen the prayer life of students. The sixth-grade retreat will be in April with the theme "Need of Community." Their goal will be to build friendships. A few months after each retreat, students attend a follow-up retreat.



"What's unique and special about these retreats is that the lessons that students learn in the initial retreats will be explored in the follow-up retreats," Ms. Walkowiak says. "For example, in the initial retreat, the eighth graders were taught Decision Steps, and they reflected upon important decisions that they've made in their lives. In the follow-up retreat, they revisited the Decision Steps and how they've applied them to their lives, and then they used those steps to create their Lenten sacrifices. We want the lessons learned and the impactful moments they have during the retreats to become ingrained into who they become."

Another aspect of the retreats is the journals that students are given to reflect upon their "God moments" – these are impactful moments from the retreat where the Holy Spirit is at work and speaking to their hearts. Students get to keep their journals and are encouraged to reflect on those moments after the retreat.

*If you are interested in donating to this wonderful cause, visit [www.osvhub.com/saintpeterslincoln/giving/funds/middle-school-retreat](http://www.osvhub.com/saintpeterslincoln/giving/funds/middle-school-retreat). For any questions about the junior high school retreats, contact the front office at [office@stpeterslincoln.com](mailto:office@stpeterslincoln.com).*

*A Letter from Our Pastor*

## **THE JOY OF THE PASCHAL MYSTERY THIS EASTER SEASON**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

As we rejoice from the celebration of Easter at the end of March, April brings us into the Easter season. I want to highlight the profound significance of the 50 days from Easter Sunday to Pentecost in the Catholic Church. This extended period is a time of immense joy, hope, and spiritual renewal, reflecting the exhilarating experience of the disciples witnessing the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Paschal mystery, encompassing Christ's suffering, death, and resurrection, is the heart of our faith. In the resurrection, we find the ultimate victory over sin and death, promising new life, and eternal salvation. The 50 days of Easter serve as a continuous celebration of this life-altering event.

Celebrating the Paschal mystery throughout the Easter season is crucial for several reasons.

Let's begin with the joy of Jesus' resurrection, the cornerstone of our faith, which offers us all hope. The extended Easter season allows us to bask in this joy, inspiring us to live in the light of the risen Christ.

The Paschal mystery signifies not only Christ's victory over death but also our potential for renewal and transformation. The Easter season reminds us that through Christ, we can experience spiritual rebirth and profound life change.

Celebrating the Paschal mystery throughout the 50 days allows us to deepen our faith. We can contemplate the meaning of the resurrection, explore the rich symbolism of the Easter liturgy, and experience a



profound connection with Christ's sacrifice and victory.

The Easter season is a prime time for evangelization, an occasion to share the joy of the resurrection with others and invite them into the fold of the Church. By living out the Paschal mystery, we can become beacons of hope and share the Good News with the world.

The 50 days of Easter culminate in the celebration of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit descended upon the apostles. It is a reminder of the vital role the Holy Spirit plays in our lives and the mission of the Church. Celebrating the Paschal mystery throughout the season prepares our hearts to receive the Holy Spirit with renewed vigor and openness.

As we journey through the Easter season, let's immerse ourselves in the Paschal mystery, reflecting on the transformative power of Christ's resurrection and allowing it to permeate every aspect of our lives. May these 50 days be a time of renewal, deepening faith, and evangelization as we continue to celebrate the joy of Easter.

In His Mercy,

*Fr. Eric Clark*

Fr. Eric Clark,  
Pastor



# ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

## PARISH COMMUNITY CELEBRATE OUR NEWLY-RENOVATED CHURCH



*Construction was completed about a week before the dedication Mass on March 23 and we were able to return to our sanctuary for Palm Sunday and Triduum.*



*Fr. Clark will be available to give group tours for anyone looking for more about all of the renovations.*

Having celebrated Holy Week, and now experiencing the renewal of the Easter Season, we hope that all of our parishioners have been able to enjoy being back in our beautifully renovated church. Construction was completed about a week before the dedication Mass on March 23 and we were able to return to our sanctuary for Palm Sunday and Triduum. These special liturgies were made even more special since we could celebrate them in the new church. Fr. Clark enjoyed seeing the parishioners' reactions as they had the chance to see the beautiful space in all its glory.

"It's like a parent watching their child open up Christmas gifts and seeing the joy," Fr. Clark says. "I looked forward to the joy of seeing parishioners worship together in our beautiful, new, renovated church."

A lot of sacrifices were made to make these renovations possible. Not only did parishioners make financial sacrifices, but many of the day-to-day activities of the parish had to be adapted for the space. It wasn't always easy, but the fruit of those sacrifices was well worth it as we have been able to celebrate our new church and its dedication.

"It's really a testament to how many people still contributed by coming to Mass even though we were in the basement," Fr. Clark says. "It's been edifying to see how many people are so excited and I really do think it has brought us closer together as a parish community."

What changes can parishioners look for now? Aside from the beauty of the interior, many updates have been made as well. The narthex now features a screen that will serve to keep the parish up-to-date about upcoming events and liturgies. If you are wondering about all of the new murals in the church, a QR code is available to access documents that explain them. The parish is also putting together a Bible study on the life of St. Peter based on our new stained glass windows with the Emmaus Institute in Lincoln. The parish plans to offer

*For more information about our new church, contact the parish office at 402-423-1239.*

## **TES LONG-AWAITED RETURN TO OVATED CHURCH**

this study to small groups. Fr. Clark will be available to give group tours for anyone looking for more about all of the renovations. Adoration has also started back up in the church and there is an option to digitally sign up for an hour. All are welcome to pray and allow the beauty of the church to help lift your heart in prayer.

"I'm filled with gratitude for the number of parishioners who have been so supportive, prayerful, and patient," Fr. Clark says.



*The Palm Sunday and Triduum liturgies were particularly special since we could celebrate them in the new church.*



*Aside from the beauty of the interior, many updates have been made as well.*



*Many sacrifices were made to make these renovations possible. But these sacrifices mean that we have been able to celebrate our new church and its dedication.*



## THE WAY PROVIDING GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT ON THE PATH TO THE CATHOLIC FAITH

*Jonathan Hasse and Tyler Simpson Reflect on Journeys into the Church*



*Jonathan Hasse and his wife, Lisa, are excited to live the faith together as a family.*

*“Wanting to know more and more and to be able to more clearly see the whole masterpiece of God’s plan of sheer goodness, going through OCIA in The Way was the next step in the journey for me.” — Jonathan Hasse*

On Holy Saturday, during the Easter Vigil, we welcomed this year’s candidates and catechumens into full communion with the Church. After months of study and discernment in our classes called The Way: Discovering & Living the Catholic Faith, these men and women made their professions of faith, received the Sacraments of Initiation, and are now blessed to be Catholics. We are thrilled to welcome them into the life of the Church!

Jonathan Hasse became Catholic this Easter when he received all three Sacraments of Christian Initiation – Baptism, Holy Communion, and Confirmation. He was raised a Seventh-day Adventist, and when he went to Mass for the first time, he knew he needed to become Catholic.

“When approached with openness, a thin place between Heaven and Earth reveals itself in the Mass,” Jonathan says. “It brings up questions that demand answers, and every question, when answered, will only slowly roll back an even more beautiful picture. Wanting to know more and more and to be able to more clearly see the whole masterpiece of God’s plan of sheer goodness, going through OCIA in The Way was the next step in the journey for me.”

Jonathan went through the OCIA process alongside his wife, Lisa, a cradle Catholic who had fallen away from the faith and has now rediscovered her faith. Both Jonathan and Lisa are excited to live the faith together as a family. They had their marriage con-validated and had their children baptized in March in addition to Jonathan entering the Church. And as they look ahead to life as a Catholic family, the couple is full of great hope and faithfulness!

“If I can demonstrate an authentically Christian life to my children, then they can become equipped with

*continued on page 7*

## Abide in Christ and build His kingdom

*Tyler and Kennedy Simpson and their newborn daughter, Matilda — Tyler looks forward to fully living out the faith with his family.*

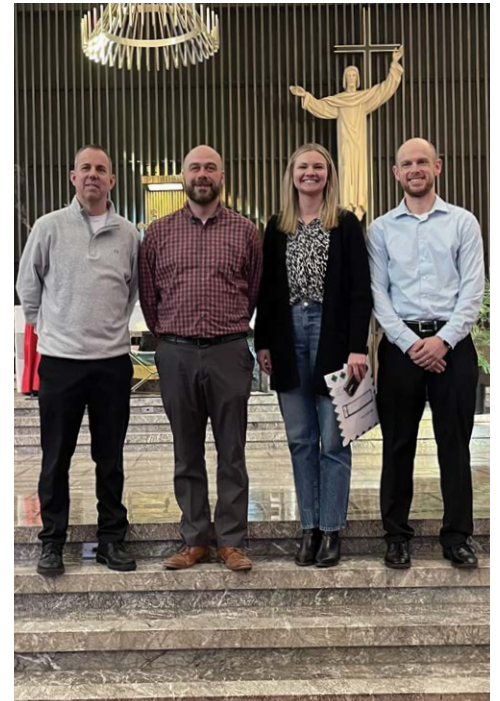


*The Soria family — Victor Sr., Julissa, Victor Jr., Christopher, and Emily at class.*



*Chad, Fr. Wirth, Sam, Jake, Maya, and Jon at class*

*Candidates and Catechumens in The Way at the Rite of Election at the Cathedral of the Risen Christ*



the armor to tread through increasingly dark valleys of death,” Jonathan says. “I look forward to the community of charitable upward-aiming people and the opportunity for my children to receive an authentically Catholic education that will prepare them for this world and fortify them through daily Mass and spiritual guidance.”

Tyler Simpson, who was also received into the Church this Easter, says that his family, too, plays a large role in his excitement to live the Catholic faith.

“When I met my wife, Kennedy, she introduced me to the Catholic faith,” Tyler says. “I have gained more interest in learning more about the faith each time I’ve attended Mass with her — so much so that when we got married I told her that I wanted to be Catholic.”

And today, a newly minted Catholic, Tyler rejoices as he looks at his infant daughter!

“I can be involved in the faith along with my daughter and continue to grow deeper in faith with my wife,” Tyler says.

Having been baptized into the Christian faith as a Lutheran, Tyler received First Holy Communion and Confirmation at the Easter Vigil. He says that the time he spent in OCIA classes deepened his understanding of and appreciation for the Catholic faith.

“I enjoyed getting to hear from Fr. Clark and Fr. Wirth on the topics they presented each week,” Tyler says.

Both Jonathan and Tyler offer their sincerest gratitude to Fr. Clark, Fr. Wirth, and the whole team for The Way.

“I feel so blessed to belong to a parish with such knowledgeable and dedicated catechists,” Jonathan says.

Tyler echoes Jonathan’s sentiments: “I want to say thank you to all of the volunteers for taking their time to help show us the way of the Catholic faith,” he says.

Meanwhile, we as a parish want to say “welcome” to all of the candidates and catechumens who entered the Church this Easter! We are blessed by your presence and look forward to watching God use you to build His Church! May you continue to be blessed by God’s grace in the sacraments and fulfilled by a life lived for Him!



# ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH



4500 Duxhall Dr. | Lincoln, NE 68516  
402-423-1239 | [www.saintpeterlincoln.com](http://www.saintpeterlincoln.com)

## MASS SCHEDULE:

*Saturday: 4:00 p.m.*

*Sunday: 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:00 a.m.*

## DAILY MASS

*Monday-Friday: 6:30 a.m., 8:15 a.m., 5:30 p.m.*

*Saturday: 8:15 a.m.*

## CONFESSION

*Monday: 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.*

*Wednesday: 4:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m.*

*Friday: 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.*

*Saturday: 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.*

*Sunday 30 minutes before each Mass*



St. Peter Catholic Church

# DIVINE MERCY

# Sunday

With Homilist Fr. Eric Clark

April 7, 2024

2:30-4:00pm

