



ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

Monthly Newsletter

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APRIL 2022



ST. PETER CATHOLIC CHURCH

THE NATURE EXPLORE PROGRAM

A Valuable Opportunity for Students to Build a Relationship with God's Creation

As St. John Chrysostom once said, "Nature is our best teacher" – and the Nature Explore program at St. Peter School is proving just that! The grounds are themed with the saints in mind, with areas such as Isidore's Farm and St. Joseph's Workbench, to name just a couple. Incorporating our faith into every aspect of a child's learning is a beautiful part of Catholic education.

"The goal is to help children normalize their relationship with creation, and thus the Creator," Principal Sister Mary Michael says.

Seeing the mystery of God in creation is important for children as they experience and delight in nature. Each day, students spend time outside exploring the area. There is water, digging, sand, and dirt, as well as inoperable tractors for them to climb on and pretend. A stage area has been provided for open-ended imaginative play where children can create dances or plays. There is also a cedar arbor entrance.

"This is one great example of the beauty of God's creation," Sr. Mary Michael says. "There is a visual beauty and the smell of the cedarwood. They are all multisensory calls to God's goodness."

One unique area is St. Joseph's Workbench. Children can use tools to build and create. There are nuts and bolts to work with their hands, hammers and nails for building, and pliers to use.

"We had three seventh-graders

volunteer to build the workbench," Sr. Mary Michael says. "These students drew up the plans and followed it through to the finish. We are so thankful and so proud of these boys."

St. Joseph's Workbench has been particularly beneficial to many students.

"This area has been a delight to our children who are particularly active," Sr. Mary Michael says. "We have really seen how it has increased their focus."

The Nature Explore program provides a great antidote for what Sr. Mary Michael says is a relatively new phenomenon among people – fear of nature.

"This fear is not of lions and tigers and bears, oh my, that would be normal, good and wise," Sr. Mary Michael says. "This fear is often of dirt or very small insects."

This project was started at the beginning of the year – with a lot of support and assistance from the students and the parents, the program is flourishing. The junior high students are offered an elective to work on these projects. The area is intentionally left without a fence so the space is available to those in the neighborhood, as well. Not only may this program benefit the current students, but the school also hopes to see an increase in enrollment as it is expanded.

Plans for the space include installing the water center and the



"The kids love being outside and playing with one another in this space. They are truly finding God's beauty."

— Sister Mary Michael, Principal

planting center, as well as having plenty of space for additional Explorer areas to be added as the school sees fit.

"The kids love being outside and playing with one another in this space," Sr. Mary Michael says. "They are truly finding God's beauty."

A Letter from Our Pastor

All Things **AND** *All People* **ARE MADE NEW**

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

We associate the Easter season with springtime – a time of new life and new beginnings – and Holy Scripture addresses this idea of newness many times. The Lord declares, “Behold, I make all things new” (Rev. 21:5).

This idea of being “new” is important to us as Catholics, and it is important to our parish. We need to strive to do this on a regular basis – even on a *daily* basis. Think of the fact that all was once new. Regardless of how you view the development of this earth and those of us who occupy it, all was once new.

During this Easter season, we need to retain that idea of being “new.” And being “new” means conversion, and we have often pointed out that conversion is at the heart of a life of stewardship.

As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* puts it, “The Paschal mystery has two aspects: by his death, Christ liberates us from sin; by his Resurrection, he opens for us the way to a new life” (654).

In other words, Christ’s Resurrection is the source of our new life – our own future resurrection. St. Paul wrote about it to the Romans (Rom 6:5) – “For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection.”

Hope for a new life beginning now and extending on into heaven is the result of Jesus’ Resurrection. What greater grounds for thanksgiving can there be than this



Easter hope? We should sing with joy about God’s promise to us, “Behold, I make all things new” (Rev 21:5).

St. Paul also wrote (Col 3:1-2), “If then you were raised with Christ, seek what is above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Think of what is above, not of what is on earth.” Jesus’ Resurrection and His promise of a new life for us mean that we need to live in conformity with our status as adopted children of God.

How do we show our joy and our gratitude to God for this amazing gift He has given us? We join in worship and praise God by word and song. We share the Good News of Jesus’ victory over death with our family, friends, and neighbors. And we offer back to the Lord a portion of the time, talent, and treasure He has entrusted to us.

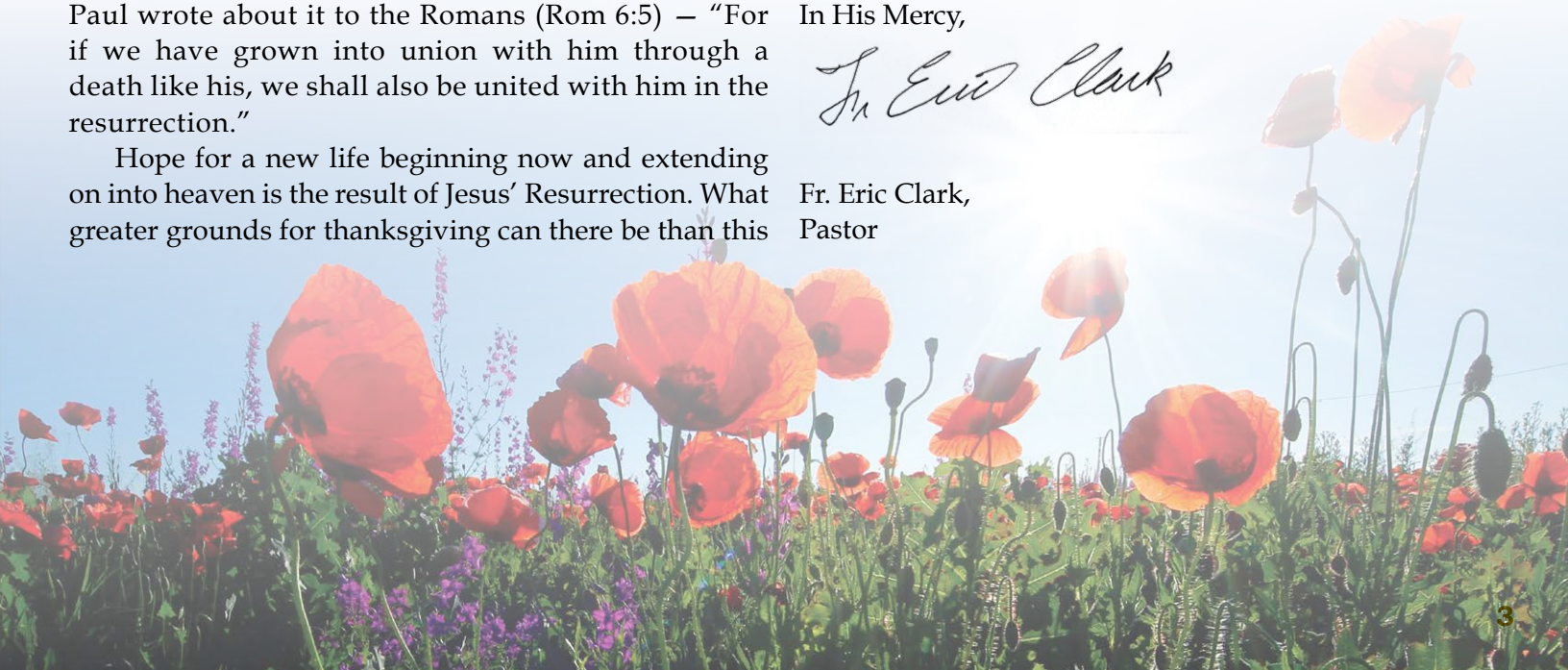
Yes, the Easter message that we share in the benefits of Christ’s Resurrection indeed makes all things new – the ultimate foundation for all Christian stewardship.

The Lord is risen, alleluia.

In His Mercy,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr. Eric Clark". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Fr. Eric Clark,
Pastor





THE RITE OF CHRISTIAN *Welcoming Souls Home*

This month we are happy to introduce two of our RCIA participants at St. Peter, who will be entering the Church this Easter.

Every year, courageous souls enter the doors of Holy Mother the Church, surrendering their hearts to what she believes and teaches. They have seen her light amid the darkness and experienced the love of Christ in a profound, life-changing way. Each of them has traveled a unique and precious journey on their path to the Fullness of Christian Faith found in the One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church with the help of the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults process, or RCIA.

“During their time in RCIA, I pray that each member discerning encounters the living God, Jesus Christ, and His body, the Catholic Church,” says Parish Catechist Blake Vajgrt, who directs the RCIA process. “I want them to develop a complete understanding of who Jesus is, and desire to live as His disciples.”

Throughout the enriching RCIA process, catechumens (non-baptized adults preparing for full communion with the Catholic Church) and candidates (baptized adults preparing to receive the remaining Sacraments

of Initiation) learn about the most essential aspects of the Catholic faith, and how to integrate them into their daily lives.

Impressively, our parish RCIA process places a beautiful, enthusiastic emphasis on holistic formation of each RCIA member.

“We try hard to build into the RCIA a real sense of community,” Blake says. “For example, we spend time together after RCIA class on the third Thursday of each month having drinks, continuing conversation about class content, getting to know each other, and watching football. We want the RCIA members to know that we care not just about their faith life, but about the other aspects of their lives as well. We hope they know we are there for them, and they are welcome here at St. Peter. Christ has called us to abide in Him together!”

During classes, the RCIA teachers have taken time to help form each member in how to pray. The Lord Jesus invites us mind, body, and soul to love Him in and through His Church.



TYLER PUCCIO

Who is your Confirmation saint? Unknown at this time. Deciding between St. Sebastian and St. Stephen the Martyr – the former because he is the patron saint of athletes, and sports have always been a huge part of my life, whether it has been being active in sports or being a fan of the Huskers and most Chicago sports teams; the latter because my family shares a close connection with him through the first-class relic that my maternal

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If you would like more information about how to participate in the RCIA process, call Blake Vajgrt at the parish office at 402-423-1239. RCIA meeting times for Fall 2022 are yet to be announced — they generally run from September through Pentecost.

INITIATION OF ADULTS: Welcome to the Catholic Church

grandmother has passed down.

What would your Miss America talent be? I can clap with one hand — not sure if that is Miss America worthy though.

What chore should we not ask you to do at the parish? Dishes. Neither my fiancée nor I have a dishwasher, even though we both grew up with one. Very tough transition.

Where are you from? I grew up in the northeast suburbs of Chicago. The town name is Gurnee and we are most known for our outlet mall and Six Flags Great America.

Are you married? I will be getting married on Dec. 30, 2022, at St. Peter!

Where do you work and what do you do? I work at Spreetail as a Technical Recruiter. I am passionate about being able to impact people's lives. That is why I love my job because I help people find a job that they can be passionate about and be able to provide for their families.

What excited you about joining the Church and our parish? St. Peter has some amazing people within the parish. Everyone has been very welcoming to me and my fiancée. Also, I have to give a shout out to Fr. Bedient as he has been amazing throughout RCIA and our marriage preparations!



MORGAN BEVAN

Who is your Confirmation saint? St. Michael. I chose him because he is the patron saint of police officers and the military. I used to be a police officer in Colorado Springs and I served in the Marine Corps and Army. I currently serve in the Nebraska Army National Guard as an MP.

What is your Miss America Talent? I can juggle.

What chore should we not ask you to do at the parish? The household chore I dread most — dusting.

Is there anyone you would like to thank for helping you in your discernment to enter the Church? I would like to thank Fr. Bedient for bringing me into the Church

and everyone facilitating the RCIA classes.

Where are you from? I grew up in Lincoln, Neb.

Are you married? Not married and I do not have children.

Where do you work and what do you do? I work full-time for the Nebraska Army National Guard.

What are your hobbies? I am passionate about playing guitar and riding gravel bikes.

What do you enjoy about St. Peter? I enjoy St. Peter because I enjoy the Masses. The parishioners and members are compassionate and caring.

How have you grown in your relationship with the Lord? I stay close to Christ by attending Mass and praying. Attending RCIA and Mass has taught me the importance of the Eucharist and praying. For family prayer, I pray with my mother who resides at Brookside Rehabilitation Center in Lincoln. I am also learning to take the time to pray on my own.

Do you have any unique talents? I am musically inclined. I played drums in a couple bands while going to UNL. When I moved back to Lincoln in 2014, I started playing guitar.



RESPONDING TO THE GLORY OF CHRIST'S RESURRECTION AT EASTER

Dying, He Destroyed Our Death; Rising, He Restored Our Life

*“He suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died, and was buried.*

He descended into hell.

On the third day He rose again from the dead”

— Apostles’ Creed

As we have recently come to the end of our Lenten journey toward Easter, let us take a moment to meditate on three pivotal lines from the ancient creed, which comprise the central events of our redemption.

Far from being a mere myth or legend, in Jerusalem around the year 30 A.D., Jesus Christ — the Son of God made man — was tortured at the hands of the Romans. He was flogged, beaten, spit upon, and crowned with thorns. He was made to carry the cross through the crowded streets to Golgotha and, once there, He was crucified — He was nailed to a cross and died. Just as someday we will each be laid in our graves, Jesus was laid in His.

The most obvious question that confronts the observer of this horrific reality is “why?” Luckily, Christ made the impetus for His self-sacrifice quite clear: “Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, so that everyone who believes in Him may have eternal life” (Jn 3:14-15).

The reasons Christ died on the cross are twofold, one negative and one positive. The negative cause is sin. Only in witnessing the cost of redemption — the death of the Son of God — can we begin to comprehend the profound magnitude of sin: “You have been purchased at a price,” says St. Paul (1 Cor 6:20).

Conversely, Christ willingly accepted the cross because of love. St. John famously says, “For God so loved

the world that He gave His only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him might not perish but might have eternal life” (Jn 3:16).

Uniting these two causes, St. Paul says, “God proves His love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us” (Rom 5:8).

In His limitless compassion, Christ entered into the fullness of human suffering — physical torment, emotional agony and utter isolation — so that He might share complete solidarity with mankind. Accordingly, His passion and death not only accomplished our redemption, but by the cross, He also showed us the way to true discipleship. For Christ taught His disciples long before His crucifixion, “if anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me” (Lk 9:23).

Christ’s is the final and perfect covenant between God and man, and it is a covenant of love, with Christ Himself as its high priest. Nevertheless, this covenant is not based on love as popular culture conceives of it, but love as Christ displayed it: “The way we came to know love was that He laid down His life for us” (1 John 3:16).

Joined with the passion, Christ’s Resurrection is the key to the entire Gospel — for in rising from the dead, Jesus proved true His bold promises. He had prophesied to the apostles, “No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again” (Jn 10:18). The Resurrection vindicates this promise and validates His teaching and miracles.

This Easter, let us respond to the glory of Christ’s Resurrection by exclaiming, as St. Thomas the Apostle did, “My Lord and my God!” And may each of us be filled with faith in God of our salvation, hope in the rewards He has won for us, and love for Him who has deigned to bestow them on us.

Jesus of Divine Mercy Ministry

Bringing the Message of the Lord's Mercy to Our Community

St. Maria Faustina Kowalska was a Polish nun who received revelations from our Lord, which she wrote about in her diary. She brought the message of the Lord's mercy to the world.

The Lord told her, "Mankind will not have peace until it turns with trust to my mercy."

Here at St. Peter Catholic Church, about 28 years ago, a group was formed to address the special needs of the parish – the Jesus of Divine Mercy Ministry. Jeannie Moxley, in prayer, felt called to name the group after the Divine Mercy Devotion. The group has changed and evolved over the years, but the commitment to Divine Mercy has continued.

The women's group meets at 11:30 a.m. on the third Wednesday of the month for prayer and spiritual growth. Specifically, they pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy and hold up our priests and those on the prayer line. Then, they meet for coffee, plan activities, and share spiritual reading.

"I feel that God called me to help spread the message of Divine Mercy," Jeannie says. "Jesus said, 'This is the time for mercy. If you don't turn to my



mercy now, in the future, you will have to deal with my justice.'"

Jesus wants us to know about His great love and mercy. Jeannie wants to help spread that message. On Sunday, April 24, the group will host events for Divine Mercy Sunday. There will be Eucharistic Adoration and priests available to hear confession. Those in attendance will pray the Chaplet of Divine Mercy.

Jesus promised to St. Faustina that on the Feast of Divine Mercy Sunday, the soul that will go to confession and receive Holy Communion shall obtain complete forgiveness of sins and punishment (Diary entry #699).

The Divine Mercy Ministry members brought the Divine Mercy image to St. Peter Catholic Church. The group also brings an Our Lady of Fatima statue to parishioners' homes.

The group encourages the Corporal Works of Mercy by organizing a Lenten Giving Tree to benefit Catholic Social Services. People can pick an egg with a needed item and return the item to the tree.

In addition, the Divine Mercy Ministry adopts a family from St. Gianna Women's Homes for Christmas. They are also on call to provide items all year for the

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"I feel Jesus has really put the desire in my heart to share the Divine Mercy Message. I just believe this is the time to implore God's mercy." — Jeannie Moxley



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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.

Saturday: 8:15 a.m.

CONFESSION

Monday & Friday: 7:00 a.m. - 8:00 a.m.

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

JESUS OF DIVINE MERCY MINISTRY *continued from page 7*

nonprofit. St. Gianna Women's Homes support women being coerced into abortion or escaping domestic violence situations.

For Memorial Day weekend, the ministry members sell carnations, which are placed on the altar in honor of family members and veterans who have passed away. The money collected is given to a local charity.

Jeannie believes in the mission of this ministry. She feels blessed to share the message of Divine Mercy with parishioners at St. Peter Catholic Church.

"Jesus has promised that anything you ask through the Divine Mercy Chaplet, within His will, it will be given," she says.

Jeannie also feels blessed by the group of friends she has found through this ministry. She enjoys having the opportunity to be together each month and share her faith.

"I feel Jesus has really put the desire in my heart to share the Divine Mercy Message," Jeannie says. "I just believe this is the time to implore God's mercy."

If you would like more information on the Jesus of Divine Mercy Ministry, please contact Jeannie Moxley at 402-421-1730 or rptraiz@yahoo.com.