



St. Peter's Currents

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Parish Events

Faithfully Fit Forever Gives Participants Both a Physical and Spiritual Workout

What do you get when you combine faith, exercise and health awareness? Here at St. Peter, Faithfully Fit Forever provides a comprehensive program designed to keep participants fit in all three of these areas.

“Faithfully Fit Forever is a fitness class designed for those with mobility and balance challenges,” says Lisa Amos, the program’s director. “We focus on the whole person fitness of the participants.”

Faithfully Fit Forever was started by Catholic parish nurses at Concordia University in Moorhead, MN. In order to bring it to St. Peter, Lisa and other parish representatives attended a training program at Luther Seminary in St. Paul where they learned about the program and how to facilitate it. The program attracted parishioner and fitness instructor Linda Towle, who has been teaching the class since its beginning. Following a fantastically successful year, Linda



Linda Towle leads the Faithfully Fit Forever participants during a program meeting.

invited fitness instructor Mark Kingsriter to join her in teaching.

“Working with seniors and fitness is something they’re very passionate about,” Lisa says. “I think the success of the class really comes from the knowledge, love and passion that Mark and Linda have both for fitness and for the people that come to the classes.”

The program, which is heading into its fourth year, numbers between a dozen and

Faithfully Fit Forever *continued from front cover*

20 participants each week. The class meets once a week for a one-hour session. During the first ten minutes, the instructors educate the class about health topics such as how to prepare healthy meals for diabetics, how to take care of cholesterol, why it is important to exercise, and other similar topics. Then, the next 40 minutes are dedicated to physical exercise.

“Most of the time they’re sitting in chairs, which is good for people who don’t have good balance or can’t be on

their feet,” Lisa says. “There are also strength and stretching exercises, as well as cardio.”

“I think people of that age are looking for ways to stay healthy and stay active and, most importantly, stay independent,” says Linda. “Every little thing they can do is worthwhile. We try to keep them active in activities they would most likely do in everyday life.”

The last ten minutes of the program are spent in prayer.

“To wrap up the program with meditation and prayer is a very unique thing for people,” Linda says. “I don’t get to have that in any of the other fitness classes I teach. We are definitely a prayer community, and everyone brings something individual into it.”

“I think the best thing about Faithfully Fit Forever, and maybe even what’s drawn people to it and kept them so dedicated to it, is that it emphasizes that our spiritual health is intimately connected to all aspects of our health — our physical health, the ability to care for ourselves, and continuing to learn about ourselves and our spirituality,” says Lisa. “I think it’s really important for people to know that they can come and care for their bodies, and at the same time care for their spirit.”

Most of all, the group thoroughly enjoys the time they spend together, and the participants and instructors look forward to the class each week.

“It’s a really fun group — they’re very supportive of one another, and Linda and Mark are very supportive of them,” Lisa says. “They’ve learned and prayed a lot. Our oldest participant, LeRoy Brown, is just turning 100 years old, and he rarely ever misses a week. His daughter also comes to class with him.”

“[The participants] love it.” adds Linda. “They are the most genuine, honest people, and they all have things to offer each other and to us as instructors, too. I know they think we give a lot to the program, but let me tell you, it’s the highlight of my week.”

Faithfully Fit Forever classes begin again this fall. For more information, please check the schedule in the Sunday bulletin, or feel free to contact Lisa Amos at 651-905-4304.



Weights are just one exercise component of Faithfully Fit Forever.



The group performs a warm-up activity together.

The Days May be Long, But the Years are Short

Dear Parishioners,

It is hard to believe that September is upon us. I have always heard that time seems to go faster when you get older, but I also feel that sometimes the days are long, but the years are short. Didn't summer just begin? Now we are looking at fall and, before we know it, Thanksgiving and Christmas will be here.

There is a common saying that time speeds up as you get older. But what about the children who are heading back to school? I'll bet most of them think the summer was way too short and flew by in a nanosecond. Perhaps time goes fast for all of us, regardless our age, especially when we are enjoying ourselves. It fits with the adage, "Time flies when you're having fun."

Fun—what a great word! Fun was part of my childhood. It does not always seem to be part of my adult life. However, if I look at life from a stewardship perspective, "fun" does not seem to be out of reach. Stewardship is a very positive way of living because it focuses on gifts and thanksgiving. Stewardship asks us to look at life from what we have, not from what we do not have. Some of the happiest people I know are those who practice stewardship and live it out in their daily lives. Yes, they bear crosses, and yes, their lives are not perfect, nor are they perfect people. Nevertheless, they say "thank you" often, and they say it especially to God.

We all recognize that January is when our newcalendar year begins because the numbered year changes(2014 sounds a bit remarkable, but then we have to remember how the days can be long, but the years are short). Nevertheless, September really seems like the beginning of a new year in many ways, doesn't it? Schools have restarted, vacations are over and be-



hind most of us, and even our ministries seem to pick up and become more active. Perhaps now is the time we should really make those resolutions.

I would ask you to think in terms of stewardship resolutions. Many of you are already very involved in parish life. I would invite you to resolve to find the time to pray, or perhaps to just listen. God does talk to us, but often we simply do not listen. If you already do set time aside for individual prayer, decide to also take part in some of our community prayer opportunities. If you are someone who does not attend Mass regularly, make your mind up to come to Mass more frequently. If you are someone who usu-

ally attends Mass, but you are not involved in one of our many parish ministries, give of yourself in that way. I am not talking about a total change of life, but I am talking about dedicating yourself to something more in relation to your faith.

Throughout the Bible people encounter Jesus and walk away completely changed individuals. That is what my challenge to you is. Meet the Lord halfway; give Him a chance to lead and guide you; make an effort to take another step in your faith and stewardship journey. You, too, can have the happiness of the good and just steward. Now that could be fun.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Joseph Gallatin
Pastor

We Are All Qualified to Be Worthy Stewards

When it comes to the demands of the Christian life — specifically the demands of parish life — how often do we ask ourselves if we are qualified to take on that role?

When presented with a chance to sign up for a certain ministry at our parish, we may believe that we lack certain skills and feel unworthy to step forward. Or we may simply be unwilling to take the first step toward becoming involved in parish life.

This reaction is the natural product of our fallen human nature. However, we cannot look at the Christian call from this perspective.

When God became man, He made His grace available to us so we could be like Him. Jesus commands us in Matthew, “Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect” (Mw 5:48). That is certainly a lot to ask. And while it is impossible for us to accomplish this solely by our own strength, God enables us to accomplish the impossible — but only when we make the decision to accept His grace and live up to the high calling He has bestowed upon us.

The antidote to the “unworthiness” disease that threatens the best of us can be summed up in one word — “magnanimity,” a virtue with which most of us may be unfamiliar. The word itself is virtually extinct in the English language. It comes from the Latin words *magnus* and *anima*, which taken together mean “greatness of soul.”

A magnanimous person is someone who sees the demands of the Christian life as a sea of endless possibilities with God’s grace, and who determines to rise to the greatness to which God calls him. This person neither stops to count the cost, nor to measure his unworthiness. Magnanimity is not arrogance, because a magnanimous person recognizes that only by God’s grace does he accomplish anything. Nor is it imprudence, since he strives only to do what God asks of him and nothing more.

Where can we find such people? Do they even exist in today’s world? The lives of the saints stand as some of the best and most inspirational examples of magnanimous souls. In-



deed, many of the most attractive saints were very ordinary people who became extraordinary simply because of their magnanimity.

St. Thérèse spent her short existence in total obscurity behind convent walls doing little acts with great love. Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati, who never traveled the world preaching, touched the hearts of his friends, and tirelessly served the poor in his own town. St. Gianna just tried to be a good wife, mother and doctor. St. Peter led the entire Church, even though he only knew how to fish. St. Joseph, a simple carpenter, raised and cared for God Himself made man. Our Lady, nothing more than a young peasant girl, said, “Let it be done unto me,” allowing God to become man.

When examining history from the beginning of time, there is a detectable pattern — God almost always calls the most ordinary and seemingly unqualified people to accomplish His great works.

God is calling all of us to be magnanimous with our lives. Even in the small circle of our daily dealings — at home, work or in our parish — there are countless ways we can show that we are not afraid of what He might ask of us. The journey might not always be easy. But with God’s grace, we can point our sails toward heaven with confidence, and never look back.

“The Faith given to me in baptism suggests to me surely: by yourself you will do nothing, but if you have God as the center of all your action, then you will reach the goal.”

- Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati

The Sacristan Ministry: *Bringing the Eucharistic Christ to Others*

For over 25 years, Tom and Mary O' Neill have been working together to help bring Our Lord in the Eucharist to our parish community in a beautiful way. By serving as sacristans, they have been living out the true meaning of stewardship, and doing it side-by-side.

"Tom and I compliment each other as we work," Mary says. "We have different strengths, so we can each work on the specific task for which we are best equipped to do. We like doing things together, which makes sacristan duties seem less like 'work' and more like 'helping' one another and others. What one of us forgets to do, the other one will usually remember – although more than 20 years ago, we forgot to put Father's chalice out before Mass and the altar server had to tell us during Mass to bring a chalice forward. We haven't forgotten Father's chalice since then! Being sacristans together is a way we can share our Catholic faith with one another. In fact, there are several couples who do the Sacristan Ministry together, and it works out very well."

Tom and Mary have served as coordinators of the Sacristan Ministry for years. However, they have recently asked Gail and Al Barta to take over their responsibilities as lead sacristans in the near future. Community Life Coordinator Sara Rogers schedules the 17 sacristans who help at our weekend Masses, while Mary schedules the seven sacristans/altar servers who cover the weekday Masses — the weekday sacristans also serve as altar servers.

"Sacristans function like 'stage managers' for Mass and other important liturgies," Mary says. "This means arriving 30 to 45 minutes before Mass to set everything up — wine, hosts, water, chalices, etc. — ensure doors are unlocked, and ensuring all other volunteer minis-



Tom O'Neill prepares for Mass.

try positions related to Mass are covered before Mass begins so that Fr. Gallatin does not have to. If someone fails to find a substitute when they cannot make an assigned time, the sacristans are responsible for finding replacements or filling in ourselves if need be. Sacristans also 'clean up' after Mass."

Interestingly, Mary first opened her heart to the Sacristan Ministry freely, without even really knowing what she was getting into – but she has never regretted her decision.

"I signed up for what I thought was just ironing church laundry," Mary says. "I later found out that I was actually volunteering to get things prepared for Mass, but I stayed with the ministry anyhow. Twenty-five years later, I am ironing the linens as well as doing the Sacristan Ministry!"

Importantly, our dedicated sacristans find many reasons to be grateful for the opportunity they have to serve.

"I like being a sacristan because I enjoy helping Father get everything ready

for Mass so he does not have to stress out about it," Mary says. "I also appreciate the chance to get to meet other people in the parish. In doing our work, sacristans meet people in four other ministries – we get to know the altar servers, ushers, lectors and Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. We also meet people who have special needs at Mass, such as those who need Communion brought to them."

Although the ministry seems to be quite simple, it involves the use of some real talent.

"You need to be detail-oriented — the work of a sacristan is meticulous, yet gratifying because you know you are making things related to Mass go more smoothly," Mary says. "You also have to be committed to your assigned Mass and duties. This is one ministry that you can't fail to show up for!"

For more information on how to help out with this essential ministry at our parish, please contact the parish office at 651-452-4550.

St. Gregory the Great

Laboring for the Kingdom of God

Sept. 3 is the feast day of St. Gregory the Great. Perhaps it is no coincidence that the Feast of St. Gregory also falls around the time when Americans make our national observance of Labor Day. While a shining example of Christian virtue, St. Gregory the Great also sheds light on the fuller value and purpose of labor and human work.

St. Gregory was born in Rome around 540 to a wealthy family, with several family members noted for holiness of life. He was raised and educated during times of great trial, both for the Church in general, and for Rome, a city besieged by several waves of barbarians.

Gregory was made prefect of Rome at a young age. He struggled with the call to give all in following Christ, but finally chose a monastic life, donating his estates to the founding of monasteries. His three years of monastic seclusion were some of the most enjoyable of his life.

Once Gregory was ordained as a deacon, he was sent to the Court of Byzantium as ambassador, where he struggled greatly with the Court's worldly atmosphere. Having provided, with some difficulty, six years of faithful service to the Court, he was joyfully recalled to Rome. Gregory was appointed abbot of St. Andrew's Monastery, which under his leadership, produced many monks who were later renowned for holiness of life. He was later chosen to be a missionary to England. This demonstrates how well-known Gregory must have been by this time, for after he was sent away, an uprising immediately arose among the populace of Rome. A team of messengers was then dispatched to bring him back, which they successfully did.

The death of Pope Pelagius II in 590 led to Gregory being immediately chosen by the clergy and people of Rome as the pope's successor. Some sources suggest that Gregory was dragged from his bed, while others maintain that he fled from the city and hid for three days.

Despite his initial unwillingness to accept the burden of the papacy, Gregory spent the final 14 years of his life devoting all of his energy towards his work as pope.

Gregory's life produced fruit that would continue to mature for centuries to come — guidance for the care of souls, reformation of the liturgy, sending missionaries to spread faith abroad, reform of the clergy and much more. He is arguably one of the greatest foundational supports of Medieval Europe, and thus, of our own society today.

Americans celebrate Labor Day, the yearly tribute given to our country's workers. The day's purpose is to remind us of the real social and economic contributions made through the



early Labor Movement, up to workers in the present day.

As Catholics, we can also celebrate Labor Day with a deeper Christian understanding of its purpose.

Jesus spoke often about “the Kingdom of God,” and He taught us that it is already here – however, not in its perfect, final form. Christians receive the Kingdom at baptism, and they also build it inside themselves through the varied ways of working to grow in personal holiness. They also work to build the kingdom, just as Gregory did, by offering Christ-like service in all areas of their lives. Thus, in our own Christian lives, we continue the exact same work that St. Gregory performed, and to which all of us are called, in building of the Kingdom of God.

St. Gregory is one of the most influential figures of the early medieval period. He affected all of Christendom, and the entire modern Western world, through the gift of all that he had to give. When Gregory arrived at the moment of his death, he surely heard our Lord say to him, “Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of your master” (Mt. 25:21). What a joyful greeting and reward that awaits those who follow his example!

Growth Through Participation

Joanne Rocco Carter

Joanne Rocco Carter has been a part of our parish family for the last 18 years. Throughout that time, she has been continually active in a number of ministries and organizations in our parish and community.

“I have moved a lot in my life, and anytime I’ve moved I try to get involved in my parish,” Joanne says. “I had excellent advice about 30 years ago when I was about to move to a different state. My friend said, ‘Whenever you move, get involved in your parish, get involved in your community as if you’re never going to move again.’ I’ve listened to that advice in all the places I’ve lived. My parish to me is my parish family. I enjoy meeting and getting to know the people. It helps me grow in my faith, as well as establish deep and meaningful friendships.”

Joanne has been on the Parish Pastoral Council for three years. She also serves as a lector and is the leader of the Refugee Committee, and she recently started becoming more involved in our parish’s Council of Catholic Women. In the past, Joanne has taught Religious Education, has been a member of the choir and more.

“Basically anything that comes along that I have time to be involved in, I do,” she says. “It’s a pleasure. It’s a good parish.”

Joanne’s active involvement in our parish and community has blessed many aspects of her life, such as her faith and her sense of belonging to the parish family.



Joanne Rocco Carter with her husband, George.

“I have grown,” she says. “If I’m away, out of state or if I go to different parishes for any reason, it’s always good to come home. St. Peter’s means so much to me right now. I feel very at home. I feel that our pastor is a very good leader, as well as the pastors we’ve had before him. That makes a big difference, the leadership of the parish.”

Participating in parish life has also affected her relationship to the rest of the parish community.

“Each activity that I took part in, from choir to teaching Religious Education classes, in everything I’ve done, I’ve met more and more people because I’ve done a variety of things,” Joanne says. “I’ve really enjoyed that. I think it was last year, a young

man approached me. He had his wife and children with him, and he said that I taught him in Religious Education classes and he thanked me for it. It was so great being thanked and appreciated for that. It’s huge. To me, that’s very meaningful.”

Joanne has also found areas of parish ministry where she can apply her own unique talents and gifts, and she encourages others in the parish to seek out opportunities where they can do the same.

“We’re all Christ’s disciples,” Joanne says. “The disciples aren’t dead, they’re very much alive. We have to share our gifts, talents and support as much now as ever before. That’s part of our Christian life, trying to find what Christ wants us to be. We have to hear His commandment and love one another, and that’s being there for each other.”

“I think it was last year, a young man approached me. He had his wife and children with him, and he said that I taught him in Religious Education classes and he thanked me for it. It was so great being thanked and appreciated for that. It’s huge. To me, that’s very meaningful.”

— Joanne Rocco Carter

Church of St. Peter

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Church of St. Peter Upcoming Events, September and October 2013

Evening Weekday Mass

Thursday, Sept. 5 & Thursday, Oct. 3 at 6:30 p.m.

Donut Sundays

Sept. 8, Sept. 22, and Oct. 20

Red Cross Blood Drive

Thursday, Sept. 12, 1-6 p.m.

Teacher Commissioning

Sunday, Sept. 15 at 9 a.m. and 11 a.m. Masses

Boy Scout Pancake Breakfast

Sunday, Sept. 15 at 8 a.m.

Workcamp Weekend (Registration opens for 2014)

Saturday, Sept. 28 and Sunday, Sept. 29

Faithful Shepherd's Septemberfest Family Fun Night

Friday, Sept. 20 at 5:30 p.m.

Faithful Shepherd's Septemberfest Concert

Saturday, Sept. 21 at 6 p.m.

Rediscover: Catholic Celebration

Saturday, Oct. 12 from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at Saint Paul RiverCentre

Workcamp Bake Sale

Sunday, Oct. 13

Pizza Bingo

Friday, Oct. 25 at 6 p.m.

Parish Fall Festival

Sunday, Oct. 6 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

The Pork Dinner is from noon to 2 pm. Please join us for bingo, boutique vendors, and other games and food!

www.stpetersmendota.org

Weekend Mass: Saturday, 5:00 p.m. Vigil | Sunday, 9:00 & 11:00 a.m.

Daily Mass: Monday - Friday, 9:00 a.m.

Confession: Saturdays, 4:00 - 4:45 p.m. and by appointment