

# St. Peter's Currents

September/October 2012

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## Pope Benedict XVI Calls for Year of Faith

A shepherd always has the best interests of his sheep in mind, as he leads them to green pastures and quiet waters. When he detects danger, he selflessly guides them to safety.

Noting the frightening numbers of Catholics that have turned away from their faith in recent years, the shepherd of the Church on earth, Pope Benedict XVI, has called for a Year of Faith. Designed to strengthen the faith of Catholics around the world, the Year will begin this Oct. 11, lasting until November 2013.

“Pope Benedict, like Pope John Paul II, has been urging the people of Europe for years not to forget the faith,” says Fr. Joseph Gallatin. “Through the Year of Faith, that same message has to

go to all of us around the world. Historically, American Catholics might have tended to be more faithful than Catholics in a lot of other countries, but that doesn't seem to be the case anymore. The current generation here is being strongly drawn by secular interests, and in large part seems to be giving up the faith.”

In an attempt to stem the tide of faithlessness, the Year of Faith is a call to renewal, to a new evangelization, and to a strengthened relationship with Christ. It is also a year to come to a deeper love for Christ's Body, the Church, through which the heritage of faith has been given

and protected down through the ages.

“We should use this year as an occasion to remember that faith comes from God in



*continued on page 2*

# Year of Faith *continued from front cover*



the first place,” Fr. Gallatin says. “It’s not something that we simply conjure up in ourselves. It is a gift that God gives us, and it is up to us to respond. We need to set aside an attitude of doubt toward things that we find unappealing. If people are willing to set aside their doubts and grant some degree of reliability to the Church and its teaching, this can truly be a year of transformation!”

The timing of the Year of Faith was purposefully chosen to reflect two tremendous gifts that were given in the 20th century to buttress the Church’s faith in these uncertain times — the Second Vatican Council and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. As the Church begins the Year of Faith this fall, it will also celebrate the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Council, as well as the 20th anniversary of the publication of the *Catechism*. According to Pope Benedict, these two marquee events taken together represent a major bulwark for the Church in the 21st century.

“The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* is one of the most important fruits of the Second Vatican Council,” the Pope writes. “In this Year, the [*Catechism*] will serve as a tool of providing real support for the faith, especially for those concerned with the formation of Christians, so crucial in our cultural context.”

The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops has answered the Holy Father’s call, and will be asking individual pastors to reinvigorate the faith of their parish through various means. St. Peter will host a special evangelization symposium for all the priests of the archdiocese in November. At the parish level, special emphasis will be placed on growing in faith through homilies and in parish catechesis programs. A special class will also meet between Masses on select Sundays this fall to study some of the landmark teachings of the Second Vatican Council.

As the Year of Faith begins this fall, please join with Pope Benedict and the Universal Church around the world in striving to grow in faith through study, prayer and the sacraments!

“May this be a year in which we train ourselves to embrace the gift of faith that comes from God,” Fr. Gallatin says.

*“We should use this year as an occasion to remember that faith comes from God in the first place. It’s not something that we simply conjure up in ourselves. It is a gift that God gives us, and it is up to us to respond.”*

*— Fr. Joseph Gallatin*

# September Brings New Beginnings

Dear Parishioners,

There's something about September that gets the adrenalin pumping again. Perhaps it's the thought of new beginnings.

As the summer winds down, there's a sense of anticipation when you see the store shelves filled with back to school items. This time of year makes me aware once again of the great hopes, exciting dreams, and good intentions that a new school year holds for our children, their parents and our teachers.

Even for those parishioners not directly involved in school, the approach of September marks new beginnings. Labor Day traditionally marks the end of the summer vacation season, and our calendars reflect that fact. Many of you have calendars a lot like mine – they're full year-round with appointments and obligations. But, even for us, things get busier in September as various organizations that took a break during summer begin their regular round of meetings again.

As you make out your schedules for the fall, don't forget to set aside some time to share the talents God has given you. As you are aware, as Christian disciples – as stewards – we are called to return to God a portion of the Time, Talent, and Treasure he has entrusted to us. We should make our commitments to God when we begin our planning, so that we don't offer him just the scraps of time and energy left over after everything else.



Make this September the month you make a commitment to sing in the choir, including attending rehearsals. Or begin working with our parish religious education in one way or another. Or decide to launder altar linens once a month. Or volunteer to help in the parish office one morning a week. Or help care for the parish grounds. Or join the Knights of Columbus. Or join a social service ministry. Or... well, you get the idea.

There are many ministries and groups within the parish you can serve, and you'll find that you receive even as you give. There isn't

a person in this parish that can't find at least one activity in which they can participate and which fits their schedule. If you aren't involved, make this September the month to change that.

Thinking about commitments, don't forget to set aside "Time" for prayer. Again, it's a matter of priorities, and I challenge each and every one of you to make a new commitment of "Time" to prayer. You can start small, with one *Our Father*, one *Hail Mary*, and one *Glory Be* during the course of the day. That's at least a beginning. And, to me, September is all about new beginnings.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Fr. Joseph Gallatin  
Pastor

*As you make out your schedules for the fall, don't forget to set aside some time to share the talents God has given you.*

# Workcamp Draws Youth



Summer is the time when teenagers may find relief from their hectic school schedules, as well as from the many important life-changing decisions they must face during the school year. This free time also gives teenagers the opportunity to focus on their spiritual lives, their relationships with God and one other — and to just have some fun.

This summer, Youth Coordinator Ed Overell and two other adults took 16 parish youth to Greenville, Mich. for the annual Youth Workcamp.

“For me as the youth leader at the church, where it’s my responsibility to create opportunities for our youth to grow in faith, Workcamp is my favorite part of my job, year in and year out,” Ed says. “It’s an insane amount of work to prepare and fundraise for, but getting to watch what it does for the kids — I kind of take in what the Workcamp experience is and see them realize, when they put God front and center, how great things can be and see how much they get out of serving other people.”

Workcamp is a weeklong youth service trip sponsored by Group Mission Trips. This year, a total of 350 youth from around the country gathered for a week of service and spiritual growth.

During the week, the youth divide into work crews of six people each. The individual crews perform service projects, working at residential homes in Greenville and the surrounding area. These projects include painting rooms, repairing decks and more.

“Our group of kids really worked hard,” Ed says. “They enjoyed themselves, they had a good time, and they worked hard to serve these people. We gather at the end of every day to share stories, and it’s fun to hear 16 and 17-year-old kids talking about working to help somebody that they’ve only known for two or three days. And you



# Youth Closer to God

also hear about how close they become to these residents. They want to go and they want to scrape this house, or climb up on this roof, or spend time digging holes. They want to do this for people they've never met, because they want to serve, which is really fun."

The youth build strong friendships during the week. They also benefit spiritually from the work they do for the residents of Greenville.

"I had an amazing time," says Victoria Rabuse, 16, who attended her second year of the Workcamp. "It was really good. I made a lot of friends. You make lasting friendships, and you know that your work is having a big impact on the people whose homes you're working on. You know your work makes a difference. It's not a temporary thing."

The other key aspect of this trip is the focus on faith. Each night of the week, the youth gathered for a time of praise and worship.

"I had a much deeper connection this week to the praise than I had in years previous," Victoria says. "I walked out of it with a stronger relationship with God, and a stronger relationship with the people I came with."

Victoria is not alone. Indeed, God is at the center of the work and cooperation shared by the youth throughout the week. This has a profound effect on their faith and relationship with God.

"I felt closer to God through it," says Olivia Vogel, 16. "The message that we had to share was really powerful, that God is making everything new."

Like Victoria, this was Olivia's second Workcamp. Neither of them want this year's trip to be their last.

"I want to come back after I'm done with high school, and keep doing it," Olivia says. "I don't want it to stop."



# The Church of St. Peter: Focus On Finances and Facilities *Honoring Our Past, Shaping Our Future*

For the past 172 years, the Church of St. Peter has served the people of Mendota and surrounding areas. In the decades to come, we look forward to continuing to celebrate the grand heritage of the parish, and to continue providing deeper and more meaningful opportunities to know and love Jesus Christ.

To help ensure that we can provide the programs and facilities that will serve parishioners in the near future and beyond, parish leadership has gathered important information to share with all parishioners during four identical presentation/dialogue meetings in the second week of September.

The material that was shared and discussed included our parish mission, history, and current demographics. The meetings also included discussions on volunteer organization/structure, programs and ministries that serve our parishioners, as well as time, talent and treasure. And finally, the meetings included discussions on parish finances concerning our operating budget, balance sheet, details on the current parish debt, archdiocesan obligations, and some deferred repairs and improvements needed to properly care for our facilities.

The goal of the presentations was to provide you with the best information available at the time, and then to invite your comments, questions and constructive ideas about how we may choose to address parish finances and our facilities. Working together as a family of faith, we can help shape our future through dialogue such as this.

At the time of this newsletter's publication, four presentations were yet to occur, but all parishioners were invited to attend. It is our hope that many did attend and participate.

As a member of St. Peter's Parish, your reactions to the information will guide our next steps. Therefore, your participation is essential to our success. Please refer to the parish bulletin as this process unfolds in the coming weeks. Thank you!

Fr. Joseph Gallatin, pastor  
Jim Oricchio, parish trustee  
Helen Wilkie, parish trustee

## Summer Activities at St. Peter



*The Pastoral Ministry group visits the Minneapolis Institute of Art on June 27. The group visits an attraction in the Twin Cities twice a year.*



*Fr. Steven Jones blesses Bishop Paul Swain of the diocese of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, during a priestly ordination Mass on June 29. Fr. Steven was a "Teaching Parish" seminarian at St. Peter for three years. As a layman and then as a transitional deacon, Fr. Steven participated in Sunday Mass here once a month and taught in our religious education program.*

# Setting an Example of Stewardship for Our Children

As we strive to live as grateful stewards, we must remember that each of us has a responsibility to help our youngest parishioners learn what it means to live as a disciple of Christ. Jesus Himself told the disciples, “Let the children come to me, and do not prevent them; for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these” (Mt 19:14). Christ wants children to grow closer to Him and to become His disciples, and parents are responsible for helping to lead their children to this end. The Rite of Baptism reminds us that parents are “the first teachers of their child in the ways of faith.”

An important part of faith involves living a life of stewardship, as the proper response of a Christian disciple. So, it follows that parents bear a great responsibility that comes from Christ Himself to raise their children as grateful stewards. However, it may already be difficult for adults to grasp the concept of stewardship and put it into practice in their own lives. How can parents teach their children to do the same?

First and foremost, parents can teach stewardship by setting a good example. Indeed, the example of our lives is so powerful that it can and should be a witness to the Gospel. As parents live the life of stewardship, their children will see the beauty in the stewardship way of life, and they are bound to follow suit. If parents live in thanksgiving to God for all He has given them, their children will grow to see that all we have is a gift from God. And when parents offer gratitude to God, it will surely impact their children.

Eight-year-old Suzie watched her dad give Communion at Sunday Masses throughout her young life. When asked



why she thinks he does this, she responds, “We need to help the priest.”

Meanwhile, her older sister, Jane, responds to the same question by explaining, “We need to serve God. He does so much for us. We should appreciate it and give back to Him.”

It is clear that by witnessing their dad’s example, the girls are beginning to understand – each in her own way – that the life of a Christian disciple involves selfless service in gratitude to God. Yet it is not just their father’s example that has helped them develop this understanding. Both their father and their mother emphasize stewardship as a family practice. They spend time in family prayer, serve at the soup kitchen together, bring up the offertory as a family and participate in other acts of service. Such involved participation in the faith-

ful life allows the girls to bear witness to the power of serving others in thanksgiving, even at their young ages.

“We need to help other people,” Suzie says. “Jesus wants us to put other people first, and if we want to listen to Him, we need to serve others.”

As Suzie’s statement demonstrates, the stewardship way of life is not only understood or lived out by adults; Jesus wants children to be His disciples, as well. So it is essential that parents help their children develop a true understanding stewardship, and encourage its practice through the example of an active faith life.

May all Christian parents be not only the first, but also the best teachers of faith to their children, in what they say *and* in what they do.

# Church of St. Peter

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## Upcoming Events for September/October

### Red Cross Blood Drive

Sept. 20, 1 p.m. to 6 p.m.

### Christian Initiation Begins

Sept. 23

### Fall Festival

Oct. 7, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

### Adult Study Initiative:

### Celebrating 50 Years since Vatican II

Sundays Oct. 14 through Nov. 11, between 9 a.m.  
and 11 a.m. Masses

### End of Life Planning Seminar

Oct. 17, 6 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

### Pizza Bingo Night

Oct. 26, 6 p.m. to 8 p.m.

[www.stpetersmendota.org](http://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