



Blessed Sacrament Parish & Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

INTRODUCING OUR NEW PARISH STEWARDSHIP NEWSLETTER

Dear Parishioners,

I am pleased to present our new parish newsletter! This newsletter is designed to help us grow in understanding that stewardship as a way of life is a disciple's response to the call to know, love, and follow our Lord Jesus Christ. Each month, we'll share stories that reveal more about who we are as Catholics and as members of God's family. Through these stories, we'll gain insight into how the stewardship way of life helps us grow closer to Christ and to each other.

Each issue will feature activities and events happening within the Blessed Sacrament and Queen of Peace communities. These moments will help us to see how our hearts, minds, and lives are transformed when we intentionally engage in stewardship. In every article, we will witness how Christ is working within us and our community as we embrace this way of life more deeply.

I hope this newsletter will be a meaningful tool for



ongoing faith development. As we learn more about how our fellow parishioners are living their faith within our community, I pray it inspires each of us to consider our own calling to stewardship and how we might become more involved in the life of our parish — perhaps even trying new things.

One important event — perhaps the most important — as we develop stewardship at Blessed Sacrament and Queen of Peace will be our Annual Stewardship Renewal this fall. The Renewal provides

a dedicated time each year to reflect on how we use God's gifts in service to the Church. During this time, we'll make written commitments to God and ourselves, pledging to be intentional in our use of time, talent, and treasure:

Time: Using our time wisely and making space for personal and family prayer, as well as quality time with friends and loved ones.

continued on back cover

WHAT DOES *Stewardship* REALLY MEAN?

This is not just an Old Testament concept. In fact, of the 36 parables in the New Testament, more than half touch on topics like time, talent, possessions, or money. If Jesus talked about stewardship that much, it should be a cornerstone of our lives today!

What crosses your mind when the word “stewardship” comes up? Do you think of it solely in terms of money? Do you quickly brush it off as something unrelated to our Catholic Faith?

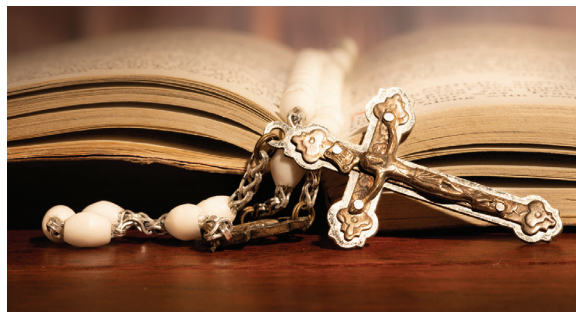
Stewardship is deeply rooted in Scripture and is significant in our lives as Catholics. In the very first book of the Old Testament, God instructs us, “Be fruitful and multiply. Fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth” (Genesis 1:28).

So, what does this mean for us today? It’s essentially God saying, “This world is in your hands, so take good care of it.” Right off the bat, God entrusts us with the responsibility of being good stewards of the gifts He’s given us.

This is not just an Old Testament concept. In fact, of the 36 parables in the New Testament, more than half touch on topics like time, talent, possessions, or money. If Jesus talked about stewardship that much, it should be a cornerstone of our lives today!

As Catholics, we often talk about stewardship in terms of “time, talent, and treasure.” While these are tangible ways to express and evaluate stewardship, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops reminds us that stewardship is deeply intertwined with discipleship. It’s about how we respond to God’s call in every aspect of our lives.

Here’s a key point the Scriptures and Church traditions emphasize — stewardship isn’t about the Church needing



our resources; it’s about our need to show gratitude. Sure, the Church and our parish will always have financial needs, but our focus shouldn’t solely be on meeting those needs. Instead, we should gratefully give back a portion of our time, talent, and treasure to God, acknowledging all that He’s blessed us with.

Remember, stewardship isn’t just a one-time thing or a checklist to complete. It’s a way of life — a continuous call to live as followers of Christ. It takes time to set personal goals and define what stewardship means for each of us.

So, let’s start by reflecting on our commitments to the parish. How do we live out our faith daily with our families and friends? How much time do we devote to prayer, Mass attendance, or participating in parish ministries and activities? And when it comes to finances, what percentage of our income should we dedicate to God each week? How can we use our talents to enrich our parish community?

In the months ahead, we will ramp up our efforts to educate and communicate about stewardship. Together, we’ll gain a deeper understanding of how stewardship is our response to God’s call to discipleship. With God’s guidance, our hearts will be transformed as we wholeheartedly embrace a renewal of stewardship within our parish.

Take a moment to examine how you’re currently responding to God’s call to stewardship. If He were to call you home tomorrow, would He say, “Well done, my good and faithful servant”?



PARISH CHOIR JOYFULLY FILLING OUR WORSHIP WITH GLORIOUS SONG

To sing well is to pray twice” is a famous quote often attributed to St. Augustine. Of course, singing and the Mass go hand-in-hand. Even with no music, a Mass is still a Mass, but it just feels empty. Fortunately, we are blessed to have beautiful music at our parishes.

There are currently 10 members in the choir — nine from Queen of Peace and one from Blessed Sacrament — an even split of men and women and a mix of ages. The choir sings at the 10 a.m. Mass at Queen of Peace on the first, second, and fourth Sundays. They also sing at Blessed Sacrament at the 4:30 p.m. Saturday Mass on the third Saturday of the month.

For years, Rusty Asbury has been in charge, working hard to ensure the theme of the readings and Gospel match the songs.

“These choir members are extremely committed to this ministry,” Rusty says. “They come each week. They are here early. They take this seriously.”

The choir practices at 7 p.m. on Thursdays at Queen of Peace and gathers 30 minutes before each Mass.

“It’s a big commitment, but the members enjoy each other,” Rusty says. “They enjoy camaraderie and are committed to making our worship inspiring.”

Not all the choir members know how to read music, but Rusty says that’s not essential.

“You just need to have a pleasant voice and be willing to learn the music we are working with,” Rusty says. “We go over it enough so people can easily learn it.”

Many of the parish cantors are part of the choir. Cantors help out at Masses, funerals, and weddings. Rusty says that music is an essential part of the Mass. A Mass without music loses something.

“Music brings the text to life,” he says. “We should worship together in song. It’s important.”

The choir members are a really fun group, and Rusty enjoys being with them for practices and Mass.

“Come try it out, come be part of it,” he says. “We are welcoming and happy to have people join us.”

Rusty appreciates all the time the choir members gave in 2024. It was a busy year with singing for the Natural Eucharistic Revival Eucharistic procession at Our Lady of the Snows shrine and Msgr. Jack McEvelly’s 60th anniversary of ordination.

With Christmas Day behind us, the choir will look forward to Lent and Easter — a favorite time of year for Rusty.

*Eucharistic Revival Pilgrimage
stop at the National Shrine of
Our Lady of the Snows, July 2024*



Rusty Asbury encourages anyone with a pleasant voice to get involved in the choir. For more information, contact Rusty at rasbury@blessedsacramentbelleville.com or 618-803-9423.

LOOKING FORWARD TO THE *Blessed Sacrament* *Events Offer Opportunities for Comm*



Every fall, as school comes back into session, both Blessed Sacrament and Queen of Peace host our annual events for the parish community and beyond. These events go a long way in fostering fellowship among our parish and school families, as well as providing something wholesome and fun for our wider community.

In late August, Blessed Sacrament holds its picnic as a parish social event.

"All parishioners, school parents, and friends are encouraged to attend," says Claire Hatch, Blessed Sacrament principal. "The cost is only for the food, drink, and games."

The Blessed Sacrament Picnic has been an annual favorite for the last 20 years, taking place on a Saturday evening in late August. It is a great opportunity for parishioners and community members to enjoy food, games, and rides for the kids, a cake booth, a quilt raffle, poker, and beer and food stands.

"The main purpose of this event is for fellowship and connecting with parishioners," Ms. Hatch says. "It is not a big fundraiser."

The social event typically brings in about \$8,000 to help the parish. It is truly a team effort, with lots of volunteers, school parents, and parishioners helping to make the event possible each year.

"Parishioners should come for the fellowship and to meet new and existing parishioners," Ms. Hatch says. "It is a great way to stay connected to the parish and have fun."

Queen of Peace begins preparing for its annual festival pretty early — as soon as the festival is over, Ben Hoffman begins planning and preparation for the following year.

"We literally start Monday for the next year," Ben says. "By the end of the week, I'll have most of my contracts for the next year."

Ben has acted as chairman of the Queen of Peace Festival for the last 10 years and has been part of the



ament Picnic and Queen of Peace Festival

unity to Share in Fellowship and Fun

committee since 2005. Shortly after he and his wife were married, he became involved with the festival after a call for volunteers. He has helped out ever since.

The festival is a significant fundraising event for the parish, taking place on the Saturday after Labor Day each year. Typically, the festival brings in over \$40,000 for the parish and community. Set-up takes place in the days leading up to the festival, with help from the students and many parishioners. With over 20 tents for games, food, and more, there is plenty of work to go around.

"It's a lot of work," Ben says. "But I really enjoy it."

Highlights of the festival include Quilt Bingo, chicken dinner, food offerings, beer and soda, a huge silent auction in the school cafeteria, and live music. There is also the cake stand, kid games, carnival rides, raffles, and more. A big change for this year's event is that the schedule for the Bingo will be moved to an earlier time to accommodate the senior attendees.

"We just want to have more time to get it done," Ben says. "This allows a little more time to get the gym turned over and ready."

Both events take many hands working behind the scenes to ensure a smooth, enjoyable experience for all. Be sure to attend and consider how you can contribute your time and talents to these wonderful stewardship opportunities!



To learn more about the Blessed Sacrament Picnic, contact Claire Hatch at chatch@blessedsacramentbelleville.com.

To learn more about the Queen of Peace Festival, contact Ben Hoffman at ben.hoffmann@grinnellmutual.com or 618-570-4828.

THE VITAL ROLE OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION

Nurturing Faith and Knowledge

For Catholics around the United States and the world, the significance of imparting not only academic knowledge but also fostering a deep understanding of the Catholic faith is paramount. Our diocesan Catholic grade schools and high schools stand as a cornerstone of the faith for our children, providing a holistic education that shapes minds and souls.

Catholic education is unique in its commitment to integrating faith and reason. It goes beyond the transmission of facts and figures; it seeks to form young minds in the light of Catholic teachings. In these schools, students are encouraged not just to excel academically, but also to cultivate virtues such as compassion, humility, and justice. The aim is to graduate individuals who are not only intellectually equipped, but also morally grounded.

In a world often marked by moral ambiguity, Catholic schools serve as sanctuaries where values are not only taught, but lived. Students are surrounded by an environment that fosters a sense of community, encouraging them to see the divine in each other and in the world around them. This formation extends beyond the classroom, preparing them for a life of service and responsibility.

Each year, the last week of January is marked by a special celebration of Catholic Schools Week. This observance is a testament to the dedication and impact of Catholic education across the United States. It is a time to recognize the

contributions of teachers, administrators, and families who collaborate to provide an exceptional educational experience rooted in faith.

During Catholic Schools Week, activities and events showcase the unique character of Catholic schools. Open houses welcome prospective students and their families, providing them with a glimpse into the enriching academic and spiritual environment these institutions offer. Special liturgical celebrations further emphasize the connection between education and faith, reminding everyone of the shared mission to instill Catholic values in the next generation.

As we reflect on the importance of Catholic education, it becomes evident that investing in the formation of young minds is an investment in the future of the Church and society. The impact of Catholic schools extends far beyond the academic achievements of their students; it resonates in the moral fiber of individuals who, guided by their faith, go on to contribute positively to the world.

With the celebration of Catholic Schools Week at the end of January, let us reaffirm our commitment to Catholic education, recognizing its vital role in shaping not just the minds, but the hearts of our youth. Through our Catholic schools, we pass on the torch of knowledge and faith, ensuring a legacy that transcends generations.

Catholic education is unique in its commitment to integrating faith and reason. It goes beyond the transmission of facts and figures; it seeks to form young minds in the light of Catholic teachings. In these schools, students are encouraged not just to excel academically, but also to cultivate virtues such as compassion, humility, and justice.





MEET OUR PASTORAL COUNCIL

Serving Our Parish and Helping to Grow the Stewardship Way of Life

Sarah North has been a parishioner at Queen of Peace for as long as she can remember, having grown up in the parish. So, when Fr. Godfrey Mullen asked if she would join the Pastoral Council and serve as its chair, Sarah immediately agreed.

"When Fr. Godfrey asked me, I knew I needed to say, 'yes,'" Sarah says. "It gives me the chance to serve the parish and help Fr. Godfrey."

Sarah and the other 10 members of the Pastoral Council serve as advisors to Fr. Godfrey as he strives to pastor our parishes well.

"We advise Fr. Godfrey as far as things to improve or things we need to work on in our parishes," Sarah says.

For his part, Fr. Godfrey says this advisory body of parishioners is an invaluable asset.

"The Pastoral Council, by its purpose, helps the pastor know which direction to go," Fr. Godfrey says. "They bring a diverse set of opinions and experience. They raise valuable questions and important perspectives that I may not have. Many parishes prefer to think about their history. The Pastoral Council helps me envision our future."

The 11 members, who are parishioners at both Blessed Sacrament and Queen of Peace, meet with Fr. Godfrey once a month. After beginning with a prayer and then reviewing details of the previous meeting, the members get to work addressing whatever Fr. Godfrey has put on the agenda for that meeting.

"We talk about some things he wants to see changed, like moving the tabernacle back to the center of the church at Queen of Peace," Sarah says. "He gets our opinions and advice so that he can move forward in a way



Pastoral Council members Sarah North, Debra Zoeller, Karen Ferrara, Eric Edgar, Anna O'Gara

that best serves our parishes."

Recently, the Pastoral Council has focused on how to implement the stewardship way of life at Blessed Sacrament and Queen of Peace.

"We've discussed the best way to get the word out, like starting this newsletter," Sarah says. "We talk about how to get more parishioners involved and offer Fr. Godfrey any advice we can."

Sarah and the other current 10 members of the council will serve a three-year term. Their term will be up in 2026 when 11 more parishioners will serve in this capacity.

For Sarah, serving the parishes in this way has been incredibly fulfilling and she feels blessed to be a part of it.

"COVID pushed so many things aside," Sarah says. "Being a part of the Pastoral Council is allowing me to be a part of getting our parish more active again. A lot of parish involvement has declined, and it feels great to bring some of the ministries back and to get people more involved."

In turn, Sarah says being a part of the Pastoral Council has heightened her own awareness about what's going on within our parishes, and that also encourages her to do more.

"If I don't get involved, then I don't understand what's going on within the parish or why we are doing certain things," she says. "I have been so blessed, and being involved allows me to make sure to uplift and help others."

As a parish family, we are so grateful to all of the members of the Pastoral Council. Thank you for serving our parish in such a selfless manner, as you work to build a culture within our parishes that calls each of us to do more, to serve Christ and His Church with the gifts He has given us — our time, talents, and treasure.

Blessed Sacrament Parish & Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish

8707 West Main Street,
Belleville, IL 62223
(618) 397-2287
bellevillecatholic.com



MASS TIMES:

Tuesday:

8:15 a.m. – Blessed Sacrament

Wednesday:

8:15 a.m. – Our Lady Queen of Peace

Thursday:

8:15 a.m. – Our Lady Queen of Peace

Friday:

8:15 a.m. – Blessed Sacrament

Saturday:

4:30 p.m. – Blessed Sacrament

Sunday:

10:00 a.m. – Our Lady Queen of Peace

INTRODUCING OUR NEW PARISH STEWARDSHIP NEWSLETTER *continued from front cover*

Talent: Sharing our unique gifts to strengthen the Church through service in parish ministries and other activities.

Treasure: Practicing wise and just stewardship of our financial resources, contributing a proportionate amount of our income to the parish.

As we journey together to develop stewardship as a way of life at Blessed Sacrament and Queen of Peace, the support and active involvement of every parishioner are essential. Each of us has a vital place here and a role to play as we live our lives as disciples of Christ.

May the Holy Spirit renew and refresh us as we grow in faith and service through the use of our time, talent, and treasure.

Peace,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Fr Godfrey OSB".

Very Rev. Godfrey Mullen, OSB
Pastor

