

SAINT PETER'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

DECEMBER 20, 2020



104 WEST FIRST STREET • MANSFIELD, OHIO 44902
419.524.2572 | MANSFIELDSTPETERS.ORG

Mass Schedule:

Saturday: 5:00 P.M.
Sunday: 7:30 A.M., 9:30 A.M., 11:30 A.M.
Monday & Friday 5:30 P.M.
Tuesday - Thursday 7:00 A.M.

Spanish Mass:

Resurrection Parish, Lexington
2nd and 4th Sundays 5:00 P.M.

Parish Office Hours:

Monday - Friday: 9:00 A.M.- 2:00 P.M.
Saturday and Sunday: Closed

Pastoral Care Contacts:

Ms. Kristi Reindl 419.524.2572
Hospital & Follow-up
Nursing Homes/Assisted Living &
Prayer Pipeline
Deacon John Reef 419.529.3694
Shut-ins/Homebound

Sacrament of Baptism:

Please contact the Parish Center to begin plans for the baptism of your baby or child.

Sacrament of Reconciliation:

Saturday: 3:00 - 4:30 P.M.
Other times by appointment.

Sacrament of Marriage:

Arrangements should always be made at the **Parish Center office at least eight months** in advance of the ceremony. A wedding date is confirmed after the initial meeting with a priest.

Bulletin Deadline:

Friday, 12:00 noon. All requests must be submitted in writing or email and must receive prior approval.

Parish Administrative Assistant:

Ms. Kristi Reindl 419.524.2572
ext.2122

Pastoral Staff:

Fr. Gregory R. Hite, *Pastor*
Fr. Kevin Moebius, *Parochial Vicar*
Mr. Bill Johnson,
Director of Music & Liturgy
Ms. Lynne Lukach, *Pastoral Associate*
Mrs. Elizabeth Wurm, *Director of*
Religious Ed. & Youth Minister

Deacon:

Mr. John Reef

St. Peter's School:

Mr. Jonathan Cuttitta
High School, Jr. High School
Mrs. Ashley Rastorfer
Elementary School and Montessori

Business Manager:

Dr. Vincent Palombo

Director of Marketing:

Mr. Jason Crundwell

A PARISH OF THE SAINT JUAN DIEGO DEANERY, DIOCESE OF TOLEDO

MASS INTENTIONS

Monday, December 21, *Monday of the Fourth Week of Advent*

5:00 pm Rosary

5:30 pm Carl Leesburg

Tuesday, December 22, *Tuesday of the Fourth Week of Advent*

7:00 am Charles F. Eaton

Wednesday, December 23, *Wednesday of the Fourth Week of Advent*

7:00 am Isabel Stuht

Thursday, December 24 *Vigil of the Nativity of the Lord*

4:00 pm HS—William, Dorothy and Jeff Ault

4:00 pm Church—Parish

7:00 pm Church—Parish

7:00 pm HS—Parish

12:00 am (Midnight) Parish (Carols at 11:30 P.M.)

Friday, December 25, *The Nativity of the Lord*

9:00 am Parish

Saturday, December 26, *Vigil of The Holy Family*

5:00 pm Earl E. Hershey (Anniversary)

Sunday, December 27, *The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph*

7:30 am Sammy Tridico

9:30 am Joan Smrekar

11:30 am Parish

PLEASE REMEMBER TO SUPPORT THE MINISTRIES OF ST. PETER'S PARISH

By mailing in your offering envelopes, OR

By visiting the website at www.mansfieldstpeters.org, to learn about opportunities for electronic giving.

We greatly appreciate your generosity and support during these difficult days!

THANK YOU!

Thank you for your continued generosity to our parish during this pandemic. Every sacrificial gift is accepted in the Lord's eyes.

Please remember to include our parish in your estate planning.

Shout out to all the parents out there. Who is loving remote learning? Wait a second, I don't see one single hand up in the audience today!

Trust me, I am in the same boat.

My guess would be that many of you are impacted by the fun that is remote learning. What makes it so fun? Well, to start, putting your lives on hold and making about a thousand arrangements that you wouldn't have had to make if it were not for remote learning. Maybe it is trying to figure out this whole education thing without your fearless leader, your child's teacher, right there in front of you. It might be the panic and fear of never knowing whether or not you did something right or wrong no matter how hard you tried. You might be stuck in the rut because there seems to be more questions than answers. And- this might be the most important part if your household is anything like mine- that I am getting a lot of information from my young scholars who enjoy reminding me constantly that I am "not doing it right" and that I am not as good as their "real" teacher.

I am sure that if we surveyed the teachers in our midst they would cite the same exact things.

But today we take a little look at the first remote learners- our Shepherds and Kings.

The technology they used was far worse than anything we have experienced, and by technology I am speaking of only a simple star.

All they had to use to guide their learning was that heavenly body and some messages from a far away place, with angels they had no knowledge of.

The lessons they were trying to figure out were not the new math, how to properly construct a sentence or construct a Venn Diagram...the lesson they were trying to decipher was how to have faith in a situation where a faithful response seemed like the last thing they should do.

They didn't have worksheets to follow, just darkened, grassy plains under the night sky where their ignorance more than likely glowed more brightly than the star they were following.

They didn't have to deal with screens that would freeze or microphones that didn't work, but instead had to deal with the nagging question each and every day of whether they were making the right move.

END OF THE YEAR CHARITABLE GIVING

The end of the year is fast approaching, and it is time to think about those last-minute charitable deductions and reduce your 2020 tax burden. Here are a few ways that may work for you.

New for 2020 - \$300 Above the Line Charitable Contribution

As part of the CARES Act passed by Congress earlier this year, allows individuals and couples who do not itemize deductions to deduct \$300 of qualified charitable contributions as an "above-the-line" deduction. This will lower your adjusted gross income. Your weekly Sunday stewardship and other donations to St. Peter's count towards this deduction.

IRA Charitable Rollovers

If you are 70 ½ or older, you can elect to make a qualified charitable distribution from your IRA. This distribution will lower your overall taxable income for the year. More seniors are taking advantage of this option and are making a one-time distribution to cover all their annual stewardship gifts for the year.

Transfer of Appreciated Stocks

If you hold a stock that has appreciated significantly over this year, you can avoid capital gains taxes and make a charitable deduction by donating the stock to St. Peter's. These transfers can be done electronically, so contact the Development Office for more information. Stock transfers should be initiated by December 22 to guarantee they will be completed before the end of the year.

Elimination of the 60% Charitable Limit

Under the CARES Act, Congress temporarily modified the contribution limits for individuals and allows individuals who itemize to deduct qualified charitable contributions up to 100% of their adjusted gross income. The excess contributions will be carried forward for the next five years. These changes only apply to cash contributions made to a 50% charity, excluding supporting organizations and donor-advised funds. Stock donations and gifts to private foundations are still subject to the 30% of AGI rule.

Eliminating the contribution limit creates a huge opportunity for donors who want to make a significant impact to charities this year. Under these rules, a donor could take a significant distribution from their IRA, rather than the annual \$100,000 limit, donate it to charity, and take a deduction for the full amount. If you're considering leaving a large portion of your IRA to charity in your estate, this may be a year to consider a large gift, especially if you are expecting to have a taxable estate. You could benefit from tax savings and also see the benefits your charitable donation produces during your lifetime.

If you have any general questions you can call the Development Office for more information. For specific questions related to your personal situation, please contact your tax professional or an investment advisor for more information.

Continued from page 2

They had to travel for weeks and years, praying without a direct microphone or an answer, with a night scene that didn't seem to change as long as they walked, without a curriculum or a map to follow and no one to call or email when things didn't go as planned. They rearranged their lives and just followed, hoping that what they were doing was leading them to a positive end result.

This Christmas season is different than any of us have ever experienced in our lifetimes, with doubts and anxieties, anticipation and on some level fear, pining for some sense of a regular routine in a world where the last thing that is apparent is a sense of normalcy. Fear not, our first remote learners went through the same, and came out at the other end with the magnificent result of having the Savior that was promised, but came in a package not anticipated, with them. If they could withstand a storm much greater than ours, we can too, with the basic knowledge that we can contact our teacher any time we like for more guidance on how to get closer to Him.

Elizabeth Wurm

CALENDARS AVAILABLE

Calendars for 2021 from Wappners Funeral Home and the Herlihy-Chambers Funeral Home are once again available all at entrances. We are very thankful for this annual donation.

PLEASE WELCOME OUR GUESTS

Mary and Joseph brought their child into the world in a stable because there was no one to show them hospitality. We are going to have a great many visitors for our Christmas Masses and less seating due to Covid. Let us be sure to show them warm and welcoming hospitality by making room for all who come to worship with us.

On a related note, as in past years, there is no reserved seating and seats may only be held for late-arriving members until the ushers begin seating people.

Social distancing will be observed and masks must be worn.

Thank you in advance for your hospitality.

PARKING LOT AND SAFETY EMERGENCY

Please remember to lock car doors and keep valuables out of sight when you come for weekend Mass. Also, please do not park in emergency lanes, behind the priests' garage doors or the center aisle lane, it makes it impossible for emergency vehicles to help us.

PLEASE PRAY FOR THE SICK OF OUR PARISH



Bill Ruhl, Jeannie Burkhalter, Krista Marshall, Aaron Blank, Cindy Lassen, Dina Riley, Eliana Nelson, MaKaya Butler, Sharon Valdry, Maria Loschinkohl, John Ziegler, Marlene Ziegler, Dorothy Trinter, JoAnn Marbaugh, Gwen Yockey, Mel Switzer, Louise Steggall, Tammy Dudley, Keith Combs, Mady Ziegler, Elaine Johnson, Cindy Jasnek Cartier, Jeannine Klotz, Marilyn B. Williamson, Tom Powell, Chief Master Sergeant Joseph Basting, Peggy Basting Taylor, Kathy Carcione, Carol Pittenger, Jill McMillen, Catherine R. Liston, Alan Gallaway, Beverly Strauser, Larry Strauser, Christi Strauser, Jennifer Strauser, Barb Jefferies, Lucille Thompson, Myrna Bohr, Patrick and Judy Boyer, John Doty, Ardis Steggall, David Donley, Jacob Randall, Lana Milli, Pam Taylor, Rena Brown, Jordan Hiser, Amy Malaska, Mary Page, Michelle Page, Christine Franz, Mary Frasz, Margie Caldwell, Maria Bey, Catherine Bance, Pamela Schopieray, David Barnes, Barbara Barnes.

Names will only be listed for 4 weeks. If you wish to have additional time, contact the Parish Center at 419.524.2572.

IN GOD'S ARMS...



Joe Mollica Mary Hoffer

David Grimmer Mary Frasz Beninga Garza

ETERNAL REST GRANT UNTO THEM, O LORD.

PARISH AND SCHOOL MINISTRIES

Did you know that there are many ways in which you can become more involved at St. Peter's? We are always looking for volunteers for the various ministries provided by both the parish and school. The complete list can be found on our website at mansfieldstpeters.org or by contacting the Parish Center office at 419.524.2572.

PRISON MINISTRY CORNER



Our parish Prison Ministry Team members have greatly missed seeing our brothers at RiCI and ManCI these many months. Our brothers who have access to television have shared their gratitude for the opportunity to "pray with us" during Mass each Sunday morning and appreciate seeing Fr. Hite, Fr. Kevin, Deacon John, and Bill Johnson. They look forward to the televised Christmas Eve Mass. We all eagerly await the day we can resume some level of religious services. For now, we offer prayer and encouragement through pastoral letters, along with the monthly devotionals *Word Among Us* and *Give Us This Day*.

APOSTLES OF THE INTERIOR LIFE

St. Peter's parishioner **Kate Cropp**, who is the daughter of Lance and Kelly Cropp of our Parish, is a member of *The Apostles of the Interior Life* and is currently studying in Rome. You may remember that Kate spoke at all Masses earlier this year to give us some information about her vocation. *The Apostles of the Interior Life* are a community of consecrated women religious who dedicate their lives to God, and who live by the evangelical counsels of chastity, poverty, and obedience. Kate wrote to us this week that one of the women in her community made her profession this past Saturday, December 12th. For those interested in knowing more about this community, a video of the profession liturgy is available on the community's YouTube page. You may view the liturgy by searching YouTube for *Apostles of the Interior Life*.

THANK YOU FROM CATHOLIC CHARITIES H.O.P.E. FOOD PANTRY

Catholic Charities would like to thank parishioners who generously donated food, personal care and other items to HOPE Food Pantry during the Thanksgiving and Christmas Season. Your support helps meet the need for more than 1,300 people each month and makes it possible for our ministries to provide Christ-centered, life transformational services to our friends and neighbors in Richland County. God bless you!



RECYCLING—NEXT DATE: JANUARY 8, 2021

WE STILL SELL GARBAGE BAGS FROM THE YELLOW BAG PEOPLE IN THE PARISH CENTER.

FOOD COLLECTION: January 9 & 10

SUNDAY OFFERING



FY 20/21 YTD
Nov 2020

Sunday and Holy Day Collections

Sunday Collection & Holy Day Collection:	\$335,528.00
Total Budgeted Sunday Collection To Date:	\$355,000.00

Sunday Collection Surplus/(Deficit)	(\$19,472)
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School Collection

Total School Collection To Date:	\$40,671
Total Budgeted School Collection To Date:	\$60,000

School Collection Surplus/(Deficit)	(\$19,329)
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EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES



DIRECTOR OF DEVELOPMENT & ADVANCEMENT

St. Peter's Parish & School is seeking to fill a new position in our Development Office. The Director of Development & Advancement provides leadership, planning and management of the Advancement Office and is responsible for designing, implementing and maintaining a comprehensive institutional advancement program. Minimum qualifications include a bachelor's degree in a related field or equivalent experience with a minimum of five years experience in fundraising, event planning, donor relations and alumni relations. Outstanding knowledge of fundraising data software and database management software is required. Practicing Catholic preferred. Please send cover letter, resume, salary requirements and references to Vincent Palombo, Business Manager at palombo.vincent@myspartans.org.

All candidates must also complete the Diocese of Toledo VIRTUS training and pass FBI/BCI background check.

SUBSTITUTE SECRETARY AND CLASSROOM SUBSTITUTE

St. Peter's Elementary is in need of substitute teachers and substitute secretaries for the 20-21 school year. Must have Bachelor's degree, substitute/teaching license, and have BCI, FBI checks completed as well as VIRTUS requirements. Send resumes to rastorfer.ashley@myspartans.org. The secretary subs do not need a degree/license...they just need FBI, BCI, and VIRTUS. Thanks!

CHRISTMAS MASS SCHEDULE



The church will open one hour before each Mass!

Christmas Eve—Thursday, December 24, 2020

4:00 P.M. (in Church)

4:00 P.M. (in High School Auditorium)

7:00 P.M. (in Church)—***Incense will be used***

7:00 P.M. (in High School Auditorium)

7:00 P.M. WMFD Mass—TV and Online

12:00 Midnight—Church (Music begins at 11:30 P.M.)

Incense will be used

Christmas Day—Friday, December 25, 2020

9:00 A.M. (in Church)

ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL UPDATE

Our parish goal is \$55,000.00 so far we are at \$50,533.10, with pledges from 361 households or 91.88%. Thank you for your support of our diocesan ministries and the help you provide to our seminarians and deacons who are in formation to serve our parish's future. Through your generosity, 4 men were ordained to the priesthood on June 27, 2020, and we **Welcome Fr. Kevin Moebius** to our parish. **Your pledge** to the Annual Catholic Appeal helped to make this possible! **Remember, we have a Seminarian in Training, Hayden Eighinger**, studying at the Athenaeum of Ohio (Mt. St. Mary's of the West) who depends on your support to continue his formation as he continues in his studies for the priesthood.

*"Currently, due to the generosity of increasing donors, we are **less than \$5000 in meeting our goal to this year's Annual Catholic Appeal goal.** The youth of our diocese, seminarians studying for our diocese, and assistance for our school principals in their ministries continue to require your commitment. **We have until December 31st.** May St. Peter's Parish share their sacrificial gift as part of this year's appeal."*

For more information, visit the Diocesan website at Toledodiocese.org/ACA. Your pledge may be sent to: Annual Catholic Appeal, Diocese of Toledo, 1933 Spielbusch Avenue, Toledo, Ohio, 43604.

*Gratefully yours,
Father Hite*



Perhaps you are already considering resolutions for the new year and feel drawn to deepening your spiritual life. All are invited to take advantage of *THE SEARCH*, an acclaimed series on Formed. We will be offering to watch *THE SEARCH* as a group after 5:00 P.M. Mass four Saturday evenings in a row: January 9, 16, 23, 20. After viewing the episodes we will spend time in discussion and fellowship each week. Please consider joining us. There is no sign-up; simply plan to stay in church after 5:00 P.M. Mass on those dates. We hope more and more parish households are spending time with the many fine FORMED materials—videos, audio talks, ongoing series, numerous resources on prayer, children's materials, etc. If you haven't already signed up for this FREE parish subscription, the instructions are simple:

- Go to Formed.org
- Click on "I belong to an organization or parish."
- Type in or scroll to find St. Peter's Catholic Church, 104 West Frist St., Mansfield.
- Type your name and email.
- Enjoy browsing the thousands of titles and let us know what you are finding most helpful. Questions or comments? Contact Angie Dillon, Bill Johnson, or Lynne Lukach at the Parish Center—419.524.2572—and we're happy to be of assistance.



St. Peter's School—Head of School

Graduating students who achieve academic excellence, practice Christian spirituality, and prepare to be of service to the world.

St. Peter's School in Mansfield, OH is conducting a search for its first Head of School. The Head of School will provide educational, spiritual, executive, financial, advancement and managerial leadership in order to achieve the fullest attainment of St. Peter's School's mission.

Key responsibilities include but are not limited to:

Upholding and promoting the academic and educational standards of the school, striving for academic distinction and recognition; overseeing the recruitment, retention, and professional development of faculty and staff; assessing and evaluating building principals; managing the school's support systems; acting as a liaison with the Diocese of Toledo and any appropriate agencies or organizations; implementing objectives from the school's strategic plan; helping develop financial resources for the school; creating and reporting on key performance indicators to assess the school's success; exhibiting dedication to the ministry of Catholic education by modeling Gospel values and enhancing the Catholic identity of the school; developing, in cooperation with the directors of marketing and development, a long-range public relations and marketing plan; and communicating and collaborating with parish, staff, parents, parishioners, alumni, and community members, acting as the official spokesperson for the school.

For more information, please view the employment page at The Catholic Diocese of Toledo web site: toledodiocese.org

All candidates must also complete the Diocese of Toledo VIRTUS training and pass FBI/BCI background

THE ST. PETER'S STRATEGIC PLANNING COMMITTEE

The St. Peter's Strategic Planning Committee invites you to apply for St. Peter's School's Governing Board. This board will participate in the search for the Head of School; support and evaluate the Head of School; work with administration and committees to oversee the general policies, programs, annual school budget, and operations of St. Peter's School; promote St. Peter's School in the community; seek local support for quality academic, religious formation, and extracurricular activities; review the annual report to the Bishop of Toledo concerning the state of St. Peter's School; and conduct an annual review of the strategic plan goal achievement.

Applicants with backgrounds in the following areas are encouraged to apply: education, business administration, communications/marketing, law, accounting, human resources, insurance/risk management, research/evaluation, finance, investment, non-profit work, and grant writing.

Service on this board will require a significant commitment of time and energy—approximately 5 hours a week for the first year.

Conflicts of interest will be assessed on an individual basis. The only disqualifying conflict would be direct employment at St. Peter's School or Parish.

Please consider applying at this link: [Governing Board Application](#). Thank you for your continued support of St. Peter's Parish and School.

Leading the FLOCK

BY BISHOP DANIEL E. THOMAS



“Fratelli tutti”

With these very first words of his third and newest Encyclical Letter, signed by Pope Francis in Assisi and published on October 3rd, the vigil of the Feast of Saint Francis of Assisi, the Holy Father quotes his namesake in an address to all his brothers and sisters, proposing to them “a way of life marked by the flavor of the Gospel.” In the introduction, the Pope mentions how he has taken his inspiration from the saint of fraternal love, simplicity and joy; how the issues of human fraternity and social friendship have always been a concern of his; and how, in this Encyclical, he has sought to bring together reflections he has spoken of repeatedly and in other contexts, situating them in a broader context of reflection.

This Encyclical represents a summation of the underlying vision that the Holy Father has proclaimed throughout his papacy: “It is my desire that, in this our time, by acknowledging the dignity of each human person, we can contribute to the rebirth of a universal aspiration to fraternity. Brotherhood between all men and women” (n. 8).

In the current worldwide situation in which we find ourselves, strained by the effects of a pandemic, and the resulting polarization,

isolation and division, it is not hard to see why Pope Francis strives to offer a message of concord instead of discord, turning to the Gospel Parable in which Jesus tells of a man assaulted by thieves and lying injured on the wayside. He writes: “The parable eloquently presents the basic decision we need to make in order to rebuild our wounded world. In the face of so much pain and suffering, our only course is to imitate the Good Samaritan. Any other decision would make us either one of the robbers or one of those who walked by without showing compassion for the sufferings of the man on the roadside. The parable shows us how a community can be rebuilt by men and women who identify with the vulnerability of others, who reject the creation of a society of exclusion, and act instead as neighbours, lifting up and rehabilitating the fallen for the sake of the common good. At the same time it warns us about the attitude of those who think only of themselves and fail to shoulder the inevitable responsibilities of life as it is” (n. 67).

It is Pope Francis’ conviction that the practice of social friendship, whether it be between nations, peoples or individuals, is one where each person knows and maintains his or her identity, but is also able to know and respect the

identity of others and work toward “coming up with shared goals that transcend their differences and can thus engage in a common endeavor” (n. 157). Further, the way forward to a new political future based on fraternity and social friendship begins with “moving beyond ourselves” which requires dialogue: “Authentic social dialogue involves the ability to respect the other’s point of view and to admit that it may include legitimate convictions and concerns” (n. 203). And it is religion which can play such a significant role in helping the dialogue of social friendship which leads to a greater sense of fraternity in our political world. Touching as he has before on topics of import in the realm of the Church’s social teaching, Pope Francis highlights that the religions of the world are called to the service of fraternity.

In receiving this new Encyclical Archbishop Jose Gomez, President of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, wrote: “In analyzing conditions in the world today, the Holy Father provides us with a powerful and urgent vision for the moral renewal of politics and political and economic institutions from the local level to the global level, calling us to build a common future that truly serves the good of the human person. For the Church, the Pope is challenging us to overcome the individualism in our culture and to serve our neighbors in love, seeing Jesus Christ in every person, and seeking a society of justice and mercy, compassion and mutual concern.”

As we receive this new Encyclical, we affirm that among Catholics, among other Christians and

those of other religions, “the effort to seek God with a sincere heart, provided it is never sullied by ideological or self-serving aims, helps us to recognize one another as travelling companions, truly brothers and sisters” (n. 274). And we understand more deeply that “The Church has a public role over and above her charitable and educational activities. She works for the advancement of humanity and of universal fraternity. She does not claim to compete with earthly powers, but to offer herself as a family among families, this is the Church, open to bearing witness in today’s world, open to faith, hope and love for the Lord and for those whom he loves with a preferential love. A home with open doors. The Church is a home with open doors, because she is a mother” (n. 276).

In releasing this new Encyclical, the Holy See concluded: “Faced with those injured by the shadows of a closed world and still lying by the roadside, we are invited by Pope Francis to make our own the world’s desire for fraternity, starting with the recognition that we are all ‘*Fratelli tutti*,’ brothers and sisters all.” May this be the starting point for us all.

The Pope’s Encyclical Letter *Fratelli tutti* (On Fraternity and Social Friendship) may be found at bit.ly/fraternity2020.



Most Rev. Daniel E. Thomas
Bishop of Toledo
October 9, 2020

**ENCYCLICAL LETTER
FRATELLI TUTTI
OF THE HOLY FATHER FRANCIS
ON FRATERNITY AND SOCIAL FRIENDSHIP**

A fruitful exchange

137. Mutual assistance between countries proves enriching for each. A country that moves forward while remaining solidly grounded in its original cultural substratum is a treasure for the whole of humanity. We need to develop the awareness that nowadays we are either all saved together or no one is saved. Poverty, decadence and suffering in one part of the earth are a silent breeding ground for problems that will end up affecting the entire planet. If we are troubled by the extinction of certain species, we should be all the more troubled that in some parts of our world individuals or peoples are prevented from developing their potential and beauty by poverty or other structural limitations. In the end, this will impoverish us all.

138. Although this has always been true, never has it been more evident than in our own day, when the world is interconnected by globalization. We need to attain a global juridical, political and economic order “which can increase and give direction to international cooperation for the development of all peoples in solidarity” [120] Ultimately, this will benefit the entire world, since “development aid for poor countries” implies “creating wealth for all” [121] From the standpoint of integral development, this presupposes “giving poorer nations an effective voice in shared decision-making” [122] and the capacity to “facilitate access to the international market on the part of countries suffering from poverty and underdevelopment” [123]

A gratuitousness open to others

139. Even so, I do not wish to limit this presentation to a kind of utilitarian approach. There is always the factor of “gratuitousness”: the ability to do some things simply because they are good in themselves, without concern for personal gain or recompense. Gratuitousness makes it possible for us to welcome the stranger, even though this brings us no immediate tangible benefit. Some countries, though, presume to accept only scientists or investors.

140. Life without fraternal gratuitousness becomes a form of frenetic commerce, in which we are constantly weighing up what we give and what we get back in return. God, on the other hand, gives freely, to the point of helping even those who are unfaithful; he “makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good” (Mt 5:45). There is a reason why Jesus told us: “When you give alms, do not let your right hand know what your left hand is doing, so that your alms may be in secret” (Mt 6:3-4). We received life freely; we paid nothing for it. Consequently, all of us are able to give without expecting anything in return, to do good to others without demanding that they treat us well in return. As Jesus told his disciples: “Without cost you have received, without cost you are to give” (Mt 10:8).

141. The true worth of the different countries of our world is measured by their ability to think not simply as a country but also as part of the larger human family. This is seen especially in times of crisis. Narrow forms of nationalism are an extreme expression of an inability to grasp the meaning of this gratuitousness. They err in thinking that they can develop on their own, heedless of the ruin of others, that by closing their doors to others they will be better protected. Immigrants are seen as usurpers who have nothing to offer. This leads to the simplistic belief that the poor are dangerous and useless, while the powerful are generous benefactors. Only a social and political culture that readily and “gratuitously” welcomes others will have a future.

LOCAL AND UNIVERSAL

142. It should be kept in mind that “an innate tension exists between globalization and localization. We need to pay attention to the global so as to avoid narrowness and banality. Yet we also need to look to the local, which keeps our feet on the ground. Together, the two prevent us from falling into one of two extremes. In the first, people get caught up in an abstract, globalized universe... In the other, they turn into a museum of local folklore, a world apart, doomed to doing the same things over and over, incapable of being challenged by novelty or appreciating the beauty which God bestows beyond their borders” [124] We need to have a global outlook to save ourselves from petty provincialism. When our house stops being a home and starts to become an enclosure, a cell, then the global comes to our rescue, like a “final cause” that draws us towards our fulfilment. At the same time, though, the local has to be eagerly embraced, for it possesses something that the global does not: it is capable of being a leaven, of bringing enrichment, of sparking mechanisms of subsidiarity. Universal fraternity and social friendship are thus two inseparable and equally vital poles in every society. To separate them would be to disfigure each and to create a dangerous polarization.

ENCYCLICAL LETTER - continued from page 10*Local flavour*

143. The solution is not an openness that spurns its own richness. Just as there can be no dialogue with "others" without a sense of our own identity, so there can be no openness between peoples except on the basis of love for one's own land, one's own people, one's own cultural roots. I cannot truly encounter another unless I stand on firm foundations, for it is on the basis of these that I can accept the gift the other brings and in turn offer an authentic gift of my own. I can welcome others who are different, and value the unique contribution they have to make, only if I am firmly rooted in my own people and culture. Everyone loves and cares for his or her native land and village, just as they love and care for their home and are personally responsible for its upkeep. The common good likewise requires that we protect and love our native land. Otherwise, the consequences of a disaster in one country will end up affecting the entire planet. All this brings out the positive meaning of the right to property: I care for and cultivate something that I possess, in such a way that it can contribute to the good of all.

144. It also gives rise to healthy and enriching exchanges. The experience of being raised in a particular place and sharing in a particular culture gives us insight into aspects of reality that others cannot so easily perceive. Universal does not necessarily mean bland, uniform and standardized, based on a single prevailing cultural model, for this will ultimately lead to the loss of a rich palette of shades and colours, and result in utter monotony. Such was the temptation referred to in the ancient account of the Tower of Babel. The attempt to build a tower that would reach to heaven was not an expression of unity between various peoples speaking to one another from their diversity. Instead, it was a misguided attempt, born of pride and ambition, to create a unity other than that willed by God in his providential plan for the nations (cf. *Gen 11:1-9*).

145. There can be a false openness to the universal, born of the shallowness of those lacking insight into the genius of their native land or harbouring unresolved resentment towards their own people. Whatever the case, "we constantly have to broaden our horizons and see the greater good which will benefit us all. But this has to be done without evasion or uprooting. We need to sink our roots deeper into the fertile soil and history of our native place, which is a gift of God. We can work on a small scale, in our own neighbourhood, but with a larger perspective... The global need not stifle, nor the particular prove barren";^[125] our model must be that of a polyhedron, in which the value of each individual is respected, where "the whole is greater than the part, but it is also greater than the sum of its parts".^[126]

A universal horizon

146. There is a kind of "local" narcissism unrelated to a healthy love of one's own people and culture. It is born of a certain insecurity and fear of the other that leads to rejection and the desire to erect walls for self-defence. Yet it is impossible to be "local" in a healthy way without being sincerely open to the universal, without feeling challenged by what is happening in other places, without openness to enrichment by other cultures, and without solidarity and concern for the tragedies affecting other peoples. A "local narcissism" instead frets over a limited number of ideas, customs and forms of security; incapable of admiring the vast potential and beauty offered by the larger world, it lacks an authentic and generous spirit of solidarity. Life on the local level thus becomes less and less welcoming, people less open to complementarity. Its possibilities for development narrow; it grows weary and infirm. A healthy culture, on the other hand, is open and welcoming by its very nature; indeed, "a culture without universal values is not truly a culture".^[127]

147. Let us realize that as our minds and hearts narrow, the less capable we become of understanding the world around us. Without encountering and relating to differences, it is hard to achieve a clear and complete understanding even of ourselves and of our native land. Other cultures are not "enemies" from which we need to protect ourselves, but differing reflections of the inexhaustible richness of human life. Seeing ourselves from the perspective of another, of one who is different, we can better recognize our own unique features and those of our culture: its richness, its possibilities and its limitations. Our local experience needs to develop "in contrast to" and "in harmony with" the experiences of others living in diverse cultural contexts.^[128]

148. In fact, a healthy openness never threatens one's own identity. A living culture, enriched by elements from other places, does not import a mere carbon copy of those new elements, but integrates them in its own unique way. The result is a new synthesis that is ultimately beneficial to all, since the original culture itself ends up being nourished. That is why I have urged indigenous peoples to cherish their roots and their ancestral cultures. At the same time, though, I have wanted to stress that I have no intention of proposing "a completely enclosed, a-historic, static 'indigenism' that would reject any kind of blending (*mestizaje*)". For "our own cultural identity is strengthened and enriched as a result of dialogue with those unlike ourselves. Nor is our authentic identity preserved by an impoverished isolation".^[129] The world grows and is filled with new beauty, thanks to the successive syntheses produced between cultures that are open and free of any form of cultural imposition.

149. For a healthy relationship between love of one's native land and a sound sense of belonging to our larger human family, it is helpful to keep in mind that global society is not the sum total of different countries, but rather the communion that exists among them. The mutual sense of belonging is prior to the emergence of individual groups. Each particular group becomes part of the fabric of universal communion and there discovers its own beauty. All individuals, whatever their origin, know that they are part of the greater human family, without which they will not be able to understand themselves fully.

ENCYCLICAL LETTER - continued from page 11

150. To see things in this way brings the joyful realization that no one people, culture or individual can achieve everything on its own: to attain fulfilment in life we need others. An awareness of our own limitations and incompleteness, far from being a threat, becomes the key to envisaging and pursuing a common project. For "man is a limited being who is himself limitless".^[130]

Starting with our own region

151. Thanks to regional exchanges, by which poorer countries become open to the wider world, universality does not necessarily water down their distinct features. An appropriate and authentic openness to the world presupposes the capacity to be open to one's neighbour within a family of nations. Cultural, economic and political integration with neighbouring peoples should therefore be accompanied by a process of education that promotes the value of love for one's neighbour, the first indispensable step towards attaining a healthy universal integration.

152. In some areas of our cities, there is still a lively sense of neighbourhood. Each person quite spontaneously perceives a duty to accompany and help his or her neighbour. In places where these community values are maintained, people experience a closeness marked by gratitude, solidarity and reciprocity. The neighbourhood gives them a sense of shared identity.^[131] Would that neighbouring countries were able to encourage a similar neighbourly spirit between their peoples! Yet the spirit of individualism also affects relations between countries. The danger of thinking that we have to protect ourselves from one another, of viewing others as competitors or dangerous enemies, also affects relations between peoples in the same region. Perhaps we were trained in this kind of fear and mistrust.

153. There are powerful countries and large businesses that profit from this isolation and prefer to negotiate with each country separately. On the other hand, small or poor countries can sign agreements with their regional neighbours that will allow them to negotiate as a bloc and thus avoid being cut off, isolated and dependent on the great powers. Today, no state can ensure the common good of its population if it remains isolated.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ST. PETER'S SCHOOL

CELEBRATING HOLIDAYS AROUND THE WORLD

Second-grade students have been learning about holidays around the world. This week as a celebration of what they have learned, students have been making different crafts associated with each holiday. Students made hats for St. Lucia Day, which is celebrated in Sweden. The girls made hats with candles on them, and the boys made hats with stars. We love learning about traditions and holidays from around the world!

If you watch the Christmas Eve Mass on WMFD-TV on online be sure to watch for the hymn from our students.

From the staff and students of St. Peter's School, Merry Christmas and thank you for your support!



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THE ETERNAL GOD

King David wished that the Ark of God might have a more permanent home. David may have envisioned something like the cedar palace where he resided. God had in mind something more: a throne where David's descendants would rule for ever, a kingdom where Jews and Gentiles alike would be welcome.

Mary's prayerful nature led to an even more disturbing message. She would conceive and bear a Son though she was not yet married. "How can this come about?" Mary wondered. "The Holy Spirit will come upon you," she was told (Luke 1:35). Mary's acceptance of this difficult challenge ushered in this, the final age of God's reign. What was once a secret known only by chosen people like King David and his descendants must now be made clear to all so that, as Saint Paul wrote to the Romans, we can be brought to the "obedience of faith," "according to the command of the eternal God," (Romans 16:26).
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FEAST OF FAITH—Gathering

When Pope Benedict XVI visited the United States in 2008, tens of thousands gathered in Yankee Stadium to celebrate the Eucharist with him. What made them different from all the other excited crowds who have assembled there through the years? When they began to sing together, to listen together, to pray together, they ceased to be a crowd, and became a liturgical assembly. It was not where they were but what they did that set them apart.

The Gospels speak of many instances when Jesus prayed alone to his Father. But Jesus also put a special value on communal prayer. "Where two or three are gathered together in my name," he told his disciples, "there am I in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20). Jesus gave his own mission to his followers, sending them forth to do everything he did: to heal, to teach, to proclaim the kingdom. Jesus wants us to meet God in and through each other. So the Christian community continues to gather, Sunday after Sunday. When we get up on Sunday morning and come to Mass, we respond to Jesus' invitation, and we express our trust in his promise that whenever we come together, he comes, too.
—Corinna Laughlin, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.



TODAY'S READINGS

First Reading — I will fix a place for my people.
(2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16).

Psalm — For ever I will sing the goodness of the Lord
(Psalm 89).

Second Reading — To the only wise God, through Jesus Christ, be glory forever and ever (Romans 16:25-27).

Gospel — Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word (Luke 1:26-38).

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READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: Sg 2:8-14 or Zep 3:14-18a; Ps 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21; Lk 1:39-45

Tuesday: 1 Sm 1:24-28; 1 Sm 2:1, 4-8abcd; Lk 1:46-56

Wednesday: Mal 3:1-4, 23-34; Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-10, 14; Lk 1:57-66

Thursday: 2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16; Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29; Lk 1:67-79

Friday: Vigil: Is 62:1-5; Ps 89:4-5, 16-17, 27, 29; Acts 13:16-17, 22-25; Mt 1:1-25 [18-25]

Night: Is 9:1-6; Ps 96:1-3, 11-13; Ti 2:11-14; Lk 2:1-14

Dawn: Is 62:11-12; Ps 97:1, 6, 11-12; Ti 3:4-7; Lk 2:15-20

Day: Is 52:7-10; Ps 98:1-6; Heb 1:1-6; Jn 1:1-18 [1-5, 9-14]

Saturday: Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59; Ps 31:3cd-4, 6, 8ab, 16bc, 17; Mt 10:17-22

Sunday: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3; Ps 128:1-5 or Ps 105:1-6, 8-9; Col 3:12-21 [12-17] or Hb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19; Lk 2:22-40 [22, 39-40]

This Weeks Cover Art: The Annunciation, Fra Angelico

