

ST. MAX NEWSLETTER

— JULY/AUGUST 2025 —



Pastor's Page

FR. KYLE KOWALCZYK

Delano's motto is "Spirit of Community". Not everyone in Delano agrees that we actually live that out. Many people have said that this is one of the hardest communities they have ever lived in, and even after multiple decades, do not feel as if they have been fully accepted into the "community". Of course, others find that it is quite welcoming or at least easy to get connected to other people who didn't grow up here. Of course, Delano is growing and that means it is changing. According to the recent parish survey nearly half our Sunday parishioners only started coming to Mass here in the last 6 years! That's a huge demographic shift. There was another interesting stat from the survey, that I found to be rather ironic: of those who started attending in the last 6 years, 65% find the parish very welcoming, whereas of those who have lived here for longer than that, only 44% find fellow parishioners very welcoming. I can't figure it out.



SPIRIT OF COMMUNITY



Last month I ran the first ever (notice I didn't say the first annual) FrK 50K. It was a ton of fun! Not for me, but I think it was fun for all the kids who came to cheer me on. They had a blast. I wanted to die. Of course, every time I would come around a bend and see a group of kids there to cheer me on, I got a burst of energy to keep going. Several people even joined me for the second half of the run, which made it, not just more tolerable, but more possible to keep going. All in all, it was a good reflection for me on the necessity of community in spiritual life.

Over the centuries there have been many converts to the Catholic Church, who basically read themselves into the church. Many of the recent converts to St. Max, in fact, have followed the same pattern. (Although most of them "watched" or "listened" themselves into the Church via YouTube and podcasts.) One can gain all the knowledge he needs to convert before even stepping foot in a church building, but in order to become Catholic, one eventually has to join the community. It's not optional. It's essential. Saint Paul calls us the Body of Christ, and one can't live the faith apart from the rest of the body.

In fact, it occurs to me in the modern age, that there are really only two things that a parish can provide that somebody can't get elsewhere.

One, of course, is the sacraments, but equally important is a bunch of other Catholics, i.e., community. However, many Catholics live as if all they need are the sacraments. They go to confession once a year, come to Mass on Sundays, and the rest of the time they just do their own thing. They aren't living a bad life, they just aren't living life with anyone else. But that actually misses the point. Obviously, there are some people who are naturally better at plugging themselves in, and some people who are naturally better at welcoming and inviting other people in. And of course, some prefer small groups, others large groups, and others need more time alone. But no matter what, we all need each other.





It's been six years since I started this Pastor here, and one year since I started actually living in Delano. Especially this last year, I have felt much more connected to the parish community, and also the larger community in Delano. Community is so important. It's essential for the spiritual life. It actually is the spiritual life. As I preached on Trinity Sunday -- we are necessarily communal, because our God is communal.

And if we want to live in communion with God and receive Holy Communion, then we have to live in communion with one another, as I preached on Corpus Christi.

One of my favorite things about Delano is how close everything is together. One can practically run anywhere they want--maybe next year I'll run to every parishioner's house! And one of the best parts of parish life is little organic gatherings that pop up here and there. I love that! Someone's always throwing a party or having people over, and often times anyone is welcome to come.



LET ME SHARE SOME IDEAS ON HOW WE CAN ALL BUILD AN EVEN MORE VIBRANT CATHOLIC COMMUNITY HERE AT ST. MAX:

When you come to Sunday Mass, linger for a little bit. Say hi to someone. Introduce yourself. Say, “I don’t know if I know your name.” It’s okay if it’s awkward, or if you’ve introduced yourself to that same person a million times. No one will be offended that you tried. (I know someone who has made it a rule of life to ask everyone and anyone their name.)



Another approach could be to join up with another family you know in the neighborhood and invite all your other neighbors. And if you are not up for hosting, show up at someone else’s event. It’s just like Mass or prayer, the most important thing is showing up!

If you are feeling bold, invite someone to come to dinner or brunch. (By the way, when someone signs up as a parishioner, one of our “welcome families” invites the new family over to their house to help them get to know the parish and get plugged in with other families. It’s a very cool ministry.)



Sign up for a holy hour. When you sign up you are not just signing up for a time of personal prayer. This is a particularly communal ministry, because we are ensuring not only that the Blessed Sacrament is being adored at every moment of the day and night to the praise of his glory and the good of souls, but we are also ensuring that the chapel is open whenever anyone needs to be with the Lord. Because of this, we get to depend on each other to cover our hour if we are sick or out of town. It's a beautiful thing.





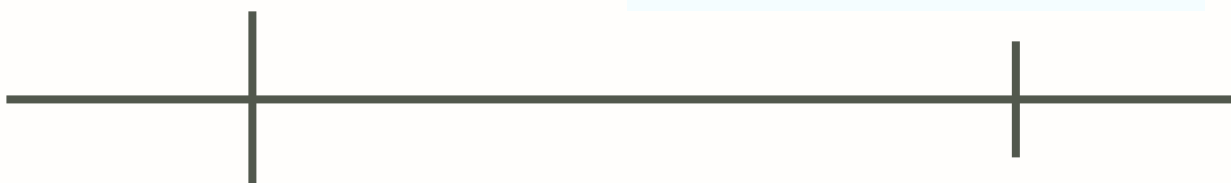
**“As each has
received a gift, use it
to serve one another,
as good stewards of
God’s varied grace.”
– 1 Peter 4:10**

Join a small group. We are hoping to launch some new small groups this fall. We are currently looking for people who are willing to be leaders. We have training available. So let us know if you are interested in being in a small group or leading a small group. It’s a great way to connect with people in a more personal way to live the faith together.

Tithe or sign up for an area of service.

Both of these are a great way of taking ownership in your community. Our little effort or little money individually doesn’t do much, but when it’s all put together, it makes a huge impact on the whole community. The more we put in, the more we feel a part of the club, so to speak.

**“And let us consider how to
stir up one another to love
and good works, not
neglecting to meet together,
as is the habit of some, but
encouraging one another
– Hebrews 10:24-25.**



When I was a younger man, I had a friend (okay, she was a girlfriend!) who was thinking about becoming Catholic. The appeal was the richness of the tradition, but the hesitation was that her current little church had a vibrant community, which was a beautiful thing. I said to her, "If you remain protestant there is little you can do about the lack of tradition, but if you become Catholic, you can effect a change in how people experience and live community." In the end, she remained protestant. But it has always remained on my heart how important community is--to some more than others.

I said above that so many people convert simply because of the truths of the Catholic Church. What if they converted because they met you and your friends. What if the thing that made them look deeper into the teachings of the church, was the vibrant love and community that they experienced from a Catholic in their neighborhood. What if they happened to stop by for Mass one Sunday and so many people asked their name and invited them to some event, to get together, or coffee, that they came back the next week and the next and the next and the next. Now, that would be a true spirit of community.



A Journey Through the Catechism

By Catherine Taylor



Graduation Mass 12 May 2025 - Class of St. Therese, St. Maximilian Kolbe Satellite Group. From our parish: Tom Janas, Billy Hucker, Stephanie Russek, Susan Steinke, Catherine Taylor, Michelle Chiapetta (not pictured), along with Fr. Taphorn, Archbishop Hebda, and members from three surrounding parishes.

Has anyone ever commented to you something about our Catholic faith that you wish you knew how to respond to better? Or you yourself were wondering why we do or celebrate something in a particular way? Or perhaps you just desire to grow closer to Jesus and fill that longing in your soul for Him? If so, the Saint Paul Seminary Catechetical Institute's *Pillars Program* may be for you.

This past May, I along with 5 other St. Max parishioners and another 232 parishioners from across the Archdiocese, graduated as the Class of St. Therese of Lisieux — the 16th class to graduate from the Pillars Program since it started in 2010. The Pillars Program is a two-year course designed to “provide Catholics a renewed confidence, conviction and hope by providing strategies for better understanding, defending, articulating and living the faith today.” And that it did!

Our parish was one of six satellite locations made up of parishioners from St. Max and the surrounding area. We met weekly, during the Fall and Spring semesters for two

years, engaging in a small group discussion at the start of each evening followed by a live video broadcast with all other locations for a teaching by one of a dozen excellent instructors for the latter half of each night. We were walked through the entire Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC): What We Believe, How We Worship, How We Live, and How We Pray – four pillars. I found myself enjoying the course more than I expected, and I walked away with a deeper understanding and appreciation.

“Christ blesses and desires a conversion of heart” (CCC 2608), and my heart was transformed with this course. I came to see more the beauty of the Catholic Church and that Her teachings are based on love; to understand better how we “live from blessing to blessing”; to do everything (as best I can) through the lens of God’s love, especially in how I treat others and myself; to establish a more solid foundation of prayer; and to develop an even deeper intimacy and longing for Christ. Jesus says: “I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit...” (John 15:5) As taught in CCC 2074, “The fruit referred to in this saying is the holiness of a life made fruitful by union with Christ... His person becomes, through the Spirit, the living and interior rule of our activity.” I desire that union with Christ, even more so after completing the Pillars Program, and knowing there is no limit to space and time for God, I will continue on my journey to grow closer to Jesus with “...confidence that [I] too shall go where he, our Head and our Source, has preceded us.” (CCC 661)

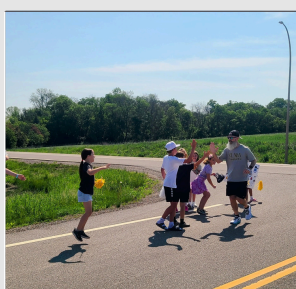
For those of us in the Pillars Program, it didn’t matter our age, our gender, which parish we attended, or where we were in our faith journey...we all gained a better understanding of the Catholic faith and of God’s plan of sheer goodness in our lives.

If you’d like to learn more about the Pillars Program, visit saintpaulseminary.org/pillars.

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Recaps





Special Feast Day
Newsletter coming
in August!

FEAST DAY 4-DAY EXTRAVAGANZA!

Come celebrate our patronal
feast day with 4 days of fun!



ST. MAX MOVIE NIGHT
THURSDAY, AUG 14



ICE CREAM SOCIAL
FRIDAY, AUG 15



MEN'S EUCHRE NIGHT
SATURDAY, AUG 16



SERVANTS NEEDED!

Sign up now
to help!!



FEAST DAY PICNIC
SUNDAY, AUG 17



Picnic Meal ✦ Cash Bar
"Bingo" ✦ Face Painting
Wiffleball ✦ Family Lawn Games



RAFFLE TICKETS

Proceeds from this year's raffle
go to the St. Max Academy
Scholarship Fund for parishioners

Tickets \$50 each - available after weekend
Masses starting July 12th

- ★ CASH PRIZES
- ★ \$3000
- ★ \$1000
- ★ \$300
- ★ \$100 (7)



Tickets \$50 each

Cash Prizes Totaling \$5,000!

FEAST DAY
RAFFLE!

An exceptional education

begins with exceptional teachers!

Learn more about our middle school team.



Ms. Atkinson

Hi, my name is Karen Atkinson, and I joined St. Maximilian Kolbe Academy in the fall of 2023 teaching middle school Math and Science. I have a BA in Mathematics from the University of Minnesota and a Master of Arts in Teaching from the University of St. Thomas. I am licensed to teach Tier IV Mathematics Grades 5-12. After teaching Pre-Algebra, Algebra 1 and 2 (including honors), Functions and Trigonometry, and Probability and Statistics at Holy Family Catholic High School for 20 years, God led me to St. Maximilian Kolbe Academy. In my free time, I enjoy being active in music ministry, coaching gymnastics and various community bands. Experiencing the "I did it!" moments from gymnasts are highlights just like the "Now, I get it!" moments from students with math concepts during school days. Building a student's confidence is a challenge I accept with joy!



Ms. Sharp

Hi, my name is Mallory Sharp, and I joined St. Maximilian Kolbe Academy in the fall of 2024 as the Middle School English Language Arts teacher. I have a BA in English Education with a Minor in Theology from the University of Mary, Bismarck, ND. This past spring I completed my Master of Education in Curriculum Instruction and Assessment. I am licensed to teach Tier III Communication Arts/Literature 5-12. I came to St. Max from St. John Paul II Catholic School in NE Minneapolis where I taught English Language Arts (grades 6-7), History (grades 6-8) and Religion (grades 5-8) over the past three years. What I like best about teaching at St. Maximilian Kolbe Academy is helping students grow in the art and love of writing and sharing my appreciation of great literature with them. In my free time, I enjoy hanging out with my nephews and niece, cycling and reading novels.



Mrs. Foster

Hi, my name is Magen Foster, and I joined St. Maximilian Kolbe Academy in the fall of 2023 teaching middle school History and Theology. I have a Master of Theological Studies from St. John's University and am in the process of completing the Catholic Educator Formation and Credential Program through the Institute for Catholic Liberal Education. Previously, I worked as a youth minister for middle school and high school in Oak Grove. I always knew that I wanted to teach and working with the youth there furthered my enthusiasm to transition into a classroom setting. In my free time, I enjoy reading, playing board games with my husband, and staying active.

Schedule your summer tour: admissions@stmaxkolbeschool.org





Nearly 150 years of Catholic Education....



There are many beautiful things happening at St. Max Kolbe Academy and we desire to share them with you! We recently started a newsletter, 'Friends of St. Max', in order to keep our alumni, all of our supporters, and anyone interested in the school in the loop.

We don't want to miss anyone! If you or someone you know is interested in receiving the 'Friends of St. Max' Newsletter, please scan the QR Code and enter your email address. Thank you.

Let's stay in touch!

To stay in touch, just scan the QR code to enter your email address.



Scan to stay in touch!



St. Max Kolbe Academy

SUMMER READING CHALLENGE

Summer 2025 and the Mystery Book Bag!



Our fantastic librarian, Mrs. Laura Reither's passion for reading has spilled over into the summer months as she has challenged St. Max Kolbe Academy students to continue their reading.

To help inspire this summer's reading challenge, Mrs. Reither has curated books based on each student's reading level and packed them in a small book bag. Each book bag contains 5 books especially vetted and selected for every 1st - 5th grade participant. Students are able to swap their mystery book bag every week to continue the adventure of this challenge.

The mystery is part of the fun! Students are discovering books they wouldn't have otherwise selected on their own.

Parishioner Spotlight



Clingman's Dome



Waffle House



Northwoods



Road Trip



Smokey Mountains



Mexico

Meet

THE BAUMANS!



How long have you been parishioners?

We have been parishioners for 12 years.

What drew you to St. Max?

St Max Kolbe is the parish that Tim grew up in. So, when we moved to Delano St Max's was the natural choice to join and become involved in.

Tell us a little bit about your family.

Our family of 8 is a busy active family. We have 6 kids ranging from 15-2! Michael 15, Gabriel 12, Evelyn 11, Marianna 8, Raphael 6, and Benedict 2.

How are you involved in the parish/what do you currently participate in?

Michael and Gabriel are alter servers and can usually be found on the alter during the 10 am Mass.

Tim enjoys the Thursday morning men's groups and sometimes fills in as an usher.

Christy has been involved in various servant roles in the parish community. She is presently on the School Advisory Committee and the St Max Academy Gala committee. As a couple we enjoy adoration hours, our small group, and as family we enjoy Ars Vivendi.

What do you appreciate about St. Max?

We enjoy the parish community and the many opportunities for faith development. It is a beautiful blend of the old and the new with the reverence of the liturgy with ad orientum and use of Latin. The traditional Mass fits very well with the beauty of St Peter's and St. Joseph's.

Talk a bit about your faith journey.

Nothing is more exciting like a hard core atheist to devout a Catholic, but as cradle Catholics that is not our story. We instead have been blessed with deepening our faith through the sacraments, including the Eucharistic and daily prayer.

Tim and I also take our vocation of Marriage seriously and the responsibility to get each other to heaven, while building the domestic church with our children. To be an example of the love of the Holy Trinity and the love of Christ for His church.

Do you or your family have any favorite hobbies, activities or traditions that you participate in?

We love to travel. Family road tripping 20 + hrs have provided numerous memories as we play road games, sing and listen to awesome dj selections from our in house DJ Tim. We have chased the sunset from FL to Tennessee and to the great north woods of MN.

As a family we are discerning creating Poustinia's (hermitage's to provide others with prayer and respite).



MY LIFE WITH GOD

DEACON JOE KITTOK

by Dylan Mika



“The greatest lesson I learn is that God put me in this world to know, love, and serve Him so that I may live with Him in heaven forever” – My Life With God by Father Lovasik, S.V.D.

We at St. Max recently had the great privilege of interviewing Deacon Joseph Kittok about his life, his service as a Deacon, and his insights about living life as a faithful Catholic. It’s our honor to share his wisdom and stories in this month’s newsletter!



Deacon Joe was born on a hot day in July 1947 to Martin and Margaret Kittok. The oldest of eleven children, he grew up on a dairy farm not far from here, and in his words “it was a happy life”. He had a strong religious upbringing, including a daily Rosary with his family around the table. He received the Sacraments from Fr. Andrew Handzel (for whom Handzel hall is named!). His Delano roots were deepened even further when he began his education here at St. Peter’s school:



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“My mother was a religious influence in my life. In first grade she gave me over to Sister Cajetan and told me to ‘do as she tells me to do’. There were forty of us in First Grade - a prophetic number - and we were great friends. There weren’t any cliques... we were on our good behavior. I don’t think times were as mean as they are now.”

”

It was in these early years that Deacon Joe began his lifetime of service to the Lord and to others as an altar boy for Father Handzel. After eighth grade, the young Joe and his friends moved on to Delano High School, where they were “humble and mostly well behaved”. Afterwards, Deacon Joe briefly recalled his military service:





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“After High School there was a conflict going on, and any male with a pulse was asked in an odd sort of way to help. My job in the army aside from boot polishing and dish washing was listening to and recording morse code. Vietnam was a nice, warm country and most of the people there were pleasant. After 25 months of that, I returned to a grand party which was the tradition among my relatives”.



Joe and Jan Kittok

”

Following his service to his country, Joe met the love of his life Janice on January 10, 1971 at the Waconia Paradise Ballroom. It was a Sunday evening, “a special dance night for those who didn’t get enough Polka on Saturday”. They were married within the year and went on to have three boys: Joe, John, and Jacob. During this happy time, Deacon Joe (still not yet a Deacon) dutifully served his wife and children by building houses, farming, mowing lawns and beginning his earliest side job in the cemeteries of Delano.



Younger Joe with Fr. Handzel



“

“One time, we were waiting for a burial to organize - for the family to arrive. Myself and Fr. Michael Tegador spoke of the importance of praying for the deceased. I was sitting on the grass, just waiting, and we were talking about how I'm in exactly the right spot to pray for these folks who we're burying so their stay in purgatory can be lessened and so they can move on. So I promised him that I would pray for everybody that I buried. In my evening prayer, I pray for all those who I've promised to pray for. I have a collection of funeral cards, where they put the picture on the front. I have big boxes of those. Now I have 53 years of these cemetery adventures and many other related tasks.

”



Happy Birthday Deacon Joe! (July 29)



After many years of caring for his family and digging graves, Joe became a Deacon, and he was assigned to St. Peter's Church. Deacon Joe attributes part of his motivation to apply to the Diaconate to Father Bob Zasacki's Cursillo group, which helped him to explain his existence and purpose for being here on Earth.

Deacon Joe has served faithfully ever

since, in continuity with his lifetime of service to his pastor, his country, and his wife and children. He circled it back to his childhood quite poignantly: "I can only guess that I've been with six or seven priests since I became a deacon. They all have different requirements and thoughts about what I should be doing. It's my job to do as they say. Just like Sister Cajetan."

“

“One of the things that stuck with me is that we're given these gifts from God, and we should not just use them for ourselves, but for others. For our church, and for our God and our mission here on Earth, to recruit as many people as possible, whoever will listen. You've accomplished your mission if you've recruited just one person. Well, my wife was a Lutheran, so I had that easier - I already had my one!”

”

Deacon Joe is one of the Deacons at St. Maximilian Kolbe and can be seen at every weekend Mass and Holy Day of Obligation throughout the year. He was named the 2019 Delano Citizen of the year, in large part because of his decades of service and activity within the community.





ADRIAN VOVOLETS

We welcome Adrian as our new Music Director at St. Max!

Adrian Vovovets is a liturgical organist and music instructor, and is excited to be joining St. Max as Music Director. He graduated from the University of Minnesota with a Bachelor of Music in Organ Performance, from the University of Notre Dame with a Masters in Organ and Sacred Music, and had Doctoral studies with Professor Nathan Laube at the Eastman School of Music and with Dr. Janette Fishell at the Jacobs School of Music. Andrey studied extensively the organ works of Johann Sebastian Bach and Max Reger, along with liturgical service playing, with Professor Kola Owolabi, and organ improvisation with Professor William Porter and Dr. Kim Kasling. Andrey has over a decade of teaching experience in schools of music, as well as teaching a private studio of students. Adrian recently moved to Minnetrista from Eden Prairie with his wife, Gabriella, and their dogs, Haku and Red.

ONE OF OUR OWN...

Fr. Francis Kittock is considered a legend in the archdiocese. All of the priests who knew him speak highly of him and even cite him or quote him as if he were a great saint or a wise sage. He grew up in Delano on his family's farm, and he is an honored son of Delano. He attended Nazareth Hall Preparatory Seminary in St. Paul in the 1940s and was ordained in 1955. He was a cousin of Deacon Joe, and Deacon remembers him fondly from family get-togethers when he was younger. He passed away in 2020, and he is honored here at St. Max with his framed photo hanging proudly in the St. Joseph sacristy.

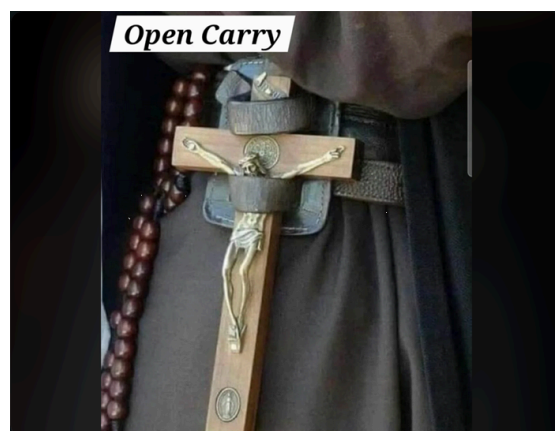


Did you know?

Fridays Are Still Days Of Penance – Ask almost anyone and they will tell you that Catholics are no longer required to abstain from meat on Fridays throughout the year. However, the current Code of Canon Law (CIC) states that, with the exception of solemnities, “All Fridays through the year and the time of Lent are penitential days and times throughout the entire Church.” (CIC 1250) Furthermore, “Abstinence from eating meat or another food according to the prescriptions of the conference of bishops is to be observed on Fridays throughout the year unless they are solemnities.” (CIC 1251) In the United States, the bishops have declared that it is permissible to substitute some other form of penance, but we are still urged to fast from “something” in remembrance of the Lord’s death on the cross.

-catholicexchange.com

Meme of the month



Life Insurance • Annuities • Fraternal Benefits

We offer financial security through life insurance & annuities while creating social, spiritual & charitable opportunities.

Brian Marketon, RICP®, FICF, CEBS®

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to our
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UPCOMING *Events*



JULY
9

SUMMER RESCUE PROJECT BEGINS

6:00 pm. Join us for special small group experience which seeks to proclaim the gospel in a compelling way. Contact Andrew in the office to learn more.

JULY
13

MISSION PRIEST WEEKEND

As Fr. K takes a few days off visiting the North Shore, we will have a visiting Mission priest at all Masses this weekend.

JULY
20

SCAPULAR ENROLLMENT

In celebration of the Feast of Our Lady of Mount Carmel (July 16), Scapular enrollment will be available after all weekend Masses

AUG
1

RESPECT LIFE GARDEN BLESSING

10:15 am. The beautiful garden in front of our St. Joseph campus is in full bloom! Join us after Friday Mass for the blessing of the garden, and coffee and donuts afterwards.

AUG
6

TRANSFIGURATION MASS & CINNAMON ROLLS

8:30 am. Join us for Mass at the Adoration Chapel, and afterwards coffee and cinnamon rolls to celebrate this special feast day.

AUG
14

ST. MAX MOVIE NIGHT

7:30 pm. Pre-screening of the film, Triumph of the Heart - a feature film about St. Maximilian Kolbe. One night only at Delano Emagine Theater. Ticket info coming soon. This is the first day of our 4-day celebration in honor of our patron saint.

AUG
15

FEAST OF THE ASSUMPTION

Holy Day of Obligation. Mass times at 6:30 am, 8:30 am, and 5 pm. All Masses are the Main Church at St. Peter Campus. Special ice cream social to follow the 5 pm Mass.

AUG
16

FEAST DAY MEN'S EUCHRE NIGHT

6 pm. Calling all men of the parish. Join us for a special night of euchre in St. Martha Hall. Parish provides homemade tortilla chips, you bring the toppings. Lessons provided. RSVP with Jeff @ 763-645-4324

AUG
17

FEAST DAY PICNIC

11:00 am. Join us for our annual picnic at St. Joseph Campus! Grilled lunch of hamburgers and brats and all the extras. Wiffleball games, face painting, "bingo", lawn games, beer stand, and more! Raffle drawing at 1:30 pm

SEP
10

ALL SACRAMENTS MEETING

5 pm. Will you be needing a sacrament this year? Baptism, First Confession, First Communion, Confirmation, Marriage, OCIA...Join us for this informational meeting in St. Martha Hall.