

**BLESSED IS
THE NATION
WHOSE GOD IS
THE LORD
PSALM 33:12**



BLESSED TRINITY PARISH

Amazing Faith-Filled People **A LETTER FROM YOUR PASTOR**

I am always stunned and ever grateful when parishioners dive deep in understanding their faith and living their faith in action. Every week on Saturday and once a month on Tuesdays, there are two groups of men who come together to share their faith journey, and their struggles with one another.

With coffee mugs or water bottles in hand, they sit together and discuss the challenges, joys and questions that living their faith brings about. They care for one another and affirm and support each other in whatever is going on in their lives. Then they take up the Scripture readings for the coming Sunday—ponder them, use a commentary on the readings to clarify the intent of the Scripture passage.

After that they discuss how and if the Word of God personally touches their heart or not. Amazing you might be thinking—that these individuals would take extra time and effort of prayer and study to know and understand their faith more deeply! These get togethers of men were not the brainchild of some priest or some Church official. It came from these men's own heartfelt desire to understand Jesus Christ and His meaning in their lives.

The parish each year has offered faith sharing programs during the Lenten season. Some of these groups have continued on as a way to further nourish their faith. This summer the parish is offering a program called ALPHA. This is another faith sharing you may consider. It is all about nurturing and being nurtured by the faith journey of others.

For me, it is a powerful sign of the Holy Spirit drawing men and women together to a deeper relationship with the Lord Jesus. Unknowingly, people like them have truly strengthened my faith by their commitment to ongoing learning in their faith life.

Blessings and God love,

Fr. Peter

Fr. Peter



Family as Domestic Church - by Arianne Lokuta, Nicole McDonald, Kathy Mancini

— A family walks through the woods and wonders together about the beauty of nature.

— A grandmother shares stories about Jesus while teaching her grandchild about the rosary.

— A dad comforts a grieving child over the loss of a grandparent and receives comfort himself in the happy memories shared by the child.

— A child never says good night without receiving a word of blessing from a parent...and she is in high school

These ordinary activities are real life examples of families living the domestic church. While most think of a building or place outside the home as "church" the Second Vatican Council describes family life as the center of Catholic spirituality and faith. The family can be thought of as the smallest unit of the Church. The family is the first place where children can experience the love of God through their parents and other family members. By extension, parents are the first and best teachers of the faith for their children. Everything a parent does teaches their children, whether it is intentional or not.

Studies have shown that family faith practice is a stronger indicator of whether children will continue to practice their faith into adulthood, rather than attendance in Catholic School or Parish Religious Education programs.

Pope Francis has stressed the importance of the family in

a child's faith life, and has commented, "How precious is the family, as the privileged place for transmitting the faith." In fact, Pope Francis declared March 19, 2021 – June 26, 2022 as the Year of the Family.

Pope Saint John Paul II pointed out that, "the humble dwelling place in Nazareth is an authentic school of the Gospel. Here we admire, put into practice, the divine plan to make the family an intimate community of life and love; here we learn that every Christian family is called to be a small 'domestic church' that must shine with the Gospel virtues. Recollection and prayer, mutual understanding and respect, personal discipline and community asceticism and a spirit of sacrifice, work and solidarity are typical features that make the family of Nazareth a model for every home" (Angelus address December 30, 2001).

Most parents would find it a stretch to live up to such an image of Domestic Church but reflecting on the ordinary nature and anonymity of the Holy family's life in the small town of Nazareth is a helpful exercise. Jesus, in his human nature would have needed to be taught manners, Jewish scriptures, carpentry skills, etc., by his parents, Mary and Joseph, just like any other child.

The mission of Blessed Trinity Parish's K-7 Faith Formation program is to support the Domestic Church by helping children, with their families, grow closer to God and in their faith. In our family catechesis sessions, parents and

children spend the first 15-minutes of each weekly class together learning about a different aspect of the faith before children go to their grade-level classes. These short sessions include family discussion and sharing, and ideas and activities for bringing faith home. The program also includes Family Faith Enrichment sessions where the entire class time is spent learning about the faith together as a family. This program supports families in nurturing their Domestic Church and gives encouragement and ideas for weaving our beautiful faith into family life.

The whole community is called to nourish the Domestic Church. Our K-7 Faith Formation year runs October to April. If you have gifts to share and would like to help enliven the Domestic Church, please prayerfully consider if God may be calling you to this important ministry. Reach out Nicole or Arianne to discuss or go to our website at <https://www.blessedtrinitycatholic.org/registration> for registration and volunteer information.



Benefits of Lifelong Learning - by Sue Gormley and Peg Hicks

Pastoral Associate, Sue Gormley, joined retired Pastoral Associate, Peg Hicks in a discussion about lifelong learning.

What does life-long learning mean to you?

Peg: To me, life-long learning means growth in mind and spirit; I always found the term "grown-up" a misnomer—I don't think we completely "grow up" until we die.

Sue: To me, it means we are never too young or too old to learn about God and our faith and to rejoice in how God is always at work in our lives. We are blessed with an incredibly rich faith with over 2,000 years of writings and teachings. Today, with so much high quality material available online, there is an abundance to select from.

What were some of your first experiences as an adult learner? Where did these experiences lead you, or what difference did they make?

Peg: In college, my husband and I led music at our chapel, so we began attending liturgical music conventions and workshops. I discovered that I loved learning about Catholic liturgy and sacraments. The more I learned, the more questions I had, which many years later would lead to graduate studies in theology. I still remember a very specific moment when an instructor's comment about religious symbolism blew open doors in my mind—a paradigm shift that forever changed the way I understood literature, music, and liturgy. The concept that words and images can contain several layers of meaning continues to fascinate me.

Sue: I know what you mean, Peg. I've always loved the story in Acts 8:26-39 when Philip asked the Ethiopian eunuch if he understood the scripture passage and he answered "How can I, unless someone instructs me?" I remember the first bible study class I attended, hearing my teacher's and classmates' interpretations, and learning that there were wonderful books called Commentaries written by scholars to help the reader understand the many levels of meaning. At Blessed Trinity Parish, we are fortunate to have priests who encourage us to spend time reading and praying with the scriptures before coming to Mass, so that we will be more receptive to hearing the Lord speak to us through his inspired word. We are also very fortunate to have a group that meets weekly to discuss the scriptures for the upcoming weekend and to have the scripture courses that you (Peg), Jackie Butterfield, and I lead.

When did you first teach other adults? Were there any surprises/insights/fun stories along the way?

Peg: My first real job in college was working as a Boston City Hall tour guide. To excel, I found myself studying architecture, Boston history, city politics, and communication techniques. This led to a career as a National Park Ranger, and taking lots more classes. I discovered I really loved learning and was excited to

share what I learned. I cherished moments when I could witness "aha!" moments in park visitors or students, knowing that they were experiencing new insights. One of my favorite memories is of a student I was teaching at Merrimack College. His "aha" moment literally caused him to stay glued to his seat even after the bell rang; what had been a simple truth learned in childhood suddenly took on real depth as an adult.

Sue: Now you've got me curious, Peg. What was it that struck the student and kept him glued to his seat?

Peg: We had been talking about the presence of Jesus in the tabernacle and how when we receive Holy Communion, we receive Jesus into our bodies and are like walking tabernacles. AHA!

Sue: Thanks for sharing that Peg! When I was in high school and college, in the summer I worked at a lake and taught swimming and sailing lessons to children and adults. I was surprised to learn that it was often harder to teach adults because of their fears. Children tended to be more trusting, and when learning to float in the water, they were usually able to relax and allow the water to surround and lift them. Adults were often much more fearful of sinking and concerned about what other people would think. Likewise, with sailing, if it was windy out and the boat was racing along, heeling on its side, most of the children thought that was exciting and great fun, while some adults were afraid the boat would capsize and, as a result, froze in fear. When I began working as a Pastoral Associate at Blessed Trinity, I had the great opportunity to work with Peg to offer instruction to new liturgical ministers such as Lectors, Acolytes and Eucharistic Ministers. Like the adults learning to swim and sail, many of the adults were fearful of making a mistake during Mass. What if I pronounce a name wrong when reading the scriptures? What if I ring the bells at the wrong time? What if I drop a host when giving out Holy Communion?

What are your favorite topics to study currently?

Peg: I enjoy studying church history, particularly the role of women deacons in the early church, as well as the history of the Mass. This month, I'm attending a New England genealogy seminar and some online Boston College theology lectures.

Sue: Last fall we began a Grief Support Group called Living With Loss. I am finding it inspiring to learn through people's stories the many ways that they have been supported by God, our priests, our Ministry of Hope, and members of our faith community.

The Long and Winding Road - by Rich Chenell

As Catholics, our lives are about lifelong learning. Not, just spiritually, but as people. It should be a journey to do better as sons and daughters, as brothers and sisters, as parents, as neighbors. And, for the majority of Catholics, life is just that.

But it's not always a straight and easy road. For those of us old enough to remember the Beatles, and those young enough to use social media music services who also know the Beatles, their song "The Long and Winding Road" can seem to be about our own lifelong spiritual journeys.

I'm sure that a bunch of you right now are saying, "What?????" So let me explain. Just look at the opening stanza:

"The long and winding road
That leads to your door
Will never disappear
I've seen that road before"

If you change just one word in the second line, the word "your" to "God's," it describes His commitment to us. Now re-sing the stanza with the exchanged word and I think you'll see what I mean.

The road starts out as a straight one for those of us that become Catholics as children. Our parents guide us along the way with stops for us to celebrate the Sacraments of Baptism, Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation.

Most Catholics make our Confirmation when we are around 15 years old and it's a big step because that's when we are considered adults in the Catholic faith and are now expected to be more responsible for our own spiritual direction. But for many middle teens, it's a time of distractions with school, sports, work, girlfriends/boyfriends, and especially today, social media, and it's a time when faith is put on the back burner.

I've always been behind the curve and, luckily for me, we didn't have social media when I was a teenager so I did a pretty good job of keeping my road fairly straight through my teens. It was in my early 20s that my road started to bend. I didn't make a U turn, but I did take a left at the fork in the road.

It wasn't that I didn't believe in God anymore or didn't still love Him, because I did. And, it wasn't like I was out there running wild and being sinful (OK...overly sinful). I still tried to be a good person and do things right. I just lost my way with the church. I didn't come out of Mass with that same feeling of joy that I used to, so I started going less. That's when my road started to wind.

But, a funny thing happens as we travel that long and winding road and make our way through the ups and downs of life; through the difficult times and the joyful times... we find our faith returning to us for any number of reasons. Maybe it's because we don't let the distractions of our younger years that shaded our faith from us distract us anymore. Maybe it because an event or circumstance made us feel something was missing. If you've had a long and winding road, plug in your reason here. For me, it was because I got married and we had children.

Both Alison and I were lucky to have parents that planted the seeds of faith in us, so when we had children, we wanted to plant the seeds of faith in them too. We started going to church every week, well, most weeks. We celebrated all the Sacraments with both of our children as they grew up. And, you know what? Through those years, my road straightened out.

Unfortunately, when our kids finished their Sacraments I thought my job of planting those seeds was done. I became more of a "casual Catholic" and would go to church only on the "big" days. And, my road started to wind again.

Thank God Alison's road continued straight!! She'd ask me every Sunday, "Are you coming to church?" Most times I'd say no, but occasionally, and for no particular reason, I'd say yes.

Another funny thing happens on that long and winding road...you meet people that change you and make you think differently. On one of those days that I said yes, St. Catherine's had a new priest. His name was Father Peter Quinn. He sounded different than our previous priests. And then Father Joe came along. Both were so genuine and sincere that I couldn't help but listen. I wanted to hear more, and I started going to church regularly again. As I went to church more, I looked around each week and noticed what an incredible and wonderful community of faith we have. And, that's when my road started to straighten out again.

Don't get me wrong, I still have many bumps and potholes in my road, as we all do. Thankfully we have a very loving and forgiving God whose door will always be open, no matter how long and winding our roads are.

Peace.



Turning 100 (St. Catherine) and 75 (St. Anne)

On Pentecost Sunday our Parish enjoyed an incredible celebration! At the Mass and BBQ that day, we celebrated 75 years for Saint Anne Church and 100 years for Saint Catherine of Alexandria Church. We are extremely grateful for the extraordinary efforts of the many volunteers who worked tirelessly to plan that magnificent day! Following the Mass, there was a wonderful BBQ, music, history display, games, raffle - and even classic cars!

We are especially grateful to the sponsors for helping us make that event happen: Badger Funeral Homes, Bishop Ruocco Council of the Knights of Columbus, BJ's Wholesale Club of Leominster, PepsiCo, The Seed Agency, and many parishioners of Blessed Trinity Parish. Our faith community is strong, vibrant, and grateful!

Pentecost Mass

and BBQ



Let's Celebrate

OUR HISTORY

Today is a celebration of our two churches! Stop by the Hall to learn about the history of Saint Anne Church, Saint Catherine of Alexandria Church & Saint Catherine's Cemetery!

A big thank you is owed to the parishioners who created the history displays for us!

Go check it out!

OUR BBQ SPONSORS

They made today possible!

Badger Funeral Homes

Bishop Ruocco Council
Knights of Columbus
•• BJ's Wholesale
PepsiCo (Leominster, MA) ••

The Seed Agency

Parishioners of
Blessed Trinity Parish

Passing on the Faith to our Youth - by Diahne Goodwin

Learning Begins with Loving,
Loving Begins with Listening.

If you are a parent or a grandparent, you will probably agree that you want the best for your relations. You want them to grow up to be happy, caring, compassionate, contributing members of society. And you probably want them to share in your faith, to have a place for God in their lives. Even if you are not a parent, but have young people in your life, you most likely would want the same for them as well. As Catholic Christians, our faith life is integral to our whole lives. We are called to live as disciples, as Jesus taught and modeled for us. Learning how to do that is indeed a life long process. Passing that faith and way of life to the next generation is also part of that process.

The challenge of how to pass on the faith to the next generations is a constant one, experienced by each generation. Often one thinks about what we need to teach our young people and we can become too focused on passing on information. We can provide instruction and teach about concepts of faith—amass a large amount of head knowledge—but if we do only that, we will miss the mark. Anyone who is a parent knows that the example of our actions and how we manage our relationships teach a great deal. As young children grow into the youth in our lives, they move from imitating their parents' examples to beginning to question and own their faith journey for themselves.

Supporting this journey with love and patience is critical and can start with something as simple as listening. Recent studies with both

Pew and Barna research agencies agree that young people today—Generation Z, those in middles school through college years—need to know they are loved and are seen before they can be taught. There is a desire to be understood and to matter. The studies also indicate that those in this generation are truth-seekers and are very much open to going deeper, learning and discussing issues of substance, even on difficult topics. However, it begins with trust, in knowing they are loved.

How do we get to know who our young people really are and to let them know they do matter? It starts with listening. David W. Augsburger, author of *Caring Enough to Hear and Be Heard* states, "Being heard is so close to being loved that for the average person, they are almost indistinguishable." Wow! Some people have compared being misunderstood as the same feeling as being isolated. Being intentional about listening can build that foundation of love...of trust. This means that we listen to

understand, not with the intent to respond or to form a response that suits our desires while listening. It means we need to be focused more on being interested in who they are, not in being interesting ourselves. Listening and understanding don't mean that we have to agree with everything we hear or see, but it shows that we care and respect and want to engage with that person authentically. That building of trust leads to positive relationships and an openness for learning more.

These lessons around connecting with our youth may be good advice for all ages. We all need to be loved and heard and understood. In one sense we are all fragile human beings, struggling to find our way in this often difficult world. We need to remember that God's own relationship with us began with love, and God continues to love us with patience and mercy, imperfect as we are, continually inviting us to him.



"Your Name Will be Cephas" – by Leo Carroll

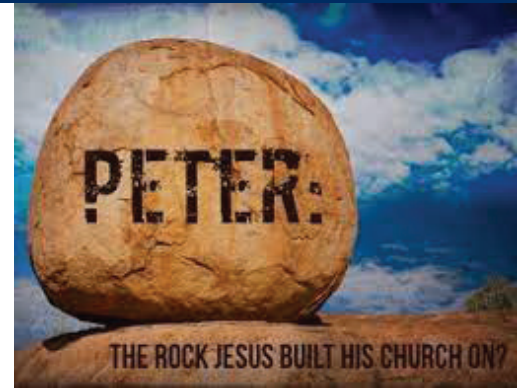
There is something about the Apostle Peter to which we can relate—we share a common humanity with him in our imperfections! In the midst of our own faith formation, we can see from the Gospels how Peter in his myriad manifestations evolved through his own faith formation. In our joys and triumphs, the Gospels show us Peter in his. In our doubts and inconsistent behaviors, we can empathize with Peter as he also endured his own.

Whether it was his magnificent spiritual intuition when he declared to Jesus, "You are the Messiah," or on another occasion, "You are the Holy One from God," it is inescapable that Peter was earmarked to be the locomotion upon which the early Church would be built. Jesus, in fact, said, "Your name will be Cephas," which means 'rock.'

But Peter was also a simple fisherman at heart, and his human clay, like ours, would repeatedly show itself. He 'rebuked' Jesus when Jesus began to introduce His disciples to the idea that He was going to suffer, die, and then rise again after three days. Jesus had to say to him, "Get behind me, Satan!" Or at the Last Supper, when Jesus was washing the feet of His apostles, Peter strongly balked, "You will never at any time wash my feet!" Peter was also unable to stay awake and pray with Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, and most infamously of all, denied Jesus three times in the courtyard of the High Priest, "I swear that I don't know that man!"

In short, Peter was like us – fallible, well-intentioned, but on a rollercoaster of emotions and reactions. His faith formation saw the mountain top at the Transfiguration but also the depths of the valley where he totally disappeared in the hours before Jesus' crucifixion.

In choosing Peter, Jesus was telling all His followers through the millennia that He knew failures would occur with us. The important thing was to never give up and to keep trying. The very thing which so often causes us to despair and lose hope—seemingly endless relapses—is what distinguished and endeared Peter. He always got back up! And so can we! This is the ultimate lesson for us in our own faith formation.



For the full article, visit
<https://www.blessedtrinitycatholic.org/newsletters>

Lifelong Learning – continued from page 3

What are your favorite topics to teach?

Peg: I particularly love studying and teaching the books of the Bible.

Sue: I enjoy working with new Liturgical Ministers, preparing people for adult confirmation and marriage, and accompanying people returning to the church who attend our Landings program. I was very impressed with our Lenten small group faith sharing program this year. We used Dynamic Catholic's Turning Point, led by Dr. Allen Hunt. It presented stories unique to the gospel of John. Each class focused on a scripture passage where a person encountered Jesus which caused a conversion of heart and forever changed that person's life.

Any courses coming up?

Peg: Yes! Right now, I'm putting together an online Bible Study series about the Wisdom Books in the Bible and the Four Faces of Jesus, which will both be accessible via Zoom, this fall, as well as two Zoom sessions on Women in the Bible.

Sue: Blessed Trinity will be offering an Alpha Program this summer, on Thursday nights, beginning July 7th from 6-8 pm at St. Catherine. At Alpha, a safe space

is created where people come to discuss life's big questions, to explore our faith, to ask questions, and to share our stories. We share a meal, watch a video presentation then break into small groups for discussion and listening. It is vitally important for us to be able to come together as a faith community to get to know one another, to share our faith journeys, and to learn more about God's love for us and plans for our lives. Parishioners should watch our website and bulletins for information on programs coming this fall.

How can parishioners put what they are learning into action?

Peg: There are so many ways—a great way is to share your faith with others through faith sharing groups, or volunteer to be a catechist. Teaching can lead to more questions, more study, and often a deeper faith."

Sue: Parishioners can put their learning and faith into action by participating in a summer mission trip, serving as a catechist, being a service leader in our faith formation program, or participating in one of our many ministries. Our 2022 Ministry Catalog is available on our website: <https://www.blessedtrinitycatholic.org/learn-about-volunteer-opportunities>.



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Saint Anne Church
 75 King St.
 Littleton, MA 01460

Saint Catherine Church
 107 N. Main St.
 Westford, MA 01886

CURRENT MASS SCHEDULE:

Weekend Schedule:

Saturday 4:00 pm – St. Catherine Church (live streamed)

Sunday 8:30 am – St. Anne Church

Sunday 10:30 am – St. Catherine Church

Weekday Schedule:

Mon & Tues 8:00 am – St. Anne Church

Thu & Fri 8:00 am – St. Catherine Church

Reconciliation:

Saturday 3:00 pm or by appointment

St. Catherine Church

Fr. Peter Quinn 978-320-4201

Father Joe Rossi 978-320-4202

BENEFITS OF LIFELONG LEARNING

NURTURES
CURIOUS MINDS

BUILDS NEW
SKILLS,
IMPROVES
THOSE YOU
ALREADY HAVE



OPENS MINDS
AND INCREASES
WISDOM

IMPROVES
MEMORY AND
INCREASES
SELF-
CONFIDENCE

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 Billerica, MA
 Permit 66

Benefits of Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning increases brain health;

Lifelong learning expands social connections;

Lifelong learning improves mental health and reduces stress; and Lifelong learning builds knowledge and new skills!

When it comes to your health, wouldn't you want to learn ahead of time about ways to improve your health and increase longevity? Keeping up on the latest ways to stay healthy is so important to our overall well-being. Waiting until you are having a health crisis isn't the time to take the remedial class!

So, what does lifelong learning have to do with our faith and spirituality? The early Christians were continuously learning how to live the Gospel and to apply the teachings of Jesus to everyday life.

The Greek word disciple means "student" or "learner." Aren't we all called to be disciples? The great commission in Matthew 28:19 tells us, "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations." Matthew goes on to say (Matthew 28:20), "teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

How can we teach, if we haven't learned ourselves? We are commissioned to go and make "learners." Have you ever thought about the great commission from that angle?

2 Corinthians 12
 ("For When I Am Weak, Then I
 Am Strong")

O' Lord, Jesus, please
 Help me as here I cower, Your
 Yoke's light weight up'n
 My shoulders, but not
 Yet as easy as being
 Lulled in grace's cradle.
 My faith flickers, Lord, and
 The flame's not steady
 Enough for me on
 These waters to dare
 Towards You to walk, so
 Tempests continue
 To assail and assign me to
 The bottom of this poor
 Boat, where nailed
 Into Your sorrowful hands
 And feet are the thorns of my
 Flesh's doubts and the
 Barbs of my foolish
 Boasts. . .

Leo Carroll
 May 30, 2022