

UPON THIS ROCK

THE COMMUNITY VOICE OF ST. PETER CHURCH

ST. PETER CHURCH, NORTH RIDGEVILLE

SPRING 2011

'God willing,' he'll be ordained a priest

He seemed to have it all – great family, solid education and a personality that won him friends wherever he went. But Chuck Butkowski wasn't happy.

Today all that has changed and as he fairly beams, the

31-year-old says that in a few weeks he hopes to be become a priest.

After grade school, the St. Peter parishioner went to St. Edward High School and then on to Eastern Michigan University where he played football and studied business and marketing.

"I was a typical college guy," he said, "I had good friends, I dated ... everything you're supposed to do."

Graduating in 2001, he landed a job at Wells Fargo Bank, which should have been a plum position for the new grad, but it didn't take long for Butkowski to feel something was missing.

"It wasn't fulfilling," he said. "Life is a journey and I was searching for what would make me happy."

Perhaps the world of finance wasn't right for him. He changed jobs, but there was still a void in his life and



though Lois and Paul Butkowski, wanted to help their son, all they could do was to be there for him as he struggled.

I kind of mulled teaching," Butkowski said. His parents are teachers and he had seen the impact they had on their students. At the same time he began to realize that his faith in God wasn't as strong as it should have been, his brow seeming to furrow at the recollection. He said he never really turned away from God, but "He was second fiddle in my life."

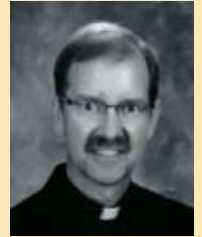
Weeks went by and still nothing seemed to satisfy the young man's thirst for serenity and he decided to pray more and put his life in God's hands.

"I told Him, 'I am so unhappy ... what do you want me to do; whatever it is I will do it,'" he said. Recounting that moment, the formerly wrinkled brow re-

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Fr. Bob's Corner

In order to prepare our newsletter for publication I write my note almost a month in advance. I do not know whether March will come in like a lion and go out like a lamb. I do know that it will be a month of change: both regarding weather and church celebrations.



Ash Wednesday, March 9, begins the season of Lent. The Lord invites us to renew our life in Jesus Christ by doing penance: almsgiving, prayer and fasting. As a parish we have a number of opportunities during this season to invest ourselves in the Lord. Two staples of the St. Peter Parish Lenten life are fish fries and Stations of the Cross. Fish fries will begin on Friday, March 11 and continue for six weeks. There will be no fish fry on Good Friday. Times are 4:30-7 p.m. Stations of the Cross will be every Friday during Lent at 7:30 p.m. Good Friday Stations will be acted out by the youth of St. Peter Parish

One special opportunity for spiritual growth during this season will be the joint parish mission between St. Peter and St. Julie Parishes. Our mission presenter will be Steve Angrisano (www.spiritandsong.com/artists/steveangrisano), a nationally acclaimed Catholic singer, songwriter and mission leader, who has a special gift for

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Fr. Bob's Corner

ministering to youth. St. Julie's will be the site for this year's mission. Angrisano will be presenting on Monday and Tuesday, March 28 and 29 at 7 p.m. The mission continues at St. Peter Church with our community meal on Wednesday, March 30 at 5:45 p.m. followed by Mass at 7 p.m. We will conclude the week at St. Peter Church with our joint Lenten Penance Service at 7 p.m. on Thursday, March 31. All are welcome. Bring a friend.

One final March event I would like to highlight: on Saturday, March 19 the St. Peter PTU is hosting Raise Your Paddles for Computers (www.raiseyourpaddleforcomputers.myevent.com). This dinner and auction is the school's major fundraiser, as we seek to upgrade our computer lab. Please visit the website or contact the office for more information.

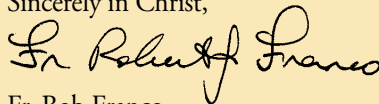
Two more events to highlight: in April we celebrate the most sacred days of our Church year – the Easter Triduum. Holy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday form the heart of liturgical year. These days, along with Easter Sunday, April 24, cap our Lenten observance and

propel us to live the new life Jesus won for us by his death and resurrection. Please mark your calendars.

Finally, I need to highlight a parish celebration that happens too rarely in most Catholic churches. God willing, Rev. Mr. Charles Butkowski will be ordained a priest on Saturday, May 21 at 10 a.m. at the Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist in Cleveland. Deacon Chuck grew up here at St. Peter's and his parents still attend our parish. A Mass of Thanksgiving will follow on Sunday, May 22. The time is yet to be determined.

Pray for Deacon Chuck and his classmates as they enter their final preparations for ordination to the priesthood. As they embark on this life of service, we pray that God will inspire them to do good in the name of Jesus Christ, making God's presence tangible to many people in our diocese.

Sincerely in Christ,



Fr. Bob Franco
Pastor, St. Peter Parish

Strut your stuff at parish family dance



Cut a rug.

Shake a tail feather.

Boogie on down.

Whatever your generation called dancing, the St. Peter Family Fun Committee hopes you'll dust off your moves and join them on April 2 for the first annual Parish Family Dance, to be held from 6:30-9:30 p.m. in the gym.

Family-friendly music will be provided by SOUND FX and song requests taken. There will be contests for the funniest hat, loudest tie, and craziest dress, as well as mother/son hula hoop, father/daughter sing-a-long and child/parent look alike competitions.

Non-alcoholic drinks will be avail-

able. Dancers are asked to bring a snack, dessert or appetizer to share. Advance admission is \$5 per family and \$6 at the door. Children must be accompanied by an adult. Casual, fancy or period dress is acceptable.

Advance tickets may be purchased by cash or check made payable to St. Peter PTU. Include your family name, the number of people attending and submit it in an envelope marked Family Dance, c/o Matthew Krese, Rm. 2B. Envelopes may be submitted through the school, dropped off at the parish center, or in the Mass collection. Contact Laura Krese, (440) 353-9542 or kkrese@windstream.net for more information.

God calls each of us in his own way

"God calls each one of us in his own way. That's what a vocation is; a call from God to holiness."

Those are the words of Antony Rajamani, a young man who will begin to follow that call when he graduates from the seminary in May and goes on to become a priest.

Rajamani's journey began in Tamal Nadu, a state in the southern part of

India. He is the middle child of five siblings. He attended Catholic high school where he



first began to feel that God was calling him. His college years took him in the opposite direction however, and as Rajamani says, he became "consumed with things that made him happy."

After graduating with a degree in human resources and working at the International Airport, Rajamani felt something was missing from his life.

"God did not give up on me," he says. Although his family was not happy with his decision, Rajamani entered the seminary. Even today, this is not a decision his family is happy about.

As he prepares for graduation and begins his journey toward the priesthood, Rajamani reminds us that we should encourage each other to live out our own call to holiness.

"The road will be muddy, and there will be bumps, but God will always be there."

As a church community, let us remember Antony Rajamani and the other seminarians who will graduate this May, and keep them in our thoughts and prayers.

The History of St. Peter Church

“Thou Art Peter and Upon this Rock I Will Build My Church”

Editor’s Note: Part 4 of the History of St. Peter Church appeared in the last newsletter and covered the years from 1938 to 1959.

The early 1960s saw Msgr. Edward Halloran oversee a school of 435 pupils, build a new convent for the sisters, and replace the wooden altars inside the church, with marble altars that had been brought over from Italy. The church altars were consecrated in 1962 and became the first items to be consecrated in the history of the church.

In 1965 Halloran, along with several parishioners, sisters, and priests from the surrounding area held a groundbreaking ceremony for a new addition to the parish school. A Silver Jubilee was held in the church basement for Halloran later that same year, and through the fundraising



Msg. Halloran

efforts of parishioners, to show their appreciation of the sisters, a 1965 Chevy Bel-Aire was presented to them. Each of the sisters could not wait to take their turn driving the beautiful new vehicle around the church lot.

The Rev. Nicholas Novosel arrived in 1967, as Halloran departed for St. Thomas More. The Rev. Richard Ziegler, associate pastor arrived later that year. The following school year, Novosel instituted the first Parent Teachers Union (PTU).

That first year they sponsored several successful dinners as a means of fundraising for the school. Novosel also added the cry-room as an addition to the church so that parents of small children would feel welcome to attend with their entire family.

Novosel left St. Peter Parish in 1967.

Youngsters enjoy St. Peter’s CYO sports program

There’s an old adage that claims, “All work and no play makes Jack (or Susie, for that matter) a dull boy.” For boys and girls in the CYO (Catholic Youth Organization) Sports Program at St. Peter Parish, chances are slim to none that they’ll lack activity.

CYO has been part of parish life at St. Peter’s for years, and offers youngsters in grades five to eight the opportunity to get involved in sports with boys eligible to play basketball and track and girls, the added sport of volleyball.

Jerry Hansen said that boys and girls who want to participate in the sports program must be parishioners of either St. Peter or St. Julie or go to public school and attend PSR regularly. In addition, there is a \$75 per-sport fee.

Hansen, who was the athletic director

for the program for more than 15 years, is now the parish designee or liaison between the diocesan CYO office and the parish. When he left the post of athletic director, no one stepped up to replace him so Hansen oversees the local program from his present position.

“Someone takes care of volleyball and basketball, and the athletic board makes decisions,” he said, adding, “I’m still semi-active in everything.”

Approximately 180 boys and girls participate in CYO sports at St. Peter, with around 30 people involved as volunteers. Hansen said he would “love to have more public school children” in the program. For more information, visit the CYO Web site, watch the bulletin for sign-ups or call Hansen at (440) 315-8739.

‘God willing,’

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laxed and Butkowski smiled. “I thought of the priesthood.”

At first the idea made him uneasy, but after discussing it with a priest friend, it began to take root. The priest even suggested a trial, “Try it for a year, if it’s not for you, fine.”

The young man’s thoughts raced ... “What are my friends going to say; what will my parents think; I didn’t want to tell anybody.” So he quietly began preparing to enter the seminary, keeping his plans close to his heart ... until the day he learned he needed his parents’ proof of marriage. “I knew I had to talk to them.”

He soon learned he had no reason to worry about what his mom and dad thought. “They were great ... awesome ... they were happy for me,” he said. And he reached a turning point in his life. To become a priest requires six years of studying, but “You begin to understand God in a whole new way,” he said.

In October Butkowski was ordained a transitional deacon, allowing him to do some things a priest does, like baptizing. Within the next few weeks he’ll complete his classes, be interviewed by the bishop and then, he says, “God willing, I’ll be ordained a priest.”

UPON THIS ROCK is published by St. Peter Church of North Ridgeville, Ohio for the parishioners of the church.

Publisher: Father Robert Franco, Pastor

Editor: Carol Klear

Layout: Mary Ann Tipple

Staff Writers: Ann Marie Ross, Mary Ann Tipple, Sue Valletta, Carol Vogel

Suggestions for future articles may be sent to Carol Klear, edit37@windstream.net

A welcoming presence at the parish center

Christine Stefanek has never forgotten what former pastor Fr. Stephen Kaminski said to her when she began working as the parish secretary for St. Peter Church.

“Fr. Stephen told me, “The first impression of this church is you,”” she recalls. “I try to keep that in mind and greet everyone with kindness.”

Stefanek has been a welcoming presence at the parish center since 2004. She initially worked one evening a week and one weekend per month, then became the full-time secretary in 2005. She especially enjoys getting to know the parishioners and likes to greet them by name whenever possible.

“I love helping the people of the parish, and appreciate being here for them. It is wonderful to work here.”

The most difficult aspect of her position is dealing with someone’s loss. “I hope I can give them comfort,” she says.

After seeing the hardships some parishioners experience, she is very grateful for the blessings in her own life.



Stefanek and her husband, Michael, have been married for 20 years. They met while working together at Pat Catan’s where Michael Stefanek currently supervises the store’s Strongsville warehouse. After getting married, they moved to North Ridgeville, joined St. Peter Parish, and began raising their family. They have three children. Madeline is a high school senior who is considering a career in biology; Monica, 16, loves to write and is thinking of becoming an English major and 14-year-old Joe, “is keeping

his options open.” Rounding out the Stefanek family is Lupi, a five-year-old rat terrier they adopted from the Cleveland APL.

Christine Stefanek enjoys spending time with her family and friends, and likes to read all types of books. Volunteering at the parish is another important activity to her. She is involved with the youth group, which allows her to spend more time with her daughters, and also Vacation Bible School.

“Volunteering brings you in contact with people you might otherwise never have had the opportunity to know. And the more people you know, the more you get involved.” Christine also has a cross-stitch project that she has been working on for about 10 years. “It will hang on my wall one of these days.” she chuckles.

Looking ahead, Christine plans on being actively involved in the life of St. Peter Parish and would like to continue her role as parish secretary.

“I hope I have helped the parishioners and have treated them well.”

Parents: first educators and protectors of God’s children

There is nothing more precious to us than the gift of our children. From the first moment of life, parents kick into gear to provide the best that life has to offer. The sad commentary is that the world around them is not as kind and sometimes is even harmful. The Church in the Diocese of Cleveland takes the issue of child sexual abuse very seriously. All of us who work with children have been “Virtus” trained and fingerprinted.

The focus of the Virtus Program is not to concentrate on pedophiles, but to be the watchtower and lighthouse for our children so that abusers never get the chance to get near our kids.

The second phase of “protecting children” will be introduced this fall. The program is called “Praesidium.” The purpose of this program is to teach parents and children alike to recognize warning signs in the actions of individuals whose motivation to be with children is less honorable than their actions and words proclaim.

One of the key words in this process is grooming. Perpetrators groom parents first into believing that they too have the best intentions for their children – NOT! They make themselves available, try to help out all of the time, can act sympathetic and then ask you to leave

your children where they will be safe. Parents who are both working, may be tired and taxed by the economic crunch, can fall victim to this grooming process. We will show both parents and students alike how to keep those lines of communication open and not fall victim to the evils in today’s world. Praesidium will also address the impact of technology and who might be talking with our children in cyberspace.

Together as one Church, we can support one another in keeping our children safe. This my prayer and the ministry that I take very seriously.

– Sister Mary Sean Groh, S.N.D.

Kitt Hall from Fish Fry to Fun

When Kitt Hall was built as a multi-function building, they weren't kidding. When not in use for Fish Frys, an overflow Christmas Mass or Community Suppers, St. Peter's School students work on their athletic skills. One popular winter sport is basketball. Lent is the season for fish frys, St. Peter kids serving *us* dinner, meals spent with friends and family.



Photos: Mary Ann Tipple



Photos: Robert Daveante

The Nailer

The region was secluded and peaceful; it's scenery open and breathtaking. To the south were fertile green plains and to the north a snow capped mountain. As a child Levi would grasp his mother's mantle, and walk the steep sloping path to the well. A journey they would make twice a day, with a pottery jug steadied on her left shoulder. Familiar dwellings huddled on its hillside; a magnificent countryside to behold. Levi's home was a modest two-room structure, entered through a low and narrow doorway. The front door was wooden hued and hardened dirt covered its floors. The roof was level and square; gray in color like an evening shadow. On many a hot and restless night he'd place his straw mat to dream. Two meals per day he would partake cheese, wine, vegetables, fruit, and eggs. With a the longing for sweetness, wild honey or syrup from grapes or dates. As an adolescent he studied and played in a town ideal for children to flourish. For years they'd walked the hills and ridges that overlooked a gleaming blue sea. On the crest of a hill he'd sit and gaze afar dreaming with his friend of distant adventures. Below them, camel caravans traveled over a dusty familiar trade route. Some would pause to drink from their well while others camped for the night. Makeshift tents they would setup near the plaza to sell or barter their exotic wares. Around their crude but friendly campfires wondrous tales were shared of the "outside world". With morning light he'd walk that same path to vend a large basket of hand forged nails. For like his blacksmith father before him, he learned the skills of his trade. The congested and chaotic town was filled with dust but had a sweet-scented aroma. Life was simple then and teemed with great wonder until the Romans came into his village. Now a young full-bodied man was restrained by the Romans to serve in their legion. It was a time of great disparity between the rich and the struggling poor. The Romans inflicted adversity on poor families to pay high taxes. So in bondage he pounded hot spongy masses into iron from its hardened dense form. Signaled by the sound of a clear bell-like note he withdrew the iron from the hot furnace. And throughout the legion's camp could be heard the steady thump of his shingling hammer.



In thirty AD the Romans honored him with the title of Chief "Nailer".

On a silent crisp blue morning they put to use three of his hand-forged nails.

"Your eight-inch nails, the soldier said, were perfect to crucify this young man from Nazareth."

With uncontrollable weeping the Chief Nailer fell upon his knees, when he heard his nails held fast on that cross his childhood companion, Jesus.

Written by Mary L. Cole a parishioner of St. Peter Church in North Ridgeville

The season of Lent

Forty days. Fasting. Ash Wednesday. Holy Thursday. Penance. Abstinence. These words describe aspects of the season of Lent. Lent is described as the feast of feasts, the holiest of seasons, a time of prayer and spiritual preparation in the Catholic Church.

Lent begins on Ash Wednesday and lasts until the celebration of the Last Supper on Holy Thursday. The 40 days of Lent are the intervening days excluding Sundays. A ritual of the Ash Wednesday service is the receiving and wearing of ashes on the forehead. Ashes, from the palms of the previous year, are placed on the forehead in the sign of the cross with the words, "Remember man that thou are dust and unto dust you shall return." The ashes symbolize penance and contrition and a reminder to all that God is merciful to those that repent.

Fasting and abstinence also are components of Lent. Fasting is required of anyone 18 - 60 years of age. A fast is a reduction in the amount that is eaten. Typically, the breakfast and lunch meals are small meals that when combined they are less than the meal eaten for dinner. Snacking between meals is not acceptable. Abstinence is forgoing the consumption of meat on Fridays during Lent.



Anyone 14 years of age or older is required to adhere to abstinence during Lent.

Giving something up during Lent is a common practice. The intent of this practice is rooted in giving up a particular sin or changing a pattern of behavior rooted in sin. Denying oneself something during Lent is not necessarily the goal of 'giving something up'. Changing a behavior or moving away from sin and closer to Christ should be the primary outcome of Lent.

Lent provides Catholics a time for prayer in preparation to celebrate The Paschal Mystery of Christ's passion, resurrection, and ascension.

More random thoughts from Deacon Don

I'll begin with an update. I would again like to thank everyone for all of your thoughts and prayers in regards to my knee-replacement surgery and subsequent recuperation during the last quarter of 2010. By the grace of God, I am continuing to progress and am now ready to move on to the next phase. So, I will again be taking some time away to have my other knee replaced at the end of March and, if all goes as well as it did the last time, I hope to return around Easter. I hope!



cookies, candy, beer, wine or whatever it is that they gave up? This whole scenario sounds comical but I've known people who have done just exactly that.

Lent is a time for new beginnings. The word "Lent" itself comes from the old English *lente* meaning spring-time and what is springtime if not new beginnings? Perhaps we should use the Lenten Season to embrace this conversion and do something or "give up" something that really is meaningful and leads us to this conversion. If giving up chocolate can lead to this conversion then, by all means, please do so but there are plenty of other things that one can give up or do that would be even better.

Time certainly does seem to fly these days. By the time this little missive goes to print, the Season of Lent will be right around the corner. Lent, for sure, is a time that many people dread. Why? Because it is a time of penance and that means that we, as Catholics, have to "give up" something during this time. Most noticeably, this "giving up" entails not eating meat on Ash Wednesday, the Fridays in Lent and, especially, Good Friday but many people also will give up other of their favorite things such as candy, sweets in general and, for some, alcoholic beverages, among other things.

All of this giving up is a good thing as long as we remember exactly why it is that we're doing the giving up. The Lenten Season and the whole idea of Lenten penance is meant to spur on a conversion within us—a conversion from our sinful ways to the ways of righteousness. How does one's giving up a favorite food, treat or drink during Lent account for any type of conversion if on Easter Sunday that person sets about getting their hands on and consuming every ounce of cake,

How about giving up a little time? Anyone can help out at the community meal on a regular basis or join one of the many parish commissions at St. Peter's. All of these ministries can certainly use some extra hands in the work that they are performing.

Maybe instead of giving something up, something extra can be done. Here's a couple easy ones, make a commitment to praying every day for a specified amount of time, say 5 minutes, 10 minutes, 30 minutes or whatever or spend time during the week reading and reflecting on the readings from the previous and coming Sundays.

There are many, many things that a person can do during Lent but whatever it is that is done should be something that is sustainable and continued long after the Lenten Season ends. Conversion, new beginnings, that's what Lent is all about!

— Deacon Don

A window into a saint's life

The Resurrection of our Lord



Depicted in the window is the risen Lord clothed in red. Our Lord is carrying a banner displaying a red cross on a white background. The white represents purity, innocence and peace while the red cross is a reminder of the blood shed by Jesus and also symbolizes the risen Lord.

Surrounding Jesus are presumably guards carrying spears, who petitioned Pilate to secure the tomb so that Jesus' followers would not steal his body. As Matthew 28:4 states, "The guards were shaken with fear of him and became like dead men."

An angel is located next to Jesus and is described in Matthew 28:2-3, "For an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, approached, rolled back the stone and sat upon it. His appearance was like lightning and his clothing was white as snow"

The window of the Resurrection of our Lord, located on the west or tabernacle side of the church was a gift of Aloysius and Catharine Pitts.

Save the Date

Ash Wednesday
March 9

Raise Your Paddle
March 19

Fish Fries
March 11, 18, 25,
April 1, 8, 15

Easter
April 24

Outreach Meals
Last Wednesday
of the Month

Worship

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament

Every Tuesday 8:45 a.m. to 7 p.m.
Liturgy of the Hours and
Benediction at 6:40 p.m.

Legion of Mary Rosary

Following 8:15 a.m. weekday Mass

Miraculous Medal Novena

Following 8:15 a.m. Monday Mass

Reconciliation (Confession)

3:30 - 4:30 p.m. Saturdays

Community

Holy Name Society

Knights of Columbus

Mothers Club

Parish Life Commission

Social Justice Commission

The Vincentians

Senior Saints

Eucharistic Celebration

Monday thru Friday: 8:15 a.m.

Weekends:

Saturday: 5 p.m.

Sunday: 6 a.m.

8 a.m.

10 a.m.

12 p.m.

Parish Staff

Pastor:

Rev. Robert J. Franco

Deacon:

Rev. Mr. Don Jankowski

Principal:

Sr. Mary Patricia Vovk, S.N.D.

Music Director: James Akoury

Ministerial Assistant: Cheryle Koberna

Director of Religious Education:

Sr. Mary Sean Groh, S.N.D.

Business Manager: Karen Doubrava

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St. Peter Church
35777 Center Ridge Road
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