



Fall 2025



The Catholic Call to Stewardship
is the theme of this issue
of the Spirit Newsletter

SEE INSIDE FOR:

Our Lady Queen of
Peace Events 2

The Season of Creation:
A Season to be Grateful 2

The Canticle of the Sun 2

Disciple Camp 2025 3

Planted in God's House:
The Parish-School
Partnership at Our Lady
Queen of Peace 4

Faith Formation:
A Lifelong Journey 4

Congratulations,
Father Brian Wilk 5

Ushering in Gratitude 6

Living the Journey God Has
Laid out for You 6-7

Father Brian's Message 8

Our Lady Queen of Peace Spirit

Volume 32, Number 2

The Catholic Call to Stewardship

By Courtney Waack, Appeal Coordinator, Diocese of Madison

"How shall I make a return to the Lord for all the good he has done for me?" (Psalm 116:12)

As Catholics, God calls us to stewardship in Sacred Scripture and Church teachings. God created us in His image and likeness. Since the beginning, God has called us to be caretakers of His creation. We are called to live a life of gratitude. This means taking time each day to recognize that everything we have – our faith, families, friends, homes, schools, and churches – is a gift from God. He has given each of us gifts so that we might use them responsibly and generously. We can express our gratitude for His blessings through prayer and acts of kindness. When we use our gifts wisely and give from our "first fruits" – our first and best – we give our gifts back to God.

Stewardship is often described in terms of time, talent, and treasure. This means dedicating time to prayer and service, using personal talents in charitable ways to benefit our parishes and communities, and sharing financial resources to support the Church and those in need. Stewardship is returning a portion of our gifts – our time, talent, and treasure – to God. No gift is ever too small or insignificant.

"Make love your aim." (1 Corinthians 14:1)

When we receive the Eucharist, we are brought into communion with Jesus and with each other, living as one body in Christ. The Eucharist is a reminder of God's immense love and mercy. By offering our hearts and lives to God, we show our love and gratitude for His blessings and the gift of Jesus. Living a virtuous life helps us grow in holiness and deepens our love for God and others.

Stewardship is an expression of this love, closely connected with discipleship. It leads to evangelization when others witness faith in action through daily acts of love, service, and charity. When we are rooted in the love that binds us all together, our parish communities grow stronger.

"You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity." (2 Corinthians 9:11)

Discipleship in Jesus is a lifelong journey. With every step forward, we are challenged to be humble, trusting, and to accept God's will. By grounding ourselves in the spiritual practice of prayer, we can begin to see ourselves and others as God does. Through prayer, our minds and hearts will be transformed through a spirit of hospitality. As gratitude grows in our hearts, we see that we already have more than enough and that we have enough to share. Through a spirit of generosity, we return our gifts out of love and gratitude to God.

Together, we help God to build the Kingdom, and our small, individual acts can grow into something greater than we could ever imagine. As we live out the call to stewardship, our relationship with God will deepen, and we will witness growth and vibrancy in our parishes. In this way, we are enriched through the fullness of God's blessings.

OUR LADY QUEEN OF PEACE EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 14

**Scripture Scholar Catherine
UpChurch Presentation**
12:30 pm and 6:30 pm

SEPTEMBER 20/21

Hospitality Weekend After all Masses

OCTOBER 1

Respect Life Month begins with special
information events each weekend

OCTOBER 4

Mass of Anointing in Church
11:00 am followed by a light lunch reception

OCTOBER 7

Mental Health Presentation
6:30 pm featuring guest speaker Bishop
Donald Hying

OCTOBER 12

New Parish Member Welcome Brunch
11:15 am Mass, Program and Brunch
follow in Gathering Space

OCTOBER 18/19

**Hospitality Weekend After all Masses
& St. Vincent DePaul Big Truck in the
Parking Lot**

OCTOBER 25

Confirmation Mass in Church - 7:00 pm

NOVEMBER 2

Mass of Remembrance in Church - 11:15 am

NOVEMBER 3

**Estate Planning With QP in Mind Seminar
in Gathering Space - 6:30 pm**

NOVEMBER 13

Indigenous Stations of the Cross - 5:30 pm

NOVEMBER 14

**Queen of Peace Silent Auction at
Monona Terrace - 7:30 pm**

NOVEMBER 15/16

Hospitality Weekend After all Masses

NOVEMBER 24

**Ecumenical Thanksgiving Service
in Church - 7:00 pm, Reception following**

NOVEMBER 27

Thanksgiving Mass in Church - 9:00 am

The Season of Creation: A Season to Be Grateful!

Submitted by Caleb Mitchell, Director of Liturgy & Pastoral Music

By the time you read this, the Season of Creation will be underway! What is the Season of Creation, you might ask? This special time to reflect and celebrate God's Creation was called for by Pope Francis in 2015. In the midst of a crisis of Creation, it is a time to reconcile ourselves with the world around us. Spanning September 1 (the Day of Care for Creation in the Catholic liturgical calendar) until October 4 (the feast of St. Francis of Assisi, patron saint of Creation), the celebration of this time period has grown in recent years. The USCCB (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops) encourages the celebration of this season in our country, offering some suggestions on how we, as people who are one with God's Creation and stewards of Creation, can participate. Some of the ways that the Bishops offer are identifying reusable resources rather than relying on disposables, like grocery bags, dinnerware, etc., including a prayer of thanksgiving for the food that sustains us that comes from the earth before we eat, participating more fully in the celebration of the Eucharist in which all Creation is united, and reconciling ourselves with our hurting planet.

In our efforts here at Our Lady Queen of Peace, we recently hosted an evening celebration of the 10th anniversary of *Laudato Si'* (Care for Our Common Home), written by Pope Francis in 2015. Many people gathered for a sustainable meal, followed by a presentation on the impact that *Laudato Si'* has had, and finally an outdoor prayer circle to praise God for the gift of Creation. We also have transformed a few of the flower beds around the QP campus to pollinator friendly areas to help the animals that make growing our food possible. This fall, we will celebrate the new Mass for the Care for Creation at one of our new Wednesday 5:30pm Masses. This Mass text was recently released by the Vatican and was celebrated soon after by Pope Leo at an outdoor Mass. More opportunities to richly celebrate this Season of Creation will be coming, so let's stay in touch! We have so much to celebrate as members of God's Creation! In closing, pray with this text from the Cantic of the Sun.

The Cantic of the Sun

From the Cantic of the Creatures by St. Francis of Assisi, adapted by Marty Haugen.

The heavens are telling the glory of God, and all creation is shouting for joy! Come, dance in the forest, come, play in the field, and sing, sing to the glory of the Lord!

Praise for the sun, the bringer of day, he carried the light of the Lord in his rays; the moon and the stars who light up the way unto your throne.

Praise for the wind that blows through the trees, the seas' mighty storms, the gentlest breeze; they blow where they will, they blow where they please to please the Lord.

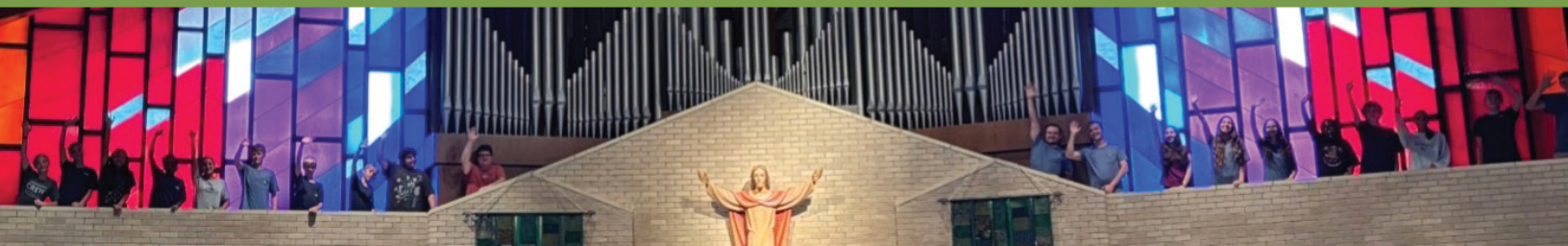
Praise for the rain that waters our fields, and blesses our crops so all the earth yields; from death until life her mystery revealed springs forth in joy!

Praise for the fire who gives us his light, the warmth of the sun to brighten our night; he dances with joy, his spirit so bright, he sings of you!

Praise for the earth who makes life to grow, the creatures you made to let your life show; the flowers and trees that help us to know the heart of love.

Praise for our death that makes our life real, the knowledge of loss that helps us to feel; the gift of yourself, your presence revealed to lead us home.

Reprinted under OneLicense A703-703



Disciple Camp 2025

1 WEEK • 19 STUDENTS • 3 VEHICLES

Submitted by Cheryl Horne,
Pastoral Associate

- **Over 51 pounds of produce** from the Lacy Community Garden to the St. Vincent dePaul food pantry.

- **Lots of storybooks sorted and read** aloud as well as countless diapers prepared for gifting at Babies & Beyond.

- **1 holy half hour** at Eucharistic Adoration in our Chapel.

- **2 pallets of donations** to Books for the World packed to be shipped overseas so children in need can have a book of their own.

- **12 tied blankets** for families sleeping in their cars in Madison.

- **Dozens of pews vacuumed** along with windows washed and chairs sanitized.

- **Hundreds of weeds pulled** at QP and the CMC.

- **1 epic water fight.**

- **Over 250 hours** spent glorifying God by serving the people of God.

- **Lots of great volunteers** to help Noah and Cheryl (shout-outs to Ellie Payne and her family, Caleb, Mrs. Vitale, Mr. Miller, Gary Muldoon at Books for the World, Brenda and Vicky at Babies & Beyond, Armando and Sarah at the CMC, Eliza and Peg and Jim at Lacy Garden, Jany at MMSD TEP program, the amazing Brandon Fox and, of course, Fr. Brian) copious quantities of ice cream and popsicles, a sufficiency of sunscreen and bug spray, and praying the Mass together twice.

It was a great week of unforgettable experiences, new friendships and deepening longtime bonds. And it was kind of amazing that we ran into QP parishioners everywhere we volunteered. Not because we planned it that way. Our parish has such a rich and wonderful tradition of serving those in need in our community – just as Jesus calls us to.

Friendship and faith, service and sun ... all in the name of God.

What better way to spend a week in the summer.



Planted in God's House: The Parish-School Partnership at Our Lady Queen of Peace

Submitted by Mary Jo Vitale, School Principal

At Our Lady Queen of Peace, our parish and school share more than a name – we share a mission. We are truly *Planted in God's House*, growing together in faith, service, and community. The strong bond between parish and school ensures that our students are not only academically prepared but spiritually formed, learning that faith is lived out in daily life.

The parish supports our school in ways that are spiritual, financial, and administrative. Our Faith Formation team – **Cheryl Horne, Kay Schachte, and Noah Gonring** – walk alongside our teachers, enriching religious education with professional guidance, resources, and opportunities to deepen each child's relationship with Christ. They help our students actively participate in the liturgy, giving them a deeper understanding of the Mass. It is no surprise that many of our graduates continue to serve as liturgical ministers or volunteer in parish and community ministries, locally and even nationally.

Our partnership extends beyond the classroom through the **Stewardship and Development Office**, led by **Sue Godfrey**, whose vision fosters a unified community of faith, service, and generosity. Events like *A Night in Bethlehem* bring parishioners and school families together, creating shared experiences that strengthen our bonds. This year's shared theme – *Planted in God's House* – invites us all to reflect on how our faith roots us in God's love and calls us to grow together as one family.

We are especially blessed by the leadership and pastoral care of **Fr. Brian and Fr. Jay**, whose presence in our classrooms, joyful interaction with students, and celebration of the Eucharist make our parish school feel like home. Their example reminds our students that the Church is not only a place we visit, but a community where we belong.

Our students are active participants in parish-wide service opportunities, from the CMC Meal Program and Luke House to the Allied Drive Giving Tree and the Respect Life Baby Bottle Drive. Through these experiences, they learn that we are part of something bigger than ourselves, called to share our gifts and serve those in need.

It has been said by local high school administrators: "*Queen of Peace students are the first to identify a need, the first to volunteer to help, and the first to lead.*" These words capture the heart of our mission. As a parish school, our purpose is to give students the tools to live their faith through community, service, and stewardship.

Together planted in God's house, we grow strong in faith and bear fruit in service – today, tomorrow, and for generations to come.

"Queen of Peace students are the first to identify a need, the first to volunteer to help, and the first to lead."

- Local High School Administrator

DID YOU KNOW?

- Our Faith Formation team partners with teachers to integrate Catholic faith into daily learning.
- Parish leadership visits classrooms and celebrates Mass with students weekly.
- Students serve in parish ministries and outreach programs year-round.

Faith Formation: A Lifelong Journey

Submitted by Kay Schachte, Director of Religious Education and OCIA

Faith formation is a lifelong journey that helps us grow closer to God and deepen our understanding of the Catholic Faith. From young children discovering God's love, to teens seeking purpose, to adults growing in discipleship – each stage of life offers opportunities to live out our baptismal call.

For children, this journey begins at home with parents as the first teachers of faith, and continues through parish faith formation programs. During these formative years, the seeds of faith are planted and nurtured by a supportive community.

Our Religious Education program for Grades 1–6 helps children grow in love for God and His Church. Through engaging lessons, prayer, scripture, and activities, they learn about Jesus, the sacraments, moral living, and the importance of being part of the Church. Guided by dedicated catechists and supported by families, this program lays the foundation for a lifelong journey of faith and full participation in the sacramental life of the Church.

If you have not registered your child yet, please visit the Faith Formation tab on the Queen of Peace website to complete registration. Classes start for the year on October 5.



Congratulations, Father Brian Wilk!

On Sunday, August 10, 2025, at the 8:00 AM Mass, Father Brian Wilk was officially installed as Pastor of Our Lady Queen of Peace Parish. The installation was led by Bishop Donald Hying, who presided over the ceremony in front of parishioners, staff, and members of the parish leadership councils.

This special moment marks a significant milestone in our parish's history. In the 80 years since Queen of Peace was founded, Father Brian becomes only the fifth Pastor to serve our faith community. His leadership, warmth, and dedication are a blessing to us all.

Congratulations,
Father Brian!
We look forward
to walking this
journey of faith
with you.



Join us for an evening of rustic charm, bidding, and bonding at our annual

Adult Social & Silent Auction



FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 14TH
7:30 PM - 11 PM | MONONA TERRACE

BEVERAGES • DESSERT • MUSIC • LATE-NIGHT SNACKS

Scan the QR Code to get
your early bird tickets,
sponsor, or donate!



Learn more at www.qopcauction.org



Join a QP Choir!

9:30 Mass Adult Choir

Rehearsals on Wednesdays at 7:00 p.m. in Church.

*First Rehearsal on September 3

11:15 Mass Contemporary Choir

Rehearsals on Tuesdays at 7:00 p.m. in the Parish Center

*First Rehearsal on September 9

Children's Choirs (PreK-Eighth Grade)

Cherub Choir (PreK-K)

Children's Choir (1-4)

Contemporary Youth Choir (5-8)

Adult/Young Adult Praise & Worship Ensemble

Busy Person Choir

Handbell Choir

Contact Caleb Mitchell
(caleb.mitchell@qopc.org – 608.231.4618)
to join a Choir @ QP!

Ushering in Gratitude

Submitted by Caleb Mitchell, Director of Liturgy & Pastoral Music



There is much to be thankful for in our

Queen of Peace community. The part of our community life that we should be most grateful for is gathering to celebrate the Eucharist, which is our thanksgiving as a gathered people to God. To celebrate our liturgies fully and vibrantly, there are many hands that need to be involved, from various volunteers that lector, distribute communion, serve, greet, set up and coordinate the pieces of the liturgy, sing and play the piano and organ, and present the gifts of bread and wine on behalf of the community. One role that often goes unnoticed and is necessary for our celebration is the role of usher.

The usher ministry has a long history at Our Lady Queen of Peace. Many who are reading this will remember George Gibert, Queen of Peace usher captain for 48 years. George was extremely dependable – he set the bar high. When George decided to pass the head usher duty to someone else, Nick Beerntsen was the man for the job. Nick had ushered with George Gibert for a decade before he took the reins, so he was prepared to accept the challenge, with George at his side to assist in the first year.

~~~~~  
**As a parish community, we are grateful for the impact that Nick had on all of us.**  
~~~~~

Nick continued to set the bar high. He ensured ushers were not only prepared for our regular weekend Masses and that usher teams were full (with the usher captains' help) but was always on top of finding coverage for special events, Christmas, Holy Week, Holy Days, large funerals – anything that was needed. Nick also faithfully represented the QP Ushers on the Liturgy Commission for many years with Joe Keyes, one of the 5:00 pm usher captains. Nick brought practical wisdom and advice to the Commission's discussions. He was the first to offer his help to the Commission when something needed to be done.

This July, Nick was taken from this earthly life and entered eternal life with God. We are grateful for all that Nick did to make Our Lady Queen of Peace a safe and comfortable place for everyone by putting others' needs first. We remember the countless times he hung up his hat in the usher's room to get ready for ushering duty. Think of how many bulletins and worship aids Nick handed out and greeted us with! As a parish community, we are grateful for the impact that Nick had on all of us.

One of the ways we can consider sharing our gratitude is by sharing our gifts with others and by doing so, glorify God. Ushering is a perfect way to offer our time and gifts to God. A wish list item that Queen of Peace has had for many years is to increase participation in our usher ministry by 20 new ministry members. Ushering offers the opportunity to welcome fellow Mass-goers, help people find a comfortable seat in church, assist with taking up the collection, and direct our communion procession. As any usher would agree, ushering is a rewarding way to be an active participant in the liturgy and to find a place to belong in the usher family. As Nick would end his usher recruitment notices, "Ushering is for anyone – women, men, older teens to older folks – and doesn't require a large time commitment." Would you like to know more about being an usher or serving as an usher? Director of Liturgy Caleb Mitchell would be ecstatic to welcome you as a new usher. (caleb.mitchell@gopc.org/608.231.4618)

Living the Journey God Has Laid out for You...

Submitted by Cheryl Horne, Pastoral Associate

We are all on a faith journey; each of us ... set on a different road laid out by God. And we can choose to follow where God leads or not.

But sometimes it's hard to know where the journey is taking you ... or where you've been, exactly ... until you come to a sacred doorway.

And that's just what Nick Davidson and Liam Bruni are standing in right now: a sacred doorway. As members of the Verona Class of 2025, they are preparing to move off to college in the fall. Both were active in their faith lives in high school. Both were confirmed, both went on Mission Trip, both served on the St. Vincent de Paul Youth Council, both served on Team Jesus, both won the Parish Service Award (along with their good friend Davin Knudsen), and both have made plans for their academic life, social life, dorm life ... and faith life in college. Their recent pilgrimage with other young adults to Rome was a part of that sacred doorway into what is next: the doorway from high school into all that God has in store.

But what got them here?

What started their faith journeys that led them to want to spend their senior summer on pilgrimage to Rome?

I sat down with them both recently on a Saturday afternoon and asked them exactly that.

What sparked your journey of faith?

NICK: I was raised in the faith, my parents went to church (and they still do). We were involved, but it didn't really connect. It didn't become my OWN until I was a part of the St. Vincent de Paul Youth Council,

serving hot chocolate down on State Street on a REALLY cold night my freshman year. We met some people who lived on the street – and we were just talking. It started out being about service hours, but when I was surrounded by other people my age who loved God and we were talking with people who had nothing, and laughing and serving, it changed everything for me. My faith became my own.

LIAM: Mine is similar but different. My family went to church regularly. I was raised in the faith, and then a few years ago I was at a retreat camp – at a YoungLife retreat. I heard one of the counselors do a witness talk about making your relationship with Jesus personal. I had prayed for a sign – a sign to know that all this faith stuff was real. And that witness talk was it. I sat with God right after that for like 15 minutes, crying, because suddenly – I got it. I knew that God was real and was with me. It set me on a path of daily devotion and wanting to know God more deeply every day and to help others know God too.

You just got back from a senior summer pilgrimage to Rome and Assisi. What was the highlight for you?



Nick and Liam in St. Peter's square

LIAM: For me it was coming up from the lower level into St. Peter's Basilica for the first time. Seeing the altar and the Papal throne illuminated by beams of sunlight was incredibly beautiful. It's gorgeous. And it's right THERE. I had been seeing it all my life on TV and in pictures – and now I was there. I'd love to go back and just be able to spend all the time I wanted in prayer in the different churches and basilicas ... there wasn't enough time to pray. I loved seeing all the places – like where Pope Francis is

buried in St. Mary Major – but I want to have more time to pray in those places.

NICK: I had two moments. One in Rome and one in Assisi. In Rome, the perfect holy moment was the Scala Sancta – the steps that Jesus walked on his way to meet Pilate. Tradition says you go up those steps on your knees. It was amazing! I just wanted more time to pray going up the steps. In Assisi, Liam and I and two other guys were sort of walking aimlessly in the streets of the city, and at the end of the road in the most random spot there was a ledge overlooking the beautiful countryside scenery. And there is a small church sitting right on the edge of that ledge and we went inside and it was beautiful but very small. We sat in there and prayed for awhile and it kind of spoke to me that whatever path you may take, no matter where you turn, God will always be at the end of it. And in the end, God is what's important.

Beautiful. So with everywhere you've been - literally and spiritually - what do you think God wants for your future? What are you hoping for in college? And how do you think God is calling you to use the gifts and talents you've been given to help others and to serve and give glory to God?

NICK: I know that two gifts I have right now are health and youth. I can use those two gifts to do what Jesus calls us to do: to help feed those who are hungry and clothe those who are in need and help provide shelter for those who are homeless. To use what I have to show people – all people – that God loves them. I can even do fundraising – like that hot chocolate sale with the St. Vincent de Paul Youth Council years ago. Being able to give tangible things to people who need them – all to show them that God loves them. I can do that.

LIAM: I want to show people that you can find God in joy. I want to use the gifts of faith and hope and joy to show people the true joy that comes from the love of God. I want to help other people find the path to God – the path God has laid out for them. THAT's the path to happiness, the path to finding your passion, the path to making others happy ... it's sharing the love of God.

Beautiful. Are you both sure you are only 18? What advice do you have for people who are younger (or older) than you who want to find their own path to a deeper relationship with God?

LIAM: Don't judge. Don't let what others have said about someone determine how you feel about them. Meet everyone as though you were meeting Jesus. How would you treat Jesus if you were meeting him?

It doesn't matter if they are younger or older or richer or living in a park – you are meeting Jesus and you can learn something from meeting them. We are all made in his image, we are all unique, and God loves each of us and wants us to love and look after each other.

NICK: My advice: Remember that we wouldn't be here if it weren't for God. We are called to live for God and give thanks to God every day by using everything we have been blessed with to serve others.



Liam & Nick and a future filled with faith

We should be living the attitude of gratitude every day.

Truth.

I sat thinking about these two young men I have known for over six years after they left that Saturday, and I came up with an idea.

So, here's my hope, and my plan:

Watch for the followup article to this one in four or five years when Nick and Liam are ready for the next sacred doorway, and we'll see where their faith journey has led them.

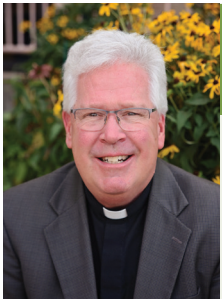
Until then, we'll try to follow your advice guys: Live the attitude of gratitude, and use the gifts and talents you've been given by God to share the love of God with those around us.

I like it.



401 South Owen Drive
Madison, WI 53711-1539

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Madison, WI
Permit No. 1105



Father Brian's Message

Dear Friends,

We are happy to provide you with a copy of our most recent Queen of Peace Spirit newsletter. It contains valuable information on parish happenings and initiatives. Please read it and share it with others you know who may have an interest.

Two words should stand out to you in this newsletter. GRATITUDE and STEWARDSHIP. Gratitude needs to be at the heart of our faith experience. All we have is gift. We need to give thanks each day in our prayer life for the blessings bestowed on us as a parish and as individuals. God's gifts are so expansive that we can take them for granted at times. But remember, God always provides, and for that we need to give thanks.

Living a life of gratitude should lead us to a life of stewardship in the parish. Stewardship is not just about money and finance. Stewardship is a way of life. It is the grateful

response of all disciples who recognize God's gifts and who share these gifts in the love of God and neighbor.

As we move forward into this life of stewardship, we will be focusing on prayer, formation, service, and hospitality. These are things that we can all take part in and make part of our faith experience. We will be working together across the parish landscape to grow this sense of gratitude and stewardship in all that we do.

In his first speech as Pope, Leo XIV said the following, "God loves us, God loves you all, and evil will not prevail. All of us are in God's hands. So, let us move forward, without fear, together, hand in hand with God and with one another." Let's grow in gratitude and a life of stewardship.

Blessings!

Rev. Brian J. Webb

Special thanks to the staff and parishioners of Queen of Peace for their contributions to this newsletter.