



PEACETIMES

Prince of Peace Newsletter

WINTER
2025-2026

Latest Pillars Project Expands Parking, Creates Better Traffic Flow



In early November, the finance council approved moving forward on the completion of the landscaping to Country Club Lane and finishing the west entry of the church to include underground sprinklers and grass seeding. Two additional parking lots will provide 68 additional parking places. Paved driveways will connect the parking lots to Country Club Lane. More options for entering and exiting will make traffic flow more smoothly.

Funding for this project is a part of the 2026 Pillars Campaign that began on January 1, 2006. \$108,000 is remaining to meet this year's goal. If you are interested in donating to Pillars, or this project specifically, please contact the church office.



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Five Reasons Your Child Should Be an Altar Server

Spiritual Growth

- Develops prayer life: Kids learn to pray with intention and focus.
- Understands the Mass better: Serving helps them grasp the liturgy and Eucharist.
- Draws them closer to God: Altar serving fosters a personal connection with God.



Sense of Purpose

- Special role: Kids feel important and valued in the church.
- Ownership: They take pride in their service and responsibilities.
- Leadership skills: Altar serving lays groundwork for future leadership roles.

Builds Confidence

- Overcomes shyness: Serving in front of others helps kids feel comfortable.
- Public speaking: They learn to communicate clearly and confidently.
- Responsibility: Kids feel trusted and capable.



Learning Service

- Selflessness: Altar serving teaches kids to put others first.
- Humility: Serving others without seeking recognition.
- Role modeling: Kids inspire others with their service.



Community Involvement

- Belonging: Kids feel part of the church family.
- Connections: They build relationships with clergy, staff, and parishioners.
- Tradition: Participating in Mass connects them to the wider Church.



SEEK 2026



Seven high school seniors, joined by four chaperones, headed to Denver on January 1st for the annual SEEK Conference.

SEEK is a five-day conference hosted by the international Catholic outreach organization, FOCUS (Fellowship of Catholic University Students). It is one of the largest regular gatherings of Catholics in the world and brings together thousands of people. This conference features dynamic Catholic speakers, daily

Mass, opportunities to receive Reconciliation, adoration, and builds Catholic community with people from around the country. This year's conferences were held simultaneously in Columbus, OH, San Antonio, TX, and Denver, CO.

Historically, SEEK was a college-focused event, but it now serves Catholics of all ages, including families, priests, and religious figures.

All of the Kearney students had an amazing time and are planning to return as freshmen in college next year. The 2027 SEEK Conference will be held in Columbus and Austin, January 1-5.





SAINT KATHARINE DREXEL

Katharine Drexel, the second American-born canonized saint, was born into great wealth in Philadelphia in 1858. Her mother died soon after Katharine's birth, and she was raised by her father and stepmother, both known for their philanthropy, especially their generosity to the poor.

As a young heiress, Katharine traveled extensively across the U.S. and became aware of the difficult circumstances faced by Native Americans and African Americans. After her father and stepmother died, Katharine determined to use her inherited wealth to help these groups.

Traveling in Europe in 1887, she asked Pope Leo XIII for help in sending missionaries to the many institutions she funded, including a school in South Dakota. The pope challenged the heiress to undertake the mission herself.

After much discernment, Katharine decided to devote not just her fortune (worth more than \$200 million today), but her life to the poor. In 1889, at thirty, she entered the Sisters of Mercy.

But Drexel continued to feel a special call to serve African and Native Americans. In 1891, she started her own religious congregation, the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament for Indians and Colored People (S.B.S). The order's first American Indian school was launched in Santa Fe, New Mexico, three years later.

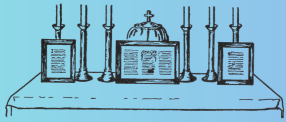
Mother Katharine eventually created eleven more schools on Indian reservations, nearly a hundred for African Americans in rural areas and the inner cities of the South, and in 1915, established a teachers college that would eventually grow to become the first and only

Catholic university for African Americans, Xavier University in New Orleans. In 1922, in Beaumont, Texas, the Ku Klux Klan threatened to tar and feather the local pastor and bomb his church if he did not close down one of Mother Drexel's schools. The sisters prayed for God's intercession to resolve the threat. Within days a tornado destroyed the Klan's headquarters. Two Klansmen died, and the Klan never bothered the sisters again.

In 1935, a severe heart attack forced Mother Katharine into prayerful retirement at her motherhouse in Philadelphia. Nevertheless, she continued to fight for, and fund, civil rights causes. During the 1950s, her sisters in Harlem and New Orleans were jeered at and called derogatory names, and Mother Katharine's response was to ask the sisters if they prayed for their detractors. She died in 1955, and was beatified by Pope Saint John Paul II in 1988, and canonized in 2000. Her feast day is March 3.

www.catholicstewardship.com





Why Does the Priest Kiss the Altar?

You may have noticed that after the priest proceeds in for Mass, he genuflects to the tabernacle and when he reaches the altar, he kisses it, and when Mass concludes, he kisses it again. Do you know why? Here is your answer!

Consecration: The altar is consecrated by a bishop, which sets it apart for divine worship. The kiss serves as a recognition of this special status and the altar's role in the liturgy.

Biblical Roots: The act of kissing as a sign of homage is found in the Bible, where it is associated with submission and respect for God. This Biblical context enriches the understanding of the priest's gesture during Mass.

Symbol of Christ: The altar is not a piece of furniture. It represents Christ Himself, His sacrifice, His body, and His victory. At the beginning of Mass, the priest kisses the altar to greet Christ. At the end of Mass, he kisses it again to take leave of the Lord who has just offered Himself.

Ancient Tradition: In the early Church, altars were built over the tombs of martyrs. To kiss the altar was also to honor those who gave their lives for Christ. That tradition remains. Every kiss acknowledges the communion of saints and the blood that testified to the faith we celebrate.

Connection to Martyrs: Historically, altars were often built over the tombs of martyrs, and the relics of saints are sometimes embedded within them. Kissing the altar can also be seen as an act of veneration for these holy figures, acknowledging their sacrifices for the faith.

As Mass comes to an end, the priest does something many people rarely notice. Before he leaves the sanctuary, he returns to the altar and kisses it again. This is not repetition. It is completion!

There is also a deeply human meaning. We kiss those we love when we depart, not because they disappear, but because the bond remains. The priest's kiss says, "I am leaving this place, but I remain united to You."

This final kiss teaches the faithful something essential: Mass does not end by walking away from Christ, it ends by carrying Him with us. The altar remains sacred. The presence of Christ remains real, and the mission continues beyond the sanctuary walls.

I hope the next time you see a priest kissing the altar, you will remember what it means.

For more you can read: In Exodus 29:37, In Leviticus 8:15, The Book of Hebrews 13:10, Psalm 118:27.

If you have any questions about your faith, please email me at lkawagga@gidiocese.org.



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Office Hours: 9am-4pm Mon-Friday

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