

Dear Fellow Petes,

I am pleased to bring you the SECOND ANNIVERSARY ISSUE of our Parish Newsletter, Built on the Rock! At the beginning of every publication I am fearful that there will not be enough content, then all the articles start coming in and my editorial skills are tested to assure that I can get everything in that is required for the quarter!

This last year has seen many changes in the parish and school — improvements and changes that help to enrich our parish and school community: Pasta @ Petes; Coffee, Church & Chat; new approaches to bible studies; the Parish Community Forum, Lenten Prayer Services; listing ministries in the weekly bulletin; members of the children's choir acting as 'junior' cantors; Mini-Oktoberfest Respect Life Sunday; new playground equipment; three graduates from the Called and Gifted Program; a new organist for Saturday night Mass, Dean Griffiths; a new School Board President, Kevin Noonan; a new school website. Also, the sad passing of our dear associate pastor Father Folger; and the happy addition of our new associate pastor, Father Semmer.

The parish staff has reviewed the Rock Cycle's Long Range Advancement Plan (LRAP) and will be deciding which improvements the Implementation Teams will start on. The LRAP is included in its entirety, please take a look at it — starting on page 9. I want to thank all of you who participated in the Rock Cycle this year and look for your continued support as we proceed to the Implementation Phase, which will begin at the Kick-Off Meeting on January 25, 2009, 1—3 pm, Father Frawley Hall. All Parishioners are encouraged to attend!

Because next year will bring many more changes to the parish, including the retirement of our dear pastor, Father Anglim (by the way, we will be celebrating his retirement at the 2009 Festival), as well as transitioning to a new pastor, I would like to provide the following prayer that I am encouraging all of us to use in the coming months.

*O Faithful God, as your people, we cherish our memories and our history as a sacred gift. We ask you to guide us in our time of transition. We need your wisdom that we might be receptive to change, conversion and growth. We need your grace to redirect our hearts that we may be willing to offer ourselves in joyful service. Do not allow fear, ignorance or pride to limit the work of your spirit, nor custom to prevent the creativity within us from bearing fruit. Open our hearts to the call of the Gospel.*

**NOTE:** The calendar in this newsletter includes not only upcoming Christmas events, but starting in February, Lenten activities as well. Let's not forget December 8, Holy Day of Obligation, the Immaculate Conception. Please refer to the calendar on pages 6 and 7 for Mass times for December 8, December 24, December 25 and January 1.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all my fellow Petes and thank you for a wonderful year!



## Father Folger's Last Mass

Shortly after his ordination, nearly every new priest returns to his home parish to say his first Mass. Kneeling in the pews are his proud parents, his friends and his relatives. It's a very special occasion.

The young man is burning with zeal. He wants to get going - to say Mass, to administer the sacraments, to act as an intermediary between God and man.

Years later (40? 50? 60?) this same man says his last Mass --- although he may not know it at the time. His parents are long gone. He is much older now. His hair is gray and his face wrinkled. He may no longer be able to genuflect and his zeal has been tempered by a lifetime of service to God's people.

On a Monday morning early in July, Fr. Folger said his last Mass at St. Peter's. Deacon Gagnon assisted him. It was obvious to the 25 or 30 people in attendance that he was quite weak. He mounted the altar steps with hesitation.

After Deacon Gagnon read the gospel, Fr. Folger made his way slowly to the lectern to give a brief homily. He said a few words and then stopped. There were several moments of silence. Finally he said, "I think I've lost my train of thought." Then he turned and went back to the altar.

Later --- it might have been shortly after the consecration --- he seemed somewhat confused. He didn't seem to know what prayer to say next.

Because he was so weak, he did not distribute communion but took a seat at the altar instead. After communion, Deacon Gagnon put the Eucharist back in the tabernacle and sat down. At this point, Fr. Folger usually waited a few moments before continuing the celebration. But he continued to sit there. Time dragged on. Finally, Deacon Gagnon said something to him. Had he fallen asleep? Who knows? But he roused himself, somehow finding the strength to give the final blessing. Then he left the altar.

That was the last time Fr. Folger said Mass at St. Peter's.

Less than two months later, on August 29<sup>th</sup>, the cancer that had racked his body for months finally claimed his life.

On the back of the memorial cards available at his funeral on September 3<sup>rd</sup>, was a testimonial to the life of a priest written by Lacordaire, the 19<sup>th</sup> century French Dominican.

To be a priest, it read, is "... to go from men to God and offer Him their prayers; to return from God to men to bring pardon and hope...."

This Fr. Folger did, as long as he could.

*Contributed by Bob Zuiker*