

OCTOBER, 2022

# ST. PETER CATHOLIC SCHOOL

*Respect • Responsibility • Reverence*



**DOZENS OF PETS** received a blessing from Fr. Joseph on the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi on the afternoon of Oct. 4.



**ST. FRANCIS** wrote, "All praise to you, Oh Lord, for all these brother and sister creatures." We're guessing he would love to see the bond between our students, teachers, and their pets!



# HIGHLIGHTS FROM HEAD TEACHER MIRTA DÍAZ



## "St. Francis of Assisi"

On Oct. 4 each year, the Church remembers one of the most significant saints of our Catholic faith, and a great influence in the evangelization of the new world, St. Francis of Assisi, patron saint of animals, environmentalists, and veterinarians. Surely many of us know many important facts about St. Francis. For example, he renounced his wealth to take care of the most marginalized in his city and he formed the Order of the Franciscans. He was the first to set up a living nativity scene and he showed great love and respect for creation.

St. Francis was the first saint whom I knew by name and who greatly impacted my life. I must have been 7 or 8 years old; I remember sitting on my grandparents' patio reading a comic book. My grandmother, a lay Franciscan

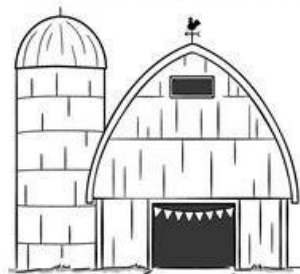


, approached me and snatched my paperback and put into my hands a small illustrated book with the story of St. Francis and the lepers. That was more than 35 years ago. While I have never been able to remember what the book that my grandmother took from my hands was about, I have never forgotten the shocking story with which she replaced it. The story and name of St. Francis of Assisi made a huge impact on me, just as they forever changed the way many missionaries around the world preach -- by their lives' example, and if necessary, by using words, as St. Francis would say.

## CALENDAR

- Oct. 13: NO Afterschool (*Teacher in-service*)
- Oct. 18: SAC at 5:45 pm
- Oct. 19: "101 Dalmatians" at Four Rivers Cultural Center
- Oct. 20: End of the first quarter
- Oct. 25: Report cards distributed
- Oct. 26 & 27: Parent/teacher conferences
- Nov. 5: Barn Dance

New Location! At the Kirkpatrick Center on the school campus!



\* must be 21 or over to attend \*

## ST. PETER CATHOLIC SCHOOL BARN DANCE

6<sup>P</sup><sub>M</sub> | SATURDAY  
NOVEMBER 5th

All proceeds benefit St. Peter Catholic School  
(541)889-7363 | [www.stpetercatholicsschool.com](http://www.stpetercatholicsschool.com)

**Learn more about the City of Ontario's plan to give \$100 to every child, K-12:  
[www.oregoncollegesavings.com/ontario-promise](http://www.oregoncollegesavings.com/ontario-promise)**

# MEET ST. PETER'S PASTOR/PRINCIPAL, FR. JOSEPH P. THOMAS, CST

## Early Life

I was born in the small village of Manimala in Kottayam District, Kerala, India. Speaking about my family, let me borrow the words of St. Little Flower: *The good God gave me a father and mother more worthy of heaven than of earth.* My parents, Thomas and Annamma, are very traditional Catholic parents. They planted and kept the seeds of faith within me. Even today, I strongly believe that their faith, prayers, and sacrifices are the real strength of my life. I am the eldest son in my family. I have a brother and two sisters. All of my schooling was in my mother tongue, Malayalam. Childhood hardships never disappointed me.

***"I am here for you. Let us work together, together we can make a difference. By the grace of God, I am what I am."***

## Divine Call /Chosen

After my high school studies, I joined the Little Flower Congregation in 1990. The founder of the Congregation is Rev. Fr. Basicilius Panat, CST. The heavenly patroness of the congregation is St. Therese of Lisieux, who is generally known as Little Flower. After 14 years of formation, I became a priest on January 3, 2004. I have chosen as my motto: By the grace of God I am what I am.

## Educational Qualifications

I hold bachelor's degrees in Philosophy, Theology, and Education, as well as post-graduate studies in Education and Sociology.

## Life as a Teacher

During the first year of my priesthood, I was entrusted with the financial responsibility of our novitiate house. Next, I was asked to serve for ten years as the founding principal of a new school known as Little Flower School, Kaur, Tamilnadu.



For next three years I was appointed as the Novice Master of the CST Fathers of the St. Thomas Province.

## Life as a Shepherd

To understand and learn from a new culture and do my priestly ministry, in 2018 God chose me to work in the Diocese of Baker. For one year, I worked as the administrator of St. Edward the Martyr church in Sisters. Then, in July 2019, Most Reverend Bishop Liam Cary entrusted me with the responsibility of pastor of Blessed Sacrament Catholic Church and St. Peter Catholic School.

# Now you know:

***Ursuline Academy of New Orleans has the distinction of being both the oldest and continuously operating school for girls and the oldest Catholic school in the U.S. Ursuline Academy was founded in 1727 by the Sisters of the Order of Saint Ursula.***

# SPCS to expand preschool to 3-year-olds

Recognizing the need for child care in Ontario and surrounding communities and that the preschool years are a time when many of the most basic habits and behaviors are formed, St. Peter Catholic School plans to add a Pre-kindergarten program for 3-year-olds beginning in January.

"We know parents want to entrust that their precious children are in the best possible care, in the best possible learning environment, and we believe we can offer that at St. Peter's," said Fr. Joseph Thomas, CST, school pastor and principal, explaining the reason for the expansion. "We also know that parents who experience the quality of education and child care when their children are young are more likely to continue their education here."

The school already has received \$17,000 in grant funds from the JTMF Foundation

for playground equipment. The JTMF Foundation was created by John and Tami Marick, the former owners of Consumer Cellular and supporters of Catholic education. According to Foundation representative Darin Porter, JTMF partners with amazing organizations who are

meaningfully impacting the lives of individuals today and focuses its efforts in the Pacific Northwest.

The school has written another grant for \$50,000 which will significantly help with start-up funding for this additional program.

"For me, and I know for many others, the formation of one's Catholic faith begins in early childhood," said Head Teacher Mirta Díaz. "We are

looking forward to serving more children and families with a high-quality early learning program that, like our current preschool program for 4-year-olds, will include a values-based Catholic education."



**MIDDLE SCHOOLERS at St. Peter's have an opportunity this year, to take an elective sewing class. They have learned basic hand stitches, how to sew on buttons, and are learning embroidery. Proudly, they have completed a couple of beautifully embroidered pillows.**