

THE NET WORKER

*The Newsletter of
St. Peter the Apostle Parish
River Edge, New Jersey*

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**FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK**

This month, our pastor Monsignor Slipe, will leave St. Peter's and begin a new job at the helm of St. Catherine's of Siena in Cedar Grove. We will miss him greatly, and are grateful for all the wonderful improvements he brought to our church. We have devoted this issue to some memories of Msgr., although the couple of pages here don't begin to describe the bonds, the comfort, the leadership and the fellowship he offered all of us during his time here as pastor. We wish him all the best.



Parting Thoughts of our Monsignor - Father Slipe -

FROM: *Mary Donohue* The minute we saw him in October 1994, we were comforted. The moment he addressed us in his first homily, we knew that we had found a pastor and friend. Now fifteen years later, he has become not only pastor and friend, but a dear and important part of our family and community.

From Father to Monsignor – his assignment to St. Peter the Apostle has brought us as a parish many blessings and moments of grace. The re-establishment of the Parish Council and the meaningful, responsible method of discernment of its members, the flowering of the Music Ministry, the thoughtful liturgies, Cornerstone, continuing faith education, St. Peter's many service ministries, the careful maintenance of our buildings and property, the prudent administration of our tithes, the generosity to those in need of spiritual or temporal help, the strong esprit de corps and bonds of affection, friendship and love that are characteristic of our parishioners – are all evidence of the presence of a loving Father at the head of our house of prayer.

We were so proud when Father became Monsignor in 2000! We are so grateful that in celebration of our 50th anniversary as a parish, he encouraged us to expand, modernize and beautify our Church. The Parish History, Forward in Faith, will record for all time the accomplishments, fun and companionship of our first 50 years. The tasteful art, sculptures and designing of the new church addition, and

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its heart, The Gathering Space, are perhaps Monsignor's most visible legacy to us. We are especially drawn to the sensitive and meditative connection between the magnificent Crucified Lord by Giorgio Atzori dominating the sanctuary, and the exquisite, strong ark-like tabernacle positioned also in the sanctuary but opposite and somewhat behind the Crucifix, imaginatively spanning time – the barren, empty wall between Cross and Tabernacle signifying the connection through the ages between Covenant, Cross and Eucharist.

Thank you, Monsignor-Father, for all the faith, peace, love, understanding, knowledge, justice, and happiness that you have brought us. May your parishioners at Saint Catherine of Siena love you as much as we have loved you, and may your new assignment be grace-full.

We will never forget you. Map Quest tells us that Cedar Grove is not so far – only 14 miles and 27 minutes away on a good traffic day! †

FROM: *Megan Brockmeier*

*Dear Monsignor Slipe,
I was sorry to hear that you are going to another parish. I will miss you but I know that you will be helping so many more people. I think it's cool that you baptized me and did my First Communion. I really enjoyed your homilies. Thank you for being such a great priest. I hope you come to visit us.
Love, Megan.*

FROM: *Pat Angelosante* My daughter lives in Connecticut and she does not miss going on the St. Peter's website every weekend just to read Msgr Slipe's letter in the Bulletin. I know she will miss his message.

FROM: *Bill & AnnMarie Decelle*

Dear Msgr. Slipe, we cannot thank you enough for the honest, loving, words of wisdom that you have shared with us over the past few years. Your advice has helped us tremendously and has given us a peace of mind that is irreplaceable. Thank you for taking the time to care about us and our struggles to be honest about what we should and can do to continue to move our family forward in life. You will be missed. Thank you, Thank you, Thank you. God Bless You.

FROM: *Jim Cockefair*

We were at a Saturday morning meeting at the Archdiocesan Center – Msgr. and the core team from Renew 2000. After thanking each person for giving up a Saturday morning to attend, the moderator went around the room and asked each person to tell everyone what they would normally be doing on a Saturday morning. Msgr. responded “Nothing, I’m just a priest and we only work on Sunday mornings.”

We hosted an Oktoberfest at our house. I found some ‘oom-pah-pah’ German drinking music that was playing somewhat loudly in the background. Well into the second CD, Msgr. said to me and the group, “Let me guess, you didn’t find these CD’s in the front of the store.”

FROM: *Julie Volmar*

When I was first married, we went to church all the time. Then we started having trouble and I lost my faith. One advent season, I returned to church, heard a rousing sermon by Slipe and have never looked back. He had a big hand in returning my faith!

FROM: *Jim & Joanne Mitchell-George*

One situation where Msgr. Slipe showed his compassion and concern was by holding a service on Sept. 11, 2001 to pray for those affected by the terrorist attacks. It is a credit that a spur-of-the moment event was held to bring the community together to pray. His words were comforting. In fact, he approached Jim and conveyed that he had been praying for him. It was a wonderful example of the church being there for those in their time of need.

FROM: *The DiBisceglie's*

During a Sunday homily, Monsignor spoke about giving to those in need. Something he said in his homily must have truly touched our three girls. That week, the girls and their friends sold lemonade to our neighbors. The following Sunday the girls said they had something to give to Mnsgr. They handed him their envelope, which may have contained \$3.50, but to them it felt like they were giving a \$100 to him. They told him they wanted their lemonade money to

go to a family in need. Monsignor cermemoniously took the envelope, gave them a huge smile and a wink, and said, “I know just the family that can use this.” The overwhelming feeling of joy that was felt by our daughters that day has stayed with them. Thank you Mnsgr. for that moment and for so many others...and for making Tony and me say “yes,” when we could have easily said “no.”

FROM: *Penny Muccia*

I have particular memories about Msgr. Slipe that are extremely meaningful to our family. Both of my sons received their First Communion with Msgr. Both of those occasions were 9:30 masses - 4 years apart -- and both were small groups of less than 12 children. I have pictures of my sons with Msgr. as their "communion picture". They are precious to us - not only because of the picture, or the coincidence that he was the priest presiding at their masses, but because of the very special and moving homilies he gave at those communions. His words fully moved our family and God Parents into action. One of the most important things that Msgr. has given to the Muccias is the willingness to "pick up the cross". And on those special occasions for each of my boys, the message of picking up the cross was transmitted to our family more deeply than we ever thought possible. Thank you for the opportunity.

FROM: *Rose & Joe Savino*

We count ourselves among the very fortunate ones who have the friendship of Msgr. Slipe. His spiritual leadership has been awesome. He has initiated and supported a record number of ministries, empowering us and other parish members to share and spread our faith.

On a personal level, we asked Msgr. Slipe several years ago for a special favor. He readily obliged us. To do so, he put his reputation on the line, based only on trust. We were extremely grateful and thank God that his trust was well placed.

We count Msgr. Slipe as a special friend, having enjoyed his company personally and experienced his warmth and sense of humor. One Saturday morning when we invited him for breakfast, he jokingly but knowingly decided to tell others who casually walked into the sacristy! It was one of the most enjoyable, unplanned get togethers we have had and thanks to all who came to our home, there was plenty to eat!!

Finally, we feel, Msgr. Slipe is truly a dedicated priest, whose deep spirituality is inspiring and whose beautifully-developed homilies and letters in the bulletin reveal a magnificent intellect that is enviable. We will personally keep in touch with him, but we will truly miss his presence among us here at St. Peter's.

FROM: *David Ashley*

In 1994, my wife Chris & I went to 9:30 Sunday mass. However, it wasn't a typical Sunday. Msgr. Slipe had been temporarily assigned to replace our former pastor. The parish was going through a difficult time and we, as well as the parish, were uncertain how to define exactly what we were feeling and how to address it, even to each other.

From the moment Msgr. Slipe stepped to the pulpit, his demeanor and words began to sooth the parish's wounds with his caring awareness of the pain inflicted, and thoughtful insight as to why we were all are drawn to Christ. Msgr. had begun the healing process. We knew that there was something special happening at St. Peter's and he was an extraordinary individual. It was a mass we will never forget.

Several years later, in 2002, Msgr. Slipe called for an informal Parish forum to discuss the scandals that had embroiled the Catholic Church & particularly Boston at that time. Earlier in the week the American Bishops had concluded a conference in Texas to address the situation, but their releases did little to ease the tensions or even outline a plan of action.

As he stepped to the podium to address the crowd without his traditional Roman Collar parish, Msgr. Slipe paused and looked directly into the eyes of each of the 50 or so parishioners who had gathered. In his typical straightforward fashion, he began to explain that this forum was called by and for the parish intended as platform for all to express their distress, disgust and outrage. And further, Msgr. Slipe declared that he too was a member of this parish. In this brief moment, Msgr. managed to console the parish while at the same time revealing himself as a vulnerable participant rather than just a spokesman fielding questions.

In the midst of all the complex issues and turmoil created by the revelations, the calm in his voice, combined with the tone of betrayal in his words, had set the stage for a frank discussion. The stress of the crowd began to diminish and the atmosphere changed. Those of us gathered went on to come to grips with our emotions, and this feeling was carried out into the community. Once again, Msgr. illustrated his leadership in bonding our Parish, not only between himself and the parishioners, but between each of us at St. Peter's and beyond. This is just another example of the significant difference Msgr. Slipe has made in how we view each other and aided in cultivating our community.

In 2004, shortly after the passing of my younger brother, Darrold, my mother was diagnosed with terminal illness, Myelodysplastic syndrome (MDS), a condition with some similarities to leukemia. Previously, she had been blessed with great health and enjoyed a totally independent lifestyle. Now at age 80, she was given a life expectancy of 6 months after a year of trying to establish the cause of her "weariness". To her, this was unacceptable.

Having visited with us regularly, she had often heard Msgr.

Slipe's sermons and was enamored with his spirituality, insight and particularly his "Boy Scout" persona. She would often approach him after mass and Msgr. always made the time to listen to her updates, questions and of course her request for a blessing. His caring manner brought her an incredible sense of peace and helped her forge the spirit and strength to battle the illness.

My mother passed away in 2006, 2 years longer than she was given. She always spoke of affectionately of Msgr.'s faith and passion as a priest. Msgr. presided at her funeral in Queens and gave her eulogy. He was eloquent, compassionate and helped bring life and death into spiritual perspective. To this day my family, scattered over NY & Florida, still speak of the peace, beauty and love that Msgr. Slipe brought to us that day.

FROM: *Patty, Rocco, Ricky, Emily,
and Patrick Rizzo*

Dearest Monsignor Slipe: When we moved to River Edge 6 years ago, we felt like we belonged to a beautiful community from the minute we entered St. Peter's. My children became altar servers, got involved with the choir and CCD, and eventually my son was asked to become a sacristan for the church. That was his proudest moment, and ours. Not to mention the wonderful world of Cornerstone and what it did for me at a very troubled time of my life. All of these blessed

things are a result of the wonders of Monsignor. Our lives would have never been the same without your presence. You have

You have given us so many reasons to want to come to church, a place that we can all call home.

given us so many reasons to want to come to church, a place that we can all call home. St. Peter's is a welcoming place for all and you have been the main reason. We love and will miss that warm smile and your wonderful sermons.

This is the third parish that I have been a member of in my life, and can honestly say that none could compare. It was probably because none of the parishes were lucky enough to have had such an extraordinary captain at the helm.

Good Luck to you at your new parish. You will be very missed by all who have been fortunate enough to have known what an incredible man you are. Many thanks for making our family, a special part of yours.

FROM: *The Lobley Family* During 9:30 mass several years ago, Msgr. gave an especially good homily. His homilies are always good, but this one really crackled. Afterward, my husband and I were complimenting him on it, and he chuckled and kind of rolled his eyes. "Oh boy," he said. "I thought I was doing the 11:00 today. I had something totally different prepared. And at about 9:20 I had to step in and change it for the children's mass." We were dumbfounded. That tight, focused and thought-provoking homily had come off the top his head! That is truly a gift and we are so lucky have shared in that. We will miss your homilies and your constant encouragement to live a deeper, more meaningful life.

FROM: *Martha Mulligan* Msgr. Slipe arrived at Saint Peter's while I was going through the RCIA program. During the year-long process our other priests attended our meetings and always had a meaningful and encouraging message. However, Msgr.'s. has always stayed fresh in my mind and so many years later, still resonates. He said "You think that you made the decision to join the RCIA program but God has called you to be here". Every RCIA meeting, we knew in our hearts, that we were called to be in the presence of one another and the Lord.

Through the years, my participation in different ministries has had many twists and turns. Often I don't know how I got involved, often I doubt my abilities, but then I remember -- "God has called me to be here." Simple words from our pastor who has been a blessing in our lives.

FROM: *Patty Walsh* I am a member of the Women's Cornerstone Team 13. On the eve of the candidates' weekend all of us were very busy setting up the Parish Center, the classrooms, the church and attending to all that needed to be done. Msgr. Slipe came to check on our progress and offer us his blessing. We all felt great and were ecstatic to be part of such a special event. At the end of his blessing he gave the following words of caution (paraphrased), "Just when you thought that all of your best laid plans were coming to fruition, something will go wrong". We were crushed - what did he mean? We had worked too hard for something to go wrong. Msgr. Slipe explained that the devil had a way of coming along just when things were going right and would try to undo do our great efforts, but he cautioned us not to let him interfere. I heeded his message all through the weekend and continue to do so in my daily life. Thank you Msgr. Slipe!

FROM: *Pat Rice* Monsignor's a good man. I always enjoyed the quick chat with him after Mass and his comments. The best part was getting to know him better serving on Cornerstone Team 11. He always had great insights and I couldn't have asked for anyone better to lead our team. We still know him as Monsignor, but we were able to know him as a guy that year. In addition, he was good to my aunt and uncle, former parishioners Frank and Rusty Rice. One of his first moments at St. Peter's was visiting my Uncle Frank in the hospital, a good memory for both.

FROM: *The Hawrahan's* In addition to Monsignors leadership, compassion, humor and friendship my family also really enjoys one tradition he started here at St. Peter's. We enjoy bringing back water in our travels to St. Peter's and participating in the Baptism of the Lord. I am happy to say that without much direction from me, my children make sure that the water is brought from somewhere that "represents" us as a family. I remember back to our trip to Ireland. I thought it would be neat if we brought water back from the Irish sea. We had travelled there from my husband's aunt's house that happens to overlook the Shannon river. My children vetoed my idea, and wanted to wait until we returned to Aunt Mary's house and collect water from the Shannon as it more represented our roots. Another year we visited various baseball stadiums, and my children made sure to collect the water from the furthest part of our journey. This past year we joined Tom on a convention the week after school ended in June. The kids were having so much fun being kids, and in the middle of it all, they stopped, found a water bottle, and collected water from Lake George on their own volition. I know my children enjoy the symbolism of how water connects us all, and take pride in celebrating the Baptism of the Lord mass. I also wonder how many times when they bless themselves do they think about our participation. This tradition has been so meaningful for our family, and we thank Monsignor for this rich tradition!



CORNERSTONE

One of the greatest gifts that Msgr. Slipe gave to St. Peter's was to bring Cornerstone to the Parish. For the over 750 participants who made Cornerstone through the years, the weekend was life-changing.

Cornerstone had started and was ongoing at a church in Upper Saddle River, when Msgr. Slipe hired Mary Bertani and the two brought it to St. Peters. The 27-hour weekend retreat was first done here in 1996, and was an instant success.

Since then there have been 13 years of weekends, each bringing renewed faith and life to the candidates and team members who participate. In addition, St. Peter's has been instrumental in setting up Cornerstone in other parishes in Chester, Wayne, and North Carolina. It takes vision, leadership and a lot of hard work to bring a program like that to a parish and keep it going. We thank you, Msgr., for bringing us Cornerstone.



WANT TO WRITE TO MSGR. SLIPE?

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