



St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church and Student Center

1150 28th Street, Des Moines, IA, 50311
Office@stcathrinedrake.org ~ 515-650-8646

27th Sunday in Ordinary Time ~ October 4, 2026

Autumn

The leaves are falling, falling as if from far up,
As if orchards were dying high in space.
Each leaf falls as if it were motioning “no.”
... We’re all falling . This hand here is falling,
And look at the other one. It’s in them all.
And yet there is One, whose hands
Infinitely calm, holding up all this falling.
--- Rainer Maria Rilke

[For] years my delight in autumn’s palette slipped into sadness as I watched the beauty die. Focused on the decline and fall of summer’s green growth, I allowed the prospect of death to eclipse all that’s life-giving about autumn. Then, I began to understand a simple fact: all the “falling” out there is full of promise. Seeds are being planted and leaves composted as earth prepares for yet another uprising of green.

[As] I experience the late autumn of my own life, I find nature a trustworthy guide. When I’m able to see how life “composts” and “seeds” us just as surely as autumn composts and seeds the earth, I’m better able to see how possibility gets planted in and through me even as things fall away.

Looking back, I see how often my losses laid the ground for new life. The job I got fired from opened me to look for work that was mine to do, the “road closed” sign turned me toward terrain I’m glad I traveled In each of these experiences, it felt like something was dying, and so it was. And yet amid all the dying, silently the seeds of new life were being sown: all I needed to do was pay attention to them.

That’s the lens through which I read “Autumn” by Rainer Maria Rilke. [His] final line is an “and yet.” Falling is not the end of the story, he says. There is a presence in our midst that quietly upholds us even as we fall.

Parker Palmer, *Living The Questions*, published on Substack, 31 October 2025. Lightly edited for length

PARISH STAFF

Very Rev. PJ McManus
Parochial Administrator (Pastor)
Very Rev. David Fleming
Pastoral Assistant

Jan Blessum-Business Manager
Megan Schultz-Campus Minister
Rachelle Watters-Office Manager

Director of Music
Dennis & Melinda Hendrickson

Director of Liturgical Ministries
Margaret Hanson

Deaf Ministry Coordinators
Gus and Dee Cordero

Ministry of Servant Leaders
John Chesser—CHAIR
Margaret Cavanagh
Gus Cordero
Melinda Hendrickson
Larry James
Robert Ebow McEwan
Mark Schmidt
Megan Schultz
Alexia Simonton

Ministry of Stewardship
Brendan Comito—CHAIR
Josh Beck
Patrick Carruthers-Green
Larry James
Annette Roth
Kristi Ryan
John Moellers

Ministry of Faith Formation
Laura Catherine Carruthers-Green

Ministry of Community Formation
Melinda Hendrickson

Ministry of Service
Margaret Cavanagh

Family and Children’s Ministry
Laura Catherine Carruthers-Green

Development Committee
Patrick Carruthers-Green

Hospitality Committee
Jan Wise

Communication Team
Brian Gongol

Safety Committee
Annette Roth

St. Catherine Dialogue Series
Mary-Claire Uselding

Our Vision

St. Catherine of Siena, a Newman community, is an inclusive “home away from home.”

Our Mission

Cultivate a spiritual home for students alongside other members to become who God called them to be and set the world on fire with Christ’s love.

Welcome to St. Catherine of Siena

Catholic Church and Student Center

New parishioners and students are invited to register online at stcatherinedrake.org or by contacting the parish office. Please notify the parish office when moving or with a change in phone number, address or email.

Campus Ministry

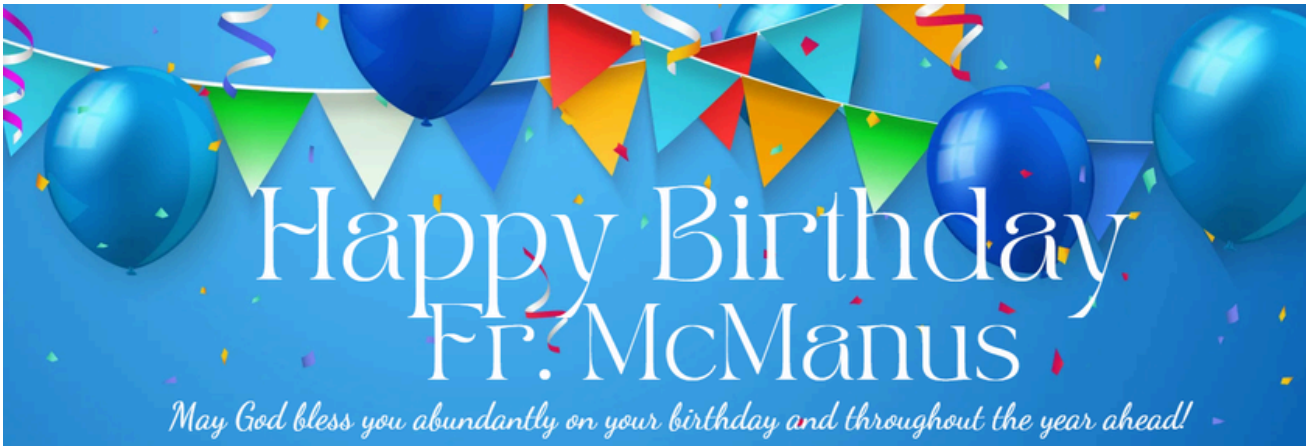
Family Weekend
MeganSchultz, Campus Minister

This weekend Drake is hosting families and loved ones for their annual Family Weekend. As a campus ministry team, we're excited to spend the weekend tailgating, meeting new people, and cheering on the Drake football team. It's a blessing to have family come to Drake University and pray alongside us, widening our St. Cate's community.

For many of our students however, family weekend was maybe a nice experience their freshman year, but not something they get to participate in their later years. With family weekend only a weekend away from fall break, it's not realistic for a lot of students to have their families come to Drake, when they may potentially go home to be with their community the next weekend. Even more so, many of our student athletes can't participate in family weekend because of their practice and game schedules, and don't even get to go home for fall break. Many of our students have to work through the weekends, or don't have a safe family environment to go home to.

As a student myself (back in the day), I remember feeling the discomfort as my college community began to feel like my new home, especially when I rarely had time to go home during the semester. We need to acknowledge this as a Catholic Newman Community, because it's not just an opportunity, it is our job and our mission to offer a home to our students. We have to offer to be the family to our Drake students. It is not a side effort - it is the entire point of St. Catherine's existing on Drake University land.

If you have not been to a 5 pm mass with us on a Sunday, please do. Come meet our new students. This community is a God-given gift.



Happy Birthday, Father!

Please join us in wishing Father PJ McManus a very Happy Birthday! Today after Mass we will have ice cream and fellowship as we celebrate our wonderful Priest!

Father, we are so grateful for your faithful service, your kindness, and the love and joy you bring to our St. Catherine's community. May God bless you abundantly in the year ahead and fill your days with peace, happiness, and many blessings.

Happy Birthday, Father PJ!
With love and gratitude,
Your St. Catherine's Parish Family

Ministry of Liturgy, Music & Prayer

Liturgy Schedule October 4
Lector - Fiona Gongol & Whitney McKinstry
Sacristan—Brian Gongol
Eucharistic Minister— Tricia Wisniewski
Money Counter— Amanda Bellville
Greeters— Diane Thierer & Anna Lee
Coffee/Donuts— Bobbi Segura
ASL Interpreter - None Scheduled

Music
#312 - Table of Plenty
#695 - How Is His Name
#720 - Hymn to Christ the King
#585 - Sing to the Mountains

Mass Times

WEEKDAYS
Monday—12pm Mass at St. John's Basilica and 7pm adoration at St. John's Basilica

Tuesday—5:30pm Mass at Sussman Theater, Olmsted Building

Wednesday—5:30pm Mass at at Sussman Theater, Olmsted Building

Thursday—8:30pm Candlelight Mass at Sussman Theater, Olmsted Building, THAM fun and games to follow

Friday—12pm Mass at St. John's Basilica

Saturday—8am Mass at St. John's Basilica

Sunday—10am Mass at Sussman Theater, Olmsted Building (with ASL Interpreter) and 5pm Student Mass at Sussman Theater, Olmsted Building

Reconciliation Times
Monday—during Adoration
Tuesday to Thursday—1/2 hour before Mass
Saturday—9-10am at the Basilica (following the 8:30 Mass)

Mass Intentions
If you would like to schedule a Mass Intention, call the parish office at 515-650-8646.

Sunday, October 4
† 10:00am - Tony Gomez Birthday

Donations

You can make a donation to St. Catherine's by mailing a check to the office, giving online by clicking on the DONATE button on our website or by completing an ACH form for automatic withdrawals.

Thank you for your generosity!

A Word from Fr. McManus

A Name and a Life--Holiness

I learned something this week that made me feel better about something that has bothered me since childhood. I never liked being called “PJ.” I wanted to be Patrick, or John, or some variation thereof. Initials didn’t feel like a real name. Then I learned that Fulton Sheen, who was baptized Peter John, went by “PJ” as a boy. I suppose there is hope for me yet.

Sheen was beatified just over a week ago. His television manner and rhetoric may not be to everyone’s taste, but he is a real, flesh-and-blood example of holiness who was born less than four hours from here. That matters. We need to know that saints can come from places like ours.

This weekend, as we welcome Drake students’ parents and families, we begin a new season of Encounter, our faith formation program for all generations. We’ll spend the year getting to know the saints. Two others are especially close to us this week: today we mark the 800th anniversary of the death of St. Francis of Assisi, and Friday is the feast of St. John Henry Newman.

Each of these men was once a son whose parents could not know what his life would become. Francis’s father expected him to inherit the family business; their conflict over Francis’s calling became painfully public. Newman’s mother cared deeply about his ministry, yet he grieved that she did not fully understand his religious convictions. Sheen’s parents quietly prayed that he might become a priest before he ever told them he wanted to be one.

Parents give their children names, homes, faith, and hopes for the future. Then, little by little, they must entrust them to a future they cannot write. That is no small thing to ask of anyone. To our visiting families: thank you for entrusting your students to this community for a time. We are glad to welcome you, and we want this parish to be a home for them.

In today’s readings, God tends a vineyard and looks for fruit. The saints were not born knowing how their stories would end. They responded to what God had placed before them, sometimes with the help of their families and sometimes amid misunderstanding. In Encounter this year, we will learn their stories together and ask what God is growing here—in our students, in our families, and in all of us.

Fr. PJ

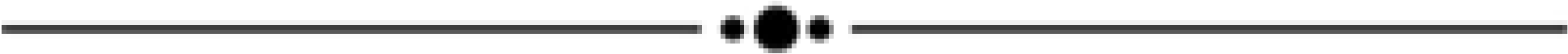
Ministry of Faith Formation

Kenya Scholarships

Five years ago, our St. Catherine’s community began supporting the education of 10 children in Kenya through scholarships. We are grateful to share that five of those students have now graduated from high school!

We now have five students remaining who still need our help to continue their education. Approximately \$800 per student provides the opportunity to attend private school in Kenya. Would you consider helping one of these children continue their education and build a brighter future? Every contribution makes a difference.

To donate, please make your check payable to St. Catherine’s and write “Kenya Scholarships” in the memo line. Checks may be placed in the collection basket or dropped off at the parish office. Thank you for helping give these children the gift of education and the opportunity to reach their full potential!



Catholic Worker House

The Catholic Worker House is in desperate need of basic clothing and household items. They are currently completely out of socks, blankets, hoodies, and towels, and their supply of clothing is very limited.

If you have even one shirt or other item you no longer need, please consider bringing it this Sunday. Every donation, big or small, can make a difference for someone in need.

A donation bin will be available at the front door of Olmsted for your convenience. Please help if you can. Thank you for your generosity and for caring for our neighbors in need!



Icon Workshop

Learn to write an icon of St. Catherine of Siena with master iconographer, Drazen Dupor. Drazen Dupor is a master iconographer from Madison, WI and will teach participants to write an icon of St. Catherine of Siena in a three-day workshop hosted at St. Augustin Catholic School. Cost to attend is \$290 and includes all needed materials for the class. If interested, please contact Samantha Fernholz (sclaman21@hotmail.com)

Help Fill our Free Little Food Pantry!!

Items most needed arecanned protein, fruits, vegetables, soup in pop top cans, peanut butter, and cereal. Please give what you can. Email Margaret Cananagh to sign up - cavanaghmargaret1@hotmail.com.



Upon Further Review

From The Word Among Us

Again he sent other servants, more numerous than the first ones. (Matthew 21:36)

As we consider today’s Gospel, we might be struck by the extravagant patience of the landowner. He carefully prepares a vineyard and leases it to tenants to cultivate the crops. But at harvest time, the tenants refuse to give him the produce. The first servants he sends to collect the crops are beaten and killed. A second wave of servants are treated the same way. And finally, when the landowner sends his son, the tenants kill him in an attempt to seize the vineyard for themselves! What more could he have done?

The landowner’s actions certainly don’t seem like the best way to run a business. But they do help us understand the loving perseverance of our heavenly Father. He holds nothing back in his attempts to bring his people back to himself. His love is relentless!

We can see this relentless love again in today’s first reading. Speaking through the prophet Isaiah, God depicts Israel as a “vineyard” (5:7). He speaks about tenderly cultivating and preparing the land so that his people could produce a bountiful “crop” of righteousness (5:2). And when they produced only “wild grapes,” he sent Isaiah to call them back to him. Then, over time, he sent Jeremiah and Ezekiel and more and more prophets to speak his word to them. No matter what happened, the Lord never gave up on them.

God never gives up on us, either. He cares for us even when we ignore him, even when we reject him, even when we are not fruitful. He is always extending mercy to us and giving us another chance. So welcome him in today. Let his love sweep you off your feet. Let it inspire you to respond with faith and trust to his invitation to return.

“Lord, help me to love you and bear fruit for you and your kingdom.”



★ NOVEMBER 14, 2026 ★

MARY'S HELPING HANDS
BORN TO RUN
5K RUN OR 1 MILE WALK

AT CONFLUENCE BREWING
9:00 AM

JOIN US FOR A MORNING OF FITNESS, FUN & COMMUNITY!

- TIMED 5K RUN OR 1 MILE WALK**
Open to all ages and abilities!
- FAMILY FUN**
Run, Walk, Stroller friendly.
- AWARDS**
Top overall & age group winners
- POST-RACE CELEBRATION**
Food, drinks & music
- MAKING A DIFFERENCE**
100% of proceeds stay in our community

Get Registered!
Scan the QR code to register and find more details.

Team Engagement

- Team entries included with sponsorship
- Recognition for corporate participation
- Great for team building and community engagement

Thank you
for supporting mothers and babies in need.

ALL PROCEEDS BENEFIT VULNERABLE EXPECTING/NEW MOTHERS AND THEIR BABIES

Ministry of Stewardship

Help the Hungry and Gather With Our Local Community

The World Food Prize Foundation is bringing the community together for an unprecedented effort to fight hunger: packaging 600,000 meals in one hour in an attempt to break the Guinness World Record for the most hunger relief meals packed in one hour.

In partnership with Meals from the Heartland, volunteers will work side-by-side to surpass the current record and to provide nutritious food to people facing hunger in Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, Nebraska, and communities in eight other countries. But this is about more than a world record.

This is about what happens when a community comes together with a shared purpose. Every meal packaged will help provide nourishment to children and families facing food insecurity, both close to home and around the world. Since 2008, Meals from the Heartland has distributed over 290 million around the globe. This effort will take place during the World Food Prize events.

Details:

Tuesday, October 20, EMC Expo Center at the Iowa Events Center

5:30 - volunteer check-in, instructions, and gear

6:30-7:30 - meal packaging

To register: go to

<https://www.worldfoodprize.org/worldrecord>

Around the Dioceses

Women’s Evening of Recollection

Monday, October 12, 2026

6:30-8:30 p.m.

St. Augustin Church

Spend a brief time away from the world to be with Our Lord. The Evening is designed to help you spend time alone with God, to look at your life from His perspective, and find practical ways to serve God amid your ordinary work and family life.

Women of all ages are invited!

6:30 Confession.

6:40 Practical Talk.

7:00 First meditation. Confession. Meditation.

8:00 Benediction

8:00-8:30 Social Time

The Women’s Evenings of Recollection will take place on the 2nd Monday of each month. Questions: Terry McFarland (630-885-0246)

Building Community

OUR PARISH REMAINS STRONG

Our building may be temporarily closed, but St. Catherine of Siena Catholic Church & Student Center remains strong and active under Fr. PJ McManus's leadership.

Thank you for your patience, flexibility, and prayers.

We don't yet have a timeline for returning to our building, but we are moving forward with faith, gratitude, and hope.

Our building is recovering. Our community is strong. And our future is bright.

The deadline for bulletin announcements are noon on Tuesdays. Submit to: office@stcatherinedrke.org.