

Bell Ringing on April 9 to commemorate the end of the Civil War and the end of slavery

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On April 9, 2015, our nation will mark the 150th anniversary of the surrender ceremony at the Appomattox Court House, which came to symbolize the beginning of reconciliation throughout the United States for a nation torn apart by civil war. The terms of Confederate General Robert E. Lee's surrender were intentionally lenient as President Abraham Lincoln wanted to demonstrate to people in the South that they had a place in America. Confederate troops were paroled, allowed to keep their side arms, horses, their possessions and urged to return to their homes.

One-hundred-fifty years later as we commemorate this event, we all can benefit from the words with which President Lincoln concluded his second inaugural address just weeks before the war ended:

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right, as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his

orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish, a just and a lasting peace, among ourselves, and with all nations.

With a sense of respect for those who have labored these many years to act on President Lincoln's vision and with a profound sense of hope for the future, Bishop Thomas John Paprocki and the other Catholic bishops of Illinois **call on all parishes, schools and religious houses in this Land of Lincoln to ring their bells at 2:15 p.m. on Thursday, April 9, for four minutes. Ss. Peter & Paul Parish in Alton is proud to have participated in this momentous commemoration!** This will be done to coincide with the very hour of the ceremony at Appomattox, leading to the end of the four-year Civil War and to an end to slavery in the United States, which came in December of that year with the ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment. We invite all citizens at the ringing of the bells to pause and say a prayer for our nation in the spirit of President Lincoln's inspiring words.

Ss. Peter and Paul Catholic School, a Service Oriented faith-based School located in Alton, Illinois, offers classes for Pre-K through 8th grade students. The school's curriculum is centered on educational excellence - not Common Core. The student experience at Ss. Peter and Paul is rich in constructive offerings such as art classes through Jacoby Arts Center, field trips and competitive inter-area sports.

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