

Saint Mary

ON THE HILL
CATHOLIC CHURCH



News and Notes from Fr. Jerry

Celebrating the Joy of Christ's Resurrection

Dear Parishioners,

Lately, I've been recommending to any parishioner that asks for a good book on the spiritual life Sherry Weddell's *Forming Intentional Disciples*. It has a wonderful subtitle – *The Path to Knowing and Following Jesus*. The author believes that we face immense challenges when one considers that only 30 percent of Americans who were raised Catholic are still practicing. And the statistic that really shocked me was that "only 48 percent of Catholics were absolutely certain that the God they believed in was a God with whom they could have a personal relationship."

"Good Golly Miss Molly," somewhere along the way we lost focus. But with immense challenges come immense opportunities. The Gospel for Easter Sunday mentions that even the original disciples "did not yet understand the Scripture that he had to rise from the dead" (John 20:9). But we've been at this for almost 2,000 years now, so it is about time we should begin to understand that in and through the Sacraments of the Church, our Risen Lord very much wants to have a personal relationship with us. As Catholics, we need to start sharing with one another and the world how we have personally encountered God's love through Jesus.



Holy Week Schedule

Holy Thursday, April 2

Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper – 7 p.m.

Adoration after Mass until night prayer at 11:45 p.m.

Good Friday, April 3

Stations of the Cross – noon
Celebration of the Lord's Passion – 7 p.m.

Holy Saturday, April 4

Easter Vigil – 8 p.m.

Easter Resurrection of the Lord, Sunday, April 5

Masses at 7:30 a.m., 9 a.m.,
10:45 a.m., and 12:30 p.m.

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"Grow in Your Relationships" **Second Wednesday**

Too often, life's realities pull us away from what is important – relationships. In so many ways, relationships lie at the heart of growth.

"Relationship with God is at the heart of our spiritual growth, and we are commanded to love each other in our growth as disciples," says Dr. John McCormack, Clinical Psychologist and St. Mary's parishioner. "And we cannot grow readily in relationships to God and others if we are not growing in our understanding of self."

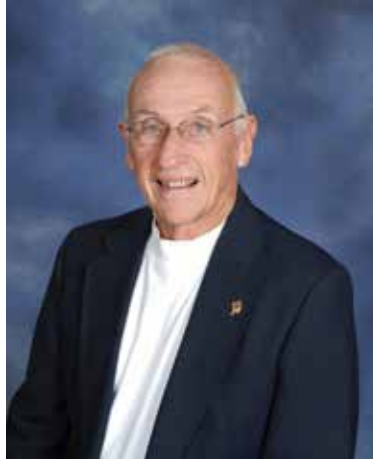
In 1998, John sought a way to integrate his professional life and spiritual life. The suggestion was offered to present relevant topics to adults who want to listen and engage in thoughtful conversation.

"The fields of clinical psychology and Catholic spirituality can take very divergent paths depending upon how secular or faith-based you want to be," John says. "They are not difficult to integrate, but you have to want to do so."

The group that would become Second Wednesday began meeting with no long-term focus. They discussed intersections between these two fields on particular topics and how the topics relate to relationships.

"I would say the mission of Second Wednesday is coming into a deeper understanding of self and your relationships to others and to grow in your relationship to God," John says. "Each topic comes to mind through prayer and whatever I may be studying professionally, and how that relates to something going on in the life of the Church."

Today, this ministry is under the umbrella of Adult Faith Formation and meets September through May on the second Wednesday of the month at 6:45 p.m. in the computer lab at St. Mary on the Hill School. Anyone 18 years old or older from the community is welcome to attend.



Dr. John McCormack, Clinical Psychologist and Facilitator of the Adult Faith Formation Ministry Second Wednesday

At the beginning of the Lenten season, the presentation theme focused on the three primary practices of the Lenten season - prayer, fasting and generosity - and the corresponding three psychological practices.

"The Lenten practices parallel the psychological practices of mindfulness, pain as a part of living, and the benefit of a giving lifestyle," John says. "To know that the psychological and spiritual experts are in such agreement on what makes for individual human growth reinforces using those practices to grow as human beings and disciples of Christ."

The monthly gatherings of 10 to 15 people begin with a presentation on the chosen topic and its psychology, as well as its complementary spiritual aspects. The presentation then generates conversation and sharing from the group. They begin with prayer and close with song.

"I think those attending think it is time well spent," John says. "From what people say in response to the subject, it is pretty common for those attending to feel like they are understanding something better or seeing it more clearly."

All members of the community are welcome to join in conversation and reflection. Come for fellowship and to consider your own relationships to God, others and self, for relationships are at the heart of growth and a meaningful life.

"We have a great time and some wonderful conversations with thoughtful examples shared by people," John says. "If you want to have an enjoyable evening with a substantive topic to stir your thinking, then it is a good way to do so."

For more information about Second Wednesday, please contact Dr. John McCormack at the parish office at 706-733-6627.

Cultivate Your Personal Garden *for Christ this Spring*

Everyone loves springtime. The weather is warmer and beautiful flowers are blooming all around us.

But anyone with a beautiful garden will attest that the flowers do not magically appear as if the season change itself miraculously makes the flowers bloom. Beautiful flowers and lush gardens are the result of the gardener's hard work.

Imagine that a man is given some flower seeds. The man then buries the seeds in the ground and leaves them on their own. As the months pass and rain falls, some seeds may receive enough nourishment to bloom. But simply burying seeds in the ground will hardly make for a gorgeous garden. Rather, if the man truly wants to enjoy many beautiful flowers, there is much care and work ahead. Recognizing the hidden beauty within these simple seeds, he must cultivate the ground, plant the seeds in a solid foundation, then water and fertilize them throughout the year. Only then will he see the proper fruit these seeds were made to bear.

This simple illustration speaks to the heart of us this season — not only as we look around at the flowers, but more importantly as we reflect on the springtime of the Church. We are celebrating the great feast of Easter when, through His death and resurrection, Christ offers us the greatest gift of all — eternal life with Him forever. This celebration leads us to reflect on the many gifts God has given us in

this life and the fruit they will bear, especially as we look to life eternal.

He has given each of us a multitude of gifts so that we can better serve Him and bring others to Him. Do we notice the hidden potential of our gifts? Do we see them, like the seed, as seemingly small yet so full of fruit? Everything we have — our time, talents and treasure — is a gift from the Lord. Do we accept gifts in gratitude, then put them to use by cultivating and nourishing them so they will bear the proper fruit?

Just like springtime flowers that we enjoy, our time, talents and treasure need to be cared for. Our gifts need to be cultivated and nourished. Only then will we see them for what they are — wonderful gifts given by God meant for His greater glory.

Like the seeds, if we use our gifts flippantly, we may see some fruits here and there. But we are called to so much more — we are called to build a beautiful garden. We are called to offer God the most beautiful flowers of all.

This season, as we look at all the beautiful flowers around us and enjoy God's creation, let us think about the seeds in our own lives. Ask yourself if you have accepted the gifts God has given you — your time, talents and treasure — and have cultivated and cared for them properly. Or, do they just sit dormant within you yearning to bloom?



Welcome to

RCIA at St. Mary



Debbie and the other catechumens and candidates attend weekly RCIA classes to learn more about the Catholic faith and prepare for the Easter Vigil.

Each year, at one of our most beautiful Masses, St. Mary on the Hill welcomes new members into our Church family. Some of these people are baptized and welcomed into the family of God for the first time, while others, who have been baptized, become fully initiated into the Catholic Church, through receiving the Sacraments of Confirmation and the Eucharist. It is an incredible celebration, not only for those who are receiving sacraments, but for all of us, welcomed to share their joy.

This year at the Easter Vigil, one of the people we will be welcoming into our community is Debbie McCurry. Although Debbie was baptized into the Baptist church at the age of 13, she and her family didn't attend church through her high school years. After moving to Georgia in her 20s, her reintroduction to religion came by way of her Methodist mother-in-law, who encouraged Debbie's son to come to church with her. After her husband passed away at the age of 37, Debbie was left alone to raise her then-13-year-old son. Although faith

was not really a priority for Debbie, she was grateful for the Christian influences in her son's life.

"We had a good support, he was going to a small Christian school, they'd come pray with him, kept him on the right road, he always had a good Christian base," Debbie says.

This Christian base led her son to travel to Ireland, to discover his roots, after college. While in Ireland, he converted to Catholicism.

In turn, this became the beginning of Debbie's journey into the Church. Her son, very devoted to being Catholic, continually asked that when he got married, would Debbie convert? Although intrigued by her son's experience, she never felt sure if she was ready to move forward with such a big decision. Finally, she took a step in asking a Catholic co-worker to give her information about taking classes to become Catholic. Two years later, the co-worker informed Debbie that RCIA classes would be starting soon. In the fall of 2014, Debbie decided to check it out. Now, less than a year later, Debbie is excited to finally become Catholic. Through the RCIA

to the Family

ary on the Hill

classes, she has enjoyed the opportunity to learn about the faith, meet many faithful parishioners, as well as share the journey with other “newbies.”

“I’m loving the classes, the people are wonderful,” Debbie says. “My sponsor, she’s a hoot – she’s seen it all and done it all, and she’s a real comfort to me. Everyone in the class, they’re wonderful folks. Every class, I learn something new – I have to take a little time to absorb it and process it in my mind, and then it’ll come to me the next day. I keep saying, ‘I’m going to have to take the class again!’”

There’s been a lot to learn, as Debbie notes. One of the things she’s most thankful to have learned about is prayer.

“I’ve been struggling with how to pray, I’ve never been a pray-er,” she says. “Getting instruction on how to pray, that’s good for me – how to breathe, relax, clear my mind of things and speak to Him in silence. I’m getting there.”

She was also inspired to learn about singing as a form of prayer.

“Our choir director was saying in one class, ‘Singing is praying!’” she says. “That’s so cool! I sing terribly, but I was singing! We’re supposed to be praying – singing is our prayer!”

The change, however, isn’t just limited to Debbie’s understanding of the Catholic faith.

“People have noticed a difference in me,” she says. “I was not a real happy person, I was alone – I’m not as angry anymore. [My mom] said the other day, ‘I notice a difference in you, you’re mellowing out.’”

As her time in RCIA comes to a close and Debbie prepares to receive the sacraments, she reflects on the things that she loves most about this Church that she’s chosen to become a part of.

“They talk about the Church being the family,” Debbie says. “I like the family. I think it’s beautiful – I like it much more than any other church. I like the tradition. I’m loving Mass, every Mass is a learning experience.”

Debbie tells the story of when she first realized that, although she couldn’t receive Communion, she could go up to receive a blessing from the priest.

“I walk down the aisle with my arms crossed, to get my blessing, I didn’t know I could do that!” she says. “Every time I go up, I’m just smiling, because I’m so happy!”

So what was Debbie’s son’s response when she told him?

“I wasn’t going to tell my son I was converting, I wanted it to be a surprise,” she says.

But he’d always call on Sunday, and it was disrupting her Mass schedule.

“So I had to tell him,” she says, “He’s thrilled. I can’t wait for my son to see [St. Mary on the Hill], he’s never seen this church, but he’s coming to see me [come into the Church].”

Debbie’s son certainly won’t be the only one who’s thrilled – we’re all very excited to welcome her and all new members of our faith family.

If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about the Catholic faith through RCIA, please contact Deacon Ken Maleck at 706-863-3895.



(From left) Debbie McCurry and her sponsor, Louise Wright, attend RCIA classes together

“They talk about the Church being the family. I like the family. I think it’s beautiful – I like it much more than any other church. I like the tradition. I’m loving Mass, every Mass is a learning experience.”
– Debbie McCurry

Get Ready for This Year's Golf Tournament!

The 23rd Annual Msgr. P. James Costigan-St. Mary on the Hill Catholic School Golf Tournament will be held on Friday, May 1, at the Forest Hills Golf Club. The tournament is a fun day for all, with proceeds benefiting the school's Endowment Fund. Thank you to our school families, alumni, parish families, friends, and corporate sponsors for making the tournament a huge success each year!

Our 2015 Tournament Sponsors include Bullard Dental, TaxSlayer.com, Taylor Hyundai, and Thomas Poteet & Son Funeral Directors. The entry fee is \$125 per person. Sponsorship levels are as follows:

- Hole Sponsor – \$150 (sponsor sign on a hole)
- Team Sponsor – \$500 (four-person team)
- Team and Hole Sponsor – \$650 (four-person team and sponsor sign on a hole)
- Tournament Sponsor – \$1000 (four-person team, two mulligans per player, sponsor sign on tee box, name in tournament brochure, name in the Church bulletin, name on school website)



SEND IN THIS FORM IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN BEING A PART OF THE TOURNAMENT:

_____ I would like to enter the tournament at \$125 per person.

_____ I would like to be a Hole Sponsor at the \$150 level. Please put the following on the sponsor sign:

_____ I would like to be a four-person Team Sponsor at the \$500 level.

_____ I would like to be a Team and Hole Sponsor at the \$650 level. Please put the following on the sponsor sign:

_____ I would like to be a Tournament Sponsor at the \$1,000 level.

Please make your check payable to St. Mary on the Hill Catholic School and mail it to 1220 Monte Sano Ave., Augusta, Ga., 30904. Please call the school at 706-733-6193 if you have any questions.

Celebrating the Joy *continued from front cover*

There are so many aspects of the Easter celebration that should bring joy to every Christian. Not only do we rejoice in Christ's resurrection, as He conquered death, but we also rejoice because of the eternal reward we gain through it. As the Catechism of the Catholic Church (654) puts it, "The Paschal mystery has two aspects: by his death, Christ liberates us from sin; by his Resurrection, he opens for us the way to a new life."

We believe that in raising Jesus from the dead, God did something truly new – both on earth and in heaven. Yes, through His resurrection, we have the opportunity to be united with God in eternal bliss and happiness. But that new life doesn't have to wait until we die – it is meant to begin here and now as we experience the Risen Christ in our midst through prayer, the sacraments and works of charity. What greater grounds for thanksgiving can there be than this Easter hope of all things being rooted in God's love through Jesus?

How can we thank God for the greatest gift that we could ever be given? We can join in worship, praising

God in our words and deeds, and share the Good News of His victory with our family, friends and neighbors. Most importantly, we respond to His graciousness with a gift of our own – a gift of our very self. When we give our time, talent and treasure to God and to others in service, we make a concrete gesture of thanksgiving in return to the One who is most deserving of our love.

Despite the challenges of our daily lives and the struggles we may be going through, the Risen Christ is present with us. In His love for us, He has overcome sin and evil, and even death itself. In His love for us, we find a peace that will never end. That is certainly reason to rejoice. Jesus Christ is Risen, Alleluia!

God bless you,



Fr. Jerry

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Recent Donations to St. Mary on the Hill

St. Mary on the Hill School

*In Memory of James Hutto
Ellen and Philip Kelly*

*In Memory of Miriam W. Siwinski
Marguerite Welch*

Mass Schedule

Sunday, 7:45 a.m., 10:30 a.m., 12:15 p.m. and 5:30 p.m.

Monday, 7:00 a.m. and 9:15 a.m.

Tuesday, 7:00 a.m. and 9:15 a.m.

Wednesday, 7:00 a.m. and 5:15 p.m.

Thursday, 7:00 a.m. and 9:15 a.m.

Friday, 7:00 a.m. and 9:15 a.m.

Saturday, 9:15 a.m., 5:00 p.m. (Sunday Vigil)

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Saturday, 3:45-4:45 p.m.

Perpetual Adoration Chapel

Chapel is located at the corner of Monte Sano and Bellevue.

Baptisms

Grady Michael Rudder
Son of Brannon and Katherine Rudder

Alicin Noel Rockett
Daughter of KaCey and Moravia Rockett

Khaleesi Cossette Rockett
Daughter of KaCey and Moravia Rockett

Miles James Cosper
Son of Jonathon and Sharon Cosper

Johnathan Bryce Rodriquez
Son of Patrick and Sarah Rodriquez

John Kenneth Dial
Son of Brandon and Maura Dial

Emily Clare Ryan
Daughter of Matthew and Kristin Ryan

Hudson Ryan Hitt
Son of Patrick Hitt and Lindsey Guilfoyle