

# Saint Mary

## ON THE HILL

CATHOLIC CHURCH



*News and Notes from Fr. Jerry*

### FINDING

# Hope in the Cross

### THIS EASTER SEASON



Dear Parishioners,

In terms of truly celebrating Easter here in Augusta, it is always good to have Masters Week behind us. When Easter falls before the Masters, everyone is busy getting ready for the tournament and when the Masters coincides with Holy Week, well, many of us are not in town and those of us who are seem somewhat preoccupied. I look forward to our Faith Community giving its full attention to the celebration of Easter this year.

The summit of the Liturgical Year is the Easter Triduum – from the evening of Holy Thursday to the evening of Easter Sunday. Though chronologically three days, they are liturgically one day unfolding for us the unity of Christ's Paschal Mystery. The celebration of the Triduum marks the end of the Lenten season, and leads to the Mass of the Resurrection of the Lord at the Easter Vigil. I'd encourage you to participate in the Easter Triduum.

The liturgical services that take place during the Triduum are:

© April 13, Mass of the Lord's Supper – Holy Thursday at 7 p.m.

© April 14, Good Friday of the Lord's Passion – Good Friday at 7 p.m.

© April 15, Mass of the Resurrection of the Lord – Holy Saturday at 8 p.m.

For all Christians, Holy Week is the most important week of the year. Think about how much you enjoy Christmas, your birthday or an anniversary. Holy Week is much more important than these beautiful days. As a Christian people, we celebrate and remember the Passion, Death and Resurrection of Our Lord and Savior.

And the remembrance does not always come easy. I recently shared with our Men's Faith Group that for the longest time in my prayer life, I did an "end around" Jesus and pretty much prayed exclusively to the Father. Why? Well, honestly it is because the cross is hard to embrace. Being good stewards of our life in Christ is not easy, but to embrace the cross is not only countercultural, it seems absurd. Then again, we cannot avoid what Jesus said to His disciples: "If you wish to come

### 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.

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# John Scherer Receives the St. Joseph Medal for His Years of *Selfless Service*



John Scherer and family – (Top row, from left) Jason Scherer, Cindy Scherer, John Scherer, Kateri Terrette, Kristen Widener; (bottom row, from left) Easton Terrette, Ella Claire Widener, Walker Widener, Rylan Terrette, Amberlyn Widener; (not pictured) Ryan Widener, Brandon Terrette, Tony Woodward.

For as long as he can remember, John Scherer has been a parishioner at St. Mary's.

"I've been a member all my life," he says.

John was baptized at Sacred Heart, but shortly thereafter, his family moved to St. Mary on the Hill, where they were heavily involved from the get-go. John's mom served as the parish secretary from 1959 to 1977, and John spent many of his days hanging around the rectory spending time with his mom and getting to know our parish priests. He also volunteered as an altar server and attended St. Mary on the Hill School.

From that young age, St. Mary's was home to John. So, when he had children, it was an easy choice for him to raise them as part of the St. Mary's faith community. They attended St. Mary on the Hill School, and John made it a priority to get involved with the school as much as he could.

"There is no greater responsibility than to raise our children," John says. "It is important that we bring

them up in the Church, and we do that with involvement – especially in the school when our children go there. It is important for them to see that we are there, and we are involved."

Yet, John's involvement didn't stop there. While he was heavily involved in the life of the school as his children attended, John also taught CCD for 15 years, volunteered in our Youth Ministry program for five years, served as part of our Stewardship Committee for five years, worked in the business office for three years, and more. Needless to say, John has been a vital part of our parish life over the years, and he continues to do so even in his retirement.

Today, he and his wife, Cindy, organize our school Book Fair, and John substitutes for our teachers as often as he is needed. He relishes the opportunities to be so involved, to watch as two of his grandchildren now attend the school, and to witness them and the other school children grow in their love of our faith, of our school, and of our parish family.

"It is my privilege to do what I do," John says. "I do it simply because I love to and because I have been given gifts. I have time – I need to give back."

Yet, John admits that being recognized for his contributions to our parish and our school is a humbling experience for him. So, when he was awarded the St. Joseph Medal at the all-school Mass during Catholic Schools Week, John turned his eyes to Christ, thanking the Lord for giving him the gifts he shares so selflessly with us.

John is a shining example for the rest of us. A true steward in the deepest sense of the word, he uses his gifts in gracious service of God and neighbor.

John, from the bottom of our hearts, we thank you for all that you do! May God continue to bless you for your selflessness!

*"There is no greater responsibility than to raise our children. It is important that we bring them up in the Church, and we do that with involvement – especially in the school when our children go there. It is important for them to see that we are there, and we are involved." – John Scherer*

# St. Mary's on the Hill Through the 1970s

After the capital-intensive building spree of 1950s and 60s, parishioners settled in a period where the lay began to share the responsibilities of parish ministries with the clergy. Of the many Vatican II changes, increased involvement by the laity, especially through the establishment of Parish Councils, was one of the most significant at the time. Msgr. Bourke established a Parish Council in 1970 and the parish voted to adopt our Parish Council Constitution in September 1971, providing for the election of nine at-large members to "help the pastor and parish administration and policy-making with regard to all aspects of parish activities and functions."

Also in this same timeframe, the parish promoted the establishment of the Social Apostolate Committee to coordinate distribution of food, clothing and financial aid to those in need. Sr. Celine Fahy, O.S.F., guided the program that has come to be known as Catholic Social Services and has served thousands of needy individuals.

Perhaps the most challenging issue to face the Council in its early years concerned the status of the considerable savings the parish had accumulated over the years. Msgr. Marvin J. LeFrois, who had assumed the pastorate in September 1970, urged the Parish Council in October 1972 to put aside attitudes of big business and disperse a portion of the savings to better serve the needs of others. He said the disposing of the funds would be a concrete expression of trust in God's



providence and in the generosity of the people. He challenged the Council members to determine priorities on the basis of what they considered valuable. These concepts would prove prescient, as our parish was among the first to embrace these precepts in its next chapter under a new name – Stewardship.

After months of deliberations, the Council voted to have \$80,000 available for dispersal, and to retain an additional \$40,000 for a contingency fund. The initial dispersal included \$20,000 to cover parish operating deficits in 1972 and 1973 – \$27,000 to St. Mary's School, \$20,000 to the Aquinas Foundation, \$5,000 to the Religious Education Committee for Adult Religious Education Programs, and \$2,500 to St. Anthony Parish in Savannah. During this time, the parish also began its own

tithing program, setting aside 10 percent of its collections for use in helping charities and other worthwhile projects.

In the summer of 1976, Msgr. LeFrois learned he was being reassigned to Sacred Heart Church in Warner Robins, Ga. Our new pastor, Fr. Michael Delea, arrived that September and continued the efforts of his predecessor to promote social responsibility and adult education in the parish. Father was an avid golfer and musician who seized every opportunity to regale visitors with his favorite Irish ballads and songs.

Early in Fr. Delea's pastorate, his desire to see a greater emphasis on music to enhance the liturgies prompted him to pursue the purchase of a pipe organ to replace the electronic organ. The Parish Council hired Rick Carswell in April

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## Reflections on 90 Years of A F at St. Mary

While there are many longtime parishioners in our midst, you would be hard-pressed to find any that have made their home here in our parish for quite as long as the Markwalter family. Vic and Agnes Markwalter – known lovingly as “Pop and Aggie” to the generations that followed – first brought their family from Holy Trinity to St. Mary on the Hill following their move to Lombardy Court in 1926, just nine years after the parish was first established. And on any given Sunday in 2017, you can still find countless Markwalters filling the pews of our church!

One of Vic and Agnes’ children, Mary Markwalter Gambill, was just 2 years old when her parents moved to the Hill. At that time, her older siblings – Wish, Dick, and Ann – began attending Mount St. Joseph School. And in the years to come, Mary and her younger siblings – Jane, Agnes, Louise, and Jack – would follow.

While located on the same block as our current parish school, the school the Markwalter children and their peers attended bore little resemblance to the St. Mary on the Hill Catholic School of today.

“We only had four classes when I was at Mount St. Joseph – first grade, and then second and third together, fourth and fifth, and then sixth and seventh grade,” Mary explains. “So we had four sisters teaching everyone in the grade school. Then, the high school was two rooms upstairs and they had two more sisters teaching up there.



*The Markwalters in front of their house on Lombardy Court, 1926 – Vic and Agnes with their children, (from left) Ann, Wish, Jane, Dick, and Mary.*

One year, a relation of Flannery O’Connor bought a house that used to be on the corner where the flagpole is today, and gave it to the sisters. They called that addition O’Connor Hall.”

Back then, the school day ended before 2 o’clock in the afternoon so that the children could share the main meal of the day with their families. All workers – from doctors to businessmen to manual laborers – returned home for this special family time. Afterward, children were free to roller skate or play kick-the-can in the streets of their neighborhood, or ride their bicycles to the public library housed in the current Partridge Inn.

In addition to the differences in the school and family life of parishioners then and now, the church itself has also evolved. As

Mary notes, you often see more people at a single Mass today than the total number of parishioners in the 1920s, which topped out around 200. Another change that stands out in Mary’s mind involves the increased participation of the laity in the Church.

“My sister, Ann, got sick as a child and was bedridden for a long time,” she recalls. “The priest used to bring her Communion to the house and the altar boy would also come, dressed in his cassock. As they came in the door, we would all stand with our heads bowed while they passed by to bring Communion to Ann. Years later, when I became a Eucharistic Minister, I would take the Host out of the tabernacle and take it in the car all over town, to the hospital and the homebound. Things have certainly changed!”

When Mary married Floyd Gambill in 1950, the couple knew that they would raise their own family in the Catholic faith. In time, all of their children – Mary, Russ, Agnes, Julie, Pat, Joe, Jean, and Paul – would attend Mount St. Joseph, which transitioned to St. Mary on the Hill School in 1960, and Aquinas High School. In school and at church, the Gambill children were always in the company of many Markwalter relatives.

Agnes Gambill Mirshak, Mary and Floyd’s third child, cherishes many childhood memories that revolve around the celebration of sacraments at St. Mary on the Hill.

“Some of my earliest memories are baptisms,” Agnes says. “I

# Family's Faithful Presence on the Hill

remember when I was 2 years old, three of the Markwalter cousins were all baptized at the same time. We used to have big parties after First Communions, too – all of the sacraments were a big deal in our family.”

Agnes remembers her time at the parish school as a period of great change – it seemed as if there were always a new expansion or building project taking place in the 1960s. During her first year, the high school building was torn down as the area’s existing Catholic high schools merged to form Aquinas. Later, overcrowding would lead to store rooms being converted into classrooms. By the time Agnes was in middle school, they were adding on a new wing for the junior high. In the years she spent there, the school building transformed from a single old house to a large facility including such “luxuries” as water

fountains, cloakrooms, and even a big cafeteria.

Despite this fast-paced growth, some aspects of Agnes’ life at the parish school had not changed since Mary’s time there. Boys and girls were still separated in the schoolyard, for example, and religious sisters continued to share their talents as teachers at St. Mary on the Hill School. Bishop Boland himself – serving our parish as a brand-new priest at the time – prepared Agnes’ second-grade class for their First Communion.

Agnes met her husband, Tim Mirshak, during their third year at Aquinas High School, when the girls’ and boys’ wings merged. Following their marriage in 1976, Tim and Agnes stayed active in the faith and in parish life. As young parents, they joined a small faith-sharing group that ended up having a big impact on their spiritual life.

“It was like we really became adults in the Church at that time,” Agnes recalls. “Being a part of that group led us to a deeper prayer life and spiritual life, where it went beyond just going through the motions and really made us think about what we believed.”

As they raised their own family, Tim and Agnes continued the Markwalter tradition of sending their children to the parish school. Like Agnes and her siblings before them, the Mirshak children always had many Markwalter cousins joining them in the church pews and classrooms. Now, the next generation has arrived – three of Tim and Agnes’ grandchildren are growing up in the parish and attending St. Mary on the Hill Catholic School. And on most Sundays, they could probably count over 50 other Markwalter descendants in the congregation!

## St. Mary’s on the Hill Through the 1970s continued from page 3

1978 to be the parish’s first full-time Music Director. An Organ Committee was organized the following month. The Council accepted the recommendation to purchase a 48-rank organ from the Wicks Company at a cost of \$149,000. We continue to enjoy this instrument, blessed on June 1, 1980, nearly 40 years later!

Fr. Delea was transferred to St. Benedict’s in Savannah in 1981. Fr. Gerard A. Murphy, a former Associate Pastor, took the reins aided by Fr. Daniel O’Connell, and they enthusiastically began evaluating the parish both spiritually and in relation to the condition of the physical plant. The campus included the Church, the Rectory, the Parish Hall, St. Anne’s Hall,

and St. Mary’s on the Hill School. While minor repairs had occurred over the years, it became apparent a long-range Master Plan for improvement needed to be devised. The Parish Council approved this measure in November 1981.

The Parish was saddened, when after a brief illness, Fr. Murphy passed away on Dec. 28, 1981. The statue of the Blessed Mother in front of St. Mary’s School was dedicated to Fr. Murphy’s memory, marked by a plaque at the foot of the statue.

Fr. O’Connell led the parish through this difficult time until Bishop Lessard appointed Fr. P. James Costigan to lead our flock in February 1982.

## Giving so That Others Might Live

Stephanie Bussey first realized the importance of organ and bone marrow donation nine years ago, when Brennan Simkins, a child in her son's first-grade class, was diagnosed with leukemia. She, along with many others in the community, participated in a bone marrow donation drive, determined to help in any way they could. Now, four bone marrow transplants and other treatments later, Brennan is now a ninth-grader, who has been cancer-free for five years.

"It tugged at all of our hearts in the community," says Stephanie, a parishioner at St. Mary's. "If [bone marrow donation] is something we could do, why not?"

But as Brennan's story unfolded, another story began to take shape, this time, even closer to home.

"My mother came down with an autoimmune liver disease," Stephanie says. "[This past] December, she got accepted into the transplant program, but in January, she passed away. My mom was a fighter, but she suffered the last years of her life and didn't end up receiving that gift [of a transplant]."

Through the grief of watching her mom suffer, something was sparked in Stephanie – a desire to make a difference in the life of someone with a serious illness. Last summer, she participated in a screening and was found to be a bone marrow match for a woman in England. The donation was postponed and rescheduled a number of times, before the woman receiving the donation was well enough to receive the transplant. This February, Stephanie donated bone marrow, a mere three weeks after her beloved mother's passing.

Stephanie encourages others to consider the value of making a donation, whether blood, bone marrow, or informing your family of your wishes to have your organs do-



*Stephanie Bussey (top row, second from the left) says her giving spirit is inspired by her mother.*

nated after your death. Blood is the most simple to donate, requiring no preparation and taking little time.

Donating bone marrow requires preparation and sacrifice, but according to Stephanie, this is extremely important and worthwhile. It starts with a simple cheek swab, and if selected, there is some preparation the week before donating the bone marrow, and the process itself takes about five hours to complete.

Stephanie recommends that people wanting to donate their organs after their death not only tell their family members, but also have it listed on their driver's licenses.

"If there were more people out there willing to do that, there wouldn't be such a long list," she says. "Organ donation is taking something so horrible and turning it into something wonderful."

Stephanie's experiences of donation have been an opportunity for her to draw closer to the Lord and Blessed Mother, as well as a reminder to intercede for others in need.

"Any time I was feeling bad, I thought of Mary seeing Jesus on the cross, and the pain and suffering she went through," she says. "It's minimal compared to that, and could hopefully change somebody else's life. The Hail Mary kept going through my head and I just kept praying that this process would heal the woman receiving my donation."

Despite having never met the woman whose life she may have saved, Stephanie and her family feel close to her and pray regularly for her recovery.

"We've been praying for her because we've known all along that she's been suffering," Stephanie says. "She must be a daughter, maybe she has children, and she has friends and family. I hope that she's healed."

For more information on bone marrow and organ donation, or our upcoming drive, please contact Stephanie Bussey at 706-306-2313 or sbussey7@yahoo.com.

To give blood, please contact Sheppard Community Blood Center, located at 1533 Wrightsboro Road, Augusta. They take walk-ins or you can make an appointment by calling 706-737-4551, Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. We will be hosting a drive to encourage people to join the National Marrow Donor Registry on Sunday, April 30, from 11:30 a.m. until noon, and from 6:30 p.m. until 7 p.m. in the church narthex. Anyone ages 18-44, in general good health, and willing to donate marrow cells is eligible to join the National Marrow Donor Registry, which only requires filling out minimal paperwork and a cheek swab.

## Finding Hope in the Cross This Easter Season *continued from front cover*

after me you must deny yourself and take up your cross daily and follow me. For if you wish to save your life, you will lose it; but if you lose your life for my sake you will save it" (Luke 9:23-24).

The cross is more readily embraced by people of faith who suffer, are poor, broken, or are the victims of such things as violence, oppression or natural disasters. They see the cross as the hope that no matter what has happened to them, God will see them through. The Father did it for Jesus who hung on the cross, so surely their sufferings will be redeemed by Jesus' sufferings.

Where people possess much material abundance, comfort and leisure, however, there is a tendency to de-emphasize the cross, to draw away from it. They can't touch it or feel it, so they wish to "save" their lives by looking to other things – power, wealth, fame, relevance, being the center of attention. What is preached about the cross from the pulpit sounds good, but in reality, something more tangible is often desired.

Christ emptied Himself completely in humble obedience, allowing Himself to suffer and die out of

compassion for the world (Philippians 2:6-11). Good stewards follow His example and work day-to-day to empty themselves and live compassionately – most noticeably by sharing their lives with others.

As we approach the climax of our liturgical year, the Easter Triduum, let us ask the Holy Spirit for an even deeper awareness of the cross in our lives. Let us find hope in the cross and pray that as we embrace it, we too will experience in a special way the joy of new life in the risen Lord.

Don't forget to join in the wonderful liturgies of the Easter Triduum. I wish you and all your loved ones the happiest Easter of all. May God bless you now and always.

God bless you,



Fr. Jerry

# Ad Placement



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## *Recent Donations to St. Mary on the Hill*

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St. Mary on the Hill Bereavement Ministry

The Family of Patricia Beckwith

St. Mary on the Hill Apron Ministry

The Family of Patricia Beckwith

## Baptisms

Feb. 18

Omofomwan Praise Aluya

*Son of Aluya and Justina Oseghale*

Feb. 18

Caroline Ruth Cosper

*Daughter of Michael and Callie Cosper*

Feb. 19

Fields Patrick Armstrong

*Son of Joseph and Lindsay Armstrong*

Feb. 19

Kollin Alexander LeonGuerrero Lowery

*Son of Ferris and Karmen Lowery*