

Saint Mary

ON THE HILL

CATHOLIC CHURCH

News and Notes from Fr. Jerry

Serving the Master

Dear Parishioners,

"Roll out those lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer, those days of soda and pretzels and beer. Roll out those lazy, hazy, crazy days of summer. Dust off the sun and moon and sing a song of cheer."

Nat King Cole sang it so well so very long ago. And golly jeeppers, whatever happened to those days? I mean, in the days of my youth, August was the best of months as I was free to roam the beaches of Ocean City, N.J., for the entire month. My dad would come down from his office in the city for long weekends, but my mom, my siblings, and I would be at the beach until after Labor Day, when we'd head home that Tuesday to get ready for school, which did not begin until the Wednesday after Labor Day. Oh, how I long for those good old days.

I say that even as I admit to being somewhat of an ogre, pressing everyone to get things done. Perhaps, next summer, I'll give a little more effort to rediscovering the joys of being a beach bum. But for now, as we begin a new school year, I rejoice that we have such a great group of teachers in our school, such a dedicated parish staff, and so many people in our faith community who are willing to give so much of their energies to our vibrant parish. I thank

Mr. Joe McBride for his willingness to lead our school community. And I am grateful that Fr. John Tran has hit the ground running. We welcome him and the teachers who are new to our parish school this year.

Serving the Master is our pastoral theme for this year. The focus will cover a number of initiatives. I'll be working closely with our Pastoral Council chair, Jim Purcell, along with Eric McArdle and Mary Kruckow to develop more fully our parish governance structure. As a faith community, we will also serve the Master by reaching out to non-practicing Catholics and inviting them to join us actively once again in building up God's Kingdom. Deacon Ken Maleck will lead us in this effort, and we will participate with all the Catholic parishes in Georgia with the Catholics Come Home program.

Serving the Master will also call us to renew our outreach to the broader Augusta community. We will be doing that in a very concrete way by building a Habitat house. This will require a tremendous effort as we are the sole sponsoring group for this house, and many volunteers from our parish will be needed to build it. I am grateful for the members of the Service Commission

IN THIS ISSUE

- 2 Stewardship's "Supreme Teacher"
Following Christ's Example
- 3 Mother's Day Out/
Preschool
*Social, Academic, and
Spiritual Preparation*
- 4 Forward in Faith
- 5 Steubenville
The Journey Continues
- 6 Brothers and Sisters
- 8 Recent Gifts and Baptisms

continued on page 2

Stewardship's "Supreme Teacher" *Following Christ's Example*

Former President and Five-Star General Dwight D. Eisenhower once said, "You don't lead by hitting people over the head – that's assault, not leadership." President Eisenhower's words are blunt and humorous, but he makes a great point. Almost any successful endeavor in life requires the benefit of strong leadership. And a truly effective leader does not lead by simply telling others what to do, but by providing a strong example of how to carry oneself on a daily basis.

This is no different for us in our lives as Catholic Christians. As individuals who face a myriad of difficult choices every day, we require a leader who, through word and example, can show us the path to living according to God's will. For us, Jesus is the supreme teacher of every aspect of Christian life, and His life as documented in the gospels is a model that we should strive to imitate in living as good Christians. And as we have learned, stewardship – the sharing of the gifts that God has given to us – is a big part of Christian life, and one for which Jesus left many examples of successful living.

Jesus' nature of selfless service, documented many times throughout the New Testament and culminating with His death for our sins, is an underlying aspect of living the stewardship way of life. As the U.S. Conference

of Catholic Bishops points out in its pastoral document *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, "In Jesus' teaching and life, self-emptying is fundamental. His self-emptying is not sterile self-denial for its own sake; rather, in setting aside self, He is filled with the Father's will, and He is fulfilled in just this way" (20).

Jesus points out to Peter in Matthew's gospel that this "self-emptying" requires sacrifice, but ultimately leads to "eternal life in the age to come" (Mk 10:30). But the Christian steward's ultimate reward is not his or her only benefit from living the stewardship way of life. By sharing of our time, talents and treasure and living in imitation of Christ, we can relate more closely to Him in sharing, in a small way, in His sacrifice. "To be a Christian disciple is a rewarding way of life, a way of companionship with Jesus, as a part of it is itself a source of deep joy. Those who live this way are happy people who have found the meaning and purpose of living" (*Stewardship*, 21).

The next time you are frustrated or unsure of how to best respond to God's gifts in stewardship, take a moment to open up the Bible. Jesus may not "hit us over the head" in His leadership, but He does provide numerous examples through His actions and teachings of how to live as one of His disciples.

Serving the Master *continued from front cover*

for pointing us in the right direction. In particular, I thank Rich Dimenna and Richard Davis for stepping forward and giving their good leadership to this project.

And if we are truly serious about **Serving the Master**, then we need to be ever more conscious that the Lord is calling each of us to a specific mission. Most of you are called to the vocation of married life, which means that you are called to form a domestic church. One of the initiatives that we started two years ago is a marriage enrichment weekend called "Living in Love." It has already started to bear much fruit, and I have great hopes that it will form a foundation for many more good ministries in our faith community. So, I'd urge the married couples in our parish to mark off Sept. 11 and 12 on their calendars, when we will have the next "Living in Love" retreat in our

parish hall. I am grateful to Jim and Lorena Smith, along with Katie and Steve Connor, who head up this ministry.

Finally, a big part of **Serving the Master** involves forming as many people as possible in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. For the last 50 years we have been accomplishing that formation in a very wonderful way through the Ministry of Catholic Education. This year we will celebrate the 50th anniversary of our parish school. Bishop Boland will join us Oct. 9 to celebrate this milestone. Please mark your calendars now so that you can join in the celebration.

God bless you,



Fr. Jerry

Mother's Day Out/Preschool

Social, Academic, and Spiritual Preparation

St. Mary's Mother's Day Out/Preschool Program is known by some in the community as "Mass Boot Camp." This would make program director Gina Crow a "drill sergeant" of sorts. But instead of instructing her students to "drop and gimme 50," Gina and her staff teach them how to say the "Our Father," "Hail Mary," and blessing before meals.



"We work hard to get them ready for Mass," says Gina, who explains that many of the children who attend Mother's Day Out/Preschool eventually enroll at St. Mary's School, where they attend Mass at least once a week.

Mother's Day Out/Preschool is open to families with children ages 6 months through those entering kindergarten. The program is structured to provide childcare for younger children (6 months through 2 years old) and educational enrichment for children ages 3 and older. Class is in session during the school year on Mondays through Thursdays, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. In general, the program begins one week after the St. Mary's School year begins, and ends two weeks before the end of the school year.

In addition to teaching the children about the Catholic Faith, Gina and her staff also teach them basic concepts they will need to know before starting kindergarten.

"We teach them about numbers, colors, their 'ABC's' and shapes," she says. "We also teach them how to rhyme, how to sit in a desk and, this past year, we had all of the children reading before the end of the year!"

But Mother's Day Out/Preschool isn't limited to a strict schedule of faith formation and academic

education. The children have plenty of time to play together and make friends, too. Important social constructs, such as sharing, are best learned by children as they play with others their own age. Gina also says the program helps create friendships among the children that often last for years.

"Some of the kids in the program have been together since they were in diapers," she says.

The children, however, aren't the only

ones benefiting from the program. Moms with busy schedules often use Mother's Day Out/Preschool so they can work, go to school, or even have some quiet time alone. Many of the moms have even become friends over the years.



"Mother's Day Out/Preschool is a good thing for our parish because we teach the children the Catholic Faith at a young age," Gina says. "We even try to explain stewardship to the kids – showing them why they should do good for others and give of their time and talent."

Compared with day care and other childcare services in the area – which can cost more than \$100 a week – Mother's Day Out/Preschool is quite a bargain. Generally, tuition for one day a week is \$45 a month, two days is \$80 a month, three days equals \$115 a month, and four days a week is \$140 a month. Registration fees are equal to one month's tuition. There is limited space available, and Gina encourages parents to register their children soon.

For more information about St. Mary's Mother's Day Out/Preschool – a.k.a. "Mass Boot Camp" – contact Gina Crow at 706-262-2659, or via e-mail at gina.craw@knology.net.

Forward in Faith

After her husband Billy's death, parishioner Jane Barrett felt a mix of emotions: confusion, loneliness, isolation. Naturally, she turned to the Church for support during this difficult time. But at the time of Billy's passing, St. Mary's did not have a support ministry for widows or widowers.

"I remember going to Msgr. Costigan and telling him that widows like me needed support from the parish," Jane says. "He said, 'Start a group.'"

Monsignor's reply caught Jane off-guard, and she quickly dismissed the notion of creating her own widow support group.

However, a few years later, Jane approached parish leadership again with the idea. Fr. Jerry, who had just been appointed pastor of St. Mary's, helped Jane organize a group: Forward in Faith.

Since its inception in 2005, Forward in Faith has grown tremendously. In the beginning, less than 10 individuals attended the monthly meetings.

"We started out being a spiritual ministry to each other," Jane says. "But fewer and fewer people were coming to the meetings. So I said, 'Let's take this in another direction.'"

That new direction entailed social gatherings, usually centered on dinner at a local restaurant. Jane says her fellow group members needed an outlet during the evening – the loneliest part of the day. Today, close to 40 individuals attend the monthly dinner date.

Forward in Faith, while not exclusively a women's group, caters predominantly to widows within the parish. Jane says she never intended for the group to become a widows group, but that the few men who have attended the gatherings in the past didn't stay for long.

"They were overwhelmed because there were so many women," Jane laughs.

With a group as large as Forward in Faith, many restaurants aren't able to accommodate their needs. Jane says the group primarily patronizes Calvert's in Surrey Center and Macaroni Grill on Robert C. Daniel Jr. Pkwy. The outings allow the women to create

lasting friendships and enjoy delicious dinners. Jane, in particular, enjoys Calvert's "Sunset Special."

"I've gotten to know many women that I never knew before," Jane says, explaining how the group has benefited her. "I feel like I've broadened friendships."

But Forward in Faith isn't just concerned with dinner and conversation. The group also meets for spiritual enrichment from time to time. In fact, earlier this spring, the ladies attended a day of spiritual renewal hosted by Fr. Arnold.

"Fr. Arnold is such a good speaker," Jane says. "He talked a lot on God being with us, and that we're never alone."

Such topics draw reference to the group's name: Forward in Faith. The title is appropriate for the ladies, who have all taken steps in faith, determined to do God's will despite the fear and pain that comes from losing one's spouse.

In addition to coordinating Forward in Faith, Jane also serves as a member of the Consolation Ministry, which reaches out to those who are experiencing death in the family. Having lost her husband, she understands the emotions a person experiences when his or her own spouse passes away. For those in the parish who are experiencing the pain of losing a loved one and seeking support from the parish, Jane would love to help them in some way.

"Anyone who feels bereft and needs ministry in this area, feel free to call me," she says.

Looking back on the progression of Forward in Faith, Jane feels blessed to have been a part of such an important and supportive ministry.

"It's been so rewarding to me that the Lord put it in my heart to do this," she says. "Helping others makes me feel good; I'm glad I listened to the Lord."

Forward in Faith meets on the second Tuesday of each month. To join the group at its next dinner outing or to simply learn more, contact Jane Barrett at 706-736-8200.



Members of Forward in Faith gather for a Christmas party.

Steubenville

The Journey Continues

At 3 a.m. on Friday, June 25, 24 youth from our parish boarded a bus headed to the Steubenville South Youth Conference in Alexandria, LA. Thirteen hours later they arrived at their destination only to embark on an entirely different kind of journey – one of spiritual growth and awareness.

From the opening session on Friday night to the concluding Mass on Sunday morning, the conference weekend was set up to challenge, inspire, and help Catholic teens reach a deeper understanding and appreciation of their faith.

“Sometimes kids just don’t realize the awesomeness of the Catholic Church,” explains Youth Minister Michael Lammers. “With 3,500 youth gathered in faith, they become on fire for Christ.”

And the sight of such a large group of Catholic teens filling an arena impressed many, especially those who were attending for the first time.

“Seeing all those Catholic teens gathered together to worship really impressed me,” says rising sophomore Nicholas Novajosky. “The whole experience was eye-opening, and I grew closer to God more than ever.”

Throughout the course of the weekend there were keynote speakers, live entertainment, and opportunities to attend Mass and Reconciliation. Saturday afternoon offered two breakout sessions in which the students chose to attend talks such as “Sharing Christ Over Coffee,” “Daring to Date,” or “The Holiest Place on Earth: Praying the Mass.”

Since the overall theme for the conference was “The Word Made Flesh,” Eucharistic Adoration was held twice in the Coliseum Arena. And with Saturday’s session the priest walked around carrying the monstrance among the teens. It was a moving experience for many.

“The conference really showed me how to experience God in other ways,” shares Zack Cundey, who was attending his second conference. “Before Steubenville, I wasn’t

really open to raising my hands and praying, but now I am more comfortable in expressing my faith.”

With the weekend focusing on faith and fellowship, part of the experience meant no luxuries: no cell phones, no electronic devices, and no iPods. The youth slept in sleeping bags on a classroom floor (men at one high school, women at another), and lights were turned off shortly after midnight.

“Doing without those things was an important part of the experience,” explains Michael. “Instead of returning to a motel in the evening and turning on the TV, we went back to our room and actually got some sleep; instead of listening to iPods, the kids made up raps on the bus.”

Although the trip home marked the end of their weekend, an impromptu stop for dinner at an Outback Steakhouse showed everyone in the most beautiful way imaginable that the journey continues. Expecting a long wait, they were surprised when the manager welcomed them

and said he had been holding a reservation for a party of 30 – a reservation that no one in the group had made.

The exuberance of the youth was contagious; throughout dinner they shared their experiences from the conference with the staff, who commented how the happiness radiating from those young men and women helped turn their bad day into a beautiful one.

“We all sat amazed,” shares Michael. “As the adults watched, the power of God was evident when we saw the whole mood of the restaurant change from drab to radiant with the love and joy of Christ through these youth.”

Many thanks to Michael Lammers and chaperones Miriam Cortez-Cooper, Kelly Wiedmeier, George Ciamillo, and Joe Dominey who made this year’s Steubenville South Youth Conference such a huge success.





Brothers and Sisters

by Katie Conner

It was the end of a long day. Steve and I sent the last of our night owls off to bed and sat down to enjoy the evening miracle that occurs ever so briefly in our home – peace and quiet. For just a few moments, the endless chatter and occasional arguing, recapping of the day’s events and review of spelling words ceases, and our ears take a little respite. But the blissful silence was abruptly broken that night by peals of laughter coming from the upstairs hallway. We exchanged glances, poised on the horns of a parental dilemma, torn between sending them (again) to their beds, and chuckling to ourselves at what must be transpiring above us. We chose the latter – and not just because the couch felt so comfy that night.

One of our dearest goals as parents is that our children will grow up as friends and remain so throughout their lives. We have set about intentionally to do all we can to help these friendships develop and deepen over the years. Certainly it is not realistic to expect that they will all be “bff’s” and perfectly compatible at every stage of life. Their personalities and interests are amazingly different. Some naturally gravitate to each other, while some struggle at times to be in the same room without an argument. But who else knows us like our siblings? Who else has the same inside scoop on our trials and triumphs and the crazy stuff Mom and Dad did? Who else has shared the same traditions, the same vacations, the same bedroom maybe, as our brothers and sisters? Those are bonds worth strengthening to make childhood more memorable and adulthood more delightful.

In this endeavor of raising friends, I have tried to glean wisdom from all the sources I can find. My two sisters and I (no boys in our bunch) live thousands of miles apart now, but we were true friends growing up

and remain so to this day. So I have looked first to my parents for guidance. I remember my mom from time to time politely sending neighbors away when it was time for the “sisters to have their playtime together.” She was intentional in carving out time for just the three of us to be together without outside interruption. I try to do this with my kids now. Certainly, friendships outside our family are important and are to be encouraged, but Steve and I tell the kids we went to a lot of trouble to bring them the friends living right in their own home!



Whether biological or just brothers and sisters in the Lord, it is important to build lasting relationships with those in our families.

Our priority is working on those friendships first. If they cook up a project together that is not too headache-provoking, I encourage them to go for it. If the older ones want to go out for a late night coffee together, I generally go along with it. I want them to have a full storehouse of shared happy times that they can look back on as the years go by.

My parents were also careful to avoid making comparisons between us. They made us feel cherished as individuals so there was little occasion to see each other as rivals. Steve and I work at

this, too. It can be tempting to hold one sibling up as an example of what to do (or not to do) for the others. But each child is an individual and has his or her own gifts and challenges. Not only do comparisons undermine their bonds of friendship, they are simply unjust to the unique individuals that our kids are. And though we certainly celebrate a child’s accomplishment as a family, we tend to pull that one child aside privately for specific praise, just as we correct them in private (as much as that is possible!). We have observed that little (and even not so little) egos are fragile. One child’s best work in class could very well be a “B” or “C” and that is just fine. We don’t want another child’s “A” to make the “B” student feel like he or she doesn’t measure up. Feeling

continued on page 7

Brothers and Sisters *continued from page 6*

inadequate (or superior for that matter) does not exactly foster sibling bonding.

Observation of grown siblings has also been a source of wisdom and helped us shape this adage: “We don’t tear down, we build up.” (If Conner kids are reading this, stop rolling your eyes!) It is amazing to find how many strained adult sibling relationships there are because of long-ago childhood hurts. Steve and I have no tolerance for teasing or bullying. Such behavior is all the more painful when inflicted by the ones who are meant to be our supporters and protectors as we believe siblings are meant to be. Along those same lines, we do not allow (and stop that eye-rolling, Conner kids) “one-upsmanship.” These are comments like “You thought your game was tough, you should have seen mine.” We want them to appreciate each other’s challenges and triumphs without comparison, just as we, their parents, do.

Child-rearing books have been another source of help, though they often require a lot of reading for one little

workable tip here and there. One of the best tips I ever got from a parenting “expert” was a bit counterintuitive. This expert recommended changing the children’s activity every half hour or so, before they begin arguing and fighting. It does help stave off a pattern of playing that always ends in conflict. We have also learned from “the books” the idea of pairing up older siblings with younger ones for play time and mentoring. It creates a bond where a difference in age may otherwise be an obstacle to closeness. Most of all, we rely on a big dose of prayer to get us through day by day.

Our family is very much a work in progress, so I cannot offer the above as tried and true just yet. And we are always looking for help in this journey of parenthood, especially raising children to be friends. So if anyone wishes to offer, we are more than happy to take advice. You can find us in the church at 10:30 a.m. on Sunday – our kids will probably be the ones fighting in the pew! God bless all the brothers and sisters and their parents, too.

Ad
Placement



Saint Mary

ON THE HILL

Non-Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Augusta, GA
Permit No. 475

1420 Monte Sano Avenue
Augusta, GA 30904
Phone 706-733-6627
www.stmaryonthehill.org

Recent Gifts to St. Mary on the Hill

St. Mary on the Hill Church

In memory of Dr. Victor Casella
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Stuntz
Mr. and Mrs. Harold Boardman
Mr. and Mrs. David Burton
J.T. Cosnahan and Baird & Co.
The Ierardi Family
Mr. and Mrs. James Garren
Dr. and Mrs. Biagio Vericella
Mr. and Mrs. James Cranford
Mr. and Mrs. John Fain
Mr. Edward Holmes
Dr. and Mrs. Edouard Servy
Mr. and Mrs. Philip Hargrove
Mrs. Sally Melton
Marie McBurney
Mr. and Mrs. David Titus
Mr. and Mrs. Bill Geiger
Dr. and Mrs. John Jones
Mr. and Mrs. Donald Thorstad
Mr. and Mrs. Steve Gurley
Mr. Michael Rucker
Michael and Carter Costigan
Mr. Tom Hennessey
Italian American Club of the CSRA
Mr. and Mrs. Larry Babbitt
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Lyons
Ms. Judy Huff
R. Thomas Fuller
Dr. George Hamiter
Dr. and Mrs. Miguel Bosch
Mr. and Mrs. Vaughn Maxwell
Mr. and Mrs. William Toole
Mr. and Mrs. Ray Brady
Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Nordmann

In memory of Kitty Murray
Ms. Mary Anna Buckley
Mr. and Mrs. Jimmy Elliott
Mrs. Sally Melton

In memory of Vola Jacobs
Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Rice
Mrs. Sally Melton
Mr. and Mrs. Freddie Vaughn
Mr. and Mrs. Bobby Dressel
Mr. and Mrs. Ray Brady
Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Nordmann

In memory of Norman Russell
Mrs. Joan Howard
Mr. and Mrs. Paul McClafferty
Mr. and Mrs. Tom Fitzpatrick
Ltc. and Mrs. Michael Keris

In memory of Bo Weigle
Mrs. Sally Melton
Mr. and Mrs. Scott Davis

In memory of Patricia Green
Mr. and Mrs. Dan Walter
Mr. and Mrs. Scott Davis

In memory of Anne Snelling
Mr. and Mrs. Donald Bailie

In Honor of Henri Ducluzeau
Mrs. Luisa Ducluzeau

St. Mary on the Hill School Endowment

In memory of Vola Jacobs
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Hagler

Baptisms

Paul Douglas Andrews
Son of Paul and Brook

Langston Christopher DeLette
Son of Ryan and Jennifer

Adilyn Elizabeth Eckert
Daughter of Terrence and Brandi Eckert

Macey Elizabeth Ouellette
Daughter of Michael and Stephanie

John David Ray Strickland
Son of Timothy and Heather Srtrickland

William John Twiss
Son of Todd and Jillian