

Saint Mary

ON THE HILL
CATHOLIC CHURCH



News and Notes from Fr. Jerry

August: The Gift of Time

Dear Parishioners,

As August dawns upon us, I'm shocked by the simple reality that summer is just about over! Yes, some of us are trying to squeeze in that one last vacation or sit outside for just a few more minutes. But for the most part, we've started to transition back into the swing of fall.

How has this happened? Wasn't it just yesterday that the kids were being let out of school and the sun decided to show its beautiful face again?

I once heard from a psychologist that time seems to pass more quickly as we get older because we're experiencing fewer "firsts." When we're continually experiencing new things, time tends to stand still while we're living them. After we've repeated those events numerous times, they don't faze us much any more – and before we know it, months have passed, seasons have changed, and it's time to start the annual cycle again.

continued on page 7

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.



RCIA:

Joyfully Bringing Souls Home to Rome

For Rebecca Grady and Deacon Ken Maleck, co-directing the RCIA – Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults – is truly a matter of the heart, and it shows.

“I converted to Catholicism in 1981 along with the rest of my family,” Rebecca says. “My father, now deceased, was Fr. Daniel Munn [founding pastor of St. Ignatius of Antioch Melkite-Greek Catholic Church]. Thanks to my parents seeking the Truth and finding it in the Church, I have been able to benefit from the wisdom of Church teaching in my adult life. I have found in the teachings of the Church a source of peace and happiness that has been a great joy to pass on to other people as much as I can through RCIA. I like to share their personal faith journeys with them and walk alongside of them as we walk together towards heaven. It deepens my faith, as well.”

“My favorite thing about being involved in RCIA is when I get a ‘thank you’ note after Easter saying how much someone enjoyed the program and what a difference it has made in their life,” Deacon Ken says.

At St. Mary’s, RCIA sessions usually take place on Mondays at 7 p.m. in the Parish Hall from mid-September until Easter – when most RCIA members come into full Communion with the Church. The sessions are open to catechumens (those who are not yet baptized) and candidates (those who are already validly baptized), as well as people who are simply inquiring about becoming Catholic. The gatherings feature fascinating presentations given by Rebecca, Deacon Ken, various other deacons and priests, and teachers from Aquinas High School. Using the text *We Believe*, the sessions cover topics such as God, the Trinity, the Creed, the Sacraments, the Mass, devotion to Mary, and the saints. Furthermore, two or three sessions focus on the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Each RCIA member also receives a Bible and a copy of the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

“We go over as many details about what the Church teaches as we can,” Deacon Ken says. “We give them an honest, clear picture of the Catholicism. We want them to make an informed decision.



The ultimate goal is for them to choose to live out their faith in the Catholic Church or at least in a Christian church, and to develop a personal relationship with Jesus.”

During the RCIA process, candidates and catechumens undergo various Rites as well, such as the Rite of Enrollment/Welcoming and the Rite of Election, which is conferred by the bishop at the Cathedral. During the Lenten season, they experience the tender mercy of Christ as they make their first Confession. A couple of weeks before Easter, Rebecca coordinates a powerful retreat that focuses on spirituality. During this retreat, participants learn how to relish in their newfound relationship with God’s glorious Church on earth through personal prayer, devotions, and more.

“The retreat is intended to be a way to step back and prayerfully seek union with God, which is the inspiration behind every step of the spiritual journey,” Rebecca says. “At the retreat, we talk about forms of prayer, prayer in Scripture, and various spiritualities as paths to Christ, but mostly we seek to provide an opportunity for prayer and reflection for the candidates and catechumens.

Importantly, RCIA sessions are not just open to those who are certain they want to come into full communion with the Catholic Church. Although they are not adult education courses, they do offer an ideal opportunity for those who are simply searching for the Truth or a “church home.”

For more information on RCIA, or to inquire about sponsoring someone going through the RCIA process, please email Deacon Ken at kmaleck@knology.net.

The Senior Center: St. Mary's Great Gift

The spiritual wellbeing of the seniors here at St. Mary on the Hill depends not only on sacraments and sacramentals provided by the Church, but also on the social and physical health of the community. This is why the Senior Citizen Center is dedicated to providing a healthy environment of faith and friendship to the older members of our faith community.

Patty Lezotte is in charge of operations at the center, and she emphasizes the importance in having a well-organized social group for our seniors.

"Not only does having a common social group keep your mind active, but it keeps people youthful," she says. "It's healthy to be around people and peers that share each other's interests."

There is almost no end to the activities provided by the Senior Center. Among them are painting classes, Bingo games, Bridge classes and games, movies, luncheons, and bus trips to surrounding attractions.

"We go to see plays in Atlanta and Greenville sometimes," Patty says. "And we've taken trips to the Atlanta Aquarium and we have taken cruises on the river, and on the canal. We're a very active group."

The Senior Center is open from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. On Tuesdays throughout the school year – September through May – the center sponsors a senior Mass and luncheon at the parish hall.

The activities at the center are simple, yet fun ways

for our seniors to enjoy each other's company while keeping a focus on faith.

"We pray – before our Bingo games, for instance – and we go around before meals and people tell us their special intentions," Patty says. "It's a soulful experience because there's so much kindness here."

Patty also expresses her gratitude to the crew that helps out at the center.

"Without Therese Evans and Anita Irvin on certain occasions when I was hospitalized, we'd have to close," Patty says. "But because they were kind enough to come by and help out, a lot of people benefited. Therese is the Bridge teacher here, and it's amazing how many people started to come because of her."

The Senior Center does not need volunteers, as is stated on the website, but more people are welcome and encouraged to join. St. Mary on the Hill is generous enough to reach out and satisfy the needs of the aging. All eligible parishioners are encouraged to come and take advantage of this wonderful gift.

For more information regarding the Senior Center, please visit the facility website – <http://stmaryonthehill.org/seniors.htm> – or contact Patty Lezotte at **706-262-0340** or patty.lezotte@knology.net.

Catholicism Comes A

At St. Mary on the Hill Catholic School, “Catholic” isn’t just a word. It is part of a fabulous, all-encompassing vision that makes our parish school the extraordinary place that it is.

“At our school, not only is the Catholic faith taught, but it is lived out daily,” Assistant Principal Mary Beth Jordan says. “Religion is taught every day and woven throughout the curriculum. This is how we keep our Catholic identity. It is what makes our school different from other local public schools. I really do appreciate our school’s Catholicity. It is not just the students who are supported in their every day lives by having the privilege of working in an environment of Catholic Community, it is also staff members like myself!”

In fact, St. Mary’s Catholic educational program lays a remarkable foundation for the lifelong spiritual journey of each one of its students. Children hearts are often very sensitive to the workings of God’s grace, and that is where the importance of a Catholic education comes in.

“Catholic education helps students to recognize that, in addition to parents, a community exists to support them as they live out their faith,” Mrs. Jordan says. “St. Mary’s is a place where students, families and staff work together for the glory of God.”



Live at St. Mary on the Hill School

The school's mission statement is as follows: "In a Christ-centered atmosphere, the mission of St. Mary on the Hill Catholic School is to teach, to learn and to become faith-filled servants of Jesus."

Not only does St. Mary on the Hill Catholic School have plenty to offer from a religious point-of-view, but it also presents a wealth of academic advantages. It is accredited by the Florida Catholic Conference (FCC) and Southern Association of Colleges and School (SACS). According to the school's website, "As prescribed by the Office of Catholic Schools, Diocese of Savannah, St. Mary's curriculum exceeds state and national standards and provides a superior Catholic education that is both academically challenging and developmentally appropriate. The curriculum focuses on educating each child in all dimensions: intellectual, spiritual, physical, emotional, moral, and social."

"Our school has small class sizes and is very community-oriented," Mrs. Jordan says. "The academic benefits of St. Mary's absolutely show forth through the performance of our students, and by their test scores."

This coming school year, St. Mary's will be enhancing its academic offerings even further by replacing most of their Promethean ActivBoards with new versions. The school will also be implementing a new math curriculum which was revised and written by master teachers within our diocese, in conjunction with the University of Notre Dame.

Our parish school serves students in kindergarten through eighth grade. If you would like to take advantage of the blessing of Catholic education and enroll a student, please contact St. Mary's School Office at **706-733-6193** or inquire further at **www.stmaryssaints.org**. St. Mary's is a stewardship-based school. For more information about cost, you may contact the office as well.



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 both 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 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops points out in its pastoral document *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, "In

Jesus' teaching and life self-emptying is fundamental. Now, it might seem that self-emptying has little to do with stewardship, but in Jesus' case that is not so. 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" (19).

Jesus points out to Peter in Mark'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, talent 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, and the practice of stewardship 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: A Disciple's Response*, 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.



August: The Gift of Time *continued from front cover*

Yet, we should not allow our time to be something that simply evades our grasp, trickling through our fingers. After all, time itself – every moment on this earth – is a gift from God. We each have 24 hours today and seven days this week to use however we please. Not one of us gets more time than another.

At the end of this summer, there is cause to look back and see how we chose to use our time these last few months. Did we set aside time to pray? Have we allowed for time to serve others? Did we devote time each day to serve God?

When we assess the use of our time, we must make a spiritual examination – “Have I been a good steward of the time given to me?” Maybe now is a good time to make some changes in our lives and

get more involved. There is no better time than right now to seek out ways to serve God, our parish, and those around us. This is what it means to be a good steward!

As the lazy days of summer give way to the busyness of fall, remember to keep God in your hearts, in your minds, and on your tongue as we continue our stewardship journey as a parish family. Please pray for me as I pray for you.

God bless you,



Fr. Jerry

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Fran Mixon

In This Month's Issue

News and Notes From Fr. Jerry
Front Cover

**RCIA: Joyfully Bringing Souls
Home to Rome**
Page 2

**The Senior Center: St. Mary's
Great Gift**
Page 3

**Catholicism Comes Alive at St.
Mary on the Hill School**
Pages 4-5

**Stewardship's "Supreme Teacher"
Following Christ's Example**
Page 6