

Saint Mary

ON THE HILL

CATHOLIC CHURCH



News and Notes from Fr. Jerry

Are We Living Out Our Duty as Hospitable Ambassadors of Christ?

Dear Parishioners,

As we meditate on Advent, the humility of God holds the mirror up to us. If God loves us to the point that the Creator is willing to become creature; if God gives up his dignity as God to become one of us and enters into this messy old world, what are the implications for us?

At the very least, I think it means we must try to imitate God's love and give ourselves to others. Recently, I've heard a couple sad stories about people acting badly in church. In one case, it involved a lack of hospitality towards a person with a physical disability, and in the other case, people failed to show a friendly welcome to visitors who had fled the wrath of Hurricane Matthew.

Our actions and reactions toward visitors at Mass communicate who we are and whom we represent. So, as visitors head our way this Christmas season, I hope we will take the time to welcome them to our faith community. Remember, we are Christ's ambassadors (2 Corinthians 5:20). Welcoming gestures, however small, will not only have a positive impact on visitors – they will make us more hospitable ambassadors of Christ.

Welcoming newcomers to your parish is not just the job of the pastoral staff, ushers, or greeters. It is everyone's responsibility. Here are some things you can do to offer better hospitality in our parish.

1. Cultivate the virtue of hospitality at Mass.

Many Mass attendees tend to gather into little cliques and ignore those who are not members of their particular clique. They are not really inhospitable, just heedless of the need for hospitality. Make hospitality a new habit when you go to Mass.

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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.

Ministry Stitches Love Into Baptismal Bibs

When the women who sew the baptismal bibs for our youngest new parishioners take up their needles and thread, their sewing is indeed “a labor of love.”

Anne Proctor oversees this ministry — a group that ranges from 10 to 15 women.

“They’re different ages,” Anne says. “Some are young mothers, and one member is 100 years old and still sewing.”

Although the tradition of a sewing group, or circle, saw women gathering in a home to work together, the Baptismal Sewing group relies on technology to stay in touch.

“No, we don’t get together,” Anne says. “I buy the material and lace and make the patterns. All contact is done by email or phone. I put kits together and leave them at the church. The ladies pick them up and return the completed bibs to the pick-up spot.”

The bibs are made of simple white material with an embroidered cross on the front. Lace is placed around the edges. During the baptism service, the bibs are placed on the babies.

“There is another group of ladies who help the priest in setting up the baptism candles, bib, and all the necessary things,” Anne says. “We routinely have baptism on the



The delicate stitching on the cross shows the care put into the creation of the baptismal bibs sewn for our newest, youngest parishioners.

second and third Sundays of each month. The parents have contacted the church office and set up the time. Our contribution is unseen by anyone else.”

The ministry began when Fr. Jerry arrived in 2002, and brought a request with him.

“His previous church had made bibs for all the infants being baptized,” Anne says. “He asked if I could work on it. Someone in the

church office suggested me, as I had done a bit of sewing. I love sewing, and I have a daughter that I sewed for, and I had done a number of courses in it. He just asked if I’d do it. I did, and got the pattern from his old parish. We’ve been making infant baptism bibs ever since.”

The pattern is simple, at Fr. Jerry’s request.

“It’s very, very simple,” Anne says. “Our goal is to keep it as simple as possible. It’s very pretty with the lace around the whole bib. Father didn’t want it to appear professional. He wanted it to be a homespun kind of bib.”

The white of the bib represents the soul cleansed of original sin at baptism.

“It’s a labor of love to do it,” Anne says. “I don’t put a particular face on the child wearing the bib, but I see a new member of the parish.”

The number of bibs made each year follows supply and demand.

“Sometimes I make kits four times a year, eight at a time, and the church always has them in a drawer — about 10 to 20 are what we hope to have on hand, readily available,” Anne says. “The ladies enjoy doing it. If you’re an accomplished seamstress, do sewing for

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“We take pride in our new members of the parish. You think about the sacrament and assisting the Church in welcoming a new member to the parish.”

– Anne Proctor

Ministry Stitches Love Into Baptismal Bibs

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children or grandchildren, it's a piece of cake. I have some who finish very quickly. We take pride in our new members of the parish. You think about the sacrament and assisting the Church in welcoming a new member to the parish as you sew each bib."

If you are interested in joining the Baptismal Sewing Ministry, please call Anne Proctor at 706-736-4335.



Each infant baptized at St. Mary on the Hill receives one of these bibs made by our Baptismal Sewing Ministry.

Congratulations to Our Recently Confirmed Youth

We extend our congratulations to our 80 young men and women who were confirmed on Nov. 7!



“These Veterans The Ancient Order of Hibernians Gives

It is Dec. 9, and the parish hall is alive with the sights, sounds, and smells of a joyous celebration. An Irish band plays traditional tunes and Christmas music, a pile of gifts waits to be unwrapped, and a holiday feast is laid out on a long buffet – fried turkey and baked ham with all the fixings. Even Santa Claus himself makes an appearance, not wanting to miss out on all this merrymaking!

No, we aren't talking about your ordinary Christmas party – this event is a Christmas dinner put on for local veterans by the Ancient Order of Hibernians, or AOH, a fraternal organization for Catholics of Irish heritage. Now in its fourth year, the Veterans Christmas Party has quickly become an outstanding highlight of this organization's service in the community.

“It's really heartwarming to see the veterans enjoy themselves,” says AOH President Mike Ramp. “Taking the time out to do the party during this time of year has become a number-one priority for us.”

This special Christmas party became a tradition after Fr. Jerry Ragan, chaplain to our local AOH, expressed interest in the group doing something to honor veterans during the holiday season. That first year, the party was held in an assisted living house for vets on Central Avenue, which has since closed. Now, the event is held in our parish hall and the guests of honor



AOH members at the 2015 veterans Christmas party – (from left) Dave Maney, Stephen Ramp, Michael Ramp, Worth Andrews, Michael Leonard, Jerry Armstrong; Bill Berry (seated). The AOH members would especially like to honor Dave Maney, who passed away in October. “Oddly enough, he had been moved to the Georgia War Veterans Home,” Mike Ramp says. “We were really excited that one of our own would be attending an event that was close to his heart and as a member and guest.”

include residents of the Georgia War Veterans Home, as well as veterans who are staying at the Charlie Norwood VA Medical Center in the rehabilitation program for the blind. These vets are typically at the VA for six or eight weeks, which often means spending the holidays far from family and loved ones.

For members of the AOH, this annual party is a way to express a deep gratitude for the veterans' selfless service to our country.

“We're just trying to give back for what these veterans have given us,” Mike says. “These veterans are special – they are either elderly or have disabilities. These are vets who aren't looked after by the warrior groups, ones that have fallen through the cracks. They are in a home, or they are away from home, and they need some entertainment. It's not a tremendous thing, but it is something that we like doing for them.”

Year after year, the AOH members and their wives who make this event happen find that they enjoy the evening every bit as much as the men and women they are serving, and they are humbled by the opportunity to touch the lives of the veterans in some way.

“The response – the cards and thanks we have received afterwards – has been phenomenal,” Mike says. “Last year, one gentleman came up to me and said, ‘I'm so thankful for your organization doing this for us, getting us here and entertaining us. We don't get out that much and this is really great.’ And he said, ‘You didn't



AOH president Mike Ramp talks with a veteran at the annual Veterans Christmas Party

s Are Special" an Extraordinary "Thank You" to Vets



The annual veterans Christmas party hosted by the AOH brings the joy of the season to those who have selflessly served our country



AOH member Michael Leonard serves Christmas dinner at the annual Veterans Christmas Party

have to buy us gifts – the music is great and you’re all talking to us.’ They love to tell war stories, and I just love talking and listening to them.”

The annual Christmas party for veterans is certainly a highlight of the many services provided by the 30-plus members of the Ancient Order of Hibernians here at St. Mary on the Hill. Mike encourages all Catholic

men of Irish heritage to consider joining this wonderful group. Please keep an eye out for the AOH’s informational brochures to make an appearance in our narthex soon – perhaps next year you, too, will be a part of this wonderful holiday event for our vets!

In the meantime, we thank the AOH for all of their hard work and service throughout the year!

Advent and Christmas Schedule



Advent Penance Service – Dec. 6 at 7 p.m.

Feast of the Immaculate Conception Mass Schedule

Dec. 7 – 5:15 p.m., Vigil

Dec. 8 – 7, 9:15, noon, and 6 p.m.

Breakfast with Santa – Dec. 11, 8:30 a.m. – noon

Live Nativity – Dec. 18, 6:30, 7, and 7:30 p.m.

Christmas Mass Schedule

Christmas Eve Mass – 6 p.m., 9 p.m. and midnight

Christmas Day Mass – 9 and 11 a.m.

Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God

Dec. 31, 6 p.m., Vigil

Jan. 1, 9 and 11 a.m.



The 1940s, World War II, and its Lasting Impact

The expansion of The Hill as a residential and resort area caused a steady increase in the congregation, but it was World War II that really taxed the capacity of our church. Within the parish limits, the Forrest Ricker Hotel, a former tourist destination, became Oliver General United States Army Hospital. The airport, located on a section of the former Camp Hancock – on the southwest corner of Highland Avenue and Wrightsboro Road – was converted into the Daniel Field Army Air Base. The work at the Arsenal was intensified and the facilities of the Lenwood, a Veterans Hospital on the south side of Wrightsboro Road and Maryland Avenue, were enlarged. The congregation, which had started with about 400 members, now numbered over 1,000 – not including the Catholic families temporarily located within the parish boundaries.

The explosive growth of the parish during the war years is graphically illustrated by the end-of-year balance sheets' tally of annual receipts:

1941 – \$2,911
1942 – \$15,985
1943 – \$22,420
1944 – \$28,487

As the war began, Fr. Barr was called into service as an Army Chaplain in December 1940 and was replaced by Fr. Daniel J. Bourke. In 1941, he was replaced by

Fr. Thomas A. Brennan, who noted how spiritually active the parishioners were. Fr. Brennan presided over the parish's Silver Jubilee celebration on Nov. 28, 1944.

The 1940s saw Mount St. Joseph students involved in the many civic projects to aid the war effort. They collected scrap metal in any form and rubber tires – “pots, pans and wires” for the cause. Traditional gym classes were replaced by military-style drills and physical training. The ladies donned their wartime uniforms – the regular school skirt with a long sleeved white blouse adorned with their “Victory Corps” insignia, a blue tie, and a blue military hat with a bright red “A”! The girls looked forward to working weekly with their drill instructor, a handsome young soldier from Camp Gordon!

A weekly nurse assistant training course was taught by Mrs. Claude Burpee, a nurse at University Hospital. Upon completion, some MSJ girls actually worked as aides at the hospital. Others helped their parents staff the USO in downtown Augusta.

Buoyed by the coming end of worldwide war, Msgr. James J. Grady took the helm of St. Mary's on the Hill in April 1945. Within a month of his arrival, the new pastor began looking for a site for a Catholic hospital and a site to relocate Boys Catholic High, which had opened in 1939 at the corner of 7th and Telfair, staffed by the Marist Brothers.

Are We Living Out Our Duty *continued from front cover*

2. **Come early, leave late.**

Instead of rushing to Mass to be there on time, and then rushing out at its conclusion, make time to come a little early and linger just a bit later. Make room in your busy life to greet and spend time with others at Mass.

3. **At the end of Mass, go in peace to greet someone!**

Seek out someone you've not met before. Shake their hand, introduce yourself, and take a few moments to welcome them to your parish home, God's house.

4. **Welcome everyone.**

Not only do visitors need your warm welcome, but regular Mass attendees also need a friendly greeting. Develop a good handshake and be enthusiastic about your parish. You are greeting others in the name of Christ.

5. **Say goodbye with genuine warmth.**

After Mass, bid farewell to visitors, inviting them to return next week. Introduce them to one of the parish priests if the opportunity arises.

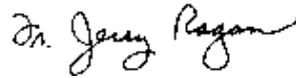
6. **Give visitors information about the parish.**

Ensure that a visitor has a bulletin and other information about the parish before they leave. If there is a social gathering or the pancake breakfast after Mass, invite them.

7. **Be part of a greeting ministry team.**

Truth be told, ever since Randy Herald moved away a couple years ago, this ministry has gone missing. So, we are in need of a few good extroverts to resurrect this ministry. I'd be happy to offer a few pointers to all those who are regularly early for Mass and would be interested in creating a more welcoming parish. But remember, the ministry of hospitality is not just the responsibility of a few – the entire faith community is called to take on this ministry as ambassadors of Christ.

God bless you,



Fr. Jerry

Ad Placement

Saint Mary

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Baptisms

Bettis Cantelou Rainsford, III
Son of Bettis and Melissa Rainsford, Jr.

Kelsey Nicole Rosema
Daughter of James and Ashley Rosema