

Saint Mary

ON THE HILL
CATHOLIC CHURCH



News and Notes from Fr. Jerry

Ensuring the Vibrancy of Our Parish for Years to Come

Dear Parishioners,

I hope you are enjoying the history articles that are being placed in this year's *Marianite* as we celebrate 100 years as a Faith Community. In 1917, St. Mary on the Hill was established to serve the needs of the many Catholics who had moved to "The Hill" section of Augusta following the devastating fire in downtown Augusta in the spring of 1916.

Bishop Benjamin Keiley instructed Fr. Patrick H. McMahon to acquire property that would be suitable for a parish church. Fr. McMahon purchased a house on the southeast corner of Monte Sano and McDowell streets. Parishioners gathered in that house, which today functions as the priests' rectory, until a church was built in 1919.

The original church, used today as our Parish Hall, was dedicated on Nov. 30, 1919, and was utilized as our worship place until our growth mandated a larger facility.

The first Mass in the present church was celebrated on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception in 1955. Since that time, the church has undergone several enhancements. The beautiful

stained glass windows, which primarily depict the Mysteries of the Holy Rosary, were installed in 1969, and the Wicks pipe organ was blessed on June 1, 1980.

Finally, the interior of the church, left unfinished in the 1955 construction, was completed during the refurbishment of the church in 1993. At that time, a day chapel and gathering space were also added to the structure.

The parish has also been dedicated to the ministry of Catholic education. In 1960, the parish took over operation of the elementary school from the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, who had established Mt. St. Joseph's Academy on the site in 1916. St. Mary on the Hill School has experienced many structural additions since that time, and presently educates 450 students each year. In a bold move to ensure access to a Catholic education for all of our parishioners, in 1995, the parish began to fund the operation of the school completely from generous support of the parish Stewardship initiative.

St. Mary on the Hill has had a vibrant past. As your pastor who has

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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.

The Daddy-Daughter Dance: *A Beloved Parish Tradition*

One of the most highly anticipated events for little girls in our parish is just around the corner! The St. Mary on the Hill Daddy-Daughter Dance is being held on Friday, Feb. 24. This annual event – open to dads and their daughters from kindergarten through eighth grade – has been a favorite tradition for many parishioners for close to 10 years, creating countless wonderful memories for the fathers and daughters who attend.

Sara Bennett, the new Social Director for the parish, is especially excited about some of the fun things in store for this year's dance.

"Every year, we have a different theme to make it festive, and this year is a Mardi Gras theme," she explains. "We'll have a DJ and a photo booth, so the dads and daughters can take pictures and have a keepsake to take home. This is a really popular event – since it's in the parish hall we have to limit it to 150 people, and it always seems to sell out."

Although this is her first year planning the event as Social Director, Sara has helped with the dance for the past seven years. She loves seeing how much the girls enjoy this special evening with their fathers.

"I started helping with it when my daughter, Britt, was in preschool because I wanted to help make the night special for her and the other little girls," Sara says. "It was so neat to peek out and see all the little girls with their dads. They get super excited to get dressed up and be out with their dads."

Families of all different sizes and types enjoy this event each year, giving many young girls the chance to share a special bonding experience with their fathers or father-figures.

"Some dads that come have one daughter, and some have five," Sara says. "And there are also girls whose dads might be deployed or otherwise not present, and I've seen them with their uncles and big brothers, so they're still able to enjoy it, as well."

Like so many of the dads and daughters who attend this event each year, the dance has become an annual tradition for Sara's husband, Dan, and their daughter, Britt.



Britt and Dan Bennett get ready to leave for the 2016 Daddy-Daughter Dance at St. Mary on the Hill.

"They started going when Britt was in kindergarten, and she's in sixth grade now and they plan on going this year," Sara says. "Dan usually buys her flowers, and they go out to dinner and then come to the dance. He really enjoys it. What I've found is that through the years, you see a lot of the same girls that came in kindergarten and are now in middle school, and they're still coming every year with their dads. They don't lose interest."

In addition to spending time with their daughters, the dads who attend the event also find an opportunity to get to know one another as the girls spend some time talking and playing with their own friends. In this way, the dance also serves as a unique social event for fathers in the parish.

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The Daddy-Daughter Dance: *A Beloved Parish Tradition* continued from page 2

With the celebration of fathers and daughters as the central focus of this dance, the parish shows its support for young families and helps to nurture the priceless connection between young girls and their fathers.

“The dance helps celebrate family, and it’s just another way for a dad to be able to show his daughter his love for her and have a special night of bonding,” Sara says. “Every little girl likes to be doted on by her dad. I think that it helps strengthen their relationship.”

As each year has shown, the parish Daddy-Daughter Dance is truly a beloved tradition here at

St. Mary on the Hill. This year, we look forward to seeing dads and daughters continue to make lifelong memories together at this very special event!



Tickets for the Daddy-Daughter Dance are available through the parish office. The cost is \$15 per daddy/daughter, plus \$5 for each additional daughter.

100-Year Anniversary Celebration Events 2017

Feb. 7: Augusta University “Trio Babes” Concert, Parish Hall, 7 p.m.

March 5-8: Parish Mission, 7 p.m.
(see story on pages 4-5)

May 21: Aquinas High School 60th Anniversary Graduation Mass, 2:30 p.m.

June 11: Church Picnic at Mistletoe State Park – 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Mass at noon

Summer Series: Dinner and Talk (ticket event), 6 p.m.
(location TBA)

June 7: Dr. Messimo Faggioli - Professor of Historical Theology, Villanova University

June 21: Dr. Allen Hunt

July 12: Fr. Thomas Rosica, CSB, talk on “The Parish Community in the Mind, Heart and Teaching of Pope Francis”

July 26: Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet

Sept. 1: All-School First Friday Mass, 9:15 a.m. followed by 100th Anniversary Reception in Parish Hall

Sept. 17: CCD 100-Year Celebration, 9 a.m. in the Church – Reception to follow in Parish Hall

Oct. 10: Dr. Richard Elliott, Mormon Tabernacle Senior Organist, Organ Recital in the Church, 7 p.m.

Oct. 21: Summerville Tour of Homes, featuring our Church, 12-3 p.m.

Oct. 22: Summerville Tour of Homes, featuring our Church, 2-5 p.m.

Nov. 15: 20th Perpetual Adoration Anniversary Benediction with Reception to follow in Parish Hall

Dec. 8: 100th Anniversary Mass at 6 p.m. Inaugural ringing of the 100th Anniversary carillon bells, followed by Gala Ball in the St. Mary on the Hill School Cafeteria

A Very Special *Pa* Milestone Year at S

This year marks an exciting milestone here at St. Mary on the Hill as we celebrate our Centennial, and our Lenten parish mission March 4-5 will reflect this momentous occasion by bringing back three priests who have all called our parish home at different times in our history. Bishop Emeritus J. Kevin Boland, who served his very first assignment as a young priest here at St. Mary on the Hill from 1959 until 1961, will celebrate all of the Masses on the weekend of the mission. Msgr. Jim Costigan, who was pastor at St. Mary's from 1982 until 2002, will lead a Holy Hour on March 6 and a penance service on March 7. On March 8, Fr. Pablo Migone, an alumnus of St. Mary on the Hill Catholic School and Aquinas High School, will preach the Homily during an evening celebration of the Eucharist.

The parish mission – in addition to helping parishioners prepare their hearts and minds to enter the Lenten season – will celebrate St. Mary on the Hill's illustrious past while looking toward a promising future. We are blessed that these three outstanding clergymen will be making a pilgrimage back to our parish to provide us with this opportunity for spiritual growth and renewal!

According to Bishop Boland, parish missions offer parishioners – whether they are already regular Mass-goers or not – a valuable chance to revitalize their faith life.

"Participating in a mission is always good," Bishop Boland says. "It's like a football season for football fans – everyone may watch a game on TV, but the really committed people will try to go to a game, because the real thing will give them more energy going forward. So, we go to Mass every Sunday and it sometimes becomes rote and we get used to it, so a mission is taking a little time out and seeing if we are responding to God



Bishop Emeritus J. Kevin Boland

as well as we could. It's a special event in our spiritual journey."

And now more than ever, during this Centennial year of the parish, is the perfect time to reflect on the many people and blessings in the past that have brought us where we are today.

"I will be expressing gratitude for what happened 100 years ago," Bishop Boland says. "If we could put ourselves in those people's shoes, would they have expected to find what we have here today? Large groups of parishioners, the parish school and a high school – planting that flag 100 years ago was a great act of courage."

Bishop Boland is greatly looking forward to coming back to St. Mary on the Hill, seeing some familiar faces, and reminiscing about his time here as a brand-new priest arriving in Georgia from Ireland.

"I had my beginnings there," he recalls of our parish. "The two years went by very quickly, but I remember many people from those years who were so

We hope everyone will mark their calendars and plan on attending the three evenings of our Parish Mission, March 6-8. Come join us as we reflect on 100 years as a parish, look ahead to the future, and grow in faith together!

Parish Mission for a St. Mary on the Hill!

affirming and supportive of this kid from Ireland who didn't know what he was doing!"

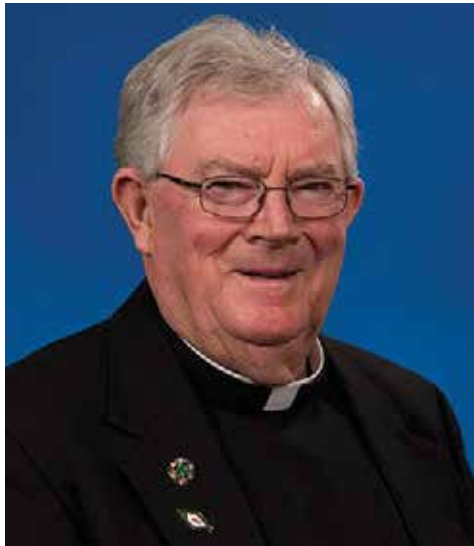
Our parish mission will also be a homecoming for Msgr. Costigan, who retired in June after eight years as pastor at St. Peter the Apostle in Savannah, but continues to serve the parish as Senior Parochial Vicar. Having spent 20 years serving as pastor here at St. Mary on the Hill, Monsignor still maintains deep ties to our parish.

"I still remember and know a lot of people there," he says. "I love St. Mary's, of course! I invested 20 years of my priesthood and time there, and during that period of time, there is a lot of formation of people that takes place, so [this mission] is a revival and celebration of that."

One of the topics Msgr. Costigan will touch upon during the mission is our parish's commitment to stewardship – a legacy of his time here that, to this day, informs so much of what we do as a faith community.

"The reasons I wanted to do stewardship to begin with was out of commitment," he says. "It's an outgrowth of discipleship to me. We're called to be disciples, so if we answer that call and follow Jesus, we're going to have to do something with that. Jesus didn't want people sitting on a log – He wanted them to do something!"

"Stewardship is the 'action' part of discipleship – getting involved, outreach, and all the things we do,"



Msgr. Jim Costigan

Msgr. Costigan adds. "So, it only made sense to bring that into Catholic education. And now you've gone the full cycle, and the kids who were in school at that time are now sending their own kids there. So people see the value and the good of it, and hopefully it will continue on."

Like Bishop Boland, Msgr. Costigan views a parish mission as an important opportunity – especially as we move into the Lenten season – for renewing one's faith, moving closer to the Lord, and recommitting to live out our discipleship.

Fr. Pablo, Chancellor for the Diocese of Savannah, also sees many benefits for parishioners who choose to participate in a parish mission.

"Missions are helpful in a parish because you're able to bring priests from outside the parish, so it's a chance for folks to hear someone else preach another point of view," he says. "The purpose is to bring some



Fr. Pablo Migone

fresh air, and to provide confessions – so, it's a chance to grow deeper in your own faith and knowledge."

Like Bishop Boland and Msgr. Costigan, Fr. Pablo has close ties to the parish, as well, having spent the latter part of his childhood here. He is pleased to be able to come "home" for our mission and celebrate this renewal of faith taking place during our Centennial year.

"St. Mary's has been where I have felt at home, and where I feel that I know families," Fr. Pablo says. "I'm really looking forward to it. I think it will be a great celebration and moment for the parish. Especially this year at St. Mary's – it's special and unique since it's the (centennial), and they have Msgr. Costigan and Bishop Boland and me coming; all who have ties to St. Mary's. So, it will be good to hear three different perspectives about three different stages of the parish."

St. Mary's on the Hill Builds a Parish School *The Late '50s, Early '60s*

The history of a Catholic school on Monte Sano Avenue goes back prior to the establishment of St. Mary's on the Hill Parish. In June 1916, St. Joseph's Academy – later Mount St. Joseph Academy – moved from its Wrightsboro Road address, where the VA facility is now located, to Chateau LeVert on Bellevue Avenue, between Monte Sano and Arsenal Avenues. The failure of the Irish American Bank forced the Sisters of St. Joseph to abandon their beautiful new facility and relocate. Later that same year, adjoining property was purchased which faced Monte Sano Avenue.

With many Catholics migrating up the Hill after the fire of 1916, a new mission parish was established to serve them – St. Mary's on the Hill – and the Sisters' school for girls in Chateau LeVert grew and prospered. It had both high school and elementary departments operated by the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, and their mission and school operated continuously until the last high school class of Mount St. Joseph graduated in June 1957. Younger students then transferred over to the newly built Aquinas High School, where the ladies continued their education under the tutelage of the Sisters, and male students, formerly enrolled at Boys Catholic High School, continued their courses under the direction of the Marist Brothers.

As for the elementary students, their last class graduated in June 1960. Earlier in January 1959, a well-planned fundraising drive had been held in the parish. The land on which Mount St. Joseph's stood was purchased from the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, and the groundbreaking ceremony took place on Jan. 12, 1960. The school, designed by Woodhurst and O'Brien architects and built by Claussen Webster Construction Company, first welcomed students on Sept. 8, 1960! St. Mary's on the Hill School, beautiful in appearance and splendidly equipped, was ready to receive over 400 students. Manned by seven sisters of St. Joseph, five lay teachers, a secretary, dietitian, and kitchen staff, the school was headed by Sr. Mary Gerald, C.S.J.

The school grew so rapidly that it soon became necessary to enlarge it, and plans were also made for a new convent and chapel at the same time. The sisters moved in to their new home in Dec. 18, 1964.



Today, the Perpetual Adoration Chapel and school complex take up the entire block. They are a tangible testimony to us of the generosity of a people, committed to a living faith and quite aware of their obligation to transmit that faith to new generations.

Ensuring the Vibrancy of Our Parish for Years to Come

continued from front cover

been with you for the past 14 years, I can say that I am proud of who we are as a community of faith. As we pass this historical milestone of 100 years as a parish, I look forward to celebrating our past – but more importantly, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I look forward to continuing the mission of our parish, which is to make the love of God an ever-more-present reality in our world.

Over the past several months, I have been working closely with the leaders from the parish to prayerfully discern a three-year priority plan, which will set the course for the future of our parish. Many of you have contributed greatly to the direction of this plan through your participation in the Listening Session that took place in September 2016.

The plan is ambitious, but it is what is right, and just as we strive to respond to the Holy Spirit's invitation to continue to grow and mature as disciples of Jesus Christ! I ask for your prayers and support as

the Pastoral Council and I begin to “roll out” the Parish Priority Plan in the coming weeks. Over the next three years, we will focus on goals in three particular areas – Catholic Formation, Outreach, and Hospitality – as we continue our commitment to the highest standards of excellence in Stewardship, Eucharistic Adoration, and Catholic Education.

This plan is not my plan. It is our plan! Having listened to your voices and the prompting of the Holy Spirit, being a people united in mission together – priests, deacons, staff, parish leaders and the whole community – we have an opportunity to ensure the vibrancy of our parish for generations to come!

God bless you,

Fr. Jerry

Ad Placement

Saint Mary

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In Honor of the Priests and Staff of St. Mary's
Lou M. Cheek

St. Mary on the Hill School

Jack and Marcelene Markwalter
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Baptisms

Dec. 11, 2016

Michaela LaRue Roberson
Daughter of David and Bambi Roberson

Dec. 18, 2016

Lucas Connor Kelly
Son of Michael and Mary Kelly

Dec. 21, 2016

Vera Rae Prestifilippo
Daughter of Dominic and Jennifer Prestifilippo

Dec. 30, 2016

Paul Blackstone Wasko
Son of Jonathan and Michele Wasko