

# Saint Mary

ON THE HILL  
CATHOLIC CHURCH



*News and Notes from Fr. Jerry*

## Are We Prepared to Match Jesus' Gifts to Us?

Dear Parishioners,

**A**nother Christmas season has come to a close, and for most of us, it was another wonderful season filled with extraordinary gift giving. Now, with a new year upon us, I would like to turn our focus to an even more extraordinary type of gift.

This gift is not the traditional "present" we give to loved ones. No, this gift is ongoing and never-ending, bearing a value far beyond the realm of our comprehension.

This is the gift of the Eucharist. "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Those are words that we associate with the presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. They are words that carry a meaning beyond our abilities to really appreciate them at times. Christ's eternal gift to us calls us to share it with others. We need to strive in this new year to receive the Lord with humility and love, and then to pass that on to our families, our friends, our faith community, and all those with whom we may come in contact.

It is through the Eucharist that we become one with the Lord. It is through Him that we receive the strength to be good stewards. We need to receive this incredible gift and share the Good News with all around us. When we approach the Eucharist, we must always keep in mind the real presence of Jesus Christ, and that in itself is a humbling experience.



*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.

# Teaching Children to Live a Life of Stewardship

## How old do you have to be to practice stewardship?

Can a 10-year-old embrace stewardship? How about a 5-year-old?

Although there is no guideline to what the right age is to begin to live a life of stewardship, God's call certainly extends to each of His children — even the young ones.

It is especially important to show children that they are not too young to share their time, talent and treasure to help build God's kingdom.

### Sharing Your Time

A young child can share of his time in a variety of ways appropriate to his ability. For example, during the day, a child can pray for a loved one that is hurt, or say prayers with his parents or siblings. He can participate in Mass each Sunday, and even take time from his day to thank God for a veteran who has served our country.

Spending time being virtuous — such as being patient, generous and kind — is also a great example of sharing our time for love of God.

### Sharing Your Talent

Using God-given talents to glorify God can also be performed by both young and old. An elementary school-aged child can easily clean her room or perform chores such as raking leaves, doing laundry, or taking care of pets. Making cards for people who are sick or who have had a death in the family are other concrete examples of being a faithful steward.

Even using our talents — such as playing a musical instrument or football — to the best of our abilities to give God glory is an example of being a good steward.

### Sharing Your Treasure

Although children do not have the same type of treasure to share as adults, instilling the importance of sharing finances is an important lesson.

If a child receives an allowance, he can return a portion of it to the Church in the collection basket. If he gets money for his birthday, he can give a small portion of it back to God in thanksgiving. Little ones can even share things like their Halloween candy with their siblings or friends as a way of demonstrating generosity.

### The Most Important Lesson

Above all, the most important lesson to teach our children is why we share. We don't share because we "have to." We don't share because our parents tell us to. We share our time, talent and treasure with God because we are thankful for the blessings He has given us and we want to thank Him for His generosity.

Teaching these lessons at a young age will allow a lifetime of good stewardship to follow for even the youngest of God's children.



# As God's Instruments, St. Mary's Youth Choir Leads Us in Worship With Music

In an age when so many of our young people are being pulled from away from their faith by the music that permeates their everyday lives, the music created by our own Youth Choir at St. Mary on the Hill serves as remarkable and inspiring contrast.

Parishioner John Rose has been involved with the Youth Choir for more than 10 years and currently serves as its Choir Director. Throughout those years of working with youth, he has developed certain expertise to draw upon in noting the importance for young people to share their musical passion and talents in the celebration of Mass.

"My prayer before every Mass is that our choir becomes God's instrument," John says. "For most musicians, there is a lot of fear to overcome when performing. After all, you and your talents are on display. But when our focus shifts to being God's instruments, there is a sense of freedom experienced. We simply focus on doing our best, hoping that God is working through us. In the process, the young musicians are blessed and our Church is blessed."

"It's a privilege to actively use my talents at Mass," he continues. "And I would encourage anyone to do the same."

The Youth Choir sings each week at the 5:30 p.m. Sunday Mass. Currently, there are about eight high school students, four college-age kids and four not-quite-so-young members participating. The general rule is that anyone who has been confirmed is welcome to participate. The instruments include a few guitars, a violin, two pianos and a trumpet, though this varies from week to week. The Choir rehearses from 4 to 5:30 p.m. every Sunday and occasionally during the week as everyone's schedules permit.

John notes that he finds participation in the choir to be very stabilizing. And this stabilizing influence is vital for our young people, who are still developing their identity in Christ, and who are constantly dealing with challenges to their faith in this secular society. With this in mind, John identifies the special power of music to aid us all spiritually.

"I think music gives us a sense of integrity or wholeness," he says. "When we sing a song praising God, our minds are thinking about the words and notes, our

bodies are producing the physical sounds, and our spirits are engaged in what we are singing about. While

most of our lives are spent fractured, distracted from what is right in front of us, music restores us – mind, body, heart, and soul.

"I believe this is why our church has placed such a high regard for music in the liturgy," John continues. "I believe we all have

a hunger to be whole – in particular, young people who are making the transition from childhood

to adulthood."

John's favorite aspect of leading and serving in the Youth Choir Ministry is simply being part of it.

"If I'm being honest, it's just listening," he says. "The musicians I work with are wonderful. There's typically a moment in every Mass when the music just seems right. It often catches me off-guard. It's beautiful."

What a gift we have in our young people – giving of their time and their talents to glorify God and lead us all closer to Him through the treasure of music! If you would like to get involved, please contact John Rose by phone at 706-457-6731 or by e-mail at [jmacfamily@gmail.com](mailto:jmacfamily@gmail.com).



# St. Mary on the Hill Catholic School



*“Catholic school students learn that God is present and active in their lives and in the world. They learn to recognize the ‘footprints of God’ in their daily experiences, especially in the midst of life’s challenges. They see the signs of God’s love around them, and become instruments of God’s grace in their own neighborhoods, communities and the world.” – Mary Beth Mitchell, Assistant Principal*

Students, teachers and staff of St. Mary on the Hill Catholic School certainly know – Catholic education is worth celebrating! That is why our St. Mary on the Hill community – along with other Catholic schools around the country – looks forward to Catholic Schools Week every year during the last week in January.

“The purpose of Catholic Schools Week is to celebrate the contributions and solidarity of Catholic schools nationwide,” says Mary Beth Mitchell, Assistant Principal at St. Mary on the Hill Catholic School.

“Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service” is this year’s Catholic Schools Week theme. The week-long celebration begins on Sunday, Jan. 25, and continues through Saturday, Jan. 31.

Each school celebrates this week in its own unique way. Here at St. Mary on the Hill Catholic School, the celebration will include a number of fun activities and events, starting with Benediction, Mass and Beta Club Induction on Monday, Jan. 26.

Tuesday, Jan. 27 is Student Appreciation Day at St. Mary on the Hill, and the school will host an Open House on Wednesday, Jan. 28, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

“We all have an opportunity to focus on the value that Catholic education provides to young people and its contributions to our Church, our communities and our nation,” Ms. Mitchell says.

Thursday, Jan. 29, is a Teacher Appreciation Day. Throughout the week, the students have the chance to participate in fun activities and spiritual retreats. The week culminates with one final activity for the school and community, a closing Catholic Schools Week Mass at 9:15 a.m. on Friday, Jan. 30.

In everything that goes on during Catholic Schools Week, we are reminded as a school, parish and community of what a gift Catholic education truly is.

“Catholic school students learn that God is present and active in their lives and in the world,” Ms. Mitchell says. “They learn to recognize the ‘footprints of God’ in their daily experiences, especially in the midst of life’s challenges. They see the signs of God’s love around them, and become instruments of God’s grace in their own neighborhoods, communities and the world.”

And as a Catholic school, St. Mary on the Hill offers its students an experience they would not get at any public school.

# Catholic School

# Catholic School Celebrates Catholic Schools Week 2015



“St. Mary School students learn to experience God’s grace and presence in their lives through their relationships with family, friends, teachers, and community,” Ms. Mitchell says. “The loving and supportive relationships they experience are

reflections of the love and life-giving dynamic of the Trinity. As a community, we celebrate our successes and achievements. We share grief and downfalls. We unite together in solidarity, and even challenge each

other to become better reflections of God’s love.”

For more information about Catholic Schools Week or to get involved, please call the St. Mary on the Hill Catholic School office at 706-733-6193.

# Catholic Schools Week 2015

# *Hospitality* Extends to Our Family at Home and in Our Parish

**A**s Catholics, we are members of two very important family units. First, there are our own families, which consist of our spouses and children. And as a parish community, we are members of a larger “family of faith,” along with our clergy and fellow parishioners. Of course, both types of units share in the Catholic faith, as we gather to celebrate Mass each Sunday.

Yet, all does not appear to be well. The modern media unfortunately seems to place a heavy emphasis on the destruction of both types of family units. Indeed, every day, we are bombarded with disconcerting stories about the various issues that threaten the vital bonds of the family — divorce, abuse, gay marriage and abortion, just to name a few. At the same time, the “families of faith” in our own parishes have also been threatened by a number of issues, from scandals and mismanagement of resources, to drops in Mass attendance and school enrollment.

All of these threats and issues most certainly promote a hostile environment for today’s American Catholics. In turn, we may feel that there is little we can do to counter the

negativity that is so pervasive within our country towards those practicing the Catholic faith.

The good news is that finding the solution to such seemingly insurmountable problems often begins in the most simple and basic of places — at home. In this particular case, it begins in two homes — that of our own family, and in the parish home of our “family of faith.”

Certainly, we would like visitors in our own homes to feel welcome, whether they are extended family, familiar friends or new acquaintances. Therefore, we do whatever we can to make these visitors feel appreciated — we might prepare a home-made meal for our guests, or serve them a fresh cup of coffee, all while we initiate a friendly and insightful conversation.

Of course, this effort to make visitors to our home feel welcome is a wonderful example of providing hospitality, one of the four key pillars of stewardship.

So, if we consider our other family unit — the “family of faith” in our own parish — the same can be applied to those entering our church for worship and fellowship. Whether we make an effort to get to know some



of the familiar faces we see at church each Sunday, reach out to someone who is new to the community, or extend a warm welcome to those visiting our parish, we are following Jesus’ example of hospitality at its most foundational and engaging level.

Of course, while hospitality serves to enhance worship and fellowship for the entire parish family, it also impacts our community on a day-to-day basis. If we foster a welcoming environment in our parish home and present the many opportunities to minister and serve, involvement will only increase throughout the community! Therefore, if hospitality continues to flourish throughout the parish and its many ministries, so will the stewardship way of life!

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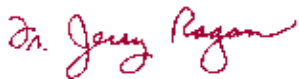


## Are We Prepared? *continued from front cover*

In addition to the Eucharist, we continually receive the gifts of time and talents. A new year reminds us of these gifts. Although each of us may receive different gifts, we all receive an equal gift of time. If you are making resolutions, a good one might be to find the time to pray and to reflect and to share our gifts with others. Each of us needs to set aside time each day for God. In fact, each of us should endeavor to set aside multiple times a day to pray to and to listen to God.

Are we prepared to take the risk in using our time, talents and resources to build the Kingdom of God? That is the true determination of stewardship — whether we accept this risk with the kind of trust in God to which we are called. Our faith is measured by the risks we are willing to take to live it out. Christ Himself risked it all by going to the Cross and models true sacrifice for all of us. Through that sacrifice, He continues to give us the greatest gift of all — the Eucharist. We need to accept that gift and use it to fulfill our own lives and the lives of those around us.

God bless you,



Fr. Jerry



# Ad Placement



# Saint Mary ON THE HILL

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## Recent Donations to St. Mary on the Hill

### St. Mary on the Hill Church

David McDaniel  
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*In Memory of Raymond Lundquist*

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Michael J. Rucker

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*In Honor of Linda Cook  
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### St. Mary on the Hill School Endowment Fund

*In Honor of the Priests and Staff of St. Mary on the Hill  
Lou Cheek*

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Ethan James Leo Statkowski  
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## Baptisms

Catherine Wilcox Hall  
*Barry and Holly Hall*

Stella Marie Jones  
*Jason and Erin Jones*

Xavier Eoghan Jacobs  
*Kaden and Lindsay Jacobs*

Aiden Vinh Pham  
*Matthew and Quyen Pham*

Della Grace Wittke  
*Paul and Patricia Wittke*