

# Saint Mary

## ON THE HILL

### CATHOLIC CHURCH



*News and Notes from Fr. Jerry*

## Sharing the Love and Mercy of Our God

Dear Parishioners,

The practice of making New Year's resolutions goes back over 3,000 years. The start of a new year gives us the feeling of a fresh start, a new beginning, and new opportunities. It is a time when people feel that they can begin anew with their lives. Common New Year's resolutions are to lose weight, exercise more and eat healthier, or to spend more time with family. Still others include managing money better and being more organized.

Although there is nothing in the Bible or notable in Christian tradition about New Year's resolutions, many good stewards take advantage of this time of year to become closer to the Lord. They may re-commit themselves to pray more, to read the Bible, or to attend Mass more regularly. If you are looking for some ideas for your New Year's resolutions, remember that Pope Francis in this Jubilee Year of Mercy has asked Catholics to bring God's love and mercy to the "other." He emphasized practicing the corporal and spiritual works of mercy, such as feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, comforting those filled with sorrow, and praying for the living and dead.

Encountering God through our life of faith necessarily leads to encounter with the "other." Who is the "other"?

The "other" is someone of a different ethnicity, culture, generation, viewpoint, ability, or faith tradition – a person or group of people whose voices are not often heard, or our neighbor in the pew, across the street, or on the other side of the world. In encountering these "others," we encounter Christ. This encounter leads to mutual transformation as we expand our understanding of one another's experiences. This mutual transformation facilitates learning and prepares us for more informed and effective action.

In a world filled with fear and terrorism, the popular thought is to "circle the wagons." Many think that our first priority should be to trust only those who belong "to our own tribe." But Islamic terrorism will never be defeated by denigrating an entire faith tradition or by becoming hostile to a billion Muslims. As People of Faith, we are challenged to be truly Catholic; all embracing in encountering others and sharing with them the love and mercy of our God.

Pope Francis tells us, "For me this word is very important. Encounter with others. Why? Because faith is an encounter with Jesus, and we must do what Jesus does: encounter others." As members of the Body of Christ, we are each

*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.

# Laura Cameron *Celebrating 100 Years*

A lot happens in the life of a parish. Pastors come and pastors go. Children grow up, marry and have children of their own, creating their own memories of parish picnics, breakfasts with Santa, and crowded Christmas Eve Masses. In the life of a parish, ministries are introduced, building funds are launched, and the rhythm of the liturgical seasons are punctuated with baptisms, weddings, funerals, and ordinations. Yes, a lot happens in the life of a parish – and parishioners like Laura Cameron remind us how faith and service are the heart and soul of what makes a parish flourish.

“I have been a member of St. Mary’s for over 70 years,” Laura says. “And it has always been such an important part of my life.”

When Laura first moved to Augusta, the year was 1946 and she had a brand-new job working for the Veterans Administration. It was a big step for her. Having grown up in Florida in a large Italian-American family – her mother came to the U.S. at the turn of the century, while her father arrived around 1910 – Laura came to Augusta with a strong foundation of family, faith, and a solid Catholic education. The problem was that she didn’t know anyone here, and that she and her young family were on their own. But from the very beginning, she knew that joining a parish would be a good way to begin a new life, make new friends, and become part



*Laura Cameron celebrating her 99th birthday in 2015. This month, she will celebrate her 100th.*

of a parish community. And so shortly after arriving, Laura began attending St. Mary’s, and she never left.

Of course, the church was a lot different in 1946 – the original St. Mary’s was what we use today as the Parish Hall, and the site of the present church was just an open field where Laura says the pastor would practice his golf swing. It was a small parish, and in Laura’s eyes it had one, glaring problem.

“There was no music – none,” Laura says. “And it was surprising. I grew up in a musical family. My father played several instruments and he made sure that we all learned to play something – for me, it was the piano. He also played for the town band, and as a family, we played for the soldiers at the USO dur-

ing World War II. So, it was strange to be in a parish with no music. I remember that I approached the pastor on All Saints’ Day and asked why there was no music, and he said it was because they didn’t have an organist.”

Well, that was all Laura needed to hear. She had a musical talent that she could share, and without hesitating, she stepped in to serve as St. Mary’s new organist. Before long, she helped form a choir that included a quartet, a violin and an organ, and soon she was sharing her talents not only at Mass, but also for weddings and funerals at several parishes around town. And since she was playing at weddings anyway, the next logical step was to serve as the parish Wedding Coordinator, a ministry in which she is still involved.

“Through music, I was very active, but I also participated in parish life in other ways, such as by serving as sacristan and Eucharistic Minister,” Laura says. “I volunteered in the parish office until they brought in all the computers, and when I retired, someone convinced me to volunteer at Catholic Social Services – something I still do every Friday. I like to get out, and everything I’ve done in the parish has given me such satisfaction. Of course, I feel like a pest sometimes, but my life would be empty without the church and parish life.”

*continued on page 3*



*Laura Cameron, 1930s.*



*Laura Cameron.*

## Laura Cameron *continued from page 2*

One of the most beautiful things about being part of a parish for so long is to be able to look back and see how St. Mary's has changed over the years. In 1954, one year before the first Mass was celebrated in the present church, Laura remembers standing beside Fr. Costigan and both of them holding their breath as a massive stone was moved into place over the entrance doors of the church. She was here when the parish took over the operation of the elementary school from the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet and renamed it St. Mary on the Hill Catholic School – of which all three of her children attended. She witnessed the construction of Aquinas High School – of which her daughter, Gina, was a member of the first graduating class. And she has seen the number of ministries grow from a simple Sunday school program to a parish catalog that is now full of programs, ministries and organizations.

By now, Laura is well known in the parish, and many who know her mention her endless energy and all-encompassing enthusiasm. The numbers are fascinating – she has been a parishioner of St. Mary's for over 70 years; she has four siblings (ages 92, 93, 96 and 98); she has three children (Gina Werrick Adams, Anita Cameron Wylde, and Tommy Werrick, now deceased), one stepson (Robert Cameron), six grandchildren, and seven great-grandchildren; in 2000, she became one of the first recipients of the Gartland Award; at least once a week, she takes ballroom dance lessons (her favorite dances are the tango and Viennese waltz); she has traveled to all 50 states and visited 34 countries (35 if you count the time she stepped into Russia just to be able to say that she did); and this month, she is celebrating her 100th birthday. But don't think she's slowing down. Last summer, while vacationing in Florida with her family, she did a tandem skydive which, in her opinion, was the perfect sort of adventure for a 99-year-old.

"It was most interesting being up in the plane and looking down at a live map," Laura says. "When we first jumped, it was a little scary – but then the parachute opened and we just floated down. It was so quiet. And they took really good care of me. Usually with landing, you have to take some running steps – but with me, there were two men waiting on the ground who took my hand so I wouldn't have to run. Was my family amazed? Truthfully, I think they thought I was crazy."

When asked about her faith, or why she has been so involved through the years, or how she stays so committed, Laura says that she doesn't see those things – faith, involvement and commitment – as being separate things. Instead, they are all part of who she is as a person. It's that simple.

"She never wavers," says her daughter, Gina. "She always says that life is what it is – that you accept what you've been given and that you finish, or follow through, whatever you take on. She's always been like that."

Ultimately, with so much that happens in the life of a parish, it is parishioners like Laura Cameron who not only remind us of how far we've come, but of how faith and service is a legacy for future generations of parishioners. It's a gift that keeps on giving which, Laura says, can give your life purpose. And for someone who is turning 100 years old on Jan. 30, those are words of wisdom.

"Make something out of every hour," Laura says. "Help out whenever you can, with what gifts you have. Being active keeps you going, and in order to keep going, you have to be active. And on it goes."



*Last summer, at age 99, Laura Cameron participated in a tandem skydive.*



*Laura Cameron during a 2015 road trip to Nevada.*



*Laura Cameron in Ireland.*

# Celebrating the Importance of Catholic Education

## *Catholic Schools Week*

The Christmas decorations have been put away, and we've already celebrated the New Year. Could there be anything else we might look forward to this winter? In fact, there is – our St. Mary on the Hill students are preparing to celebrate something very special!

Each year, Catholic schools around the country join together to celebrate Catholic Schools Week! The National Catholic Education Association chooses a theme each year, and dedicates each day during the week to honoring an aspect of the Catholic School community. And here at St. Mary on the Hill School, our students, faculty and staff look forward to Catholic Schools Week all year.

"Catholic Schools Week is an opportunity to celebrate our Catholic heritage, our Catholic faith, and to highlight for the kids exactly why we are here as a Catholic school," says Principal Joe McBride. "They get a great education, but everything we do here ties into our faith. We try to incorporate our faith not just in Mass or religion classes, but also in social studies and science. This week, we focus on what that means and what's available for them at our school. We talk about how special it is that we have the opportunity to live our faith here at school."

The overall theme for Catholic Schools Week – which runs this year from Sunday, Jan. 31 through



Saturday, Feb. 6 – is "Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service." Each day is dedicated to honoring a facet of our school community, and events are planned throughout the week to help us focus on these themes:

- Sunday – *In Our Parish*
- Monday – *In Our Community*
- Tuesday – *In Our Students*
- Wednesday – *In Our Nation*
- Thursday – *In Our Vocations*
- Friday – *In Our Faculty, Staff and Volunteers*
- Saturday – *In Our Families*

"We kick off the week on Monday morning with benediction and adoration, followed by Mass," Mr. McBride says. "Then we have a Beta Club induction right after Mass, where the kids who do Christian service get recognized for their service to the school, and we recognize outstanding academic achievements. Tuesday, we celebrate the students. They are out of uniform, there's no homework, and most of what we do that day is centered around recognizing the kids and what they mean



on

to the school. Without them, we wouldn't be here! So, we give them a fun, relaxing day. Then, each day throughout the week, we hold events that highlight all of the different pieces of our school."

While many of the events throughout the week are purely for fun, the real focus of all Catholic Schools Week activities is to reinforce the importance of Catholic education.

"Throughout the week, teachers will have different people from the community come in and speak to their classes to talk about what they do, and to talk about things that relate to Catholic education," Mr. McBride says. "Catholic education isn't just happening here. We're celebrating as a whole all of Catholic education. We try to focus the week on what it is to be Catholic – what sets us apart from other schools. We are able to go to Mass and our religion classes are focused on our Catholic faith, but we also try to build in some greater themes like social justice and praying for vocations. We want them to understand that we are not a private school, but we are a Catholic school, and that makes us a little different. We can practice our faith at school and we want to show them how they can bring that into their greater life."

Catholic Schools Week is also an opportunity for St. Mary on the Hill School's faculty, staff and students to show their gratitude for the whole St. Mary on the Hill community, who work together in countless ways to offer support for our school throughout the entire year.



"We talk a lot throughout the year about our parish and stewardship and how they help us," Mr. McBride says. "We want the kids to understand stewardship so they understand how it helps us and our school. Any time you give to the parish, you are supporting the school, and we appreciate that support so much. It gives us the ability to be here, and we are very thankful to our parishioners for the gift of Catholic education."

St. Mary on the Hill School will be hosting an Open House during Catholic Schools Week on Feb. 3 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. All are invited! For more information, please contact the school office at 706-733-6193.

# Finding Faith and Fellowship Through Books: The Faithful Readers Club

A coffee shop on Davis Road, a Catholic store on Monte Sano Avenue, various private homes – the meeting locations may have changed over the many years that the Faithful Readers Club has been gathering. But the essence of the group has remained the same – the sharing of faith and fellowship centered on an inspirational reading experience.

“This is a very informal group,” says Jodie Silva, who organizes the Faithful Readers Club. “As a group, we toss out ideas for a book. We generally read Catholic authors, but that’s not a hard-and-fast rule if we find another good spiritual book.”

Once the group selects a book to read, Jodie sends out an email letting all group members know the title chosen and when the next meeting will be. In general, the women who make up the Faithful Readers Club meet up about every eight to 12 weeks, depending on the length of the book they will be discussing at each gathering. Selected books include everything from historical novels to theological publications. A recent meeting highlight for the group was a presentation given by local Catholic author Rachel Balducci, who spoke about her writing.

The opportunity to discuss spiritual books with other women has been a source of encouragement in Jodie’s faith life for the eleven years she has participated in this ministry.

“We talk about the faith and help each other strengthen our values,” Jodie says. “When we talk about these things, it helps reinforce how we live our lives in a Christian way,

and how we can take that stewardship and live it out in the world. As mothers, wives and single women, we get great perspective on how to live out that spirituality.”

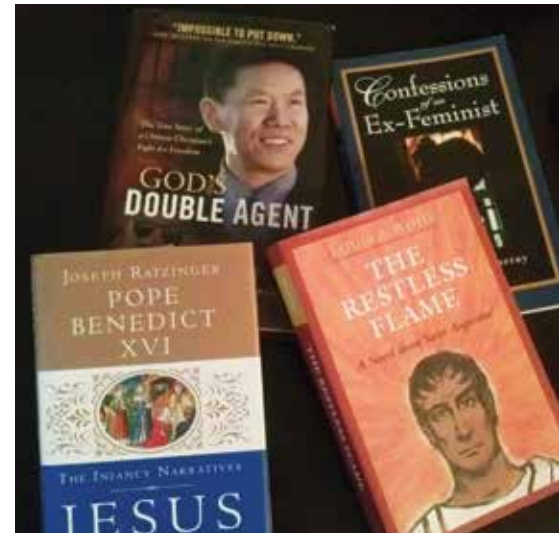
At St. Mary on the Hill, we are blessed to be part of a large, active parish that comes together often in prayer and worship. Participation in one of our parish’s small groups – like the Faithful Readers Club – is a wonderful way to explore our Catholic faith in a more intimate setting.

“All of these kinds of small faith-building groups are really important, especially in a large parish like ours,” Jodie says. “When you can come together with a group of people, it helps everyone to strengthen their faith and their resolve to keep doing what they’re doing to follow their faith and values.”

In addition to the spiritual rewards of small-group faith sharing, the women of the Faithful Readers Club also enjoy the fun and fellowship of their gatherings. This special sense of community was one of the things that first attracted parishioner Danielle Givens to the group over 10 years ago.

“I wanted to learn more about my faith, and to be around other women who were on the same journey and wanted to share their own faith,” Danielle explains. “I enjoy the fellowship and companionship I get from the other women. The group is about faith sharing, but it’s also about being part of a community and being on a similar path in life.”

There is something truly special about being able to read an inspiring



book and share that reading experience with a group of faith-filled women. Danielle still remembers how deeply touched she was by one book in particular.

“My favorite moment in the group was when we read *The Spear* by Louis de Wohl during Lent a few years ago,” she recalls. “I felt so moved by that book because you really felt like you were walking with Jesus, that you were in the crowd – it really brought you into that moment. The author made it so historically accurate – it was fiction, but there was so much truth in it that you felt you were there.”

And as Danielle points out, being “transported into the moment” in such a way was truly meaningful within the group, as well.

“Everybody liked that book,” she says. “And getting to share that excitement with the group was really special.”

Women who are interested in receiving emails about book selections and meeting dates for the Faithful Readers Club should contact Jodie Silva by phone at 706-294-5443, or by email at [jodiesilva@gmail.com](mailto:jodiesilva@gmail.com).

## Sharing the Love and Mercy of Our God *continued from front cover*

created in the image of and loved by God, we are called to form relationships with one another, and we are called to “create a culture of encounter.”

A great place to begin this encounter would be to resolve to make a personal commitment to practice one or two of the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy during this holy year.

### The Corporal Works of Mercy are:

- To feed the hungry
- To give drink to the thirsty
- To clothe the naked
- To harbor the harborless
- To visit the sick
- To ransom the captive
- To bury the dead

### The Spiritual Works of Mercy are:

- To instruct the ignorant;
- To counsel the doubtful;
- To admonish sinners;
- To bear wrongs patiently;
- To forgive offences willingly;
- To comfort the afflicted;
- To pray for the living and the dead

God bless you,

Fr. Jerry

LOVE AND MERCY

Ad  
Placement

# Saint Mary

ON THE HILL

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

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

## In This Month's Newsletter

News and Notes From Fr. Jerry  
*Front cover*

Laura Cameron: Celebrating 100 Years  
*Page 2*

Celebrating the Importance of Catholic  
Education: Catholic Schools Week  
*Page 4*

Finding Faith and Fellowship Through Books:  
The Faithful Readers Club  
*Page 6*

## *Recent Donations to St. Mary on the Hill*

### St. Mary on the Hill Church

William Scicchitano  
Anne Proctor

*In Memory of Charles Scavullo, Sr.*

Peg & Ron Gadapee  
Jim Farmer  
Susan Steinberg

### St. Mary on the Hill School

Barbara G. Mulherin

### St. Mary's Senior Center

*In Memory of Dr. C. Richard Chamberlain*  
Anne & Joseph Nozzolio