

Saint Mary

ON THE HILL
CATHOLIC CHURCH



News and Notes from Fr. Jerry

Resolving to Be Better Stewards This New Year

Dear Parishioners,

The Year of our Lord 2017 will be an exciting year for our faith community. This month, the Pastoral Council will wrap up its very intensive work on the Priority Plan for our parish. As we look at our past and celebrate 100 years as a faith community, this plan will help us look to the future with a sense of mission as we discern how the Holy Spirit is guiding us to share God's love with our world today. We are a people of prayer and are blessed to have someone praying before the Lord, 24 hours of every day in our Adoration Chapel. We are people who take Christian formation seriously and are blessed to have a vibrant parish school. We are people who have heard the call to discipleship, and many of us have deepened our relationship with God by living Stewardship as a way of life.

Stewardship is a commitment of mind and heart to the Lord – a way of life that needs constant renewal and transformation. This time of year has always been one of looking forward to a new year, reflecting on the changes we need to make in our lives and resolving to follow through on those changes. Perhaps those who seek to make resolutions to be better

stewards might find inspiration in one or more of the following examples:

Stewardship of Prayer: Resolve to strengthen your relationship with the Lord through prayer. Notice how often you pray and what hinders you from praying. If you are a beginner, commit to short, daily prayer times. Make a visit to the Adoration Chapel.

Stewardship of Family: Resolve to set aside more time to stay connected with your family. Eat dinner together, schedule regular dates with your spouse, plan family outings, and go to Mass together. Practice patience and forgiveness.

Stewardship of Health: Resolve to get those medical and dental checkups. Adopt healthier eating habits. Add exercise and other physical activity to your daily routine.

Stewardship of Possessions: Resolve to possess a little more "lightly" this year. Consider ways you can reduce the amount of all that stuff you own. Distinguish

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.

St. Mary on the Hill Catholic Church

Serving the Master 2016 Annual Report

OUR FAMILY: We are a community of 2459 registered households, 1859 are active. On average, 671 registered families and 62 children contribute weekly to the support of the parish. We have a total of 2741 ministry commitments (talent), 2873 prayer commitments (time) and 698 offertory commitments (treasure).

OUR INCOME: In fy2016, parish income totaled \$5,711,855 from the following sources:

Weekly Offertory – adults \$3,939,603; youth \$4,569;
Stocks & annual gifts – \$178,454;
Bequests – \$1,304,166; Memorials \$7,748
Special collections – \$105,245
Program & Other Revenue – \$172,070

OUR TITHE: Our parish is dedicated to stewardship, and we give generously throughout the year to national and international collections (as defined by the Diocese of Savannah) as well as other organizations in need. Our parish tithe committee reviews these requests and presents them to the Pastoral Council and Finance Committee annually. Please see the detailed tithe account report, which was published in the **Oct. 9, 2016** bulletin – it can be viewed with all fy2016 financial reports on our website www.stmaryonthehill.org. Our total parish giving (excluding the BAA) was \$243,485. For calendar year 2015, **32.96%** (610) of the 1851 active St. Mary families gave \$248,304 to the BAA surpassing our goal of \$242,807.

DIOCESAN ASSESSMENTS: The Diocese of Savannah assessment for fy2016 was \$284,304, 11.25% of our fy2014 adjusted offertory and gifts. Our parish is also assessed for the Southern Cross, \$10 for each registered parish family. The assessment for fy2016 was \$24,470 while our Southern Cross collection was \$5,554.

EDUCATION: Education is a major priority for our parish. In addition to the \$1,900,000 for our elementary school, which had 431 students enrolled in grades K – 8, St Mary's gave Aquinas High School \$70,000 to help with their operating budget. The church education and formation budget includes \$54,700 for pre-school/MDO,

CCD, adult formation, RCIA and the parish mission. CCD educated 187 students and there were 122 kindergarten, first and second-graders from CCD and SMCS who were involved in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Our youth and young adult program budgets were \$39,850. We had 16 RCIA participants join our church last Easter.

MINISTRIES and PROGRAMS: \$167,850 was budgeted on other ministries and programs such as Senior Center activities, sanctuary supplies, music, socials, weddings, Consolation Ministry, and stewardship materials.

OVERHEAD: Personnel costs for religious, lay salaries and benefits were \$794,460. General overhead for utilities, maintenance, liability insurance and other general expenses was \$383,543. Capital improvements (maintenance, renovations and equipment) totaled \$63,332. Two major expenses were building a retaining wall at the Annunciation House and replacing the organ motor.

SACRAMENTAL ACTIVITY: As a parish family, we baptized 71 children and 5 adults, had 71 students prepared for First Communion, Confirmed 73 students and 1 adult, witnessed 15 marriages, performed 10 convalidations, and buried 44 of our loved ones.

OUR SCHOOL: The church support of \$1,900,000 is the main source of income for the school; other revenue: tuition, which was \$605,771, registration of \$149,414 and \$32,000 from the endowment fund for assistance in paying for a laptop cart with 30 laptops and replacing 10 classroom ActivBoards. Development income was \$19,958 from the annual PJC golf tournament and donations/memorials of \$8,935. The annual PJC golf tournament netted \$13,000, which was transferred to the School Endowment Fund in June. Other income includes extended day care fees \$49,015, lunch \$107,857, PTO \$42,526 and \$72,957 for student activities, supply fees, athletics and commissions.

Prepared by the Parish Staff

“A Catholic School as Part of a Parish Mission Is a Great Blessing”

Catholic Schools Week at St. Mary on the Hill

Across the country, we have the opportunity to enjoy a very unique celebration – Catholic Schools Week. CSW each year begins on the last Sunday in January and runs through the first week in February – this year, it takes place from Jan. 29 to Feb. 4. The theme for the National Catholic Schools Week 2017 is “Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service.”

This theme encompasses several concepts that are at the heart of a Catholic education. Schools are communities – small families in their own right, but also members of the larger community of home, church, city, and nation. Faith, knowledge and service are three measures by which any Catholic school can and should be judged.

“A Catholic school as part of a parish mission is a great blessing,” says St. Mary on the Hill School principal Joe McBride. “That has been the case in my own life and in the lives of my children. Catholic education touches lives on many levels in a positive way – certainly for the students, but also for their parents and extended families, and for the people of the parish.”

Catholic Schools Week provides a wonderful opportunity to fulfill and celebrate the purpose of our school.

“That week is a great time to stop and appreciate what we have, to show our appreciation to the many who sacrifice so that we can exist, and for us to show gratitude for our many blessings,” Mr. McBride says. “It is also a time to allow the students to see the fun side of being a Catholic school family.”

Although the specific plans for the week are still in the works, each day will feature a different theme. On Sunday, Jan. 29, students from the school will speak at all parish Masses to give a perspective on what our school means in each of their lives. Monday, Jan. 30, begins with a strong spiritual element as we thank God for our school. All students will participate in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Benediction. In addition, we will hold our induction ceremony for our Beta Club, which honors students for academics and service.

Tuesday, Jan. 31, will be Student Appreciation Day. Students are allowed to “dress down” and enjoy fun events. Also, the Parent-Teacher Organization (PTO) provides



donuts to the students, as well as offering them a special lunch. Wednesday, Feb. 1, is devoted to the parish and the community. Open House occurs at the school from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. Students will conduct tours of the school, and all are welcome to come and see what is happening. On Thursday, Feb. 2, we devote the day to our parents. They are invited to join us and visit classrooms. In addition, we feature parents explaining their own jobs and vocations. An important aspect of vocations will be our priests, deacons and religious explaining religious vocations to the students and answering questions.

Friday, Feb. 3, is a time to celebrate the dedication of our teachers and staff. We begin with an All-School Mass at 9:15 a.m. Since it is the Feast of St. Blaise, throats will be blessed at some point, and again, the PTO offers lunch to parents and students. The specifics are yet to be determined, but on Saturday, Feb. 4, we will hold a family-oriented event.

For more information and details, please be sure to watch the parish bulletin or call the school at 706-733-6193.

Beyond the Wedding Day: *Marriage*

“**W**edding planning.” Those two words alone are enough to send many engaged couples into a flurry of activity because, of course, there is so much to be done! Set a date, find a venue, coordinate colors, choose flowers – the to-do list is seemingly endless. And while it is good to put some thought into such a momentous day, our culture all too often neglects the importance of planning for the couple’s future once the “big day” has come and gone. In the Catholic Church, we seek to bring that long-term planning to the forefront of an engaged couple’s experience, emphasizing that preparing for married life is even more important than planning for the wedding day.

To be married at St. Mary on the Hill, a couple must complete a Marriage Preparation process specified by the Diocese of Savannah. The first step is to meet with a priest or deacon to begin the process. In addition, the couple is asked to attend a Marriage Prep weekend. There are four different weekends offered in our deanery throughout the year, with the one led by St. Mary on the Hill taking place in January.

Parishioners Mike and Sarah O’Neill, who experienced their own Marriage Prep weekend as an engaged couple 15 years ago, have been helping with these retreats for nine years and currently serve as our parish’s Marriage Prep facilitators.



Sarah and Mike O'Neill

“[During the weekend], we talk about six different areas of marriage and give the couples some expectations of what they could encounter along the way,” Sarah says. “The areas we discuss are finance, communication, family of origin – what each spouse is bringing into the marriage – Natural Family Planning, theology of the body, and parenting. A priest usually gives a ‘theology of the body’ talk, and couples from the parish give talks on the other topics. They share their experiences – their successes and their failures

– to give the couples a little taste of real marriage.”

By giving engaged couples a “window” into their own marriages, the parishioners who present talks provide them with a valuable look at what joys and challenges await them in married life.

“In our feedback forms, we see that even the people who moaned and groaned about the weekend at first end up really loving it, because we’re not sugar coating it,” Sarah says. “We’re not trying to scare anybody, but we want to make sure they realize it’s not all easy. And we can share something we’ve fought about, and yet, they see that we made it – our marriage survived. Marriage isn’t perfect, but we’ve made it. We have people give talks that have been married for 10, 20, 30 years – so the engaged couples see that.”

“In Marriage Prep, you have a lot of couples that are both from different religious backgrounds, or even if they’re Catholic, they may not be very exposed to the Church,” Mike says. “And this is an opportunity to bring them into the Church and present the Church in the way that we live it out – a real, breathing life. It’s not just about stamping a marriage contract or one of the to-do list items for the wedding. This is a ministry showing them a Catholic Church full of couples that are on fire and living their lives in the faith.” – Mike O’Neill

Marriage Preparation at St. Mary on the Hill

As a Holy Sacrament, marriage in the Catholic Church is much more than a legally binding union. In fact, it is a covenant relationship between both spouses and God, nurtured and strengthened by the abundant grace that comes to us in the sacrament. And as with any other sacrament, we are called to fully prepare our hearts and minds to receive that special grace.

“Marriage is not a business arrangement,” Mike says. “Marriage is choosing to live your life for one another. God binds us – we’re not two, we’re one. That’s a big deal spiritually. We leave our individuality behind and become one, and the only way to do that is through marriage as a sacrament.”

In addition to giving engaged couples a chance to explore various topics pertinent to married life, the O’Neills also find that Marriage Prep weekends allow them to show the couples how dynamic married life in the Church can be.

“In Marriage Prep, you have a lot of couples that are both from different religious backgrounds, or even if they’re Catholic, they may not be very exposed to the Church,” Mike says. “And this is an opportunity to bring them into the Church and present the Church in the way that we live it out – a real, breathing life. It’s not just about stamping a marriage contract or one of the to-do list items for the wedding. This is a ministry showing them a Catholic Church full of couples that are on fire and living their lives in the faith.”

In the many years that they have been involved with Marriage Prep, Mike and Sarah have seen their marriage continue to be strengthened each time they facilitate a weekend. Their own planning for the weekend requires them to look back over the year, identify and learn from their own successes and failures as a couple. Having the opportunity to share their stories and strategies with others brings a new energy to their commitment to married life.



The O'Neill family at the baptism of Lucy Kate – (back, from left) Caleb (14), Jonah (12), and Gideon (10); (front row, from left) Mike, Fr. Kevin O'Keefe, Lucy Kate (6 months), Sarah, and Charlotte (2)

Taking the time to prepare to receive the Sacrament of Holy Matrimony – and then taking the time to nurture that marriage through the years – is an essential part of life for every Catholic called to the vocation of marriage. For this reason, the Church asks engaged couples to look beyond their wedding day when preparing to receive this sacrament.

“You’ve got the bride planning the wedding, thinking through everything and making all these decisions about the day, but this is about the rest of the marriage,” Mike says. “Hopefully, the things we talk about

help them plan how they’re going to make decisions, how they’ll plan their finances, how they’ll parent. If they take one or two things away from the weekend, it’s worth it. The wedding coordinator plans the wedding, and we try to give them some coordination on their marriage going forward.”

Indeed, beyond the selection of bridesmaids’ dresses, the reception menu, and music style, engaged couples have much more important planning and preparation to be done as their wedding day nears. And as many married couples in our parish could tell you, the fruits of this preparation – experienced in a strong, sacramental marriage – are well worth the effort!

“We want these couples to get really excited about getting married,” Sarah says. “It’s not about the day, but about all the things a sacramental, holy marriage can give you.”

Are you interested in learning more about marriage preparation at St. Mary on the Hill? Please contact our parish office at 706-733-6627.

Celebrating 100 Years

The Post-War '40s, and the Roaring '50s

With the close of World War II, area residents settled in to a more familiar pace. It was a period characterized by a demographic spurt – the so-called Baby Boom – and industry migrating to the area. In the history of our parish, it was both a period of great inspiration and aspiration – and our forefathers responded with unprecedented generosity!

Msgr. James J. Grady, a strikingly handsome, intelligent, articulate, and dynamic cleric, assumed the pastor responsibilities in April 1945. Within a month of his arrival, he began looking for a site for a new Catholic hospital. He also put in motion moving Boys Catholic High to a more central location in the city – an idea that would consume the better part of a decade. His tireless efforts to see both of these goals realized took their toll on his health, as did the explosive growth of the parish – now 2,000 people, of which 760 were adults. The successful hospital drive ended in November 1951.

An interesting tidbit: it is believed the land where the new hospital was to be built was donated to the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet by none other than local manufacturing magnate – and atheist – John P. King. King's namesake had also earlier donated the land for Pendleton King Park, a short distance away. This generous contribution catapulted efforts to build a Catholic hospital in Augusta.

Msgr. Grady was transferred to Atlanta in November 1951, and was replaced by our fifth (also second) pastor Fr. Harold J. Barr. Unfortunately, Fr. Barr barely lived to see the dedication of St. Joseph's Hospital in 1952. Our sixth pastor returned in December 1952 – Father John J. Kennedy – just as our city's population was exploding because of the construction of the Savannah River "Bomb Plant."

Fr. Kennedy boldly made the decision to build a new church at the same time as funds were being raised and paid for the new hospital and new Catholic High School. The strain on the parish finances was severe, but St. Mary on the Hill parishioners responded generously!

In October 1954, with \$100,000 in hand, the parish borrowed \$185,000 to begin construction of the new church beside the old. The cornerstone, laid on Sept. 23, 1954, contained the names of contributors. The old 1919 church, too steeped in memories, was refurbished as a Parish Hall, a role it maintains to this day. The evolutionary growth of the parish is evidenced by the adjacent buildings – the Rectory, which was the original mission chapel, the 1919 Church with Gothic features, and the 1955 structure with its neo-Gothic design. The First Mass was celebrated on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, Dec. 8, 1955. Stained glass windows were installed in 1969, and the concrete block and exposed steel girders would await the extensive refurbishment of 1992.

Meanwhile, as early as 1953, prominent developer and longtime parishioner Johnny McDonald had negotiated with the city for 16 acres of old Daniel Field property as the location for a boys high school. A month after the dedication of the 1955 church, the decision was made to close Mount St. Joseph's, and move the ladies into one wing of the new high school, and the boys to the other. The ladies would continue to receive instruction from the Sisters of St. Joseph of Carondelet, the boys would be taught by the Marist Brothers. Fr. Kennedy led a citywide campaign to raise \$175,000 in pledges, \$17,700 contributed by non-Catholics. Ground was broken in October 1956, and the boys moved in to their new quarters in March of 1957. The girls from Mount St. Joseph moved in to the school named after St. Thomas Aquinas in September 1957 to complete the transition.

The Roaring '50s saw many great Catholic institutions rise to greater heights supported by an unstoppable commitment to the Church, healthcare and education in the Catholic tradition. But the decade wasn't quite over yet...



Resolving to Be Better Stewards *continued from front cover*

between those items that are necessary and those that are considered luxurious and unnecessary.

Stewardship of the Parish Family: Resolve to serve our faith community in some way this year – such as at liturgy, in the parish’s outreach, or education and formation efforts. Is it time to enhance your generosity to the parish?

Stewardship of Money: Resolve to render sacred your annual budget. Reprioritize your financial goals to ensure that the Lord comes first in your

spending. Take positive steps to improve your financial health. Attend our Financial Peace University course.

Most of all, have a happy and blessed New Year!

God bless you,

Fr. Jerry Pagan

Fr. Jerry



Ad Placement



Saint Mary ON THE HILL

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

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

Recent Donations to St. Mary on the Hill

Men on a Mission

Paul and Mary Ellen Zielinski
John and Annette Lint
Gary and Marie Ackerman

St. Mary on the Hill Church

In Memory of William Kozel
John W. Kozel

In Memory of Richard Flake
Michael Rucker

In Memory of Marguerite Bussey
Michael Rucker

In Memory of Mary Ann Richards
Johnnie Phillips

St. Mary Consolation Ministry

In Memory of Dr. Paul Mahoney
Audrey Mahoney

Baptisms

Nov. 13, 2016

Michael Thomas Nordmann, Jr.
Son of Michael and Leslie Nordmann

Nov. 17, 2016

William McArdle Sherman
Son of Devin and Tricia Sherman

Nov. 19, 2016

Lucy Mae Weber
Daughter of John and Victoria Weber

Nov. 25, 2016

Landry John Rudder
Son of Brandon and Katherine Rudder

Hayden David Howell

Son of Christopher and Kori Howell

Emmett Dane Alva

Son of Adam and Elizabeth Alva

Nov. 27, 2016

Holly Ailish Gallegos
Daughter of Joseph and Kateri Gallegos