

Saint Mary

ON THE HILL
CATHOLIC CHURCH



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News and Notes from Fr. Jerry

Running on All Eight Cylinders

Dear Parishioners,

Thursday of “Masters Week” started out as a busy day in the parish office. Mary Bowles told me that a Bishop Robert Morneau had just called, and said he would be by in about 15 minutes to pick up his badges for the tournament. Now, you know that I like to help clergy (especially the clergy that wear those pointed hats) get out to the National if I can. But I didn’t have any badges for that Thursday, and I was getting a bit panicky because it never seems to be a good idea to make a bishop unhappy. Fortunately, five minutes before the Bishop arrived, Msgr. Costigan showed up with the promised badges. The parish office was simply being used as a drop site.

Msgr. Costigan was an old friend of Bishop Morneau’s, who is an auxiliary bishop in the Diocese of Green Bay, and a frequent lecturer on stewardship. Msgr. Costigan had invited the Bishop to speak to the Diocesan Clergy Conference that was held in the parish hall back in 1995. I had known of the basic concepts of stewardship before that conference, but I felt a real movement of the Spirit as I listened to Bishop Morneau speak. Seeing Bishop Morneau this past April prompted me to go back and review my notes from that conference that was held in our parish hall long before I was ever pastor.

Bishop Morneau said that he had

always been haunted by Psalm 16, verse 12, which places a question of gratitude before us, “What return can I make to the Lord for all the Lord has given to me?”

“That question haunts me every day,” the bishop said. “I have a dream that I die and the Lord says, ‘Morneau, you were an eight-cylinder car and you used only two cylinders.’”

Stewardship done right is about realizing how gifted one is and then using properly all the cylinders – one’s time, talents and worldly treasure – in the right proportion, and in a balanced way that brings meaning to one’s whole existence. For Bishop Morneau, stewardship is the answer for the human search for identity, and the meaning of life.

“Stewardship offers a biblical foundation for what life is all about,” the Bishop said. “It provides a sense of direction – it’s void-filling and difference-making. It’s a seminal concept, and it can change lives. The core of stewardship is gratitude. A gratitude that overflows into giving as a way of thankfulness for all that God has given us.”

But convincing people of the value of stewardship as a way of life is at best an uphill battle in U.S. society today.

“Ours is a culture of entitlement,” Bishop Morneau stated. “We take things for granted, and our culture promotes individualism as a way of life. We don’t

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Faith, Fellowship and Fun

The YAM

When Andrea Maguire moved to Augusta to attend nursing school, she wanted desperately to find a group of young adults with whom she could grow in the Faith and build strong friendships. However, the only group of young people at St. Mary's was the high school youth group.

"That wasn't what I had in mind, but it was what I found; so I decided to get involved and help the high school kids," Andrea says.

Not long after she started helping with the youth group, Andrea voiced her desire for a young adult group to youth ministers Michael and Missy Lammers. The couple informed Andrea that a fellow young adult, Eric Wright, was searching for the same thing. The two connected, and together they recruited an initial group of local young adults.

Four years later, St. Mary's Young Adult Ministry (YAM) has become a substantial social and faith-based outlet for close to 30 young adults in the CSRA.

"The group brings people in from Fort Gordon and all of the parishes in our deanery," Andrea says. "It has really become its own little community of sorts."

The men and women of YAM, who are all between the ages of 18 and 35, meet every Thursday at 7:30 p.m. in the Annunciation House. Typical meetings are divided between faith formation – where group members discuss scripture passages and/or encyclicals or listen to a guest presenter – and time spent in Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, often coupled with praise and worship.

"The meetings are really wonderful," Andrea says. "I have learned so much about our Faith, and to have time every week for Adoration is a tremendous blessing."

After Adoration, the group usually heads over to the Knights of Columbus Hall – on the corner of Monte Sano and Central Ave. – for drinks and fellowship. These activities, when combined together, are a recipe for what Andrea and many other local young adults consider a refreshing and invigorating night.

"I have been fed spiritually and emotionally through the years thanks to this group," Andrea says.

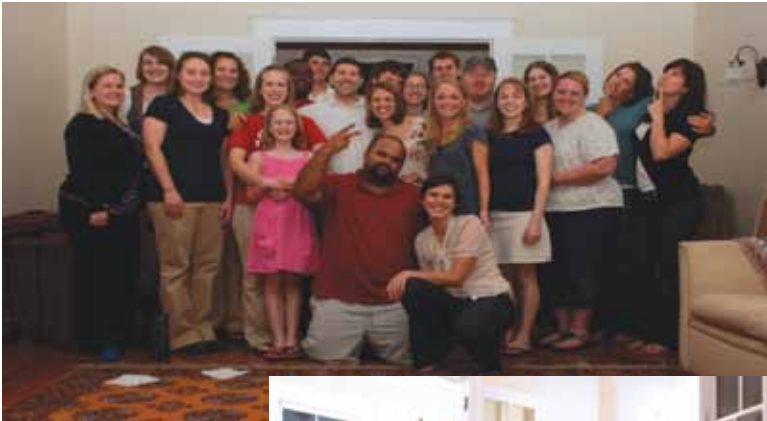
In addition to the YAM's weekly meetings, group members often

get together for a Sunday night supper club at each other's homes following the 6 p.m. Sunday Mass. They also try to get together for at least one other social event each month,

such as game nights, baseball games and more.

In addition to these regular activities, many YAM members travel to Savannah each summer to attend the ordinations of our newest priests as well as hang out on Tybee Island together.

The members of YAM are a busy bunch, and they invite all local young adults to join them. If you are 18 to 35, single or married, and looking for a great group of Catholic friends who will support you as you strive to live your faith, consider attending a weekly meeting. For more information about upcoming events, visit the group's Web site, www.augustayam.com, or contact Andrea at 770-757-1776.



Stewardship Summer Giving

We've stopped the newspaper. We've stopped the mail. We've taken the dog to the kennel. The iron is unplugged, and the stove is turned off. Is there anything else we need to do before we leave on vacation?"

How about remembering to write an offertory check to St. Mary's for the Sundays you'll be gone?

"But I won't be at Mass at home on those Sundays," you say. "Can't I skip those envelopes when I'm away? After all, I'll put a dollar or two, or maybe even five, in the collection at the church where we visit. Isn't that enough?"

Many of us, whether we have school-aged children at home or not, mentally operate on a school-year calendar. We assume our parish operates in a similar

fashion, from September through May, with a break during the summer months. And to some extent, many parish activities do function on such a schedule. For example, our parish does not hold Religious Education classes during the summer, our choirs frequently take a break during June, July and August. Even many of the parish staff members take summer vacations! Can't our giving go on vacation during the summer, too?

Even as we form the question in our mind, we know the answer. The prime reason for keeping up our commitment all summer is that God doesn't go on vacation. He continues to sustain us throughout the summer months. He persists in pouring out blessings on us, even during the hottest weather. He keeps on meeting us in His sacramental presence when we go to Mass whenever and wherever we travel. As God remains faithful to us during the summer, we are called to be faithful in our commitments to Him and our parish family even during the summer season.



God's steadfastness in giving to us is the primary reason why we respond by being faithful in our stewardship toward Him. But there is also a practical reason why we need to keep up our commitments of time, talent and treasure throughout the summer: the Church needs our involvement all year round.

Even though some parish activities are reduced during the summer months, the parish's expenses are not. After all, there are still Sunday Masses and weekday Masses, too. The parish staff members still need their salaries. And, of course, we need to run the air conditioning in our church during the hot summer months. Despite the fact that some parish functions are suspended, there are usually other extra activities, such as Vacation Bible School, that only take place during the

summer. And although the regular parish Religious Education program may be suspended, the summer expenses are often the highest as textbooks and other supplies are bought for the coming school year. Our parish has to pay its bills on a year round basis, just like each registered parishioner.

Our parish plans a budget for the year, taking into account the commitments you, the members, have made. If parishioners do not remain faithful to their financial commitments, the budget will not balance.

Our giving needs to be maintained throughout the summer, just as God maintains His generosity to us. Stewardship is a response to God's gifts, and God pours out His gifts and His grace upon us all year long.

Why mail an offertory check to the parish office before going on vacation? For the same reason we pay the mortgage or the light bill. Because, for most of us, that's the only way to make sure that we don't spend it during our vacation!

Adoption

Doing Something Beautiful for God

The Fair Family

For a few years, young Rebecca Fair was “praying up a storm.”

“Please, God, let Mommy have another baby in her tummy, or let us adopt another one,” she would pray every night.

Her parents, Pat and Kelly Fair, thought they were done forming their little family, as they had already adopted two children in addition to Rebecca – Annie and Shannon. However, young Rebecca was insistent, and God heard her prayer.

“It is because of Rebecca’s prayers that we have Daniel, who we adopted from Guatemala,” Kelly says. “Prayer really works!”

Indeed, it does. Pat and Kelly’s family is truly blooming, thanks to God’s goodness. All four of their children attend St. Mary School, and have plenty of talents to share. Annie, now 14, loves writing poetry and stories; Shannon, 13, is a tennis player and a runner; Rebecca, 9, is a very sociable and happy child; and Daniel, 3, is a blessing to the whole family.

“Our older girls adore Daniel; he is like their little mascot,” Kelly says. “They carry him everywhere!”

For the Fairs, adopting children has been an experience they wouldn’t trade for the world.

“The adoption process has deepened our faith and opened our eyes to how much God loves us,” Kelly says. “It has been such a blessing to us. We feel so grateful. Stewardship is so important to us, and we try in some small way to give back to God.”

Pat and Kelly first had the desire to adopt when they discovered they were not able to conceive. They



The Fair Family: Parents Pat and Kelly, along with children Annie, Shannon, Rebecca and Daniel



The McCabe Family: Parents Dan and Renee, along with children Sean and Anna.

chose to work with a Christian adoption organization, the Open Door Adoption Agency, located in Thomasville, Ga. The process included a home-study and the construction of a “life book,” which featured pictures of their home, family and what is important to them. Through Open Door, the adoptive mother chooses which family her child will go to, and she is cared for all the way through the process.

“It is such a wonderful gift for someone to trust that you are going to do a better job raising their children than they can do,” Kelly says.

Over the last few years, Pat and Kelly have realized an important aspect of adoption.

“If we are going to take a stance as a Church and as a community against abortion, we need to open ourselves to the solution, which I believe is adoption,” Kelly says.

The McCabe Family

After struggling to adopt their two children, Sean, 12, and Anna, 9, Dan and Renee McCabe have been filled with gratitude.

“Adopting our children has been the greatest blessing of our lives,” Renee says. “I feel that I can never do enough in gratitude to God for what we have been given. When you go through a lot to have a family, you gain such a sense of thankfulness. When I wake up every morning, I am in such awe that I have these beautiful children.”

For the McCabes, the path to adoption included more than a few detours. Before receiving Sean and Anna, a few of Dan and Renee’s attempts at adoption

Congratulations 2010 Graduates!

High School Graduates

| NAME | HIGH SCHOOL | COLLEGE PLANS |
|-------------------|--------------|------------------------------------|
| Wilkes Murray | Aquinas | Clemson University |
| Michael Punch | Lakeside | University of Georgia |
| Thomas Barrett | Aquinas | Georgia College & State University |
| Connor Crowley | Lakeside | Georgia Tech |
| Jeffery Stoner | Lakeside | Francis Marion University |
| Chris Wojtseck | Aquinas | Ohio State University |
| Justin Pitock | Lakeside | University of Georgia |
| Maureen Kennedy | Aquinas | Johnson And Wales University |
| Ashlyn E. Proctor | Curtis | Augusta State University |
| Julian Salazar | Augusta Prep | Duke University |

College Graduates

| NAME | COLLEGE ATTENDED | DEGREE RECEIVED |
|---------------|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| Brett Bentley | GA Southern | BA of Science |
| Megan Snead | GA Southern | |
| Watson Folk | Vanderbilt University | BA of Biological Science |

Adoption *continued from page 4*

fell through. Eventually, the couple was able to adopt through an organization called American Adoptions.

At the time of Anna's adoption, Dan and Renee experienced a profound connection with her large Catholic biological family.

"When we came to get Anna, we were so touched by her biological family that was ready to give her to us," Renee says. "They understood the gift of life. We really felt the presence of God as we shared that time with them. I pray for the birth parents of my children all the time. They have demonstrated the most self-sacrificing type of love there is."

Sean and Anna enjoy attending our parish school, as well as spending time with their parents riding bikes, taking adventurous trips, reading books and engaging in other family-oriented activities.

The Broome Family

Jim and Alice Broome are another couple that has discovered the beautiful path of adoption. The Broomes

felt called to adopt from the Ukraine, particularly because Alice is a native of the Eastern European country.

"We felt that it would be the most natural and best place to adopt our children from," Jim says.

Several years ago, the couple adopted two Ukrainian boys: James, 13, and John, 12, biological brothers.

"We receive plenty of satisfaction and fulfillment from watching our sons grow and learn, as every parent has," Jim says. "We have been very fortunate and blessed. Together as a family, we enjoy playing sports, watching movies or doing things around the house."

James and John are currently learning English, and they enjoy attending CCD at St. Mary's. They will receive their First Holy Communion soon, and are adjusting very well to life in America.

Let us keep these generous couples in our prayers, and the children they have adopted. As Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta would say, these families have truly done "something beautiful for God."

Finding Strength in the Struggle

No one likes to suffer. Yet suffering is a real part of life.

"It's part of what it means to be a Christian disciple," says clinical psychologist and parishioner Dr. John McCormack. "That is our challenge as Catholics: to live through the suffering and allow it to bring us closer to one another and to Christ."

This is easier said than done. Most of us tend to run away when things get tough; we don't want to feel uncomfortable or deal with pain. This is particularly true for married individuals. The reason half of all marriages end in divorce is marriage can be a difficult vocation. When the hard times come, many people leave.

In the more than 20 years that Dr. McCormack has worked with couples, he has learned that marriage is one thing worth fighting for. When couples fight through the struggles together, their relationship is always strengthened.

"Struggles can be a fertile source of increased closeness to God and to one another," Dr. McCormack says. "Every marriage has struggles; and that is okay. In fact, it is to be expected. I have been blessed to see the fruitful result of people working through the struggles. And it is well worth their time and effort."

Dr. McCormack began offering his counseling services in the form of a ministry at St. Mary's approximately 13 years ago. Prior to the formation of the counseling ministry, Dr. McCormack and his wife, Ann, had worked with many couples in the parish as part of the Marriage Encounter and Retroville ministries.

"We loved the work we did with couples [in those two ministries]," Dr. McCormack says. "Not only was it a blessing to work with those couples, but working with other couples helped Ann and I to work on our own relationship. That was an added blessing."

The couples who seek his advice are each in the midst of dealing with unique issues and problems.

Some have been married for many years, others are newlyweds. Some aren't even married at all.

"Couples don't have to be on the verge of divorce; in fact, I encourage them to seek help before the issues escalate to that point," Dr. McCormack says. "[The issues couples deal with] really run the gamut. I even talk with engaged couples sometimes."

The typical cost for secular marriage and family counseling sessions can be as high as \$200 a session. St. Mary's couple counseling ministry offers support and advice to couples for just \$15 per session, which covers the cost of overhead and the upkeep of the counseling room. For those interested in taking advantage of this ministry, simply call the parish

office (706-733-6627) and ask to leave a message in Dr. McCormack's confidential voice mailbox. The doctor will then contact the couple and set up a time to meet. All meetings are set in small cottage behind the Annunciation House, on the corner of Arsenal and Central Ave.

If you and your spouse or fiancé(e) are in need of professional counseling, consider scheduling a session with Dr. McCormack. Don't let the struggles of married life overshadow the joy and beauty of the sacrament.



Running on All Eight Cylinders *continued from front cover*

have a strong sense of the common good. I'm convinced that a large part of the depression in our society is that we are not using our gifts well."

Bishop Morneau promotes stewardship not as a way to increase the riches of our faith communities as much as to increase the richness of one's life. In lectures across the country, he advocates stewardship as a way of life "because it has the tremendous power to do two things: to change one's life and to change one's destiny," he says. And having been pastor of this parish now for almost eight years, I would add that it does increase the richness of our faith community in that it leads to a sense of discipleship and has brought so much vibrancy to our parish.

These are some of the benefits that Bishop Morneau listed as coming from living stewardship as a way of life:

- Advances prayer life by fostering one's relationship with God. It forces lifting the mind and heart to God to listen and to respond.

- Nurtures a community's prayer life in much the same way, urging listening to God and responding as a community.
- Demands that people answer God's call to serve others.
- Inspires confidence to use gifts and talents as a way of extending the hands of Jesus.
- Prompts generosity.
- Encourages thinking before spending time and before spending limited resources.
- Begins the process of taking steps in faith and realizing our dependence on God.
- Demands that one take seriously the teachings of Jesus in all aspects of daily life, in all contacts with others, and all spheres of influence.

God bless you,

Fr. Jerry Ragan

Fr. Jerry

Ad Placement



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Recent Gifts to St. Mary on the Hill

St Mary on the Hill Church

In memory of Patricia Green

Mr. and Mrs. Philip Weigle

Sara Melton

Mr. and Mrs. Mark Horn

Mr. and Mrs. Levi W. Hill IV,
and Mr. Levi W. Hill III

Mike Rucker

Mr. and Mrs. Joseph E. Kelly III

Mr. and Mrs. Robert J. Dressel, Jr.

Mary Louise Rucker

Dr. and Mrs. J.B. Tanenbaum

Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Nordmann

Dudley and Madeline Bowen

Barry and Beth Storey

Peter and Rosemary Menk

Jim Hudson Lexus

Jon and Mary Sprague

Dr. and Mrs. Doug Quarles

John and Marcelene Markwalter

Mr. and Mrs. Donald Thorstad

Mr. and Mrs. Frank Doyle

Randy and Becky Smith

Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Rice

In memory of Sissy Barnes

Dr. and Mrs. Doug Quarles

In memory of Lisa Grondin

Tamara Bell

Baptisms

Ava Marie McArdle
daughter of Eric and Lisa

Chikamso Stacy Opene
*daughter of Adaeze Ijeoma and
Uche Anthony*

Isabella Desiree Hartley
daughter of Jeremy and Natasha

Taylor Danielle Bash and
Jennifer Gabriella Bash
*daughters of David and Karen
Dross*

Mary Kathleen Johnson
daughter of Matthew and Melissa

Martha O'Neil Funsch
daughter of Nicholas and Alice