

Saint Mary

ON THE HILL
CATHOLIC CHURCH



News and Notes from Fr. Jerry

Lenten Subtraction Also Needs Addition

Dear Parishioners,

You may have heard someone say “Lent and Easter are late this year.” That is not really true in an actual sense (In the next 25 years Ash Wednesday is in March nine times, once as late as March 10). However, this month of March is the time we need to focus on both the meaning of Lent and what that means to us as Catholics.

According to the Church, Lent officially begins at midnight on Tuesday, March 4, as March 5 is Ash Wednesday. Like myself, you probably have already seen Lent as a time to “give something up,” to make yourself more holy. The three practices of Lent have always been highlighted by “praying, fasting, and almsgiving.” We are indeed called to try to infuse those things into our lives more deliberately during Lent. However, I would point out to you that two of the three require action, not rejection. Prayer and almsgiving are things we must do. Fasting involves denial.

The word “Lent” comes from the Middle English word *lencten*, which

actually means “lengthening,” as when the days get longer. We all appreciate the fact that the days begin to get longer, and we have more daylight. I would maintain that all of this means “new life” and that is what we are really called to during this Lenten season.

From a stewardship perspective I would suggest to you that Lent and our preparation for Easter calls us to a different way to look at our Lenten preparation. Yes, Lent is a time for repentance, a time for establishing ourselves spiritually for Easter. We may think it is a time for us to seek God’s grace, but I would point out to you we have already been given God’s grace. What we need to do is to try to develop more intensely in God’s grace. How can we as good stewards do that?

Giving something up is certainly one way, but I would suggest that we expand that. If you give something up, add something positive in its place. Lots of people give up candy. Should we not add fruit and vegetables in its place? If you fast, which is certainly

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Mass Schedule

Sunday, 7:45 a.m., 10:30 a.m.,
12:15 p.m. and 6:00 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.

Stewardship

The Wise Men's Gifts Symbolize Our Lenten Obligations

We experience great joy when we celebrate the coming of the Magi at Epiphany each year. For many of us, it is the completion of Christmas. Yet, the gifts offered by the Magi — gold, frankincense and myrrh — can be a guide for us as we plan our Lenten observances this year.



this Lent we can practice being a little more generous than usual. If our giving is a thankful response to the gift of eternal life that God has given us, we will find that the giving is indeed a means of grace.

For centuries, myrrh has been associated with fasting. Although

It may seem strange to connect the joyful celebration of Epiphany with the penitential season of Lent. Yet, our spiritual life should not be divided into separate bits having no connection with each other. In the same way, the Church's liturgical year should also flow from one season to another. The different feasts and seasons certainly have different emphases, but they are intended to build on each other. So let's see if we can connect what the Magi gave Jesus with what we're going to offer Him this Lent.

The basic ingredients for our Lenten rule normally come from what are termed the Three Notable Duties — prayer, fasting and almsgiving. These in turn come from Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7).

How do we connect the wise men's gifts with the notable duties? Actually, what the gifts symbolize matches up surprisingly well.

Frankincense is the basic ingredient in the incense used in the worship of God, in the ancient world and in the Church today. Offering it to Jesus points out His divine nature, and so it symbolizes prayer. Our Lenten rule needs to include prayer and worship. Of course, we are bound to worship at Sunday Mass year-round. Maybe during Lent, we might add a weekday Mass. Perhaps we can increase the time we devote to private prayer at home or at Adoration. Devotional reading from the Bible or another appropriate book can be added. And don't forget the possibility of adding family devotions during Lent, so the whole family prays together.

When we offer our gold to Christ to build His Church and to help His poor, we are engaged in almsgiving. While giving from the treasure God has entrusted to us is a duty throughout the whole year, maybe

myrrh comes from the same family of plants as frankincense, it has a more pungent scent and bitter taste. In the ancient world, it was regularly used in embalming. Generations of theological writers have seen the gift of myrrh as a foreshadowing of Christ's sufferings. And fasting strengthens us in holiness and prepares us to come into God's presence after our own deaths. St. Thomas Aquinas himself linked myrrh with repentance and fasting when he wrote that myrrh represents the penance by which we preserve our souls from the corruption of sin.

Fasting may be the most difficult of the three notable duties for modern Americans. After all, most of the advertising and many of the magazine articles we see are devoted to making us more, not less, comfortable. We usually think of fasting only under the heading of dieting to lose weight. Instead, try to think of fasting as a way to become more spiritually fit. Body and spirit affect each other. The whole sacramental system is built on the truth that we can receive spiritual grace through material things and physical actions. Our specific requirements of fasting are limited — abstaining from meat on Fridays during Lent, and a reduction in the quantity of food we eat on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. But discipline of our physical bodies for our spiritual well-being does not have to be limited to Lent!

Gold, frankincense and myrrh were indeed valuable gifts for the wise men to present to the Child Jesus. When we look at their symbolism, we can see their relationship to the three notable duties of almsgiving, prayer and fasting. What gifts are we going to offer to Jesus this Lent?

Dynamic Catholic Speaker Ennie Hickman Set to Lead 2014 Lenten Parish Mission



Mission leader Ennie Hickman.

The goal of a parish mission is to provide a positive experience of God, leading to personal and ongoing conversion in a community setting, and St. Mary on the Hill's upcoming Lenten Mission is designed to do just that.

With the essential mission elements of preaching, prayer, reconciliation, Scripture, and the Eucharist anchoring the program, this year's Lenten Parish Mission will be held March 10-12. Each night of the Mission will begin at 7 p.m. in the church.

A decades-old tradition at our parish, the St. Mary's Lenten Mission has typically been held during the second week of Lent, since Lent has always been considered a time of heightened and intensified spiritual growth. This year, however, since Lent begins later than usual, and to avoid a conflict with the Feast of St. Patrick, our mission will be held during the first week of Lent.

Our 2014 Lenten Mission will be led by Ennie Hickman, a renowned missionary from Houston, Texas. A dynamic Catholic speaker, Ennie has traveled the United States and abroad for the past 15 years sharing the message of Jesus Christ.

"This year's mission, in a unique way, will build on our Strong Catholic Family/Strong Catholic Youth Initiative, so we are asking families to attend," says our pastor, Fr. Jerry Ragan. "Ennie Hickman is well known for his ability to connect with young people through his work at the Steubenville Youth Conferences."

And since there is no truly Catholic renewal without consciousness of and response to those around us who are in need, a very important follow-up to this year's parish mission will be our "Works of Mercy Saturday" event, to be held March 22. The Works of Mercy Saturday will offer a host of opportunities for the families of our parish to be involved in concrete works of mercy that reflect the joy that Gospel living brings to our lives.

"Parish missions are very important events in the life of a parish," Ennie says. "Just like a domestic family recharges its batteries on vacation or a family holiday, a parish family needs time together, to pray, to learn, to grow and to spend time together. My hope for the families of St. Mary's is that they find some spiritual refreshment in spending time with the Lord and His Word."

Each day of the Lenten Parish Mission will center on a different theme. Ennie will lead the Mission for the first two evenings March 10 and 11, and the event will close on March 12 with The Most Reverend Gregory J. Hartmayer, OFM Conv., Bishop of Savannah, celebrating Mass with our parish priests concelebrating. Bishop Hartmayer will deliver the homily, which will echo the final chapter of Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel*, with its call for all of us to be "spirit-filled evangelizers."

During his time at St. Mary's, Ennie will also be visiting the students at Aquinas High School and St. Mary on the Hill School to minister to them during school hours.

"Having had the opportunity to witness Ennie Hickman speak numerous times, I can personally attest to what a dynamic and engaging speaker Ennie really is," says St. Mary's parishioner Joanna Watwood, who organized this year's Parish Lenten Mission. "Ennie's love for the Lord and his desire for us to be in deep relationship with the Lord is so real and so powerful. He has a way of leading people in worship that causes you to dig deep and reflect on how to live out your relationship with the Lord in a real way."

For more information on this year's Lenten Parish Mission, please see the parish bulletin or visit our parish website at www.stmaryonthehill.org.

St. Mary on the Hill 2014 Lenten Parish Mission

March 8/9

Called by Baptism – Dedicated to the Gospel

Mission leader Ennie Hickman will speak at all weekend Masses.

March 10

Adore: The Joy of God's Love

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament led by Fr. Jerry. After Exposition, there will be Scripture readings, and a talk by Ennie that connects a sense of God's love leading to a heart for the marginalized and the forgotten.

March 11

Reconcile: The Joy of Forgiveness

Penance Service led by Fr. Jerry, during which there will be the reading of a Scripture passage and a talk by Ennie, followed by the individual celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

March 12

Celebrate: The Joy of the Gospel

A Eucharist will be celebrated by Bishop Hartmayer, with the priests of the parish concelebrating. The Bishop will deliver the homily, with a theme centered on the final chapter of Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel*, and its call for all of us to be "spirit-filled evangelizers."

The Adventure of the Priesthood

Meet Fr. Tom Murphy

St. Mary's has been blessed over the years with a diverse group of priests hailing from all over the world to serve our parish family. However, the newest member of this family comes from our own corner of the world. Fr. Tom Murphy was born and raised in Savannah. As the second of four children — he has three sisters — Fr. Tom was raised in a loving Catholic family, and his parents were themselves Savannah natives. Fr. Tom attended Catholic elementary school and high school in Savannah, and graduated from Armstrong Atlantic State University.

Throughout his youth and even into his college years, Fr. Tom thought about being a priest.

"I always had a great reverence for the priesthood," he says. "I was greatly influenced by the parish priests in my life, especially the young Irish priests that came to serve our parish. They laughed and joked with us kids and played soccer. They were joyful. But then seeing them up on the altar celebrating Mass, I knew they were also privy to something extraordinary."

After graduating from college with a degree in business and criminal justice, young Tom Murphy joined the Savannah Police Department, with the thought of the priesthood still in the back of his mind. He continued attending daily Mass in the basement of St. John's Cathedral. Then, a series of events occurred that made him consider the priesthood more seriously.

"There was a crime wave in those days in Savannah," Fr. Tom says. "Sadly, I saw a few of my friends, fellow police officers, killed."

Realizing how short life can be, Fr. Tom felt he had to at least give the seminary a try. He headed north to Mount



Fr. Tom Murphy celebrates Mass at St. Mary on the Hill.

St. Mary's Seminary, and it was there that he "fell in love with the priesthood."

"I also met a lot of guys like me who had already graduated from college and worked a while before making the decision to become a priest," Fr. Tom says.

On June 6, 1987, Fr. Tom was ordained a priest in St. John's Cathedral, just a stone's throw away from his boyhood home. One of his professors in seminary had told him the priesthood is an "adventure." Looking back on the 26 years since his ordination, Fr. Tom agrees. "It is most definitely an adventure!" he says. "Like anything worthwhile, it's hard, but it's worth it. If a young man is looking for adventure and excitement, the priesthood will satisfy him."

For Fr. Tom, the most amazing aspect of his priesthood is "the privilege to offer Mass and knowing I can do that for the rest of my life."

Having spent the majority of his priesthood serving parishes in small towns and rural areas, Fr. Tom has also served in specialized ministries, serving migrants, working in campus ministry at Mercer University, and serving for many years as a police chaplain in Savannah and Middle Georgia.

With his Savannah upbringing, it is no surprise that Fr. Tom's hobbies include boating and saltwater fishing. When he gets the chance, he also enjoys golfing. Since moving to Augusta, he has combined his love of both history and walking by exploring on foot the Riverwalk area, Sacred Heart and other local historic sites.

"I'm very thankful to Fr. Jerry for being so welcoming," Fr. Tom says. "The staff and the whole parish have made me feel very much at home here."

And we are blessed to have Fr. Tom Murphy join our parish family!

"I always had a great reverence for the priesthood. I was greatly influenced by the parish priests in my life, especially the young Irish priests that came to serve our parish. They laughed and joked with us kids and played soccer. They were joyful. But then seeing them up on the altar celebrating Mass, I knew they were also privy to something extraordinary." — Fr. Tom Murphy

Journeying With Christ Through the Stations of the Cross

Stations of the Cross is offered at St. Mary's every Friday during Lent at 7:30 p.m.

On Good Friday, Stations of the Cross will be prayed at noon.

Praying the Stations of the Cross

For an online guide to praying the Stations below, visit www.catholic.org/prayers/station.php

Opening Prayer

Station 1 - Jesus Is Condemned To Death

Station 2 - Jesus Carries His Cross

Station 3 - Jesus Falls The First Time

Station 4 - Jesus Meets His Afflicted Mother

Station 5 - Simon Of Cyrene Helps Jesus To Carry His Cross

Station 6 - Veronica Wipes The Face Of Jesus

Station 7 - Jesus Falls The Second Time

Station 8 - Jesus Meets The Women Of Jerusalem

Station 9 - Jesus Falls A Third Time

Station 10 - Jesus Is Stripped Of His Clothes

Station 11 - Jesus Is Nailed To The Cross

Station 12 - Jesus Dies On The Cross

Station 13 - The Body Of Jesus Is Taken Down From The Cross

Station 14 - Jesus Is Laid In The Tomb

Closing Prayer

For Roman Catholics throughout the world, the Stations of the Cross is synonymous with Lent, Holy Week and, especially, Good Friday. This devotion is also known as the "Way of the Cross," the "Via Crucis," and the "Via Dolorosa." It commemorates 14 key events on day of Christ's crucifixion.



The Stations originated in medieval Europe when wars prevented Christian pilgrims from visiting the Holy Land. Later, for the many who wanted to pass along the same route, but could not make the trip to Jerusalem, a practice developed that eventually took the form of the 14 stations currently found in almost every church. In the 12th century, St. Francis of Assisi devised the list of stations and started the tradition of reciting it as a type of devotional service. European artists created works depicting scenes of Christ's journey to Calvary.

In 1761, St. Alphonsus Liguori wrote: "The pious exercise of the Way of the Cross represents the sorrowful journey that Jesus Christ made with the cross on His shoulders, to die on Calvary for the love of us. We should, therefore, practice this devotion with the greatest possible fervor, placing ourselves in spirit beside our Savior as He walked this sorrowful way, uniting our tears with His, and offering to Him both our compassion and our gratitude."

Praying the Stations of the Cross is one of the most popular devotions for Roman Catholics and is often performed in a spirit of reparation for the sufferings and insults that Jesus endured during His Passion. The object of the Stations is to help us make a spiritual pilgrimage of prayer, through meditating upon the chief scenes of Christ's sufferings and death.

This devotion may be conducted personally, by making your way from one station to another and saying the prayers, or by having the celebrant move from station to station while the congregation make the responses.

A plenary indulgence may be gained by praying the Stations of the Cross. If, for some reasonable cause, the Stations are interrupted, a partial indulgence may be gained for each station.

Saint of the Month: *St. Patrick*

This month, we celebrate the feast of St. Patrick. Born in the year 387, Patrick grew up in the Roman province of Britain. He was captured at the age of 16 by Irish raiders, taken to Ireland and sold into slavery. And, despite the precarious nature of his captivity, Patrick managed to learn the language and customs of the Druid pagans who held him.

Throughout Patrick's captivity, the young saint would often turn to God in times of distress and need. Prayer became Patrick's refuge, and he would spend hours in conversation with God.

Patrick remained in the hands of his captors for six long years. Then, in the summer of 407, he experienced a profound religious transformation. Commanded by God in a dream, Patrick was instructed to leave Ireland via the coast. There, on the rocky shores of the Irish coast, sailors caught sight of Patrick and returned him to Britain and his family.

However, a short while later, Patrick experienced another profound dream. In the dream, Patrick heard the cries of the Irish people, "We beg you, holy youth, to come and walk among us once more." And although it would be years before he returned to Ireland, the prophetic nature of Patrick's dream was inevitable.

Patrick was not destined to stay in Britain for long — he soon moved to continental Europe and began studying for the priesthood in a French monastery. In 432, Patrick was ordained a bishop and commissioned to take the Gospel to Ireland. He reached the Irish shores for a second time on March 25, 433. Patrick would spend the remainder of his life in Ireland, converting the Irish pagans for the next 30 years.

Patrick's legend spread far and wide, and by the grace of God, the saint converted thousands of Druids to the Catholic faith. He built churches throughout Ireland and opened the eyes of ruthless barbarian kings to the grace and love of Christ. Legend has it that Patrick used an ordinary shamrock clover to explain the mystery of the Trinity to the Irish people. Other legends depict Patrick ridding the island of venomous snakes. However, scientists now know that snakes never inhabited the Emerald Isle. But the story symbolically sheds light on Patrick's evangelical mission — ridding Ireland of pagan religions, with the cross replacing the popular Druid serpent.

Today, 93 percent of Ireland is Catholic. We celebrate St. Patrick's Day on March 17, the day of his death. A holiday for all nations, St. Patrick's Day has become a universal opportunity to celebrate friendship and good fortune.

Get Ready for the Golf Tournament!

The 22nd Annual Msgr. P. James Costigan St. Mary on the Hill School Endowment Golf Tournament is Friday, May 2 at Forest Hills Golf Course. The tournament has raised more than \$190,000 for the St. Mary School Endowment over the years!

The tournament is a fun way to spend the day with family and friends, while supporting a great cause! If you have any questions or are interested in being a part of the event, please call Mary Davis at 706-733-6627.

Lenten Schedule

Fat Tuesday Pancake Supper
Tuesday, March 4
6 p.m. in the Parish Hall

Ash Wednesday
Wednesday, March 5
(day of fast and abstinence)
Mass Schedule — 7 a.m.,
9:15 a.m. (all-school Mass),
noon and 6 p.m.

Stations of the Cross
in the church on Fridays at
7:30 p.m. and at noon on
Good Friday

Parish Mission
March 10 to 12
7 p.m. in the Church with
Ennie Hickman,
Mission Leader

**Lenten Faith Sharing Group
with Fr. Jerry**
Sunday mornings starting
March 16
9:15 to 10:15 a.m. in School
Computer Lab

K of C Lenten Fish Fry
Every Friday night during
Lent at 6 p.m.,
1501 Monte Sano Ave.

Works of Mercy
Saturday, March 22
(see the bulletin for further details)

**Family Celebration
of Gospel Joy**
Wed., March 26 at 6:30 p.m.
(to share a meal and experiences from
Works of Mercy Saturday)

Lenten Subtraction *continued from front cover*

beneficial, should you not place prayer in its place? If you give up television, what do you replace it with? Perhaps we could give that time away through a parish ministry. It is those positive, action-oriented things we do to make our lives better, and our spiritual lives more full that really reflect stewardship and our willingness to do more during Lent, not less.

I have heard of one Catholic high school where the students fast on Fridays during Lent. What makes that act particularly significant is that they then donate to the poor the money they would have spent on the meal, and those who follow the fast gather during lunch for prayer. There it is — all three Lenten practices — prayer, fasting, and almsgiving.

Sometimes we make this too complicated. This month is the perfect time for us each to evaluate our lives, and to do something positive to make our lives more holy and more spiritually fulfilling. It is a time for us to commit ourselves to stewardship as a way of life.

God bless you,



Fr. Jerry

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St. Mary on the Hill School

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Baptisms

Andrew Franklin Williams, IV
Son of Willie and Maggie Williams

Gabriella Antonia Muro
Daughter of Troy and Tracie Muro

Cecelia Catherine Muro
Daughter of Troy and Tracie Muro