

Saint Mary

ON THE HILL
CATHOLIC CHURCH



News and Notes from Fr. Jerry

An Opportunity to Grow Closer to God

Dear Parishioners,

The word “Lent” is an Old English word for springtime. And how blessed we are to live in that part of the world where everything springs into life during Lent. Between now and Easter, we will see the Paschal Mystery come to life in nature. We will witness a beautiful change in nature – a profound transformation from death to life, from hibernation to activity, from barrenness to blossoms everywhere.

As good stewards who want to draw ever-closer to God, the season of Lent should be a time of “spring training” for us. It should be a graced time for clarifying our priorities in life and recommitting ourselves to the task of following the Lord unreservedly.

God loves us whether we make Lenten changes or not. But the wonderful thing about Lent is that it provides us an opportunity to make God a greater part of our life, and to take our faith to new levels.

While giving up sweets in favor of healthy snacks for Lent is a common and noble endeavor, the goal of Lent should not only be a spiritual excuse to lose weight! In choosing acts of self-denial, we are saying “no” to things in order to get into the practice of saying “no” when inclined towards sin, ultimately deepening our faith and our relationship with the Lord. And if our relationship with the Lord is truly authentic, then it is not just about “my own personal relationship with God.” Any personal relationship with God should always have an outward thrust to it.

Of the three traditional practices of Lent — prayer, fasting and almsgiving — almsgiving is surely the most neglected. In his Message for Lent 2015, Pope Francis asks us to reach out to those in need: “We can help by acts of charity, reaching out to both those near and far through the Church’s many charitable organizations. Lent is a favorable time

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.

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The Apron Ministry:



With aprons around their waists and the compassionate love of Jesus in their hearts, members of the Apron Ministry make sure that those who are grieving don't have to tough it out alone.

"The time after a loved one dies is really hard for a lot of people," says Margaret Matheis, who serves as Co-Ministry Leader of the Apron Ministry along with Ellen Kelly. "Often, the family members of the deceased are overwhelmed with funeral plans, hosting visitors, and more. That is why the Apron Ministry is there to help them take care of some of the details. Our ministry helps the grieving family members know that our parish community cares about them during this difficult time. We allow the family to have time to just grieve and be with one another."

The Apron Ministry, which is actually under the umbrella of the Consolation Ministry, has about 20 dedicated members who give their time and talent to easing the burden of those who are grieving.

When Consolation Ministry members meet with the family of the deceased to help them prepare for the funeral, they ask them if they would like the services of the Apron Ministry or not. If so, Margaret visits with the family and helps them to make decisions in preparation for the funeral meal, such as how many guests can be anticipated and which paper products and food will be needed.

Next, Margaret estimates how many Apron Ministry volunteers she will need to prepare the place where the meal will be served, as well as assist during the meal and clean-up afterwards. However, the meal itself is usually provided through the generosity of family and friends. If a family feels that their own home is not adequate for hosting the funeral meal, the Parish Hall may be used instead.

"We are very proud of what we do," Margaret says. "We try to make everything as lovely as possible. We use nice platters and special dishes, and we wear aprons during the meal. It is hard work, but we enjoy it. It takes

"The Apron Ministry helped me years ago when my mother died, and that is one reason I decided to give my time to it. I have gotten to know a lot of wonderful people by working with this ministry. I am a registered nurse, and I believe that taking care of people is very important, and doing so helps us to grow in our relationship with Jesus." – Margaret Matheis

Sharing the Compassion of Jesus

organization and team work, but our ministry group is great at it! Our volunteers know how to be generous with their time and how to present food well."

In the many years that the Apron Ministry has been around, it has touched numerous lives, including the lives of its volunteers.

"The Apron Ministry helped me years ago when my mother died, and that is one reason I decided to give my time to it," Margaret says. "I have gotten to know a lot of wonderful people by working with this ministry. I am a registered nurse, and I believe that taking care of people

is very important, and doing so helps us to grow in our relationship with Jesus. I also really love the fact that St. Mary's is the church I have been part of since I was born, and we are like a big family. There is a real connection between our parishioners. We are there for each other."

To participate in this beautiful ministry of compassion, please contact the parish office at 706-733-6627, or fill out your next stewardship commitment card indicating your interest. For more information, please call or email Margaret Matheis geraldmatheis4202@comcast.net.



Holy Week Schedule

Holy Thursday, April 2

Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper, 7 p.m.

Adoration after Mass until night prayer at 11:45 p.m.

Good Friday, April 3

Stations of the Cross, noon

Celebration of the Lord's Passion, 7 p.m.

Holy Saturday, April 4

Easter Vigil, 8 p.m.

Easter Resurrection of the Lord

Sunday, April 5

Masses at 7:30 a.m., 9 a.m., 10:45 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.

Ladies Ancient Order Irish Eyes A



"So whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do everything for the glory of God" (1 Cor. 10:31). It's easy to think that our hobbies and personal interests are something we do apart from our spiritual lives or service to others. But those very passions, harnessed for the glory of God and turned toward the good of others, can offer the same enjoyment with deeper meaning and change the world for the better.

The women of the Ladies Ancient Order of Hibernians – LAOH – are taking their love of their Irish heritage and putting it at the service of God and others right here at St. Mary on the Hill. Former parishioner Sharon Vincent is the Georgia State President of the organization, which today is essentially a Catholic action group. The order was formed in Omaha, Neb. in 1894, and the St. Mary's chapter of this national organization was established on March 1, 2003.

"The primary purpose of the Ladies group was to protect young immigrant Irish girls coming in to the United States, to assist them in securing employment

– and to keep them from becoming homesick and discouraged," Sharon says. "Today, our work centers on the propagation of the faith. We also foster and preserve the Irish culture – its art, dance, music, and sports."

The St. Mary's chapter meets eight times each year. They keep their Irish spirits strong at each meeting through a special report presented on the history and traditions of Ireland and the Irish people. Each year, their Irish pride is on full display through their float in the annual St. Patrick's Day parade.

The LAOH focuses on service to our faith family and to needs in our local community through a variety of outreach projects.

"We have provided funds for seminarians who are discerning religious life," Sharon says. "And we offer donations for special projects at our Catholic schools such as the purchase of hoodies for Aquinas High School students participating in the Walk for Life in Washington, D.C."

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Order of Hibernians Are Smiling



A large part of the group's time and efforts goes into two annual fundraisers in support of Catholic Social Services here in Augusta – the Celtic Tea and the Evening in Ireland, both open to the public.

This year, the Evening in Ireland was held on Feb. 21 at the Elks Club. Attendees enjoyed a piper, the announcement of the Hibernian Lady of the Year, heavy hors d'oeuvres, cash bar and the Lissakeole Irish Band.

The Celtic Tea is set for April 26 at the St. Mary's Parish Hall this year.

"It is one of my favorite events," Sharon says. "Either teams or individuals decorate their tables using different themes. Linen, china, silver, and crystal adorn the tables, and hats and gloves are encouraged. We

have entertainment, usually related to Irish, raffles, and almost everyone leaves with a memento in hand."

Tickets may be purchased at the door.

Membership in the LAOH is open to all practicing Catholic women, ages 16 years and older of Irish descent, or the wife or mother of a member of the Ancient Order of Hibernians.

"Our Irish Catholic heritage and tradition is something we carry with us through the year," Sharon proudly notes.

For more information about this group, please contact Sharon Vincent at 706-860-5115.

Whatever your passion, put it at the service of God, country and parish. It will do you and others a world of good!

"The primary purpose of the Ladies group was to protect young immigrant Irish girls coming in to the United States, to assist them in securing employment – and to keep them from becoming homesick and discouraged. Today, our work centers on the propagation of the faith. We also foster and preserve the Irish culture – its art, dance, music, and sports." – Sharon Vincent

MEN'S FAITH GROUP

Discussing What Matters Most

If you are up bright and early on a Saturday morning and happen to walk by the Knights of Columbus Hall on Monte Sano, you may overhear some lively male voices emanating from inside the building. No, it's not the sound of a football game on the TV – it's the Men's Faith Group of St. Mary on the Hill, hashing out the deeper questions of life and society in light of our Catholic faith. Our very own pastor, Fr. Jerry Ragan, serves as the leader of the group which is open to men of all ages from the parish.

The format of the meetings is simple, beginning promptly at 8 a.m. and ending promptly at 9 a.m. on the first and third Saturdays of each month. Fr. Jerry starts with a brief opening prayer, and then the men dive in to a lively discussion of the topic at hand – either a portion of a spiritual book the group is reading or a timely issue that Fr. Jerry or another member brings up for the group to ponder. The goal is to deepen the formation and spiritual life of the men involved. Typically, about 10 men show up each meeting, representing a very wide span of ages and backgrounds.

"I go for the spiritual guidance I receive there," says Billy Herman, a lifelong parishioner and faithful member of the group for the past six years. "It's good to have a group of spiritual advisors to surround you. For example, there are some Church teachings that I may find hard to understand. The discussions we have help me to come to an understanding."

Participation in the group discussion also varies, as some members prefer to silently take in the discussion.

"Whether quietly and silently, or actively and vociferously, all are looking to strengthen our relationship

with God," Billy says. "I have been in many different faith groups and discussion groups over the years and I have found this one in particular strengthened my faith the most."

As Billy notes, there is definitely strength in numbers.

"The value of having a group to discuss things with is the shared opinions and points of view that come from it," he says. "A comment someone makes may light up something in my own mind that couldn't happen if I simply read and thought about things alone."

There is a camaraderie that has developed among the men as they gather together in pursuit of a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ. And, Billy points out, there is something very special about having one's pastor serve as leader of the group.

"I think it's great that Fr. Jerry is willing to come and meet with us," he says. "It's a great benefit to have him there."

New members are always welcome, and Billy offers encouragement to any man in the parish thinking about stopping by.

"You'll get answers to the questions that concern you," he says. "You'll deepen your realization that Jesus is there with us and wants us to know Him more deeply. You'll get the guidance of your pastor and fellow Catholics."

And by the way, coffee and doughnuts are always provided! For further information, please contact the parish office at 706-733-6627.



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– Billy Herman

An Opportunity to Grow Closer to God continued from front cover

for showing this concern for others by small yet concrete signs of our belonging to the one human family.”

Through almsgiving, along with prayer and fasting, Our Lord encourages us to look to the needs of others. “Seeking the good of another” is the classical definition of love. Using our resources – our time, talent, or treasure for the sake of others – is the concrete way of expressing love of neighbor. As pastor, I am blessed to witness on a daily basis men and women in our faith community reaching out to others, especially those in need. This month, I am happy that we are highlighting the good work of the Apron Ministry. The women involved in this ministry provide such great comfort to the “sorrowful.”

Lent is a great time to give alms. And the Bishop’s Annual Appeal and the Rice Bowl Project of Catholic Relief Services offer great opportunities to do so. Lent is a great time to take an honest look at your Christian

outreach. It can also be a good time to reflect on how you approach the stewardship of treasure. Money can be a great blessing, but it can also cause a person to lose his soul. It doesn’t matter whether you have very little money or great amounts of wealth, the temptation to use it selfishly is a danger for most of us. To avoid becoming too attached to our possessions, we must intentionally detach ourselves from them. This is never an easy reflection for most of us, but if we face it honestly, it can lead to a grateful heart and a great intimacy with the God who gave His all for love of us.

God bless you,



Fr. Jerry

Ad Placement

Saint Mary

ON THE HILL

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