

# Saint Mary

ON THE HILL  
CATHOLIC CHURCH



*News and Notes from Fr. Jerry*

## Make Prayer and Hospitality Pillars of Your Lenten Journey

Dear Parishioners,

I hope our Lenten Mission was a good experience for many of you. In the coming weeks, we will conclude our Lenten observance, experience Holy Week, and celebrate the joy of Easter. Of course, I hope that you have made some effort to make this Lenten season special and significant, but if you have not, it is never too late to accomplish that goal.

With thoughts of Lent, Easter and the Year of Mercy at the top of my mind, I offer a couple suggestions to help carry you to the end of your Lenten journey.

As you know, prayer is foundational to stewardship, as it is one of the Four Pillars of a stewardship parish — along with hospitality, formation and service. With this in mind, here are some suggestions on how you might make your prayer experience even more meaningful.

Pick someone to pray for, perhaps even someone you don't get along with. Just pray for them. On Ash Wednesday, I started offering my adoration time for



a different person each day and it has been a real blessing. You do not have to tell them you are praying for them, but the exercise is good for you, and for them, as well.

If possible, find a time this month to pray before the Blessed Sacrament at our Adoration Chapel, especially if this is something you do not normally do. Pray every morning shortly after you get up, and again

each evening before you turn in. It does not have to be a long period of time, but consistency in prayer can really deepen your relationship with God.

In terms of the pillar of hospitality, there is also much we can do in this area, both as a parish and as individuals and families. Here is a suggestion that involves hospitality — one that is also connected to gratitude and even the Year of Mercy. Many of us spend time at a computer. It is a way for us to stay connected to those who are close to us, and to the world around us. Why

### 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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# “It Is Truly an Exciting Process” *RCIA at St. Mary on the Hill*

**W**e have heard the saying, “Rome, sweet home,” but do we realize what it really means? Do we comprehend the magnitude of what it means to belong to God’s Church on earth?

Some of us may, and some of us may be just discovering what it means to be safe in the embrace of the Mother Church. Thanks to the stellar RCIA – Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults – process at St. Mary’s, many souls are being brought “home” and realizing the gift of faith God has had waiting for them.

“Having only been baptized and later married in the Church, I was largely unfamiliar with the Catholic faith,” says one RCIA sponsor, who was a candidate last year. “The warm community of St. Mary on the Hill was something that drew me to come into full communion with the Church. I finally decided to start the RCIA process for the sake of my children. My husband and I were raising them as Catholics, but I was unable to answer their questions or fully engage in their religious instruction.”

Once this sponsor mustered up the courage to go through RCIA, God opened new doors for her to help others as well.

“The RCIA classes were presented in a format that was easy to understand,” she says. “The volunteers were very helpful and open. I had a fabulous sponsor who is a lifelong Catholic and answered all of my questions. When I was asked to be a sponsor only a few months after Easter, I was happy to help.”

At RCIA classes, catechumens (non-baptized persons seeking full communion with the Catholic Church) and candidates (baptized persons seeking full communion) enjoy delving into the treasure chest of Catholicism alongside their brothers and sisters in Christ. The classes meet on Mondays at 7 p.m. in the Parish Hall from September through Easter.

The purpose of the classes are to inform both candidates and catechumens about the teachings of the Church on a wide range of topics, with the hope of enabling them to come to know and love Christ and His



Church more fully. The topics covered include:

- The existence of God
- A Catholic understanding of Scripture
- The Old and New Testaments
- The doctrine of the Trinity
- The Church: One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic
- The Creed
- The Saints and Mary
- The Sacraments
- Sin and the Ten Commandments
- The End Times
- Morality
- Catholic customs
- The liturgical year as seen through music, and a walk-through Mass.

During the RCIA process, candidates and catechumens undergo various Rites, such as the Rite of Enrollment/Welcoming and the Rite of Election, which is conferred by the bishop at the Cathedral. During the Lenten season, they are embraced by the tender mercy of Christ as they make their First Confession. A couple of weeks before Easter, all participate in a retreat that focuses on prayer and spirituality.

## *RCIA at St. Mary on the Hill* continued from previous page

RCIA is directed by Deacon Ken Malek and co-directed by Rebecca Grady. Faithful assistants Carrie and Jesse Murga, Kim Werner, Theresa McArdle, and James and Robin Madden give their time and talent to RCIA as well, along with a number of parishioners who volunteer to be sponsors.

“This is my third year with the RCIA program, and what I love about my involvement with it is being part of a community of people seeking to know Christ in and through His Church,” Rebecca says. “An RCIA program is connected to the earliest days of Christianity, and is still the process by which new members are enfolded into the Mystical Body of Christ, His Church. It is a truly exciting process to be a part of.”

Last but not least, the aim of RCIA is also to help the new members of our parish family integrate into our community.

“The role of the parish is hugely important, because the parish represents the Body of Christ for the person

going through RCIA – the parish is the face of Christ in a real way,” Rebecca says. “We are the ‘immediate family members’ of those joining our parish family, which is part of a much larger family, the universal Church. Our welcoming words and actions are of great value. Our parish is vibrant, with many opportunities to join in and to serve.”

Sponsors volunteer to walk with these individuals seeking communion with the Church, and support them in the process. Those interested in volunteering with RCIA may contact the parish office at 706-733-6627, or sign up on their stewardship commitment card. Those who are interested in learning more about the Catholic Church through RCIA may contact the parish office, as well.

## Holy Week Schedule

### **Holy Thursday, March 24**

Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper, 7 p.m.  
Adoration after Mass until night prayer at 11:45 p.m.

### **Good Friday, March 25**

Stations of the Cross, noon  
Celebration of the Lord’s Passion, 7 p.m.

### **Holy Saturday, March 26**

Easter Vigil, 8 p.m.

### **Easter Resurrection of the Lord**

Sunday, March 27  
Mass is at 7:30 a.m., 9 a.m., 10:45 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.



# Welcoming Our New Paroc

By now, many of you have met our new parochial vicar, Fr. Gonzalo Meza. Some of you have listened to his homilies, introduced yourself after Mass, or have even had him over for dinner in your home. And we've even learned some interesting facts about him – he really likes Italian food (especially *pasta alla carbonara* and *pasta con pesto*); his favorite book is the Bible, but he also likes to read Dostoyevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, and various Spanish authors; his favorite movie is *La Vita è Bella (Life is Beautiful)*, he is a gifted pianist and can play anything by Bach, Chopin, or Mozart; and his favorite sports teams are the Antonio Spurs and the Denver Broncos. But to know Fr. Meza is to also know his vocation story – one that began in his native Mexico.

As a young boy growing up in Mexico, Fr. Meza will tell you very honestly that the idea of the priesthood never even entered his mind. Not once. To be sure, he was raised in a traditional, Catholic family, he attended a Catholic grade school, and every Sunday he went to Mass with his family. He had an aunt – Tía Eulalia – of whom he was very fond and who dem-

onstrated a deep faith. But Father's goals were more academic than spiritual, so after he finished school, he enrolled at one of the world's top universities, the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México – UNAM.

"I majored in Political Science and Public Administration, with a minor in Economics," Fr. Meza says. "I still had no idea that one day I would be called to be a priest. It wasn't until I began working in the consular section for the U. S. Embassy in Mexico City that the seeds of my discernment began."

While working at the Embassy, one of Father's jobs was to process undocumented immigrants who had been deported back to Mexico from the United States. Case by case, information had to be gathered, entered and filed. The workload was staggering, and Father says they were assigned files by weight – a mountain of paperwork that could weigh 10-15 pounds at a time. And with each case, Father not only began to realize the depth of desperation that would force someone to make a journey into the unknown, but he heard their stories – the immigrants from Central America who, when transitioning through Mexi-



Fr. Gonzalo Meza in front of the Trevi Fountain in Rome, Italy



Fr. Gonzalo Meza with Pope John Paul II, Rome, 2004

# Parochial Vicar, Fr. Gonzalo Meza

co, are forced to ride on the roof of a cargo train known as *la bestia*, or “the beast”; the extortion and dangers they face along the way; the women who live in constant fear of being assaulted; and the final journey across the border through tunnels, sewers and deserts.

“It’s a terrible journey,” Father says. “But a mother living in El Salvador, who just wants to be able to give her children an education, or even some toys, what choices does she have? So, they go illegally, then they are deported and families are torn apart, and yet it continues. Today, there is the problem that families are sending their children on this journey in the hopes they will find relatives already living in the United States. It is a humanitarian crisis.”

It was through his work at the Embassy that Father began to see the people behind each and every story. They weren’t numbers or statistics. They weren’t names on a piece of paper. They were fathers, mothers, children, and entire families. And while the enormity of the immigration problem was daunting, and while he couldn’t help the immigrants legally or politically, Father began to think that maybe he could help them on a spiritual realm by offering them hope. This was the beginning of his discernment journey – a journey that would continue, interestingly, in France.

“I had gone to France to teach, and while I was there, I lived in a house with some priests,” Fr. Meza says. “In the morning, I attended Mass with them, in the evening I prayed with them, and through them I became involved in church ministries such as youth evangelization. I really felt then that I was being called to the priesthood, and everything was arranged for me to attend seminary there in France.”

But it wasn’t meant to be. Prior to beginning his studies, Fr. Meza flew back to Mexico for the canon-



Fr. Gonzalo Meza at the Manila Cathedral, Philippines

ization of Juan Diego Cuauhtlatoczin in 2002 and, in the end, decided not to attend seminary in France after all. He was still discerning the priesthood, but when he returned to work at the U.S. Embassy, Fr. Meza was again reminded of the plight of the immigrants. This was the heart of his discernment journey, and it would eventually lead Father to the Archdiocese of San Antonio, Texas, where he was ordained in 2009.

What many may not realize is that a large part of Father’s formation involved studying at the Pontifical North American College in Rome, Italy, where his work as a translator for various press agencies meant traveling with the Vatican

Press. Fr. Meza flew with Pope Benedict to countries including Mexico, Cuba, Spain, and the United Kingdom. In 2010, he was with Pope Benedict in Fatima during the Year of the Priesthood. And he was in St. Peter’s Square when Pope Francis – the first pope from Latin America! – was elected.

And it was in Rome that Fr. Meza met our very own Fr. Pablo Migone, which is why he is here with us today. In addition to serving as our new parochial vicar and helping out at Aquinas, Fr. Meza will continue to work with immigration issues within our diocese.

“The Church is made up of one family, and as such, she welcomes everyone,” Fr. Meza says. “There are no strangers in the eyes of the Lord, and during the Year of Mercy, it’s important to continue to reach out to others.”

From Mexico, to France, to Texas, to Rome – we are blessed to now have Fr. Meza here with us. He is very happy to be here, and says that his office door is always open – in fact, he genuinely likes to meet people. And when you do have a chance to talk with him, ask him for a pope story. He has a lot of good ones!

Bienvenidos, Fr. Meza! Welcome to St. Mary on the Hill!

## Spirit and Truth

# Young Adult Group Provides Opportunities for Friendship and Growth in Faith

For many young adults, the process of finding solid friendships and building relationships on faith can be difficult. Our society is very mobile, and our Catholic calling to love and to serve is often accompanied by a desire for community. The Spirit and Truth Young Adult Ministry provides an opportunity for those between the ages of 18 and 35 to connect with other Catholics, learn about their faith, and serve the community together.

"I moved here about seven years ago from Massachusetts," says Laura Tempia, current President of Spirit and Truth. "When I moved here, I had a hard time meeting people. I would go to different Catholic churches for Mass trying to find where I fit in. Eventually, I found Spirit and Truth at St. Mary's and I've been going ever since."

Spirit and Truth meets every Thursday night at 7:30 p.m. in the Annunciation Hall. There is dinner served each week, and the meeting always starts with prayer and an icebreaker. This is followed either by a guest speaker, a presentation from a member of the group, or by studying the Gospel for the following Sunday's liturgy. The evening ends with time for adoration and fellowship.

"Learning about Christ and His Church isn't complete when CCD



*Spirit and Truth Young Adult Ministry provides an opportunity for young adults ages 18 to 35 to experience true friendship and grow in their faith.*

ends or when you're confirmed," Laura says. "Spiritual growth lasts your whole life, and that's what Spirit and Truth provides for young adults – the challenge to grow spiritually in a comfortable, friendly environment with other young Catholics."

In addition to the Thursday evening meetings, Spirit and Truth meets for social and service events, as well. These events change from month to month, so be sure to regularly check the bulletin and look out for regular emails for more information. The group has participated in a variety of events, from volunteering at the Golden Harvest Soup Kitchen,

to participating in the living Rosary at the abortion clinic, to helping raise money to feed families in the Rwandan Congo through the Sisters of Namur.

"A lot of young adult groups struggle between having both social and spiritual events," Laura says. "Our group does a really great job of providing both."

As Laura shares, the warmth from the presence of God, especially in adoration, can really open up hearts. Spirit and Truth allows young adults to come together, open their hearts, grow in faith, and experience true friendship.

If you would like to get involved with the Spirit and Truth Young Adult Ministry, or if you would like to learn more, please contact Laura Tempia at [augustayam@gmail.com](mailto:augustayam@gmail.com).

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*continued from front cover*

not begin and end each week emailing someone a note of thanksgiving? Again, it does not have to be lengthy, but when we think about it, each of our lives is filled with people to whom we should be grateful.

Just send that someone a note thanking them for something specifically, or in general. By starting and ending each week like that, our minds are in the right place for prayer and for having the attitude that Christ asks us to have.

Finally, as we head towards Easter at the end of the month, I'd ask you to make a sincere effort to participate in the Easter Triduum. This includes Holy Thursday, Good Friday, Holy Saturday, and Easter Sunday. The liturgies on the three nights of the Triduum are our most beautiful and most important of the entire year. Our Church should be full on these nights, and this year might be easier than most

since Holy Week is separated from the Masters by a full week.

I thank you for all you do, for our parish, for the Church, for one another, and for me personally. I am blessed. Like most, I may not express it often enough. I pray for you, and I ask you to pray for me during this holy time.

God bless you,



Fr. Jerry

Holy Thursday – March 24 at 7 p.m.

Good Friday – March 25 at 7 p.m.

Holy Saturday – March 26 at 8 p.m.

## Ad Placement



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Walter and Marilyn Moore  
Donald and Dori Thorstad  
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## Baptisms

**Jan. 9**

Nathaniel Peter Cui  
*Son of Robert and Amy Cui*

**Jan. 10**

Amelia Rose Fealko  
*Daughter of Robert and Caty Fealko*

Atticus Kai Mendoza  
*Son of Rino and Ashleigh Mendoza*

**Jan. 13**

Maurice Joseph Lathrop  
*Son of Kurt and Eleuteria Lathrop*

**Jan. 17**

Anna Louise Hall  
*Daughter of Barry and Holly Hall*

**Jan. 24**

Parks Joseph Rhodes  
*Son of Scott and Ryan Rhodes*

**Jan. 31**

Durant Robert Dunstan  
*Son of Charles and Jennifer Dunstan*

Emily Marie Carnell  
*Daughter of Jacob and Victoria Carnell*

**Feb. 6**

Margaret Ellis Pociask  
*Daughter of Jason and Sarah Pociask*

**Feb. 7**

Leland Gould Johnson  
*Son of Rob and Emily Johnson*