

# Saint Mary

ON THE HILL  
CATHOLIC CHURCH



*News and Notes from Fr. Jerry*

## Living Joyfully and Thankfully

Dear Parishioners,

**M**ay is a wonderful month with all sorts of celebrations. In our parish school and our CCD program we begin the month with the May crowning of the Blessed Mother. Each year, we celebrate Mother's Day on the second Sunday of the month. And in our parish, the tradition for many years has been to celebrate our First Communion Mass the day before Mother's Day, which is May 10 this year. Then there are always so many of our young people who are preparing for their graduations from junior high, high school, or college during May or in June. They, too, will move on to a new stage in their lives. These are all occasions worthy of celebration.

As busy as this month can be, my hope is that many of you will be able to join Fr. Charlie Hughes on Wednesday, May 21st as he celebrates the 60th anniversary of his ordination to the priesthood. We will start with Mass at 5:30 p.m. and after Mass head up to our school cafeteria for a covered dish dinner. It will be a bittersweet celebration filled with joy for 60 wonderful years of priestly ministry, but also sadness as this event will also serve as a fond farewell, as Fr. Charlie leaves us



to rejoin his Glenmary Community in Cincinnati as he begins a new stage of his retirement.

May is also the month when many others all across America will also be experiencing a new stage in their lives. I'm thinking of those who came into the Church through Baptism or Reception at the Easter Vigil. Because Easter Sunday was so late this year, just over one week before the first of May, they'll spend this month as new Catholics. We are blessed by their presence in our faith community.

In some ways, the Second Readings at our Sunday celebration of Mass this May will be directed especially to them, although the rest of us can certainly benefit as well. That's because there are frequent echoes of the baptismal

### 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.

*continued on page 7*

# The True Meaning of the Word “Stewardship”

According to the late stewardship pioneer Msgr. Thomas McGread, when a pastor speaks about money during his homily, 75 percent of the congregation immediately stops listening.

Let’s face it — most of us do not like to discuss money, and many of us feel that talking about money at the pulpit is bad form.

However, did you know that tithing is mentioned in the Old Testament 39 times, and in the New Testament 11 times? Tithing is biblically based, and it simply means to give a portion of our gifts back to God.

A further distinction is that tithing does not equal stewardship. Or, more fundamentally, giving money does not equal stewardship. Stewardship, which is also a biblical principle, really has nothing to do with money. As a matter of fact, 19 of the main parables

of Christ relate directly to stewardship. And, in those parables when Christ speaks of stewardship, He never mentions raising money. Surprised?

Stewardship simply means being grateful for all of God’s blessings. Everything we have — each breath we take on earth, the tremendous talents we possess, and our ability to earn income to sustain ourselves — all stem from God. We come into the world with nothing and we leave with nothing.

Recognizing this and being grateful for our bountiful blessings is the first step of stewardship. Once these realizations fall into place, we are then eager to find a way to respond to God’s generosity and to embark upon a stewardship way of life.

And stewardship is just that, a way of life. It is not like a TV show to which you can tune in whenever the mood



strikes, and shut off when you are no longer interested. It is truly a way of living.

Yet, the mere word “stewardship” has gotten a bad rap over the years — and not just by us lay people.

In 1992, when the United States Council of Catholic Bishops were forming the Pastoral Letter on Stewardship, they originally didn’t want to title it *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*.

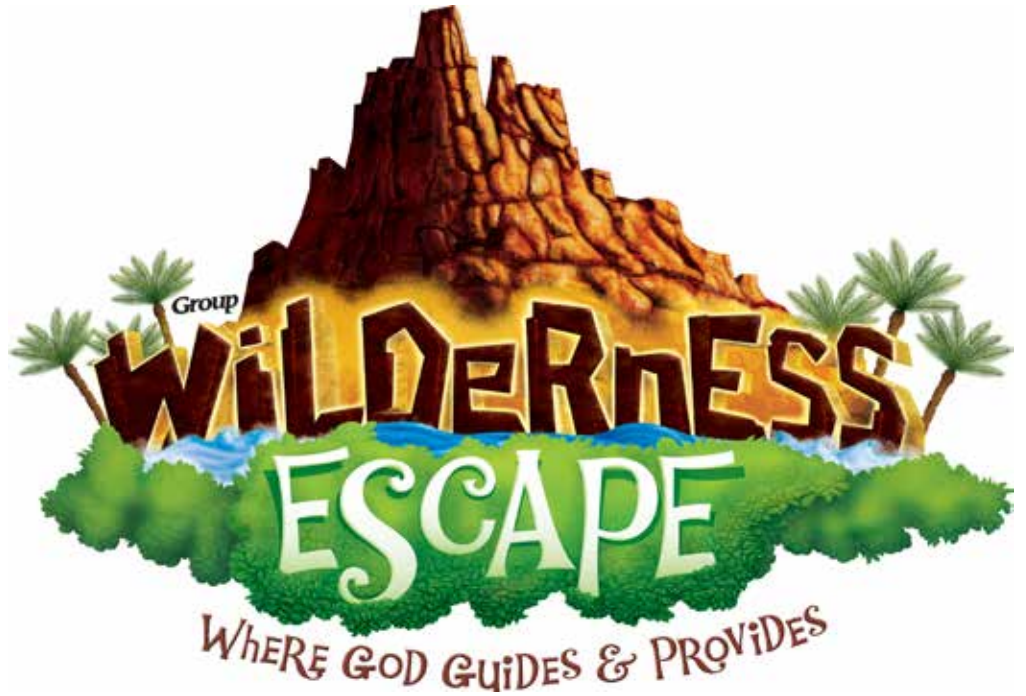
“Instead, they wanted to just call it *A Disciple’s Response*, with the reason being that they felt stewardship meant money,” said Msgr. McGread before his passing in April 2013. “I convinced them at the time that ‘stewardship’ is a biblical term and it is our job to explain what a steward is. Before the Pastoral Letter, most of us didn’t understand the spiritual dimension of stewardship.”

So, how do we go about sharing the spiritual dimensions of stewardship with fellow parishioners and lay leaders?

First of all, Msgr. McGread cited the importance of being hospitable and discovering the needs of parishioners. He felt that when parishioners were welcomed and their needs were met, they were fulfilled and felt a sense of belonging to their parish. This, in turn, creates ownership. Once parishioners felt like they were part of the parish, they wanted to respond by volunteering, and sharing their time, talent and treasure in order to help make it the best parish community possible.

And, when parishioners support their parish with all of their resources out of gratitude, the entire parish blossoms. Prayers increase, ministries grow, and yes, the offertory increases. These blessings are natural outcomes of living a stewardship way of life, and they are why it is important that we should always remember the true meaning of the word “stewardship.”

# Families to Join Vacation Bible School



St. Mary on the Hill Parish families will have a valuable opportunity to spend quality time together, as well as build a closer relationship with Jesus Christ, thanks to the Vacation Bible School adventure planned for this summer.

Traditionally at St. Mary on the Hill, Vacation Bible School has been a week-long, half-day summer program, usually in June, designed for children ages 3 through fifth grade.

"In trying to keep our focus on 'Strong Catholic Families, Strong Catholic Youth,' we are planning to have a Family Vacation Bible School this year," says Joan Purucker, co-director of CCD at St. Mary's. "Vacation Bible School will be for the whole family from age 0 to 100!"

"Strong Catholic Families, Strong Catholic Youth" is a program developed by the National Federation for Catholic Youth Ministry. Its focus is designed to motivate parents to take responsibility for the faith development of their children, and to motivate parishes and their schools to support and equip parents and families in passing the faith to their children.

Joan says the Vacation Bible School program will be a modified presentation of Group Publishing's "Wilderness Escape – Where God Guides & Provides."

The "Wilderness Escape" program allows kids and adults to travel through rotation stations and experience what happened after Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt.

Through the "Wilderness Escape" Vacation Bible School, families learn to trust God while discovering what it was like to live in the Israelite camp.

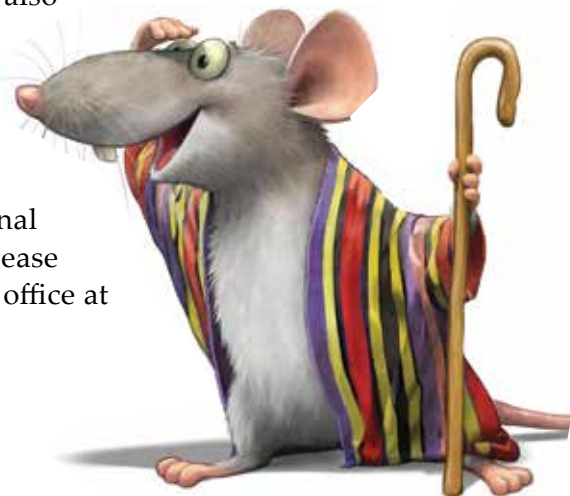
Vacation Bible School will run from Monday, June 23 to Wednesday, June 25 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

"We will start with dinner at 5:30 p.m. and the Vacation Bible School adventure will begin at 6:30 p.m.," Joan says. "Dinner will be provided each night."

Although the emphasis will be different this year, volunteers are needed, and they may sign up by filling out a volunteer form. The form will be posted in the bulletin the first weekend in May, and forms can also be picked up in the narthex or the church office, and can be downloaded from the parish website.

Families are required to preregister for Vacation Bible School. The fee is \$25 per family. Information on registration also will be posted in the church bulletin the first weekend of May.

For additional information, please call the church office at 706-733-6627.



## Special Activities Prepared for End of the School Year

As we approach the end of another school year, there are many exciting activities being planned for the students and parents at St. Mary on the Hill School. Each year, students look forward to these events, which allow them to pause and reflect on the school year and all that they have learned and experienced.

The end-of-year events kick off on Friday, May 2 with the May Crowning, which takes place during First Friday Mass. The entire school attends this Mass, which is also open to the parish. At the May Crowning, the second-grade students will place a crown atop the head of the statue of Mary.

"I think May Crowning is particularly important here at St. Mary's because Mary is the patron saint of our school," says Mary Beth Mitchell, assistant principal at St. Mary on the Hill School. "It's important that we remember in our Catholic tradition to honor the saints.



When we do that in particular for our patron saint, it becomes a very important event for our students and families."

The next event, and the one students look forward to the most each year, is the annual Field Day event, which takes place this year on Friday, May 9. Field Day lasts from the beginning of the school day through 11:45 a.m. Students are divided into teams for the varying grade levels, and spend the day playing different games and having fun.

"Field Day is basically just for fun, for the students to play and have fun together!" Ms. Mitchell says. "We think it's important for the students to have one day where they are just enjoying each other at the school, and just playing together."



Then on Saturday, May 10 at 10 a.m., the second grade school and CCD students will receive the Eucharist for the first time during their First Holy Communion. This is a very special day for the children and their families, as well as for the whole parish. All parishioners are welcome to attend First Holy Communion, which takes place at St. Mary on the Hill Church.

On Wednesday, May 14 at 1:15 p.m., there will be an Academic Awards ceremony at the school, providing the whole school with the opportunity to recognize the many academic accomplishments of the students throughout the year. All students attend this event to show support and recognition for the accomplishments of others.

The last event before the end of the year will be the Eighth-Grade Graduation on Tuesday, May 27 at 7 p.m.

"Graduation night is a time where students receive recognition for their accomplishments over their time at St. Mary's, including athletic, academic and other accomplishments," Ms. Mitchell says. "It's important for graduating students to take the time to reflect on their time at St. Mary's, what it has meant to them and what they've learned here, so that they go on carrying a piece of St. Mary's with them."

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*— Mary Beth Mitchell, assistant principal*

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# Fostering an Appreciation of the Word of God

## *Children's Liturgy of the Word*



**A**s Catholics, we have the marvelous privilege of having a living faith, which is rooted in the wisdom of the Sacred Scriptures. It's something to rejoice about, and at the Children's Liturgy of the Word, that's exactly what happens.

"At the Children's Liturgy of the Word, we break down the Gospel of the day into a kid-friendly version," says Deacon Al Sullivan, who volunteers with the ministry. "We bring it down to their level, and ask them questions about it. The responses we get are amazing! The children are very engaged. It is so nice to see them like that! We also talk to them about things like the importance of keeping God always on our minds and in our hearts."

The Children's Liturgy of the Word is offered on the first and third Sunday of each month during the 10:30 a.m. Mass during the school year. The children who would like to participate in the Children's Liturgy of the Word are called forward and blessed by the priestly celebrant before the Liturgy of the Word begins. They then process into the Parish Hall to hear an age-appropriate proclamation of the Scriptures and to participate in an interactive homily. At times, the children enjoy an activity based on the Gospel message, or sing fitting songs. The children return to Mass when the Offertory is being brought up.

Each week, the Children's Liturgy of the Word is put on by several volunteers, including various parent volunteers, and it is coordinated by Tiffiney Salmons. Children who have not yet received First Communion and are at least 3 years old are welcome to participate, and usually about 25 to 50 children attend.

Sometimes, the Children's Liturgy of the Word is just as enriching for the adult volunteers as it is for the children.

"It is exciting for us, because we get to see the Gospel through their eyes," Deacon Al says.

"It is a learning experience for us volunteers, as well. The children can ask some great questions and make some simple but very revealing statements!"

Last year, Tiffiney's daughter, Victoria, helped out with the Children's Liturgy of the Word.

"We both really enjoyed volunteering together," Tiffiney says. "Our children learn from us as we engage in activities together. Through the experience, Victoria started to develop a sense of responsibility and a good demeanor in working with children. It was an opportunity for me to pass on my faith as I volunteered with a ministry which develops my child's faith."

Above all, ministries such as this one foster a profound appreciation for the Word of God, as well as for the way of stewardship.

"Volunteers who help with the Children's Liturgy of the Word are giving back to the community of the church, and using their time and talent," Deacon Al says. "They are giving for the greater good of the parish."

Those who would like to help out with this ministry may contact Deacon Al Sullivan at 706-738-5102 or Tiffiney Salmons at 762-218-5904. Volunteers must be VIRTUS trained.

## The Rosary: *Our Lady's Lasso*

An old priest once said, "It is no coincidence that rosaries look like lassos, as Our Lady wraps them around lost souls and pulls them out of the depths of hell."

This thought is comforting but provokes inquiry — what exactly is the Rosary, how does one pray it, and why should one pray it?

Since May is the month of Mary, this is a great time to utilize reason in defense of faith and try to understand the theology behind this intense spiritual weapon.

There are two putative origins of the Rosary. For many centuries, it was believed that the Blessed Virgin appeared to St. Dominic and exhorted him to encourage the use of the Angelic Salutation — or Hail Mary — for the conversion of souls and comfort of the afflicted. Modern scholarship traces the Rosary back to ninth century Irish monasticism. Monks would pray all 150 psalms or "psalters" every day, a form of prayer too complicated for uneducated laypeople without access to copies of Scripture. So many began reciting the Lord's Prayer or the Angelic Salutation in response to each psalm, keeping count with pebbles or a knotted rope. Through many centuries, the Rosary evolved into three sets of five mysteries, each mystery consisting of 10 Angelic Salutations and one Lord's Prayer recited while meditating upon the life, death or glory of Jesus Christ.

In *The Secret of the Rosary*, St. Louis de Montfort expounds the dynamics of the Rosary. The prayer consists of both vocal or exterior prayer, and meditative or interior prayer. The first vocal component of the Rosary, the Creed, is important because faith is "the foundation of all Christian virtues, of all eternal virtues, and also of all prayers that are pleasing to Almighty God." The Lord's Prayer is the "perfect prayer" to the God of Heaven because it was authored by Christ, is free of all human limitations, and "contains all the duties we owe to God, the acts of all the virtues and the

petitions for all our spiritual and corporal needs." The Hail Mary blesses the name of Mary and her Divine Son and implores her powerful intercession as mediatrix of graces.

But the Rosary is not simply a physical incantation. Vocal prayer is accompanied by contemplation of the mysteries of Christ's life and the virtues of the Virgin. It is by

lifting the incorporeal soul in prayer that one quiets the passions, tastes the peace of Christ, marvels at His loving plans and promises, and grows in the desire to emulate Him and His sinless mother. Because the soul animates the body, a strengthened soul means nobility of action and a will that is commensurate with the will of God. As Louis de Montfort says, "The Rosary is a blessed blending of mental and vocal prayer by which we honor and learn to imitate the mysteries and the virtues of the life, death, passion and glory of Jesus and Mary." The Rosary's emphasis on both vocal and medi-



tative prayer caters to man's nature as an embodied soul — one's entire being, both physical and spiritual, cries out to God in praise, repentance, thanksgiving and supplication.

Thus, it is no surprise that the magisterium and countless saints have encouraged devotion to the Rosary. St. John Paul II said of the prayer, "The Rosary is my favorite prayer, marvelous in its simplicity and its depth." The late pontiff also added five more "luminous" mysteries to the Rosary to help the faithful meditate upon significant moments in Christ's earthly ministry.

The old priest was correct in asserting that the Blessed Virgin uses the Rosary to convert lost souls. However, the words of the Memorare must be remembered: "Remember, O most gracious Virgin Mary, that never was it known that any one who fled to thy protection, implored thy help or sought thy intercession, was left unaided."

In order for the Rosary to help us, it must be actively embraced and recited frequently and fervently.

*Join us on Mondays in the Day Chapel at 5 p.m. for the Rosary and Miraculous Medal Novena. We wish to thank Patricia Boerner and Ellen Burroughs for their many years of dedication to this ministry. Please welcome Anne Arnold, Bob Spensley and Margot Boerner who will be taking over the leadership of this ministry.*

## Living Joyfully and Thankfully *continued from front cover*

liturgy in 1 Peter, from which the readings come. Many scholars think that letter was built around a homily for Baptism that was reworked into a letter and sent out to a wider audience.

In particular, I want to invite us all, new and long-time Catholics alike, to reflect upon 1 Peter 2:9: "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own, so that you may announce the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

That's an exciting statement! We gained a whole new status when we were baptized, whether we were infants or adults, whether it was a long time ago or just this Easter. Instead of merely being one of God's creatures, we became one of God's children. Once baptized, we became citizens of a "holy nation," who are God's own people. God's grace acts in the sacrament of Baptism to make us "new creations" (2 Cor 5:17).

But the new status we receive as God's children is not for our personal benefit alone. God calls us out of the darkness of sin and error into His wonderful light of truth and holiness, and that is a marvelous thing that should

give us great joy. But God's call is issued for a purpose, St. Peter tells us, so that we may announce God's praises.

How do we do that? By using some of our time in prayer and worship, certainly. But we also announce God's praises by sharing with others what God has done for us. We do so by our actions, when we use our talents in building up God's Church and in serving the people around us. We announce God's praises when we return some of the treasure entrusted to us back to Him for His service.

May then will be a joyful month, as throughout the Easter season we not only celebrate Jesus' risen life but our own new life in Christ. Let us offer a grateful response by living as faithful stewards of everything that He has entrusted to us. Live joyfully and thankfully this May!

God bless you,



Fr. Jerry

# Ad Placement



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## End of the School Year

*continued from page 4*

There will also be a Volunteer Appreciation Reception hosted by school faculty during May to show appreciation for all the parents and volunteers who have helped to make this a successful year at St. Mary on the Hill School.

"We will have a reception where we honor folks who have volunteered at the school throughout the year and given their time and talent to our community," Ms. Mitchell says. "Parents are involved in a variety of ways, from helping as room moms and dads, helping at various events, volunteering at the Carnival, in the library, at the Book Fair, or even chaperoning field trips. We honor all of the folks who have taken time, a little or a lot, throughout the year to help us accomplish our mission."

For more information on the end-of-year events going on at St. Mary on the Hill School, please contact the school office at 706-733-6193.