

Saint Mary

ON THE HILL
CATHOLIC CHURCH



News and Notes from Fr. Jerry

The Love for God and One Another

Dear Parishioners,

If we listen closely to the Mass readings throughout this month of May, we will recognize a common theme – love. Of course, every month and every day – and every minute, for that matter – is a time to show our love for one another. St. John begins many of the passages of his letters with the word “Beloved.”

We will hear in one of the readings, “Beloved, let us love one another, because love is of God.” If we would simply follow that one commandment to “Love one another,”

we will carry out the stewardship of all of our gifts. Living as a steward is indeed living a life of love – for God, for the Church, for everyone in need, for our families, and for everyone with whom we come in contact.

Our Holy Father Pope Francis has spoken about this often during his papacy. At his very first Mass as pope, he said in his homily, “Everything has been entrusted to our protection, and all of us are responsible for it. Be protectors of God’s gifts.” There are two important parts to this statement: first, we need to

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 Bible

The Textbook of Stewardship

Have you ever wished that life came with an instruction manual? What a valuable resource that would be! Whenever you find yourself running in circles, this instruction manual would give you step-by-step instructions on how to fix the problem and reroute your course.

Well, here's some good news. For those living a Christian life, there is such a manual — the Bible.

Sometimes referred to as the “textbook of stewardship,” the Bible is a bountiful resource for the present-day Christian. Written by anointed prophets and sages, this collection of divinely inspired parables, poems and letters is full of testimonials that express the blessings that come from true discipleship, expressed through lives of stewardship.

Stewardship is not a new concept. The Bible gives proof to this claim through passages such as the 26th chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy. We read Moses' words, as he tells the Israelites to offer the choicest portions of their harvest to God: “When you have come into the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you as a heritage, and have occupied it and settled in it, you shall take some first fruits of the various products of the soil which you harvest from the land which the Lord, your God, gives you, and putting them in a basket, you shall go to the place which the Lord, your God, will choose for the dwelling place of his name... ‘Therefore, I have now brought you the first fruits of the products of the soil which you, O LORD, have given me.’ And having set them before the LORD, your God, you shall bow down in his presence” (Dt 26:1-2, 10).

St. Paul briefly touches on the essence of stewardship when he said, “In every way I have shown you that by hard work of that sort we must help the weak, and keep in mind the words of the Lord Jesus who himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:35).

Again, in St. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, we read about living a life of Christian stewardship: “Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor 9:6-7).

While this is well and good, what does it mean for the present-day Christian? Why should it matter that the Bible alludes to stewardship in various passages? It shows us that Christians and Jews have struggled with and benefitted from the concept of stewardship for thousands of years. It ties the message of stewardship to the role of a Christian disciple. It gives proof that stewardship and discipleship go hand-in-hand. It offers encouragement to us, that stewardship is in fact a foundational component of the Christian life, a way of life that one of the founding fathers of the Church — St. Paul — preached about and advocated.

The Bible is indeed the textbook of stewardship. It lays out the steps we must take to become true disciples of Christ. Reading and meditating upon God's Word is always a fruitful exercise. Those who regularly delve into Scripture often develop a deeper understanding of who God is, how and why He loves us, and how we can show Him our love in return — all most certainly important topics of discussion for any steward-in-the-making.

As you strive to become a grateful steward and live the life of Christian discipleship, develop a love for Sacred Scripture. Allow God's Word to nourish your soul regularly, and watch as stewardship changes from a foreign concept to an integral component of your daily life.

Forward in Faith Ministry Offers Social Time to Widowed

Mealtime can be a lonely time, especially when the chair across the table is empty after the loss of one's spouse.

That's why the Forward in Faith Ministry welcomes widowed women and men of our parish to join them for dinner at a local restaurant at 6 p.m. on the second Tuesday of each month.

Colleen Quinn, who coordinates the group with Gail Winkley and Jackie Kennedy, says the ministry first began as a support group that met at the senior center. Then after the group held a Christmas party with the members bringing food, it was decided that the social meal was what was needed.

"We'd rather go out to eat than have a support meeting," Colleen says. "Most didn't want to talk [about their loss]."

Currently, the group consists of about 35 members.

"It varies how many come each month," Colleen says. "Sometimes some don't come each time. I do try to encourage people who have been widowed."

Although the group does not function as a support group, the communal meals do offer support to newer widows and widowers. Colleen felt that support when she was widowed 10 years ago, and her son was living far away.

"I had a lot of friends in the group, so they were very supportive to me," she says. "I think what the group is trying to do is help support others through the grieving process. This is especially supportive for those who don't have family here. There are a lot who do have family, but this is a really congenial group. We all understand what the others have been through. The circumstances may be different, but we've all gone through the same thing."

There presently is one widower in the group, and Colleen says men are most welcome to join.

"I try to encourage them to come," she says.

By getting together to share a meal and caring talk, the group builds a relationship with Christ, and feels His presence, through their relationship with each other.

One of the members is not Catholic, but the members all talk and share their thoughts on religion and their faith, Colleen says.

Each month, Colleen places an announcement in the bulletins for the location of the meeting each



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month. She also calls upon her knowledge of the parish members to extend an invitation to those she knows have suffered a loss. Other group members will invite those they know to join them, too.

"The group understands that at first, it's hard to walk into a gathering like that," Colleen says. "You get a lonely feeling, and it's nice to get out in a group with those in the same situation."

Tuesdays were chosen for the meeting day because that day of the week usually is not a busy one for restaurants. The group doesn't meet in July or August, or during Masters Week. Gail chooses the restaurant each month, while Jackie handles the reservations.

Anyone wanting more information about Forward in Faith, or who wants to join, may call Colleen Quinn at 706-868-8649.

May, the Month of Mary

The month of May has arrived – and so has a sense of joy, as we celebrate the sunshine and blue skies that will soon give way to summer. There is also another wonderful reason to celebrate May's arrival – it is the month of Mary, and we can take the time to do a little something special for the mother of God, and our mother in Heaven. Here at St. Mary on the Hill, our parish school honors Mary through its annual May Crowning.

"It's been a part of our school all the years I've been here," says second-grade teacher Ellen Hoffman. "The eighth grade always used to host it, but a few years ago we decided to have the second grade do it since they're the First Communion class. They really take ownership of it now, and understand what's going on."

This year, the May Crowning will be celebrated with a special Mass on Friday, May 1. During the Mass, the second-graders will all wear their First Communion outfits and take on several important liturgical positions.

"They are the readers and gift bearers," Miss Hoffman says. "When the crown is being presented to the altar for blessing, the second-graders sing the song 'Hail Mary.' We always have a second-grade girl actually crown Mary, and the whole school sings the song 'Hail Holy Queen' while she is being crowned. After Mary is crowned, the whole school recites a special prayer to Mary, the Act of Consecration."

The May Crowning is notably special to our parish and school families here at St. Mary on the Hill.

"It's very meaningful to us because the Virgin Mary is our patroness," Miss Hoffman says. "It's a beautiful Mass and meaningful to all of us that we crown the mother of Jesus."

Another notable event in the month of May is, of course, First Communion for the second-graders. This year's First Communion, which includes students from both our school and Religious Education programs, will be held on Saturday, May 9. The students have been working hard to prepare for this important sacrament.

"For example, we have the children do a special project," Miss Hoffman says. "We have a parent, Mary Garner Merz, who volunteers to cut out pieces of cloth, and

each child designs and pieces a square cloth. We have a parishioner, Marilyn Moore, who sews these pieces together, and that serves as an altar cloth for the big day.

"On March 10, the school children, Religious Education children and families gathered for an adoration service and potluck dinner," she adds. "This gave them time to reflect and pray as they prepare for their First Eucharist, and the dinner was a great opportunity for fellowship."

Parishioners are invited to honor Mary and to support our second-graders during this very special month of May!



“If You Ever Have a Problem, go to Our Blessed Mother” Rosary Makers in Honor of Our Lady

What began as a son following advice from his mom turned into personal healing and eventually a ministry that reaches folks around the world. In 2004, parishioner James Tanner found himself unable to continue working due to a disability he had suffered during military service years ago. Out of work, James became depressed, then remembered some advice his mother had given him when he was a soldier.

“Mom had said whenever you feel down, pray to the Blessed Mother and she will intercede for you with her Son,” James recalls. “I took that advice and started to pray the Rosary nightly. It came to me that instead of just saying the Rosary, I should also make them.”



James Tanner

James did some research online and found a ministry called Our Lady Rosary Makers based in Louisville, Ky. The ministry sells reasonably priced rosary-making supplies and ships rosaries to various missionary groups around the world. James began making rosaries at home. Eventually, he spoke with Fr. Jerry and received approval to begin a ministry of his own here at St. Mary on the Hill. In 2005, the Rosary Makers in Honor of Our Lady Ministry was born.

The group meets on the second Tuesday of the month from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Senior Center. The mem-

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bers usually start with a prayer and then get right to work. James will instruct any newcomers in the art of rosary making. As they work, the group discusses the various places they have sent their rosaries over the years, including locations in South America, Haiti and Vietnam. They enjoy the camaraderie that comes from working together on a very meaningful project.

Because of his own military service, James has felt a particular calling to get rosaries into the hands of service men and women throughout the U.S. and overseas. He now focuses on making “military rosaries.” Made of black nylon cords – which make no noise, do not shine at night and can even be washed – they have been approved for soldiers to carry while in uniform. James has received letters from soldiers near and far expressing their thanks and sharing how much this gift has meant to them.

James continues to pray the Rosary at least once every day. Through his own devotion to the Blessed Mother and in reaching out to others, he has found healing and joy in life once again.

“I was really depressed before I started doing this, and now I am no longer depressed because I’m doing something so beneficial for others,” he says. “It’s just like my mom told me all those years ago, if you ever have a problem or feel down, go to our Blessed Mother.”

New members are most welcome. If you would like to participate but are unable to get to the meetings, James will be glad to teach you to make the rosaries and you can work on them from home. For more information, please call James Tanner at 706-863-8786.

Celebrate the Feast of the Visitation: *May 31*

At first glance, the Visitation seems a simple enough event — Mary went to Judah, where she visited her pregnant cousin, Elizabeth.

And, yet, the reality behind the events that took place on this fateful day is so profound that we celebrate the Feast of the Visitation every year on May 31.

Imagine being 12 years old again. For most of us, that brings back memories of playing in the park, riding our bikes, watching TV, playing baseball, and so forth. Now, imagine that at the young age of 12, you find out that you are expecting a child — and, even more daunting, that this child is the Lord.

As unimaginable as that situation is for all of us, it is the reality that 12-year-old Mary knew. What a weight to bear!

Yet, it is clear that God knows what He is doing, because Mary's reaction to this reality was much different than most of ours would be. "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord," she responded to the angel. "Be it done unto me according to your word" (Lk. 1:38).

Then, she set out to the town of Judah to visit her cousin, Elizabeth, whom she just learned was also expecting a child.

Instead of keeping to herself and processing the fact that she was pregnant with her Lord and Savior, Mary immediately set out to bring Christ to others. She was indeed the first steward of the Church — offering her whole life to the Lord as His "handmaid," and revealing Christ to others through her service.

As soon as Mary entered the house and greeted Elizabeth, John the Baptist leaped in Elizabeth's womb, rejoicing at the presence of the Lord within Mary. "And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit and exclaimed with a loud cry, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?'" (Lk. 1:41-43). Mary radiated with the presence of Christ. Elizabeth had not been told that Mary was pregnant with the Savior, and yet, no sooner did Mary enter her home, Elizabeth knew.

No doubt, Mary is the steward of all stewards. So selflessly had she given herself to the Lord that she became His mother, and, in that way, her very being radiates Christ. It is for that reason that we venerate the Blessed Mother. Everything about who she is as a person, so closely united is she to the Lord and His will, brings us to her Son.

This month, as we celebrate the Feast of the Visitation, may we all venerate the Blessed Mother for her selflessness, and ask her to bring us closer to her Son.



The Love for God and One Another

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recognize that all is a gift from God, everything we have and everything we are; second, we have a responsibility to use those gifts wisely in service to others.

Pope Francis has also emphasized this stewardship of service throughout his papacy. Speaking to young people in Brazil, he said, "Let us protect with love all that God has given us." Not only does he point out how we are gifted, but he recognizes that our motivation for using and sharing those gifts should be love. Recently, at an audience with young people, he was even more specific: "Have you thought of how you can put your talents at the service of others?" he asked. "Do not bury your talents! Set your stakes on great ideals, the ideals that enlarge the heart, the ideals of service that make your talents fruitful."

We all have been called to love – called by our Lord and Savior, by our saints, by our Pope, and by our spiritual leaders. Nevertheless, we also understand that loving in this way and being good stewards is never easy. Let us vow to work together to love and to carry out our lives in ways so many have challenged us to do.

God bless you,



Fr. Jerry

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