

Saint Mary

ON THE HILL
CATHOLIC CHURCH



News and Notes from Fr. Jerry

I Took Your Place

Dear Parishioners,

On Easter day, a man went to visit a church. He arrived early, parked, and headed for the entrance. Another car pulled up near him, and the driver got out and said, "I always park there! You took my place." The visitor went inside for a special Easter Sunday talk in the Day Chapel. He found an empty seat and sat down. A young lady approached him and said, "That's my seat. You took my place!" The visitor was distressed but said nothing. After the talk, the visitor went into the Church and sat down. Another parishioner walked up to him and said, "That's where I always sit!" The visitor was now very troubled by these comments, but said nothing.

Later, as the priest began the Eucharistic prayer, asking for Christ to become present, the visitor stood up and his appearance began to change. Horrible scars appeared on his hands and feet. Someone noticed and asked, "What happened to you?" The visitor replied as his hat became a crown of thorns and as a tear fell from his eyes, "I took your place."

The story of course is a fable, but true. We received an email after Easter from someone new in town. She stated

that she was looking for a church to call home, but felt so unwelcome among us that she is going to look elsewhere. Ouch! As I think about the legacy that I'll leave behind when I take on my next assignment, I would hope that one of the lessons that I taught our faith community is that we need to be hospitable – a good steward is aware of God's blessings and the importance of sharing those blessing with others.

We began this Easter Season by renewing our baptismal promises on Easter Sunday. This recommitment to our faith is essential for those who take the stewardship of their faith seriously. It focuses our attention on answering Christ's call to follow after Him, proclaiming His Gospel in word and deed, putting the Eucharist into action, building up the communion of faith, and sharing Christ's peace with a broken world.

Renewing our baptismal promises calls us back to our central identity as Catholic Christians, and strengthens us anew "as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God" (1 Cor. 4:1). The renewal of our baptismal promises at the Easter Vigil is directly related to how we live out our faith

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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"I Have Loved Every Minute of My Time Here" Farewell to Principal Joe McBride



St. Pope John Paul II had a great love and appreciation for Catholic education. Speaking to visiting Bishops from the United States in 1998, he said, "A Catholic school is a place where students live a shared experience of faith in God and where they learn the riches of Catholic culture."

Mr. Joe McBride shares those feelings wholeheartedly. Mr. McBride has served as our Principal at St. Mary for the past seven years, and will be leaving at the end of June. Prior to becoming Principal, Mr. McBride served as the Assistant Principal for six years, so he is completing 13 years at the school.

Of course, he and his wife, Angela, and their children have been part of the parish for even longer than that. They are blessed with five children, each of whom attended the school, and three of whom have graduated – Madie, 18; Meghan, 16; Mia, 15; James, 12; and Brennan, 10.

"As I look back on my time here at the school, it is difficult to imagine anything more fulfilling and rewarding than working with the students, their families, the faculty and staff here at St. Mary on the Hill Catholic School," Mr. McBride says. "I have loved every minute of my time here. Of course, we also feel blessed to be a part of this parish."

Asked to reflect on what he feels are his greatest accomplishments as the head of the school, Mr. McBride offers a thoughtful, reflective response.

"Perhaps our biggest achievement, in my opinion, is the fact that we have maintained the school as authentically Catholic," he says. "We are more than a private school – we are a Catholic school. We have remained true to the Catholic faith and our mission as Catholics to be disciples of

Christ. Note I say 'we,' because nothing we have succeeded at could happen without the support of our pastor and our parish, and especially our parents, grandparents, our faculty and staff, and in a sense, our whole community. I was given a great school, and I like to think it still is.

"From an academic perspective we have also thrived and advanced," Mr. McBride continues. "Our students finish at the top according to every measurement, and so many of them have gone on to success beyond their time here at St. Mary School, and into their adult lives. In addition, we have stayed abreast or ahead of what has happened in technology through the years. As we all know, that is almost a daily challenge because new developments and technological tools are being made available at such a rapid pace."

The good news is that although we may be losing Mr. McBride as our school principal, he and his family have no intention of moving elsewhere, and they will continue to be involved in the lives of the parish and the school.

"As the parish and the school have embraced the idea of stewardship as a way of life, it has made being in a position like this so much easier and more comfortable," Mr. McBride says. "We have always put the students first, and worked diligently to prepare them to move forward, as students certainly, but more importantly as faith-filled Catholics."

Mr. McBride's immediate plans are to stay in Augusta and work for Catholic Stewardship Consultants. We offer our gratitude for Mr. McBride's leadership and service, and we offer him all of our prayers and best wishes as he makes this next step in his life.



Longtime Parishioner Recalls Changes and Tradition on “the Hill”

What makes a church special? Is it the building itself? Is it the clergy and staff? What about the people who populate that church? Are their spirits and the community they create what truly make a church special? If you ask longtime parishioner Doug Herman, he might tell you it's a little bit of each.

“For years in our church, the walls were unfinished cinderblock of all different shapes and sizes,” Doug says. “I would sit in the pew and look at those blocks and think about all the parishioners that had put them there and been a part of that church – all of them, big and small.”

Born in 1941, Doug is the direct descendant of two of the founding families of St. Mary on the Hill. His great uncles, Joseph Leo Herman and Edward Sheehan Jr., helped open the original church in 1917. Joseph Herman's descendant, Jim Thrash, also still attends the parish in addition to Doug's siblings, William A. Herman III, James E.



In this photo from 1956, longtime parishioner Doug Herman is pictured with other members of the St. Mary on the Hill Catholic Youth Organization. Now 75, Doug recently shared many of his memories of parish life.



Beth Barksdale married her husband, Logan Abbott, at St. Mary on the Hill in 2014. Beth, granddaughter of Doug Herman, was the third generation of Hermans to marry at the church. Beth and Logan now reside in Savannah.

Herman, and Maureen Herman Smith.

“In 1944, when I was 3 years old, we moved to the Hill from downtown Augusta and my parents became parishioners,” Doug says.

Having been a parishioner continuously since then, Doug shared with us some of his favorite memories from growing up at St. Mary on the Hill including becoming an altar boy in 1950.

“We had to learn Latin in those days before Vatican II,” he recalls. “We never knew what we were saying, but it was rather beautiful.”

Later, in 1956, Doug served as president of the St. Mary's Catholic Youth Organization and was an active member of the Finance Committee for many years. He says during those decades, he was able to witness many changes, including getting to know many different pastors over the years.

“One of the most colorful was Msgr. James Grady,” Doug says. “He was a very avid golfer. Everyone would like to go to his Mass on Sundays at 8 a.m. because he always had a 9:15 a.m. tee time at the Augusta Country Club. He would say a right rapid Mass to get to the golf course.”

But perhaps his favorite memory is one that has inspired a legacy of its own within the Herman family – marrying his wife, Jeanie, at the church in 1963.

“Our daughter, Deanie Herman Barksdale, also married her husband Will at St. Mary's,” he says. “Then about three years ago, my granddaughter, Beth Barksdale Abbott, got married also at St. Mary's. I think we're unique in that.”

Jeanie and Doug are also parents to John D. Herman, Jr., and have nine grandchildren.

In his spare time, Doug likes to study the history of Augusta and says he would like to see the parish open the church cornerstone that was placed in 1919.

“It shows some of the information from the original church,” he says.



A descendant of two of the founding members of St. Mary on the Hill, Doug Herman and his wife, Jeanie, started a legacy of Herman marriages at the parish when they wed in the church in 1963. His daughter and granddaughter also married here.

The 1980s at St. *Expansion and Moving Forw*

Following the death of Fr. Murphy, Rev. P. James Costigan became our Pastor in February 1982 and began a 20-year pastorate that would mark significant change in the spiritual and ministerial life of the parish. At the same time, the physical plant was expanded, renovated and refurbished.

Fr. Costigan's first impression of the parish mirrored some of the concerns confronting the Parish Council. The 1,300-family parish had a physical plant that needed extensive repairs and updating. The parish staff worked in cramped quarters on the bottom floor of the rectory, while the priests resided on the upper floor. Father noted on his first Monday in the parish that there was a meeting going on in the kitchen and another group meeting in the dining room. This left the priests with minimal privacy, for they never knew when or where a group would be meeting in the rectory.

In March 1982, the Parish Council authorized the architectural firm of Woodhurst and O'Brien to draw up plans for the addition of a parish office building and the renovation of the parish hall. This project began the effort to bring the physical plant up to the standards required by a large parish. Over the next few years, the rectory was renovated, the office building completed, the parking lot expanded, and St. Anne's Hall was razed to make way for a new building to house the nursery



and Youth Ministry activities. St. Joseph Hall was added to the school, complete with kindergarten, science and computer labs, art room and library. The building program culminated in 1993 with the completion of the expansion and refurbishment of the church.

Fr. Costigan employed a collaborative management style in his approach to solving parish problems. The Parish Council constitution was amended to reduce the number of at-large elected members and to allow the various commissions to propose members from each commission for election to the Council. This change provided for a broad range of ideas from the ever-expanding parish. The parish was no longer

an "on-the-Hill" parish, but a community that attracted members from west Richmond County and Columbia County, also. Surveys were taken periodically to check the pulse of the parish, and a program called "Shared Praxis" was used to gather parishioner ideas about the refurbishment of the church.

Additionally, Father continually challenged the Parish Council to find ways to get more people involved in the activities of the parish.

For years, St. Mary's had a strong Religious Education program. Sr. Cheryl Donahue, O.S.F., joined the parish staff as the Director of Religious Education and Pastoral Assistant in September 1983, reflecting the parish's desire for a more vigorous approach

Mary on the Hill

ward as a Parish Community

that a full-time education director could bring to the community. Adult education, the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults and Children, and the Heart Renewed Program educated new members and strengthened the faith of longtime Catholics.

Br. Joseph Teston, F.M.S., a Savannah native and former teacher at Aquinas, was engaged by Fr. Costigan in 1984 to assist the priests in the disposition of marriage litigation cases and in counseling divorced and separated Catholics. Br. Joe later extended his pastoral duties to include work with the students at St. Mary School, planning senior citizen outings, taking Communion to the sick, visiting shut-ins, organizing the Rainbows for All God's Children Program, and being an all around "big brother" to many in the parish. He celebrated his Golden Jubilee as a Marist Brother on May 20, 1989, with Mass and a reception at St. Mary's.

Parishioners James J. O'Connell and Donald Cisick were ordained to the Permanent Diaconate by Bishop Lessard on May 25, 1985, at the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist in Savannah. They were members of the second class of deacons ordained in the diocese since the re-institution of the permanent diaconate by the Vatican in 1972. Permanent deacons perform a variety of pastoral tasks, including officiating at weddings and funerals and assisting at Mass, delivering homilies and proclaiming the Gospel.

Although various youth activities had been offered since the pastorate of Fr. Harold Barr, the Parish Council recognized that the large number of teens in the parish – just under 1,000 – needed special attention. Julian Heyman became the parish's first Director of Youth Ministry in August 1986, and devoted his time and energy to the religious, educational and social needs of young people of the parish.

When Sr. Ruth Butler, C.S.J., became Principal of St. Mary on the Hill School in September 1984, she faced the task of increasing the school's enrollment and completing a Self-Study and Assessment. In February 1986, the Education Commission recommended that the school board be disbanded and the management

of the school be transferred to the Parish Council. This arrangement provided the school with more tangible evidence of the parish's support for the school, the parish's largest single education and evangelization effort. The Parish Council thereby assumed more responsibility for the school's policies and financial stability. When Sr. Ruth left for her next assignment in June 1989, the new Principal, Sr. Kathleen Mitchell, C.S.J., and the Assistant Principal, Sr. Joan Kaucher, C.S.J., found that the enrollment was at capacity and the school once again enjoyed its outstanding reputation in the community.

Throughout the history of St. Mary on the Hill, the Parish Council of Catholic Women has been an important factor in the social life of the parish. Carroll M. Quinn, who had served on many parish and diocesan Boards, was elected President of the National Council of Catholic Women on Sept. 18, 1991. The parish took great pride in having one of its own members lead this organization of eight to 10 million Catholic women.



Parish Picnic Celebrating 100 Years

Join us on *Sunday, June 4*
at *Mistletoe State Park's Beach House Shelter*
from *11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.*

to enjoy a day filled with fun, food, and fellowship
as part of our ongoing 100-year celebration.

Mass will be held at noon followed by a picnic lunch.

The Knights of Columbus will be cooking hamburgers and hot dogs
and the Church will provide the fixins. Please bring a dessert to share.

A playground area is available as well as beach access to the lake for swimming
and boating. Please note that there will be no lifeguard on duty. Please be sure to
bring your swimsuit, beach towels and beach chairs. Other activities include vol-
leyball, corn hole, potato sack race, egg race and more. Kona Ice will be on hand
to serve up shaved ice.

Tickets to the picnic are free of charge at the Church Office and must be picked
up by May 26, 2017, so we have a head count for food.

A Big Green Egg Grill will be given to one lucky St. Mary's family!

To enter the drawing, you must bring your ticket to the picnic. The drawing will
be after Mass and **you must be present to win.**

For more information or if you'd like to volunteer, please contact Sara Bennett at
sarambennett@hotmail.com or 706-667-2377.

"On June 19, 1924, St. Mary's celebrated its fifth anniversary by going on a picnic. This was not your ordinary outing. Five hundred people boarded the Georgia and Florida Railroad train and traveled to a place called Brushy Creek. Van Pelt's Orchestra provided music. The men played baseball, men and women tried fishing and everybody had a grand time."

I Took Your Place *continued from front cover*

each and every day. Christ has risen and is present among us, calling us each day to follow after Him. He is calling us to share His love with others, especially the stranger.

Stewards strive to remain faithful to their baptismal promises each day and to resist temptations to wander away: they are faithful to daily prayer, participate more fervently in the Eucharistic celebration, try to live the Beatitudes, and make a commitment to ongoing conversion of heart (see the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, #2340).

Many who say they are Catholic desire to live their lives as if Jesus was still in the tomb. But He is not. Christ has risen and is present among us, calling us each day to follow after Him. Living our baptismal promises inspires us to be good stewards of God's plan as individuals and as a faith community in the 21st century.

St. Benedict probably had his own version of the story that I started off with. He directed his followers to receive guests and travelers as if they were Christ. Extending hospitality is especially important when it comes to welcoming visitors who may be attending Mass in our parish for the first time. How do we treat the unknown

person who walks by us in church, or who sits next to us at Mass? Do we ignore them? Talk around them? Look at them and say nothing? Do we take the initiative to greet them, smile, extend a warm handshake?

In the spirit of the Easter season and the renewal of our baptismal promises, I offer this simple challenge in the hopes it will further renew our faith community. Some of us tend to gather into little cliques and ignore those who are not members of our particular clique. It's not that we are really inhospitable – it is that we are just heedless of the need for hospitality. Make hospitality a new habit when you go to Mass. Seek out someone you've not met before. Shake their hand, introduce yourself, and take a few moments to see if they are already parishioners or new to our parish. If they are new make sure they know that we are happy to have them.

God bless you,



Fr. Jerry

Ad Placement



Saint Mary ON THE HILL

1420 Monte Sano Avenue
Augusta, GA 30904
Phone 706-733-6627
www.stmaryonthehill.org

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St. Mary on the Hill School Endowment Fund

In Memory of Katherine Cundey

Dr. Paul E. Cundey, Jr.

100-Year Anniversary Celebration Events 2017

May 21 - Aquinas High School
60th Anniversary Graduation Mass,
2:30 p.m.

June 4 - Church Picnic at Mistletoe
State Park - 11 a.m.-3 p.m., Mass at
noon

Summer Series: Talk & Dinner
Talk 6 p.m., Dinner immediately
following talk at Sheehan's Irish
Pub (Dinner is a ticket event)

June 21 - Dr. Allen Hunt talk on
"Why 1 of Every 10 Adults is an
Ex-Catholic"

July 12 - Fr. Thomas Rosica, CSB,
talk on "The Parish Community
in the Mind, Heart and Teaching
of Pope Francis"

July 26 - Sr. Laura Ann Grady, CSJ
talk on "A Seed is Planted"

Sept. 1 - All-School First Friday
Mass, 9:15 a.m., followed by 100th
Anniversary Reception Parish Hall

Sept. 17 - CCD 100-Year
Celebration, 9 a.m. in the Church,
reception to follow in the Parish
Hall

Oct. 10 - Dr. Richard Elliott,
Mormon Tabernacle Senior
Organist, Organ Recital in the
Church at 7 p.m.

Oct. 21 - Summerville Tour of
Homes featuring our Church, 12-3
p.m.

Oct. 22 - Summerville Tour of
Homes featuring our Church, 2-5
p.m.

Nov. 15 - Perpetual Adoration 20th
Anniversary Benediction, 7 p.m.,
with reception to follow in Parish
Hall

Dec. 8 - 100th Anniversary Mass
at 6 p.m. Inaugural ringing of the
100th Anniversary Carillon Bells,
followed by Gala Ball in the St.
Mary on the Hill School Cafeteria