

Saint Mary

ON THE HILL
CATHOLIC CHURCH



News and Notes from Fr. Jerry

Stewardship: A Great Blessing for Our Parish

Dear Parishioners,

Last month, I was humbled to be asked to direct a retreat for priests from the Diocese of Cleveland and Youngstown. I used the opportunity to brag on you. Over the years, the members of this faith community have taught me so very much about what it means to live with a generous heart. Your generosity is reflected in the pledges you are faithful to giving in our weekly offertory, but it goes far beyond the collection basket. Pope Francis has asked us to walk together; to care for one another. And I see so many doing that each and every day. You reach out and care for those who are sick and hurting in our parish through prayer and moral support, and your compassion goes far beyond our own faith community. Because of your generosity, we can help homeless families here in Augusta get back on their feet, and AIDS orphans in Ethiopia now have clean drinking water because of a well that you built for them.

I am grateful to all of you who have tried to live the spirituality of Stewardship in your daily lives. I find Stewardship to be such a great blessing for our parish because it is a way of life that



leads to discipleship. When we recognize that God is the origin of all life, the giver of everything that we have and are, the source of our freedom and giftedness, the healthy person responds by thanking God through prayer, by serving God and God's people through ministry, by sharing our financial resources with those in need.

I would hope that all of our parishioners would commit to Stewardship as a way of life, but I realize that to live Stewardship requires a conversion of heart. Why conversion? Because too often, our hearts lack the vision and compassion that makes us true followers of Jesus Christ. So, we must rely on God's grace to lead us to a deeper trust in His love. And yet, when the Holy

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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Pastor Letter *continued from front cover*

Spirit breaks into our lives, our hearts become prayerful, our ministry joyful and our generosity extravagant.

Stewards, according to the Bishop's pastoral letter, *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*, do four things:

- receive God's gifts gratefully
- nurture God's gifts responsibly
- share God's gifts justly and charitably
- return those gifts to God abundantly

As we move towards Thanksgiving, it is good to remember that Gratitude is the cornerstone of Stewardship. All is a gift for those who see life with the eyes of faith. God gives us our existence and talents, our time and our treasure, our family and friends. Stewards express their gratitude by a life of generosity.

At a recent meeting with the parents of those children who are preparing for their first sacraments, I shared the following prayer of gratitude. It was well received and I hope it will speak to you and lead you deeper into God's presence. Again, I am grateful for the commitment that so many of you have made to Stewardship, and I am humbled by your continued faithfulness and thoughtful generosity in support of our parish. May God reward you for what you have done, and will continue to do!

Prayer for Expressing Gratitude


Gracious God, in the busy-ness of our day, we sometimes forget to stop to thank you for all that is good in our lives.

Our blessings are many and our hearts are filled with gratefulness for the gift of living, for the ability to love and be loved, for the opportunity to see the everyday wonders of creation, for sleep and water, for a mind that thinks and a body that feels.

We thank you, too, for those things in our lives that are less than we would hope them to be: things that seem challenging, unfair, or difficult. When our hearts feel stretched and empty, and pools of tears form in our weary eyes, still we rejoice that you are as near to us as our next breath and that in the midst of turbulence, we are growing and learning.

In the silence of our souls, we thank you most of all for your unconditional and eternal love. We make this prayer through the greatest gift of all, Your Son, Our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen! Amen!

God bless you,



Fr. Jerry



St. Mary on the Hill Catholic Church

Serving the Master 2015 Annual Report

OUR FAMILY: We are a community of 2454 registered households, 1848 are active. On average 723 registered families contribute weekly to the support of the Parish. We have a total of 3299 ministry commitments (talent), 3288 prayer commitments (time) and 747 offertory commitments (treasure).

OUR INCOME: In fy2014 parish income totaled \$4,362,798 from the following sources:

Weekly Offertory - adults \$3,819,184; youth \$4,734

Stocks & Annual gifts - \$207,169; Bequests & Memorials \$54,369

Special collections - \$113,999

Program & Other Revenue - \$163,343

OUR TITHE: Our parish is dedicated to stewardship and we give generously throughout the year to national and international collections (as defined by the Diocese of Savannah) as well as other organizations in need. Our parish tithe committee reviews these requests and presents them to the Pastoral Council and Finance Committee annually. Please see the detailed tithe account report which was published in the September 26, 2015 bulletin – it can be viewed with all fy2015 financial reports on our website www.stmaryonthehill.org. Our total parish giving (excluding the BAA) was \$256,097. For calendar year 2014, 610 (29.69%) St. Mary families gave \$240,538 to the BAA surpassing our goal of \$236,692.

DIOCESAN ASSESSMENTS: The Diocese of Savannah assessment for fy2015 was \$263,376, 11.25% of our fy2013 adjusted offertory and gifts. Our parish is also assessed for the Southern Cross, \$10 for each registered parish family. The assessment for fy2015 was \$24,550 while our Southern Cross collection was \$5,929.

EDUCATION: Education is a major priority for our parish. In addition to the \$1,900,000 for our elementary school which had 430 students enrolled in grades K – 8, the church education and formation budget includes \$56,600 for pre-school/MDO, CCD, adult formation, RCIA and the parish mission. CCD educated 189 students and there were 160 kindergarten, first and second-graders from CCD and SMCS who were involved in Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Our youth and young adult program budgets were \$39,850 and their ministries continue to grow in numbers. We had 19 RCIA participants join our church during the Easter Vigil Service.

MINISTRIES and PROGRAMS: \$154,876 of the \$157,000 budgeted was spent on other ministries and programs such as senior center activities, sanctuary supplies, music, socials, weddings, consolation ministry and stewardship materials.

OVERHEAD: Personnel costs for religious, lay salaries and benefits were \$772,914. General overhead for utilities, maintenance, liability insurance and other general expenses was \$351,520. Capital improvements (maintenance, renovations and equipment) totaled \$55,855. The two major projects were installing a security system in the church, offices and at the Adoration Chapel; asbestos removal at the Annunciation House.

SACRAMENTAL ACTIVITY: As a parish family we baptized 51 children & 8 adults, had 69 students prepared for First Communion, Confirmed 62 students and 5 adults, witnessed 25 marriages, performed 4 convalidations and buried 40 of our loved ones.

OUR SCHOOL: The church support of \$1,900,000 is the main source of income for the school; other revenue is generated for the school - tuition which was \$510,305, registration of \$143,438 and \$33,000 from the endowment fund for assistance in paying for a laptop cart with 30 laptops and replacing 10 classroom ActiveBoards. Development income was \$22,524 from the annual PJC golf tournament and donations/memorials of \$27,774. The annual PJC golf tournament netted \$16,275 which was transferred to the School Endowment Fund in June. Other income includes extended day care fees \$37,500 lunch \$109,232 and \$88,376 from the PTO, student activities, supply fees, athletics and commissions.

Prepared by the Parish Staff

Sr. Janet Roddy

The White and Brick Building

If you travel south on Walton Way, go past University Hospital on the right, rumble over the railroad tracks, and then turn right onto 12th Street, you will come across a small white and brick building with a neatly manicured front lawn. Above the mirrored front doors, written in dark blue letters, are the words “Catholic Social Services” – three words that offer hope, refuge and assistance to many here in Augusta. On any given weekday morning, you can see people lined up outside waiting to be seen, and there to greet each and every one of them is Sr. Janet Roddy.

“I don’t know the name of everyone who comes here,” Sister says. “But I know a lot of them. Sometimes people only want a cup of coffee and someone to listen to them, and knowing their name makes them feel special.”

A name is a good place to start in getting to know the person beyond their circumstances. As a Missionary Franciscan Sister of the Immaculate Conception (MFIC) serving as Director of CSS, Sr. Janet not only has come to know the people she serves, but many know her, as well. Over the years, she has been

affectionately referred to in a variety of ways – including Sr. Mary, Miss Cat’lic, and the Pope’s sister. But if you were to ask her, Sister mostly identifies with being a child of God, something she learned growing up in Boston, Mass., as the second of six children.

“When I was a little girl, my mother would say my name, Janet Roddy, and then follow it with the words ‘child of God,’” Sister explains. “For a long time, I thought my name was Janet-Roddy-child-of-God. In fact, when I started school, I would write my name followed by the initials ‘COG.’”

And it is as a child of God that Sister decided, just after graduating from high school, to join the Franciscan Sisters as a way to live her desire to serve others. Admittedly, Sr. Janet says that initially, she didn’t have a particular desire to be a nun – she simply wanted to make a difference – but it became a vocation that suited her and one that has brought her much happiness. But discerning God’s will and learning to be happy does take work.

“Sometimes, you have to grow into your vocation,” Sister says. “There are so many different ways



Every morning, Sr. Janet Roddy rings a school bell to gather the staff for prayer before they officially open the doors.

to serve God, and sometimes knowing what God wants is not neat and tidy. But if you know yourself, if you recognize the gifts you can share and if you trust God, then He will lead you. I had a happy childhood, and I am happy now because I know I am where God wants me to be. I certainly don’t have the inside scoop on happiness. Sometimes, I have to make the decision to be happy because

“Sometimes, you have to grow into your vocation. There are so many different ways to serve God, and sometimes knowing what God wants is not neat and tidy. But if you know yourself, if you recognize the gifts you can share and if you trust God, then He will lead you.” – Sr. Janet Roddy, MFIC

oddy, MFIC uilding on 12th Street

there are always problems you can't solve, a headache that won't go away, or people who are aggravating, demanding and don't bring documentation. But I am thankful that I am basically a happy person."

Her happiness has always translated into the various ways God has called her to serve, including 42 years in Catholic education as a teacher and administrator, 16 of which were as Principal of Immaculate Conception here in Augusta. And the fact that Sister has always felt comfortable working in the inner city has truly been a gift that has helped her to connect with people on a personal level.

"I am from the hood," Sister says matter-of-factly. "I have always worked in the inner city – Savannah, Brooklyn, Boston, Philadelphia, Hackensack, Augusta – and some of those were in rough neighborhoods. But I am comfortable working in that environment, and this has helped me relate to the people who live there. Once, when I lived on Laney Walker Boulevard, I was in my yard gardening when a man walked by, stopped, and noticed that my clothes were different from what I normally wore. 'Ain't you Miss Cat'lic?' he asked. I told him yes, but that I was Miss Cat'lic on a Saturday."

In January 2010, Sr. Janet became the Director of Catholic Social Services, which provides financial assistance to families facing homelessness or eviction, utility assistance, prescription medications for those who cannot afford them, and help in procuring birth certificates. There is also a small food pantry that provides food for families in a crisis situation, steel toe boots for day laborers who have been employed, backpacks for the homeless, and hygiene products that include soap, toothbrushes and laundry detergent.

There are clients with all sorts of problems who walk through those front doors, but for the little while they are in there, they experience a calm and orderliness that provides a respite from their own lives. In addition to the coffee and snacks that are available to them, the staff and volunteers offer them respect, kindness and empathy. Of course, not every problem



Every afternoon, CSS staff members pack and prepare bags of food that will be given out on the following day.

is fixable, and not every person qualifies for assistance, but Sister says honesty wrapped in kindness, understanding, and love goes a long way.

Finally, Sister makes sure that she and the staff at CSS never lose sight of the fact that the work they do springs from faith in our God. In Sister's office are two items that remind her of her vocation – a painted icon of St. Francis of Assisi, and a large, brass school bell that she rings every morning to signal to her staff that it's time to gather in prayer.

"We always start the day by praying," Sister says. "We say the Morning Offering, pray for special intentions, and then I'll play the guitar – I play a flat guitar – while we will sing a song. And then we're ready to get started."

This past September, Pope Francis visited our country, and everywhere he went he spoke to large crowds inviting them to participate in Christ's ministry here on earth by welcoming, embracing, accepting, and helping those in need. His message of love message is one that is being heard around the world, and it's one that is being lived out every day in that little white and brick building on 12th Street.

The Perpetual Adoration Chapel: Our Road Map to Eternal Life

The journey toward heaven is one with many twists and turns. It is all too easy for a person to get lost or stopped along the way. We need a road map – a compass pointing us in the right direction. St. Teresa of Avila once confessed, “How often I failed in my duty to God, because I was not leaning on the strong pillar of prayer.” In terms of stewardship, prayer is essential for it is the foundation of our relationship with God. Only by spending time getting to know our Lord in a deep and intimate manner can we live out our Christian call to activism.

Eighteen years ago, our parish was blessed by the presence of the Perpetual Adoration Chapel. There, our Eucharistic Lord is made readily available, not only for parishioners but for the entire deanery of Augusta, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Each and every moment of every day, our Lord waits patiently for us to come to Him.

For Paul Zielenski, Program Coordinator of the chapel along with his wife, Mary Ellen, the Perpetual Adoration Chapel has been a vital part of his faith journey.

“Everyone’s relationship with God is a work in progress – some progress faster than others,” Paul says. “My personal relationship was put on the fast track when I started attending adoration, but I had a long way to go. Since I started attending adoration, my spiritual life has made incredible strides. As I find myself progressing on the road to godliness, I find more joy and beauty in my life and my relationships. Life has taken on so much more meaning.”

Mary Ellen and Paul agreed to take over the coordination of the Perpetual Adoration program in the fall of 2007. The following January, Paul discovered he needed to have an acute aortic dissection. Predictions for the procedure were grim – doctors said that Paul had a five percent chance of living and that if he survived, he would suffer from kidney failure and/or brain damage. Yet, through the power of prayer, Paul miraculously recovered without any of the projected side effects.

“I am here,” Paul says. “My kidneys work fine and, depending on who you ask, my mind seems to be doing fine also. I attribute this miracle to God’s intervention with the



Paul and Mary Ellen Zielenski, Adoration Chapel coordinators.

“Jesus wants you to do more than to go to Mass on Sunday. Our communal worship at Mass must go together with our personal worship of Jesus in Eucharistic adoration in order that our love may be complete.”

– St. John Paul II, *Redemptor Hominis*

surgeon. I asked the doctor to pray with me and the family before I went off to surgery. He said a wonderful prayer for us, and we were ready.”

The Adoration Chapel is a place where we can go to minimize the distractions of life, focusing our minds and hearts on Christ. In its peaceful quiet, we can hear God’s voice more clearly, allowing us to better discern how we are called to give of ourselves. Only then can we become the stewards that we were created to be.

“We won’t get to heaven with God by just hanging around and waiting for our time to come,” Paul says. “There is work to be done. We are on the road to heaven throughout our lives. The road has many forks, distractions and misdirections. We need a map to determine the correct roads to take. Adoration is – to me and all those that are currently participating in the program – a large part of that map. It is a chance to leave our distractions behind and focus ONLY on the Son of God, our Lord the Redeemer.”

Jesus is waiting for each one of us to come and visit, whether through a committed weekly hour or a spontaneous visit when we are out running errands. To become a weekly adorer or to learn more information about the Perpetual Adoration Chapel, please contact Paul and Mary Ellen Zielenski at 706-228-5115.

Thanksgiving & Advent Schedule

Thanksgiving Mass – 9:15 a.m.

Breakfast with Santa – Dec. 13

Advent Penance Service – Dec. 15
7 p.m.

Christmas Mass Schedule:
Dec. 24 – 4 p.m., 6 p.m., 9 p.m. and midnight
Dec. 25 – 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.

Solemnity of Blessed Virgin Mary, Mother of God
Dec. 31 – 6 p.m. Vigil
Jan. 1 – 9 a.m. and 11 a.m.

Ad Placement



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Colleen Quinn
Wink and Floyd O'Neal

St. Mary on the Hill School

Paul and Mary Ellen Zielinski

Men on a Mission Outreach Ministry

In Memory of Chris Wisner
Camille Avakian

Recent Baptisms

September 13

Franklin Brent Davis, III
Son of Franklin and Anna Davis

September 19

Madison Elizabeth Bigham
Daughter of Peter and Erin Bigham
Jasmine Isabella Matias
Daughter of Daniel and Rosario Matias

September 20

Ana Olivia Guiney
Daughter of Aubrey and Alicia Guiney

Share Grace!

Grace Scholars Donation Pre-Registration

Donor pre-registration for 2016 Grace Scholars is happening now! Visit www.gracescholars.org to pre-register and learn more about how you can support Catholic education!