

Saint Mary

ON THE HILL
CATHOLIC CHURCH



News and Notes from Fr. Jerry

The Year of Faith

Dear Parishioners,

Our Universal Church begins an exciting new adventure this month. Pope Benedict XVI has proclaimed a Year of Faith, which will begin Oct. 11. We will mark this important day in the life of the Church with a Deanery Vigil Celebration on Wednesday, Oct. 10. Bishop Gregory Hartmayer will be present to lead us in this celebration. We will begin at 6 p.m. with a communal dinner in the St. Mary School Cafeteria — please reserve your spot in the sign up book in the Narthex. At 7 p.m., there will be a Eucharistic Procession from the Adoration Chapel down to St. Mary on the Hill Church, where Fr. Thomas Healy will offer a reflection on the Year of Faith. Bishop Hartmayer will then conclude the evening with a few remarks and Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament. I know it will be a faith-filled beginning to the Year of Faith, and I hope you make every effort to be there for all or part of the evening.

The beginning of the Year of Faith coincides with the opening of the Synod of Bishops on the New Evangelization, and also with two significant anniversaries — the 50th anniversary of the opening of the Second Vatican Council, and the 20th anniversary of the publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. The Year

of Faith will end on the Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe, Nov. 24, 2013.

I view the Year of Faith as a time when we can get back to some of the basics of faith, and I pray that we will find new energy in and through a concentration on the gifts and charisms of our faith community — Catholic formation in and through our parish school, Eucharistic Spirituality in and through the ministry of our Perpetual Adoration Chapel, and Committed Discipleship in and through stewardship as a way of life.

We begin this month with a focus on committed discipleship through our annual Stewardship Renewal. We stress the importance of prayer, ministry involvement and offertory giving as the pillars that will lead to a committed discipleship. We ask all parishioners to return a Commitment Card each year expressing their commitments of time, talent and treasure. The connection between faith and stewardship is very deep. Without the grace and spiritual energy that results from living our faith, it is difficult to truly invest ourselves in God's work.

At the very least, all Catholics should express their faith in Christ and His Church by attending Mass on Sundays

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.

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Living Life to the Fullest

As professed disciples of Christ, we are also stewards of our personal and communal vocations. When we declare Christ as our King and Savior, we also promise to exist as His earthly body. The universal Church depends upon its individual earthly members for evangelization and support. As stewards of Catholicism, we must respond to this call with living faith and heartfelt stewardship. We must employ our lives in Christ's service, allowing Him to vocationally use us to our fullest potential. God designed us with specific talents in mind; by closely communicating with Jesus, His son, we can put our talents to proper use. As stated in John's Gospel, when we give our lives to Christ, He promises to ignite them accordingly: "I came so that they might have life and have it more abundantly" (Jn 10:10).

True life demands sacrifices, which are crucial in urging us onward and upward toward Christ. When we embark upon a lifelong path of stewardship, giving our time, talent and treasure in the service of God and His Church, we are effectively allowing Jesus to guide us along life's slippery slopes with the steady hand of a practiced master. Christ explains this concept in the ninth chapter of Luke's Gospel: "If anyone wishes to come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it" (Lk 9:23-24). Only after completely giving our lives over to Christ, will we experience the true majesty of life – the life each of us is destined to live.

As Catholics, we are urged to outwardly promote all stages of life, and to stand up in its defense. Considering the attention death has garnered within our society - whether we focus upon abortion, embryonic stem cell research, capital punishment or euthanasia – an understanding and respect for life must be reinstated into our culture and lives. But we must first harbor a true, personal love for life within our very souls, and live our own lives to the fullest, through Christ, in the service and promotion of His Church. We must become stewards of faith, in order to truly live as Christ planned. And we must give our time, talents and treasure – all gifts God has given us through life – before we can really claim to be alive.



Let us promote the sanctity of life through personal conversion. Our deaths in Christ destine us to live in His glory, the ultimate expression of life. Let us become the disciples we claim to be, by adopting the essence of stewardship and melding it into our very souls.

New Vice Principal for St. Mary School

Having gone two years without an assistant principal, St. Mary on the Hill Catholic School is proud to welcome Mary Beth Mitchell, who will be filling the position.

"I've been a member of the parish for the past year, but now to be able to become part of the community and adding the school into that equation is really what I'm most excited about," Ms. Mitchell says. "To add that facet of belonging to the St. Mary community, that's what I'm most excited about — to meet the families, to minister with the families and to have those relationships and develop them."

Ms. Mitchell came to Augusta in 2011, and had previously been a Catholic educator in the Chicago area. She attended Eastern Illinois University and Aurora University, where she earned a bachelor's degree in education and a master's in educational leadership. Ms. Mitchell has worked as the director of Religious Education for St. Mary Parish in Elgin, Ill., as well as principal for two different Catholic schools. She was also chairperson for several state accreditation teams, and assisted with the implementation of curriculum and standards for the Diocese of Rockford, Ill.

"She has a lot of the qualities we're looking for in terms of teacher development, classroom development, and working with teachers and students," says St. Mary on the Hill Principal Joe McBride. "Being a former principal herself, she has a lot of the attributes you look for. She'll hopefully be able to come in right away and make an impact not only on the school, but on the teachers and students."



Ms. Mitchell began her new vice principal position at St. Mary on the Hill on July 1, and worked throughout the summer in preparation for the upcoming school year.

"My role is to work with the staff and the faculty on some of the things that would help them to utilize the technology to the best of their ability, helping the teachers to use the curriculum to the best of their ability, and working with students and staff to make sure that we are giving them the best education possible," Ms. Mitchell says.

She hopes to use her experience in Catholic education in a special way at St. Mary on the Hill.

"Any educator can go into a school and work with teachers and students," she says. "But to do that within a stewardship model, which is unique to St. Mary, takes someone with experience in Catholic education to be able to fit all those pieces together. And that's what I hope to do."

As she begins her first school year at St. Mary on the Hill, Ms. Mitchell has something to share with our parish.

"After relocating to the Augusta area in 2011, it is with great gratitude, excitement and enthusiasm that I prayerfully begin this journey as assistant principal with the St. Mary on the Hill Community, where we are bound together by the Eucharist, directed by the Gospel teachings and the teachings of the Church, enlightened by the Holy Spirit, and committed to sharing in the ministry of Jesus Christ," she says.

"Any educator can go into a school and work with teachers and students. But to do that within a stewardship model, which is unique to St. Mary, takes someone with experience in Catholic education to be able to fit all those pieces together. And that's what I hope to do."

— Assistant Principal Mary Beth Mitchell

Join the Ranks and Honor the Dignity of Life in October

All Catholics are summoned to action. However, not all of them respond.

Pope Benedict XVI's homily during the April 2008 Papal Mass, held at St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York, directed all Catholics to respond when they are called to action:

"The Church ... is called to proclaim the gift of life, to serve life and to promote a culture of life ... this is the message of hope we are called to proclaim and embody in a world where self-centeredness, greed, violence, and cynicism so often seem to choke the fragile growth of grace in people's hearts."

October is Respect Life Month. Respect Life Sunday, as designated by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, is celebrated each year on the first Sunday of October.

And as we face the looming culture of death, Pope Benedict XVI continues to summon all Catholics to action. This follows in the footsteps of his predecessor, Pope John Paul II. An apostolic exhortation by Pope John Paul II, titled *The Church in America*, described this culture of death's effects on the "powerless" within American society:

"I am thinking here of unborn children, helpless victims of abortion; the elderly and the ill, subjected to euthanasia; the marginalized of society, and victims of the death penalty ... Faced with this distressing reality, the Church community intends to commit itself all the more to the defense of the culture of life" (*The Church in America* #63).

Respect Life Month is the perfect time to prayerfully examine our consciences in light of these critical issues, which directly violate the dignity of the human person. This includes not only the evil of abortion, but also euthanasia, stem cell research, capital punishment and contraception, all of which are vital contributors to the pervasive culture of death.

So we must individually ask ourselves: Do I, in my personal, day-to-day choices, respect life? If so, do I boldly proclaim this belief or merely stand idle? Do I exercise my right to vote and support candidates who promote a culture of life? Am I known within my home, family, and/or workplace as someone that respects life?

As with every movement of a Christian heart towards goodness, it is imperative that our efforts issue forth from a prayerful foundation.

The work of the Holy Spirit allows us to receive the zeal necessary to promote the sanctity of human life, even in the face of suffering.

This October, please pray for a revitalization of the culture of life. Every night, as a family, meditate on the prayer from John Paul II's encyclical *Evangelium Vitae*. As you pray, allow the Holy Spirit to fill you with apostolic boldness, and ask the Lord to guide your heart towards ways in which you can personally contribute to the culture of life.

The call is clear, the stakes are set, and all Catholics are summoned to action. How will you respond?



Geocaching with the Saints

One afternoon, parishioner Allison Greene was invited by a friend to go on a new type of scavenger hunt called "geocaching."

"So I took the kids and went out there, and spent the afternoon geocaching," Allison says. "I was hooked right away. It's so much fun with the kids."

But what is geocaching? It is an outdoor treasure hunting game that is played in the real world. Using GPS devices, players find their way to a certain set of coordinates, then must search for a container, or geocache, hidden nearby. The container contains a logbook of other geocache coordinates. And when this container is found, the player goes online and records that they have found the geocache.

"It's really about the fun of finding it," Allison says. "It really could be anywhere. The geocache is usually camouflaged to its environment, so you have to be kind of creative when you're looking for it."

Allison has been geocaching with her husband, Steven, and their children, Sebastian, 9, and Sophia, 7, since last fall.

"My daughter really likes being the one holding our GPS and using the compass to hone in on the coordinates, and our son is the one who always has the flashlight," Allison says. "He likes to go in and be the one to find the geocache."

Participants can also hide their own geocaches for others to find. There are a number of different types of geocaches. Traditional geocaches simply contain a logbook and coordinates for the next geocache location, while others may contain clues or puzzles that finders

have to solve in order to determine the location of the next cache.

The Greene family decided to do something unique with their geocaches — each one they hide contains information about a specific saint. This idea was inspired by Allison's son, Sebastian.

"He has always been fascinated by the saints," Allison says. "We were out geocaching one day, and we started talking about what we would do if we started hiding them. It was his idea to hide things about the saints, and I thought it was such a good idea."

Whenever they hide a geocache, the family chooses a saint and carefully selects a location that somehow relates to that saint. For instance, they once hid a geocache about St. Sebastian by the YMCA sports fields, because St. Sebastian is the patron saint of athletes.

Geocaching has certainly been a fun game to play, and is a way for the Greenes to spend more time together as a family. They also use it as a tool to grow in understanding of our faith through learning about the saints.

"It started out as something fun to do," Allison says. "It became a way to get the word out about the different saints. If you look up the information about the geocache, it will say St. Sebastian is the patron saint of athletes, but it also gives information about St. Sebastian. Not only are we learning more about the saints, we're teaching other people who are geocaching about the saints. I love that we're getting the word out there."

For more information about this fun activity, please visit www.geocaching.com.



(from left) Allison and Steven Greene and their children, Sophia and Sebastian, with a geocache



Sophia and Sebastian Greene with a found geocache



A St. Sebastian medal that the Greene family put in one of the Saint Series geocaches and hid near The Family Y



The Beauty of “Yes”

by Katie Conner

It's quiet in my house these days — eerily quiet. When summer ended, my last two babies — number seven and number eight, to be precise — headed off to kindergarten, and my eldest returned to his second year of college life. It is hard to believe that 20 years of mothering could have gone by so quickly. I remember as if it were yesterday, hearing the news that I was pregnant for the first time. I was a new bride and a new law student. I had big plans and lots of ambition. I thought I had a stomach flu that just wouldn't go away. So my husband, Steve, took me to the little clinic in his medical school. It was not a flu in my belly — it was my oldest boy, making his presence known. Still in shock, but with a sudden craving for pizza and root beer, we headed for a favorite restaurant of ours to mull over this amazing news. Sure, I hoped that babies would come, but not quite so soon — this timing was not part of the “perfect” plan I had hatched for myself. Thankfully, God's plans *are* perfect, and this sudden jolt into parenthood changed me and Steve for better and forever. By the end of that day, we were head over heels for our baby. And though we could not have imagined in how many ways, we sensed with awe that our lives would never be the same.

Of course, there were challenges in welcoming a new life at that moment in time. We were both students. We were young, still adjusting to married life, financially-challenged, and far from our families. But we had made a commitment to God to be faithful to each other, and to be open to life. And God has been so good to us as we have tried to live out that commitment over these past 20 years. The love affair with our baby that began over pizza and root beers grew, and by the time I laid eyes on him in the delivery room, he was like an old friend. All my other ambitions suddenly dimmed in comparison with the awesome task that was now right before my eyes — raising this helpless little guy into the man God intended him to be. What a joy. What a challenge. What an unspeakable privilege.

And so it was easy to say “yes” again to another such privilege, this time in girl form. And then just one more, a boy. And then another sweet girl. And yes, why not just two more boys, close in age this time so they could really look out for each other? Had we stopped there, we'd have missed out on the tiny queen who now rules the family, our littlest girl. Sprinkled throughout these births were four little ones who went straight from my womb to God's throne, there to praise Him and intercede on our behalf. And then, God laid on our hearts the desire for just one more, who would arrive in a most privileged way — by adoption from the other side of the world. What gifts, each of these precious lives. And how diminished the world would be without them.

Saying “yes” to life can be demanding. It demands all Steve and I have to give every day — and often, more than we thought we were *capable* of giving. It demands the sacrifice of sleep, of luxurious vacations, and a house that stays neat and tidy. It demands lots of cooking, shopping, organizing and nose-wiping — and, of course, lots and lots of laundry. It requires suffering over each of our children's sufferings. But saying “yes” to life gives so much more! More birthday parties, first steps, first communions, lost teeth, soccer teams to cheer. More siblings to stand by you through thick and thin. More practice at sharing, and more arms to hug you. More inside jokes, silliness and giggling. More beauty, joy and richness of life than words can explain. So much so that 20 years have truly *flown* by.

In October, our Church celebrates Respect Life Month. To all my fellow parents in the trenches raising the next generation, and to all who speak out for the most vulnerable among us, keep fighting the good fight! All human life has been created by the loving hand of our good and perfect God. It is therefore dignified, beautiful, worthy of respect and worth fighting for with all we have to give.

The Year of Faith *continued from front cover*

and spending some time each day in quiet, uninterrupted prayer. Daily Christian prayer is a fundamental tool in strengthening one's faith in Christ. By cultivating our own personal prayer lives, we not only have an opportunity to achieve spiritual growth for ourselves, but we will also serve as a faith-filled example for future generations of Catholics.

And one of the most fulfilling ways that we can express our faith is by serving others in our parish and the greater community. As we give back of the talents with which the Lord has blessed us, we bear witness to what can be tangibly achieved through a life of faith. If we allow ourselves to be influenced and inspired by the faith lives of others with whom we serve, we experience countless opportunities to grow in faith all the more.

Through stewardship, there is a very strong connection between faith and sacrifice that goes back to the very beginnings of faith in the book of Genesis. There is a connection between honoring God and giving Him our first fruits. Even today, dropping our envelope in the offertory

basket is an expression of faith. It is like saying, "Lord, I believe in you and your Church so much that I am willing to give something of great value, my money." Does your gift adequately reflect your commitment to God and to our faith community? At St. Mary on the Hill, we ask that parishioners work toward giving eight percent of income to our parish. How can you move closer to our parish goal?

In addition to the Deanery Vigil Celebration on Oct. 10, the eve of the Year of Faith, our annual Stewardship Renewal offers the possibility of a fresh beginning in the renewal of our faith. Does the total of your commitments reflect that God is a priority in your life? Resolve in this Year of Faith to truly be a committed disciple.

God bless you,



Fr. Jerry

Ad Placement



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