

Saint Mary

ON THE HILL
CATHOLIC CHURCH



News and Notes from Fr. Jerry

Moving Towards a Year of Mercy

Dear Parishioners,

Last month, I was on the Diocese of Savannah Priests' Retreat. The Retreat Director, Fr. Rich Buhler, SJ, on the first evening of the retreat asked us the same question that Jesus asked some of his first disciples, "What are you looking for?" (John 1:38). I was annoyed by the question because I had to do some work for a Jesus Caritas Retreat that I am giving this month and I felt a little guilty about doing that work while I should have been focused on my own spiritual well-being. When I did pray about the question that night before the Blessed Sacrament, I was surprised by the answer that arose within my spirit. I was looking for healing for the many, many hurts that I had experienced from the institutional Church over the years.

Part of the hurt I have felt over the years has been in regard to annulment process, which for too many Catholics has been torturous. As a spiritual leader trying to lead people deeper into the mystery of God's love, it hurts when the institutional Church is not able to find a pathway of healing and forgiveness for those who have experienced broken relationships and sincerely want to be faithful to the teachings of the Church. So, it amazed me that the buzz at the Retreat House on the second day of our retreat was that Pope Francis had streamlined the process for annulments.

In doing so, the Holy Father is trying to make the decision about annulments quicker, easier and cheaper. My hope and prayer is that our bishops and diocesan tribunals who make the judgments concerning the validity or nullity of a marriage will follow Pope Francis' lead.

I wholeheartedly believe in the teaching of the Church with regard to the indissolubility of marriage. It is a doctrine pronounced by Christ Jesus, and it cannot change. But marriage is so much more than vowing one's love to someone in Church. It takes great work and communication to grow into those vows, and it is only when a true bond of love and life exists that a marriage can rightly be called a sacrament. Many couples never make it to such a commitment. Often, I've heard the story of a broken relationship and have known that it would be a stretch to call it a sacrament. But for one reason or another – often due to a lack of witnesses for a marriage that broke up many years ago – the nullity of the marriage can't be proved to the satisfaction of a Church court. I believe that when examining a broken relationship under the annulment process, there needs to be pastoral sensitivity to the individual stories and actions that did or did not result in a true and sacred bond of marriage.

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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.

“The Joy Needed to Rediscover and Make Fruitful the Mercy of God”

The Jubilee Year of Mercy

Pope Francis has declared a Jubilee Year of Mercy, which will commence on Dec. 8, 2015 (the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception) and culminate on Nov. 20, 2016 (Christ the King-Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe).

Jubilee Years are not unique, as this will be the 29th such Jubilee Year since the first one in 1300. Our most recent Jubilee Years have been in 2000, 1983, and 1975. In the Catholic Church, the concept of the **Jubilee** is a special year of remission of sins and universal pardon. In the Book of Leviticus, a Jubilee year is mentioned to occur every 50th

year, in which slaves and prisoners would be freed, debts would be forgiven, and the mercies of God would be particularly manifest.

However, this particular Jubilee is unique in many ways. As in the past, it involves the establishment of Holy Doors. These are doors located at the four major Basilicas in Rome – St. Peter Basilica, the Basilica of St. Mary Major, the Basilica of St. John Lateran, and the Basilica of St. Paul Outside the Walls. Usually, Catholics are invited to make a pilgrimage to Rome and to enter through these doors during the Holy Year. Christ identified Himself as “the door.” In his announcement, the Holy Father pointed out that the Holy Doors “...evoke the passage from sin to grace which every Christian is called to accomplish. Jesus is the one and absolute way to salvation. To pass through a Holy Door is to confess with firm conviction that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, the Lord, the Savior who suffered, died, and rose for our salvation.”

Pope Francis encourages every Catholic to make a pilgrimage to a Holy Door. He has recognized that pilgrimages will be taken to Rome and to other chosen churches with Holy Doors

spread around the world – there are three others designated in the world, with the only one in North America in Quebec City’s Basilica of Notre-Dame de Quebec in Canada. Thus, in an unprecedented move, Pope Francis has directed that every diocese and archdiocese in the world specify a church or shrine with a Holy Door to encourage and make it easier for vast numbers of people to make pilgrimages in keeping with the Holy Year and to pass through a Holy Door. To put that in perspective, there are almost 6,000 dioceses and archdioceses in the world, and nearly 200 in the United States alone.

Therefore, every Catholic has an opportunity to fulfill this pilgrimage and to pass through a Holy Door. The churches and shrines designated as having Holy Doors will be announced soon. Of course, there is much more involved in this Holy Year of Mercy. Each Catholic needs to strive to learn about the Jubilee Year and to fulfill its stipulations. As Pope Francis said in his Bull of Indiction, “Doors speak to us of welcome, hospitality, openness. I am convinced that the whole Church will find in this Jubilee the joy needed to rediscover and make fruitful the mercy of God.”



“I have decided to call an extraordinary Jubilee that is to have the mercy of God at its center. It shall be a Holy Year of Mercy.” – His Holiness Pope Francis

“Devotion to Mary is a Central and Unique Aspect of the Catholic Church”

St. Mary’s Monday Rosary Group

We’ve answered this question for our non-Catholic friends before, perhaps many times – don’t Catholics worship Mary? Our relationship to the Mother of Christ is one distinctive feature of our faith, and it is a relationship that brings us ever closer to her Son!

“Respect and devotion to Mary is a central and unique aspect of the Catholic Church,” Margot Ann Boerner says. “She is the Mother of God and our Mother. We do not ‘worship’ Mary, but we do honor her for her role in our salvation.”

A powerful way to foster a devotion to our Mother is through the Holy Rosary, the prayer that our Catholic tradition says Mary described in a vision to St. Dominic in the 13th century.

Here at St. Mary’s, one group of parishioners has been gathering together each week for decades to say this powerful prayer as a community.

“The Rosary is a simple but effective way to improve your prayer life,” Margot says. “You can say a decade at any time, yet there is something to be said for regularly gathering with others to offer up a collective voice to Our Lady.”

Mrs. Agnes Armstrong Rhodes started the Monday Rosary Group over 30 years ago after being inspired by meeting Mother Teresa in Charleston, S.C. In the late 1980s, Mrs. Rhodes turned to Patricia Boerner,

Margot’s mother, a regular Rosary attendee, to help coordinate the group. Later, Patricia recruited Ellen Burroughs as a coordinator.

“Pat and Ellen were joyful team leaders until the spring of 2014, when they both felt it was time to retire,” Margot says. “To the relief of everyone, ‘new groupies’ Anne Arnold and Bob Spensley stepped forward. Now we three share the responsibilities from week to week.”

The group meets every Monday, except on Church holidays, at 5 p.m. in the Day Chapel. They start promptly and in approximately 30 minutes recite the Joyful Mysteries, Miraculous Medal Novena and Litany. Also, the group has always contributed 12 “beads” to the Living Rosary held in October, the month of the Holy Rosary.

“In visions and apparitions, Mary has always assured us of the power of the Rosary,” Margot says. “It pleases her when we pray her prayer earnestly and faithfully, and what pleases her pleases her Son.”

Margot, who joined the group in January 2002, finds the repetitious nature of the Rosary to be “peaceful and soothing in times of difficulty or joy.”

“Personally, I love ‘planning’ to be at the church every Monday at 5 p.m.,” Margot says. “No matter what my day has been like, I always leave refreshed and renewed, just like a visit with your mother should be.”

Come by the chapel on Monday to join the community in praying the Holy Rosary. The group includes young and old alike – there are even members from other parishes. All are welcome!

“Our Rosary Group is a wonderful, faithful, compassionate collection of folks who offer up this time for innumerable people in need of prayer and Our Blessed Mother’s intercession,” Margot says. “All the members of the group inspire me with their dedication and generous spirits!”

For more information about the Monday Rosary Group, please reach out to Margot Ann Boerner at 706-495-2927 or Anne Arnold at 706-589-2912 or anne.arnold55@gmail.com.



"It is a joy to see family pictures taken at the altar and the nativity during these festive times," says Jerrie Bentley, one of the coordinators of our parish's Altar Society.

For most people who regularly attend Mass, there is an awareness of the many pieces that come together to create a beautiful experience of prayer each Sunday. The priest, the choir, the readers, the ushers, altar servers, and the Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion – each has a unique role in aiding the parish community as they worship. But there is one group among those who serve the liturgy that is not necessarily always noticed.

Providing an Essential Service Behind the Scenes **THE ALTAR**

However, without their humble service, our experience of Mass would be very different. They are the Altar Society.

"It is a truly a spiritual experience when you are in the church by yourself, tending to the small chores required to prepare for Mass," says Jerrie Bentley, who coordinates one of the two groups within the Altar Society.

So, what exactly does this group of generous and unassuming parishioners do?

"The first group is coordinated by Martha Kearns and is responsible for laundering the purificators and the priests' hand towels," Jerrie says. "There are 28 volunteers who take turns doing this important work."

The significance of this kind of service is noted, from some of the earliest records of Church history.

"The Altar Society is devout in its duty to respect the dignity of its tasks," Jerrie says. "The use of Communion cloths dates back to the fourth century A.D. Every Christian knew that during the celebration of Holy Communion, the altar was to be covered with a white linen cloth. It has been written that the cloths represent the members of Christ – that is, the purity and devotion of God's Faithful. The cloths further signify the linens in which the Body of Christ was wrapped when He was laid to rest in the tomb."

Due to their important use within the Mass, the altar clothes require unique care.

"During Mass, the linens may absorb the stains from the Precious Blood and/or particles of the Sacred

"Everyone benefits from learning the history of the elements of the Mass and learning to appreciate all the many volunteers who are needed to make our Masses possible. And it is just plain fun to work with a group of very talented and creative people!" – Jerrie Bentley

Special Liturgical Service The Scenes FOR SOCIETY



Along with caring for the linens used during Mass, members of the Altar Society are also responsible for decorating the church for feast days, such as Christmas and Easter.

Host," Jerrie says. "With this in mind, purification of the linens is of utmost importance. Each linen is first rinsed in water that pours directly into the earth to make certain that any remnants of Precious Blood and Sacred Host do not remain. Once this is completed, the linens are ready for washing and ironing."

The whole process is emotionally calming and spiritually uplifting for the group members. In the midst of something that might appear to be a mundane task, those who serve find a special peace, a wonderful feeling that is difficult to put into words.

Jerrie coordinates the second group, who are responsible for the care of the larger linens that cover the altars, maintaining the Holy Water fonts, and decorating the church for important feast days, such as Christmas and Easter.

"St. Mary on the Hill has a wonderful tradition of exuberant decorations that give honor to our Lord Jesus Christ, both at Easter and Christmas," Jerrie says.

The Altar Society works with many generous florists and parishioners who donate their time and talents to assist in making the church a beautiful place to celebrate such significant Feast Days.

"It is a joy to see family pictures taken at the altar and the nativity during these festive times," Jerrie says.

For those who serve in various aspects of the Altar Society, not only do they hope to bless other parishioners, but they also find joy and meaning in these acts of service.

"It is a time for reflection and prayer, but it is also an opportunity to offer a word or smile of encouragement to those who enter our church also seeking a quiet time of prayer and reflection," Jerrie says of the time spent preparing the altar before Mass.

The Altar Society welcomes and invites new members to join them in this remarkable ministry. As Jerrie

notes, the ministry offers flexible schedule that can easily be incorporated into volunteers' families.

"Our children and grandchildren have been our most valuable asset!" she says, "Everyone benefits from learning the history of the elements of the Mass and learning to appreciate all the many volunteers who are needed to make our Masses possible. And it is just plain fun to work with a group of very talented and creative people!"

If you are interested in learning more about the service of the Altar Society, please contact Martha Kearns at 706-733-6627 or Jerrie Bentley at 706-736-0183 to get involved.

St. Mary's School Carnival: A Fun Opportunity to Give of Our Treasures

Grab your cowboy hats and don your western boots – we're headed for this year's *Wild, Wild West Weekend* School Carnival on Saturday, Oct. 17, where there will be plenty of fun and fellowship for attendees of all ages!

Therese and Brian Rhodes are chairing this event for the second year.

"Following our theme, this year's carnival will be filled with country and western games, booths, food, pony rides, and even a mechanical bull for those aspiring to be a cowboy!" Therese says. "We have added some new games and have kept the old favorites. The popular Country Store will offer homemade delights for purchase, and the

one and only Tara Scheyer and the Mud Puppy Band will make an appearance as well. All of this guarantees a full day's worth of western family fun!"

Having both attended St. Mary's School themselves, Therese and Brian were excited to be able to give back through their service.

"When Brian and I were first approached last year by the PTO about chairing the carnival, we definitely wanted to get involved," Therese says. "We continue to help with this event because it is a fun weekend for our parish community. The entire weekend is a wonderful way to capture faith, family and fun! Also, with this being St. Mary's only fundraiser, we recognize the importance of its success."

Admission to the School Carnival is free. Wristbands for unlimited games will be sold at the gate for \$20, and individual game tickets will be sold for 50 cents apiece. Another fun aspect of the fundraiser is the Preview Party for adults only. This portion of the event will take place on Friday, Oct. 17 from 7 to 11 p.m. in the school's gym and cafeteria. Tickets for this event are \$70 per couple and include a BBQ meal, beer, wine, and even a specialty drink.

"The Preview Party gives people a chance to view the coveted class

baskets, as well as the silent auction items," Therese says.

This year's auction includes items such as a golf cart, jewelry, artwork, a Kamado grill, and college football tickets. During the Preview Party, there will also be a raffle for tickets to the Country Music Awards in Nashville.

Besides being a fun-filled time, the School Carnival provides a unique opportunity for parishioners to give of their treasures in support of our school. In the past, funds raised through this event have helped provide for a wide variety of needs such as new computers, iPads, laptop carts, a swing set, athletic uniforms, ActiveBoards and projectors, and even teacher reimbursements for school supplies purchased.

"As a former teacher of St. Mary's, I've seen firsthand how important these funds are to the school," Therese says. "Because of the Carnival's success, the PTO is able to provide the teachers and students with some of their wants and needs, most often benefiting our students."

Mark your calendars for this important fundraiser. Not only will you have an opportunity for fun and fellowship, but you'll also help make a difference in the lives of our students through your generosity.

Those interested in volunteering or who have questions may contact Therese Rhodes at Thereserhodes@yahoo.com or the PTO presidents, Annette and Craig Kochli at akochli@netspend.com.



Moving Towards a Year of Mercy *continued from front cover*

Under the present system, that pastoral sensitivity would seem to have been lacking at times.

So, perhaps with a reform of the process, there will be more people open to having their marriages blessed by the Church. I know some parishioners whom I would judge to be in good solid second marriages and who are in Church every Sunday, but never come forward to receive Communion because their first marriage was never annulled. That is the correct practice, but I feel so helpless because I know they long to receive our Lord. I know other divorced-and-remarried Catholics who are already taking Holy Communion without the blessing of the Church, but they are at peace with their practice. Others have simply left the church, usually because they do not rightly understand our teaching on...well, almost anything.

With the recent visit of our Holy Father to our country and his announcement of an extraordinary jubilee, a Holy Year of Mercy, I am hoping that any Catholic who is hurting in any way will find peace in their relationship to the institutional Church and perhaps even a pathway through the Church to a deeper relationship to God. The Year of Mercy begins on the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Dec. 8, and it is Pope Francis' desire that it highlight the Catholic Church's "mission to be a witness of mercy." He believes that "no one can be excluded from God's mercy."

The Pastoral Council, parish staff, and I have been talking about some exciting possibilities for celebrating

God's great love and mercy for all people in the coming Year of Mercy. If you have an idea, we'd be happy to hear it. I think we can get onboard with one simple way to help more Catholics return to the practice of their faith. At the Holy Father's urging, many dioceses have already eliminated all fees for marriage annulments. I'm not sure if our diocese is able to do so, especially since we are still struggling to help the bishop meet this year's goal for the BAA – if you've not made a contribution yet to the ministries of the diocese, please do so. But as a faith community, I think it is time to pledge our support to anyone who is willing to talk to one of the parish priests or Deacon Ken about the possibility of an annulment. If there are any costs associated with an annulment, the parish will cover them.

And as a part of the institutional Church, if I have caused you any hurt or pain, I pray during the Year of Mercy, you'd give me an opportunity to make amends. I try to give my best effort to being a loving priest, but I too am a sinner and I'd humbly ask you to give me a chance to reconcile with you if there is a need to do so. Love will always be our Mission.

God bless you,



Fr. Jerry

Ad Placement

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Baptisms

Jocelyn Riley Furno
Daughter of Peterray and Megan Furno

William Salter Thompson
Son of Joel and Carson Thompson

Rory Christopher James Slocum
Son of Matthew and Alice Slocum

Juliana Ruby Shoffner
Daughter of Jonathan and Cecilia Shoffner

Charles McClendon Stewart
Son of Daniel and Catherine Stewart

Lilah Isabel Cuyugan
Daughter of Carlo-Mer and Leah Cuyugan

Layton Robert Lynn
Son of Jonathan and Julie Lynn

Boone Wayne Washington
Son of Eric and Melissa Washington

Elijah Douglas Schexnayder
Son of Matthew and Harmony Schexnayder

Tess Leann Lynde
Daughter of Brian and Amanda Lynde

Crawford Morris Goldberg
Son of Adam and Megan Goldberg

Gatlin Garrett Martin
Son of Tristan Morris and Britany Huggins

Rebecca Blue Barrett
Daughter of Lan and Crissy Barrett

Molly Catherine Eubanks
Daughter of Daniel and Lauren Eubanks

Recent Donations to St. Mary on the Hill

St. Mary on the Hill Church

*In Memory of Jerry Pardue:
Trends & Traditions Antique Mall*

St. Mary on the Hill School Endowment

*In memory of Virginia Long:
David Sandlin*