

# Saint Mary

## ON THE HILL

CATHOLIC CHURCH



*News and Notes from Fr. Jerry*

## Nurturing Our Relationship with God

Dear Parishioners,

I am excited that our Catholic High School is focusing in on what is important by starting a new campus ministry. And Aquinas could not have hired a better man to lead this ministry than our very own Youth Minister, Mr. Michael Lammers. He is a man who is on fire for the Lord. Through prayer, spiritual friendships, and most especially the Eucharist, Mr. Mike nourishes his faith every day and will be a great help to the students at Aquinas in keeping them rooted in their faith.

As all good campers know, a fire not “fed” with wood gradually dies. And as most couples know, a marriage relationship that is not nurtured eventually goes cold and breaks down. In like fashion, faith that is not nurtured weakens or fades. If we do not care for our faith, we will wake up one morning with little or no faith. This happens all the time. I see it especially with regard to the Eucharist. People at one stage in their lives may have a strong faith and love for the Eucharist. Then “stuff happens,” and they stop going to church. It could be due to a stressful event or because they become too busy with other



things that they neglect their spiritual life. As with a marriage relationship, a crisis can either lead to a stronger faith life or to a break with God and the Church. On any given weekend, some people are returning to God and Church, while others are consciously or unconsciously distancing themselves. The following are some concrete ways that can help us nurture our faith.

- Have a regular quiet time with God in prayer. We must be open and honest with Him about what is going on in our lives. Our Adoration chapel is a beautiful place to pray.
- Be around people of strong faith. Their example is contagious and

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# Family Honor

## Recognizing God's Plan for Us

### Upcoming Family Honor Sessions:

#### Real Love & Real Life

*(A four-session  
program for 7th  
and 8th grade  
students and their  
parents)*

**Sept. 13, 20, & 27  
Oct. 4**

*7:00-9:15 p.m. in  
St. Mary's School  
cafeteria*

#### Changes & Challenges

*(A two-session  
program for 5th  
and 6th grade  
students and  
their parents)*

**Jan. 24 and 31**

*7:00-9:15 p.m. in  
St. Mary's School  
cafeteria*

*For information  
on how register for  
Family Honor,  
contact Paige Parel  
at 706-733-6193 or  
pparel@knology.net.*

**A**s parents, we want the very best for our children. Physically, intellectually, morally, spiritually – we strive to give them the tools that, over time, will enable them to go out into the world confident in who they are.

With the arrival of puberty, however, things can get a little confusing. Dealing with peer pressure and biological changes becomes challenging and, just when a teen needs his or her parents the most, paradoxically, the lines of communication can break down.

This is why the Family Honor Program at St. Mary's is such a blessing. Uniquely Catholic, this virtue education program is for parents and their children, and provides a God-centered view of sexuality within the context of our relationship with God, one's self, and each other.

"Family Honor is not just about abstinence," explains Kim Welsh, who coordinates the scheduling of Family Honor. "It's learning about virtues such as courage, respect, responsibility, and purity. It's about fertility awareness, and how it is an amazing gift from God within the sacrament of marriage."

To be clear, Family Honor is not solely a sex education course. The two programs offered – *Changes and Challenges* (for fifth- and sixth-graders) and *Real Love & Real Life* (for seventh- and eighth-graders) – use the SPICE concept to address the spiritual, physical, intellectual, creative and emotional dimensions of each individual.

"Family Honor will teach your children about the goodness of life and family, and about appreciating their sexuality as a power

to be protected," explains Fr. Jerry. "It will empower you to communicate about chastity as it relates to love, dignity, and honor."

Parishioners Jim and Mary-Garner Merz, who have gone through the program with their son, Garrett, and their daughter, Caroline, are enthusiastic about the program. They say that it reinforces values they are trying to teach at home.

"It is a valuable tool for parents and children alike," Mary-Garner says. "It will not only break the ice regarding the tough subject of sexuality, but also will empower these young adults to stand firm in their choice to live a chaste life."

The key to the program's success is parental involvement. For eighth-grader Garrett Merz, having his father attend class with him was one of the best parts of Family Honor.

"It was great getting to go with my dad because I knew he was there for me," Garrett says. "We went out to eat before the program and talked. Also, after Family Honor, we sat in the driveway and talked about what we learned."

Caroline Merz, who participated in both programs, is now a teen presenter. She credits the program for teaching her self-esteem and for making her aware of God's presence in her life.

"Now that I am in high school I feel that Family Honor has given me the tools and knowledge to stand firm in my faith," she explains. "We learned how to resist peer pressure, the importance of a good relationship with God, and His plan for us."



# We Are All Qualified to be Worthy Stewards

**W**hen it comes to the demands of the Christian life – specifically the demands of parish life – how often do we say to ourselves, “If only I qualified for that role?”

When presented with a chance to sign up for a certain ministry at our parish, we may lack certain skills and feel unworthy to step forward. Or, perhaps, we simply may be unwilling to take the first step toward becoming involved in parish life.

This reaction is a natural one, the product of our fallen human nature. However, we cannot look at the Christian call from this perspective.

When God became man, He made His grace available to us so we could be like Him. Jesus commands us in Matthew’s Gospel, “Be perfect as your heavenly Father is perfect” (5:48). That is certainly a lot to ask. And while it is impossible for us to accomplish this solely by our own strength, God in fact enables us to accomplish the impossible — but only when we make the decision to accept His grace and live up to the high calling He has bestowed upon us.

The antidote to the “unworthiness” disease that threatens the best of us can be summed up in one word: “Magnanimity” — a virtue with which most of us may be unfamiliar. The word itself is virtually extinct in the English language. It comes from the Latin words, *magnus*, and *anima*, which taken together mean, “greatness of soul.”

A magnanimous person is someone who sees the demands of the Christian life as a sea of endless possibilities with God’s grace, and who determines to rise to the greatness to which God calls him, neither stopping to count the cost, nor to measure his unworthiness. Magnanimity is not arrogance, because a magnanimous person recognizes that only by God’s grace

does he accomplish anything. Nor is it imprudence, since he strives only to do what God asks of him and nothing more.

Where can we find such people? Do they even exist? Look at the lives of the saints, and you will find some of the best and most inspirational examples of magnanimous souls. Look at the lives of the saints and you will find that some of the most attractive saints were very ordinary, untalented people who became extraordinary simply because of their magnanimity.

St. Thérèse spent her short existence in total obscurity behind convent walls doing little acts with great love; Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati, who never traveled the world preaching, touched the hearts of his friends, and tirelessly served the poor in his own town. St. Gianna just tried to be a good wife, mother, and doctor. St. Peter said, “Yes,” to lead the entire Church even though he only knew how to fish. St. Joseph, a simple carpenter, said, “Yes,” to raising and caring for God Himself made man. Our Lady, nothing more than a young peasant girl, said, “Let it be done unto me,” and allowed God to become man. If you look at history from the beginning of time, you will detect a pattern: God almost always calls the most ordinary and seemingly unqualified people, to accomplish His great works.

God is calling all of us to be magnanimous with our lives. Even in the small circle of our daily dealings — at home, at work, in our parish — there are countless ways we can show we are not afraid of what He might ask of us. The journey might not always be easy, but with God’s grace, we can point our sails toward heaven with confidence, and never look back.

***“The Faith given to me in baptism suggests to me surely: by yourself you will do nothing, but if you have God as the center of all your action, then you will reach the goal!”***

***-Bl. Pier Giorgio Frassati***

# Sharing the “Good News” Through the Gabriel Guild

**G**abriel is always bringing good news in Luke’s Gospel: news of the birth of Jesus, and of John the Baptist.

St. Mary’s Gabriel Guild might not have news of that magnitude – but the ministry is still essential for spreading good news to parishioners and the community.

“The main goal is to get information out to fellow parishioners about things that are going on around the parish,” says Mike Hebert, who along with his wife, Kathy, coordinates the Gabriel Guild. “There’s just so much happening, and people can’t always find out what’s going on.”

This group of parishioners combines writing, photography, graphic arts, media relations and other communications expertise and skills to increase public awareness of the parish and its activities. Their message is directed to parishioners as well as Catholics in the diocese and citizens in the local community.

With contacts at the *Southern Cross* (the biweekly diocesan newspaper) and *The Augusta Chronicle*, the Gabriel Guild can spread the word fast about events that people in the community and diocese need to know about. So if you’re helping organize a big event – whether it’s a 10K race, Oktoberfest, or anything that invites community participation – be sure to keep the Gabriel Guild in the loop!

In order to get the word out effectively, advance notice is absolutely essential. *The Chronicle*, for example, needs two to three weeks advance notice to print information about an event.

If you are part of a ministry or committee that is seeking to get the word out about a particular event, there is an easy and effective way to do so: e-mail.

“When an event is being planned, it might be a good idea to put us on the e-mail list, so that way we can help publicize it,” Mike suggests.

The e-mail address for the Gabriel Guild is [Katfrmga85@yahoo.com](mailto:Katfrmga85@yahoo.com).

The Heberts invite any parish ministry to tell them about recent or future events so that a notice, pictures, or recap can appear in the local or diocesan newspaper. While Mike and Kathy are not publicists by profession, they do enjoy photography, and are ready to help publicize events when they can.

As a member of the Gabriel Guild, Mike gets to see the wide range of activities at St. Mary’s, which can range from reverent to rowdy.

“One of my favorites was going to the Daddy-Daughter dance around Valentine’s Day, with girls ranging from 5 years to teenagers,” he says. “They were all dressed up and dancing together, and it was so funny to see 40 or 50 kids dancing together while the dads looked at each other and said, ‘I’m losing my kid!’”

The Gabriel Guild encourages parishioners to join its ranks, especially those who have an interest in spreading the word about parish activities. If you’re the kind of person whose ear is always to the ground, whether in the church, the school, or elsewhere, then you might be a perfect fit for this group.

“Getting involved in something at church will add so much more to your religious experience,” Mike says. “You will get so much more out than you put into it.”

St. Mary’s is a busy place, with many activities taking place each week: that became apparent to Mike and Kathy immediately after they began the Gabriel Guild.

“My wife and I couldn’t believe how many different things take place at the parish,” Mike says. “At first we couldn’t get our minds around all the things happening.”

Surely the average parishioner feels the same way. But you can help them filter through what’s happening by supporting the work of the Gabriel Guild – either by sharing news with them or by joining their ranks. To learn more, contact Mike or Kathy via e-mail at [Katfrmga85@yahoo.com](mailto:Katfrmga85@yahoo.com), or by calling 706-860-8817.

*“My wife and I couldn’t believe how many different things take place at the parish. At first we couldn’t get our minds around all the things happening.”*

*- Mike Hebert, Gabriel Guild*



# The Prison Book Ministry

## *Drawing Souls to Christ*

Approximately 10 years ago, there was a young inmate at Augusta State Medical Prison who was dying from AIDS. He was not at peace with God, and he really did not seem to care if he lived or died. However, thanks to the members of St. Mary's Prison Book Ministry, he experienced a tremendous grace from God that changed him, inside and out.

"We gave him a Catholic prayer book from the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception, and he started using it every day," says parishioner Gene Griner, who coordinates the Prison Book Ministry along with Rosie Walling. "It totally transformed his life. Although he hadn't been Christian before, he accepted Christ as His Lord and Savior before he died. He would say that it was reading that prayer book that changed his life."

This is just one of many beautiful examples of an inmate whose life was profoundly touched by the mission of the Prison Book Ministry, a simple outreach ministry that Gene and Rosie began nearly 20 years ago.

Once a week, Gene (and, occasionally, Rosie) borrows books and books-on-tape from the prison library and delivers them to the inmates in the Hospital Unit who are sick and dying, unable to physically go to the library themselves. Currently, there are a few hundred people in the Hospital Unit who make use of this service.

"They are absolutely delighted when we give them books and cassettes," Gene says. "They are tickled to death and look forward to the book cart coming around every Tuesday. It makes a big difference in their lives. It gives them something to focus on other than their crime and their illness. It is a beautiful ministry, it really is! I love my ministry at the prison. I don't do it to gain any credit; I am here solely for the glory of God."

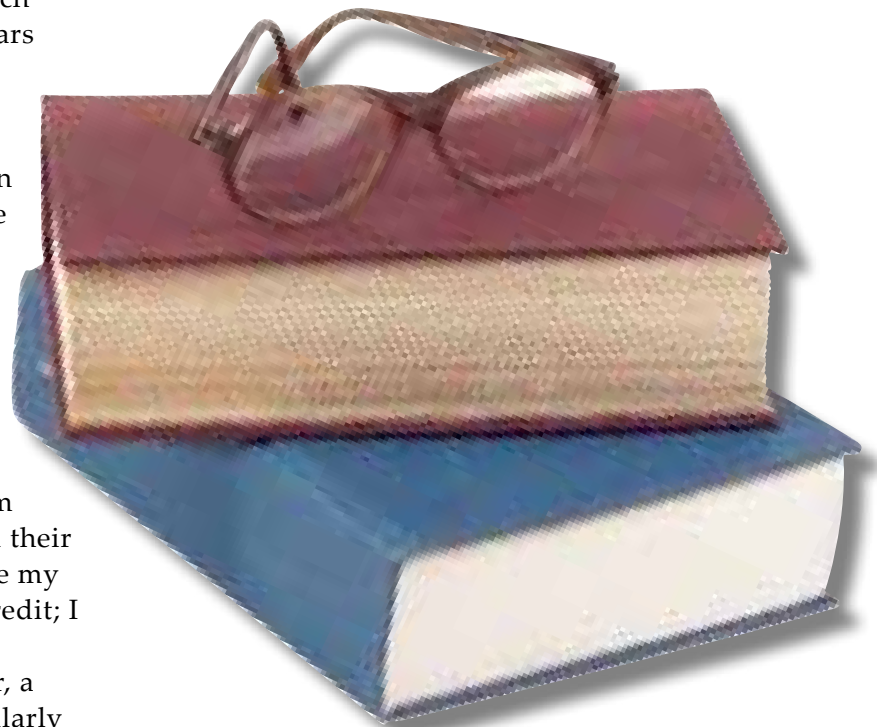
In order to keep this ministry going, however, a supply of books and books-on-tape must be regularly donated to the prison. Magazines of any kind and books containing immoral content or that have been scribbled on cannot be accepted by the prison, which

maintains maximum security. Gene keeps a special library at the prison just for prayer books and Catholic books, and therefore, donations of this type are highly encouraged. Books-on-tape come in handy for the inmates who are blind or illiterate.

How can you help? Look through your home library, and donate any gently used books that you no longer need. All donations should be placed in the wooden drop box in the narthex.

Please consider opening your heart, as well as your bookshelves, to those in need of encouragement and a good read. Your donation just might be the book that allows a troubled inmate to make peace with God, and spend eternity in Heaven.

Currently, the Prison Book Ministry is in need of Westerns. For an update on the types of books needed each week, consult the weekly parish bulletin.



# Habitat House Construction Underway

Construction has begun on the Habitat for Humanity house in Barton Village that St. Mary's is sponsoring. Ground-breaking took place the week of June 28, and the footings and foundation were set soon thereafter.

Approximately 80 parishioners have expressed interest in helping with this project through donations of time, talent and treasure. Volunteer construction crews meet each Saturday to work on the house.

The house represents an enormous gift on the part of St. Mary's Parish. Not only will parishioners donate labor to the project, but the parish has contributed \$38,000 to the project.



*Fr. Jerry reads a prayer during the groundbreaking ceremony in June.*

"This is the purest form of giving," says parishioner Rich Dimenna, one of the coordinators of the effort. "We are giving our time, talent and treasure with no personal benefit, or direct benefits to the church, expected in return."

Join the effort, and lend a hand in constructing a home for someone in need! Parishioners are invited to participate in the project by helping with the construction, or by assisting with several behind-the-scenes tasks, such as organizing workers and

establishing a phone tree. Contact Anna Avrett for more information at 706-737-2182.

## GRACE Scholars

### Georgia Residents Assisting Children's Education *Redirecting Your Tax Dollars*

In 2008, the Georgia legislature passed a bill which allows taxpayers to redirect a portion of their state tax dollars to provide scholarships to families, based on need, that have students beginning their education or are transferring from a public school to St. Mary's School.

Individuals can redirect up to \$1,000 of their state tax dollars and a married couple can re-direct up to \$2,500. Business "C" corporations can contribute up to 75 percent of their tax liability.

Last year, more than \$40,000 of state tax dollars were redirected to St. Mary School from our school and parish families. These funds allowed our school to provide scholarships to help offset tuition costs to qualifying families.

It is a very simple process! And...you are redirecting your dollars from going to state taxes to help a student attend a Catholic school!

Thank you to all of the families who participated in this process last year! And, if you are interested in learning more about how you can help families attend St. Mary School next year, please attend our informational session.

**GRACE Scholars**  
**Appreciation and Informational Reception**  
Thursday, Sept. 23, 2010, 6:30 p.m.  
St. Mary on the Hill Parish Hall

# Nurturing Our Relationship with God

*continued from front cover*

can help to nurture and bolster our own faith when it is weak and faltering.

- Read good spiritual books and become better informed about our Catholic Faith.
- Go to Mass regularly.

Since this newsletter is mailed to all the families who are registered in the parish, I hope I am reaching out to some of you who are no longer coming to church on a regular basis. Please, know that you are missed. We need you and want you to come home to your faith community.

There are some exciting things happening in our faith community this month. One of the biggest is that we are building a house. In gratitude for all that God has given us, we want to share that love in a very concrete way, so we are building a Habitat Home for Fanny Roberts and her family. We can use all the help that we can get. So, please call Anna Avrett at 706-736-4947 if you

can volunteer on a Saturday or two to help out with this good project.

Also this month, we are hosting another Living in Love Weekend. This is one of the best marriage enrichment programs to come around in a long time. Please, call Katie Connor 706-737-2182 for more information on this program, which will take place in the parish hall on Sept. 11 and 12. And, along with Wednesday night suppers, there are lots of other church programs starting up this month. So, come to Mass this Sunday and take home a bulletin that is filled with all sorts of opportunities to get reconnected to St. Mary on the Hill Catholic Church.

God bless you,



Fr. Jerry

## Ad Placement



# Saint Mary

## ON THE HILL

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### *Recent Gifts to St. Mary on the Hill*

#### St. Mary on the Hill Church

*In memory of Dr. Victor Casella*

Mr. Barry Bolgla

*In memory of Gerald Saegert*

Mr. and Mrs. Bobby Jones

Ms. Georgina Bolick

Mr. and Mrs. Peter Menk

Vola Jacobs Memorial Concert Series

Martin D. Jones and Clara J. Park

*In honor of the St. Mary Church Music Director*

Augusta Music Teachers Association

Consolation and Apron Ministries

*In memory of Philip "Bo" Weigle*

The Family of Philip "Bo" Weigle

#### St. Mary on the Hill School Endowment

*In memory of George Kemp*

Mr. and Mrs. Michael Hagler

### Baptisms



Evelyn Marlow Shaw

*Daughter of Deirdre and William*

Natalie Nicole DiPiro

*Daughter of Courtney and Chris*