

Saint Mary

ON THE HILL
CATHOLIC CHURCH



News and Notes from Fr. Jerry

Sharing a Common Vision in the New Year

Dear Parishioners,

As my New Jersey friend, Bruce, would say, these are glory days. Watching our local Catholic high school students win a State Football Championship was a glorious experience. All of us as members of this faith community, no matter where we went to school or where we currently go to school, are rejoicing in these glory days. And we offer Coach James Leonard, his staff, his managers, and especially his players, our hearty congratulations on keeping at it until you brought the State Championship home. We are so very proud of you.

But the Bruce Springsteen song can get a little cynical when it comes to holding on to the fading “glory” of our teenage years. The refrain begins, “Glory days, well they’ll pass you by.” But for me, there is something deeper and more lasting that has led to this Championship Season for the Aquinas High School football team. It goes beyond a trophy, beyond an undefeated season, beyond being the best of the best — even beyond all the sacrifice and hard work that made these young men champions. It has something to do with a coach who is only 26 years old being inspired by the memory of his grandfather, Denny Leonard, who was the last coach at Boys Catholic High and the first coach at Aquinas. It is about family. Coach

Leonard did not simply create a championship team — he was able to form a family. Throughout the season and, really, long before it even began, he was able to bond his players to each other as they moved towards a common goal.

When young men on the Aquinas team talked about their victories, they did not talk about their individual accomplishments. They talked about others. They talked about what they accomplished together. They helped each other to be their very best. I believe the real winners in life are those who together have the courage to see the impossible. They are the people who bond together as a family to overcome and persevere through all adversity. They learn from their mistakes, and no matter what, they never give up on their dreams. True champions have a common VISION.

So, here we are at the beginning of a new year that hopefully will be filled with much grace. Might it be a championship year for our faith family? My hope is that we will bond together with a common vision. My hope is that we will recognize our gifts, see the many ways we can share our gifts, and then put all of that into action, for stewardship requires action on all of our parts. I would call on each of you to return a portion of your gifts — time, talent and treasure — to God. Note

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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Stewardship: *New Year's Resolutions*

The new year has arrived, and we have all been busy making and trying to keep our list of New Year's resolutions. Many of us choose resolutions geared toward health and fitness. After all, possessing good overall health is critical to our well-being. Others may try to avoid a particularly bad habit. Maybe you need to quit smoking or stop swearing. Still many of us plan things we have always wanted to do, but never get around to doing.

As the days of January continue onward, however, many of us find the inspiration of keeping our good-intentioned resolutions to be fading fast. By the end of the month, most of us have given in to our temptations and returned to our old ways. We are only human, right? Discouraged by this yearly failure, many of us don't even bother making New Year's resolutions anymore, especially if we feel like we won't succeed.

Maybe our failures lie in both how we make our resolutions and what resolutions we actually choose. What we need to understand is the "root" of our resolution. For example, if you resolve to eat less candy to drop those recently added holiday pounds, is the "root" of your resolution a selfish one — wanting to look better since you overindulged? Or, are you genuinely seeking to stop giving in to each "sweet tooth" craving by practicing mortification — giving up of a personal pleasure to glorify God? If the "root" is a selfish one, only to benefit yourself, then it is often difficult to keep in the long run. However, if we are



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trying to glorify God, our mission is much more important and worth keeping.

Tying your New Year's resolutions into the principles of stewardship — giving of your time, talent and treasure back to God — is a great way to ensure that the "root" of your resolution is right on track! For instance, resolving to pray each evening before going to bed glorifies God, brings you peace before slumber, and allows you to grow in your relationship with Christ. The "root" is pure. Your desire to keep it will be stronger and make it easier for you to keep. In the same way, resolving to return your talents to God by helping others in need is an excellent choice in creating a selfless resolution with the right "root." Furthermore, resolving to re-evaluate your finances is also extremely important, and the beginning of a new year is a great time to do it. Are you giving back to God out of gratitude for all He has given you? Or, are you merely dropping a dollar or two in the collection basket just

to feel good about yourself?

If you are not where you would like to be as a good steward — either with sharing your time, talent or treasure — you can resolve to do better. The new year is a perfect opportunity to start anew and become the good steward that God desires each of us to become. And when we choose selfless things that build His kingdom instead of ours, we are sure to not only stay on track, but to succeed!

Lanham Family Lives Stewardship Way of Life

Don't you just love a good story? The only thing better than a good story is a good story that is true. This is the true story of an amazing young family right here at St. Mary on the Hill. Jason and Irene Lanham joined the parish in 2007 when Jason, an active duty family physician, was assigned to Eisenhower Medical Center at Ft. Gordon. He currently serves as Chief of Family Medicine at the hospital while Irene focuses her energy full-time on their growing family. Jason and Irene are the proud parents of Kathryn, 9; Evelyn, 7; Faith, 5; Francis, 2; and they hope to complete the adoption of Joseph MengQing, 20 months, from China early this month. The three girls are students at St. Mary on the Hill School.

"These kids changed our perspective on what's truly important in life," Irene says. "Kathryn and Evelyn were both born with the same rare and severe heart defect. They both had 10-hour open heart surgeries before they were six months old, something that teaches you you're not in control!"

Shortly after moving to Augusta, the couple discovered they were expecting their third daughter. By then, Irene had joined a small faith-sharing group at St. Mary's.

"As scary as it was to be expecting again, it was amazing to be surrounded by women who did not question our decision to accept another child," Irene says.

Baby Faith arrived in perfect health.

"When Faith turned 1, we still felt unsure about having more biological children," Irene says. "So we started the process to adopt a healthy child from China."

Throughout this time, the couple gradually became more involved in parish life. Jason was invited by a friend to join him at his men's fellowship group.

"From there, he introduced me to many new faces, which made me feel more a part of the parish," Jason says.

After joining St. Mary's, the concept of stewardship was also introduced to Jason and Irene.

"Before stewardship, we felt as if we lived a very full spiritual life," Jason says. "At previous parishes, we went to Mass every week, prayed before meals and bedtime, and gave something in the collection. What more could there be?"

"Back then, we thought we were too busy to get more involved and knew only a handful of fellow parishioners," Irene adds. "By being involved in the ministries at St. Mary's, we have gotten to know so many other parishioners whose grace, knowledge of the faith and generosity have both deepened our spiritual life and increased the size of our social support network."

Today, in addition to participating in the small faith-sharing groups, Irene volunteers with American Heritage Girls, Vacation Bible School and other school activities, while Jason serves as a lector, assists with Children's Liturgy, and is involved with the core group of Strong Catholic Families, Strong Catholic Youth. Jason has also begun the initial phase of the diaconate program for the diocese. The couple also serves as assigned adorers for Perpetual Adoration, sharing responsibility for their hour each week.

They are quick to explain that their involvement in the parish did not happen overnight.

"It sort of grew on us," Irene says. "We are all given 24 hours in a day — no more, no less. I don't think we are any busier now than we were 10 years ago. We just use our time differently now. It was really a very gradual change in priorities and a slow increase in involvement at the parish and school. The more involved we became, the more we got to know people. The more we got to know people, the more we wanted to invest our time in the parish community."

"Our God is a God of surprises," Jason adds. "He has truly wonderful dreams for us — beyond our wildest imagination. Sometimes, we just have to let go and let God tell us His dreams."



The Lanham family. (Back, from left) Jason, Francis, and Irene. (Front, from left) Kathryn, Faith and Evelyn.

Celebrating Catholic



Catholic schools are different by design, and St. Mary on the Hill Catholic School will celebrate the uniqueness of Catholic education during National Catholic Schools Week Jan. 26 to Feb. 1.

“Catholic Schools Week is in place to celebrate Catholic education,” says Principal Joe McBride. “We take time during the week to focus on our faith through Benediction, Adoration and an all-school Mass. We take time to honor our teachers and students during the week and we invite new families to visit the school during an open house.”

Catholic Schools Week usually has a different theme each year, but the National Catholic Educational Association, or NCEA, has set one theme for this year and the next two years after that. This theme, “Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service,” encompasses several concepts that are the heart of a Catholic education.

“Our faith is what makes the week important,” Mr. McBride says. “We showcase what makes us unique from other private schools.”

Each school celebrates this week in its own unique way. Here at St. Mary on the Hill, the celebration will include a number of fun activities and events. Each classroom will also have guests visiting and speaking to students throughout the week.

The activities begin on Monday with Benediction, Adoration, and the Jr. Beta Club induction ceremony. On Tuesday, the school celebrates Student Appreciation Day. On Wednesday, there is an Open House for prospective students and their families. Thursday is a Teacher Appreciation Day. The week closes with an all-school Mass on Friday.

“The parish school is showcased throughout the week at St. Mary on the Hill Catholic School and Parish out in front of the great community. We will invite the media to come to events and see the week in action.”

– SMS Principal



Schools Week 2014

"I believe it is important because we celebrate what makes us different from public schools; our Catholic Faith," Mr. McBride says. "Our faith is what guides everything we do, from curriculum to sports. All schools strive to be good at education, but we go one step further by focusing on our faith each and every day."

Many of the events and activities of the week are also opportunities for parents and other parishioners to participate in the celebration of Catholic Schools Week. After all, our parish community is part of what we are celebrating.

"Our PTO is very involved in the week and we are blessed by the level of involvement that our parents have in their school," Mr. McBride says. "We could never do what we do without them."

Catholic Schools Week is an opportunity to set aside time each year to celebrate and show our appreciation for the gift of Catholic education in our community. And it truly is a gift, made possible by God's grace and the support of the families, parish and community that St. Mary on the Hill Catholic School serves.

"The parish school is showcased throughout the week," Mr. McBride says.

"It is an opportunity to get St. Mary on the Hill Catholic School and Parish out in front of the greater Augusta community in a very positive way. We invite the media to come to events and see the wonderful things taking place in our parish school."

For more information about Catholic Schools Week or to get involved, please call the St. Mary on the Hill Catholic School office at 706-733-6193.

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al Joe McBride



The Patron of Catholic Schools in America

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

As the first American-born canonized saint, Elizabeth Ann Seton's entrance into history was guided by Divine Providence. Born on Aug. 28, 1774, immediately following the Boston Tea Party, Elizabeth's childhood witnessed pivotal events in the formation of our country — the Continental Congress, the Declaration of Independence, and the American Revolution. At the time of the foundation of the new Republic, in a society predominately hostile toward Catholicism, a flower blossomed that would forever change the shape of education in the United States.

Elizabeth Seton was born into a wealthy Protestant family in New York City. Her life, although materially blessed, was not without suffering. Elizabeth's biological mother died when she was only 3, and her younger sister, Catherine Josephine, died at the age of 2. A spark of faith, however, was visible even in her early childhood. When questioned about her sadness concerning her sister's death, Elizabeth simply responded, "Kitty is gone up to heaven. I wish I could go there too."

Elizabeth grew into a beautiful woman, courted lavishly by handsome young men from prominent New York families. At the age of 19, she met a charming New York financier, William Seton, and the couple was wed in 1794. They remained in high society until her

father-in-law's passing, which left them to care for William's seven younger siblings, along with three children of their own. Consequently, the Seton finances crashed.

The couple traveled to Italy, and it was here that William's health failed him, and he died in December 1803. Providentially, Elizabeth was left in the company of a strong Catholic family where she witnessed the practice of the faith. In a letter to her sister, Elizabeth wrote, "My sister dear, how happy would we be, if we believed what these dear souls believe, that they possess God in the Sacrament, and that He remains in their churches..."

After an eight-month stay, Elizabeth returned to America, and she began to investigate Catholicism more deeply. She was besought by Protestant friends who hoped to dissuade her. At this time, Elizabeth prayed repeatedly, "If I am right, Thy grace impart, still in the right to stay. If I am wrong, oh teach my heart to find the better way."

In 1805, after much interior struggle, Elizabeth became Catholic. Abandoned entirely by her family and friends, she resolved her financial difficulties through teaching.

In 1807, Elizabeth was invited to establish a Catholic school for girls in Baltimore. The task was daunting, and Elizabeth labored intensely, explaining that "from half past five in the morning until



nine at night, every moment is full — no space even to be troubled." After winters spent in continual hardship and sacrifice, the school flourished and, within years, Mother Seton planted the seed from which sprang the parochial school system — along with hospitals and orphanages.

Before her death in January of 1821, she was the active mother of five — although two of her daughters died young — and the spiritual Mother of a full-fledged religious congregation known as the Sisters of Charity of the Americas. She was canonized in 1975, and her feast day is celebrated on Jan. 4.

Thanks to St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, the Catholic parochial school system remains vibrant and active. And as we celebrate Catholic Schools Week, we are thankful for the sacrifice of this loving wife, devoted mother, foundress, and All-American saint.

Sharing a Common Vision in the New Year *continued from front cover*

that I said “return,” not “give.” Everything that we have and everything that we are is through the grace of God.

We are fond of using the term “New Year’s resolutions.” I would challenge you to make your primary resolution an effort to live out stewardship through love. Love really is good stewardship. Let us each resolve in this official first month of the year to share who and what we are through acts of love, which may mean returning our gifts to God in a wide variety of ways. Let us spread God’s love to all we encounter and to all we know so that the light of that love shines into every dark corner of our world.

A traditional Irish piece of wisdom that applies to the New Year is “Always remember to forget the troubles that pass away. But never forget to remember the blessings that come each day.” My prayer is that your new year be filled with blessings and that you live in gratitude for them.

God bless you,



Fr. Jerry

GRACE Scholars — Please Act Now!

You can plan to redirect your 2014 Georgia state taxes through the GRACE Scholars Program. Georgia state taxpayers can take a credit against their Georgia income taxes and “redirect” their tax payment for tuition assistance for students entering St. Mary School for kindergarten or from the public school system. It is a win-win situation, but we need you to act quickly for next year because the state cap will be met quickly in 2014! There are two positive changes for S corporations, LLCs, and partnerships. First, you can claim a credit of up to \$10,000 of your tax liability! The second change is that GRACE will take all paperwork now, if you are an individual or a business, and then apply for your tax credit for you on Jan. 2, 2014.

Please call Mary Davis at the church office for more information, 706-733-6627.

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Peyton Anibelle Schuyler
daughter of Philip and Aliana Schuyler

Caleb Cassedy Keck
son of Jeffrey and Joanne Keck

Patrick O'Hara Kelly
son of Pat and Becky Kelly

Margorene Melody Strickland
daughter of Timothy and Heather Strickland

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Noelle Genevieve Cayia
daughter of Thomas and Sallie Cayia

Robert Francis Sarama
son of Robert and Alessandra Sarama

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son of Joel and Carson Thompson

Lucas Xavier Quaynor
son of Samuel and Laura Quaynor

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son of Justin and Kelly Henderson