

May, 2010

On Eagle's Wings

A Soul Worth Saving

I want to begin with a story. This story was told to me by an old Jesuit priest. He said that he was on retreat one time and decided that he wanted to enjoy some poetry. He found that poetry helped him discover sides of himself that he did not know he had. So, while on retreat, he sat in a garden reading some poetry aloud so that he could hear the beauty of the words. Just then, another Jesuit priest, one who was well known as very strict, stern and very, very "holy" came into the garden and heard him reading from the book.

The "holy Jesuit" cleared his throat in a rather loud way. "It seems obvious to me," he said, "that you are enjoying that book." Then, in a very damning voice said, "Father, you must know that the kind of book you are reading cannot save your soul!" Then he stood with his hands on his hips and glared down at the offending priest.

After a long pause, the poor "unholy Jesuit" who simply loved poetry, smiled uneasily and then said with a kind of gleam in his eye, "Father, I am well aware that this book of very beautiful poems will not save my soul. You are right on that score. But, I do want you to know that even though those beautiful poems may not save my soul, they certainly will make my soul worth saving!"

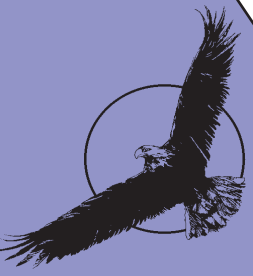
I've been thinking about that story lately because I have been meditating on the famous prayer of Mary which we call the Magnificat. That wonderful prayer begins with the words, "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord!" Mary was so full of God that her very soul just gushed with His loving presence. She is one of those kind of people who allow us to feel so close to God.

Do you know any people in your life who, like Mary, have such a gentleness and loving kindness about them that you cannot help but feel it is God who is walking right there with you? I know many people just like that and I'll bet you do too.

During this month of May, which the Church sets aside as a time to consider the gift we have all received in the Mother of God, I want to encourage you to do something a little different this year. I would like to ask you to keep a little "Mary Journal". Take time each day to consider just who Mary is to you and how she is or can be active in your life.

(...continued on page 3)

Mary, Mother of God





From the Business Manager

At the end of March, we made a payment on the debt in the amount of \$28,000. Our current balance is \$486,000. Proceeds from the Debt Reduction envelopes were over \$13,056. After expenses, the 50/50 Split the Pot was \$12,996. The balance of the funds received, came from stock \$500, paper recycling \$77, individual donations and memorials \$1225 and around \$146 from miscellaneous items.

It's not too late to return your Stewardship forms! We are grateful for your commitment to Time, Talent and Treasure. If you have any questions about your participation in our Stewardship Drive, please call the office.

As a parish, our Catholic Ministries Appeal goal for 2010 is \$46,483. To date, we have raised \$13,833. We sincerely thank those parishioners who have already given. God calls us to share what we have to help others. If you have not yet made a pledge, you can find envelopes in the Gathering Space or the church office. You can also give online by using the link from our website or at www.catholicappeal.info.

Please help us keep our database current and correct. If you have dropped your land line, moved to a new home, or changed your email, we would like to hear from you. Email Karen Hake at khake@stjohnwc.org or call the parish office to update your information.



It's budget time again. We will be working on the financial goals for the next fiscal year. As you know, last year there were salary freezes and many cutbacks to department budgets. We have put off some necessary expenses for maintenance and office equipment. This year, due to the many local church burglaries, we are looking to purchase surveillance cameras for church and keyless entry for the church and the rest of the buildings. Anything that you can do to help us achieve our financial goals would be most appreciated.

Have a blessed May!

Kathy Mack

What is Happening During May?

8/9 Pastoral Council Elections, Mother's Day
15/16 Ascension of the Lord
22/23 Pentecost



A Soul Worth Saving

continued from cover story...

Then, during the month of May, commit yourself to pray for about 15 minutes each night before you go to bed. I would ask you to set up a little shrine to Mary somewhere in your home. You might want to place a statue or image of Mary in a special place of honor and perhaps place some candles near it. You may also wish to put some fresh flowers there along with a little Holy Water. Each night before you go to bed, go to your little shrine, light the candles, bless yourself with the Holy Water and then just say out loud any favorite Marian prayer. After that, allow yourself some quiet time to listen for God's voice. Ask God to show you where he has been active in your life throughout the day. Finally, ask yourself, "what has happened today that would cause me to express the same words that Mary spoke – 'My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord?'" In other words, is there something from your day that makes you grateful to God for his closeness to you?

I kept a "Mary Journal" last year during May and I found it very rewarding. That is why I recommend it to you. I found May last year to be a remarkably peaceful and prayerful time and I think my journal keeping and those 15 minutes in my Marian shrine had lots to do with that. To paraphrase a not so holy Jesuit priest from the story above, "my journal may not have had the power to save my soul, but it did and does, I think, have the power to make my soul worth saving!"

Go ahead and try it. Have a great, peaceful and prayerful May!

fr Mark

The Magnificat

Revised Standard Version - Catholic Edition

My soul magnifies the Lord,

And my spirit rejoices in God my Savior.

For He has regarded the low estate of His handmaiden,

For behold, henceforth all generations shall call me blessed.

For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name.

And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with His arm:

He has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts.

He has put down the mighty from their thrones,

and exalted those of low degree.

He has filled the hungry with good things;

and the rich He has sent empty away.

He has helped His servant Israel, in remembrance of His mercy;

As He spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to His posterity forever.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end.

Amen.

Saint Gabriel Consolidated School Update

Registration for the 2010-2011 school year is strong and positive. We do have a few spots open in some grades. If your family is interested in discussing the St. Gabriel Consolidated School experience, please call our office at 771-5220. One of our staff members will answer all of your questions.

Joe Epplen

Principal

771-5220

www.stgabeschool.org





Catholic Social Teaching On United States Immigration

There is still a chance that comprehensive immigration reform will be considered by Congress this year. This is a complex issue which has sparked much debate not just in Congress, but among all Americans.

As Catholics, our faith teaches us that “every man and woman may be regarded as brothers and sisters, Children of the same Father.” Pope Benedict XVI

The issue touches on several of the key themes of Catholic Social Teaching:

- life and dignity of the human person
- call to family, community, and participation
- rights and responsibilities
- options for the poor and vulnerable

It is important that we understand these themes and more importantly that we understand our obligation to address them in our words and in our actions. There has been information in the Justice and Peace column of the Bulletin addressing each of these themes and how they relate to the need for positive immigration reform.

More information regarding Catholic Social Teaching can be found on the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops [USCCB] website: <http://www.justiceforimmigrants.org/>



Fabulous Flags

Have you noticed the flags along the sidewalk leading to the church? They were made by the young people in our PSR sessions. Each flag depicts a topic covered during this past year. They include: Creation, Moses and the Ten Commandments, the Great Commandment, Helping Hands, We Follow Jesus, the Bread of Life, the Last Supper, First Communion, the Prodigal Son, the Calming of the Sea, the Seven Sacraments, the Church—the people of God, the Trinity, the Communion of Saints, the Bible, Guardian Angels, the Beatitudes. What a great job each group did! Be sure to take a minute or two to check them out.

Father Don's Corner

When I was in the 8th grade, I was “volunteered” to work with a second grade class that was putting on a Christmas play. I soon found myself as the light man, working a lone spotlight that once lit an aluminum Christmas tree. When the performance was over, I was told to go to Sister Michael Frances’ room because she had something for me.

The gift she gave me was a rosary that had been blessed by then-Pope John the XXIII. She told me that every time I prayed the rosary, I should mention her in my intentions. It was a unique rosary with seven decades instead of five. It was a Franciscan rosary with which you pray the same seven mysteries every time.

The first time I began to pray the rosary was when my father found out he had skin cancer. So naturally, my first intention was for my dad and then, of course, Sister Michael Frances. I started out strong praying the rosary, but somewhere in college I lost interest in it. About six years ago, I found that rosary from Sister Michael Frances in one of my desk drawers. I was once again drawn to praying the rosary and have not stopped since. What a great sense of peace it gives me to pray it first thing every morning.

During the month of May, we pay homage to Mary, our Mother. I can’t think of a better way to honor her than to pray those decades of Hail Marys with our rosary. Taking time to reflect on the many mysteries of the rosary reminds us of what Mary sacrificed and gave to us by her simple obedience to the Lord. May Mary send blessings upon you in this month and throughout your lives.



Mary: What is Her Rightful Place?

Mary is the “Mother of the Church” for good reasons. She had a profound faith and trust in God: at the Annunciation she says: “Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word” (Lk. 1:38), Mary prods Jesus to begin his Messianic ministry at the feast of Cana (Jn. 2:1-12). She stands at the foot of the cross to the bitter end. (Jn. 19:25). Mary is present with the coming of the Holy Spirit at the feast of Pentecost (Acts 1:14).

However, over time, devotion to Mary became akin to worship, and in our scholarship and popular piety she began to upstage Jesus himself. Two good illustrations of this fact can be found in quotes from two of our saints. St. Bernardino of Siena (d. 1444) said “O the unthinkable power of the Virgin Mother...God could only generate God, but the Virgin made Him (Jesus) finite, mortal, and poor”. St. Louis-Marie Grignion de Montfort (d. 1716) wrote “The greatness of her power, which she exercises over God himself, is incomprehensible”. This confusion was partly due to a misunderstanding of the Marian title “Mother of God”. This name was originally intended to underscore Jesus’ divinity, but gradually the meaning was misconstrued by some to be almost deifying Mary herself.

The main cause for this excess was due to our reaction against the heresy of Arianism. In the fourth century, Arius taught that Jesus was only a man and nothing else. Rightfully, our church leaders reacted against this false teaching by dwelling on Jesus’ divinity. Over the centuries, this emphasis became so great that Jesus’ humanity became obscured or lost entirely. The end result is that people could no longer relate to Jesus. He was no longer one of us, and many became afraid of Jesus. Mary filled the void. She, unlike Jesus, was viewed as approachable, and so became the focus of our prayer and theology.

Vatican II set out to correct this problem. For example, some advocated that within the writings of the Council, Mary should be given a treatise of her own. They decided instead to write about Mary, but within the broader context of its document on the Church (*Lumen Gentium*). Another example of moderation was their interpretation of the titles our Sacred Tradition has assigned to Mary. They were unwilling to abandon the titles entirely, such as “Mediatrix”. However, they qualified by stating Mary’s titles are “so understood that it neither takes away anything from, nor adds anything to the efficacy of Christ as the sole Mediator” (*Lumen Gentium* 62).

In the spirit of Vatican II, Mary’s place in the life of the Church can be summarized with these statements. We do not worship Mary; rather we give her special and unique veneration for her important role as the Mother of Jesus. We do not pray “to” Mary as though she is a “mini-God”, rather, we ask her to pray for us and with us. Our statues of Mary are not idols to be worshipped, rather their purpose is to honor her memory, and as an aide in contemplation. Ultimately, Mary is the supreme model of faith. Her example illustrates for all believers that it is possible to be a faithful disciple of Jesus both in good times and in bad.

Jerry Barney





Happy Retirement, Kathy Guenther!



Kathy Guenther, our Pastoral Associate for Children's Faith Formation is retiring at the end of May. Kathy has been a tremendous asset to St. John for the past 14 years. She has worked as a Catholic Educator for 25 years and, though we will miss her greatly, we want to thank her for her dedication and hard work and wish her a wonderful retirement! She will be deeply missed by the staff and all of the parish families whose lives were enriched by her presence!

Kathy, here is our retirement blessing for you: Thank you for your insight, your guidance, your companionship, your integrity, and for all the sacrifices you made. May God bless the path you take. May God bless your future labors with success. May your newly found freedom bring you great pleasure and deep satisfaction. May God bless your body with health and your soul with joy. May your work here continue to flourish in your absence. May you continue to spread your kindness and wisdom upon us for many years to come. May God watch over you and shield you from harm. May all your prayers be answered. Amen.

Youth and Young Adult Ministry

Confirmation

May 15, 2010 - 5PM Mass

Confirmation preparation is nearly complete for our young people. The candidates will have their last session, along with a pizza party on May 2. They have met with their sponsors, chosen their Confirmation names, and have performed their parish and community service, all in preparation for this important sacrament. The celebration of Confirmation takes place on Saturday, May 15, at the 5pm Mass with Fr. Mark presiding. Please pray for our Confirmandi as they take their final steps toward Confirmation in the Catholic faith.

Prayer for Mothers

Loving God,
as a mother gives life and nourishment to her children,
so you watch over your Church.
Bless these women,
that they may be strengthened as Christian mothers.
Let the example of their faith and love shine forth.
Grant that we, their sons and daughters,
may honor them always
with a spirit of profound respect.
Grant this through Christ our Lord.
Amen.



Camp Hope Mountain

June 23-26, 2010

Campton, KY

This year our adults and teens will once again be heading to Campton, KY, to provide a day camp for underprivileged children, ages 8 – 12 years. For most of the young campers, this is their summer "vacation" and our teens really help to make it special. We focus on helping them to see the good in their lives, and to hear a positive message about the beautiful Appalachian area in which they live.

Our teens serve as mentors to these children, some of whom come back year after year, forming special bonds with one another. Adults work in the background with planning, activities, and food, as well as interacting with the children. The teens also help the adults with their support work. This really is one of those "unforgettable" experiences!

Any teens who would like to join us for the trip can contact Debbie Kreiner at dkreiner@stjohnwc.org. Adults can contact Jerry Barney at 777-6433 or jbarney@stjohnwc.org.

CRHP - SAVE THE DATE!!

Our next Christ Renews His Parish weekend for Women is September 18-19, 2010. For more information, contact Bonnie Garay at 777-5701 or garay_family@yahoo.com or check the parish website.



Why is May the Month of Mary?

May is the month when Catholics traditionally focus on Mary, the Mother of Jesus. The practice dates back at least 700 years and is still observed around the world today. May is seen as the beginning of new life and the start of summer, which makes this a logical time for the celebrations of Mary, who brought life into the world.

This month of devotions in the church calendar is characterized by special hymns and the use of flowers, which bring nature into the church. There are several Marian feast days in May, including Our Lady of Fatima, Our Lady of the Most Blessed Sacrament and Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary. The celebration of May as a holy month for Mary has been ratified by several popes through the ages. Pope Benedict XV ordered a prayer for peace in 1915 during World War I and Pope Pius XII called for May devotions in 1939, at the start of World War II.

Perhaps the most well-known of the May Marian devotions is the crowning of a statue of Mary with flowers. This usually occurred on May 1st and was called "May Day". It was particularly popular in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, with a procession of school-age boys and girls dressed in their finery, following the statue in a procession. This practice is echoed on a smaller scale throughout the Catholic world with families decorating a statue or picture of the Virgin Mary in their own homes during the month of May.



Mary is honored as the mother of Jesus and as a woman free from sin. Devotions to Mary are an integral part of Catholic life. For more information about Mary, check the following websites: www.catholic.org, ewtn.com, catholiccincinnati.org.

Basic Beliefs

Tuesdays, May 4 and May 11

6:30-9:15pm

St. Max Church - Conference Room

This two-evening course is sponsored by REAP (a regional organization of parish catechetical leaders). Basic Beliefs assist participants in becoming "acquainted with the central creedal statements of the Catholic Church." This introductory course is required for catechist certification in the Archdiocese of Cincinnati. Participants will have the opportunity to share how they would explain a core teaching to students, faith sharing group, neighbor or acquaintance. There is a minimal charge that catechists can bill to their parish upon request. RSVP by calling Colleen Gerke, D.R.E. at 777-4322 ext. 106.

Father Daniel Malingumu Update

For a Lenten project, the PSR classes donated money to help Father Daniel (from the diocese of Tabora in Tanzania) purchase his books for next semester. Father Daniel is in the US for two years, working on his Master degree in Community Counseling from Xavier University. The PSR kids said prayers for Father Daniel, they wrote cards and letters for him and the 8th graders put together an Easter basket for him with goodies and gift cards. The total collected for Father Daniel's books was \$480. Father Daniel was very appreciative of all the gifts, and especially the prayers.

Please remember to keep Father Daniel in your prayers. If you would like to visit, call or email Father Daniel, or wish to make a donation for him, please contact Joan Seibenick for his information at jseibenick@stjohnwc.org or 777-6433. Thank you to our PSR students!

Our Prayers & Sympathy Go Out To ...

February

Mary Ann Weiler on the death of her father

March

Mary Ann Brausch on the death of her mother

Kathy Schackmann on the death of her mother

Sharon McClung on the death of her mother

Frank Krieger on the death of his son

Denny Hackett on the death of his mother

April

The family of Ronald Craig

Barbara Schwind on the death of her husband, Robert

Sally Demmler on the death of her mother

Mark McCormick on the death of his mother

Father Don West on the death of his mother, Joy



St. John the Evangelist Catholic Church

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