

# Messenger

St. Mary of the Assumption  
Roman Catholic Church

Fall 2019  
Volume 10 No.3

## Canonization, Celebration and Caring for Creation

Three great Catholic saints are highlighted in this issue of *Messenger*. One of them is brand new: Cardinal John Henry Newman will be canonized on October 13 ... not to be confused with St. John Neumann, who was canonized in 1977. The latter St. John may be more familiar to you: He had a parish in Western New York and was instrumental in building our first St. Mary's Church as a visiting priest from 1837 to 1840. He also established the first St. Mary's School.

The feast day of St. Francis of Assisi falls on First Friday, October 4. Known for his love of creation, the earth and its creatures, St. Francis is beloved to many - and his namesake, Pope Francis, is the driving force behind caring for all creation. In 2015, Pope Francis published an encyclical on this topic: *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home*. St. Mary's is exploring the possibility of starting a Care for Creation Ministry. Volunteers are needed. If you are interested, please con-

tact Communications Coordinator Diane Zwirecki at (716) 683-6445, ext. 24, or [diane@stmarysonthehill.org](mailto:diane@stmarysonthehill.org).



Also in this issue: Fall Fest on the Hill is right around the corner! (See page 5.) Thanks for tuning in - and please also stay engaged with parish communications via our website and social media. Have a happy and safe autumn!

### Saints in the Making

At St. Mary's 2019 Vacation Bible School in July, participants planted seedlings as part of the week's *Caring for All of God's Creation* theme.



Twenty children participated, along with 20 youth volunteers, to make VBS a huge success again this year. Among the week's activities, the children designed tee shirts, sang songs, and celebrated a family picnic and closing Mass together. And, as noted, "we all became better caretakers of creation in the time we spent together!"



**John Neumann:** the saint you probably know, who helped build our first Church



**John Henry Newman:** the soon-to-be saint you may not know ...



**Francis of Assisi:** known for his love of creation.

St. Francis' Feast Day will be celebrated on Friday, October 4 with a Care for Creation Mass at 8:30 a.m. and St. Mary's Pet Blessing on Saturday, October 5. Read more about him on page 3.

Both John Neuman and John Henry Newman were:

- Cardinals in the Catholic Church
- Passionate about fostering Catholic education
- Good and respected teachers and preachers in their times.

But each differed in their talents and interests. See pages 2 and 3 to read more, including Fr. Paul's pastor's message.

## The Mission of My Life

God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me, which He has not committed to another. I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for naught. I shall do good; I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, but keep His commandments. Therefore, I will trust Him; whatever I am, I can never be thrown away. If I am in sickness, my sorrow may serve Him. He does nothing in vain. He knows what He is all about. He may take away my friends. He may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me. Still, He knows what He is all about.

- St. John Henry Newman  
(1801-1890)

## From the Pastor ... Saint John Henry Newman

Widely recognized as one of the finest preachers in Victorian England, a master of English prose, author of a number of important Christian writings and a philosopher of religion, Cardinal John Henry Newman will be canonized a saint of the universal Church by Pope Francis on October 13.

A man of humble but courageous belief, Newman helped develop Catholic thought, which contributed to the calling of the Second Vatican Council and to recognizing the importance of the laity in the life of the Church. This issue of *Messenger* highlights some of the contributions he made to our faith life.

Raised as an evangelical Christian, he later became a priest of the Church of England and a professor at Oxford University. In the 1840's, he was one of the founders of the Oxford Movement, a group calling for spiritual renewal in the English Church. Soon after this, he chose to enter the Catholic community, which caused some concern to both Anglican and Catholic believers. However, his contributions to Cath-

olic life as a pastor and founder of the University of Dublin, and the exemplar life he led, found him named a Cardinal of the Church.

In 1893, a group of Catholic students at the University of Pennsylvania - finding the need to better understand and explain their beliefs - met and established the first Newman club in the United States. Today, Newman Centers can be found at many colleges throughout our country, providing the opportunity for students to learn and celebrate their faith as they prepare for their futures. John Newman is the Patron Saint of this movement, today often called Campus Ministry.

John Newman recognized the importance of learning about Catholic teaching so that we might embrace and live it in meeting the challenges of our times. He reflected that in making moral decisions, the role of "conscience" was of utmost importance. In honoring this new saint of our Faith, may he be an inspiration to all of us to learn and live our Catholic heritage with renewed vigor in these, our days. - Fr. Paul

## Pet Blessing Set for October 5

"Ask the beasts and they will teach you the beauty of this earth."

- St. Francis of Assisi

Following the celebration of the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi on Friday, October 4, St. Mary's will hold its annual Pet Blessing on Saturday, October 5 at 9 a.m. in the Pavilion. *All are welcome!*



## Celebrating the Lives of Three Great Saints

### St. John Henry Newman 1801-1890



1801: Born in London, England.

1816: Influenced by Rev. Walter Mayers "who was the human means of the beginnings of divine faith in me." Experienced

his evangelical conversion.

1822: Elected a Fellow of Oriel College at Oxford University.

1825: Ordained a priest in the Church of England.

1830: Broke with his earlier Evangelical position.

1833: Nearly died of fever in Sicily. Composed *Lead Kindly Light* on the way home.

1845: Received into the Roman Catholic Church.

1847: Ordained a priest after seminary study in Rome.

1852 to 1858: Was sent to Dublin, where he founded the University of Ireland.

1863/64: Was attacked in the press and replied with his autobiography *Apologia Pro Vita Sua*.

1869/70: Took a moderate view on infallibility at Vatican Council I.

1879: Was made a Cardinal by Pope Leo III.

1890: Died on August 11 in Birmingham, England. His epitaph: *Out of the Shadows and Imagery into Truth.*

### St. John Neumann 1811-1860

1811: Born in Prachitice, Bohemia (now the Czech Republic).

1836: Came to New York after studying in Prague, and was ordained a priest. Was assigned to work with German immigrants in the Niagara Falls area. His first assignment was at the Church of Sts. Peter and Paul, Williamsville, and his parish in Western New York stretched from Lake Ontario to Pennsylvania.



1837 to 1840: As a visiting priest, played an instrumental role in building the first Church on St. Mary's Hill, where he celebrated Mass once a

month. Established St. Mary's first school at the corner of Transit Road and Broadway, Lancaster.

1842: Joined the Redemptorists as the first member to profess vows in the United States.

1852: Was named the fourth bishop of Philadelphia.

1852 to 1860: Founded the first Catholic diocesan school system in the U.S. in Philadelphia. Drew in many teaching communities of sisters and the Christian Brothers.

1860: Died on January 5 in Philadelphia.

1963: Became the first American bishop to be beatified.

### St. Francis of Assisi 1181-1226

1181: Born in Assisi, Italy.

Circa 1202: Spent a year as a prisoner while in the military.

1205: During his army service and after a vision from God, became disillusioned with his worldly life. On a pilgrimage, had a vision from Christ, telling him to "repair my Church."

1208: After listening to the Gospel on "commissioning the twelve," started wandering, proclaiming, "The Kingdom of God is at hand." Soon attracted followers.

1209: Composed a simple rule for his followers, or friars: *The Regular Primitiva (Primitive Rule)*, which came from verses in the Bible.

1211: Influenced the young noblewoman Clare of Assisi, who became deeply touched by his message and realized her calling.

1219: Went to Egypt to try to help end the conflict of the Crusades.

1223: Arranged for the first live Christmas Nativity scene.

1224: Had a vision of a seraph, who gave him the stigmata – the five wounds of Christ.

1226: Died on October 3 in Assisi while singing Psalm 141.

1228: Was canonized by Pope Gregory IX.



## Welcome to St. Mary's Fr. Mario!

Rev. Mario Racho has been assigned to St. Mary's as parochial vicar for a three-year term. Fr. Mario, whose assignment took effect June 17, was one of eight men ordained as Roman Catholic priests by Richard J. Malone, bishop of Buffalo, on June 1 at St. Joseph's Cathedral.



Fr. Mario grew up in Balilihan, Bohol, in the Philippines. He is a graduate of Philippine Maritime Institute, where he earned a bachelor's degree in marine transportation. He worked at an industrial company for several years before entering St. Paul's Seminary, Siland, Cavite, where he studied philosophy and communications. Along with the seven other newly ordained Buffalo-area priests, he was ordained a transitional deacon in September 2018 and graduated from Christ the King Seminary, East Aurora, in May of this year.

Welcome to St. Mary's, Fr. Mario!

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## Sr. Therese Chmura Celebrates Her Golden Jubilee

As St. Mary's celebrated the Feast of the Assumption – our parish feast day - this year, parishioners also honored the Golden Jubilee of Sr. Mary Therese Chmura, CSSF.

Sr. Therese entered the Felician Franciscan Congregation from St. Josephat Parish, Cheektowaga, on August 22, 1969 – the Feast of the Queenship of Mary.

During these years, she has served countless Christians on their own journeys through life. Though her responsibilities have been many and varied, a constant role throughout her years of service has been that of teacher – through her words, her leadership and her outstanding example. She has taught at Villa Maria Academy, Buffalo and Cardinal O'Hara High School, Tonawanda, as well as at Villa Maria College. In addition, she taught religious education at the former St. James Parish, Depew, and at St. Gabriel's Parish,

Elma. She served as director of religious education at St. Andrew's, Sloan, and for the past eight years, has ministered here at St. Mary's as director of faith formation.

In helping others to strengthen their spiritual lives and discern their vocations, Sr. Therese has served as a retreat leader. As assistant superintendent of religious education for the Diocese of Buffalo, she was instrumental in developing and fostering faith formation programs for youth and adults.

May God grant continued good health and blessings to Sr. Therese so that she remains with us at St. Mary's for many years to come!



## Preparing for Confirmation



Confirmation preparation was ongoing throughout the summer, including retreats and classes with Faith Formation leaders. This group of Confirmation candidates volunteered by hosting a Sunday Coffee Hour in August in the Pavilion at St. Mary's.

## Parishioner to be Honored With Vincentian Award

St. Mary's parishioner Dolores Celano will receive the St. Vincent de Paul Ozanam Award Thursday, September 26 in a ceremony at the Millennium Buffalo Hotel.

The Ozanam Award is presented annually to Vincentians in recognition and appreciation of their extraordinary contributions to the mission of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul in the spirit of its founder, Frederic Ozanam. Conferences

nominate members they believe are exemplary in the ways they have carried out the society's mission in their communities.

Other members of St. Mary's St. Vincent de Paul conference will be attending the September 26 awards ceremony to celebrate Dolores receiving this honor.

Congratulations, Dolores, and thank you for your service to St. Mary's and to our community!

## Exploring Early Non-Scriptural Literature

St. Mary's Pastor Fr. Paul Steller will lead a series of sessions this fall to look at some of the Jewish and Christian works written in the early years of Christianity that did not become part of the Bible, but contributed to the development of our Christian story.

Among the works considered will be the Dead Sea Scrolls, the Infancy Gospels, the Other Gospels, and the Christian Acts of Martyrdom. Sessions will be held on the following Tuesdays from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in Room 140, adjacent to the Parish Center in the St. Mary's Elementary School building: September 17 and 24, and October 1, 8, 15 and 22.

## Advent Awakenings

On three Tuesday evenings in December, Fr. Paul will lead sessions looking at the history and development of the Christian Advent/Christmas season and its customs, saints and scriptures. Special consideration will be given to the Sunday liturgies of the season. Sessions will be held on December 2, 9 and 16 from 7 to 8:30 p.m. in Room 140.

*All are welcome!*



### St. Mary's Second Annual

## Fall Fest on the Hill

Friday, September 20  
6 – 11 PM

St. Mary's Elementary School

**\$10,000 Grand Prize**  
Cash Prizes Totaling \$13,500



50/50's

Pull Tabs - Basket Raffles



Featuring Live Music by Barnstorm

8 – 11 PM in the Courtyard

**\$50/Ticket – Admits 2 Guests – Adults Only**

Includes Cash Prize Raffle Ticket, Food Stations,  
Coffee & Pop

Bring Your Own Appetizers – No Carry In Beverages  
Cash Bar

**To Purchase Tickets, Call (716) 253-7880**

## Support St. Mary's While You Shop

As you shop for autumn and the upcoming holiday season, consider purchasing Scrip to benefit St. Mary's parish and school. Scrip enables you to buy gift cards from local and national vendors, with a percentage of every purchase coming back to St. Mary's.

Effective by mid September, credit card payments will be accepted for Scrip cards purchased online.

You can purchase Scrip at the Rectory on Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Or, drop your order in the locked box in the rear of Church or at St. Mary's Elementary School.

For more information, call (716) 682-6445 or email [marykate@st-marysonthehill.org](mailto:marykate@st-marysonthehill.org).

When you shop through Amazon, consider going to [smile.amazon.com/ch/16-0764775](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/16-0764775) or search St. Mary's Lancaster. Amazon will donate 0.5 percent of your purchase to our parish.

*Thanks for supporting St. Mary's while you shop!*



**Fall BACK**

Daylight Savings Time ends at 2 a.m. on Sunday, November 3. Remember to set your clocks back one hour, if they don't automatically adjust to the time change.

## St. Mary's Parishioner Updates

During the months of May, June and July:

- *The following new parishioners joined St. Mary's:* Marcus Agnello, Brad and Jennifer Carroll and family, Joseph and Danielle Cavaretta, Maryann Delzer, John Fasanella and Patricia Higgins, Theresa King, Joshua Klein and Krystal Kless and family, Joseph and Marcella Lauricella and family, Justin Luksch and Brianna Koerner, Sean and Cassandra Maeder and family, Mary Mancini, Sheila Monheim, Abhilash and Jenna Prasad and family, Larissa Kate Robinson, Jerome and Carolyn Stachura and family, Dennis Tremblay, and Dedric and Sarah Whittle and family.

- *The following couples were married at our Church:* Derek Jansma and Lauren Goh, Reid Zaccagnino

and Andrea Agnello, Austin Polino and Jennifer Snyder, Daniel Hamilton and Michelle Jezuit, and John Taylor, Jr. and Monica Ecker.

- *These children became members of our parish family through Baptism:* Calvin Jack Collingridge, Hailey Grace Malke, Audrey Danielle Geary, Hailey Rose Grogan, Olivia Rae DeBergalis, Anthony Joseph Barone, Gavin Reid Bace, Ava McKenzie Klein, Mia Lee Perkins, Landon Walter Kelm, Liam Xavier Whittle and River Joseph Memminger.

- *Funeral Masses were celebrated for these beloved souls called home to the Lord:* Claire Dose, Erica Strohm, Barbara Kamrowski, Michelle Lattuca, Josephine Groves, Muriel Steinel, Brian Green, James Stock, Gerald Greiner, Lana Faisant and James Green.

## Your Support Makes it Happen

Thank you to all of our St. Mary's parishioners who contribute to Upon This Rock, the ongoing Buffalo Diocese campaign to strengthen parishes and provide enhanced pastoral care throughout the diocese.

Since 2016, when Upon This Rock was launched, funds raised at St. Mary's have helped fund a portion of the recent restoration work on our Tyrolean stained glass windows, as well as underwriting the cost of a new Rectory roof and a new truck for the cemetery.

Our parish receives disbursements

twice a year from the Upon This Rock Foundation. Our most recent disbursement was in the amount of \$28,117. Parishes will continue to receive these payments for two more years, as Upon This Rock is a five-year initiative.



Watch for further updates on how your stewardship through offertory gifts and fund raisers, as well as Upon This Rock, helps keep our parish strong and viable.

## Bereavement Ministry Provides Needed Support at Difficult Times

"For this God is our God for ever and ever. He will be our Guide even to the end ... " - Psalm 48:14

The St. Mary's Bereavement Ministry serves parishioners during one of the most difficult times in life: the loss of a loved one. Services provided through this ministry include:

- Praying for bereaved families and for the deceased.
- Helping to plan funeral liturgies.
- Providing music and servers for funerals.
- Offering funeral breakfasts in the Parish Center.
- Making follow-up calls to families.
- Sending cards to nearest kin on the first Christmas and Easter following a death, as well as the anniversary date.

- Providing house and babysitting during calling and funeral hours.
- The annual Christmas Angel Tree program and liturgy, as well as Memorial Day, All Souls Day and other commemorative Masses.

More information is available just inside the rear entrance to Church, on the right. In addition, the rack on the wall inside the inner door to Church, on the left, offers booklets on topics ranging from mourning, grieving and handling the heart-break of loss to getting through the holidays and the first few weeks after a loved one's funeral.

To speak to someone from the St. Mary's Bereavement Ministry, please call (716) 684-9864 or contact the Rectory at (716) 683-6445. Please call the Rectory for information on St. Mary's Cemetery.

## A Student's Prayer for a New School Year

Lord Jesus, I ask for Your help as I begin this new school year.  
Allow me to experience Your presence in the many blessings  
You put before me.

Open my eyes to the new challenges and exciting opportunities that this new  
school year brings.

Open my heart and mind to new friends and new teachers.

Give me a generous spirit to be enthusiastic with my studies and courage to  
accept new opportunities.

Help me to be attentive to my teachers and let me experience Your presence in  
my new friends.

Jesus, inspire me to do my best this year!

Amen

## Be Part of St. Mary's Social Media Community



St. Mary's Parish has a vibrant and growing social media presence. Please join our social media community and be a part of our ongoing communications!

- Visit our parish website at [st-marysonthehill.com](http://st-marysonthehill.com) and school website at [smeschool.com](http://smeschool.com).
- Download our free parish app on your Smartphone. Search for St. Mary of the Assumption in the Apple and Android stores. Or, go to [www.parishsolutions.com/assumption](http://www.parishsolutions.com/assumption).
- Like us on Facebook.
- Follow the parish on Twitter @ [stmarys716](https://twitter.com/stmarys716).

More participation in social and digital media was among the suggestions made in the recent parish communications survey, which was published in the Summer 2019 issue of *Messenger*. Thank you to all who participated in the survey, which will assist in planning St. Mary's communications and parish fund-raising support for the future.



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Diane Zwirecki, APR, Editor  
Ray Milkowski, Sr., Photographer



Visit us on Twitter @stmarys716



Like us on Facebook.



## St. Mary's Mass Schedule

### Daily Masses:

8:30 a.m. Tuesday, Thursday (School Chapel)  
12 Noon Monday, Wednesday, Friday (School Chapel)

*During the school year, there is also an 8:30 a.m. Mass on Fridays in the Church.  
Please call the Rectory or visit the website for holy day information.*

### Weekend Masses:

Saturday  
4:30 p.m.  
7 p.m.

Sunday  
8 a.m.  
10 a.m.  
12 Noon

### **Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession):**

Saturday 3:30 p.m. - 4 p.m.  
*Appointments can be made for the Sacrament  
by calling the Rectory at 683-6445.*