

Messenger

St. Mary of the Assumption
Roman Catholic Church

Summer 2018
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From the Pastor ... Mary, Mother of the Church

Through the centuries, many titles have been given to Mary. This year, an important one, proclaimed by the Second Vatican Council, was officially celebrated for the first time as a liturgical feast on the Monday following the Feast of Pentecost. This title honors Mary as the Mother of the Church. While Mary has held many titles, only a few of them have become part of the official worship tradition of our faith.

The first title honoring Mary resulted from a declaration at the Council of Ephesus (located in present day Turkey) held in 431. The Council honored her as the Mother of God, and this feast is today observed each year on January 1. Devotions in her honor have developed through the years, often guided by the needs of the Church at particular times. Often, Marian feasts have had important connections with feasts of Jesus – serving as complementary observances, i.e., Feast of Jesus' Birth (December 25) – Feast of Mary's Birth (September 8); the Ascension of Jesus into Heaven – the Assumption of Mary into Heaven.

The Second Vatican Council (1962-1965), when reflecting on the role and importance of Mary in the faith life of the Church in modern times, stressed two significant ways in which she serves as a support for Christians. One sees her as a Model for Christians and the other as Mother of the Church. These teachings are found in the Constitution on the Church (Chapter 8).

Both these titles remind us that Mary was a person just like us who, as the New Testament accounts teach, experienced both the joys and sorrows of life, who placed her faith in the love and compassion of God, and who sometimes struggled but always responded with faith and trust to life's challenges. This new feast of Mary, Mother of the Church, importantly reminds us that as the Holy Spirit on Pentecost sent believers to bring Jesus' message to others, so too are we called in our time to do the same - and Mary is there with us as we continue her Son's mission and message. We are the Church of God, the People of God and truly, fittingly, she is Mother of the Church.

- Fr. Paul



Teeing Off to Benefit St. Mary's ...

Fore!

The 16th Annual St. Mary's Golf Tournament is set for Monday, July 23 at Chestnut Hill Country Club, Darien Center.

The day begins with registration at 9 a.m. and a shotgun start at 10 a.m. Lunch will be served at the turn, and a one-hour open bar will precede a 4:30 p.m. steak dinner. The evening concludes with prizes and awards. Prizes include longest drive, lowest team score, highest team score, closest to the pin, putting and hole-in-one contests.

Fee is \$100 per golfer or \$40 for dinner. For more information, please call (716) 683-2112.

Support St. Mary's By Buying Scrip

Parishioners often ask about the St. Mary's Scrip program and how it works to benefit our parish.

The answer is simple: Take into consideration the places where you normally shop and dine, as well as possibly purchasing gas at Tops or paying your Kohl's charge bills, using Scrip gift cards. Tops and Kohl's are just two of dozens of vendors available.

When you buy Scrip gift cards for any or all of these vendors, a percentage of every purchase comes back to the parish. There are no added fees.

For example, if you buy four \$100 Tops Scrip cards, St. Mary's earns a 5 percent rebate: \$20. If you purchase four \$100 Kohl's Scrip cards, the parish earns a 1 percent rebate: \$5. If you buy two \$10 Tim Horton's Scrip cards, St. Mary's earns a 5 percent rebate: \$1. While these totals are individually small, the numbers climb quickly when more and more people participate.

You can buy Scrip after Mass at the back entrance to Church (look for Scrip sellers there), in the St. Mary's Elementary School building on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays from 8 to 10 a.m., and at the Rectory on weekdays between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. Some cards are available immediately; others must be ordered and can be picked up within about a week. Locked boxes are available in Church and at school, so orders can be dropped off there.

For more information, please call the St. Mary's Scrip Office at (716) 683-2112, ext. 312 or email SCRIP@sme-school.com.

Enjoy Summer Events at St. Mary's

Summertime at St. Mary's means Coffee Hours and Hot Dog Roasts under the Pavilion, outdoor Masses on Saturdays, Vacation Bible School, and the annual celebration of our parish's Feast Day on August 15.

Coffee Hours following Sunday Masses began May 20 and will continue through Labor Day weekend. Plan to stop by and enjoy fun, refreshments and fellowship.

Hot Dog Roasts will be held following Saturday Masses on June 30 and August 11.

If you can spare a few hours to help out at a Coffee Hour or Hot Dog Roast, please contact Elaine Driscoll at (716) 683-8611 or edristoj@aol.com.

Attention heads of ministries and parish outreach programs: If you would like to showcase your group by hosting a weekend Coffee Hour or Hot Dog Roast, please let Elaine know. It's a great opportunity to shine a light on

your ministry work and give more parishioners a chance to get involved.

The 7 p.m. Mass on Saturday is celebrated under the Pavilion throughout the summer, weather permitting. Please bring your own lawn chair!

"Answering the Call" is the theme of this year's Vacation Bible School, which takes place from Monday, July 23 through Friday, July 27, from 6 to 8 p.m. at St. Mary's Elementary School. Children entering kindergarten through grade 5 in the fall are welcome to attend. Cost is \$15 per child or \$25 per family.

Students entering grades 6 through 12 can volunteer as teen helpers at Vacation Bible School. To register or for more information, please call the Faith Formation Office at (716) 683-8564.

Watch for further information on St. Mary's August 15 Feast Day celebration!

WINGS Women's Bible Study Group To Host Movie Series

The Women in God's Spirit (WINGS) Bible study group at St. Mary of the Assumption Catholic Church will host a free movie series, open to the public, in the St. Mary's Elementary School gymnasium on three evenings this summer.

Doors open at 6 p.m. and the shows begin at 6:30 p.m. Guests are asked to bring their own lawn chairs. Pizza and pop will be provided; guests also can bring snacks.

Featured movies include:

All Saints Thursday, June 28.

Let There Be Light Tuesday, July 31.

God's Not Dead 3 Tuesday, August 28.

WINGS is a gathering of women of all ages who are in pursuit of a stronger, deeper faith. The group was founded at St. Mary's in 2012 by five women, and since then has grown to more than 60 members. For more information on WINGS, please call (716) 200-2261.

Parishioner Shares Story of Nicaragua Mission Trip

Kathleen Horvatits was one of seven St. Mary's parishioners who journeyed to Nicaragua on a parish mission trip in February. They were hosted by Ann Marie Zon, who has been doing missionary work in Nicaragua for 38 years. Reflecting on the experience, Kathleen writes:

Approximately 30 percent of Nicaraguans live on less than \$2 per day. In rural areas, poverty rates are especially high, with 50 percent of households living in extreme poverty. Ann Marie is one of three founders of The Nicaraguan Mission Project (The Mission), which serves the neediest population living in the Diocese of Granada. Our group had the good fortune of exposure to many of the projects developed and supported by The Mission, and saw first-hand the support of generous Western New Yorkers who have contributed to its success.

Our local community donates clothes, household goods, school supplies, furniture, religious items, and other



goods to support The Mission's efforts. (Examples of items needed can be found at http://www.projectnica.com/items_needed.htm). We found it amusing to observe many local citizens wearing clothing promoting the Buffalo Bills and Sabres in several communities!

Our team visited several churches, chapels, and missions, some of which were built primarily through support from Ann Marie and her Mission co-founders, Fr. Alfonso Alvarados and the late Fr. Leonel Navas.

Approximately 73 percent of Nicaraguans are Roman Catholic. Aided by donations from Western New Yorkers, the diocese was able to build the Sinai Retreat Center, a multi-building campus that furthers faith formation.

What I found most impactful was how passionately the Nicaraguan people practiced their faith through devotion to Jesus and the Blessed Virgin. Each Thursday brings Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament in local churches. Young and old alike come to pray, and weekend Mass at Jesus Rescate National Shrine is filled with pilgrims and joyous singing.

The Mission sponsors a program in which a cow is donated to the mother of an interested family. She signs a contract agreeing that the cow will be cared for, that two calves will be returned to the project, and that two homemade cheeses will be given to another family or an elderly person each month.

A similar program involves donating pigs to families. When these programs

were first implemented, livestock was purchased externally. The team subsequently bought acreage in the nearby mountains and created a farm where they now raise their own cows, pigs, and chickens. Donations of \$100 or \$50 will purchase a cow or pig, respectively, for a family in need.

Education is of significant importance to The Mission - and is the key to local residents' self-reliance. Schools are government operated and children must have uniforms to attend. Our team visited several schools, where we delivered supplies and snacks. Most of them had few or no books, and instructional aides such as black boards and bulletin boards were shabby or absent altogether. The Mission purchases uniforms in larger sizes so that students can wear them for at least two years. A donation of \$30 will sponsor a child to attend elementary school, \$50 will sponsor a child to attend middle school, and \$100 will sponsor a child to attend high school. A monthly donation of \$65 will sponsor a student to attend college.

I have said nothing of the diverse, raw beauty we observed throughout our trip, but words cannot do justice to this or any of our experiences. I am honored to have had the privilege of getting to know and develop lasting bonds with my fellow team members. Our team has been discussing how we can continue to support this important cause, and we anticipate plans for future missions.

Thank you to all who have supported and continue to support the Nicaraguan mission project at St. Mary's!

Welcome New Parishioners

A warm welcome to these new parishioners who registered at St. Mary's between February and April 2018:

Adam & Kelly Cichocki and Family

Joseph & Laura Decenzo
Virginia Doak-Swann

Michael & Laura Fitzpatrick and Family

Steven & Krista Jezioro and Family

Christopher & Jessica Kulpit and Family

Justin & Jessica McGraw and Family

Ashley Ann Pelkey and Family

Garrick & Shannon Shick and Family

Joan Sorce

Andrew & Jaime Welka and Family

Kathy Anne Wick

Justen Wilczak & Lauren Chudoba and Family

Tom & Tina Witnauer and Family

First Eucharist Celebrated at St. Mary's

First Communion was celebrated at Masses at St. Mary's on Saturday, May 5 and Sunday, May 6. Congratulations and blessings to these children, who received First Communion, and to their families!

Mackenzie Baumgart
Andrew Bello
Gabrielle Bindemann
Ryan Blair
Derrick Carroll
Ryan DeKruger
Madison Durkin
Sean Eisensmith
Marin Gill
Olivia Gmerek
Joseph Green
Brent Greenawalt
Audrey Karnath
Emily Keicher
Nora Koneski
Kari Kowalski
Leonardo LaBelle
Jack Lewandowski
Julia Lorenz

Catherine Markowski
Ella Molik
Amanda Molino
Ava Molino
Ariella Mordino
Tara Patro
Zoe Quinn
Emily Rodriguez
Aaron Schmittendorf
Katie Schmittendorf
Ella Shurmatz
Ian Simon
Bostyn Sobol
Leah Tulowiecki
Sydney Weinholtz
Nathan White
Brendan Wisniewski
Corey Wisniewski

Seniors Enjoy Second Annual Prom



St. Mary's Family Faith Formation Program hosted the second annual Senior Prom on Saturday, April 21. Senior citizens from the parish and local community enjoyed an afternoon of dancing, with live music provided by the Lancaster High School Jazz Ensemble, as well as mingling, laughter, games and the sharing of warm memories. This year's prom theme was "April in Paris."



Get To Know St. Mary's Outreach Ministries

There are numerous opportunities for parishioners to get involved in ministries at St. Mary's that benefit our parish and the community. Here are just a few with which you may not be familiar:

- **Bereavement Ministry:** Members offer support to families who have suffered the loss of a loved one. The group's activities range from funeral

liturgy planning to gestures of compassion. Contact Marilyn Streit at (716) 684-9864.

- **Circle of Friends:** This is a social gathering of individuals with disabilities, who share the gifts of friendship and fellowship. The group holds monthly gatherings. Contact Donna Michael at (716) 683-0615.

- **Knights of Columbus:** The Knights

serve as role models of the Gospel message in the local, national and international communities. Contact John Dryja at (716) 684-8120.

- **Knights of St. John:** The Knights witness their faith in God in daily works of charity in the Church, the community and their commandery. During warm weather months, the Knights of St. John Memory Garden is in full bloom near the Pavilion outside St. Mary's Church. Contact Bob Reyn- ders at (716) 683-0031.

- **Ministry of Praise:** There are no meetings for this ministry. Members take time to pray daily for intentions received in a monthly letter from St. Mary's. Contact the Rectory at (716) 683-6445.

- **Prayer Shawl Ministry:** This ministry creates shawls for hospital patients, nursing home residents and others who may benefit from them. The group holds monthly meetings, but attendance is not a requirement. You can participate simply by working on shawls at home. Contact Patricia Kedzierski at (716) 681-2284.

- **Social Justice Ministry:** This ministry provides information and resources to further social justice in the local community and worldwide. This includes participation each year in a local Habitat for Humanity project, building or renovating a home for a family in need. Contact Holly Walter at (716) 656-9583.

More information on these and other St. Mary's ministries can also be found on the parish website at www.stmarysonthehill.com.

St. Vincent de Paul Members Help Feed the Hungry

by Greg Gable

On any given Tuesday morning, a group of St. Mary's parishioners can be found in a commercial kitchen at the corner of Main and Bryant Streets in Buffalo, busily chopping veggies, opening cans, cutting desserts into serving-sized portions, washing dishes, and serving patrons of the St. Vincent de Paul Dining Room.

These are the people of the parish's St. Vincent de Paul TASK Force - where TASK stands for Tuesday at the Soup Kitchen.

This community volunteer program started three years ago with a conversation between Kate Brace, manager of the dining room, and Marianne Gable, a member of the St. Vincent de Paul Conference at St. Mary's.

By working in the dining room (Brace notes that it actually is not referred to as a "soup kitchen"), volunteers help enable between 120 and 200 clients a day to enjoy a hot, hearty meal. The dining room has just three permanent staff members, whose work is aug-

mented by a total volunteer force of up to 20 per day from area parishes. Some of these dedicated volunteers have been serving the program for more than a decade.

In addition to a meal, goody bags of bread and pastries are offered to each departing client.

If you would like to become involved in this program or would like more information on the St. Vincent de Paul Chapter at St. Mary's, please contact President John Troidl at (716) 685-2357 or 1620john@gmail.com.

If you have supported any of the St. Vincent de Paul efforts at St. Mary's - including spring and fall clothing and households drives, coffee can collections after Masses, donations of clothing into the blue bins in the parking lot, having items for donation picked up at your home, or dropped money into the donation box at Church - then you, too, have assisted in feeding the hungry of our community. Thank you for your ongoing support!

St. Marianne Cope, OSF

Saint from New York State Celebrates Feast Day August 9

by Barbara Owczarczak, Pastoral Minister

Barbara Koob (now officially "Cope") was born on January 23, 1838 in Hessen, Germany. She was one of 10 children born to Peter Koob, a farmer, and Barbara Witzenbacher Koob.

The year after Barbara's birth, the family emigrated to the United States, where they settled in Utica, NY. They joined St. Joseph Parish, where Barbara attended school until 8th grade, when her father's ill health required her to get a factory job to help the family.

In August 1862, once her family was grown, Barbara was allowed to join the Sisters of the Third Order of Saint Francis in Syracuse. She professed her vows in November of the following year, taking the name Marianne, and began teaching at Assumption Parish School. Over time, Sr. Marianne became school principal. She also helped establish two Catholic hospitals in central New York. She was a pioneer in insisting on a patient's right to refuse treatment.

By 1883, Sr. Marianne had become the Superior General of her congregation. It was at this time that she received a plea for help from leprosy



sufferers in Hawaii. King Kalakaua himself sent the letter, asking for aid in treating patients who were isolated on the island of Molokai. The king had already been declined by more than 50 other religious institutes. On October 22, 1883, Mother Marianne and six other sisters left for Hawaii. Upon their arrival, Mother Marianne began managing a hospital on the island of O'ahu, where victims of leprosy were sent for triage. The following year, Mother Marianne helped establish the Malulani hospital on the island of Maui,

where she opened a school for girls.

In 1888, Mother Marianne and two sisters went to Molokai to open a home for "unprotected women and girls." On Molokai, she also took charge of the home that Saint Damien de Veuster had established for men and boys. She was instrumental in changing life on Molokai by introducing cleanliness, pride, and fun to the colony. Bright scarves and pretty dresses for the women were part of her approach.

As Mother Marianne grew older, her workload only seemed to increase. Eventually, it became a burden on her frail body and she was confined to a wheelchair. Despite her physical limitations, she continued to work tirelessly. During all her years of work with leprosy patients, she never contracted the disease herself, which many regarded as a miracle in itself. Mother Marianne lived to the age of 80, passing away on August 9, 1918.

Marianne was beatified by Pope Benedict XVI on May 14, 2005. After her beatification, her remains were moved to Syracuse, New York and placed in a shrine. On October 21, 2012, she was canonized by Pope Benedict XVI.

Liturgical Environment Ministry Seeking Volunteers



The St. Mary's Liturgical Environment Ministry decorates the Church to reflect the liturgical seasons and also maintains all the plants, both inside and outside the Church. Many thanks to the volunteers who participate! The floral arrangements pictured here were arranged by Mary Ann Ludwig. Additional volunteers are needed. If you'd like to help with this ministry, please contact Elaine Driscoll at (716) 683-8611 or edristoj@aol.com.



St. Mary's Elementary

Best Wishes Class of 2018!

Congratulations to the St. Mary's Elementary School Class of 2018 as they continue their academic years at area high schools beginning this fall.

Among the highlights of our eighth graders' last few months at SME were a successful Chiavetta's chicken barbecue fund-raiser, with proceeds earmarked for new cafeteria tables, and the annual Hope Ribbon ceremony. After the ceremony in Church, SME seventh graders hosted a reception in the Parish Center for Hope Ribbon recipients and their parents.



St. Mary's Youth in Action: Parishioner Inducted into Youth Hall of Fame 49th Annual Bishop's Altar Server Award Presented



Two young parishioners from St. Mary's earned important honors this spring. Jonathan Surdej, an active member of the parish's Middle School Faith Formation Program, was inducted May 3 into the Lancaster Youth Bureau Hall of Fame. He is pictured at left with Pastor Fr. Paul Steller and Director of Faith Formation Sr. Therese Chmura. Andrew Jasinski was recognized as St. Mary's 2018 Altar Server of the Year. He received his award from Bishop Richard J. Malone at a Mass in March at St.

Joseph Cathedral, Buffalo.

Congratulations, Jonathan and Andrew and thank you for your commitment to our parish!



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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.*