

# Messenger

St. Mary of the Assumption  
Roman Catholic Church

Summer 2019  
Volume 10 No.2

## Help St. Mary's Launch its Care for Creation Committee

*"The Church is ... conscious of the responsibility which all of us have for our world, for the whole of creation, which we must love and protect."*

These are the words of Pope Francis, who in 2015 published his encyclical *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home*. The document is a worldwide call from the Holy Father for everyone to understand the serious environmental issues affecting the planet and to become involved in addressing them.

Would you be interested in working on a Care for Creation Committee at St. Mary's? The committee would study the Pope's encyclical and work on related projects and initiatives at our parish. The Diocese of Buffalo has a Care for Creation Committee, which provides a wealth of information and resources to assist.

If you're interested, please contact Communications Coordinator Diane Zwirecki at (716) 683-6445, ext. 24, or [diane@stmarysonthehill.org](mailto:diane@stmarysonthehill.org). Thank you!

**See page 6 for  
more information!**

## *From the Pastor ... The Beauty of Creation*



The regularity of tornadoes, flooding, droughts and other changes in weather patterns in recent years have helped us become more concerned about our environment and how we are using this planet that we live in and on.

The *Book of Genesis* reminds us that the Creator entrusted creation to us to use wisely and well, for the benefit of all who live on this earth. Many voices are calling us to become more attentive to our environment and how we are using our natural resources. Pope Francis, in his writings and speeches, has frequently raised awareness concerning our environment and our call to share equally with all our sisters and brothers the goods of the earth. For example, the need for good, clean water worldwide is just one concern affecting humankind.

Beginning in this issue of *Messenger*, there will be information concerning our environment in each issue. Check these items out. I hope you might consider becoming a member of our parish Care for Creation Committee. Our annual Vacation Bible School with our young people will be celebrating God's creative goodness. (See page 6.) And once again this year, beginning June 16 and continuing through September 8, our 7 p.m. Saturday Mass will be celebrated under our Pavilion (weather permitting). Bring your chair, blanket or bench, invite a friend, and join us.

Have a creative summer – take a walk, plant a flower or a tree, discover some new aspect of nature, read one of the biblical psalms, watch a sunrise, admire a sunset!

*- Fr. Paul*

## Please Help Improve Communications at St. Mary's

As a St. Mary's parishioner, our quarterly *Messenger* newsletter is for *you* – to keep you up to date on parish news and developments, and also on issues relevant to your faith and how you can grow in it. Please take a few minutes to complete this brief survey and return it in the collection basket at Mass or by dropping it off or mailing it to the Rectory – Attn: Diane Zwirecki, APR, Communications Coordinator. **If you complete and return your survey and are willing to provide contact information, your name will be entered into a drawing to win a \$50 Amazon gift card. All completed surveys must be received by Monday, July 15.** Your input is greatly appreciated!

### 1. What current articles in *Messenger* do you read? (Please check all that apply.)

- Letter from the pastor \_\_\_\_
- Names of new parishioners \_\_\_\_
- Names of those baptized at St. Mary's \_\_\_\_
- Names of couples married at St. Mary's \_\_\_\_
- Names of those whose funerals have been celebrated at St. Mary's \_\_\_\_
- Schedules of upcoming services and events, i.e. Lenten, Easter and Holy Week, Advent and Christmas, parish feast days, etc. \_\_\_\_
- Articles on parish and outreach ministries, i.e., Ladies of Charity, St. Vincent de Paul, etc. \_\_\_\_
- Updates on St. Mary's Elementary School \_\_\_\_
- Updates on St. Mary's Faith Formation program \_\_\_\_
- Biographies of saints \_\_\_\_
- Others (Please attach.)

### 2. What topics would you like to read more about in *Messenger*? (Please check all that apply.)

- Schedules of upcoming services and events, i.e. Lenten, Easter and Holy Week; Advent and Christmas, feast days; fundraisers, etc. \_\_\_\_
- Information on the financial

status of the parish and related issues \_\_\_\_

- Articles on parish and outreach ministries, i.e., Ladies of Charity, St. Vincent de Paul, etc. \_\_\_\_
- Updates on St. Mary's Elementary School \_\_\_\_
- Current issues impacting the Church, locally and globally \_\_\_\_
- How to become more involved in St. Mary's Parish \_\_\_\_
- The history of St. Mary's Parish and its school \_\_\_\_
- Catholic saints \_\_\_\_
- Others (Please attach.)

### 3. Do you follow St. Mary's on Facebook? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

### 4. Do you follow St. Mary's on Twitter? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

### 5. What other social media do you follow ?

Instagram \_\_\_\_  
SnapChat \_\_\_\_  
Others (Please attach.)

### 6. How often do you visit the St. Mary's parish website?

- At least once a week \_\_\_\_
- At least once a month \_\_\_\_
- Several times a year \_\_\_\_
- Never \_\_\_\_

### 7. Would you be interested in reading or engaging in a parish blog? Yes \_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_

*If you answered "yes," please attach a list of topics for blog posts that would be interesting or helpful to you as a parishioner.*

### 8. Please attach a list of any comments or suggestions on how the parish website could be more informative or useful to you.

### 9. Please attach a list of any additional comments, suggestions or ideas for improving the *Messenger* and/or other parish communications.

### 10. The following information is optional. Please print clearly.

- Your name:
- 

- Your mailing address:
- 
- 
- 

- Your age range (Circle one):  
Under 20      20-30      30-40  
40-50      50-60      60-70  
70-80      81 and above

## Seniors "Swing into Spring"

St. Mary's Family Faith Formation Program hosted the parish's third annual spring social event for senior citizens and their families on Saturday, April 13.

*Swing into Spring* was attended by approximately 100 area seniors and their families, some encompassing

three or even four generations, as well as grandchildren enjoying the event with their grandparents.

Live dance music was provided by the Lancaster Central Schools Music Department. Guests also enjoyed games, refreshments, and the crowning of a Prom King and Queen.



Parents and youth in the St. Mary's Family Faith Formation Program work together and connect with other families who share similar values. Participants from other parish Faith Formation programs also help host the annual spring event.

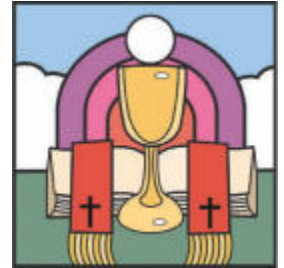


### Would You Be Interested in Being An Adult Altar Server?

The St. Mary's Funeral Ministry is seeking men and women who can assist the parish by serving at funeral Masses. If you are interested, please call the Rectory at (716) 683-6445. Thank you.

## St. Mary's Welcomes Parochial Vicar

Rev. Mario Racho has been assigned here at St. Mary's Parish as Parochial Vicar. Rev. Racho was ordained a priest by Bishop Richard Malone on June 1, after completing his seminary studies. Please welcome him as he joins our parish family!



## Eucharistic Minister Training Coming Up

Eucharistic ministers of Holy Communion may serve at Mass and/or by visiting homebound parishioners.

If you find yourself called to this ministry, please plan to attend one of the following training sessions. Training will begin in Room 140 at St. Mary's Elementary School and then move to the Church:

Friday June 21, 2019 **or**  
Saturday June 22, 2019  
9 a.m. to 12 noon

Current Eucharistic Ministers of Holy Communion are strongly recommended to attend a training session from 11 a.m. to 12 noon in Church on either day for updated information. You are also welcome to attend the full training to refresh your spiritual understanding of this ministry.

## St. Mary's Altar Server Honored



*Congratulations to Abigail Maw, recipient of the 2019 Bishop's Altar Server Award from St. Mary's. Abigail, who enters ninth grade this fall, received her award at a Mass earlier this year at St. Joseph Cathedral. She is pictured with St. Mary's Pastor Fr. Paul Steller.*

## Devotions Prolong Christ's Presence in Our Lives

By Deacon David Jerome

We are familiar with the fact that our Blessed Mother is our model and example of faith with God. We remember the circumstances of the Annunciation. The Angel Gabriel said to Mary, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore the child to be born will be called Holy, the Son of God." (Luke 1: 35)



Through the power of the Holy Spirit and the presence of Christ within her, at the Annunciation, Mary's soul was lifted to an entirely new plane of sanctity and perfection. She was *devoted* to the will of God and to Jesus her Son. In Christ Jesus, humanity and divinity meet and are joined.

These scriptural truths have profound implications in our spiritual lives. Like Mary, through our sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation,

and Holy Eucharist, we conceive Christ in our hearts and minds through the mysterious action of the Holy Spirit. Our humanity meets divinity and we can be lifted to an entirely new plane of sanctity and perfection as the Word and Sacrament germinates in our souls. Devotions are recognized methods of helping the seeds of our faith to sprout, to grow, and to produce abundant fruit.

All humans yearn to live life to the fullest. With our hearts burning within us, after sitting at the table of the Eucharist, we do not want the Lord to vanish from our sight as he did on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). Devotions allow that presence of Christ to continue interiorly and externally outside of the Eucharistic celebration. They prolong the the presence of Christ in the many circumstances, needs, and experiences of our daily lives.

It is important that we realize that Vatican II acknowledges that the spiritual life is not limited to participation in sacramental liturgy. We Christians are called to pray without ceasing. We must cultivate through prayer and devotion, a personal relationship with the persons of the Holy Trinity, as well as with the Blessed Virgin, the angels and the saints.

Far from discouraging the practice of devotions privately and communally, the fathers of Vatican II heartily endorsed both universal

and local expressions of piety.

Today there is a great need for these devotions to be revitalized in our lives and by our Church. Unfortunately many people have lost their awareness of the transcendent— that there is a world beyond and above this secular world we are inundated with every day. We falsely think we can do anything, at any time, as long as it pleases us. This distorted thinking and doing leads to self damage spiritually and physically, and most people don't even realize it. Many feel incomplete and are searching for something more fulfilling and authentic in life, but they don't know where or how to find it—they end up searching in all the wrong places.

*Devotions are recognized methods of helping the seeds of our faith to sprout, to grow, and to produce abundant fruit.*

There are many acceptable devotions that are antidotes to these destructive misconceptions and distorted philosophies. Spiritual reading such as "Lectio Divina," the divine or holy reading of Scripture, slowly and reflectively, until some part of it speaks to your heart and nourishes prayer and meditation, is an example. In the selection of spiritual reading, Sacred Scripture enjoys pride of place, because the Bible contains the inspired (continued on page 5)

## Volunteers Needed to Help Host Coffee Hours

St. Mary's holds Coffee Hours in the Pavilion outside Church, after Masses throughout the summer months.

Volunteers - individuals, families, ministries or other groups - are needed to help host Coffee Hours following 8 a.m., 10 a.m. and 12 noon Masses. It just takes a small amount of time and it's a great opportunity to meet fellow parishioners and share faith, fellowship and fun.

If you or your family or group are interested, please sign up using the sheet in the back vestibule of the Church. Thank you!



## Congratulations SME Class of 2019!



## Devotions Prolong Christ's Presence in Our Lives

*(continued from page 4)*

word of God.

Eucharistic Adoration and devotions to the Sacred Heart are also wonderful remedies to these secular distortions. They can be practiced on a daily basis privately or with our community on the first Fridays of every month.

Devotion to Our Lady of Perpetual Help is prayed after 12 noon Mass every Wednesday. As previously mentioned, Mary is our model of faith and our example of how to conceive Christ in our hearts through the action of the Holy Spirit. Mary is a powerful intercessor on our behalf to make our needs known to Christ and to lead us into a closer relationship with Jesus, her Son. The Rosary, often referred to as the most "powerful weapon" in the world, is another spiritually strengthening devotion.

These devotions are officially approved by the Church and have a long record of successfully leading

people to a deeper union with God and with one another.

Clearly, devotions continue to play a vital role in our spiritual development. However, we must always remember that devotions and pious customs are subordinate to the Church's Eucharistic liturgical Prayer. No devotion or pious practice, however worthy and spiritual, can replace, rival, or equal in excellence the Eucharistic Celebration. All authentic devotions are drawn up to harmonize with the liturgy and to sustain its effects in our lives.

*Devotions are derived from the Mass and meant to lead people back to the Mass.*

By regularly participating in devotions, you keep your heart "burning" as it was when you recognized Christ in the "breaking of the bread" so He does not vanish from your life. And you more readily recognize the many opportunities for holy moments in your everyday life.

Thirty-two students graduated from St. Mary's Elementary School on June 19. Each year, prior to graduation, students are presented with blue and white Hope Ribbons, a sign of their dedication and hard work.

Hope Ribbons are a symbol of celebration and "Our Hope for the Future." Congratulations, graduates!

## Vacation Bible School Caring for All of God's Creation



Vacation Bible School will take place at St. Mary's from Monday, July 15 through Friday, July 19. Open to children entering kindergarten through 5th grade, the theme of this year's program is *Caring for All of God's Creation*.

Vacation Bible School runs from 6 to 8 p.m. at St. Mary's Elementary School. Cost is \$15 per child or \$25 for families with two or more children participating. A family picnic will be held on Friday. On Saturday, July 20, families are invited to the 7 p.m. liturgy, which will be a Closing Mass for Vacation Bible School.

Students entering grades 6 through 12 may volunteer as teen helpers.

Registration deadline is Monday, July 8. For more information, please visit [stmarysonthehill.com](http://stmarysonthehill.com) or call the Faith Formation Office at (716) 683-8564.

## All Creation is Connected: Preserving Our Common Home

Sister Mary Jean Sliwinski, CSSF, is provincial sustainability coordinator for the Felician Sisters. As she noted in the May issue of *Western New York Catholic*, "It's critical for us to care for the environment because we need the environment. We need the earth on which to live on. It's the basis of our faith."

Sister Jean offers these tips on how we can all be better stewards of the environment, while at the same time finding ways to open ourselves spiritually:

- Start your own garden or create a community garden in your neighborhood to grow your own fruits and vegetables. You could also start a butterfly or wildflower garden to attract pollinators. One aspect of St. Mary's upcoming Care for Creation Committee will be focusing on the plants and gardens at the parish, with ongoing environmental awareness in mind.
- Reduce plastic waste by installing a faucet filter or using a water pitcher and a reusable water bottle, instead of buying individual bottles.
- Pick up litter when you see it.

- Take an online carbon footprint test. They are easy to find; simply do a Google search.
- Walk or bike, instead of driving, whenever possible. It's good for you, as well as the environment.
- Pray for those at our parish and everywhere who are working hard for the environment.
- Contact your local elected officials and advocate for creation.
- Read Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si: On Care for Our Common Home*, available online at <https://laudatosi.com/watch>.

Experts working with the Buffalo Diocese on environmental improvements also encourage everyone to reduce and refuse the use of styrofoam, which is not biodegradable.

- Say no to styrofoam "disposable" cups, plates and food containers. Carry a refillable coffee cup or bring your own container to a restaurant. Encourage food and beverage vendors to stop using styrofoam articles – and thank them when they do!

**For more information, visit  
[environmentnewyork.org](http://environmentnewyork.org) or  
[greenamerica.org](http://greenamerica.org).**

"What kind of world do we want to leave to those who come after us, to children who are now growing up? ... It is no longer enough, then, simply to state that we should be concerned for future generations. We need to see that what is at stake is our own dignity. Leaving an uninhabitable planet to future generations is, first and foremost, up to us. The issue is one which dramatically affects us, for it has to do with the ultimate meaning of our earthly sojourn."

- Pope Francis

## Junior Ladies of Charity Make Chemo Kits for Kids



Pediatric cancer patients at Roswell Park Comprehensive Cancer Center and John R. Oishei Children's Hospital recently received Chemotherapy Kits for Kids, thanks to the hard work and generosity of St. Mary's Junior Ladies of Charity.

The JLOC matched a grant from the National Ladies of Charity with funds raised from their own bake sale, and then shopped for chemo kit items. In addition, many of the girls personally donated items to the project. They sorted and assembled 42 Chemo Kits for boys and girls of different ages. The JLOC also offered healing prayers for the recipients.

Following Masses on Saturday, June 22 and Sunday, June 23, the St. Mary's Junior Ladies of Charity will hold their annual Bake Sale. Proceeds will assist the Junior Ladies and benefit their numerous fund-raising projects held throughout the year.

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

The 17th Annual St. Mary's Golf Tournament takes place Monday, July 22 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.

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

## St. Mary's Parishioner Updates

During the months of February, March and April:

- *The following new parishioners joined St. Mary's:* Jenna Elliott, Adam and Becky Guglielmi and family, Adam Hayes and Karrie Jones, Ronald and Susan Hoeflich, Nicole Jacobs and Billy Kerner, Joseph Karb, Anthony and Carrie King and family, Donald and Patricia Kirsch, Brian and Melissa Lasly and family, John Messina, Alex and Amy Nicosia, Craig and Jill Sprague, and Brendon and Katie Stock.

- Matthew Urbanczyk and Sarah Szramkowski entered the Sacramental covenant of marriage at our Church.

- *These children became members of our parish family through Baptism:* Avery Massino, Liliana Dutro, Maxwell Lasly, Miles Lasly, Liviana Bakowski, Dominick Molino, Celeste Sullivan, Lillianna Pawlikowski, Benjamin Giza, Calvin Panek and Maverick LiPuma.

- *Funeral Masses were celebrated for these beloved souls who were called home to the Lord:*



- Philip Ceppaglia, Jean Buczak, Robert Urso, Charlotte Narlock, Frances Jerebko, Antoinette Paler, Crystal Koblich, Maureen Weichmann, Ronald Gallagher, Andrew Woronowski, John Troidl, Thomas Majcher, Raymond Szymkowski, Rita Roll, Adele Kuczka, Richard Van Coevering and Lucille Vetter.

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Dr. David Jerome, Permanent Deacon  
John Owczarczak, Permanent Deacon

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



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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.*