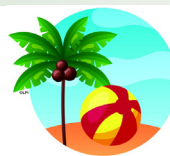
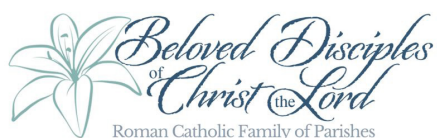


St. Mary's Messenger

St. Mary of the Assumption
Roman Catholic Church



Summer 2023
Volume 14 No. 2



St. Mary of the Assumption
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Lancaster, NY 14086
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stmarysonthehill.org

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Lancaster, NY 14086
(716) 683-6522
olpparish.com

Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta
496 Terrace Blvd.
Depew, NY 14043
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St. Martha
10 French Rd.
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(716) 684-6342
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Sacred Heart of Jesus
5337 Genesee Street
Bowmansville, NY 14026
(716) 683-2375
sacredheartshrine.org

St. Philip the Apostle
950 Losson Rd.
Cheektowaga, NY 14227
(716) 668-8370
spaparish.org

From Fr. Paul:

Upcoming Synod

An interesting and important synod called by Pope Francis is scheduled to hold the first of two summit meetings this October in Rome. The second session will take place in October 2024. The "Synod" in some ways is similar to a general church council (like Vatican II) but different in that it has been designed to bring together many members of our church at grass root levels. It began as an opportunity to listen, discuss, and design possible ways for moving us as Catholics forward into the 21st century with renewed faith and vision.

In a document issued by the Vatican this May, the results of listening sessions among Catholics held throughout the last months, presents a synthesis of all the discernment and dialogue that has taken place so

far and will build on the "Enlarge the space of your tent" (Instrumentum Laboris – it's Latin title) released last October (2022).

The Synod has been prepared by fellow Catholic communities sharing their concerns in locally held sessions. Meetings were held in our country, diocese, and here at St. Mary's. Thanks to those who shared their thoughts here in our parish. It is the hope that the insights suggested by fellow Catholics around the world may help all understand that there is more than one way of being Church and that unity should not be sought in a "rigid uniformity." A delicate balance is necessary. With prayerful hearts and hopes may this upcoming synod be guided and inspired by the Holy Spirit!

- Fr. Paul

Beloved Disciples of Christ the Lord Before Cana

Saturday, July 22, 2023

9:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.

St. Mary of the Assumption (Parish Center)
2 St. Mary's Hill, Lancaster

Concluding with Mass at a Family Parish
Before Cana (Pre Cana) is a Buffalo diocesan requirement prior to being married in the Church. Our Family of Parishes is offering a daylong Before Cana program on July 22. Couples may register for Before Cana by completing the registration form at bdelfamily.com and returning it to the St. Mary's Rectory. For more information, please contact Deacon John Owczarczak at (716) 683-3269.

WINGS Celebrates 10 Years!

By Kim Dobiesz

Ten years ago, five friends sat around a table in the Gathering Room at St. Mary's Elementary School. As active members of the school community, this wasn't the first time they had met in this room. Many hours had been spent in that same space planning school fundraisers, field trips, and classroom service projects. This Saturday morning, however, the agenda was different. This time, these women were drawn together by a deeper calling, a calling to grow closer to Jesus.

With the support of Father Paul Steller, this small group continued to meet on Saturday mornings. The women quickly realized that this time together provided much needed nourishment for their minds, hearts, and souls. With Biblical text as a foundation, they shared and discussed their faith and how to invite Jesus into their everyday lives, often busy with making lunches, driving to soccer games, and checking homework.

Upon completing their first study,

these five women were changed. They had experienced God's Word in a powerful and intimate way and had a thirst for more! They also sensed that they were not alone. They knew there must be other women out there just like them, women of faith who wanted to draw closer to Jesus and God's Word but didn't know how. They hung a few flyers on the walls of St. Mary's and 35 women stepped forward and said "yes". With that, in February 2013, WINGS was born.

For the past ten years, WINGS "Women in God's Spirit" has gathered women of faith to share and grow in their love for Jesus. Women of all ages, backgrounds, experiences, and faith traditions make up this dynamic group. Over the years, WINGS has studied many Books of the Bible including Esther, Jonah, Hebrews, and the Gospels. We encourage and challenge each other to live out our faith in meaningful ways and to be a "light" to others.

WINGS is currently 55 women strong. We hold sessions in both the spring

and fall and meet every other Saturday morning from 9-10:30 a.m. Our time together is spent reading the Bible, watching teaching videos, reflecting, and praying. Over the years, we have shared much laughter and also some tears. We have celebrated births and marriages and mourned deaths. We have witnessed two women come home to the Catholic Church through RCIA. We have completed numerous service projects and the generosity of our group has blessed many. Above all, through friendship and fellowship, we have grown closer to Jesus!

This past January, we were blessed with the birth of "WINGS - South". This sister group of 35 women meet at St. Anthony in Farnham and share the same sense of friendship and fellowship as our Lancaster group. If you are interested in learning more about WINGS, please contact Kim Dobiesz at kjdobiesz@roadrunner.com. No experience is necessary to share in the joy of WINGS, just a willingness to open your heart and mind to God!



Left:
WINGS met in April in St. Mary's Parish Center to share fellowship while wrapping up their spring study.

God's Family

**Faith Formation Supporting
Persons with Disabilities
and their Families**

What is God's Family?

God's Family is a diocesan supported program that began 15 years ago. It was created to serve families who have members, young and old, with special needs, providing a welcoming, faith-filled community for persons with special physical, cognitive, or emotional needs. The program offers support to both parents and siblings and meets monthly during the school year.

How does the God's Family Program work?

There are several ways God's Family can serve your family:

- * As an enhancement to the parish faith formation program
- * As a support network for persons with disabilities and their families
- * As a resource for those who minister to families with disabilities

Whether you are an active member of a parish or are searching for a faith community, the God's Family Program can serve to both enhance your involvement in parish life and grow and strengthen your faith. In God's Family, there is a place for everyone, and we welcome YOU!

To learn more about the God's Family Program or to learn how you can volunteer to help with the program, contact Elaine Driscoll (716) 683-8611 or edristoj@aol.com

What people are saying...

"We love the day. Everyone is made to feel welcomed and valued. We are so impressed with the loving care and attention to detail that is evident in every one of our meetings." (Parent)

St. Mary's First Communion Class of 2023



First Communion was celebrated at St. Mary's the weekend of May 6 and 7. Thirty-five students received Jesus in the Eucharist for the first time. Congratulations to our First Communicants and their families!

Luke Beebe
Alina Boswell
Connor Ceppaglia
Bayleigh Cichon
Madison Czerniejewski
Sophia Dixon
Nicholas Durkin
Caedon Dzina
Jack Eisensmith
Harper Fial
Bennett Frajdofer
Sophia Gabriele
Aubrey Gasiecki
Calista Germann
Connor Ginter
Emery Kawalec
Adyson Kelm
Annalise Ley

Alexandria Magiera
Brayden McCreary
Anthony Nervo
Elizabeth Over
Thomas Over
Marija Procyk
Patrick Schaefer
Benjamin Schiske
Maron Shady
Jaycee Spaich
Lily Spoor
Natalie Szejnar
Nicholas Szuder
Oliver Thomson
Caroline Trzybinski
Ava Vesich
Ryan Wisniewski



God in Daily Life

Question:

How do I bring God into the work of my daily life?

Answer:

Whatever your daily work, you have an opportunity to encounter God and to follow His commandments in love. In the New Testament, we see that most of the Apostles didn't have a previous religious position. They were fishermen, tax collectors, and political activists. St. Paul was a tent-maker. Among the saints, we have doctors, lawyers, farmers, and stay-at-home moms. No matter your daily tasks, God can be present there!

One way concerns behavior. Start with an examination of conscience. Look at areas where you tend to struggle to imitate Christ at work. Do you gossip? Does brimming frustration become impatience at home? Pick one sin you struggle with, then choose a virtue to strengthen that area. If you tend to speak poorly of your co-workers, resolve to stop and to say one kind thing a day instead.

Another way relates to perspective, particularly your perspective of others. Jesus' incarnation reminds us of the value of every human being. Jesus is God, and each of us is created in God's image. When you encounter another person, you have an opportunity to see God in a new place and a new way — in that person in front of you. Genuinely listen to them and be present to their concerns. Loving your neighbor is loving God! Our relationship with God and the love He inspires in our hearts shouldn't remain only at church on Sunday. We can — and should — let our faith animate our lives!

©LPi

Junior Ladies of Charity Out and About

Our Junior Ladies of Charity visited the residents at Symphony Manor over the Easter season bringing festive bags of treats which the Easter Bunny helped deliver! Many of the residents had their photo taken with the Bunny and copies of the photos were given to them. The girls also played games, passed out prizes and served refreshments. It was a fun and rewarding afternoon for all.

During the JLOC upcoming meetings the girls will make Mother's Day and Father's Day gifts for the Manor residents. They will also plan upcoming events and volunteer opportunities. Be sure to stop by the Junior's Bake Sale after all Masses at St Mary's the weekend of July 15-16. Come meet some of the girls, buy some homemade sweet delights and help support our charitable endeavors! New members are always welcome to join. Contact Mrs. Marian Snyder at (716) 681-2957 for more details and information!



The JLOC stopped by Symphony Manor over the Easter season.



Residents of Symphony Manor, pictured above with the Easter Bunny, enjoyed treats, games, and prizes from the JLOC.



During their March meeting, the JLOC responded to pen pal letters from their 2nd graders at Buffalo public school #6 and made a gift basket for a Ladies of Charity Fundraiser.

SUMMER BEGINS

©LPi

The Church Poor Box *By Jim Snyder*

The origin of the Church poor box is Biblical. In the New Testament, in Luke 21:1-4, Jesus observes an old widow putting in two small mites. The mite, also known as a lepton, was a Jewish coin and the smallest used in New Testament time. It was worth 1/64 of a denarius. A denarius was a day's wage for a common worker. In today's terms, its value would have amounted to 1/8 of a cent. Jesus drew attention to this because all the other people were giving out of their abundance. The widow gave all she had to live on. She trusted in God.

Most Catholic Churches have poor boxes varying in appearance and size. The one pictured below is at the missions Church in Capistrano, California and dates back to the 1500's.



St. Mary's poor box is in the center vestibule in the back of our Church, pictured below. St. Mary's has always had a poor box, and the current one has been there since the renovations in the 1980's.



All donations to the St. Mary's St. Vincent de Paul poor box go to assist the poor in our area.



Ablaze Young Adult Ministry

Ablaze Young Adult Ministry will continue to host events throughout the summer! The current plans are an outdoor hike with nature devotional in June, paint night or movie night under the pavilion in July, a God-centered marriage & relationship discussion and possible trivia night in August. All events are subject to change, so be sure to follow @ablazebuffalony on Facebook and Instagram and also check out and subscribe to the Ablaze website:

ablazeministry.church



Our Saturday evening outdoor Mass begins again the first weekend in June. Join us Saturdays at 7:00 p.m. for Mass at the pavilion, weather permitting. Please bring a chair.

Offer a Mass For a Loved One

As a special way to remember a deceased loved one, or for the intention of someone living, please consider offering a Mass for them at St. Mary's.



The usual donation for such intentions is \$15. You may select Mass dates, as they are available.

Please contact the Rectory to schedule a Mass, or send the name of a person for whom a Mass is being offered to: St. Mary of the Assumption, 1 St. Mary's Hill, Lancaster, NY, 14086. Your check should be made payable to St. Mary of the Assumption. Please include your name and phone number.

St. Mary's Parishioner Updates



These new parishioners have recently joined St. Mary's:

Ethan Bowen, Keith and Jeannie Campese and family, Susan Collier, Jason and Martha Dommell and family, Deron and Kim Johnson and family, Mark and Katherine Kosowski and family, Paula Kruskza and family, Shannon Lentola and family, Dale and Melissa Miller and family, Joseph and Diroja Oakley and family, William and Lauri Olsen and family, Joseph and Debra Pellicci, Christopher and Rita Polizzi, Mike and Angela Strong, Dianne Sutton, Michael and Maria Tennant and family, and Helen Wargala.



Wedding Announcements

These couples were married at St. Mary's:

Joseph Stack & RoAnn French



These children and adults became members of our parish family through Baptism:

Zoey Biagiotti, Kaydan Brunner, Riley Grazen, Jordyn McNeill, Angellina McNeill-Lazore, Tyler Pawlowski, Sara Smith, Jaycee Spaich, and Kenneth VanEvery.



These beloved souls were called home to the Lord:

Tom Crean, Ann Dyll, Charles Friedmann, Catherine Hall, Virginia Nowak, Michael Pucci, Jean Salzmann, Ann Takacs, Jacob Wagner, and Pauline Weinheimer.



ST. MARY'S ELEMENTARY

GOLF TOURNAMENT

Monday
July 24, 2023

11:00 am Shotgun

Diamond Hawk Golf Course
255 Sonwil Drive
Cheektowaga, NY 14225

\$150.00/golfer
\$600.00/foursome

- Lunch at the turn
- One hour of open bar
- Buffet Dinner
- Prizes & More!



Sponsorship opportunities available

Scan to sign up or email SMEgolfers@gmail.com to reserve your spot!

Shop with RaiseRight

The RaiseRight program is run out of our school and is a great opportunity to purchase gift cards without activation fees and support St. Mary's too! You can also **Adopt-A-Family** with RaiseRight. Even if you don't have a student enrolled at St. Mary's Elementary, you can still help a family who does.

RaiseRight is an easy, user-friendly way to shop using gift cards and certificates instead of cash, while offering families the opportunity to help keep tuition costs down. Shop in our RaiseRight office in the school Tuesdays from 9 a.m. - Noon, Wednesdays from 12:30 p.m. - 2:30 p.m. and Fridays from 8 a.m. - Noon. Summer hours begin July 1st and will be Tuesday and Friday from 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.

To learn more, feel free to email raiserright@smeschool.com.

Thank you for supporting our school!

Saint Mary Elizabeth Hesselblad *by Barb Owczarczak, Pastoral Minister*

Elizabeth Hesselblad was born on June 4, 1870, the fifth child of thirteen born to Augusto Roberto Hesselblad and Cajsa Pettesdotter Dag, in Faglavik, a small town in the province of Alvsborg, Sweden. The next month she was baptized into the Lutheran Church of Sweden, in her parish in Hundene. As she grew, the family was forced to move due to the economic trouble of the time. By 1886, she went to work to help support the family, and eventually moved to the United States. She went to nursing school at the Roosevelt Hospital in New York, and worked with the sick and aged, caring for Catholics in New York City. Being exposed to so many Catholics, her interest in The Catholic faith grew, and she came to feel, with deep prayer and personal study, that to be Catholic was a place to be closer to Christ.

On August 15, 1902, she received a conditional baptism from Fr. Johann George Hagen, S.J., who then became her spiritual director. She would later write that at the moment of her baptism, "In an instant the love of God was poured over me. I understood that I could respond to that love only through sacrifice and a love prepared

to suffer for His glory and for the Church. Without hesitation I offered Him my life, and my will to follow Him on the Way to the Cross." Two days later, she made her First Communion, then she left for Rome, where she received her Confirmation.

She returned to New York briefly, but then returned to Rome, where she entered the Carmelite House of Saint Bridget of Sweden. In 1906 she professed her vows. Elizabeth had hopes of reviving the order in both her native Sweden and in Rome. On November 9, 1911, she received 3 young English postulants, and refounded the order in Rome. In 1923, she returned to her home land in Sweden, and established a community in Djursholm. In 1931, she received from the Holy See permission to have permanent use of the church and the House of St. Bridget in Rome. In the meantime, her foundation was spreading through Europe, and to India. As her order grew, with its ministry of charity and peace, Elizabeth is credited with hiding twelve Jewish people in a convent to prevent their deportation to a German prisoner camp. They were kept safe until the city was liberated on June 4, 1944.

Elizabeth's health, which was never

ideal, declined around the time of the canonical visit of her order. On April 23, 1957 she gave her blessing to her sisters, raised her hands in a solemn gesture, and murmured, "Go to heaven with hands full of love and virtues." She died in the early morning hours on June 24, 1957. She was canonized June 5, 2016 by Pope Francis. Her feast day is June 4. She is a patroness of Bridgettines, nuns, and nurses.



Photo Credit: "St. Maria Elizabeth Hesselblad Witnessed to the Power of the Resurrection," National Catholic Register, August 17, 2016, accessed May 15, 2023. <https://www.ncregister.com/blog/st-maria-elizabeth-hesselblad-witnessed-to-the-power-of-the-resurrection>.

Vacation Bible School: Digging for Treasure, Parables Revealed

Location: St. Mary's Parish Center

Dates: July 31 - August 4

Arrival Time: 5:45 p.m.

Session Time: 6:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.

Closing Mass: Saturday, August 5th at 7 p.m. outdoors

Grades: Upcoming KDG - 5th Grade

Cost: \$25 (\$40 for 2+ children in the same household)

A picnic for the entire family will take place on Friday, August 4th.

Registration deadline: July 10th

For more information call (716) 683-8564. Visit stmarysonthehill.org or scan the QR code on the right to register.

Youth in grades 6-12 can volunteer as helpers! Visit the St.

Mary's website or scan the QR code on the left to access the online volunteer form.



St. Mary of the Assumption Parish
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www.stmarysonthehill.org

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John Owczarczak, Permanent Deacon
Kaitlin Scirri, Editor
Ray Milkowski, Sr., Photographer



Like us on Facebook and visit us on Instagram and Twitter @SMALancaster.
Visit us on YouTube at St. Mary's on the Hill.
And visit stmarysonthehill.org to connect to our parish app today!



Masses

Monday – Friday: 12 Noon
Saturday: 7 PM
Sunday: 8 AM, 10 AM & 12 Noon

Weekday, Saturday 7 PM and Sunday 10 AM Masses are
livestreamed.

Visit <http://stmarysonthehill.org/live-streams/>.
Livestreamed Masses are also available on Facebook and
YouTube @St Mary's on the Hill.

*Please call the St. Mary's Rectory at (716) 683-6445
for Holy Day Mass schedules.*

Sacrament of Reconciliation (Confession)

Saturday 6:00 - 6:30 p.m. or by appointment
*Appointments may be made by calling
the St. Mary's Rectory at (716) 683-6445.*