My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,
Life bursts forth from seeming death! Once again we’ve tred through the winter months with a longing for the light and warmth that Spring and Summer bring. This yearly experience of the changing climate is not unlike the seasons of our spiritual journey. Like the Israelites in the desert, our journey through Lent into the Easter Season is our exodus, our passage from the darkness that comes from our separation from God due to sin into the splendor of His glorious light. We journey from the purgative to the illuminative way. We mortify, literally put to death, our sinful selves to rise with Him to the fullness of life. Ultimately, we seek union with Him; we long for the beatific vision, to see Him face to face. With ever greater clarity, our communion with Him becomes more manifest to us and those around us each year as we surrender our hearts, souls, minds and bodies to Him. This is our universal call to holiness.

May all the world know that the new day is upon us and that a new covenant in His Body and Blood has been given us! The age of the risen Christ and His Mystical Body, the Church, is here. Through Him, and with Him and in Him, may His salvific mission continue through, with and in you, His Church. Now is the hour. Truly our “Amen” is our yes to be one with the Risen Christ now present. May God bless you with a happy and joyful Easter!

Upon reflecting on how blessed we are, how can we not serve God and His mission with joyful and generous hearts? I know this is true for me. Being with you and serving here at Historic St. Mary’s has been one of the great blessings of my life. I love being your pastor. Thirteen years ago, I can remember Bishop Nicholas Dattilo, the Bishop who ordained me in 1991 to the priesthood, telling me over the phone when he assigned me to you, “You’re going to love St. Mary’s; it’s a beautiful church with great people.” How right he was! Fourth oldest Catholic church in the colonies, Mother Church to countless others, arguably the most beautiful church in the diocese with a vibrant and diverse community of believers who have a heart for the poor, who are renowned for their hospitality, and who have great liturgy and music where the whole congregation sings with gusto... well it was love at first sight!

Then came Bishop Kevin Rhoades. He loved St. Mary’s so much that he fought to have us recognized in the Universal Church as a pilgrim site with a special spiritual bond to St. Mary Major Basilica in Rome. He described our parish as a jewel and as a treasure in the Church. It was Bishop Rhoades who put us to work seeking ways to make our parish facilities more accessible to pilgrims and struggling parishioners alike. For a community of believers known for their hospitality and vibrant mission in the city of Lancaster, the Diocese of Harrisburg and Universal Church, he pointed out that our historic buildings had become an impediment to our current and future mission, a mission the Church was counting on. So we got to work.

Bishop McFadden loved visiting us here. He always felt so welcomed by our church and fought for our success each time we went before the diocese looking for support and guidance as we worked through plan after plan seeking the right combination of renovations and improvements for our campus. He would have loved to have seen the completion of “Our Enduring Legacy” project, but God had other plans for him. And so we were put on hold as we waited for Pope Francis to appoint our next Shepherd, Bishop Ronald Gainer.

(continued on page 3)
Lancaster March for Life Group Fills Five Buses.

By Mary McCafferty

This year, as always, the annual March for Life in Washington, D.C. was attended by a swelling crowd of people, young and old alike, and yet the young seemed to be taking over – thanks be to God! The march was held on January 22, the 42nd anniversary of the legalization of abortion. EWTN was on hand, once again, to televise the march. They estimated 200,000 were in attendance.

The Lancaster group, “Catholics Defending Life,” filled five buses and left after an early morning Mass at St. Leo’s Church. This year, my husband Joe and I planned on attending with our two teenage daughters. We thought this would be a peaceful and educational opportunity to spend the day with our girls; however, God had another plan. Two nights before the March for Life, our Youth Ministry leader called to say that, due to an unavoidable problem, he would not be able to attend the march. He had 11 youths who were planning to attend with him, and he wanted to know if we could chaperone them.

We couldn’t say “no,” but I have to admit I was a bit nervous being responsible now for 13 youths in the much-anticipated crowd in D.C. As always, God had a solution. Our wonderful 6’2” Joe Clupp had also signed up to attend the march. I’m guessing he had planned to spend a peaceful day of prayer, and then I happened to sit right next to him on the bus. By the time we arrived in D.C., Joe had kindly agreed to stay with our group and be the leader of the pack. He found a six-foot long stick and attached one of our neon green bandannas to it for a “banner.” As we moved along, it was fairly easy to stay the course and navigate through the crowd as we marched up Constitution Avenue. Thanks Joe! You were a God-send.

One very special part of the rally that many do not know about is the event that takes place the evening before the rally. Thousands in D.C. spend the night in prayer. Over 20,000 pilgrims from across the nation pray through the night for an end to abortion and a greater respect for all human life. It is held at the Basilica of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception.

The vigil schedule includes the opening Mass, celebrated in the Great Upper Church with several hundred priests in attendance. Prayer continues throughout the night with the National Rosary for Life, Night Prayer and Holy Hours for Life. The following morning, the prayer vigil concludes with Morning Prayer, Benediction and the Closing Mass. Then, these 20,000 marchers join several hundred thousand others as they March for Life.

To be there among hundreds of thousands of high school and college students chanting, “We are the pro-life generation!!” is too emotional and inspiring to put into words. Although there are plenty of grey-haired children of God among the annual crowd, the young are definitely taking over. Amidst all of these young people, you will see hundreds of bright-eyed young religious men and women walking along with their peers. The crowd roared when Julia Johnson, a senior from Shanley High School, a Catholic school in Fargo, N.D., stepped to the podium. Administrators had shut down her school that week, so all of its students could attend the event. “We packed 400 pro-life warriors into eight buses,” Julia told the crowd. “We have traveled 24 hours to come to D.C. to be a witness to life in our nation’s capital. We are the pro-life generation!”

If you have ever considered, but then hesitated to sign up for March for Life, I encourage you to sign up next year!
Our Enduring Legacy (continued from page 1)

Bishop Gainer has been nothing but supportive of the work that we have done and the work that lies ahead of us. Like those who went before him, he has sealed, with his stamp of approval, our mission, the value of our historic and beautiful church and facilities and our enduring role in the local and larger Church. On December 3, 2014, members of our Finance and Legacy Committees joined the Bishop and his College of Consultants at the Cardinal Keeler Center in Harrisburg where we were given God’s blessing to begin raising the 6.6 million dollars necessary to complete “Our Enduring Legacy.”

Certainly seems like a lot of money, and it is. Some may even argue, “Why try to do so much?” Why not just keep our church and facilities running pretty much as they are? Well, actually much of the Legacy Project will do just that, replace systems that need to be replaced anyway, like heating, plumbing and electrical, all identified as needing to be replaced by our Asset Review Study. But the bigger issue is that we really can’t just keep things as they are; not if we really care about the present and future needs of our community. Either we continue to allow our parish facilities to become more and more impractical for our vibrant parish’s life, worship and ministry or we get busy removing the obstacles we have to the ministries and growth we know God is calling us to now and in the future.

We can do this if we all do our part! Through three years of true sacrificial giving and prayer we will reach our goal. This is not impossible. Our ancestors rebuilt St. Mary’s Church three times and added necessary additions to the convent twice, all at great personal sacrifice, to meet their needs and ours for the past 274 years. In the same way, “Our Enduring Legacy” addresses the impediments we have to the vibrancy of our life and mission today in a way that will also bless those who will follow us. We stand in the company of saints joining our sacrifices to theirs!

Still need to be convinced? Ask yourself, “What is Historic Saint Mary’s really worth?” In architectural design, materials and art alone, St. Mary’s is irreplaceable. But to speak only of these things is to miss the even greater value of our church. To Lancaster, the Diocese of Harrisburg and the Universal Church, from parishioners weekly seeking to grow in holiness through the good times and the bad on this beloved-sacred ground, to the struggling neighbors looking for the compassionate face of Christ to meet their temporal needs, to visitors and those just passing by looking for peace and consolation when they are far from home as well as to pilgrims from near and far seeking blessing and inspiration, Historic St. Mary’s is PRICELESS!

Each one of us has a story, a life changing moment of conversion, inspiration, consolation or healing, a memory of a wedding, a baptism, a funeral or a time of need when St. Mary’s was nothing less than a life-giving Mother to us, a place where she revealed to us the beautiful face of her Son. We have been richly blessed, given so much and gifted with an incredible parish built by the sweat and sacrifices of those who have gone before us… we know that now is our time. Pray for and participate generously in our campaign. This is “Our Enduring Legacy.”

In Christ’s Peace,

Decorating St. Mary’s.

Pick the coldest Sunday of the year and that’s when our ever-faithful decorators are outside beautifying the fence along Vine and Prince Streets with bows and garland and hanging wreaths on all the doors of the church and rectory. That’s only the beginning. Under the faithful direction and guidance of Alan Szymanski and Mary Walters, many volunteers spend more than 30 hours on seven different days in church placing poinsettias and other flowers, erecting trees, stringing lights, making bows and setting up the stable with all its Christmas characters. We are so grateful to this marvelous committee for making St. Mary’s a real showpiece, where parishioners and visitors alike are in awe at what they experience as they enter our sacred space during the Christmas season.
By Tina Skubon

I have been staying pretty positive about the cold and snow this winter and have not complained about it, but wow! What a winter! In spite of the challenges that the weather has given us, we’ve been busy and completed some projects.

Church. The exterior west wall of the church was spot repointed a couple of weeks ago, along with some extra work on the arch above the third window that had a large crack that continued up to the gutter system($7,300). This should prevent the interior wall crack near St. James from getting worse. We looked at replacing the church floors, which also includes removal and refinishing pews, and the cost was out of our budget for the time being.

Cafeteria/School. Quite a few ministries use our cafeteria. This past weekend alone, there were five different groups (including a Cursillo). We do not have a cafeteria supervisor on staff, so a couple of years ago Joe Clupp stepped up to oversee our kitchen facilities to assure that we are safe and healthy (and to keep us out of the newspapers!). We recently passed another health inspection with flying colors. Many thanks to Joe!

Asset Reserve Study. How do we choose what to work on? In 2007 the Buildings and Grounds Committee enlisted the services of Reserve Advisors, Inc. who studied all our facilities, including HVAC systems, electric, flooring, painting, plumbing, fixtures, etc. They gave us a full report on what needs to be replaced in kind – when and how much it will cost in tomorrow’s dollars. Other than some items that may be taken care of with the new Legacy Project, we have followed the plan rather closely.

Parking Garage. Things are going smoothly with the transition of the garage to management by the City of Lancaster Parking Authority. Tickets are used on Saturday evenings, and the Vine Street exit gate is open on Sunday mornings. Please be good stewards of our parking garage tickets. Use them only for the duration of the Mass, the time period we currently pay for. To park in the garage beyond these hours strains our relationship with the garage and will eventually lead to them raising our fees.

Snow Removal. We looked at different options for help with the manual snow shoveling that our church campus requires. The response for volunteer help wasn’t what we had hoped for, so our snow removal company has been given this added responsibility. This affected our snow-removal budget at almost $6,000 so far. Perhaps we can revisit this issue in the future.

Personnel. Julie Rasp was hired as a part-time secretary for the Capital Campaign from December through June. She has a lot of responsibilities, and we are very grateful for the work she is doing.

Offertory. We are changing envelope companies in July. You’ll see much more attractive, colorful envelopes, and we’ll be saving about $1,300 the first year. Electronic giving now constitutes over ten percent of our total offertory. The feedback from people about the company we chose to work with us on this (Our Sunday Visitor) is extremely positive. For more information, please go to our website, www.stmaryslancaster.org, and choose “Online Giving” at the very top.

A Lot of weddings. We have 25 weddings on the calendar for 2015. Because ground breaking will likely occur right after Easter 2016, we have very few weddings on the books for 2016.

Assistance to Parishioners and Local Community. Through the efforts of five volunteers, each of whom is assigned one day per week, our parish provides assistance to our local community and parishioners (the latter being handled by the pastor and parish manager). Since the beginning of July, we have received 69 requests for assistance with rent, utilities and a myriad of other things. Of these, 16 were helped and two are pending. Some reasons why someone could be denied assistance: we recently assisted them, we discover that their story is false, it might be for a request with which we normally do not assist such as bus fare or cell phone bill, the client does not do what we ask of them, their balance is so high that what we can offer won’t be of assistance, our calls are not returned by the client, etc.
Put Your Trust in the Lord.

By Joe Clupp

Sister Joan Noreen, OLME (Our Ladies Missionaries of the Eucharist) often reminds the members that when they pray with scripture, they need to linger over it and savor it. She reminds us that scripture is like a fine wine or a cordial which we should allow time to taste its full flavor. As we read through the scriptures in this upcoming Easter season, let us allow the words to wash over us and be immersed in the Word of God.

In one of the daily Gospel readings during the second week of Easter, we hear the story of the loaves and fishes from John 6:1-15. Jesus, wanting to feed the crowd, tests Philip by asking him where they could get enough food to feed the multitude. Philip responds in the way I would. He crunches the numbers and makes an estimate of what it would require to accomplish the task in human terms, implying the impossibility of the task. Andrew chimes in and points out that the little they do have will be woefully insufficient.

Philip and Andrew fall into the same trap that we do. They only look at the situation through human eyes and not through the lens of faith. When faced with the prospect of supporting the parish through my offertory and Lenten appeal and Capital Campaign, along with my other expenses, I do the same thing. I rely on my calculations and spreadsheets and financial advisor and say, “It can’t be done.”

But Jesus is not limited by our lack of vision. At the Transfiguration a cloud overshadowed Peter, James and John and they heard the voice of God tell them, “This is my beloved Son, listen to Him.” At the wedding feast of Cana the Blessed Mother tells the attendants, and us, “Do whatever He tells you.” He already knows what He is going to do. And here is where the disciples do not fail. They do what they are asked to do and have the people gather to be fed. They do not know how He will feed them, but they place their trust in Jesus, who not only feeds them but provides them with an abundance!

When I rely on myself, whether it is financial or otherwise, and come up with, “I can’t,” it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. I might even be tempted to look to Luke 14 and say that Jesus directs me to make those assessments as He points to the man building the tower or the king preparing for war. But there He is talking about knowing what is being asked of someone who says they want to be a disciple; to be totally committed to Him. Rather, I need to reflect on Luke 1 and the Blessed Mother’s fiat and her trust in the Lord so I can be totally committed to the departing words of Gabriel, “Nothing will be impossible with God.”

Choir Performs at Yule Concert.

By Stephanie Sands

Once again the St. Mary choir participated in the 28th Annual Christmas Festival of Choirs (St. Mary’s hosted this concert in 2013). This yearly concert, widely known as the Twelfth Night Concert, was held on January 4, 2015 and was hosted by St. Leo the Great Church. In addition to the Lancaster Catholic High School Choir and St. Leo the Great Choir, we were joined by these parish choirs: St. Richard’s, St. Peter’s-Columbia, Our Lady of Lourdes, Mary, Mother of the Church, Holy Trinity, St. Anthony of Padua and Sacred Heart of Jesus.

As a music director, it is always a joy to hear the offerings of other choirs. Each choir is allowed two songs totaling six minutes. We sang “Gentle Mary Laid Her Child” and “Morning Star.” Whether it is purity of sound or an interesting arrangement, or energy, passion or precision - big or small, these choirs give all they’ve got to the Lord. The host church is always packed and we traditionally finish the program with all choirs and anyone else who knows it, standing while singing the “Hallelujah Chorus” from Handel’s Messiah. It’s a glorious sound and a wonderful way to extend the Christmas season. I hope you will join us next season!
Students Compete in Faith Bee.

By Anne Barnes

At the beginning of February, our seventh and eighth grade students took a test given to us by the diocese to qualify them for the parish round of the Diocesan Faith Bee. Nine of the top ten students took part in an oral Parish Faith Bee on February 8, between our Sunday Masses. The following students made it to the parish level bee.

**Eighth graders:** Anna Peris, Noah Bennett, Peter Krimmel, Bella Beiler and Anastasia Peña

**Seventh graders:** Abby Nagel, Izzy Hayes, Colin Morrisette and Evan Hart

They needed to know the answers to questions such as:

- Which 20th century Pope, who is also a canonized saint, lowered the age for reception of Holy Communion to the age or reason (around seven years old)?
  
  (Answer: Pope Pius X)

- What are the three vows professed by members of religious orders?
  
  (Answer: poverty, chastity, and obedience)

- Which of the cardinal virtues helps us to give a person what is owed to him or her?
  
  (Answer: justice)

Anna Peris won the bee, and Colin Morrisette came in second. Ordinarily the winner would head to Harrisburg to represent St. Mary’s at the Diocesan Faith Bee. But Anna is unable to attend, so Colin Morrisette will represent the parish on March 26.

Student’s Project on EWTN’s Facebook.

A Resurrection Catholic School sixth grade student’s National History Day project on Mother Angelica, founder of the television network Eternal Word, was posted on the EWTN Facebook page.

Cody McSherry’s project and photo received 2,689 likes, 167 comments and 159 shares at last count on the Facebook page. He is pictured below with his display which took first place for sixth grade.

St. Mary’s parishioner Karen Morrisette talked to Cody about his research project and shared his photo with EWTN. Morrisette is the diocesan representative for EWTN.

Violinist Performs at Church and at School.

Drew Peris, sacristan, altar server and member of the ensemble that plays during Mass at St. Mary’s, was the second place finisher in the senior division, grades 10-12, of the 2015 Instrumental Music Competition on Sunday afternoon, March 15, at Barshinger Center for Musical Arts at Franklin & Marshall College. Drew performed Vivaldi’s Spring from The Four Seasons.

St. Mary’s Vacation Bible School!

Expedition Everest:
Conquering Challenges with God’s Mighty Power

**Monday-Friday, June 22-26**
9:00 am to 12:00 noon

Look for registration information in April.

To ask questions or to volunteer, contact Laurie Weitzel at laurie.weitzel@gmail.com or Anne Barnes at reled@stmaryslancaster.org.
**Sister Takes Key Vows.**

*By Brian Eltz*

Poverty. Chastity. Obedience. These are the Evangelical Counsels, sometimes called the Counsels of Perfection. While all are called to holiness, some are called in a special way to consecrate their lives to God, and the public profession of these vows marks the beginning of the beautiful life of a consecrated religious. Sister Mary Magdalene of the Divine Heart, O.C.D. (St. Mary’s own Channing Dale) took these vows at the Carmel of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph in Elysburg, PA on Sunday, February 1, 2015.

The ceremony itself was a private one within the cloister—with Sr. Mary Magdalene making her First Vows to God in the presence of Mother Stella Marie (the Prioress) and her fellow Carmelite sisters. On Monday, February 2 (the Feast of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary, aka *Candlemas Day*), a Sung Mass, or *Missa Cantata*, was celebrated in the Carmel’s chapel, with many of Sister’s family and friends joining in prayer and praise. Fr. Leo delivered the homily to the small congregation, made up of the sisters behind the grill, chapel regulars, Sister’s parents and siblings, friends from St. Mary’s, and a couple of Carmelite seminarians who traveled from Wisconsin to be there to show their support for Sister Mary Magdalene as she continues on her journey.

Sister greeted everyone in the meet-room after Mass, wearing her new white veil, crowned with flowers. After a year and a half behind the monastery’s walls, she still speaks somewhat louder than the other sisters, whose whispered voices are sometimes hard to decipher. It will be three years before she takes her Final Vows, so we will see if she becomes more soft-spoken in that time. Even if her voice becomes quieter, her prayers will be heard all the greater, and she expressed how she always remembers the people of St. Mary’s in her prayers. Please remember her, and all the sisters in Carmel, in yours.

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**St. Mary’s Consecration Stones.**

*By Frank Croce and Betty Anne O’Brien*

Have you ever noticed these square stones that hang on our interior church walls? They are marble with a gold cross in the middle and there are twelve of them...six on each side. They are consecration crosses, which show where the bishop anointed our church with chrism or holy water in order to consecrate it. The candle in front of each cross is to be lit on the anniversary of the consecration. These crosses signify the sanctity of our church.

Our church was consecrated on March 19, 1854 (161 years ago) by Bishop Neumann.

From the *Intelligencer and Journal* of March 21, 1854: "The new and beautiful Catholic Church in this city - St. Mary’s of the Assumption - was consecrated to the service of God, on Sunday last (March 19, 1854), with appropriate ceremonies by the Right Reverend Bishop Neumann, Bishop of the Diocese." [At that time St. Mary’s was in the Diocese of Philadelphia.]


"It was a cold and bitter morning; the services began at 6 a.m. and lasted until 9 a.m., being conducted with closed doors. The congregation began to assemble and stood shivering outside before the ceremonies were concluded. Father Keenan came to the side door of the church and admitted Mr. Joseph F. Altick to the edifice so that he could arrange his music for the High Mass which followed. He saw the concluding ceremonies and that candles which were fastened to the consecration blocks in the wall by a metal bracket were burning....

S.M. Sener, Esq., who is a convert to the church of twenty-one years standing and is forty years of age, and who had studied the history of St. Mary’s Church since in company with the late Daniel A. Altick, who was a member of the building committee in 1853 and 1854, on visiting St. Mary’s Church, pointing to the consecration stones, asked Mr. Altick what they were. Mr. Altick replied, "They are the marks put up by Bishop Neumann when he consecrated our church to show that it was consecrated....

The church was dedicated and consecrated on the same day in 1854, and a small balance of debt which remained on the church was assumed by a half dozen male members of the congregation and guaranteed by Father Keenan....

William B. Altick states that he remembers the existence of the consecration marks or stones upon the wall ever since he was a child; that they were there before the fire in 1867, and that they had a small metal attachment to them holding a candle, the hole in which said brackets were fastened remaining and being visible in said stones today."
First Reconciliation.
Father Leo celebrated the sacrament of Reconciliation with our second graders on January 31. He said, “It was a blessing to celebrate this second Baptism with them as they now prepare for their First Holy Communion! Just as Baptism is the nuptial bath that prepares us for the wedding feast of the Lamb in the Eucharist, so this sacrament of healing is always available to us as we seek ever greater union with God. Congratulations to these boys and girls; may they always know how precious they are to Him.”

Thirty-One Confirmands Receive the Holy Spirit.
Confirmation was held Friday night, February 27, at 7:00 pm at St. Philip’s Church. Bishop Gainer gave a beautiful homily and confirmed 31 of our students. Following the Liturgy of the Word there was a general imposition of hands; the Bishop prayed for the Holy Spirit to come down upon those who had already been regenerated through the waters of Baptism. "Send forth upon them your sevenfold Spirit of the Holy Paraclete." He then anointed the forehead of each with chrism saying: "Be sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit," to which our students replied, “Amen.” They then exchanged the Sign of Peace. A beautiful liturgy of the Eucharist followed. Congratulations to all our confirmands.
St. Mary’s Annual Eucharistic Devotions  
(Forty Hours)

Sunday-Tuesday, April 26-28
Service at 7:00 pm each evening

Rev. Bernardo Pistone has been invited to Historic St. Mary’s Church to preach St. Mary’s Annual Eucharistic Devotions (Forty Hours). Fr. Pistone will be sharing reflections on the three Francises: Pope Francis, St. Francis Xavier, who was a Jesuit as Pope Francis is (the Jesuits established St. Mary’s parish in 1741) and St. Francis of Assisi.

The three Francises teach us that the Lord’s Supper is the source of nourishment for our Christian lives. They have much to teach us concerning the Eucharist. Pope Francis says going to the Eucharist is like going to the “emergency room.” St. Francis Xavier says the celebration of the Eucharist totally empowers us to bring people to Christ. (History tells us that he baptized more than 40,000 Asians.) St. Francis of Assisi instructs us to bring God’s love without using any words.

Fr. Pistone was pastor at St. Mary’s Church from November 1987 to June 2002. He also served as assistant pastor here 1974 to 1979.

Resurrection Catholic School announces “Rock the Church.”

By Donna Walker

The four parishes that support Resurrection Catholic School – St. Mary’s, St. Joseph’s, St. Anthony’s and San Juan Bautista – have enthusiastically agreed to join together in an event to support the school’s annual appeal.

The choirs and music groups from each of the four parishes will appear May 15, 7:00 pm for “Rock the Church.” Each of the groups will perform their favorite pieces throughout the evening at St. Anthony of Padua Church.

“Our parish choirs possess great talent and each has its own special sound, so we are in for a treat when we see them together,” said Resurrection School Principal, Brenda Weaver. “We are grateful for their support and we hope everyone will come to ‘Rock the Church’ for Resurrection School.”

The event is free though donations may be offered.

A musical CD of the songs of the choirs and ensembles will be available upon entry for a free will donation, but supplies are limited. St. Anthony’s music director Bill Grabowski will produce the CD.

Permanent Diaconate Class.

Excerpts taken from the Catholic Witness

Bishop Gainer announced on February 17 that he is opening enrollment for a formation class for the permanent diaconate. The class will consist of a course of studies, including theology as well as pastoral, spiritual and human formation. Requirements are that the man be Catholic, received the Sacraments of Initiation, be active in the Church, be at least 30 years old and less than 62 years of age, and be in a stable marriage, if married.

The word “deacon” is taken from the Greek word diakonos meaning servant or minister. Becoming a deacon is a vocation, so before he can begin the formation process, the man must discern if he is really being called by Christ. The aspirancy year focuses on discerning, which is followed by four years of study and preparation for ordination which will take place in the spring of 2020.
Holy Week/Easter Schedule.

Holy Thursday, April 2
7:00 pm—Mass
8:00-10:00 pm—Confessions

Good Friday, April 3
1:30 pm—Seven Last Words
1:30-2:45 pm—Confessions
3:00 pm—Good Friday Liturgy
7:00 pm—Stations of the Cross

Holy Saturday, April 4
11:00 am—Blessing of Food Baskets
3:30-5:00 pm—Confessions
8:00 pm—Easter Vigil Mass

Easter Sunday, April 5
7:00 am, 8:30 am & 11:00 am—Masses

Seven Last Words of Jesus.
Jerry Welte tells us, “There is a reverence attached to last words that make them rise above everyday speech. To utter last words is to leave behind a testament to reassure and a legacy to inspire followers. Christ gives us seven last words as a final confirmation of his gospel.”

It has been a tradition at St. Mary’s for parishioners to speak on The Seven Last Words of Jesus on Good Friday. The speakers and their words for this year are:

First Word: “Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do.” (Jeff Mills)

Second Word: “Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise.” (Courtney Nowak)

Third Word: “Woman, behold your son.” “Son, behold your mother.” (Mary McCafferty)

Fourth Word: “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Michael Lambert)

Fifth Word: “I thirst.” (Danielle Parker)

Sixth Word: “It is finished.” (Regina Streb)

Seventh Word: “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” (Derek Nowak)

Our Newest Parishioners.

Looking at the Cross.
A poem for Good Friday by Ellen Spencer
As I look up at the cross I see, The Guiltless Lamb who died for me. I see the thorns that adds to the pain, In the form of a crown.
His born for my gain. It is hard to look upon those stripes so bloody & wide, deep & thin, Not that they were undeserved, but just payment for MY sin. So how is it that Jesus is up there, while I remain unscathed? Because of what He Himself has said... “There is NO OTHER WAY”!
The sky grew dark, the thunder rolled, the very earth shook; rock and stone, The penalty paid; “It is Finished” crossed His lips, and the furious wrath of God was shown. Indeed the innermost veil of the temple was torn by God above, Not only was God’s wrath poured out But Grace, such undeserving Love. God was supplying His very own Son. Jesus came as both sacrifice and priest; that we might be reconciled to God, and partake in the Passover Feast. Don’t you see what’s been done here? What a great price has been paid! When all the sins of the world, were upon Jesus Christ laid. And He willingly bore them, out of His perfecting love, that we might be with Him forever and in eternity above.

Our newest parishioners, posing for a photo before being treated to a lovely luncheon.
Candle Mystery Solved.

Back in 1991, when Fr. Pang Tcheou was a teenager, he was the sacristan at St. Mary’s under the tutelage of Father Bernardo Pistone. At the time, he was charged with changing the candles in the candle holders and the candelabras. Much to the dismay of this perfectionist, the candles would never stand up straight after he inserted the new ones.

Julia Gottschall enters the scene to discover that these candelabras are a disgrace with built-up wax and in disrepair. She decides to figure out why they can no longer hold the candles upright.

The only solution was to take them apart. When she took the candelabras apart, she discovered that the inside rods were broken and rusted. Julia’s brothers always told her if something needed to be fixed, and if you didn’t have the part, you could make a part if none was available.

Julia goes to handy man, Sam Spearing, who drives out to Hechinger’s to find that you can buy threaded rods by the yard. Of course, the rods had to be cut to fit down the center of the four large candelabras and the 52 candles that rested on them. Off to work they went, removing the old rods and cutting and fitting all the new ones.

Julia began the almost insurmountable task, which took all of Lent, to remove all the old wax from the candelabras, the followers and the candle holders. Once cleaned, they needed to be polished. So from her box of tricks, she brought out Brasso, a polish, a paring knife and a toothbrush. With the addition of a lot of elbow grease, the candelabras looked like new.

A teary-eyed Pang was ecstatic on Holy Thursday when he saw the candles standing up straight for the first time.

From then on, Julia made sure that all the candelabras were cleaned and polished every Lent. In the last five years, she has had help from Tommie Willenbring. These ladies now have the cleaning and polishing down to a science. What a gift to God to beautify His altar.
Regular Mass Schedule

Monday through Friday
12:05 pm

Saturday
5:30 pm (Vigil)

Sunday
8:30 am and 11:00 am

Holy Days
5:30 pm (Vigil)
12:05 pm and 7:00 pm

Confessions
Saturday 4:00 to 5:00 pm

Free parking is available in the Central Parking Garage for all weekend Masses.