Past, Present and Future.

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,
Advent is upon us and Christmas will quickly follow. So before I forget... have a spirit-filled Advent and a glorious Christmas! Of course, our Christmas Season embraces New Year’s Eve and Day, the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God and yes, the beginning of our Parish’s 275th Jubilee Anniversary Celebration.

What a wonderful year we have ahead of us! Not only will we be breaking ground on the first phase of our Enduring Legacy Project, a project that will equip us for the vibrant future of ministry that stands before us, but we will be celebrating the monumental milestone of having served the Catholic and nearby community since Pope Benedict XIV, that’s two Benedicts and a total of 19 Popes ago. The Parish Pastoral Council and the Legacy Committee are diligently planning events for this incredible, historical moment. But let us be present to this prayerful and reflective time of Advent. It is a season to look forward to not only our future participation in Christ’s mission but also His coming in glory. It is a time to look back with gratitude. In so doing, I am so grateful for all God has accomplished in and through you. Take time to reflect on the numerous articles in this delightful newsletter! You will find stories not only of the most recent blessings our parish has experienced but also a sampling of the past accomplishments of our fine ministries. Our church family is visibly growing in faith, hope and love.

Since this is the Year of Mercy, I’d like to say a brief word about mercy and courage. In today’s world, it takes courage to share the mercy, truth and love of God which is definitely obvious in you. Recent examples include the reemergence of our Saint Paul Street Evangelization under the direction of Annie Celotto, the reorganization of our Friday Night Community Meal under the guidance of Ruth Davis and Jet Visneski with the onsite leadership of new facilitators: Joe Clupp, Bill, Carol and Kate Moody, Fred and Gigi Rogers, Stan Setlock, Chris Morriseotte, Steve Wissler, Brendan Whalen, Tom and Joan Willig, Tim Bianchi, Ron Dusablon and Kris Blair, and the prayerful presence of the brave souls who supported the Fall 40 Days for Life Campaign under the leadership of Trevor Martenson and Karen Morrisette. You are all courageous in saying “yes!”

But there are also countless other more hidden examples of this parish’s courage and mercy as you and your brothers and sisters in Christ live lives of sacrificial love sharing the mercy of Christ in your homes, neighborhoods and in the larger community. Together we seek opportunities to support other organizations that are really making a difference in the lives of the most needy in our midst; these organizations are most grateful to you. Individually, we also seek ways to relieve the suffering of those around us through prayer, listening, caring and constantly reaching out to lighten the burdens of those around us. As a pastor, I couldn’t be more proud of the work you do in Christ’s name. In a “live and let live” world, going out to touch the lives of others requires courage. I know you have been bruised at times, and yet you don’t give up! Your willingness to serve in the face of personal sacrifice reminds me of Pope Francis’ beautiful and challenging words, “It is true that going out on to the street implies the risk of accidents happening, as they would to any ordinary man or woman. But if the Church stays wrapped up in itself, it will age. And if I had to choose between a wounded Church that goes out on to the streets and a sick, withdrawn Church, I would definitely choose the first one.” We are a Church that will be ever young and vibrant.

Savor your Advent, enjoy your Christmas and celebrate your 275th Anniversary with joy! God has so much in store for us. Let us open our hearts to the blessings, and let us extravagantly share our joy with the world!

In Christ’s Peace,
40 Days for Life.

Historic St. Mary’s played a vital role in Lancaster’s eighth 40 Days for Life campaign, which concluded on November 1. 40 Days for Life is a community-based campaign that takes a determined, peaceful approach to showing local communities the consequences of abortion in their own neighborhoods, for their own friends and families. It puts into action a desire to cooperate with God in the carrying out of His plan for the end of abortion. It draws attention to the evil of abortion through the use of a three-point program: prayer and fasting, constant vigil, and community outreach.

The 40-Day campaign tracks Biblical history, where God used 40-day periods to transform individuals, communities... and the entire world. From Noah in the flood, to Moses on the mountain, to the disciples after Christ’s resurrection, it is clear that God sees the transformative value of His people accepting and meeting a 40-day challenge.

Since the first coordinated 40 Days for Life campaign took place in Texas in 2007, the movement has quickly grown and now has been conducted in 692 cities in 32 different countries with over 650,000 individual participants! God has used the movement in amazing, tangible ways: 10,942 confirmed babies saved from abortion, 121 abortion workers quit their positions, and 64 abortion facilities have closed.

Teaming up with seven other local churches, St. Mary’s volunteered to staff the peaceful vigil in front of Planned Parenthood’s local abortion referral center at 31 S. Lime Street every Monday. Thanks to the faithful dedication and prayer of dozens of parishioners, several visits from our pastor Fr. Leo, and the joyful appearance of our Youth Ministry, St. Mary’s made a huge impact in this local movement that God has been using right here in our community. Over the past four years we know of at least five lives that have been spared from abortion because of our presence; God willing, there are many more that we will never know about until we meet them in heaven! We trust that our Lord can use these efforts to help end abortion in Lancaster, our nation, and the world.

Mass of Anointing.

By Mary McCafferty

The Mass of Anointing was held this year on September 20, 2015. Thanks to all of the wonderful volunteers, it seemed to go along seamlessly. From those who offered rides to the homebound, those assisting parishioners from their cars into the church, those who organized and gave their time to prepare the beautiful Mass, to those unseen volunteers who donated food and were in the rectory preparing the luncheon to be enjoyed afterwards, it was a day that brought joy to many. Together, Fr. Leo and Fr. Pistone concelebrated Mass and anointed over fifty parishioners. There were the young, the old and those in between; those aided by wheelchair, walker and cane; those in need of physical and spiritual healing. When all was said and done, it was a group that had received the benefit of God’s grace as our priests laid hands on them, prayed over them and anointed them with the Oil of the Sick. Fr. Pistone commented that it was wonderful to see so many familiar faces. Kelsi Chuprinski, an Extraordinary Minister, commented that it brought tears to her eyes as she had never experienced anything as beautiful as assisting in the sacrament of Anointing of the Sick.
Ministry Fair.

By Ramon Estevez

We are truly blessed to be part of a faithful and engaged parish community that seeks to serve the Lord not only in prayer but also in action. This became clear at our last Ministry Fair held the weekend of October 3-4.

Despite the cold and wet weather that storm Joaquin brought to our region the whole first week of October, the 70+ ministries that were showcased at our cafeteria warmed us all. We became aware of the graces we received from God through all these ministries and the good they have done. We had an opportunity to meet the many wonderful people who made these ministries possible by sharing their time and talent.

On behalf of these ministries, there were six Pastoral Parish Council (PPC) mission heads representing the Education, Evangelization, Liturgy, Social Welfare & Justice, Pastoral and Family Life missions plus various ministry members who volunteered to be there after all Masses.

The leadership of our Church was also present with both the PPC and Parish Finance Chairs. Additionally, the newly formed “Gift Discernment and Charism” initiatives under the Stewardship Committee guidance made its first official appearance at the Fair.

To top it all off, the Hospitality Committee did a great job by having very nice Fall-themed decorations and plenty of good food for everyone to enjoy.

Most tables had some samples relating to their ministries. Trifolds for each mission were available to those who were interested in learning more about a particular ministry. The “2015 Time and Talent Opportunities Booklet” was updated with the cooperation of both the Stewardship Committee and PPC mission heads; copies of it were available at the fair for people to become more acquainted with all the good work done here at St Mary’s and to learn how to participate. Please check out the revamped digital version of the booklet available at our website under “Mission/Stewardship.”

We were blessed with the fellowship and the faithful and dedicated participation of all those who were at the fair to help and share their joy in being active members who seek to expand God’s Kingdom.

If you feel compelled to become an engaged disciple and more actively participate in our Church, please contact some of the following ministries still seeking volunteers: EWTN, Saint Paul Street Evangelization, Mass Broadcast, RCIA, Panera Dough-Nation Project, Community Meals, Youth Ministry, and Hospitality.

On behalf of the Stewardship Committee, I offer a BIG thank you to all those who made this Ministry Fair possible.

Julia Gottschall (pictured here with her daughter, Julianne) was honored by Fr. Leo and the pastoral staff at a luncheon at the Olive Garden on November 17. She was presented with a framed picture of Historic St. Mary’s with a note on the reverse side thanking her for her 62 years of dedication and devotion to St. Mary’s.

Julia had also been presented with a Certificate of Commendation by Matthew Weitzel, Chairperson of the Parish Pastoral Council, during the 8:30 am Mass on Sunday, November 1, for her years of volunteer service to St. Mary’s. Julia was given a standing ovation by her family of faith.
By Tina Skubon

The Capital Campaign has us all extra busy, but we continue to maintain our beautiful church and other buildings. Most of the time our projects are proactive (see Asset Reserve Study below), but sometimes something comes up and catches us by surprise. As always, I welcome your questions and feedback.

Church. Jeff Johnson and crew (the company that conserved all three of our murals) returned to fix the frame of the center Assumption mural. It was splitting in two places. $500. Alan Szymanski has agreed to direct the decorating of our beautiful church for Christmas once again this year. This is a massive undertaking each Christmas and Easter, and volunteers are needed. Please contact Mary Walters, 293.0203.

Personnel. We have two new employees: Janice Frank as Receptionist and Isabelle Marescot as Rectory Housekeeper. They are wonderful additions to our staff, and our parish is very blessed to have them.

Parish Directory. Can you believe it is almost four years since we did our last directory? It’s time for another one next summer for our 275th Anniversary. Let’s decide now to have 100% participation for this momentous occasion!

Audits. The Diocese of Harrisburg conducted a safety audit on our parish facilities. Being that our buildings are so old, you may imagine that there were a number of items that need our attention. Many of them will be addressed in Phases Two and Three of the Legacy Project, but the Buildings and Grounds Committee is reviewing the list. We will also be audited on December 3 for our financial processes and practices.

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 August, we have received 68 requests for assistance with rent, utilities and a myriad of other things. Of these 18 were helped and four 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.

Weddings. There are usually between 30 and 40 weddings at St. Mary’s each year. However, due to the Legacy Project Phase One excavation and construction, there will not be any weddings for non-parishioners. There are only seven weddings on the calendar for 2016.

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. 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. Also, please be extra careful not to park in the spaces of our next-door neighbor, Scheid Funeral Home. They will tow our parishioner’s cars.

Offertory. Electronic giving now constitutes fifteen 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.
How Can you Pay your Capital Campaign Pledge?

There are four options to make payments on your pledge:

1. **Online Giving.** Go to our website www.stmaryslancaster.org; click on “Online Giving” on the very top line of the home page. Create an account. Enter your payment information (debit/EFT or Visa/MasterCard). Choose “Give a New Gift” and then “Capital Campaign.” You can then choose the frequency and start of your payments.

2. **Online Banking.** Go to your bank’s website and direct them to send a check to St. Mary’s. Please mark it “Legacy Project” so that it isn’t applied to your regular offerings.

3. **Weekly Envelopes.** A two months’ supply of envelopes is sent out bi-monthly. Included are two envelopes labeled “Our Enduring Legacy Capital Campaign”—one for each month. These can be put in the offertory basket during Sunday Masses. (If you don’t already receive the weekly envelopes, please call the rectory.)

4. **Regular Envelope.** Payments can be sent to the rectory office via the postal service to 119 S. Prince St., Lancaster, PA 17603. No account number is needed, but please mark the check “Legacy Project.” We have envelopes available for your convenience. Please contact the rectory office for a supply.

**Because regular offertory and Legacy Fund monies are deposited into different accounts, please write a separate check for the Legacy Fund! Thank you!**

Please call Tina Skubon in the parish office, 392.2578, if you have any questions.

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**Our Enduring Legacy Project Update.**

*By Jackie Burch*

Following a most successful parish-wide fundraising effort and capital campaign this summer (with close to $1 million of the nearly $3 million total pledged collected to date), the Preservation and Development Committee is preparing for the next critical steps in beginning Phase I of the project. This will focus primarily on improving accessibility to the main entrance of the church, first floor of the convent, and old school building.

Between now and early 2016 the following activities are expected to occur:

- Scheduling planning meetings with architect KCBA.
- Obtaining city and diocesan approvals related to easements.
- Establishing contract for Phase I design.
- Presenting final design for City and Diocesan approvals.
- Bishop Gainer will be here on April 9, 2016 for the groundbreaking.

This is an exciting time for Historic St. Mary’s as we move toward making our master plan a reality! But let us not forget the true ‘Master’ of our plans. Thank you for your continued, prayerful and financial support of our efforts and Our Enduring Legacy project!

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Pictured at left are Sara Reynolds as St. Dorothy, Elizabeth Grace Soper as our Lady of Lourdes and Caitlin Reynolds as St. Brigid who attended 8:30 am Mass on All Saints Day.

Joe Clupp lighting the candles while Tina Skubon reads the names of our beloved dead during the Candle-Lighting Ceremony on November 1.

Trish Frintzillas-Frey was honored by Fr. Leo and the pastoral staff for her years of service as receptionist in the front office at St. Mary’s. We will miss her welcoming voice. She looks forward to retirement away from the phone and the computer. We wish her well and Godspeed.
The Call of the First Disciples.

By Cathy Eisenbeil

Many exciting things have occurred since my initial meeting with the Souled Out Youth Ministry teens at the “Meet Cathy Dinner” on August 30. Although I would like to share every single memory and event, I would prefer to concentrate on what happened that evening. Initially, it seemed like curiosity attracted some of St. Mary’s youth and their friends to attend this event. Also, the enchilada lasagna and Spanish chicken stew feast probably seemed like a good reason for them to gather with others. In my case, I must admit that much prayer was offered beforehand since I would meet some of the teens from the parish for the first time.

I must even dare to admit that this thought crossed my mind, “For as the Lord uses me as an instrument, I shall use Spanish food as a supplementary tool...and Lord you take care of the rest!” Yet, more important than using these means as a resource for evangelization was the desire to please God. So, after praying for days and days to the Holy Spirit and giving it much thought, I finally got an answer from Lord. It was the message of the “The Call of the First Disciples.”

It was time for the youth of St. Mary’s to hold on to the net, to listen to their calling, and to ultimately let go to follow Jesus. The teens were told not to let go of the net, unless they were ready to give a definite and affirmative YES to the Lord. Letting go of the net meant that they would, individually, in the depths of their souls, be willing to surrender themselves to the will and mercy of God. Now, it was the time to acknowledge that time was not theirs, but that the reason for their being was to love and to glorify the Lord with every breath and in every action throughout their lives. That is what made them true disciples.

We all realized at some point during that meeting that we were there because we were simply meant to be there. It was all part of a celestial plan, in which not coincidentally, some parents had made their sons or daughters attend this dinner. The teens ended feeling a sense of belonging and fraternity like the disciples did. We were all there because our Lord wanted for our paths to cross for whatever purpose He had in mind for us. And yes, food can be a resource, and isn’t this the greatest reason we attend Mass? Ultimately, what was longed for was that these disciples stayed faithful to Jesus and to the Church, and that they did not simply walk away with empty nets. After the “Meet Cathy Dinner” the Lord unrolled a series of sequential episodes that have demonstrated that time, in fact, is His! And that even though we might become caught up in the knots of our nets that do not allow us to move forward in our faith, the Lord will always show us the means to become de-tangled from our nets...so that we are able to follow Him freely.

CHWC Fundraiser—Classical Sacred Music Concert followed by a Wine & Cheese Reception.

By Cathy Eisenbeil

The teens from St. Mary’s are once again being offered the opportunity to attend the Catholic Heart Workcamp from June the 12–18, 2016 in Virginia Beach. Our teens are so fortunate and blessed to have opportunities like these, where they are able to be active apostles and true witnesses of the Lord’s Gospel in a world where there is so much indifference to the needs of those who are marginalized. During the Catholic Heart Workcamp, teens, youth ministers and priests are able to offer their time, service, and prayers for the poor and most neglected of society. They are also offered the opportunity to participate in the sacraments and Mass. Furthermore, our teens truly make a difference when they put into action what their faith teaches them and when they show the compassion and mercy of Christ to others. Yet, the greatest blessing is seeing how CHWC positively impacts the lives of our teens and of the ones they serve.

(Continued on page 11)
Year of Mercy.

By Joe Clupp

On the vigil of the second Sunday of Easter, the vigil of the Sunday of Divine Mercy in 2015, Pope Francis announced an Extraordinary Jubilee Year of Mercy to be celebrated by the Church beginning with the Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception on December 8, 2015 and running through November 20, 2016, the Solemnity of Christ the King. We begin this Jubilee Year with Mary, our Mother, leading us, as always, to Mercy Himself, her Son, called the face of the Father’s Mercy by Pope Francis. The Church, the Bride of Christ, is called to reflect the Bridegroom, Jesus, the face of God’s mercy.

The Pope states that the “very foundation of the Church’s life” is mercy. He directs us back to St. John XXIII, who opened the Second Vatican Council, stating, “Now the Bride of Christ wishes to use the medicine of mercy rather than taking up the arms of severity.” This can sound to some as a lowering of the bar regarding the Church’s moral teachings, but as Bishop Robert Barron explained in his opening speech at the World Meeting of Families, this is not the case. He reminded us that the Church’s moral code “is extravagant but its mercy is just as extravagant.” It is not a matter of a zero sum game where we can be one or the other, but both extravagant in moral teaching and extravagant in mercy.

In Misericordiae Vultus (The Face of Mercy), the Holy Father calls on the Church to pattern herself after the Son to live in light of the words of Jesus, “Be merciful just as your Father is merciful.” He invites all those who have been wounded in some way to seek the mercy of the Church. He wishes all who have been away to return like the prodigal son to the Father, whose love is extravagant. But he also applies the motto “Merciful Like the Father” to all the members of the Church. In his homily, at the closing Mass at the World Meeting of Families, the Pope called on family members to be merciful to those closest to them by service in the little things of life. In the Papal Bull, declaring the year of Mercy, he states that, “Wherever the Church is present, the mercy of the Father must be evident,” and calls on Christian people around the world to reflect and act on the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy as a way to allow their hearts to be drawn to those in misery and suffering.

As a parish, we offer many opportunities to participate in these works of mercy, through community meals, homebound visits, Tithe the Tithe, teaching Religious Education, just to name a few. Perhaps our gifts and abilities are praying for the living and the dead through the prayer line or the funeral choir, providing clothing to the poor or visiting those in prison. The Pope calls on all of us in this Jubilee Year of Mercy to take up the call to witness to mercy bearing the weaknesses and struggles of our brothers and sisters.

“In this year of mercy may the message of mercy reach everyone,” the Pope says, “and may no one be indifferent to the call to experience mercy.”

Campfire Mass.

By Joe Clupp

Our annual Campout and Campfire Mass was another blazing success, with over 100 people attending Mass at the Lancaster County Park on October 10. Ron Dusablon and Joe Sexton shared the chef duties and made sure everyone was well fed with burgers and hotdogs beforehand. The Stratchkos provided plenty of firewood to keep the campfires burning. Those who came for the meal provided plenty of wonderful side dishes to go along with the perfect weather and a clear and star-filled night.

This annual Campfire Mass has been in existence for over ten years. Even with unpredictable early October weather, this has been a successful event. The food and fellowship along with the celebration of the Mass have provided wonderful ways to celebrate the gifts of nature that God has given us. The arched trees provide an awning over campsite number 3, offering a natural large sanctuary with low-light conditions enabling us to focus more on the Mass.

After Mass, many remained and shared time together by making s’mores and talking around the campfire until late into the night. If you missed it this year, keep your eyes opened for bulletin announcements next fall.

Father Leo celebrating Mass in the Lancaster County Park during the tenth annual Campfire Mass.
The World Meeting of Families in Philadelphia—A Once in a Lifetime Opportunity!

By Fred Rogers

The World Meeting of Families September 22-25, 2015, was a week-long celebration of the family that my wife, Gigi, myself and my two beautiful daughters, Amelia and Grace, along with her fiancé Matt, had the privilege to attend. It was an incredible experience and one that I will never forget. People from all over the world streamed into Philadelphia to celebrate the family, celebrate their Catholic faith and to celebrate Mass with our beloved Pope Francis, along with a million other of his most intimate friends.

The city of Philadelphia was essentially on lockdown for this historic event. Everywhere people were smiling, communing on the streets with bikes, baby strollers and walking...the atmosphere was filled with the love of Christ and the joy of not having to dodge traffic, as cars were banned in inner city Philadelphia during this time. If anyone had any doubts that the Catholic Church was no longer a viable entity in the world, the experience of attending this meeting would dispel those doubts. I could definitely feel the watchful eye of the Good Shepherd over these proceedings and pouring out His graces on all the attendees.

We arrived on Tuesday and attended workshops by inspirational speakers throughout the week. Two highlights of this part of the World Meeting of Families stood out for me. During a break in one of the talks I had the opportunity to meet the daughter of St. Gianna Berretta Molla, a physician, who is one of our more recent saints, dying in 1962. During her fourth pregnancy, St. Gianna developed a tumor on her uterus and was told to have an abortion and a hysterectomy. She declined doing this, and several days after giving birth to her daughter, she died. She was subsequently canonized by St. John Paul II in 1994 with her family in attendance at St. Peter’s Square (can you imagine being present to see your own mother canonized!). I met her daughter, who was the baby St. Gianna died for while giving birth. She has also become a physician. When I met this very kind, gentle woman, I definitely got the sense there was something special about her...I felt radiance and warmth that emanated from her. It gave me a sense that there was a special grace that she had been given.

The second awe-inspiring moment I had was when I attended weekday Mass with only about 20,000 people, a small gathering, in this huge amphitheater in the convention center. There were about 100 bishops and cardinals concelebrating on the stage. When we got to the Sanctus, this beautiful music filled my ears and 20,000 people sang “Holy, Holy, Holy.” I closed my eyes and imagined I was in Heaven around the throne of God with the 24 elders (Revelation 4:8-11) and all the saints and angels were singing to Him. What a glorious moment!

Saturday night had multiple festivities in the park with the Pope in attendance. The highlight for me was when Andrea Bocelli came on stage and sang the Our Father. I broke down in tears. The Pope had a wonderful message for families. He acknowledged that all is not always peaceful and harmonious in family life (‘sometimes the plates fly’), but it is through those difficult times we grow in love for each other and unite ourselves with the sacrifice of Christ.

One could easily see in Pope Francis the charisma and charm that has made him so popular with so many people. At the end of the evening as he was saying good night he reminded everyone to make sure to come back for Mass on Sunday. Then with a Cheshire grin on his face he turned to Archbishop Chaput standing next to him and asked, “Archbishop, what time is Mass tomorrow?” Everyone laughed because the Pope didn’t know what time Mass was to be held.

We planned to get to Mass five hours before time, so we would have plenty of time to find a seat. We didn’t plan well enough. There was a four hour wait in line to get through security. Whoever thinks that no one wants to go to Catholic Mass anymore should have waited in line with us!

Despite what seemed like a never-ending wait in the hot sun, everyone was in good spirits, friendly, talking, exchanging emails in new friendships and helping each other out in small acts of charity. We had lawn chairs with us that we lent to the elderly people in line around us so they could sit and not get too tired. We finally got through security by the start of the Eucharistic liturgy, found a spot to situate ourselves, and I looked around at the mass of humanity around us. I thought to myself, “How are they going to give all these people communion? There are not enough priests in the world!” An incredible thing happened shortly after the Consecration of the Body and Blood. Priest after priest after priest began marching up the road with escorts holding yellow umbrellas shielding them from the sun as they carried communion cups filled with the consecrated hosts. The procession of these yellow umbrellas seemed endless. The Eucharist was distributed and everyone was filled. I truly felt like I had witnessed the miracle of the feeding of the 5000 (Matthew 14:13-21), only in this case it was the feeding of the 500,000! The World Meeting of Families was a once in a lifetime experience I wouldn’t trade for anything. I am so glad I had the opportunity to participate in this event. It is so refreshing to see so many people from all over the world so on fire for their Catholic faith. Next stop Krakow, Poland World Youth Day 2016. We’ll see...
A Moment with Pope Francis.

By Suzanne Steppie

September 27 was a beautiful day. I woke up early to get ready to catch the 7:55 am train to Philadelphia. When I arrived at the Amtrak station in Lancaster, I was greeted by multitudes of bussed-in out-of-towners giddy with anticipation at the possibility of getting a glimpse of Pope Francis as he was saying a Papal Mass on the Benjamin Franklin Parkway that afternoon. In addition to the pilgrims at the train station, there was a Lancaster city police presence with their bomb-sniffing canine unit. Everyone was directed to the proper train car as it pulled into the station and we were off!

I had the good fortune of being able to watch Pope Francis’ arrival in the United States that week and followed him as he traveled from Washington DC, to New York then to Philadelphia. I was in awe of his chosen vehicle, the Italian Fiat instead of a large SUV like his security detail rode in.

The train arrived at 30th Street Station in Philadelphia around 9:30 am. The restrooms were closed to the public inside the station. There were uniformed officers directing us where to go, and as we walked out of the station, we were given free bottles of water for our pilgrimage. I walked out of the station to begin the trek to the parkway. Outside the station there were Pennsylvania National Guardsmen on duty. I ran into some enthusiastic Benedictine Sisters. They wore their traditional habits, but they also were wearing Pope Francis buttons, and had their Papal Mass tickets around their necks. They wanted to have their pictures taken with the guards, but they politely declined their request. We all wished one another blessings and I was off!

Making my way through the city, I noticed that aside of the literally thousands of people walking around, there were no cars or traffic. It was so nice to be able to walk in the middle of the streets! Every block or so, there were uniformed police officers and National Guardsmen. They were very polite and helpful. I bought a few souvenirs from street vendors. If there had been a concern about the 30th Street Station locking the restrooms down, it was countered by the fact that the city was lined with thousands of portable toilets!

I had to walk through a security check point complete with metal detectors before entering the Parkway on 22nd Street. It was about 1:30 in the afternoon and the Mass was at 4:00 pm. I found a spot close to the road Pope Francis would be riding past. I stood there the whole time. It was getting close to 3:30 pm and the screaming you could hear coming from the streets below us indicated that Pope Francis was close by. My heart seemed to be beating faster as I knew he was coming closer.

We heard the motorcycles, then saw the procession coming up the road. I was so nervous and was fumbling with my phone praying it was going to work. When Pope Francis rode by, I took as many pictures as I could. He was waving and smiling at everyone. He passed me. I just started to cry. I was so moved. I couldn’t believe I just saw Pope Francis. He then said Mass. It was beautiful. I just kept telling myself that I was really at a Papal Mass. It just didn’t seem real for a while. Then we had Communion. There were hundreds and hundreds of Ministers of the Eucharist with guides holding yellow umbrellas, signaling us to Communion. I was told these people were members from all the parishes of the Philadelphia Archdiocese. Everyone was very courteous and when one person received the host, they would step out of the way for another. I was amazed that Communion only took about 30 or 40 minutes. Pope Francis ended Mass by asking everyone to please pray for him.

We weren’t allowed out of the Parkway until they opened the gates. And then it was time to get back to the train station. I was praying as I walked to the station and still crying and feeling very moved. I just saw Pope Francis!

The train station was orderly and I got on the packed train without any problems. I was sitting next to a woman who was sharing her story with me about her experience and showing me her pictures. She gave me a wrist rosary. I got home after a long day, tired but felt so peaceful. I thanked God for the day, for Pope Francis and for making me Catholic. It’s everything I could have ever wanted.
Welcoming New Parishioners.

By Karen Morrisette

A luncheon for new parishioners was held on Sunday, October 18, in the rectory dining room. Hosted by the New Parishioner Luncheon Committee twice a year, new members are welcomed to our family of faith. It was a delightful afternoon as we spent time sharing stories of what first brought us, and what will keep us, at St. Mary's.

Following the traditional group photo in the church, the Gochnauer family, fascinated by the history of our church building, chatted with PPC chair Matthew Weitzel about St. Mary's Enduring Legacy Campaign and our upcoming 275th anniversary.

Erica Shimp, attending with her son, who is a fourth grade student at Resurrection, recalls how, during the Ash Wednesday Mass this past year, she was touched by the beauty of the liturgy and Father Leo's "booming message." After that, she knew this was the place to be.

Originally from Ocean Pines, MD and now Willow Valley residents, Jim and Janet Kerner agreed that Father Leo is definitely a "dynamic draw" to St. Mary's.

Although Philip Herr describes himself as "non-denominational," he is impressed with the "closeness" he feels at St. Mary's. Father Leo's "family approach" was right for his wife, Felie, a Philippine Catholic, and baby, Akira.

Life's changes brought Mike Adams to us from Lititz. Mike was already familiar with Father Leo through his Magical Revelations performances at St. James and had seen Father's homilies posted on Facebook.

John Shannon always knew about St. Mary's, but one day he wanted to bring his friend, Ginny Ashmore, to see the inside of the church. Little did they know they'd find our Julia Gottschall at her post, ready to take them on a complete tour! They ended up coming back for Mass and recall Father Leo's "genuine and loving homilies on tough topics."

Young couple, Matt Mehalick and Mary Fellin, both lifelong Catholics and former altar servers from Hazleton, noted the talent of our cantors and choir who sang at Mass that morning. They felt a "sense of community" at St. Mary's and expressed an interest in getting involved in fun fellowship opportunities, like our annual parish picnic.

A light snow was falling as the luncheon ended, the first sign of the changing seasons. Our new parishioners ushered in a new season. They are the seeds of our parish's future harvests. May our Lord Jesus Christ nurture them with His Body and Blood, and may we, our St. Mary's community, be there to support their growth in faith and charity.

Welcome!

Our Newest Parishioners.

Some of our newest parishioners attended our Fall New Parishioner Luncheon on Sunday, October 18. They were treated to a luncheon in the rectory, met some of the staff, and enjoyed a tour of the rectory building.

Front: Molly Gochnauer, Drew Gochnauer, Ali Kane holding Matthew Wilson, Nick Wilson, Felie Herr holding Akira, Philip Herr, Zachary Shimp, Erica Shimp, Bella Hirschman, Eva Hirschman, Mike Adams

Middle: Marybeth Gochnauer, Brad Gochnauer, Emma Gochnauer, Janet Kerner, Alyssa Mastropietro, Gerri Dietrick, Dick Dietrick, Erin Hirschman, Mary Fellin, Father Leo, Matt Mehalick

Back: Jim Kerner, Dan Roda, Ginny Ashmore, John Shannon, Colm Hirschman

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Office: 717.392.2578
Baptisms
Benjamin Christopher Kiley
Mia Catherine Kiley
Audrey Mae Chanko
Akira Gabrielle Herr
Raymond Jones
Tobias John Eltz
Elliott David Garpstas
Madison Ross Dominick

Marriages
M/M Nathaniel Menendez (Kelly Morgan)
M/M Kevin Hauck (Kristen Rohr)
M/M Matthew Thiel (Katharine Thomas)
M/M Robert Stephenson (Lindsey Herr)
M/M Darin LeZotte (Krista Lundberg)
M/M Giovanni Paterno (Theresa McCauley)
M/M Bradley Weeber (Kendal Frey)
M/M Garrett Dinsmore (Erin Whalen)
M/M Casey Ryan (Angela Bauman)
M/M Zachary Schober (Magdelana Wentworth)
M/M Sean Keough (Emily Woodward)
M/M Andrew Ace (Alaina Wiest)
M/M John Volovar (Jocelyn Smiley)

Deaths
David M. Hennigan
Ralph E. Gilbert Jr.
Deborah Sarah Stauffer
Chester L. Bentley II
Franklin R. Cicero
Eleanor V. Paytas
Natalie A. Destafano
Francis X. Kirchner
Marie A. Rittenhouse
Edward F. Brulke
Bernadine L. Pursel
Richard Ruhl

New Parishioners
Russel Showers
Maryann Figueroa and children Nikolas Figueroa and Xavion Montanez
Daniel Roda
Colm and Erin Hirschmann and children Isabella and Eva
Marybeth Gochnauer and children Emma, Drew and Molly
Jeremy and Victoria Scheid-Young
Lacey Saurbagh and children Paige, Jocelyn, Leigha and Rachel
Alexandra Kane and son Matthew Wilson
Nicolas Wilson
Edward and Michelle Gruver and daughter Katherine
Brad Fischer
John Shannon
James and Janet Kerner
Brad Wolf
Ronald and Tama Yarnell
Antonia Celotto
Jerome LoBianco
Donielle Stokes
Matthew Goodman
Leonard and Anonsiata Bizimana and their children Joseph, Philomene, Pelagie,
Augustin, Boniface, Faustin and Benjamin
Michael Schiraldi

Catholic Heart Workcamp Fundraiser.
(continued from page 6)
Our Church is aware that Catholic Heart Workcamp might not be affordable to many parents of teens. For this reason, we will be offering financial assistance to help to alleviate the cost for those who are unable to cover the price in full. Thankfully, several professional and experienced classical performers have agreed to perform a Classical Sacred Music Concert, followed by a Wine and Cheese Reception for the Catholic Heart Workcamp fund. The free-will offering concert will take place on January 24, 2016 at 3:00 pm in Historic St. Mary’s Church. Souled Out Youth Ministry is going to need parents and youth volunteers to help out during the concert and reception.

If you would like additional information on how you can support our teens for this cause, please contact Cathy Eisenbeil, Youth Ministry Coordinator, at cathy@stmaryslancaster.org or by calling 209.1626. Also, please help us by adding this intention to your prayers.
St. Mary’s Church
119 S. Prince St.
Lancaster, PA 17603

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.

Christmas/New Year’s Schedule

Sunday, December 20
6:30 p.m. Parish Penance Service

Thursday, December 24
5:00 p.m. Mass (Children’s Liturgy)
8:00 p.m. Mass
Midnight Mass (carols at 11:30 pm)

Friday, December 25
8:30 a.m. Mass
11:00 a.m. Mass

Thursday, December 31
5:30 p.m. & 10:30 p.m.
Vigil Masses for Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
11:30 p.m. Social in rectory after Mass

Friday, January 1
10:00 a.m. Mass for Solemnity of Mary, Mother God