



ST. MARYS DEANERY
Catholic Parishes of Mercer & Auglaize Counties



St. Aloysius, St. Joseph (Wapakoneta), St. Francis,
St. Joseph (Egypt), St. Anthony, Immaculate Conception,
St. Bernard, St. Henry, St. Augustine, St. Wendelin,
Precious Blood, St. Rose, St. Patrick, St. John (Fryburg),
St. Joseph (St. Joseph), St. Teresa, St. Peter, St. Mary,
St. John the Baptist, Holy Trinity, St. Paul, St. Sebastian,
Our Lady of Guadalupe, Holy Redeemer, Holy Rosary,
Mary Help of Christians, Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary

Northern Lights

Winter 2014—Volume 60

You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Matthew 5:14

www.stmarysdeanery.com • smdeanery@bright.net • 419-925-5022

From the Desk of the Dean

With the uncertainty and instability in the world, we might wonder sometimes whether God has left us to “fend for ourselves.” To be sure, God’s plan for our lives and our world hardly reads like a detailed set of travel instructions, but as both the Advent and Christmas seasons attest, the divine plan of salvation had been steadily unfolding for generations before the birth of Jesus. Then in Bethlehem, the refulgence of God’s glory appears in a humble manger at Bethlehem.

It’s not just 2,000 years ago. God is forever born into our world, and often in new and unexpected ways. I hope the pages of this issue of Northern Lights will remind us of how God continues to surprise us with his continual birth and life in the people of the St. Marys Deanery. I hope that for you and your family, this holy season will spark a renewed and deepened faith that will help you know the Christ who was born for our salvation and who guides us along the way.



With wishes for a blessed Christmas season, *Fr. Tom Mannebach*

Deanery Center Digest



The St. Marys Deanery Center has joined Facebook! Be sure to “Like Us” to have access to religious news, learn about area events and engage in conversation with fellow parishioners of the St. Marys Deanery!

Visit: www.facebook.com/StMarysDeanery



Our website has been remodeled and revitalized! Please check out the newly redesigned St. Marys Deanery website to find parish mass and confession times as well as links to parish websites and area religious organizations. Find your parish’s Deanery Center Board representative, electronic versions of the Northern Lights Newsletter, information on upcoming events and many great resources to enrich your faith!

Visit: www.stmarysdeanery.com

New Deanery Sponsored Event for Music Ministers! All leaders of parish music and liturgy within the St. Marys Deanery are invited to attend the first gathering of the Worship Advisory Committee on:

Thursday, March 6th from 6:30-8:00 pm at St. Marys Deanery Center, located within St. Charles.

The committee will serve as a means for area parishes to unite and find support in a common ministry by discussing subjects of common interest and concern and going through music.

Please RSVP by calling 419-925-5022 or emailing smdeanery@bright.net by February 27th.



Restorative Justice and Precious Blood Circles

By: Corey Knapke

“Rome wasn't built in a day and neither is a circle,” commented a participant in the recent Circle Training Workshop held St. Charles Center. The four-day workshop commenced in the final week of July, and for the first time since 2008, the idea of “The Circle” as a restorative justice practice, came to the Mercer County region from its foundations in the Chicago New Town (Back-of-the-Yards) neighborhood at the Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation Center. Local Precious Blood Parish members from Ottawa, Glandorf, Maria Stein, and St. Henry joined the group of 18 to learn how to listen, share, and reconcile.

The ministry of reconciliation has taken on a new meaning in Chicago, where perpetrators and victims of gang violence and incarcerated teens join in this aboriginal peace making process to find healing and forgiveness. Seeing its value in the largely black and Hispanic neighborhoods of Chicago, Precious Blood Missionaries and Sisters continue to recognize its potential in the context of the local Midwest parishes and schools of Mercer and Putnam counties. Additionally, this peace-making practice carries with it the Precious Blood charism of reconciliation fostered by the community's founder, St. Gaspar del Bufalo. His missions to reconcile brigands and townspeople in the regions surrounding Rome in the earlier 19th century are still relevant today, where bitter squabbles, feelings of abandonment, and general misunderstandings call for new life and Christ's healing power.

Participants in the recent workshop commented on the many areas of ministry and everyday life in which the Circle and its talking pieces could prove helpful. Participants also commented on how much more connected they felt to St. Gaspar and the Precious Blood community while learning with Circle Keeper Fr. Dave Kelly under the dome of St. Charles Center. There was an atmosphere of prayer and reflection that allowed Gaspar's presence to reach all gathered, and it is the hope of the group to reconvene and develop their newfound knowledge in the near future. For more information on the Circle process and its use in Chicago, visit www.pbmr.org.



*Whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just,
Whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable,
If there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise,
Think about these things.* Philippians 4:8

Formation and Prayer at the Shrine

By: Dr. Anne C. McGuire

Spring activities at the Shrine of the Holy Relics focus on faith formation and prayer. Two series, open to all, with catechetical credit available will be offered. In January and February, the series is “Church History through the Lives of the Saints,” with presenters Dr. Kevin Schmiesing and Dr. Anne McGuire. Five Sundays, January 19 - February 16, 2:00-3:30 pm, you can learn about a different era of Catholic Church history, with emphasis on a few saints whose lives impacted the development of the Church during that time. The series is \$20, or \$5 per session.

Call the Shrine to register, or just drop in and enjoy!

Anne McGuire is once again offering a presentation on the Cross in conjunction with adoration of a relic of the True Cross, during the Lenten Season. Each of the first five Sundays (2:00-3:30pm) and Mondays (7:00-8:30pm) of Lent, Anne will present a different perspective of the Cross, from that of the Gospel of John, through that of saints who had strong devotion to the Cross (Bridget of Sweden, Bonaventure, and Gertrude the Great), concluding with a reflection in music and art, and of course adoration of the Relic of the True Cross.

Two Days of Reflection will be offered for those wanting to set aside time for reflection, meditation and prayer. Denise Warnecke will lead “Leading Lives of Holiness” on Saturday, Jan 18, and Anne McGuire will lead “Praying with the Mystics” on Saturday, March 22. Call for details and to register.

The Rite of Christian Initiation

By: Linda Lunz

Foreword by: Katie Eilerman



On Holy Saturday, we welcome followers of Christ fully into the Catholic Church. Those who are brought into the church undergo the R.C.I.A. process, otherwise known as the Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults. This process is life changing not only for candidates and catechumens but for their catechists as well. Linda Lunz, Director of the R.C.I.A. process at St. John the Evangelist and St. Patrick, reflects on her involvement in the R.C.I.A. program and the impact it has on her life.

In 2003, Father Oscar Seger commissioned Deacon Nick Jurosic, a St. John parishioner, and Linda Lunz and Irene Heilers, both St. Patrick parishioners, to jointly lead the R.C.I.A. program for both parishes. All three teachers feel blessed and privileged to be able to share their faith and lead themselves and others to a closer relationship with Christ and His Church. They also feel it has been, and continues to be, a learning and growing experience for them. They have learned a lot about their faith due to the research and teaching in all the areas that our faith entails.

The two parishes have had as few as two adults join the faith at Easter Vigil and as many as eight who joined in 2012. It is rewarding and encouraging to see many of our new faith members join in and participate at our Masses and other church functions within the two parishes. This current year we have five people we are catechizing. We are helping them understand our Catholic Faith and why we do the things we do. They are all eager to learn and are asking excellent questions. We, as catechists, are also growing and learning as we teach. Our faith has been enhanced and we have grown closer to our Lord by sharing and discerning what our Catholic Church teaches.

We pray that our Lord will bless and shower His graces upon the catechumens, candidates and R.C.I.A. instructors within the Archdiocese as they prepare for their entry into the family of the Catholic Church at the upcoming Easter Vigil on April 19, 2014.

Coldwater Cluster Welcomes New Parochial Vicar

By: Katie Eilerman

Fr. Tim Ralston recently joined the Coldwater Cluster as a Parochial Vicar, otherwise known as an Assistant Pastor. Before coming to our area, Fr. Tim served at St. Charles Borromeo Parish in Kettering. When first learning of his new assignment, many people told Fr. Tim, "That's God's country!". From his short time here, Fr. Tim notes that this depiction is quite accurate and he *expects* the good behavior to continue. (Let that be a fair warning to you!)

Fr. Ralston was born and raised in Georgetown, OH which is located in Brown County. As a child, he attended Mass and CCD weekly. Faith started playing a deeper role in Fr. Ralston's life when he became a server and started interacting with priests. His discernment for the priesthood began in the ninth grade, when a CCD teacher and pastor suggested he consider the vocation. During this discernment period, Fr. Ralston attended the University of Cincinnati with an undecided major. After attending a "ministry night" at the seminary, Fr. Tim declared his focus of study as Philosophy and entered Mount St. Mary's Seminary two years after graduating college.



Fr. Tim Ralston

As a priest, Fr. Ralston loves celebrating the sacraments and acting as an instrument in bringing God's grace to others. Fittingly, his personal mantra is from Galatians 2:20, "It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me." This verse eloquently defines the vocation of priesthood. Just like many who become priests or consecrated religious, Fr. Tim was not always certain of his vocation. Let us be like the CCD teacher and pastor in Fr. Tim's life, who began to plant the seed for his discernment. Let us also continue to pray for vocations so more men like Fr. Tim will answer God's call.

The Gift of Life

By: Katie Eilerman

My husband and I recently bought a new home, which necessitated the need for me to sort through boxes of my childhood keepsakes. In one box, I found piles of Disney stationary I had received as a child. I remember loving these items and my anticipation to use them. However, I always waited to use the items, thinking that whatever I was going to do with them would be a waste. Now, I am finding them fifteen years later and to be honest, I am not quite as eager to use Disney stationary anymore.



This situation made me think, “How often do I just wait?” Wait to spend time with my daughter until all of the dishes are done; wait to go outside until all of the laundry is put away; wait to enjoy my life. We have a habit of waiting so long that we miss the moments in life that mean the most.

At night all we are left with is a sleeping baby who never got to play with her mom and a darkened sky that was never experienced in the light of day.

While I am fully aware that we must uphold our responsibilities, I have learned that we can stop and enjoy our lives amidst our duties. Don't wait for the big annual vacation to stop your whirlwind of a life. Stop everyday to be thankful for the gifts God has given to you and show appreciation for these gifts by really experiencing them. Whether it is waiting to mow the grass until you have used your gift of music to play the piano for ten minutes or waiting to get groceries until you have experienced your gift of friendship and spent a few moments on the phone with a friend.

My U.D. Flyer past brings me to a Dayton legend, Erma Bombeck. The following are excerpts from a piece written by Erma, entitled “If I had my life To Live Over”.

“If I had my life to live over, I would have talked less and listened more... I would have invited friends over to dinner even if the carpet was stained and the sofa faded... I would have burned the pink candle sculpted like a rose before it melted in storage... I would have sat on the lawn with my children and not worried about grass stains... I would have cried and laughed less while watching television - and more while watching life...”

“Instead of wishing away nine months of pregnancy, I'd have cherished every moment and realized that the wonderment growing inside me was the only chance in life to assist God in a miracle...There would have been more "I love you's"... More "I'm sorrys" ...But mostly, given another shot at life, I would seize every minute... look at it and really see it ... live it...and never give it back.”

Did you know? On weekdays, the celebration of daily Mass is streamed live at 9:30 am on catholictv.com, followed by the recitation of the rosary at 10:00 am. On Sunday, Mass is celebrated at 10:00 am. Check in at any other time of the day to hear Catholic news and see other great Catholic programming.

Spiritual Center of Maria Stein

By: Robin Goettemoeller

It's cold outside, but it's warm inside the Spiritual Center of Maria Stein! Stop by our gift shop, have a cup of coffee, or visit the Chapel anytime to pray and spend time with God.

Join us the first Sunday of each month for Evening Prayer and Benediction, which begins with the Rosary at 5:45 p.m. Healing Masses will take place Tuesdays, March 11, April 8, and May 13 with Fr. John Tonkin presiding. All are welcome to attend these liturgies that offer the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. Married couples looking for something to do on Valentine's Day are encouraged to register for the “Evening to Celebrate Marriage” on Saturday, February 15th. Youth in grades 8-12 are invited to attend the “Theology of the Body” retreat on March 7th -9th.

Call 419-925-7625 for more information or check our website for these and other events going on this winter at www.spiritualcenter.net.

Missionaries of the Precious Blood Celebrate 200th Anniversary

Reflection By: Fr. Andy O'Reilly, C.P.P.S. Foreword by: Katie Eilerman

**The Dream
Continues...**



Many of the parishes within the St. Marys Deanery are served by the Precious Blood Community in various capacities, whether as pastors, brothers, sisters or lay companions. The retired religious of St. Charles Center, who frequently help parishes in time of need, are all members of the Congregation of the Most Precious Blood. A person is indicated as a member of this society when the initials "C.P.P.S." appear after his or her name. These letters stand for "Congregatio Pretiosissimi Sanguinisthe", which is the name of the society in Latin.

The Society of Missionaries was founded by St. Gaspar del Bufalo on August 15, 1815. The upcoming 200th anniversary of the Society is being celebrated through the course of a three year period. The Congregation's history was recognized in 2013, while the Society's present missions and ministries are currently being recognized this year. Finally, the future of the Congregation will be celebrated in 2015.

The following reflection is featured on the Cincinnati Province Missionaries website, which was given by Fr. Andy O'Reilly, C.P.P.S. at the recent Cincinnati Provincial Assembly at St. Charles Center. His message portrays the heart and soul of the Missionaries of the Precious Blood as he looks at the past, present and future of the society.

"Missionaries have been called to be ministers of reconciliation in a broken world. People are torn apart by violence, by conflict and division in ways too countless to mention. We have said yes to the call to open the eyes of so many looking for signs of God's love, to open the ears of those listening for words of compassion and care and to release so many held hostage to their hopelessness...

Who can say what the future will bring? What we can say is that no matter what, we are compelled to proclaim God's love. Who can say what the future will bring? What we can say are the words of Gaspar when he was told that the danger was too great and there were too many unknowns when he was about to enter a town that needed his message of God's love. He simply said, 'We will not turn back now.'

We echo his words as we face the unknown future. We say with Gaspar 200 years later, 'We will not turn back now.'

Will there be a glorious renaissance for the Community, or a fading away-who knows, who can say? What really matters is contained in a quote from Mother Teresa: 'God does not ask you to be successful; God asks you to be faithful.'

I have a feeling that Gaspar, for all the obstacles, all the challenges, and, I suppose, the disappointment of dying before his work was done, must be amazed at the difference he made and how many people came to rediscover God's love for them and to receive new hope over these last two hundred years just because he was faithful.

We are grateful for the drops of Blood pouring out of Jesus on the cross. We are grateful for all who have gone before us, touching the heart of this world with the Blood of Christ. We are grateful that, compelled by the love of Christ, we will continue to touch the heart of this world with the love revealed in Christ, one drop at a time.

We look to the future: a bold, hope-filled future. We cannot say what that future will be, but we can say with faith and confidence the words that Gaspar said long ago: we will not turn back now."

**"May Jesus be in your mind,
Jesus in your heart,
Jesus on your lips,
Jesus in all your works."**

St. Gaspar del Bufalo

* Information and homily taken with permission from www.cpps-preciousblood.org/

Saint Charles Senior Living Community

By: Sister Martha Bertke, C.P.P.S.

Saint Charles hosted “Sounds of the Season” – Advent and Christmas music--on Sunday, December 1st. Choirs, directors, and musicians from several local parishes came together and shared their wonderful talents with the many people who were present. We are so very grateful to all who participated in the program, who volunteered in any way, and who attended this inspiring event.



Also, Nativity Sets on loan from the University of Dayton were displayed as a way for people to not only see them but also to reflect on the tremendous love God has for each of us. Some of the sets on display this year came from countries where the Missionaries of the Precious Blood serve. This can remind us that we are connected with people all over the world.

Now in the midst of these winter days we can continue to reflect on the mystery of the birth of Jesus. Scripture tells us that all the people who encountered the baby Jesus were inspired by what they saw. The shepherds, the Magi, the prophetess Anna, and the devout Simeon – all had their eyes opened to see Jesus in a new way. That vision changed their hearts.

During the Christmas Season we heard many songs one of which has these words, “Do you see what I see?” This caused me to reflect on the wonderful gift of sight. At times we are called to see with a new sight, or gain a new insight, or perceive a new vision for the future. We are called to see with new eyes, to think in new ways and to become a new creation. The birth of Christ can invite us to see the sacred dignity of each human being. To see people and not focus on problems, to see the value of each person rather than the illness or difficulties that confines them. Perhaps in these winter days our hearts will be touched with a new insight or a new way to care for others.

I am grateful for all of the people who live at Saint Charles. What a privilege it is for me to see many signs of how they care for one another. Consider living at Saint Charles, a great place where you can feel at home and secure in a peaceful setting. Come and visit us. For a tour or an appointment, call 419-925-4516, ext 112 or e-mail: smbertke@bright.net.