

ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

NEWSLETTER – AUGUST 2026

Let your 'yes' mean 'yes,' and your 'no' mean 'no.' Anything more than this comes from the evil one. Matthew 5:37

From the Pastor's Desk

Greetings!

This month, on August 15th, we celebrate the mystery of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary into Heaven. The fourth of the five Glorious Mysteries of the rosary, and surest hope of the promise of Jesus, that He has gone to prepare a place in Heaven for His faithful disciples. When someone tells you of something that is true, you have their word. When someone shows you this, you now have their word and your own; your own testimony to the truth of what you have seen.

Honoring the reception of Mary into Heaven is this unique assurance to God's justice and mercy, that He rewards the faithful and shows mercy to the humble and contrite. However, it is one more sign of Mary's own sinlessness. Because Mary is wholly holy, free from all stain of sin, God glorifies her body and soul in the Assumption.

Mary is the model of all Christian life and living. Her words at the wedding at Cana to the servants, "Do whatever He tells you." This is how she lived, and lived it perfectly, and so we now celebrate the reward of such faithfulness each year in this perpetual memorial of her assumption into Heaven.

The more you know Mary, the more you love her. Take some time this week to learn more about the significance of Mary and why she remains, both in her person and witness, a signature part of Catholic life.

May God bless you.

In Christ,

Parish Life & Ministry Updates

Liturgy & Worship: Sarah

Thank you for your patience as we navigate changes in procedures for Eucharistic Ministers, Ushers, Greeters, Lectors and Altar Servers. Our hope is to provide the best worship experience possible, continuing on the good tradition of St. Mary's as a welcoming, vibrant parish.

The back row of chairs has been designated for handicap seating. Able bodied parishioners should leave these chairs open for people who have mobility issues and their spouses. Chairs may be removed to make space for wheelchairs. If you move a chair, please return it after Mass. No chairs are allowed directly in front of the glass wall due to fire code.

Altar Server training with Neal Anderson went well. There were about 17 servers present each day. Time was spent learning, practicing, and having fun.

September-November liturgical ministry schedules will be created soon. If you would like to start helping with a ministry at St. Mary's or St. John's, please contact me (Sarah Woeste) in the office (320-256-9516). All ministers are welcome to switch to the Mass time and location that works for them. Current ministers should add any "can't serve" dates for September - November into MSP. If you have any trouble using the program, please contact me in the office.

Gift Bearers: Generally the family who has booked the Mass intention fulfills the role of gift bearers. However, they are not always available and gift bearers are needed. If you would like to bring up the gifts let Sarah know and we can get you scheduled.

Music Ministry invites parishioners of all ages and abilities to share their musical gifts in service to the Church. Whether you sing or play an instrument, there is a place for you!

Parish Choir: The Parish Choir is open to adults & teens who like to sing a variety of musical styles, often in four-part harmony. The choir sings twice each month and rehearses on Wednesday evenings.

Youth Choir: Students in Grades 3-12 who sing once each month during the school year. Rehearsals are generally held before Mass. Director: Sarah Wiechman

Hispanic Choirs: St. Mary's is blessed with two Spanish-language choirs that provide music for liturgies celebrated in Spanish. The choirs alternate Sundays.

Festival Choir: Everyone is welcome to join the Festival Choir for Holy Day liturgies. This choir is often made up of members from the Parish Choir, Youth Choir, and Hispanic Choirs,

but everyone is invited to participate. One or two rehearsals are held before each Holy Day Mass.

Joy in the Journey: A contemporary/folk ensemble that typically sings once each month during the school year.

Resurrection Choir: This choir serves families during funeral liturgies at the request of the deceased's family. Music is familiar and generally sung in unison. Rehearsal is 45 minutes before the funeral.

Cantors: Cantors proclaim the Word of God through sung prayer by leading, Responsorial Psalms, Gospel Acclamations, Hymns and Mass responses. Through confident leadership and welcoming gestures, cantors encourage the entire assembly to participate in singing.

Instrumentalists: We are always looking for instrumentalists to enhance our worship. If you have musical gifts, we invite you to share them at Mass and special liturgies.

Accompanists: support the assembly and our music ministries by playing piano or guitar.

Family Faith Formation: Mark

- I hope that you are excited about our new faith formation program. In order for the new program to be effective we will need volunteers to help with leading small groups. Please consider helping lead our Youth to Christ.
- I encourage all parents to sign up their 6th -12th graders for our summer retreat, called impressions. The retreat will run from 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M. On August 8th. We are looking for helpers for this retreat. If you would like help please let Mark Kociemba know at 320-256-9501. All Catholic School parents and youth are also welcome to attend. Please let me know if you would like to attend by August 1st.
- Faith Formation will be starting soon. If you have not registered your child for faith formation yet please do so ASAP. Faith formation will be starting on September 9th. 1st, 3rd-5th graders will be meeting at St. Mary's School from 6:00 P.M. to 7:00 P.M. and 6th -12 graders will be meeting at St. Mary's School from 7:15-8:30 P.M. 11th grade Confirmation will meet at St. Mary's Church on September 9th from 7:15-8:30 P.M. 1st sacraments will have their first meeting on Sunday, September 13th at St. Mary's Church from 10:00 A.M. to 11:00 A.M.
- We are looking for parents to serve on the Parent Advisory Council and youth in grades 4-12 to be on the youth advisory council. Catholic Schools students and parents are welcome to join.
- If you would like more information on the calendar or times for faith formation please go to the faith formation page on St. Mary's website and check out the calendar.

Building, Grounds & Maintenance

- The baptismal font continues to be under construction, but we hear it could be done as early as next week! Thank you for being patient as we continue to solve this ongoing

inconvenience. Thank you also to the volunteers that are coordinating the project.

- We want to give a shout out to those who have volunteered any time over the summer to help maintain the grounds of the church, cemeteries, and school. Thank you for being the hands and feet of Jesus.
- St. Mary's Cemetery offers a columbarium for the respectful placement of cremated remains. The first name plaques have recently been installed. Please contact Pam in the parish office for more information or to purchase a single or double niche.
- The statues from the grotto at the old rectory have been placed in storage until a new location is found suitable for them.

Finance: Katie

- Thank you to all those who have donated toward the Bazaar Collection! In the month of July we collected \$1,610.00 which is slightly higher than last year.
- There will be a Cemetery envelope in your September packet. The contributions toward this fund are used toward cemetery maintenance such as cemetery ribbons and regular upkeep. Please contribute as you see fit.
- Our fiscal year came to a close at the end of June. Our annual report to the parish was completed and approved by the finance council and will be available in the kiosks or at the parish office the weekend of August 9.
- As we continue to make changes as a result of All Things New, you will notice your envelopes will look different starting in September. These envelopes are used for all households (families) from the four parishes, so please be clear of your intention of the contribution. If you have any questions, please contact the parish office and we will do our best to clear up any confusion.
- Do you have any questions about what an envelope in your packet is for? Newly created envelope descriptions and schedules will be available the weekend of August 9 in kiosks and in the back of churches.
- Are you attending Mass out of our cluster? Great! Please continue using your contribution envelopes wherever you attend. We communicate with other offices and the envelopes get to the correct account of the intention.
- If you would like to dodge the new envelope system and save the headache of contribution intentions, setting up an automatic contribution is a great option! If you would like to establish a recurring donation, please contact Katie at the parish office. Automatic contributions may be designated to multiple funds, including the cemetery, maintenance, and school. Forms can also be found in the kiosk outside the office door and online. Thank you for your continued generosity and stewardship.
- Parish Registrations: Thank you to all from St. Andrew's and St. Michael's parishes that have turned in your registration update! If you plan to be a parishioner anywhere besides St. Mary's, or if you want your contributions to go to St. John's, please let us know so we can get your information in the right place.
- As many of you know, or maybe don't know, I am expecting my second child in September. With that being said, Judy Caveny has agreed to step in for me part time while I am away.

Please be patient with her as she gets reacquainted with the processes and procedures again. Thank you!

Parish Administration: Pam

Finance Council - An open forum is available at the beginning of Finance Council meetings which are usually on or near the fourth Thursday of each month. The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 26 at 5:30 PM. Please contact the parish office for more information or to be added to the agenda.

Former Rectory Property Update – We have signed a purchase agreement for the former rectory and the adjacent parcels of land. The sale is currently pending inspections.

Save the Date: September 13 - The St. Mary's Parish Life Committee will host the annual Fall Picnic and Golden Ladle Soup Cook-Off from 4:00 to 7:00 PM at the church. Anyone interested in entering soup or chili in the cook-off should contact Michelle at 320-248-5273 by September 6.

Mass Intentions - Openings available on Wednesdays and Saturdays in Meire Grove and at Spanish Masses on Tuesdays and Sundays through the end of November. Until these openings are filled, we will use Mass intentions donated at funerals. Each family may schedule one Mass intention per year. Please contact the parish office to reserve a date. Thank you!

Mass Counts - Fr. Mitchell has asked that counts be taken at all Masses. Counting Mass attendance helps a parish understand how well it is serving its people and plan responsibly for the future. Accurate attendance numbers can help with:

- Planning Mass times and locations based on actual participation
- Ensuring adequate seating, parking, ushers, ministers, and clergy
- Tracking attendance trends over time
- Evaluating whether outreach and faith-formation efforts are effective
- Preparing realistic budgets and making responsible staffing and facility decisions
- Providing accurate information to parish leaders and the diocese
- Identifying opportunities for growth or areas needing additional attention

The purpose is not simply to count people. Each number represents a person participating in the life of the Church, and the information helps the parish make thoughtful decisions about ministry, worship, and resources.

Volunteer Purchase Policy - A volunteer purchase policy is important because it provides clear and consistent guidelines for anyone purchasing items on behalf of the parish. The policy helps:

- Ensure purchases are approved in advance and fit within the parish budget
- Protect the parish's tax-exempt status by following proper purchasing procedures

- Clarify which expenses are eligible for reimbursement
- Prevent misunderstandings between volunteers, staff, and parish leadership
- Promote accountability and responsible stewardship of parish funds
- Protect volunteers from unintentionally becoming personally responsible for an expense.

Receipts and documentation are required. The policy is not meant to make volunteering more difficult. It gives volunteers clear expectations while protecting both the volunteers and the parish.

Please talk to Pam in the office before making any purchase on behalf of the church.

Growing in the Faith

In the Catholic Church, August is traditionally dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary. This devotion invites the faithful to imitate Mary's love for God, her purity, humility, and complete trust in His will. It reminds us that Mary's heart was perfectly united with the Sacred Heart of Jesus and that she continually intercedes for the Church and for all believers.

The Immaculate Heart symbolizes:

- Mary's deep love for God and her complete obedience to His plan.
- Her compassion and maternal care for all people.
- Her interior life of prayer, faith, and contemplation.
- Her role as our spiritual mother, leading us closer to Jesus.

Catholics observe this devotion by:

- Praying the Rosary regularly.
- Reflecting on Scripture, especially the mysteries of Christ's life through Mary's eyes.
- Practicing the First Saturday Devotion.
- Consecrating themselves or renewing their consecration to the Immaculate Heart of Mary.
- Asking Mary's intercession for their families, the Church, and the world.

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary – August 15

One of the most important Marian feasts of the year is the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary, celebrated on August 15.

The Assumption is the belief that, at the end of her earthly life, Mary was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory. This teaching was solemnly proclaimed as a dogma by Pope Pius XII in 1950.

The Assumption highlights:

- Mary's unique role as the Mother of God.

- The victory of Christ over sin and death.
- The hope of the resurrection promised to all Christians.
- The dignity of the human body, which is destined for eternal life.

The Church does not define whether Mary died before being assumed into heaven or was assumed without experiencing death. Both views have existed in Catholic tradition.

Prayer for the Month

O Immaculate Heart of Mary,
full of love for God and for all His children,
teach us to trust the Lord as you did.
Help us to say "yes" to His will each day,
to love with generous hearts,
and to follow your Son, Jesus Christ, more faithfully.
As we celebrate your glorious Assumption into heaven,
strengthen our hope in the resurrection
and keep our eyes fixed on the promise of eternal life.
Pray for our families, our Church, and our world,
that we may live in peace, holiness, and joy.

Amen.



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