St. Mary, Mother of God Church

A Parish of the Diocese of Greensburg
A Pennsylvania Charitable Trust
Roman Catholic Church
608 High Street ~ Freeport, PA 16229

February 4th, 2018

Established 1826

Father Ronald Maquiñana—*Pastor*
rmaquinana@dioceseofgreensburg.org

Parish Staff

William Girardi, *Pastoral Associate—412-719-7085*
Claudia Vertosick, *Business Manager/Parish Secretary*
Helen James, *Religious Education Director*
Thomas Koharchik, *Choir Director*
William Girardi, *Social Hall Coordinator—412-719-7085*
David Valencic, *Parish Custodian*
Richard Bertino, *Cemetery Caretaker*

Ministries

Kristen Marhefka/Julie Polana Gardone—*Teen Ministry*
Melissa Kristine/Beth Macurdy—*Evangelization*
John Nemcek—*Homebound Ministry*

Organizations

Diane Grant—*Christian Mothers*
Ray Smetana/Mary Ellen Gray—*St. Vincent de Paul Society*

Office Information

Administrative Center Numbers & Hours :
724-295-2281 (Office) 724-295-3090 (Fax)
Monday through Thursday - 9:00 A.M. to 3:00 P.M.
Friday - 9:00 A.M. to 2:00 P.M.

Parish Website: www.stmaryfreeport.com

Parish Email Address: thechurch@stmaryfreeport.com

Parish Information

Saturday (Vigil): 4:00 P.M.

Sunday: 8:30 & 11:00 A.M.

Weekday Masses: Monday through Friday—8:00 A.M.

Holy Day of Obligation: 8:00 A.M. & 7:00 P.M.

Reconciliation: Saturday - 3:00—3:45 P.M.

Baptism: Sundays within the 11:00 A.M. Mass (by appointment)

Marriage: Contact the Parish nine months in advance.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults: RCIA helps you to learn more about the Catholic faith. Pre-registration is required. Contact Fr. Ron or William Girardi at 724-295-2281.

Hospital or Home Visit: If you would like to receive Holy Communion or if you know someone who would like to have the priest visit, please call Fr. Ron at 724-295-2281.

Anointing of the Sick: Contact Fr. Ron at 724-295-2281.

Holy Communion: Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion are available to bring the Eucharist to the sick and homebound. If you know of someone, please call the Administrative Center at 724-295-2281.

Baptism: To understand the importance of the Sacrament of Baptism and your obligation as parents, you are required to attend one baptismal class. To register for one of these classes, please call the Administrative Center at 724-295-2281.

STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

Well, we have turned the calendar to February now, and after we celebrate our Mardi Gras next weekend, we will celebrate Ash Wednesday and quickly move into the season of Lent and the return of our pastor.

Continuing with the discussion of our neighborhood listening sessions, last week we summarized the high points as well as the low points in the history of our parish that many of you pointed out at the various sessions. Now it is time to recap the strengths and weaknesses that surfaced at our various meetings.

One prevalent item that was brought out repeatedly as a strength was the welcoming and open atmosphere that permeates our liturgies. The enthusiasm mentioned is illustrated in our greeter program (which we hope to strengthen with more volunteers), the readiness of members to always step forward when we need assistance at a liturgy or function and the introduction of some new ministries and opportunities for involvement. Also identified as strengths are our Holy Week liturgies, the children's *Breaking Open the Word* at the 8:30 Mass on Sundays, the online program *"Formed"*, vacation bible camp, Homebound Ministry and our Teen Ministry Program. The reintroduction of our annual parish picnic as well as our Mardi Gras celebration coming up next weekend were also seen as strong points. People also felt that we have good financial checkpoints in place and that our pastoral and finance councils provide a level of financial transparency that is very important in today's often skeptical world. The development of our Rosary Garden was seen as a spiritual asset as well as the efforts of our Christian Mothers organization. Finally, the leadership provided by Father Ron and the various priests that have preceded him here at St. Mary's have certainly provided the best possible strength to our parish family.

We obviously cannot avoid a discussion of some potential weaknesses that exist. The parking lot and the issues that surround tandem parking were a major point of discussion, but some new signs as a result of these listening sessions has help the situation some. If anyone would like to volunteer to be a parking lot greeter, please see Father Ron upon his return. Although we have new members each year, our attendance is stable. We need a better way to identify and address parishioners who are leaving our family before it is too late to reverse the decision. Low attendance at First Friday Adoration/Benediction, lack of retreats and days of recollection, the need for more greeters and ushers, and the need to involve younger members of our congregation in volunteer activities were also identified as weaknesses. While our teen ministry is seen as a strength, the lack of programs for young adults in their 20's and 30's was seen as a definite weakness. The struggle to recruit more choir members as well as the development of a more vibrant music program in general were also seen as weak points. And of course, the need for clearances and their effect on the number of volunteers was voiced repeatedly.

In our final recap next week, Beth and I will recap where we go from here. What have you, our fellow members, identified as the necessary steps to take in the near future as well as in the long term to continue to strengthen and build our parish family at St. Mary's. So, stay tuned for our final communication with you next week.

~~William Girardi and Beth Macurdy~~

FORMED PICK OF THE WEEK

Beloved

Session 1: Does Marriage Matter?

Why does the Church care so much about marriage?

Beloved, an Augustine Institute Studios original production, explores the essential realities of marriage. Through Scripture, Tradition, and Church teaching, you'll gain a deeper understanding of this Sacrament and how it connects with God's plan for humanity.

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—Marie, Sterline Heights, MI

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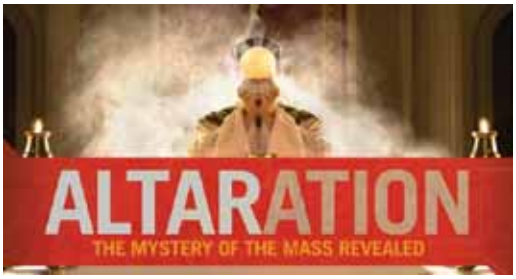
Recently, two of our parishioners—John Zurisko and Brett Jones—along with team member Nevin DeCroo and their sponsor, Mrs. Cory Petrak, attended the Hometown High Q. The team won this round and we congratulate them!



We are surrounded by distractions: music fills our ear buds, while tweets and posts are constantly checked and updated. We have been conditioned to fill any void or silent moment with noise and stimulation. So, instilling an appreciation and enthusiasm for the Mass can be a challenge. *Altaration: The Mystery of the Mass Revealed* is a new study on the Mass that features powerful cinematography and inspiring presenters. *Altaration* uses humor, stories, and small group discussion to capture your attention and instill a deep and lasting love for the Mass. Join us for *Altaration* February 18th, 25th, and March 4th from 9:30 – 10:40 AM in the Fellowship Hall. **All teens (grades 7 – 12) and adults are encouraged to attend**.

Calendar of Events

February 4th	*Religious Education Classes—9:30 - 10:40 A.M.— Security Guard - "Linda Paustenbaugh"*
	Teen Ministry Meeting—9:25 A.M.; Choir Practice—9:45 - 10:45 A.M.; 11:00 A.M. Mass
February 5th	*Christian Mother's Meeting—7:00 P.M.*
February 10th	*Mardi Gras/Wine Tasting Event—6:00 - 10:00 P.M.—Fellowship Hall*
February 11th	*Religious Education Classes—9:30 - 10:40 A.M.— Security Guard - "Kurt Hellgren"*
	Choir Practice—9:45 - 10:45 A.M.; 11:00 A.M. Mass
February 14th	*Ash Wednesday—Mass & Distribution of Ashes at 8:00 A.M. & 7:00 P.M.*
February 16th	*Stations of the Cross—7:00 P.M.*
February 18th	*Religious Education Classes—9:30 - 10:40 A.M.— Security Guard - "Jeff Lasko"*
	Teen Ministry Meeting—9:25 A.M. - Popcorn Fundraiser Begins
	Choir Practice—9:45 - 10:45 A.M.; 11:00 A.M. Mass; Baptism "Cypher"—12:15 P.M.
	Living Stations of the Cross—7:30 P.M.
February 19th	*President's Day—Parish Office Closed*

Please Read

Because we will have our Mardi Gras/Wine Tasting event next weekend, our monthly Donut and Beverage Social has been cancelled.

Christian Mother's monthly meeting will be held on Monday, February 5th, at 7:00 P.M., in the Christian Mother's Room. Members are asked to arrive at 6:30 P.M. Please plan on attending.

To understand the importance of the Sacrament of Baptism and your obligation as parents, you are required to attend one baptismal class. **The next class scheduled for this year will be held Thursday, March 1st.** Please call Mark or Melissa at 724-230-4450 or the Administrative Office at 724-295-2281 to register.

Today, our second collection will be for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe. Your donation today helps restore the Church and build the future in 20 countries, many of which still struggle to recover in the aftermath of Soviet rule. Funds from this collection help support reconstruction, education, formation, and poverty outreach. For more information, please visit: www.usccb.org/ccee. Thank you for your generosity.

The Diocesan Heritage Center is hosting a Lenten program on the five Saturdays in Lent (February 17th and 24th, March 3rd, 10th and 17th). Mass will be celebrated at 10:30 A.M. at the St. Joseph Chapel at the Bishop Connare Center. A light soup lunch will follow, and attendees will be invited to the new Heritage Center exhibit, *"Journeying with Jesus: The Passion".*

Painting with a Purpose

Catholic Charities will host a fundraiser, "*Painting with a Purpose*," February 6th, from 6:00-8:00 P.M., at Painting with a Twist, Greensburg. Doors will open at 5:30 P.M. The event is for people over the age of 18. Cost is $35.00. Register at: www.paintingwithatwist.com/studio/Greensburg/event/1293155.

The Knights of Columbus #2602 will sponsor a Pancake & Sausage Breakfast on Sunday, February 11th, from 9:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M., at the council home located at 28 Garfield Street, Natrona. Cost is $6.00/adults and $3.00/children under 6. Take your family and friends!

Saint Joseph High School is accepting admissions applications for incoming freshmen for the 2018-2019 school year. Shadow days for 8th grade students considering SJHS are available on Tuesdays, and private tours may be scheduled for any time. Please contact Admissions Director, Mrs. Shane Palumbo '92 at 724-226-4932 or you can email her at: admissions@saintjosephhs.com .

Ss. Peter & Paul Byzantine Catholic Church, 339 E. 10th Avenue, Tarentum, will be holding its Annual Easter Nut Roll Sale on March 20th, 21st and 22nd. Nut, Apricot and Poppy Seed Rolls will be available. Price - $12.00/ea. Please place your order by calling Lynn beginning Monday, February 19th, between the hours of 10:00 A.M. and 8:00 P.M. at 724-352-0031 as soon as possible.

Workshop

The Seton Hill University Chapter of the AGO (American Guild of Organists) is hosting a Workshop on Saturday, February 10th, from 10:00 A.M. to 12:00 Noon at St. Paul's Catholic Church, Greensburg, for Keyboardists. Presenters are members of the AGO. The workshop is as follows:

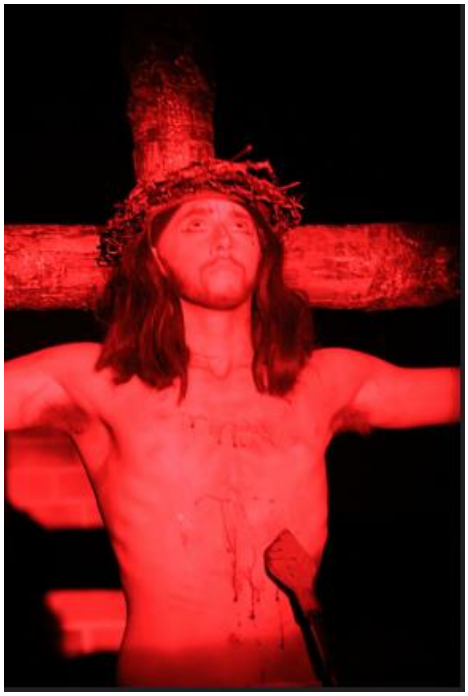
Ouch: Better Hand Health for Keyboardists
presented by Kelly Doman
Overcoming Performance Anxiety
presented by Valerie Stipcak

The workshop is free and open to all. Inquiries should be made to Marisa Cazden, Dean of the Guild by calling 724 838 9480, Ext. 28 or you can email her at: mcazden@dioceseofgreensburg.org

40 DAYS FOR LIFE
THE BEGINNING OF THE END OF ABORTION

Christians throughout Pittsburgh are invited to take part in the national 40 Days for Life campaign from February 14th to March 25th . The mission of 40 Days for Life is to unite the Body of Christ in the spiritual battle to end abortion. Why not consider joining them for 40 days of prayer & fasting, a peaceful vigil held every day from 7:00 A.M. – 7:00 P.M. in front of Planned Parenthood at 933 Liberty Avenue, Pittsburgh. *To find out more and to sign up to receive the daily devotional prayers via email, please go to: www.40daysforlife.com/pittsburgh, or www.40daysforlifepittsburgh.com,* or contact Nikki Bruni, 412-926-9413; email: nbruni@40daysforlifepgh.com.

Because of the recent and severe outbreak of the flu in our area, Holy Communion from the cup is temporarily suspended until the epidemic has subsided. Those who are gluten intolerant and normally receive Holy Communion only from the cup should see the Pastor to make appropriate accommodations. Also, the Sign of Peace at Mass will be exchanged without the normal handshake or kiss. When the priest asks you to exchange the sign of peace during this Mass, simply turn to the person next to you, and without contact, say "Peace be with you" and respond with the words, "And also with you."



St. Ferdinand Youth Ministry Living Stations

Who: St. Ferdinand's Youth Ministry

What: St. Ferdinand's interpretation of the 14 steps before Jesus' death

Where: St. Mary Mother of God Parish, Freeport, PA

When: February 18, 2018 at 7:30pm

Why: This prayer service is a fantastic spiritual event. These young individuals put in many hours to bring this service to you.

MINISTRY SCHEDULE FOR FEBRUARY 10TH & 11TH, 2018

Altar Servers	*Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion*	*Lector*	*Greeters*	*Organist*	*Cantor*
Saturday - 4:00 P.M.					
Bill Girardi; Zach Showers Madison & Dawson Gaillot	Dave Brestensky; Fred Walker Andrea Camerlo	Tim Fogarty	Arlene & Gary Miller	Verne Bergstrom	Alex Smith
Sunday—8:30 A.M.					
Andrew Nigra; Luke Boylan Madison & Austin Bachar Alexandra Lasko	Laura Huth Kim Holbein Rose Check	Susan Shea	Carol Carson Dave Kradel	Tom Koharchik	Tom Koharchik
Sunday—11:00 A.M.					
Celeste Beacom Jacob & Erin Schaeffer Victor & Olivia Svitek	Helen James Marushka Steele Bill Cogley	CCD—4th Grade	Karen Fennell	Dave Wesolosky	Choir

Mass Intentions FOR THE WEEK

MASSES FOR THE 5TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

SATURDAY:	February 3rd
4:00 P.M.	✞Helen Murphy (Mr. & Mrs. Robert Phillips)
SUNDAY:	February 4th
8:30 A.M.	✞Philip Bordonaro (Rose Check)
11:00 A.M.	St. Mary Parishioners
MONDAY:	February 5th
8:00 A.M.	✞Flora Trettel (Family)
TUESDAY:	February 6th
8:00 A.M.	COMMUNION SERVICE
WEDNESDAY:	February 7th
8:00 A.M.	✞Jovita Walker (Patty Hughes)
THURSDAY:	February 8th
8:00 A.M.	COMMUNION SERVICE
FRIDAY:	February 9th
8:00 A.M.	✞J.D. Easley Family (Estate)

MASSES FOR THE 6TH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME

SATURDAY:	February 10th
4:00 P.M.	✞Berness Cribbs (Betty & Dean Ramsey)
SUNDAY:	February 11th
8:30 A.M.	✞Rinaldo Policicchio (The Policicchio's)
11:00 A.M.	St. Mary Parishioners

Saturday, February 10th, 2018
Connie Cornman and Linda Ullrich

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In acknowledging the Real Presence of Christ,
The Sanctuary Lamp (Candle) will burn this week in
loving memory of
VERA KIMSZAL
By
Dan & Susan Shea

Collections

Offertory Collection for January 28th, 2018

No. of Envelopes Mailed Out: 611
No. of Envelopes Received: 198
Collection: Offertory - $4,057.00
Electronic Payments (8) - $178.00
Loose - $268.00; Children - $31.00; Catholic Accent - $331.00
Additional Donations—Mission Co-op - $50.00
Total Collection - $4,915.00
THANK YOU!

Winter weather is here and that means ice and snow may make it difficult for some people to get to church. But parish bills keep growing during the winter, including increased heating costs and snow removal expenses. You can make sure your parish support doesn't stop just when we need it the most. Why not check out the simple, safe and secure online giving option with your bank. Currently twenty-one families are giving online. Please consider joining that growing number of dedicated givers! We are most grateful to all those who make every effort to give consistently whether electronically or through the weekly offering basket. It really helps us plan and meet our budget.

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