

OUR LADY

Star of the Sea

CATHOLIC CHURCH

Honoring Our Parish Patroness at the May Crowning

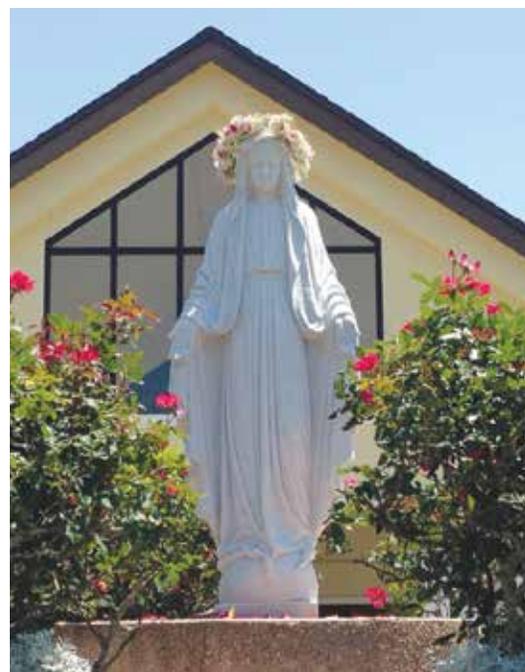
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At Our Lady Star of the Sea, we are truly proud of our parish patroness, and we aren't afraid to publicly crown her as Queen of Heaven and Earth.

“It is important for us Catholics to recognize the Blessed Virgin as our mother and our queen,” Director of Faith Formation Dina Voutour says. “Our parish’s annual May Crowning gives us a way to honor her. Our parish is named after her – Our Lady Star of the Sea. We are a Marian parish, and we should do something to commemorate this fact. The Crowning of the Blessed Virgin is a longstanding Catholic tradition that signifies our love and respect for the Mother of God.”

This year, the May Crowning will take place on Sunday, May 7, following the 11 a.m. Mass. The devotion will begin in the church, followed by a procession out to the large statue of Mary located by the pond. After Marian prayers in the church and in front of the statue, a designated person will crown the Blessed Virgin, and finally, all will be led in singing the hymn “Immaculate Mary.” The crown will remain on the statue for the entire month of May, which traditionally is known as the month that Catholics dedicate to the Blessed Mother.



The 2016 May Crowning at Our Lady Star of the Sea





The Bible

The Textbook of Stewardship

Have you ever wished that life came with an instruction manual? What a valuable resource that would be! Whenever you find yourself running in circles, this instruction manual would give you step-by-step instructions on how to fix the problem and reroute your course.

Well, here's some good news. For those living a Christian life, there is such a manual – the Bible.

Sometimes referred to as the “textbook of stewardship,” the Bible is a bountiful resource for the present-day Christian. Written by anointed prophets and sages, this collection of divinely inspired parables, poems and letters is full of testimonials that express the blessings that come from true discipleship, expressed through lives of stewardship.

Stewardship is not a new concept. The Bible gives proof to this claim through passages such as the 26th chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy. We read Moses' words, as he tells the Israelites to offer the choicest portions of their harvest to God: “When you have come into the land which the Lord, your God, is giving you as a heritage, and have occupied it and settled in it, you shall take some first fruits of the various products of the soil which you harvest from the land which the Lord, your God, gives you, and putting them in a basket, you shall go to the place which the Lord, your God, will choose for the dwelling place of his name... “Therefore, I have now brought you the first fruits of the products of the soil which you, O LORD, have given me.’ And having set them before the LORD, your God, you shall bow down in his presence” (Dt 26:1-2, 10).

St. Paul briefly touches on the essence of stewardship when he said, “In every way I have shown you that by hard work of that sort we must help the weak, and keep in mind the words

of the Lord Jesus who himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive’” (Acts 20:35).

Again, in St. Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, we read about living a life of Christian stewardship: “Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each must do as already determined, without sadness or compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver” (2 Cor 9:6-7).

While this is well and good, what does it mean for the present-day Christian? Why should it matter that the Bible alludes to stewardship in various passages? It shows us that Christians and Jews have struggled with and benefited from the concept of stewardship for thousands of years. It ties the message of stewardship to the role of a Christian disciple. It gives proof that stewardship and discipleship go hand-in-hand. It offers encouragement to us, that stewardship is in fact a foundational component of the Christian life, a way of life that one of the founding fathers of the Church – St. Paul – preached about and advocated.

The Bible is indeed the textbook of stewardship. It lays out the steps we must take to become true disciples of Christ. Reading and meditating upon God's Word is always a fruitful exercise. Those who regularly delve into Scripture often develop a deeper understanding of who God is, how and why He loves us, and how we can show Him our love in return.

As you strive to become a grateful steward and live the life of Christian discipleship, develop a love for Sacred Scripture. Allow God's Word to nourish your soul regularly, and watch as stewardship changes from a foreign concept to an integral component of your daily life.



A Letter from Our Pastor

We Cannot Be Part-Time Christians

Dear Parishioners,

May is traditionally celebrated in the Church as the month of Mary, our Blessed Mother. As the Mother of the Church, she provides us with an example of what it means to be a servant of God and our fellow humans, as well as how to obediently fulfill the promptings of the Holy Spirit.

As Catholics, we are called to model the life of Jesus. That can be difficult, and there are certainly challenges to living as a disciple of Christ. But living stewardship and discipleship brings intense contentment and joy to those who take that risk. As we hear in St. Paul's letter to the Romans, "All things work for good for those who love God."

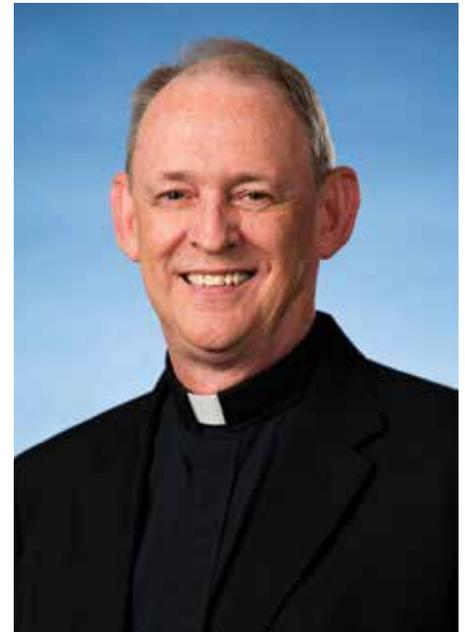
After Jesus Himself, we look to our Blessed Mother as an ideal steward and an example of what stewardship means. As the Mother of Christ, she lived her life and her ministry in a total spirit of faithfulness and service. She responded to the call to be a disciple. For us to be disciples, we also need to be good stewards of the gifts we have received. Our Church and our parish are gifts to us from God.

At no point in Holy Scripture does Jesus tell us that following Him is easy. We know it is not always simple and effortless. It requires dedication and commitment. Pope Francis has said on more than one occasion, "We cannot be part-time Christians and Catholics! We should seek to live our faith at every moment of every day."

I suspect that is how Mary lived her life from that moment she turned it over to God and His Will. So, let us vow together during this month of Mary to follow her example, and seek to be the kinds of good stewards that will make our faith community even stronger and more effective.

I pray that we all can find the strength to live and practice our faith as we should. This means being faithful to the sacraments and looking for ways to help and serve one another. We have a great parish – let us make it even greater.

As we hear in Holy Scripture, "May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make His face



shine upon you, and be gracious to you! May the Lord look upon you kindly and give you peace" (Numbers 6:24-26). Pray for me, as I pray for you.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Msgr. Keith Brennan
Pastor



Retreat Prepares Confirmation



"Sealed and Sent" is the theme for this year's Confirmation retreat. As Director of Youth Ministry Catherine Savilla explains, the idea represents being sealed with the Holy Spirit and being sent into the world to serve.



“Sealed and Sent.” What do those words mean to you? Do they make you think of a letter or a package, sealed for a purpose and sent to bring something new to the world? Do they represent the end of one thing, but also the beginning of something new? The process of Confirmation can be both things. That’s why these words have been chosen to describe Confirmation at Our Lady.

On April 1, more than 100 confirmandi gathered to explore the theme of “Sealed and Sent” as part of the annual Confirmation retreat. Students were given the opportunity to pause and reflect on where their lives as Christians have brought them so far, and to think about what the next step in entering a more mature faith through Confirmation will mean.

“When they receive Confirmation, they’re sealed with a mark on their soul that says, ‘I am His,’” says Director of Youth Ministry Catherine Savilla of the theme that will be used over the next few years. “It’s like a tattoo, and we think this age group will really relate to that. That tattoo is representative of something you keep with you and have for all time. This is a permanent mark on our souls that we carry with us always.”

Catherine explains that the retreat brought together youth and members of other ministries to help these young Catholics onto the next stage of their journey. In particular, our high school youth played a major role in leading the retreat.

“They served as table leaders, small group leaders, and they provided the skit,” Catherine says. “We have a young adult band that also provided the music. Every year, it’s a collaboration between the Faith Formation office and Palmer Catholic Academy, but this year we were excited because it’s three organizations within the church now working together.”

Members of the Men’s Group and the Council of Catholic Women pitched in to help with lunch and refreshments for the day. They also spent time with the confirmandi discussing how they’ve used their talents to serve the Church as adults.

“We’ve got examples of the young people who are serving, as well as some older members who are participating in the church,” Catherine says. “It’s a nice big umbrella of people in the parish that are covering these young people in prayer and embracing these young people as they’re brought into the parish as full members of the community.”



endi to Be “Sealed and Sent”

During the retreat, youth were given time to customize some of their time with an hour of independent prayer. Five separate prayer stations offered the opportunity for guided meditation around the parish campus, a stroll through the Rosary Garden, praying the Stations of the Cross, or worshipping in song with the praise band. At a fifth prayer station, students could also participate in an art project referred to as Visio Divina.

“We wanted to give them an opportunity to pray through art,” Catherine says. “We had images of Christ through artwork that they could look at and see different ways people have visualized Christ, and pray through seeing the images and then give them the opportunity to make a creation through praying.”

As Catherine explains, the prayer stations were another way of giving the students options to customize their retreat experience. They could spend

an entire hour at one station or move through the stations of their choosing.

“It’s something a bit different and something we felt like the young people could connect to,” she says. “They long for that opportunity to make the choices for themselves, and through this we say to them, ‘From this point on you are adults in the Church and you can make decisions for yourself. Here’s a chance to use your adult, mature time to decide how you’re going to pray.’”

If you would like more information on Confirmation or would like to help with the Retreat next year, please contact Catherine Savilla at csavilla@olsspvb.org.

Honoring Our Parish Patroness at the May Crowning

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After many years of not having had a May Crowning, our parish was grateful to begin offering it again last year. This long-cherished devotion of the Church enriches the spirituality of all who attend in beautiful ways.

“Mary, our Blessed Mother, is a perfect model of discipleship, stewardship and vocation,” Dina says. “The fiat she offered when she said, ‘Let it be done to me according to your word,’ is an indication of and model for what we Catholics should be doing today. The Blessed Virgin Mary was the first disciple of Jesus. She is Jesus’ mother, and if she had not said ‘yes,’ we would not have Jesus or eternal salvation. Mary is

our spiritual mother, and we are all members of the Body of Christ. When she gave her fiat, she became our mother in the order of grace. Mary is our advocate and our helper.”

Those who take the time to crown their heavenly mother this May will find themselves abundantly blessed in return.

“I believe that if people reflect on the life of Mary, it will help them become better disciples,” Dina says. “The Blessed Mother always directs us to her Son. Anything that can help us grow closer to the Lord is a very positive thing! This is also a great opportunity for those who have never been exposed to a May Crowning before.”

If you would like more information about the May Crowning, please see the parish bulletin or contact Dina Voutour at 904-567-1960.



Offering Our Love and Adoration to Jesus

Eucharistic Adoration is the adoration of Jesus Christ present in the Holy Eucharist. Churches that have this adoration display the Eucharist in a special holder called a monstrance, and people come to pray and worship Jesus.

Christ's great love for us was shown when He was crucified on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins and give us eternal life. He loves us without limit, and offers Himself to us in the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. Can we not give Jesus a few minutes of love and adoration in return?

What is the importance of Eucharistic Adoration?

Eucharistic Adoration is the respect and worship we give to Jesus, who is truly present to us under the appearance of bread and wine. The Eucharist is a priceless treasure; by not only celebrating it but also by praying before the Eucharist outside of Mass, we are enabled to make contact with the very wellspring of grace.

What are the fruits of Eucharistic Adoration?

People who observe Eucharistic Adoration experience a deeper devotion to Jesus, and this manifests itself in countless ways. The primary fruits are repentance and conversion, which lead to increased charity — that is, the love of Christ alive in His people. The adoration of Jesus in the Eucharist also leads to greater reverence at Mass, a deeper desire for personal holiness, and a stronger sense of union with the parish and the whole Church. Ever since the early centuries of Christianity, the Church has linked Eucharistic

Devotion to service to the poor. The practice has, more recently, led to an increase in vocations to



the priesthood, diaconate and religious life.

What is proper etiquette during Eucharistic Adoration?

When we are not taking part in vocal prayers and hymns with other adorers, we should be praying silently. Whenever we pass before the place where the Sacred Host is reserved, we should genuflect. We should observe the modest dress and decorum that are appropriate to very solemn occasions. We should avoid any actions that might disturb or distract others, or otherwise draw attention to ourselves rather than Jesus.

How should we pray during Eucharistic Adoration?

There are many ways to pray. We may meditate in silence by gazing on the Sacred Host. We may silently speak to Jesus from our mind and heart. We may also rely on devotions and prayers from Catholic tradition, such as the reading of Scripture, recitation of the Rosary, or the litanies. When two or more are gathered before the Sacrament, they may pray or sing hymns together.

What is the best way to promote Eucharistic Adoration?

The best way to promote Eucharistic Adoration is by doing it! Make frequent visits to Jesus at the tabernacle. Invite your spouse, your children, your neighbors and co-workers to join you. As the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* reminds us, "Because Christ himself is present in the sacrament of the altar, he is to be honored with the worship of adoration. 'To visit the Blessed Sacrament is ... a proof of gratitude, an expression of love, and a duty of adoration toward Christ our Lord'" (1418).

Eucharistic Adoration takes place each Wednesday after the 8:30 a.m. Mass and on the First Friday of every month from 8 p.m. to 8 a.m.



Important to the Community

Our Lady Star of the Sea Collection Counters

Administration of Church finances is a sacred trust. It is reliant upon the pastor, his staff, and dedicated volunteers to have a system that fulfills this trust, as this is part of the overall stewardship of the parish. The Diocese of St. Augustine has had regulations in place for many years relating to proper ways to count and account for offertory gifts – and here in our parish, there is a group of committed volunteers who count the collection each week and assure that it is properly recorded and deposited.

These lay parishioners gather on each week to independently count and record the collections from the weekend. The longest-standing member of the counting ministry is Mary Rose, who has been involved in

counting the collection for more than 15 years. She is considered the coordinator of the ministry.

“When we moved here from Ohio, there was a real effort underway to involve more people in the life of the parish,” she says. “I really did not know anyone and was looking for a way I might be able to serve while being involved and meet people in the process. I was accepted as a collection counter and I have continued to do it right up to now.

“As a parish, we are continuing to work on this idea of stewardship,” Mary continues. “I think our collection counting team is an excellent example of stewardship. This is as conscientious a group as I have ever worked with. They take our task very seriously and understand

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“As a parish, we are continuing to work on this idea of stewardship. I think our collection counting team is an excellent example of stewardship. This is as conscientious a group as I have ever worked with. They take our task very seriously and understand how important it is to the Parish. They also appreciate the confidentiality, which is necessary. In spite of the serious nature of what we do, we laugh a lot and enjoy one another.” – Mary Rose



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Our Lady Star of the Sea Collection Counters

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As Mary notes, somewhere between four and 10 people gather weekly – this number varies dependent on people’s schedules.

“These are conscientious people,” Mary says. “So, if someone cannot be there, they let us know.”

The ministry organization has evolved over the years, and the members all have a strong understanding

of their role and duties, as well as the efficient and accurate counting systems that are in place.

Importantly, the members of this ministry also carry out stewardship in other areas of parish and community life.

“I am struck by the fact that all of our counters are really involved in the parish in so many other ways – as lectors, Eucharistic Ministers and ministry leaders,” Mary says. “Thus, what they do as counters is stewardship, but for us it goes much deeper than that – serving our parish and God in so many ways.”

*If you are interested in learning more about this essential parish ministry,
please contact the parish office at 904-285-2698.*

LITURGY SCHEDULE

Saturday Vigil - 5:30 p.m. | Sunday - 7:30 a.m.; 9:00 a.m.; 11:00 a.m. and 5:30 p.m.

Daily (Monday to Saturday) - 8:30 a.m. | Wednesday - 7:00 p.m.

Sacrament of Reconciliation: Wednesdays from 6:00-6:45 p.m.

Saturdays from 4:00-5:00 p.m.