

OUR LADY

Star of the Sea

CATHOLIC CHURCH

Joining Hearts with Mother Mary Through our Parish Rosary Groups

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About 18 years ago, Mariann Werninck started quietly planting little seeds of prayer, hope and faith within our parish walls.

"Sometimes it would just be me, sitting in the Cry Room, praying the First Saturday Rosary by myself," Mariann says. "I just felt called to bring the devotion to our parish. I believed that the Blessed Mother wanted it for us. It is such a simple, quiet, humble thing — it's just a matter of saying the Rosary."

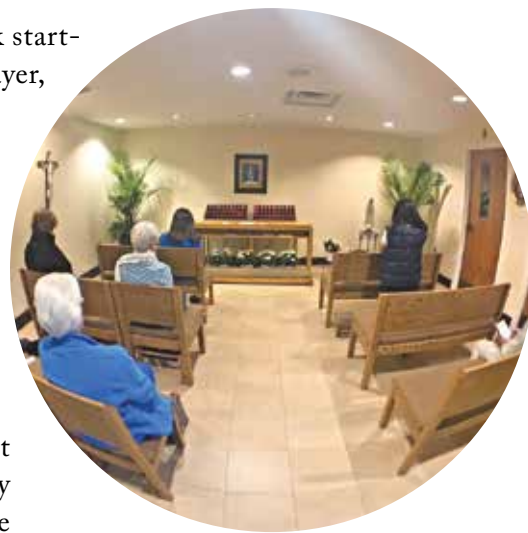
Over time, the Holy Spirit has brought these seeds to fruition in a marvelous way as a group of people now come to pray the Rosary immediately following the 8:30 a.m. Mass on First Saturdays. It is normally led by Mariann. If she is out of town, she asks someone else to lead it, so that it is consistently offered.

"It slowly grew into what it is today," she says. "It used to be prayed in the chapel, but now it needs to take place in the larger church area, because so many people come. It is a very powerful source of grace, as well as fellowship."

At the beginning of the Rosary, as well as throughout it, the leader entrusts various intentions to the heart of the Blessed Mother.

"I always offer up prayers for the homeless, the suffering, and those in bondage to addictions," Mariann says. "I ask God to guide us through each decade."

The inspiration to pray the Rosary on First Saturdays originates from a message that the Blessed Mother gave to three shepherd children in



The daily Rosary group at Our Lady Star of the Sea. We pray Monday through Friday at the Chapel at 8 a.m. and on Saturday at 9 a.m.



Joining Hearts with Mother Mary Through our Parish Rosary Groups *continued from front cover*

Fatima on Dec. 10, 1925. During the apparition, which is officially approved by the Catholic Church, Our Lady said:

“See, my daughter, my Heart encircled by thorns with which ungrateful men pierce it at every moment by their blasphemies and ingratitude. Do you, at least, strive to console me. Tell them that I promise to assist at the hour of death with the graces necessary for salvation all those who, in order to make reparation to me, on the First Saturday of five successive months, go to Confession, receive Holy Communion, say five decades of the Rosary, and keep me company for a quarter of an hour, meditating on the... mysteries of the Rosary.”

Looking back, Mariann is truly grateful that she and her children had the experience of attending the First Saturday Mass and Rosary together.

“I believe it had a good impact on my children, and it gave them something special to remember,” she says. “It helped lay a foundation of faith for them — something that can never be taken away. If I could, I would do it all over again. It also gave me a lot of grace to live out my own vocation. The Rosary brings a lot of blessings along with it!”

In addition, our parish has a Rosary Prayer Chain whose members intercede for the sick in a special way. The chain is headed up by Bob Grano, and currently has about 300 active members. After a request is sent in, all of the chain members are notified, and pray for the intention, laying it at the feet of the Blessed Mother.

“One of our members is a retired deacon, and he forwards the prayer requests to a group in Lourdes, France,” Bob says. “He has been assured that the requests then get distributed to 100,000 people. It’s amazing!”

Those who would like to submit a prayer request, join the Prayer Chain, or have a Rosary prayed for them at their home or at church may contact Bob Grano at 904-273-0256.

For more information about the First Saturday Rosary, please contact Mariann Werninck at 904-703-4379.

Lastly, the Rosary is prayed in the chapel at Our Lady Star of the Sea Monday through Friday at 8 a.m. It is led by a rotation of leaders who offer along with prayers for peace in the world, our priests, our young people and for various other intentions. On Saturdays — except First Saturdays — it is prayed after the 8:30 a.m. Mass, and is offered for the sick. For more information, please contact Grace Diez Hoeck at 904-868-3661.

Over time, they have experienced some beautiful answers to their prayers.

“About 10 years ago, a friend told me that his father was dying and that he had left the Church years ago,” Bob says. “My friend asked our Prayer Chain members to intercede for his father, so we went to his house and prayed the Rosary for him. Soon, a priest came to visit his father, and he heard his Confession, gave him Holy Communion. He died in peace.”

“Sometimes it would just be me, sitting in the Cry Room, praying the First Saturday Rosary by myself. I just felt called to bring the devotion to our parish. I believed that the Blessed Mother wanted it for us. It is such a simple, quiet, humble thing — it’s just a matter of saying the Rosary.” — Mariann Werninck



A Letter from Our Pastor

The Month of Mary: A Time for Celebration and Joy

Dear Parishioners,

In the Catholic Church, we designate a particular devotion for each month — and May is when we honor our Blessed Mother Mary. Thus, this is a good time for us to think about and concentrate on our devotion to the Mother of God. Perhaps we can add a few more Marian prayers to our daily routine. Praying the Rosary might be even more important. Of course, that assumes that daily prayer is part of our daily routine — which it should be.

Our Blessed Mother is important to our faith and to our Church. Her willingness to serve in a way that allowed the Lord to take human form really made our salvation a possibility. Because of her complete trust in God, she lived her life free from sin, and after her life, she was assumed into heaven by the power of God and crowned Queen of Heaven and Earth.

She is, of course, not divine. We worship only our Lord Jesus Christ, but we honor Mary as a saint and in many other ways. We honor God when we remember the role of Mary

in our salvation. Devotion to Mary always leads to Jesus Christ Himself.

Mary was joyous when she said “yes” to God. That is the kind of joy we need to seek — and we, too, must say “yes” to the Lord. Let us be grateful to Mary for bringing us her Son. This is why we crown her on our Catholic version of Mother’s Day. Through Mary, we are given an invitation into the Catholic fold. Her feminine presence and the safety of her motherhood may help us grow.

For most of us, this time of year is a month of growth in relation to nature. It is difficult not to have May as one of our favorite months for so many reasons. May is a beautiful time. We are called to make it even more beautiful, and we can do that as we serve and love one another.

I am deeply blessed to be your pastor. I may say that often, but it is true. My priesthood has been a blessing, and serving you all has made that blessing even more significant. I pray



for you daily. Please pray for me. God bless you and keep you always.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Msgr. Keith Brennan
Pastor





Receiving the Sacrament of Communion

We congratulate all those who came into full communion with the





Confirmation: *A Look Back*

Catholic Church as they received the Sacrament of Confirmation!





May Crowning Ceremony Honors Mary's Discipleship

"The ceremony helps people in different ways. Some are very devoted and they know what the May crowning is. Older people know about the ceremony as they have seen it. Some are new converts or who those who have had no exposure to a May crowning. It is an opportunity to learn something new. It makes people remember and refocus on the Blessed Mother." — Dina Voutour

With our May Crowning ceremony held after the 11 a.m. Mass on May 6, our parish once again celebrated our Parish Patroness in a beautiful tradition that was revived three years ago.

The ceremony included members of our Confirmation class, who received the sacrament on April 18.

The statue of the Blessed Mother that overlooks the parish grounds, as well as the fronting road, was crowned with a custom-made rose chaplet that seemingly defies being wilted by the hot sun.

"They are all fresh rosebuds that last 30 days without any water," says Dina Voutour, Director of Faith Formation.

While this phenomenon is itself worthy of contemplation, it also can lead us to discerning what the Blessed Mother means to us.

"Mary is the perfect model of we should be in regards to discipleship, stewardship and vocation," Dina says. "She had the perfect 'yes' to the Angel Gabriel when she was told she'd be the Mother of God. Her answer was the perfect 'yes.' It was not 'maybe.' She said, 'Let it be done according to your Word.' We should be striving to be more like her. If she hadn't said 'yes,' we wouldn't have salvation."

The physical arrangement for the crowning ceremony requires planning and careful placement for the steps leading to the statue.

"We make it work," Dina says.

After an opening prayer, Msgr. Brennan explained the significance of the May crowning, followed by the recitation of a decade of the Rosary.

Dina's daughter, Kimberly, placed the floral crown on the statue during the simple ceremony.

"The ceremony helps people in different ways," Dina says. "Some are very devoted and they know what the May crowning is. Older people know about the ceremony as they have seen it. Some are new converts or who those who have had no exposure to a May crowning. It is an opportunity to learn something new. It makes people remember and refocus on the Blessed Mother."

Throughout the month of May when we venerate the Blessed Mother, we should always remember that devotion to her helps lead us to her Son.

"When you think about the discipleship of Mary, she was the first tabernacle that carried Him," Dina says. "If we think and study and reflect, and pray to the Blessed Virgin, when we say the Rosary, we have a closer walk with the Blessed Mother. She always leads us to her Son. It's not about her – it's always about Jesus. It will help us to be better disciples."





The Whitehouse Family: Faithfully Living Married Life to the Fullest



Marilyn and John Whitehouse with their grandchildren

John and Marilyn Whitehouse have been, are and always will be intensely passionate about loving God and family. For them, following Christ means embracing the sacred duties of their vocation with all of their hearts.

“We have eight children and 26 grandchildren,” John says. “We are so blessed. Over the years, we have come to see that the key to successful parenting is to really love your children, spend time with them, and educate them well.”

Because Catholic education has always been incredibly important to the Whitehouse family, John and Marilyn ensured that all of their children received a Catholic education from kindergarten through the 12th grade, and went on to Catholic colleges. Amazingly, all of their school-age grandchildren are presently attending Catholic schools, as well.

In the past, John and Marilyn were leaders for Search youth retreats, and served on the diocesan vocation board.

For 20 years, John was chairman of the diocesan Advisory Board of Education.

“We really believe in Catholic education,” John says. “We have always been very involved with it. Catholic education begins in the home, but it is important to have your children attend schools that support the education they are receiving at home. This is especially true in today’s world when religion and Christian values are not being taught in public schools.”

Although Marilyn was teaching early on in their marriage, she chose to quit her job and stay home with their children. She spent a great deal of time helping them with their homework and ensuring they received a great education from the Catholic schools they were attending.

“Since we had so many children, my main prayer was that we would be able to educate well, and in the Catholic faith,” Marilyn says. “Each one of them has gone on to have such a good outlook in life, and has been so motivated.”

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The Whitehouse Family *continued from page 7*

Looking back, they both can see the fruit of her sacrifice.

“We are so grateful she gave up her teaching career to stay home,” John says. “Our daughters have all received advanced college degrees, yet opted to be stay-at-home mothers as well. We are proud of them!”

After her children were grown, however, in 2000, she taught kindergarten and finished her master’s degree in education.

On June 23, at St. Louis Cathedral in New Orleans, their son, Michael, will be ordained as a permanent deacon.

Since the Whitehouse family joined our church in 1995 or so, they have truly enjoyed being part of our parish family.

“We have been very involved with the diocese since 1975, and we have seen a lot of parishes,” John says. “We believe that Our Lady Star of the Sea is one of the best. We like the

community spirit that it has, and how involved its parishioners are. We also appreciate the parish staff.”

Marilyn finds that our parish family is service-oriented and welcoming as well.

“Our parish is very friendly,” she says. “There are many ministries that cover so many different areas of interest, so it is easy for each person to find a way to get involved.”

Currently, John serves on the Pastoral Council, and both he and Marilyn are members of the Nocturnal Adoration Society.

Perhaps above all, John and Marilyn are grateful for the opportunity to attend daily Mass.

“Attending the Sacrifice of the Mass each day and receiving Jesus is a wonderful way to get the help you need to get by in the world today,” John says.

“It is our strength and our encouragement!” Marilyn adds.

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.