

Bells of St. Mary

Calling all to Community



Volume 23 Issue 2

Summer 2021

Frs. Jim and Hank Were Athenaeum Classmates

By Dan Darragh

It's likely that many parishioners at St. Mary of the Assumption got a little ahead of the game -- so to speak -- the first time they attended Mass with Father Hank Albietz officiating.

Actually, it was praying the Our Father where they were ahead -- way ahead -- of Father Hank who always leads the prayer speaking very slowly.

Why does he do that, you might ask? Asking parishioners to say the Lord's Prayer slowly during Mass was not something he started doing right out of the seminary; it was something that evolved over several years, he says. "If you don't pray it slowly, you're not praying it," he explains. "Each phrase gives a person enough to think about for the entire day."

Assisting with the Masses at St. Mary since his retirement has led to Father Hank and Father Jim connecting on a regular basis, much as they did while attending seminary at the Athenaeum of Ohio.

"Father Jim and I were seminary classmates in the late 1960s and early '70s," he recalls. "In those days, you were only allowed to come home one Sunday, every six weeks. We were not allowed to leave until after 9 a.m. Sunday High Mass, and we had to be back at the seminary by 8:30 that night. Since I was from St. Anthony and Father Jim was from St. Helen, both on the east side of Dayton, our parents took turns picking us up and getting us back."

Father Hank earned his bachelor's degree in philosophy from the Athenaeum in 1970, his master of education in German from Xavier University in 1973, his master's in divinity from the Athenaeum in 1974 and a master's in social agencies counseling from the University of Dayton in 1984. He is a licensed social worker in Ohio.

An assistant priest at St. Anthony when he was growing up, Father Dave Heintz, inspired him to become a priest, he says. "I wanted to be like him." One of the things Father Dave did that Father Hank has adopted is beginning the homily with an anecdote or a joke. It gets people's attention and they start listening, he says.

He also credits two other men for influencing him when he's planning his homilies -- longtime newsman the late Paul Harvey and television evangelist, motivational speaker and author the late Rev. Robert Schuller. After he retired as a journalist, Harvey was known for his radio broadcasts that were called "The Rest of the Story," where he told a story about an individual or happening that had a surprise ending that wasn't commonly known.

Schuller, who for many years preached at the Crystal Cathedral in southern California, was a minister of the Dutch Reformed Church of America. The Crystal Cathedral was the backdrop for the "Hour of Power," which was once the most-watched religious television program in the nation.

Father Hank said he admired the positive outlook Schuller presented in his sermons. Schuller avoided condemning people for sins. He believed Jesus "met needs before touting creeds." Once in a relationship with God, Schuller emphasized, someone who is sowing positive faith in his heart and actions will discover that the by-product is a reduction of sin. He was known to say, "Sin is a condition before it is an action." Schuller encouraged Christians and non-Christians to achieve great things through God and to believe in their dreams. He wrote, "If you can dream it, you can do it."

The Crystal Cathedral is now Christ Cathedral, a Catholic church and the first Mass was celebrated there in 2019.

Father Hank's first assignment was at St. Peter Parish in Hamilton. He then became the assistant at St. Patrick Parish in Troy, where he stayed for five years. For the next 15 years, he served at three parishes in Shelby County, Ohio, while also being the Family Life director in the five northern counties of the Cincinnati Archdiocese. After that he served as pastor of St. Patrick Parish in Bellefontaine for nine years, followed by six years at St. Joseph Parish in Wapakoneta. For the last nine years before retiring in 2018, he was pastor of St. Angela Merici parish in Fayetteville and also St. Michael Parish in Mt. Orab (Brown County) Ohio.

Although he enjoyed hunting and fishing in his spare time, arthritis has taken its toll, making those hobbies pretty much things of the past. "I can't pull the trigger anymore, and the arthritis in my back prevents me from using my boat," he explains.



Father Hank Albietz fills in at a number of churches in the area.

See Fathers - page 2

What's inside:

Page 2 - Bicentennial Marian Pilgrimage

Page 3 - The Joys of Fellowship and Service Return!

Page 5 - One Intersection, 2 Very Different Philosophies

Page 6 - The Knights of Columbus Flag Raising

St. Mary Statue Pilgrims, Honored, Humbled

For the year 2021, the Archdiocese of Cincinnati is celebrating 200 years of Faith and one special way it celebrated was to host the longest Marian pilgrimage in the United States. From May 16-June 19, the pilgrimage made its way through the entire archdiocese, finishing at the Cathedral Basilica of St. Peter in Chains. Each day the pilgrims walked the statue of Our Lady of Fatima to a different parish along the route. Three St. Mary of the Assumption parishioners walked five consecutive days (Leg 6 of the route) as statue guardians. All three pilgrims finished their service with a renewed closeness to Jesus through Our Blessed Mother that will live on in them forever. Their inspiring testimonies are below.

Five Glorious Days by Mary Graham

It was an honor to serve as a pilgrim on Leg 6 and accompany the beautiful statue of Our Lady of Fatima on her journey throughout our Archdiocese of Cincinnati. It was encouraging to see the large numbers of people devoted to Our Blessed Mother along the way. It was a special and sacred time spent with like-minded Catholics who love our faith and were unashamed and open in sharing prayers, song and conversations with each other and with people we encountered. I will never forget the numerous Holy Masses, multiple opportunities for Eucharistic Adoration, the beautiful churches, the sacred music, and especially the untold numbers of rosaries prayed together with fellow pilgrims.

May Jesus, with the intercession of His Blessed Mother, hear our prayers and grant the requests gathered throughout the archdiocese, the conversion of sinners, and increase faith, hope and love in us all.



St. Mary Statue Guardians Mary Graham, Pegge Bellamy and Jim Gruden

Days of Peace by Pegge Bellamy

This Marian Pilgrimage was truly a humbling experience. Each day our journey was a constant prayer with Mass, Adoration, rosary, songs, silence and witnessing to people who walked with us. There was joy as we processed through neighborhoods and communities. People were grateful we brought Our Lady of Fatima to them. It was an incredible honor to do this as it brought peace, hope and the power of prayer to them.

There were several unexplained things that happened along the way that made it clear that Mary is our mother, she is with us, and we need her now more than ever! We encountered some rough roads and sidewalks while carrying Our Lady. There were detours, rainy weather, and added miles for unexpected places Mary clearly wanted to be - we trusted her. As I continued along it dawned on me, this is exactly how life is. Like our Pilgrimage, life is full of unexpected detours, wrong turns, rough roads, barriers, pain; however, we keep going and trust God. I experience God everywhere in hope, kindness, joy, compassion, peace and love amidst the obstacles.

But, the difference for me now after the Pilgrimage is PEACE. I realized that I need to keep peace in my soul and focus on God. He and Mary will give me the strength to humbly love and keep going even through the obstacles. AVE MARIA!



Mary Graham and Pegge Bellamy leading the pilgrim route with Our Lady of Fatima Statue.

See Pilgrimage page 3

Fathers from page 1

However, he still has plenty on his plate to keep him busy. Besides helping out at St. Mary Parish, he has remained active, serving at the same time as the administrator of St. Charles Parish in Kettering and also helping out at St. Mary Parish in Greenville when those pastors were ill. "Pastors ask me to fill in for a Mass if they don't feel well or plan to be out of town for vacation or a meeting," he says. But if it involves more than saying a Mass -- like when he served as parish administrator -- he's assigned by the archdiocese office. He sometimes says Mass at two different churches on a Saturday and Sunday.

And, since his dad was from Germany, he returns to that area in the southwest corner near Basil, Switzerland, every one or two years where he is able to visit with a cousin. On the same trip he goes over to Romania to visit several friends. Several years ago, when he was a member of the Rotary Club in Williamsburg, he spearheaded a project to collect money to insulate the walls of a 58-bed dormitory for physically and mentally handicapped persons in Romania.

Father Hank lives in Union, which is east of Dayton International Airport and north of Englewood.



Statue of Our Lady of Fatima at St. Mary

My Marian Pilgrimage Reflection by Jim Gruden

In 1 Kings (19:11-13), the prophet Elijah was exposed to a strong wind, an earthquake and a fire but the Lord was not found in any of those phenomenon. It was only in a still small voice where the Lord was truly found. In a similar way, when observing the Marian pilgrimage from the “outside,” one could quickly list the advertised metrics of 300+ miles, 36+ parishes, 33 days, etc. but as a Statue Guardian from the “inside” who personally lived the five-day experience, it was definitely in the still small voice where God’s presence and the Blessed Mother’s intercession were truly found. A few of the many examples.

There were the two little boys who came running out to the curb in their yard as we passed by. When asked if they knew who Jesus was, they replied, “Yes!” but when asked if they knew who the statue was they were quiet. Thanks to the sweet and joyful voice of one of our St. Mary Statue Guardians, they now know Mary as Jesus’s Mom. Then there was the young lady sitting along the curb near the St. Vincent DePaul Center as we passed by and remained there motionless for 20 minutes. A visit by a Statue Guardian didn’t resolve her issues but he believed this was the first time she had someone listen to her concerns as the tears flowed down her face. And just when everyone at St. Mary thought the Wednesday evening activities were done and gathered in the Parish Center for the social, there was the family of four who unexpectedly entered our church in tears due to a recent tragedy and found consolation with several Statue Guardians in front of Our Lady of Fatima’s statue as they grieved and we embraced their sorrow.

In summary, whether you are walking a designated Marian pilgrimage or “walking” your daily journey toward holiness and sainthood, don’t miss that still small voice where God can be found most profoundly, especially in the Eucharist, that integral and essential part of our Marian pilgrimage which we received daily during the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

The Joys of Fellowship and Service Return!



Young Adult Ministry meets Tuesday evenings



Ladies Society Second Annual Police Appreciation Cookie Drive



Father Mike Kaploka’s First Mass



Continued on page 4



Fr. Emmanuel's 20th year as a priest Mass and celebration



Junior High Ministry meets Wednesday nights



Confirmation Celebration this Spring

One Intersection, 2 Very Different Philosophies

By Moira and Mike Pfeifer

Vineyard and wheat field are two concepts often used by Jesus in parables to explain the kingdom of God. Jesus uses a vineyard to explain that “the stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone” (Luke 20:17) and that “[he is] the vine, [we] are the branches” (John 15:5). He uses a wheat field to explain that at harvest time, he will say to the harvesters, “First, collect the weeds and tie them in bundles for burning; but gather the wheat into my barn” (Matthew 13:30).

Is it a coincidence, or part of God’s plan, that the intersection of Vineyard and Wheatland avenues just north of Stroop Road in Kettering is a microcosm for the kingdom of God? On one side of the intersection is the Women’s Centers of Ohio, 1377 E. Stroop Road, Suite 301, where pregnant women can choose life. On the other side of the intersection is the Women’s Med Center, also known as “the abortion mill”, where pregnant women can choose death.



Mike and Moira Pfeifer with faithful prayer partner Vivian Skovgard

At this intersection, there is usually at least one and often several volunteers working tirelessly for life, volunteers from all over the Dayton area. One woman, Vivian Skovgard, is a sidewalk counselor who is there nearly every day the abortion mill is open. It is at this intersection that we (Moira and Mike Pfeifer) lead the Rosary on the first Friday of each month around 9 a.m.

Why the Rosary? As described by Father Donald Calloway, the Rosary is a “spiritual sword” that “has the power to slay dragons (demons), convert sinners, and conquer hearts.” Many popes and saints have attested to the Rosary as a weapon against the devil, and as a remedy against severe trials, temptations, and the hardships of life. The Rosary is our most powerful prayer for fighting the evils of abortion.

The Rosary is the “epitome, or summary, of whole Gospel,” according to the Catechism of the Catholic Church, because it encourages the faithful to meditate upon the fundamental events of salvation history, and the life of Jesus Christ, with Mary as our mediator, since she is the one who leads us to her son. There has been a growing presence of the Rosary at St Mary of the Assumption Parish. The Rosary is recited each Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. (before the 7 o’clock Mass), each Friday after the 8 a.m. Mass (Patriotic Rosary), and before each Mass on the fifth Sunday of the month weekends. The Vineyard and Wheatland Rosary Ministry now takes this “spiritual sword” to battle the “culture of death” at the abortion mill in Kettering and to pray for the women, men and children involved in this culture.

Our experiences at the intersection of Vineyard and Wheatland have been eye-opening, to say the least. It is disheartening to see the number of women that go in and out of the abortion mill in the 20 minutes or so that it takes to recite the Rosary – typically 5-10 women in that short time-period.

According to the latest numbers released by Ohio Department of Health, the abortion mill in Kettering continues to kill infants in the womb at the rate of approximately 55 per week. Dayton is becoming a magnet city for abortion, given the reduction the past few years in abortion clinics across Ohio, which has been reduced from 18 to eight since 2010, according to Dayton Right to Life.

Parishioners are invited to join us in praying the Rosary outside of the Women’s Med Center at 1401 E. Stroop Road in Kettering on the first Friday of each month at 9 a.m. after first going to the 8 a.m. Mass at St. Mary’s. Afterwards, if there is interest, we would go out for coffee and fellowship. Call 937-748-3815 if you have questions.

St. Mary of the Assumption Church
9579 Yankee Road
Springboro, OH 45066

NONPROFIT STANDARD U.S.
POSTAGE PAID FRANKLIN OH
PERMIT NO. 300

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Knights of Columbus raising a new flag blessed by Father Manning outside Church after the conclusion of 10:30 Mass on Sunday July 4th. The ceremony concluded with a brief prayer in thanks for the freedom we enjoy in our country, especially our religious freedoms.

At the beginning of the year, the Knights sponsored a memorial flag program providing parishioners the opportunity to honor a special loved one by donating a flag in their name over the Parish campus for a few months with a framed certificate that gives the name of the individual who the flag commemorates. If you are interested in enrolling a loved one, contact the Knights of Columbus.