

# St. Margaret Mary Catholic Church

## “Closer and Closer to the Lord” The Blessings of Adoration

### INSIDE

- 3 Summer Vacations Are Coming to an End... Now What?
- 4 Walking Together Resale Shop Offers a Welcoming Outreach
- 6 Homeless Outreach Ministry Evangelizes Through Action
- 7 Vacation Bible School Helps Kids Grow Closer to God

Imagine if the risen Christ were to appear to us at the altar of St. Margaret Mary – wouldn't we all go running to meet Him? More likely than not, millions of people would travel from around the world just to sit at His feet and soak in the incomparable graces of His presence. It may be hard for us to picture this scenario – and yet, the reality is that we indeed have a chance to rest in Christ's true presence on a regular basis!

It is one of the greatest blessings of the Catholic Church to have the very real presence of Jesus dwelling in our midst in the form of the Holy Eucharist. And here at St. Margaret Mary, in addition to receiving the Eucharist at all of our Masses, we also have the opportunity every Wednesday and on first Fridays to partake in one of the most sacred and life-changing experiences our Catholic faith has to offer – Eucharistic Adoration.

While parishioner Maureen Haut had never heard of adoration before coming to our parish six years ago, she decided to become a regular adorer shortly after joining St. Margaret Mary. Now, she can't imagine a life without her weekly hour or more of adoration.

“What inspired me to start going was God – it was God's calling,” Maureen says. “I had

*continued on page 2*



*Maureen Haut has found her weekly adoration hour to be a life-changing experience.*



*Parishioner John Barrett feels closer to Christ thanks to the time he spends in the Adoration Chapel.*

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# *The Blessings of Adoration* continued from front cover

no idea what adoration really was, but when my husband and I came to the parish, we met some really wonderful people, and one lady in particular would talk about it. We have two older special needs children, so I never thought I would have time for a weekly adoration.

“Then one day, it was announced in our Bible study that the person doing the 10 o’clock hour was moving and they needed a replacement,” Maureen continues. “I found out that a friend was praying for me, and a week later I told her I would do it. God wanted me there, and He changed my heart and mind. Now I go every week and don’t even think about missing it.”

As Maureen began coming to adoration week after week, she discovered a peace and comfort there that she had never experienced before. Realizing that Christ is truly present in the Host, and that she is able to sit quietly in His presence – sometimes praying and sometimes simply listening to His voice – has helped her through both good times and bad over the past five years.

One night in particular, during a time of struggle in Maureen’s life, the Lord made His presence known to her in an unforgettable way.

“I got to adoration that night, and I cried and prayed and did the Rosary as I usually do, and all of a sudden I’m sitting there and the Eucharist looked like the shape of Jesus’ face,” Maureen recalls. “There was His head, His beard, His nose. And I’m thinking I’m losing my mind – I was doubting that this could be happening to me, just a normal person. So, I got up close and I saw the outline of Him in the Host, and it was there for quite awhile. I got up so many times to see if I was losing my mind, God was probably laughing at me!”

While Maureen had already felt her faith growing stronger through her devotion to weekly adoration, this incredible experience energized her faith life even more. To this day, she considers her discovery of Eucharistic Adoration to be an answered prayer.

“That expression, ‘Knock and God will open the door to you,’ is so true,” she affirms. “I know so many people who have needed a sign and He does that for people. I think he knew that I needed one that night, showing me that He is really here.”

With the blessings that abound in Eucharistic Adoration, Maureen’s vision of the Host is not the only tangible sign of Christ’s presence that a parishioner has witnessed during an adoration hour. John Barrett, who has also been a regular adorer for about five years, has a similarly unforgettable story to share.

John, who has a strong devotion to Mary in addition to serving as an adorer, always prays the Rosary during his weekly adoration hour.

“I had an amazing occurrence happen to me a year ago on Ash Wednesday during adoration, when my rosary turned to gold,” John recounts. “I noticed a glint in my rosary as I was praying, so I looked down and the rosary had turned to a gold color. I had bought

two silver rosaries from a parishioner who had got them from a monastery. So now, I have two absolutely opposite-colored rosaries – one is silver and the other is now gold. I carry it in my right pocket at all times and take it as a sign that the Lord wanted me to know of His total existence, without a doubt. And was Mary involved? Of course. It was also a grace handed down by her.”

John’s commitment to his weekly hour of adoration has become even stronger following his experience with the rosary, and he considers the opportunity to sit in the presence of the Lord to be one of the greatest blessings in his faith life.

“I just can’t say enough about adoration,” he enthuses. “I can’t think of anything else that brings you closer to the Lord. With adoration, I have learned so much more about communication with the Lord, and listening and hearing Him when He speaks to me. It takes time, but if parishioners come and do it on a regular basis, they will enjoy it, and they will get closer and closer and closer to the Lord – it just works that way!”

*“I just can’t say enough about adoration. I can’t think of anything else that brings you closer to the Lord. With adoration, I have learned so much more about communication with the Lord, and listening and hearing Him when He speaks to me. It takes time, but if parishioners come and do it on a regular basis, they will enjoy it, and they will get closer and closer and closer to the Lord – it just works that way!”*

– John Barrett

*For more information about Eucharistic Adoration, to sign up for a first Friday adoration or to become a regular Wednesday adorer, please visit <http://saintmargaretmary.org/adoration/>*

A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR

# Summer Vacations Are Coming to an End... Now What?

Dear Parishioners,

The month of August really does seem to return us to reality, doesn't it? Summer is coming to an end – maybe not officially on the calendar, but in terms of our lives and the life of the Church, it does. The children may view it as the end of something appealing – the start of summer vacation seems like a long time ago – and their parents may be breathing sighs of relief. For those involved in parish ministries, it might be a time when we say, “Now, it's time to work.”

Perhaps this is a time when we get back into the routine of things. However, we all know the truth – that faith and the Church are not seasonal. For that matter, stewardship is not seasonal, and it's not something that is done a few times a year. Rather, stewardship is something we should be thinking about each and every day.

There are many definitions of stewardship, but at its very basis, it means using the gifts God has given us to do the things God asks – calls, expects – us to do. Stewardship is discipleship. We may tend to think of stewardship as a question: “What is mine and what is



God's?" The truth is that all that we have and all that we are belongs to and comes from God – absolutely everything!

We may hear that stewardship is using and sharing our time, our talent, and our treasure. In terms of time, the secret is not learning how to use it or how to get more of it – the secret is knowing how best to use it. Talent and treasure are given to each of

us in different amounts. Nevertheless, the bottom line is that we have to trust God before we really share those things. Relying on God and living a God-centered life are fundamental to a relationship with Him – and, for that matter, with one another. Being contented is not the fulfillment of what you may want. Rather, it is the realization of what you already have.

So, we are back to the reality of this time of year. You may have heard the statement that stewardship people are grateful people. Perhaps this is a time to be grateful for the summer that has passed. But it is a time for us to recommit ourselves to doing better, especially as we enter a time of year that provides a return to routine. Importantly, it is also a time filled with celebrations, thanksgiving, hope, and maybe even better stewardship on each of our parts.

Peace and Goodness,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "P Sarnicki". The signature is written in a cursive, slightly slanted style.

Fr. Peter Sarnicki OFM, Conv.

# Walking Together Resale Shop



*Everything is neatly arranged and marked for customers at the Walking Together Resale Shop. Volunteers sort through donated items to ensure the quality of the merchandise.*



*Books and other small items are available for purchase at the Walking Together Resale Shop.*

Our Walking Together Resale Shop has bargains galore – and more!

You'll find our dedicated ministry volunteers who welcome all through the door by sharing their love of Christ through their efforts.

The shop, at 117 S. Hubbard St., occupies the house that once served as a convent, then a preschool. It was transformed to the resale shop about 10 years ago. And over those 10 years, all the proceeds from the sales have gone directly back to St. Margaret Mary Parish – all \$100,000 in sales.

“It’s really a joint effort,” says Barb Martin, Resale Shop Coordinator. “I’m kind of the scheduler – whatever we need to get going.”

There currently are between 40 and 60 volunteers who staff the shop. It is open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday through Friday; 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Saturday; and 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. on the second Sunday of the month. On Mondays, the volunteers carefully sort through the donations and arrange the items for sale.

“This ministry is like an octopus,” Barb says. “We not only serve the people who come in, but we are able to take a look at other ministries. Our Religious Education program has a special summer program, and they wanted to make costumes. We were able to supply material to use for that. We help the Food Pantry when that ministry needs clothing for those who may need jeans or shoes. We’re glad to help as much as we can. What we do is look around to see where we can be of help in the community of our parish. We’re also one of only a few ministries who make a substantial contribution to reducing the debt of the parish.”

Items accepted for donation include clothing, shoes, books, housewares, jewelry, home décor, linens and towels, games, purses, and baby items. Donated school uniforms are a popular item for children from preschool through eighth grade, as well as high school. Large items, such as furniture, cannot be accepted.

The Resale Shop offers weekly special bargains, too – around Christmastime, holiday items are priced at 50 percent off, and there will be a 50-percent-off sale on women’s items, for example. If an item has overstayed its welcome, it goes into the “super sale” section. At the end of the season, there will be a \$5 bag sale that includes clothing, shoes and purses – whatever fits in a bag.

When people walk into the shop, they’re not seen just as prospective customers.

“Every person who comes in brings the figure of Christ,” Barb says. “We are in continuation of our worship. We come together in different locations. We try to provide a very

# Offers a Welcoming Outreach

welcoming outreach, whether they buy something or not. We're there, as ears to listen – some just like someone to talk to. That's why we like to be there."

"It's awesome to see people come in," says Mary Ann Chase, a ministry member. "When you work there long enough, you can tell the people who are grateful to have things they can buy. We're helping the community.

"The people working there are very God-centered," she continues. "They are such a kind spirit. We have people we do reach out to, that we know are in need. Christ is there. The affordability, the camaraderie, we see. There just is a lot of Christ-centered activity going on within the Resale Shop itself."

Mary Ann says she also shops there.

"It's a great place to be," she says. "And it can have perks – those who work there can shop for 50 percent off. And Wednesday is Senior Day when everything is 50 percent off."

The Resale Shop also plays a role in the practice of stewardship in our parish.

"In making donations, the parish helps make possible how much we can contribute back to the church," Barb says. "It also provides a sense of community and unity with other members of the parish. When they donate something, they do it with the sense that someone else can use it. It's very nice. It's that kind of thing that goes on. People want to know if their donated possession will go to a good home!"

The volunteers contribute their time and talent through the Resale Shop.

"All who come in say how beautiful it looks," Barb says. "That's only because the people within the ministry take pride in ownership. Our volunteers are so generous in offering whichever talent they have. They find ways to be creative."

Once a year, the Resale Shop's volunteers are honored with a luncheon in the spring.

"This is an opportunity to meet each other because they work different days and shifts," Barb says. "They hear a report of all the activities and may, if they wish, give us feedback about any improvements we can make. Lots of great ideas come out. This gives us ways we can make things better. We can't do it without the volunteers."

*Additional volunteers are always welcome at the Resale Shop, and the work schedules are very flexible. Anyone interested in volunteering can speak to one of the volunteers at the shop, or call 847-458-8958.*



*Items are displayed attractively.*



*Julie LeSueur Bridges is one of the faithful ministry volunteers who staffs the Resale Shop. Anyone wanting to volunteer can speak to Julie, or one of the other volunteers.*

## Homeless Outreach Ministry Evangelizes Through Action

While we tend to think of evangelization strictly in terms of words spoken aloud, more often than not, evangelization is done silently through our very actions. And through this “evangelization by action,” the members of St. Margaret Mary’s Homeless Outreach Ministry work together to tangibly bring the love of Christ to those in need through food.

“I love that the guests are able to see that the Catholic Church loves to help serve and care for those who are hungry,” says parishioner Lynn Fordonski. “I think it’s an important aspect of sharing what we believe as Catholics. It’s an evangelization of doing, witnessing our faith to others, rather than an evangelization of words. We are representing our beautiful faith by going out and serving.”

“I think the Catholic Church is there to help take care of people, no matter what religion they are,” adds Barb Balduf. “It’s such a fundamental need to feed people, and I think it’s perfect for the Catholic Church to be involved in something like this, because it’s happening in our backyard – our own communities.”

The Homeless Outreach Ministry takes place at the Vineyard Church of Elgin. Each day Monday through Friday, a different denomination or church commits to providing and serving breakfast to homeless individuals and families in need from the local community.

“It could be someone who is actually homeless and living on the street, or a mother and child who are financially struggling and stopping by before heading to school,” Lynn says. “It’s really about showing these people who are less fortunate that somebody cares about them.”

Currently, St. Margaret Mary has two different serving teams helping to provide breakfast on both the third and fourth Monday of each month. Setup for each designated Monday begins at 6:30 a.m. with serving beginning at 7 a.m. What is unique about this ministry is that volunteers may become involved in a wide variety of ways. Some donate or cook food and supplies, while others give of their time for the setup and serving. Still others choose to be involved in both aspects of the ministry.

“There is something for everyone in this ministry,” Barb says. “I think that is what is so great about this ministry, because you don’t have to necessarily have time every day or even need to drive there. Whether it’s lifting up prayers for the people we serve or donating a gallon of milk, there’s a way for everyone to become involved.”



In this way, the Homeless Outreach Ministry truly becomes a team effort, with many loving hands donating of their time, talent, and treasure in service of those less fortunate than themselves. And in the process, volunteers are able to encounter Christ Himself through the ministry recipients.

“Each little sacrifice that we are able to make is truly so worth it,” Lynn says. “Just recently, someone had made homemade bread for all of the sandwiches and I thanked her for giving her very best. She said to me, ‘You never know, you might be serving Jesus.’ When I heard that, I told her that every single one of them is Jesus. When we look into their eyes, we see Jesus.”



*All St. Margaret Mary parishioners are invited to consider becoming involved in this ministry of care. To begin assisting with the third Monday of the month, please contact Barb Balduf at [barbbalduf@gmail.com](mailto:barbbalduf@gmail.com), while those wishing to get involved with the team on the fourth Monday of the month should contact Lynn Fordonski at 708-533-3416 or [4donskis@comcast.net](mailto:4donskis@comcast.net).*

# Vacation Bible School Helps Kids Grow Closer to God

The kids of St. Margaret Mary enjoyed a great week of Vacation Bible School – VBS –from June 19-23! For over 10 years, VBS has been a beloved parish tradition for children in preschool through fifth grade. This year’s theme was “Cave Quest – Following Jesus, the Light of the World.” Through various activities throughout the week, kids are able to learn about their faith and grow closer to God.

“VBS went great this year!” Missy Payne says. “VBS is a great way for children to learn about Jesus and His love for us. We had Bible stories and real kid experiences, with circumstances that the kids can relate to. There were water games and relays, fun at the park, songs and dances, and making tie-dye pillowcases. We had an awesome closing ceremony each day for the kids and parents. And snacks are always a hit at VBS!”

In the mornings, elementary school aged children arrived and began their day as a group at 9 a.m. They discussed a “Bible buddy” of the day, as well as the Bible verse and story of the day. Their adult leader then led them to one of five stations, through which they rotated during the course of each day. The stations included Bible Adventure, KidVid (in which a short video relating to the topic of the day was shown), Sing and Play, Snack, and Games and Crafts.

Preschool children participated in a similar program, but were self-contained in their own designated classroom, and had activities tailored to their age level. At noon, the end of the VBS day, all the ages came together as a group to sing songs and discuss what they learned.

In addition to these fun activities, children in VBS also learn about serving others by participating in a different service project each year. Past projects have included making blankets for children in the hospital, making rosaries for those in the chapel who wish to pray the devotion during adoration,

a pet food drive, and making bags of goodies for the homeless. This year, the service project supported Rock House Kids.

“Rock House is an organization in Rockford that provides bags of food for children who may not have access to a meal when not in school,” Missy says. “Donation bags are sized to fit into a backpack, and can include any finger foods that are non-perishable, and do not need utensils or any added ingredients, including water. Families were asked to donate juice boxes, granola bars, individual cereal boxes, fruit cups, pudding cups, and individual cracker packs. The children all came together and assembled them as a group on the last day of VBS.

“These service projects are an excellent way for our kids to understand how fortunate they are,” she adds. “But more importantly, it’s an excellent way to teach them about giving. They learn how to give not only their treasure, but their time, as well.”

The success of VBS at our parish could not be accomplished without the help of dedicated volunteers.

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## *Vacation Bible School Helps* continued from page 7

“VBS is a fantastic week that highlights the talents of many volunteers and shows how we all have God-given talents just waiting to emerge,” Missy says. “Children may sign up for VBS with a friend from school, and this may be the only time that a child is exposed to Jesus throughout the year. Because of this, the importance of a fun environment and great attitude by the volunteers is essential.

“One of the highlights from the week was the fantastic decorations designed by Lynn, Heather and Amber Anderson,” she adds. “These three truly have a gift for transforming the space we use into an incredible area where the kids and the adults are amazed. Lucky for us, they have already signed

on for VBS 2018!”

Planning for VBS 2018 begins this month, and any interested parishioners are welcome to give of their time and talents to help out!

“We have a very dedicated core group of volunteers, but always welcome new faces!” Missy says. “We learn a lot from each other, and especially from the kids. Working with children gives you a very different perspective on discipleship. Our job is to reach children, especially those who may not know about Jesus, and share God’s love, friendship and forgiveness with them. We encourage you to join us in this very powerful and rewarding ministry!”

*If you would like more information about VBS, or to get involved as a volunteer, please contact Missy Payne at [7099042@gmail.com](mailto:7099042@gmail.com). Next year’s program will take place June 18-22, 2018 and the theme will be “VBS Fun Maker Factory: Created by God. Built for a Purpose.”*

### LITURGY SCHEDULE

**Monday - Thursday:** 7:00 & 8:30 a.m. | **Friday:** 7:00 & 9:15 a.m. | **First Friday:** 7:30 p.m. in Polish  
**Saturday:** 8:30 a.m., 4:30 p.m. (6:30 p.m. in Polish)  
**Sunday:** 7:00, 9:00, 11:00 a.m. & 4:30 p.m. (1:00 p.m. in Polish)