



MAY 2014

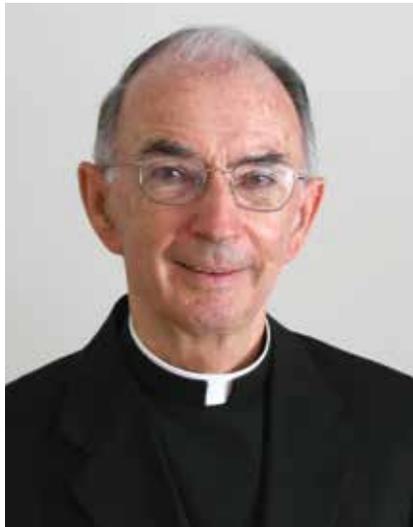
# *Our Faith in Action*

*American Martyrs Catholic Community*

## **A LETTER FROM OUR PASTOR** *Celebrating the Month of Mary*

Dear Parishioners,

It seems so many things come together for us in the month of May, designated by our Church as the “Month of Mary.” Here at American Martyrs we begin with welcoming our teens into the fullness of their Catholic faith through the Sacrament of Confirmation. While this is a special moment for them, their parents, their sponsors and all who have worked with them in their formation, it is not just a moment but a beginning of their “adult” faith journey as anointed ministers in our Church. They are called to serve the Lord and are reminded that they have received the same Holy Spirit who ever-shadowed Mary and through which she became the perfect mother and first disciple of Jesus. Mary, our Mother, stands beside us as she did with Jesus. She tells us “Do whatever He tells you.”



Almost immediately following this great experience we have the celebration of First Holy Communion for our younger children. On this

day they, with innocent and pure hearts, receive Jesus in the Holy Eucharist for the first time. Like Mary, they welcome Him into their hearts and souls. It is a great joy for families and friends and we pray together that they will have us there to encourage them as they continue to grow in the love of Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament.

Of course in this Month of Mary, we pause to honor her and all of our mothers on Mother’s Day. We have the ceremony of the May Crowning and pray for a greater devotion to Mary as Our Blessed Mother. We pray for all of our mothers, living and deceased that they will be blessed by good, respectful and loving children.

There are many ministries that honor Mary. We have the Legion of Mary whose members pray and dedicate themselves to being the visiting and comforting disciple of Mary and her Son as they help others to remain close to their faith and if they have strayed and are fearful, to come home

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# *Mothers & Stewardship*

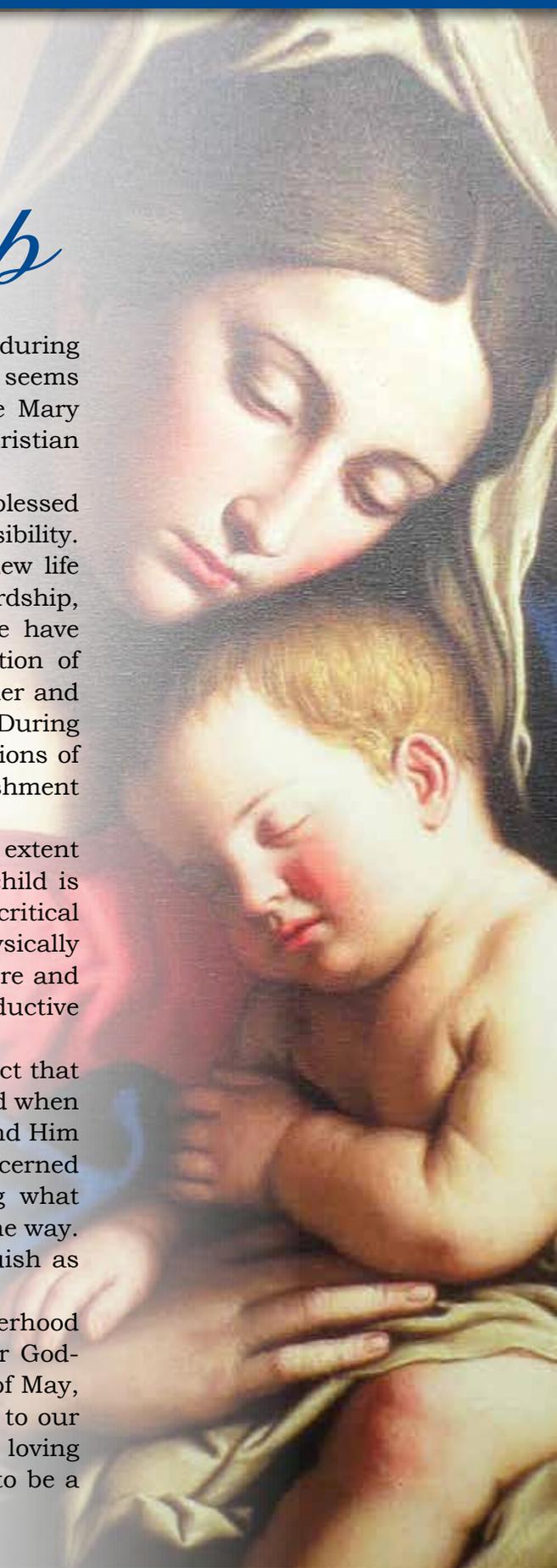
**W**e celebrate the month of Mary during May, and during this month we also celebrate Mother's Day. It seems fitting that we honor our mothers during May since Mary is given to us by God as the example of true Christian motherhood.

Those who are called to be mothers have been blessed by God and called to fulfill a very important responsibility. Mothers are the vehicle through which God brings new life into this world. When we talk about Christian stewardship, we talk about sacrificially returning to God what we have been given. What can more clearly be a demonstration of complete sacrifice than the relationship between mother and child during the nine months of growth in the womb? During these nine months, the child's life depends on the actions of the mother as the first portion of her energy and nourishment goes directly to the growing baby.

Although this relationship may change to some extent after the child is born, a mother's sacrifice for her child is far from over after the birth. The role of the mother is critical in the child's development – both spiritually and physically – throughout life. Mothers provide the comfort, nurture and support necessary for their children to become productive citizens and responsible Christians.

The job of a mother is not an easy one. This is a fact that Mary, the mother of Jesus, knew very well. She worried when her son appeared to be lost at the age of 12, only to find Him later in "His Father's House." She was probably concerned as Jesus began His public ministry – not knowing what difficulties and rejections He would encounter along the way. And Mary must have experienced indescribable anguish as she watched her Son's body being crucified to a cross.

May all mothers look to Mary as their model for motherhood and ask her intercession as they strive to fulfill their God-given role in their children's lives. During the month of May, let us all take some time to express our appreciation to our mothers for allowing us to come into this world, for loving us, and for serving as an example of what it means to be a steward for life.



## Legion Of Mary

### *Members Strive To “Go Make Disciples” For Christ*

Their devotion to the Blessed Mother and unflinching willingness to bring others to God through her are at the heart of the activities of the Legion of Mary Praesidium at American Martyrs Church.

The six members of the Praesidium, with Jenny Roderick as president, visit the sick and shut-ins of the parish, as well as the residents of a local nursing home. During the home visits, the members will take the Pilgrim Virgin statue with them, say the Rosary, and encourage those they visit to say the Rosary, as well. The Pilgrim Virgin statue can remain in the home for a set time until it is returned to the Praesidium.

“We’re solely a spiritual group,” Jenny says. “We don’t raise or ask for money.”

Frank Duff in Dublin, Ireland founded the Legion of Mary on Sept. 7, 1921. It has grown to a worldwide organization made up of men and women who have taken the Legion Promise to Our Lady. Each local group is called a Praesidium, and the South Bay region has 12 Praesidia at 12 churches.

The American Martyrs Praesidium meets once a week, as directed by the Legion, at 3:30 p.m. in the Parish House. The members pray and recite the Rosary, as well as report on their activities for the week.

Once a month, the Praesidium officers attend a

meeting of the Curia, or regional level, to report on the local group’s activities. During the week, the Praesidium works in pairs to make their visitations or engage in other outreach activities. Visits customarily last 30 minutes.

Deacon Fred, the group’s spiritual director, provides a list of parishioners who request a visitation for the sick.

“We try to get three or four visits for each pair during the week,” Jenny says. “We are to ‘go make disciples.’ We have what is called the ‘book barrow apostolate,’ a small display table set up in an area provided where people walk by. We have leaflets about the Church and leaflets for the Knights of Columbus that we pass out, and rosaries. Usually each Praesidium does it twice a year.”

The local group also takes part in the “Apostolate to the Crowd,” that involves just meeting and talking to people wherever they may be.

“We have some materials there so people can see who we are and we try to evangelize,” Jenny says. “It’s challenging, but very good — you get a lot of graces from it.”

Anyone interesting in joining the Legion of Mary is welcome to attend a meeting. “They can go on one of the visitations and then they have three months to decide if they want to join,” Jenny says. “If they want to join, they take



the promise to Our Lady. If they choose not to do that, they can become a member of the Auxiliary. We have about 80 Auxiliary members. They say the Rosary and the Legion prayer each day. That’s the only obligation they have.”

Members must be practicing Catholics who are 18 and older.

“We do have a Junior Legion for young kids up to 18,” Jenny says.

During the annual Auxiliary Luncheon, the Auxiliary members are invited to fully join the Legion.

Although the American Martyrs Praesidium does not have any special May activities planned to honor the Virgin Mary, the group does say the Rosary before each 8 a.m. Mass. The group also takes part in the Stations of the Cross devotions each Lenten Friday.

Anyone interested in a home visitation or in joining the Legion of Mary may contact Jenny Roderick at 310-379-6541.

## OUTREACH MINISTRY BRINGS MOTHERS AND CHILDREN TOGETHER FOR IMPORTANT CAUSES

The Mothers' Outreach Ministry – or MOM – is a group of mothers who get together to coordinate outreach projects with their children. The group, founded in 1997, is led by Lori Cedergreen and Colleen McCarthy.

“It’s a group of moms that comes together once a month to plan and offer outreach projects during the school year,” Colleen says. “It’s been a great way for moms to get to know each other, especially those of us who stay home with our kids, and to show our children how to serve by example.”

The moms in the group bring their children to meetings, and the children are involved in most of the outreach projects. Colleen and the other moms feel that it’s important to teach children to give back and this ministry provides a great opportunity to do just that. Group members also support one another in various ways. “One way is with new baby meals,” Colleen says. “When a member has a new baby, we try to support that mother and that family by bringing them meals three days a week for a few

weeks. When that happens, we all really feel a part of something special.”

The group is involved in countless parish events and outreach projects, and sponsors four big events during the school year. A number of these events are designated to help raise and maintain a yearly scholarship fund where the group provides a graduate of St. Lawrence of Brindisi the financial support to attend a Catholic high school. These include the Santa Photo Fundraiser in December and the Art of Caring event – a favorite for families with young children. “During the Art of Caring event, the children make cards and we get them printed,” Colleen says. “At the end, the families buy their children’s cards and the money goes in to the scholarship fund. The kids think that one is really fun.”

Other efforts MOM moms coordinate include the Baby Gear and Women’s Clothing Drive in April supporting St. Lawrence of Brindisi and the Downtown Women’s Shelter. Twice a year,

with children in tow, they also serve lunch to parish seniors following a Mass with Anointing. The seniors are eternally grateful for their time and the great lunch and the little ones energetically help distribute door prizes.

And each year, MOM partners up with a foundation called “Get on the Bus,” which sponsors a state-wide program to provide rides for children whose mothers are currently serving time in prison. The children in this program ‘Get on the Bus’ for a day to visit with their mothers. “For most of these kids, this is the only time during the year they can see their mothers, because they just can’t physically get there to visit them,” Colleen says. “It can be heartbreaking. We provide food for the kids and art supplies so they can make something on the bus to give to their mothers. We also take pictures of the kids to give to their mothers.”

For more information on the Mothers’ Outreach Ministry and the many efforts they offer, please email [mothersoutreach@americanmartyrs.org](mailto:mothersoutreach@americanmartyrs.org).

*“It’s been a great way for moms to get to know each other, especially those of us who stay home with our kids, and to show our children how to serve by example.”*  
— Colleen McCarthy



## 2ND ANNUAL FAITH IN ACTION: *American Martyrs Day of Volunteering* **April 12, 2014**



Well over 100 parishioners of all ages began their day with Mass and then were “sent to spread the Gospel” through various projects and efforts coordinated through the Social Justice and Outreach Commission and Matthew 25 Ministry.

There was a home restoration with Habitat for Humanity; beach cleanup with Heal the Bay; bagging lunches and distributing groceries for the homeless and low-income families at the St. Francis Center pantry and at our sister parish St. Lawrence of Brindisi; and many collections of books, self care items and clothing benefitting those served through the Downtown Women’s Shelter, House of Ruth and St. Vincent dePaul Society. Thank you to everyone who coordinated, collected, packaged, totes, swept, built and served.

*“For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me. – Matthew 25:35-36*



## CELEBRATE THE FEAST OF THE VISITATION:

*May 31*

At first glance, the Visitation seems a simple enough event — Mary went to Judah, where she visited her pregnant cousin, Elizabeth.

And, yet, the reality behind the events that took place on this fateful day is so profound that we celebrate the Feast of the Visitation every year on May 31.

Imagine being 12 years old again. For most of us, that brings back memories of playing in the park, riding our bikes, watching TV, playing baseball, and so forth. Now, imagine that at the young age of 12, you find out that you are expecting a child — and, even more daunting, that this child is the Lord.

As unimaginable as that situation is for all of us, it is the reality that 12-year-old Mary knew. What a weight to bear!

Yet, it is clear that God knows what He is doing, because Mary's reaction to this reality was much different than most of ours would be. "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord," she responded to the angel. "Be it done unto me according to your word" (Lk. 1:38).

Then, she set out to the town of Judah to visit her cousin, Elizabeth, whom she just learned was also expecting a child.

Instead of keeping to herself and processing the fact that she was pregnant with her Lord and Savior, Mary immediately set out to bring Christ to others. She was indeed the first steward of the Church — offering her whole life to the Lord as His "handmaid," and revealing Christ to others

through her service.

As soon as Mary entered the house and greeted Elizabeth, John the Baptist leaped in Elizabeth's womb, rejoicing at the presence of the Lord within Mary, and Elizabeth cried out, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. And how does this happen to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Lk. 1:42-43). Mary radiated with the presence of Christ. Elizabeth had not been told that Mary was pregnant with the Savior, and yet, no sooner did Mary enter her home, Elizabeth knew.

No doubt, Mary is the steward of all stewards. So selflessly had she given herself to the Lord that she became His mother, and, in that way, her very being radiates Christ. It is for that reason that we venerate the Blessed Mother.

Everything about who she is as a person, so closely united is she to the Lord and His will, brings us to her Son. And in her words that followed Elizabeth's joyful greeting, we see exactly that. Christ is glorified through her.

In response to Elizabeth's veneration of Mary, Mary exclaims, "My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord; my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. For He has looked upon His handmaid's lowliness; behold, from now on will all ages call me blessed. The Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is His name" (Lk. 1:46-49).

This month, as we celebrate the feast of the Visitation, may we all venerate the Blessed Mother for her selflessness, and ask her to bring us closer to her Son.



## A DIFFERENT WAY TO GIVE

### *Faith Direct*

**W**e are all individuals, and as such, we all live out the stewardship way of life in different ways. There are many different ministries and groups to choose from when giving of our talent, and many ways to pray in giving of our time. And in giving of our treasure, our parish offers an alternative to dropping a check into an envelope at Mass — Faith Direct.

“Faith Direct offers parishioners a service where their donations to the parish are processed conveniently, consistently and securely — and all as the parishioner designates when they establish an account,” says Jenny Attanasio, Director of Volunteer Ministry Formation.

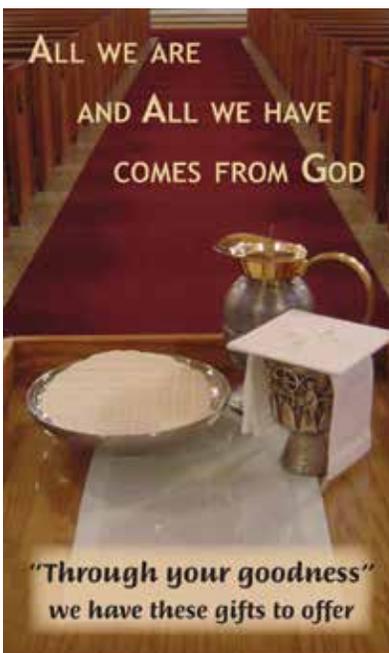
Faith Direct is an electronic giving program partnering with American Martyrs that allows our parish to provide an “e-giving,” option for those who wish to make a one-time financial gift to American Martyrs or make their regular parish donations automatically.

American Martyrs parish has been partnering with Faith Direct since November 2010.

“I feel it has been a successful effort for American Martyrs,” Jenny says. “In the three and a half years we’ve been with Faith Direct, we have about one-third of our regularly giving families giving through Faith Direct, and we have seen the amounts of the donations increase each year. In that time, we have doubled the number of folks who were enrolled in the previous program.”

So what makes Faith Direct such a useful alternative to more traditional means of financial giving to the parish? For one thing, it gives parishioners the option of making their regular gifts automatic.

“It allows people the ability to seriously look and



*American Martyrs  
Reusable Offertory Card*

plan out how much we’re giving to our parish, and when we’re able to give at different times throughout the year,” Jenny says. “I find it comforting to know that it comes out the same time of the month.”

What’s more, Faith Direct makes the entire process of financial giving easier, for both the parishioner and the parish staff.

“I can see the benefits from two perspectives,” Jenny says. “One is my staff perspective of realizing how much staff time goes towards implementing and dealing with the transactions of envelopes and all that goes along with that. And knowing some of the details that need to happen behind the scenes, it just makes sense to me. From a

practical point of an involved family, I have made it an allocated amount of our family’s income each month, and I can feel good knowing it is taken care of. I would encourage folks to explore it for themselves and their families.”

Prior to using Faith Direct, our parish had used a different e-giving program. Faith Direct has proven a better fit for our parish, not only because of the services provided, but also because of the program’s focus on the Catholic faith.

It’s a Catholic company, so they get the nuances of giving in stewardship from the Catholic perspective,” Jenny says. “So when they draft messages for us to send out as e-letters and reminders, there’s more of a Catholic faith approach to their language, which we thought was important.”

For more information or to enroll in Faith Direct, please call their toll-free number at 1-866-507-8757, or visit the website at [www.faithdirect.net](http://www.faithdirect.net).

American Martyrs parishioners may enroll using our Parish Code: CA308.

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## MONTH OF MARY *continued from front cover*

again through the open door of Jesus' welcoming Church. We have our dedicated Rosary praying groups who lead the devotion each weekday before the 8:00 a.m. Mass and each Wednesday after the 5:00 p.m. Mass. Our local Council of the Knights of Columbus is blessed to have the title of Our Lady Queen of Martyrs Council. Look at the great work they do to witness with Mary to Our Divine Lord!

I grew up in a house where the evening Rosary was as much a part of our family as the evening meal. I can still remember how each one of us had our assigned decade. We need to do all we can to encourage devotion to Mary as she is our greatest

example of how to be a faithful disciple of Jesus. She is "Queen of the Angels" and "Queen of the May." She has so many titles but her greatest is always "Mother of God."

Happy Mother's Day to all of our moms and thank you for everything you do for all of us.

In Christ,



Rev. Msgr. John F. Barry, P.A.  
Pastor

*Our Faith in Action is provided by the American Martyrs Stewardship Commission*

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### LITURGY SCHEDULE

**Saturday**, 5:00 p.m. | **Sunday**, 7:00 a.m., 8:00 a.m., 9:30 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 5:00 p.m.

**Monday/Wednesday/Friday**, 8:00 a.m., 12:10 p.m., 5:00 p.m.

**Tuesday/Thursday**, 6:30 a.m., 8:00 a.m., 12:10 p.m., 5:00 p.m. | **Saturday**, 8:00 a.m.

**Holy Day**, 5:00 p.m. (Vigil), 6:30 a.m., 8:00 a.m., 12:10 p.m., 5:00 p.m., 7:30 p.m.