



Dear Parishioners,

In this report you will find an overview of the spiritual, educational, social, and financial life of St. Mary's Parish in 2014. As you can see St. Mary's remains a vibrant faith community that reaches out to others.

If there is a single theme that dominates the past year it is "Growing our Parish." What we have done and must continue to do is to grow our parish in faith and in numbers. Let me highlight a few ways we are growing.

The Facilities Working Group has been studying the physical needs of St. Mary's Church and School for more than a year: the need for meeting space, the need for the church and lower church to be more accessible to older parishioners, and the need for additional classroom space for St. Mary's School. The committee will soon make recommendations that I will share with you.

In the fall of 2014 we undertook a parish-wide program of evangelization, "Welcome Back," whereby we reached out to those who no longer practice their Catholic faith. While the results were not dramatic, we have begun and will continue the process of reaching out.

Another sign of growth is our Youth Programs: Life Teen, Edge, and the number of young people who went on retreat this summer at Steubenville East. An even larger number will attend this summer. I have high hopes for the growth of youth ministry at St. Mary's.

Finally, there has been a significant increase in E-giving that has helped to grow and stabilize our offertory. If you are not yet a part of this, please become an E-giver.

It is an honor for me to serve as your pastor.

Father Matra

Parish Statistics

Like any growing organism, St. Mary's is constantly changing. Parishioners move away and new parishioners join our parish. Accordingly, it is important for us to continually update our parishioner database. The drop in the number of registered families is the result of our efforts to "clean-up" our database in order to present an accurate census. In 2014, our Stephen Ministers called over 650 families, some of whom no longer wish to be registered with the parish. A more hopeful sign is that there is real growth in the number of "new" families who have registered with us.

	2013	2014
Registered Families	1752	1570
New Families	70	91
Actual number of Members	5387	4356
Average Weekend Mass Attendance	1000	1047
Median Age	39	36
Infant Baptisms	37	25
Adult Baptisms	2	0
Adult Confirmations	4	1
Marriages	10	11
First Communion	72	60
Youth Confirmation	91	92
Funerals	26	27
Children in Religious Education	628	651
Children Enrolled in St. Mary's School	219	227

Liturgy and Worship

Our weekly celebration of the Eucharist is at the heart of our parish life. The Eucharist is the reason we exist as a parish. If our parish is to grow in faith, it must grow in weekly and regular attendance at Mass. Many people make our worship possible. Every weekend it requires 56 people, not counting priests, deacons, organists, and choir members, to celebrate our four weekend liturgies.

Year	Altar Servers	Ushers	Lectors	Eucharistic Ministers
2013	43	16	23	54
2014	47	20	21	54

In addition to the ministers you see each week there are volunteers that assist behind the scenes in making our Sunday Masses run smoothly. These volunteers include those who place flowers on the altar, wash and iron the altar linens, and those who count and process the weekly offertory.

The Saint Mary's Music Ministry has 30 adult and 15 youth singers and instrumentalists active throughout the year. Our music ministry consists of our adult choir, under the direction of Gena Sullivan, that sings at the 11:00 AM Mass, and our contemporary choir, under the direction of Patty Lepak, that sings at the 9:30 AM Mass, as well as cantors who lead us in singing at the 5:00 PM Vigil Mass on Saturday and the 8:00 AM Mass on Sunday. A youth choir sings at the Christmas Eve Mass. Many of our new cantors this year are teens, another sign of growth.

Religious Education (Grades 1-6)

The Religious Education program, under the direction of Judy Eagan offers two separate sessions (one before and one after the 9:30 AM Mass) so parents and children have the opportunity to attend one of our three Masses on Sunday morning.

Year	Children	Catechists
2013	324	35
2014	337	34

In June our Vacation Bible School enrolled 55 children in preschool through 5th grade. This year over 40 youth and adult volunteers helped to run this program.

Edge & Life Teen Programs (Grades 7-12)



This is the second year of our Edge and Life Teen Programs, which meet on Sunday evenings in the Parish Center for fellowship, Mass, meals and religious education. We are fortunate to have 35 volunteer adult catechists who help run this program. With the addition of a new full-time Youth Minister in 2015 we hope to make these programs even more vibrant and effective.

Year	Edge (7 th & 8 th Graders)	Life Teen (9 th & 10 th Graders)	Total
2013	138	176	314
2014	140	158	298

This past summer a group of 34 high school youth from St. Mary's attended the Steubenville East Catholic Youth Conference at the University of Rhode Island. This coming summer we have 55 high school youth signed up. This is a hopeful sign of growth in the spiritual life of our youth.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA)

The RCIA is the way in which we welcome new members into the Catholic faith. As this year's numbers show, this is an area we need to grow. The RCIA has been a well-run program, but in recent years the number of people taking advantage of it has declined, not only here but throughout the diocese. The renewal of this program is a major challenge for the year ahead.

Year	RCIA Baptism	RCIA Confirmation
2013	2	4
2014	1	2

St. Mary's School



St. Mary's School, under the leadership of Marie Gannatti, has played a vital role in St. Mary's Parish for over 50 years, and in recent years its student body has been growing. The only Catholic Elementary School in the Farmington Valley, it serves many other parishes in addition to St. Mary's. It is known for its rigorous academic program that employs the latest educational technology as well as for its deep commitment to formation in the Catholic faith.

	2013	2014
# Students	218	227
# Males (%)	102 (47%)	113 (50%)
# Females (%)	116 (53%)	114 (50%)
# Catholics (%)	195 (89%)	200 (88%)
# Non-Catholics (%)	11 (5%)	12 (5%)
# Not Specified (%)	12 (6%)	15 (7%)

Adult Enrichment

Deacon Arthur Miller conducts a Bible Study that meets on Tuesday evenings throughout the year. These sessions attract more than sixty people and allow participants to grow in their understanding of the faith. In addition to this Bible Study, there are several smaller Bible studies and prayer groups in the parish that meet weekly.

On Sundays, before and after the 9:30 AM Mass, there are adult enrichment sessions in the Parish Center. During the past year, these sessions have addressed a number of topics ranging from family and social issues to spiritual and theological topics. On a typical Sunday about 40 people attend these two sessions. While this is a good number, this is an area where we can and must grow parish participation.

Father Matera conducts adult enrichment sessions during Lent and in the fall. This past Lent he gave a series on the Resurrection, which has been published in a book entitled *Resurrection: The Origin and Goal of the Christian Life* (Liturgical Press, 2015). In the fall he gave a series on the Spiritual Life according to St. Paul that will be the basis for another book.

Communications: Website, Emails and Social Media

Our parish website continues to be the best resource to keep everyone informed about what is happening at St. Mary's. We continue to maintain the website weekly providing up-to-date information on the weekly bulletin, homilies, videos of adult enrichment sessions, information on last minute cancellations, calendar of events, and photos of parish events. The website is a valuable resource for both new and existing parishioners.

In 2014 we started sending out weekly emails to over 1000 parishioners containing the Sunday readings, the weekly bulletin and upcoming parish events. Parishioners can join our weekly email list by subscribing on our home page. Parishioners can also follow us on Facebook and Twitter.

Parish Governance

Three groups assist the Pastor in governance: The Parish Council (President, Mr. Thomas Rechen), the Finance Council (Chair, Mr. Sean Hughes), and the School Board (Chair, Mr. Claude Howard). This past year the Parish Council revised its bylaws, making it a more effective body with four new standing committees (Liturgy, Outreach, Religious Education, Adult Enrichment and Spirituality). All three of these bodies are committed to growing our Parish, our School, and our Finances.

St. Mary's Carnival / Granny's Attic



The 35th annual St. Mary's Carnival provided parishioners and others in the Farmington Valley with a way to come together in a warm and welcoming family atmosphere. Granny's Attic, a week long parish tag sale, gave us a way to share our treasures with each other.

In addition to providing fun and fellowship for all, the income from St. Mary's Carnival and

Granny's attic contribute to the support of St. Mary's Parish, its School, and Scouting. This year the Carnival contributed **\$13,200** and Granny's Attic **\$18,400** to our parish.

Outreach to Others

St. Mary's Parish is characterized by its outreach and care for others. In 2014 St. Mary's contributed \$223,891 to the Archbishop's Annual Appeal, as well as another **\$57,000** to charities through second collections, and **\$18,900** through its Parish Charities for a total of **\$287,900** given to charity. To belong to St. Mary's Parish is to belong to a community that gives and reaches out to those in need. St. Mary's also assists the wider community in the following ways.

Communion to Homebound

Several Eucharistic Ministers from St. Mary's bring Holy Communion to homebound parishioners on a weekly basis, as well as to the residents of Governor's House and the Virginia Connelly Residence.

Stephen Ministry

St. Mary's Parish has 17 Stephen Ministers trained to minister to others in times of crisis. This is the seventh year of the ministry. Annually over 100 hours of service are dedicated to those in need. Each Stephen Minister recommits to service which includes bimonthly meetings, ongoing supervision and monthly continuing education. This year the Stephen Ministers played a major role in our parish's evangelization program, "Welcome Back."

Mercy Shelter

St. Mary's provides meals and desserts at Mercy Shelter in Hartford on a monthly basis.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Members of St. Mary's spend time praying and knitting prayer shawls. Prayer shawls are provided to parishioners and friends who are sick and infirm or simply needing comfort.

Prayer at St. Mary's

Parishioners pray the rosary every Saturday. A contemplative prayer group meets in the lower church hall every other Sunday, and retreats are held for men and women in the spring. Our Edge and Life Teen groups participate in holy hours, and parishioners can request prayers for themselves and others through the St. Mary's Prayer Line.

The Giving Tree

This year's Christmas Giving Tree provided assistance in the form of gift cards to those in need in Simsbury and Hartford (South Park Inn, Emergency Shelters, Plimpton House and through the Office of Black Catholic Ministry).

Food Cards

St. Mary parishioners regularly donate food gift cards, which are distributed to those experiencing financial challenges. This year we donated \$4,000 in food cards to those in need.

Men at St. Mary's (MAST)

Mast provides the men of St. Mary's with an opportunity for fellowship, prayer, and social outreach. In the past year men of the parish have assisted with spring and fall cleanups of the parish grounds. This group is still seeking to grow itself.

CYO Basketball

St. Mary's provides youth an opportunity to play basketball in an organized league through its participation in the CYO Basketball league. This year St. Mary's has a 7/8 grade boys team, a 5/6 grade boys team and a 7/8 grade girls team. In total there are 36 participants.

Social Committee

The Social Committee organizes coffee, and wine and cheese fellowship gatherings after Mass. This year it also organized a celebration of Deacon Art's tenth anniversary of his ordination as deacon and a farewell reception for Father Santiago.

Knights of Columbus

The Knights assist our parish with its annual carnival and St. Patrick's Day Dinner. They also host an annual Halloween Party and Breakfast with Santa for 80 individuals with special needs, made possible by the assistance of 16 adult and 10 youth volunteers.

Boy Scouts / Cub Scouts

St. Mary's is a strong supporter of scouting. Troop 175, which is sponsored by St. Mary's, has 100 active members. Troop 175 has been ranked as one of the 54 best Troops in America, out of 44,000 by BSA America. The Cub Scout Troop has over 35 active boys.