Does your child experience Mass?
The Cathedral of Saint John the Baptist welcomed over 1,200 faithful on February 20, 2016, from all corners of the diocese, for an official Year of Mercy Pilgrimage. Father Tim McKeown, fresh back from Rome where he was commissioned as a Missionary of Mercy by Pope Francis, on Ash Wednesday, preached a beautiful reflection on God’s infinite mercy.

Fr. Tim began by addressing the question which was on the minds of many people, How did you become a Missionary of Mercy?

“The truth is my best qualification to be a Missionary of Mercy is that I am a sinner who loves the Sacrament of Confession. For the past 33 years I have gone to Confession at least each month. I equally love the Sacrament as a priest, as a dispenser of mercy and a receiver of mercy.”

He continued to explain What is a Missionary of Mercy?

“The Holy Father is sending priests to all parts of the world as a living sign of the Father’s welcome to all those in search of his forgiveness. He named 1,000 priests from around the world and 760 were able to come to Rome. The Missionaries will be invited by individual Diocesan Bishops to give missions or facilitate specific initiatives organized for the Jubilee, with a particular attention given to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The Holy Father has granted these Missionaries the authority to pardon even those sins reserved to the Holy See.”

“I would like to share a threefold exhortation with those assembled:

“Receive Mercy, Share Mercy and Live Mercy.”

RECEIVE MERCY

“How does our heavenly Father see the world? No doubt He looks down each day and sees our beauty and unique nature but he also sees our woundedness and brokenness and has mercy on us. The Father is rich in mercy (Eph. 2:4). God reveals himself to Moses as ‘a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness’ (Ex. 34:6). The motto for this year is ‘Merciful like the Father.’ One way God expresses his mercy is in forgiveness. Pope Francis is fond of saying, ‘The Lord never tires of forgiving: never! It is we who tire of asking him for forgiveness. We need to ask for the grace not to get tired of asking for forgiveness, because he never gets tired of forgiving’ (Name xi).
“What are obstacles to receiving his mercy? On Ash Wednesday Pope Francis mentioned three:

**SERIOUS SIN** - When we lock the doors of our hearts and choose to live in sin. When we justify our sin or try to minimize it. Then the soul becomes locked in ‘the prison of evil’ (Ash Wed. Homily).

**SHAME** - Sometimes we stay away from God because we are ashamed of our sins. We are like Adam and Eve trying to hide in the Garden of Eden. Pope Francis says, ‘No human sin—however serious—can prevail over or limit mercy’ (Name 51). The Pope encouraged the Missionaries of Mercy to ‘cover the sinner with a blanket of mercy’ so they can recover their dignity.

**BITTERNESS** - We can brood on the negative and misery in our life. We can shut our doors to God and flee the light. In fact, some people take pleasure in being bitter. Let us ask the Lord to soften our hearts in this Year of Mercy. We might ask ourselves: Whom do I need to forgive? Whom do I hold a grudge against? What relationships are broken in my life?

**SHARE MERCY**

“Remember the ruthless servant of Matthew 18? The servant owes the King a huge amount—perhaps several years’ worth of wages. He is forgiven all! But when he sees a fellow worker who owes him a small amount he has him thrown into prison. May we not be like that! We are called to show mercy because mercy has been given to us. How can we receive mercy and fail to share it with others?

“The Corporal and Spiritual works of mercy provide us a wonderful opportunity to share mercy with others. How can these be part of my life and the lives of our families in the year ahead? How about focusing on one corporal work of mercy and one spiritual work of mercy each month for the coming nine months?

“When asked, What are the most important things that a believer should do during the Holy Year of Mercy? the Pope answered: ‘He should open up to the Mercy of God, open up his heart and himself, and allow Jesus to come toward him by approaching the confessional with faith. And he should try and be merciful with others.’ (Name p. 97).”

“I want to shared an image that I use for Confession. Imagine going out to the beach. You go out at low tide, take a stick and write in the sand all the sins you have ever committed from your youth. You are surprised with the section of the beach you cover. You leave and go away. The tide turns and comes in. When you come back the next morning, the sand is clean and replenished, all of the sins are washed away. That is mercy. That is the love of God for us. ‘As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our sins from us’. (Psalm 103:12).”

In conclusion, Fr. Tim quoted Pope Francis, “In this Jubilee Year let us allow God to surprise us. He never tires of casting open the doors of his heart and of repeating that he loves us and wants to share his love with us.... From the heart of the Trinity, from the depths of the mystery of God, the great river of mercy wells up and overflows ceaselessly. It is a spring that will never run dry, no matter how many people draw from it....” Be mindful of your mercy, O Lord, and your steadfast love, for they have been from of old.” (Psalm 25:6) (Misericordiae Vultus, 25).
On February 9, 2016, Savannah inaugurated the Spring Campaign for 40 Days for Life. This wonderful activity unites members of congregations from many different churches in a common cause, celebrating life created by God and praying for the unborn and their mothers.

Forty Days for Life campaigns have been around for many years, usually each spring and fall. The number of these campaigns has grown, and there are hundreds of them in our country and across the globe. In Savannah, we take special care to schedule our spring campaign during the Lenten Season, a natural time for prayer and penance, and in this Year of Mercy, outreach to help pregnant mothers seek alternatives to abortion and healing (through such ministries as Rachel’s Vineyard) for those seeking help after an abortion.

This year, the kickoff event was held on a late afternoon on 34th Street outside the Savannah Medical Clinic, a Planned Parenthood facility. Our eloquent speaker was Rev. Marco George, a Southern Baptist minister and a former marine, who is now serving as the new Chairman of the Board for Savannah Care Center. Also present was Rev. Mark Robertson, Rector of the new Christ Church Anglican on 37th Street. Both clergymen greeted those present and spoke movingly of the difficult times we live in and the need to change the culture around us to one of hope and trust in Jesus Christ. Marco George was particularly effective in his use of the Bible as a means of explaining why abortion offends God in thwarting his plans for the lives He has created.

If you were unable to get involved in the 40 Days for Life Campaign you can still join your Cathedral Respect Life Committee. This group is dedicated to proclaiming the sanctity of all life, especially the protection of the rights of the unborn. Parishioners say the Rosary outside the abortion clinic on 34th Street every Thursday and have also carried on mail out campaigns supporting the pro-life agenda.

Please consider taking an hour or even 30 minutes out of your busy week to pray the Rosary with us and walk silently in front of the clinic on Thursdays any time between 9:30 and noon.

Later on in the year there will be other Respect of Life activities. Be on the lookout for them in the Cathedral bulletin and the Southern Cross.
Fr. Schreck suggested that we do an article on the refurbished monstrance, which was used in the Eucharistic Adoration at the Jubilee of Mercy Pilgrimage in February. He said it was a gift to St. Joseph’s Home for Boys in Washington, GA, from the late 1920’s. And so began a search for more information about this beautiful monstrance.

A monstrance, from the Latin word monstrare, meaning “to show”, is the vessel used for the exposition of the Blessed Sacrament,

Kathleen Moore dug up a lot of information about St. Joseph’s Orphanage. In 1876 the Sisters of Saint Joseph relocated their orphanage, Saint Joseph’s Home, from Savannah to Washington, GA. After the sisters established their new location in Washington, the pastor of St. Patrick, Father James M. O’Brien, thought that the distance from the orphanage to St. Patrick’s was too great for the sisters and boys to walk every day, so he directed the construction of a new church building closer to the orphanage.

The new church, St. Joseph, was completed and dedicated on November 20, 1887. The little wooden church served the Washington Catholic community for nearly fifty years before a new brick building was built and dedicated on May 30, 1932.

The building housed the Sisters of Saint Joseph, the orphan boys under their care, served as a school building and the beautiful chapel was used for Mass.

In the 1960s, the Sisters of Saint Joseph relocated the home to East Point in Atlanta, renaming it Saint Joseph Village. In the 1980s the parish sold the old orphanage and chapel building.

The monstrance is engraved “Donated to St. Joseph’s Orphanage by Rev. Father Charles J. Reithans 1929”. A review of the Diocesan Archives by Kathleen revealed that Fr. Reithans was a Sacred Heart priest who was born in Rotterdam and ultimately served as the Pastor of St. Joseph’s Church and Chaplain of St. Joseph’s Home in Washington in the early 1930s. He is buried in the priest section of the Catholic Cemetery.

It is not clear how the monstrance came to the Cathedral. Fr. Schreck said that Monsignor Felix Donnelly was the Director at St. Joseph’s Home in the 1950’s and later became Cathedral Rector. Perhaps the monstrance came to the Cathedral through him.

Lynne Everett indicated that Hope Eberwein and Catherine Neagle at Saints and Shamrocks were instrumental in arranging to ship the monstrance to Koleys Inc. in Omaha, Nebraska for restoration. Terry Goehring of Koleys was very helpful in providing information about the monstrance and its restoration. According to Terry, it was made by the W. J. Feeley Company (1875-1920) of Providence, R.I. one of the top manufacturers of altar vessels at the time.

Terry described the process to restore the monstrance. First it was broken down and disassembled into its various parts; in this case 91 separate pieces. Each piece was cleaned in a soapy solution to remove years of dust and grime. Then the pieces were hand polished and finished on a polishing lathe. Next they were cleaned again to remove any polishing residue and then every piece was put into a plating bath and coated with 24 karat gold. A protective lacquer was put over the gold and it was reassembled.

We are most grateful to all those who helped bring the monstrance back to its former glory.
As the Director of the Cathedral’s Children’s Religious Education (CRE) program, I struggle each year with my campaign to get our parents to bring their children to Mass each and every Saturday or Sunday. Sadly the campaign has not been 100% successful in the past. I am no longer surprised when I hear from the catechists that their students are not aware of the components of the Mass because they seldom attend.

This year we are having the children preparing for first Eucharist in the spring bring in a bulletin from the Saturdays or Sundays they attend Mass. It is going fairly well but frequently it creates stress, for example, when the child forgets to bring in the bulletin that they “left on the kitchen counter” or the child’s name is not written on the bulletin.

We are not certain that we will continue the process next year because the value may not be worth the stress for the family or the catechist.

But there are bright moments in the campaign. Such as when I attended Mass recently on a Saturday evening and sat in the second row. I looked over and saw one of our students, Sophia, sitting in the first row with her mother. She had the missal open to the proper page and continued to follow along during the entire Mass. That was a wonderful moment and encouraged me to continue to communicate the importance of attending Mass.

Experts say that we should eat at least one meal together each day as a family to stay connected with our children. This is true for attending Mass. We must take our children to Mass at least on Sundays to be the role models our children need and so they can stay connected with their Catholic faith. The tenants of our Catholic faith are so often represented in the Mass that it is almost impossible for a child to understand their faith without understanding the Mass and what it represents. When you attend Mass with your child ask these three questions after Mass:

1. What color was the vestment that the priest was wearing today and how does this reflect the time of year?
2. What was the meaning of one of the three readings? Give them a hint if they cannot remember.
3. Why do we say the Nicene Creed or Our Father or Gloria or Penitential Act (you pick) during the Mass? Hopefully after you ask the same questions every week they will pay attention in order to correctly answer your questions.

During our last Sunday school class each year we present a pageant for the parents on what we learned in Sunday school. This year we are focusing on what we know about the Mass. Our parents will be glad they attended the pageant to see the Mass come alive by their children.

My campaign on taking God’s children to Mass will continue. I sincerely request that all parents take their children to Mass, especially the CRE parents, at least once a week so we will have future Catholics who make us proud.
Reverend Benjamin J. Keiley was the Rector of the Cathedral on February 6, 1898 when a fire destroyed the edifice. He was aboard the Central of Georgia night train for a business trip to Atlanta when he received a wire on the train advising him of the destruction.

He left the train at Millen and returned to Savannah, arriving at dawn to behold the sad spectacle of the smoking ruin, where the mighty Cathedral had once stood. Against the gloomy background and with the embers still smoldering, Bishop Thomas Becker declared, “The Cathedral must be rebuilt and as soon as possible.”

And so Fr. Keiley set about the task of raising money to rebuild the church and shepherding the project. We have much documentation of his effort and today can still see the results in the magnificent stained glass windows, the Stations of the Cross and most importantly the exquisite murals that adorn the Cathedral. The rebuilt Cathedral was dedicated on Sunday morning October 28, 1900, a fitting celebration for the Golden Jubilee of the Diocese of Savannah.

The Cathedral stood with vast empty spaces on the walls until 1911, when Bishop Keiley and Rector, Fr. Geoffrey F. X. Schadewell asked Christopher Murphy, a Cathedral parishioner and noted Savannah artist, to conceptualize and implement a program of mural decoration for the Cathedral.

Murphy sought inspiration from the murals in the Library of Congress and the US Capitol as well as the decorations in churches and public buildings in New York, Boston, Montreal and Quebec.

Murphy commissioned Paul Gutsche, an artist who had worked on the Library of Congress project, to execute the oil paintings for the Cathedral and he personally planned and directed the mural development and placement. He came back to Savannah and immediately launched work on painting and decorating the Cathedral. A team of artists in New York painted these renaissance style pieces in eight months and they were later installed in the Cathedral, on Pentecost Sunday, May 19, 1912.

Although the 34 principal mural panels survive, it is unfortunate that many of Murphy's decorations have been obliterated in the course of subsequent alterations to the Cathedral.

Some of you may remember the 9 panels of celestial figures that once adorned the now rose colored walls behind the old high altar. These murals were crowned with a ring of cherubic faces in the area where the blue symbols are located today. It was believed that Murphy painted the faces of several of his children and their friends including little Tommy McNamara, who grew up to be Monsignor Thomas J. McNamara, Rector of the Cathedral, who had these murals painted over in the restoration during the 1960's.

Fr. Schreck is interested in exploring the possibility of restoring these decorations and is excited that Katy Pereira, Diocesan Archivist, found an excellent photo showing these lost murals. If anyone has any other good photos of the murals we would appreciate seeing them.
It’s a lucky thing to love to read. Books allow us to travel to places we may never go, meet people we would never encounter and inhabit worlds beyond our imagination. We can easily lose ourselves in a good book and we can find ourselves in one too.

The Cathedral’s book club is a diverse group of bibliophiles who laugh loudly, explore deeply and share their questions, insights and ideas. As Catholics, we share a faith, but we have different strengths and weaknesses in the understanding of our faith and in how we practice what we believe. We have varying levels of spiritual maturity, devotion and piety. Discussing what we read helps us to grow intellectually and spiritually.

While attending Mass, praying and doing good works are the primary practices of our faith, it is a great benefit to keep learning and understanding in order to develop a deeper personal relationship with God. Our religion offers us a clear path to God, but it is not always an easy path to travel.

The book club reads novels which provide guidance for the journey so participants can practice their faith more effectively and fruitfully. Oscar Wilde said, “It is what you read when you don’t have to that determines who you will be when you can’t help it.” The discussions are focused on how to better understand God in order to become more loving, merciful and aligned with His will.

The goal is not just to learn about God, but to actually grow in our love and devotion to God. Knowing that the God we can imagine is so much smaller than the God that actually is encourages the book club participants to improve their understanding of God’s immeasurable perfection and love.

Spiritual growth and maturity is our responsibility. The Bible mandates our learning and growth in many places including, Hebrews 6:1-4, “Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment.”

This idea is even more succinctly stated in 1 Corinthians 14:20-21, “Brothers, do not be children in your thinking. Be infants in evil, but in your thinking be mature.” The Bible is replete with encouragement to grow in our understanding. For more verses on our responsibility to grow spiritually mature read Hebrews 5:11-14, Ephesians 4:11-16 and 2 Peter 3:16-18.

With so many great books to choose from, the Book Club members vote on what to read and volunteers take turns leading the discussions. There is no commitment and participants come and go as their time and interest permit. So far they have read, Mere Christianity and The Screwtape Letters by CS Lewis, The Everlasting Man by GK Chesterton, Brideshead Revisited by Evelyn Waugh, Diary of A Country Priest by Georges Bernanos, Lost in the Cosmos by Percy Walker, Seven Storey Mountain by Thomas Merton, The Divine Comedy by Dante and others.

The book club is about fellowship, fun and growing in understanding, faith, and practice. They meet most Thursday’s from 10:15-11:45 in the Parish Hall library. The members are eager to have you join the conversation. For more information or questions please email: threenovacks@gmail.com
The service of Tenebrae, meaning “darkness” or “shadows” in Latin, has been practiced by the church since medieval times. Once a service for the monastic community, Tenebrae later became an important part of the worship of the common folk during Holy Week. This year we joined Christians of many generations throughout the world in using the liturgy of Tenebrae.

Presented by the Friends of Cathedral Music on Wednesday, March 23rd at 7:00 PM, the service was led by Bishop Hartmayer. The music was performed by the Cathedral Choir and guest soloists. It was a meditative service, including chanted psalmody and readings that anticipate the monastic offices of the last three days of Holy Week.

The readings were taken from the Lamentations of Jeremiah, which express intense sorrow and were presented as a profound meditation on Christ’s suffering. The readings traced the story of Christ’s passion, music portrayed his pathos, and the power of silence and darkness suggested the drama of this momentous day.

As the lighted candles were gradually extinguished, we pondered the depth of Christ’s suffering and death; as the last candle burning was removed from the sanctuary, all knelt and the Cathedral choir and soloists sang a setting of Psalm 51 (Miserere, or “Have mercy on me, O God”), by Italian composer Gregorio Allegri (1582-1652). This anthem was composed for use at the Papal Tenebrae service in the Sistine Chapel. The Miserere is written for two choirs, one of five voices and one of four; one of the choirs sings a simple version of the original Miserere chant; the other choir, spatially separated in Our Lady’s Chapel, sang an ornamented version of the chant.

The Vatican, wanting to preserve its aura of mystery and its strict use only in the Sistine Chapel, forbade copies, threatening any attempt at publication with excommunication. According to the popular story, the fourteen-year-old Mozart was visiting Rome, when he first heard the piece. Later that day, he wrote it down entirely from memory. After an English publisher obtained it from Mozart, it was published and the ban was lifted.

After the singing of the anthem, we remember the cataclysmic nature of Christ’s sacrifice as we heard the overwhelming sound of the “strepitus”, a loud noise made to symbolize His death, descent to the dead, and earthquake at the Resurrection. Through the return of a small but persistent flame symbolizing Christ at the conclusion of the service, we anticipate the joy of ultimate victory. The people left the Cathedral in a contemplative silence.
What do Islamabad, Mexico City, Bucharest, Milan, Ottawa, Vantaa, and Toronto have in common? People in these cities around the world are watching the Cathedral’s 10:00 AM Sunday Mass. The new Live Stream Mass web-page feature allows people from all over the world to view a Mass each week. According to Father Schreck, “It is intended especially for those Catholics, in our Cathedral parish and throughout the Diocese of Savannah, who are unable to attend Mass — those who are ill, who have no transportation, are in convalescent homes and hospitals, as well as those who are incarcerated. We are pleased to welcome viewers from around the world who wish to see our beautiful Cathedral and experience the Sunday liturgy.”

“Livestreaming of services at the Cathedral on a permanent basis began in December 2015 thanks to a partnership between the Cathedral and the Diocese of Savannah. The Cathedral purchased the equipment and the Diocese is funding the livestream account with the help of the Catholic Communication Campaign collection. The arrangement benefits everyone as the Cathedral’s Sunday Masses, concerts, weddings and funerals as well as Diocesan events such as ordinations, the Gartland Awards and the Gold and Silver Marriage Jubilee can potentially reach audiences around the world,” commented Barbara King.

“What impresses and humbles me every week is the analytic reports we get back. For events like Christmas Midnight Mass, we will get thousands of views, whereas for a normal weekly Mass we might have a few hundred views. I think the true meaning of that is lost in the numbers. What it really means is we have the opportunity every week to help people experience the Mass who might otherwise not be able. That might be a homebound person who physically cannot attend, or maybe it’s someone who attended on Sunday and goes back later in the week to view the service and take some inspiration from the Gospel. When viewed through that lens it’s a truly an awesome and humbling opportunity we’ve been given,” said Tim Williams. Tim worked as a videographer for WTOC-TV for nine years before joining the Diocese of Savannah as a videographer/production assistant in January. He and Craig Harvey continue to produce a livestream of the Sunday Mass at the Cathedral.

Our local parishioners are excited about watching Mass each week, particularly the elderly. “The 10:00 Mass is my favorite,” says long time parishioner Mary Dunn. “I can’t really get to that Mass anymore. I love the choir, it is so beautiful.” With a bit of a laugh, she said, “I can actually hear the sermon better than in the church. I have bad hearing now and even with my hearing aid, I can’t always hear. The first Sunday morning I was able to watch the Mass on my computer, I actually teared up. This is so wonderful for all of us who want to come to Mass but can’t.” The Live Stream Mass is available from both the Cathedral’s website – savannahcathedral.org/livestream - and the Diocese of Savannah’s website – www.diosav.org/livestream

For more information about the Live Stream Mass, contact us at webmaster@savannahcathedral.org
The release of the movie Risen has put a bright spotlight on the Resurrection. Bishop Robert Barron said he “was surprised and delighted to discover that the movie is, in fact, robustly Christian and substantially faithful to the Biblical account of what transpired after the death of Jesus.”

About the Resurrection, the Holy Father has said, “Jesus, who was crucified, is risen! This event is the basis of our faith and our hope. If Christ were not raised, Christianity would lose its very meaning; the whole mission of the Church would lose its impulse, for this is the point from which it first set out and continues to set out ever anew. The message Christians bring to the world is, Jesus, Love incarnate, died on the cross for our sins, but God the Father raised him and made him the Lord of life and death. The Resurrection is the foundation of our faith. He reminds us that thanks to the Resurrection of Jesus our faith is full of the joy of truth and eternal life.

It is no wonder that such a great, important and superhuman mystery as the Resurrection required such a long journey in time, up until the coming of Jesus Christ. Jesus can say: ‘I am the Resurrection and the life’ (John 11, 25) because in Him this mystery not only is fully revealed, through Him, for the first time, it becomes reality.”

And recalling the Gospel of Mark that tells of the death of Jesus and of the empty tomb, the Pope pointed out that this episode represents the culmination of that journey in time: the event of the Resurrection that responds to the quest of God’s people, to the quest of every man and of the whole of humanity.

“Each of us is invited to be part of this event. We are called to stand before the Cross of Jesus, like Mary, like the women, like the centurion listening to his cry, to his last breath and finally to the silence; that silence that persists throughout Holy Saturday. And then we are called to go to the tomb to see that the large stone has been rolled back and to listen to the news: ‘He has been raised, he is not here’ (Mark 16, 6). That is where the answer is, that is where the foundation is, the rock. Not in wise and persuasive words but in the living Word of the Cross and in the Resurrection of Christ.

“This is what the Apostle Paul preaches the Resurrection of the crucified Jesus Christ. If He has not risen, our faith is empty and inconsistent. But seeing that He has risen, that He is the Resurrection, then our faith is full of truth and eternal life.”

The Resurrection is the triumphant and glorious victory for every believer. Christ died, was buried, and rose on the third day according to the Scriptures. And He is coming again. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is important to salvation because it demonstrated that God accepted Jesus’ sacrifice on our behalf. It proves that God has the power to raise us from the dead. It guarantees that those who believe in Christ will not remain dead, but will be resurrected unto eternal life.
April 2016

Address Service Requested

The Cathedral Fit and Faith Team participated in their first event, the Savannah Care Center’s Walk for Life, a 2 mile walk around Daffin Park on Saturday March 5th. Funds raised from this event benefitted the Savannah Care Center that exists to empower women and men to choose life for their child by providing practical, Christ-centered support and education without cost or judgment.

Jillian Durant
Marc and Michelle Hillebrand

Photos by Melanie Brooks