The Spanish successfully established colonies and missions along the eastern coast of Florida and Georgia in the sixteenth century. Though this territory, collectively called “La Florida,” was not rich in gold and silver, it was a strategic location since Spanish galleons full of riches sailed back to Europe along the coast. Fearful of British attacks and unfriendly natives along the coast, the Spanish had an interest in colonizing the region. After the successful founding of Saint Augustine in present-day Florida in 1565, the Spanish founded a string of missions along the coast, both on the mainland and barrier islands.

By 1597 there were five missions in Coastal Georgia where Franciscan friars preached the Gospel, learned the indigenous Guale (pronounced “wally”) language, and lived peacefully with the native population. Most Guale natives not only embraced Christianity but also welcomed European goods such as glass beads, metal tools, various cloths and other luxury items. The friars lived among the Guale without any military presence, giving evidence to the good relations between the Guale and the missionaries.

Friar Luis Geronimo de Oré (a Peruvian Franciscan friar) recorded in 1618 after visiting La Florida, that in September 1597, the friar assigned to the mission of Tolomato (near Eulonia, Georgia) did not allow a baptized, Guale man to take a second wife. Juanillo, who was the heir to a Guale chiefdom, opposed Friar Pedro de Corpa’s fidelity to Christian teaching on marriage and killed him on September 14, 1597. Juanillo and the men he assembled continued to the other missions to kill all the friars.

Before arriving on Saint Catherines Island, Juanillo ordered the chief of the island to execute the two friars stationed there, Friar Miguel de Aión and Friar Antonio de Badajoz. Unwilling to carry out the order, the chief begged the friars to flee south to the mission on San Pedro Island (present day Cumberland Island). The friars refused to believe the rumors of coming murder. Once Juanillo and his men reached Saint Catherines, the two friars were brutally killed after they prayed fervently inside the mission, today marked by twelve palm trees. The Guale men also killed Friar Blas de Rodríguez near Darien and Friar Francisco de Veráscola as he returned by canoe from Saint Augustine to his mission on present-day Saint Simons Island. A sixth friar, Francisco de Avila, was kidnapped and experienced horrible tortures until he was liberated months later.

The diocesan process for the beatification of Pedro de Corpa and Companions, or the Georgia Martyrs as they are commonly called, is already complete. At the present moment Father Giovangiuseppe Califano, OFM, the Postulator of the Cause, is overseeing the redaction of the final historical document which will be presented to the Congregation for the Causes of Saints next year. There is currently a need for greater devotion to these martyrs and also more awareness about their story. These five men left everything that was familiar to them in Spain to share the Good News of Jesus Christ in distant lands. They died as witnesses to the Christian faith as they shared with others what they themselves had received.

At a time when the institution of marriage must be strengthened and upheld, the witness of Fray Pedro de Corpa and Companions fills us with great hope.

The presence of Spanish missionaries in Georgia over four hundred years ago also encourages the many Latino Catholics who now call Georgia home.
As I start my 8th year as the Director of the Children’s Religious Education Program, I reflect on the many children who have received faith formation through our program. I have seen our students grow taller and more confident in their faith during each year of our CRE program. Catechists, who teach our parish children, come and go but always leave behind more confident and better disciples of our Catholic faith.

Over the years, I have also observed many parents and grandparents, who are extremely supportive of our CRE program. They want their children to know and understand our faith so they can be lifelong Catholics. We have been helping these parents make their desire a reality for many years.

This year has been no exception regarding the terrific children, catechists and families who support and participate in our CRE program. Hurricane Irma prevented our traditional advance registration weekend. As a result, we registered 63 children on the 1st day of class with lots of excitement and controlled chaos. Everyone appeared patient and also enthusiastic to be starting the school year. Thank you to all who made the first day a smooth one in spite of the circumstances.

We have a fun-filled 2017/2018 school year planned. Fortunately we have three returning catechists, Julie Estvander, kindergarten and 1st grade, Kristin Ensley, Eucharist and Reconciliation prep and Amy Schuler, Confirmation prep, plus 2 new and extremely knowledgeable catechists, Christine Wacta, 3rd and 4th grades and Bill Schuler, 5th and 6th grades. Welcome Christine and Bill! We hope you will spend many years with us.

On Sunday, October 1, we held our traditional Children’s Mass. Many of the children, their families plus our catechists attended the Mass and sat in the first four pews. It was wonderful to see everyone paying close attention to the Mass celebrated by Father Schreck. He welcomed all the children, their parents and grandparents in attendance, promising another fun filled educational year of faith formation. He also thanked the catechists for their support of our Faith Formation program. During the Mass, Xander Leslie, a student in our Confirmation prep class, did the first reading, Ezekiel 18:25-28, with all the confidence of an adult lector. Bruno and Rocco Incorvaia, 3rd and 6th graders, and their parents brought up the offertory gifts, while Bryce Pashke and Phillip Neri Morris, both newly confirmed, served at the Mass. It was truly a children’s Mass for future, current and past students of our CRE program.

If you have children who do not attend a Catholic school and have are not yet enrolled in the Cathedral’s CRE program, it is not too late. We meet Sundays from 8:45 to 9:50 AM in the parish hall building across Harris Street from the Cathedral. Stop by on any Sunday and enroll your children.

Faith formation is a process that starts at birth and continues throughout one’s lifetime. The CRE program is here to assist parents and grandparents in the faith formation of their children. Our goal is to make disciples of Our Lord, Jesus Christ. God bless us all as we prepare the next generation of Catholics.
By Mary Clark Rechtiene

The Cathedral of St. John the Baptist has become a “must see” on everyone’s visit to The City of Savannah, Georgia. Not only are we recommended by word of mouth, local tour guides and TripAdvisor, but also on the website of Visit Savannah, the official Savannah website and tourist information center for our guests.

Visit Savannah is revamping its site to feature visits to particular neighborhoods. On August 11 their video crew came to the church to shoot pictures of the Cathedral that will be featured in the new Historic District landing page section.

The premise is a day in the life of two tourists in the historic area. They took pictures of two tourists, professional models, as a Cathedral docent walked with them around the interior pointing out various features of the church and its history.

The Visit Savannah web site is not only a site for those coming to our city, but also a great resource for locals to discover happenings in town, new and off the beaten path restaurants, museums galleries, events, etc.

Often one does not see the sights or know the history of the city in which they live. So pay a visit to visitsavannah.com. Who knows what you will discover. (The new site should be operative in the fourth quarter of this year)

Photos by Mary Clark Rechtiene
A Busman's Holiday
Mac Fogle in Europe
By Peter Paolucci

When most people take a vacation, they try to get away from it all, do something different from what they do all year long. That was not the case with our Director of Music, Mac Fogle this past summer. He did go to Europe for a couple of weeks, but during his sojourn on the continent, Mac got to play 5 different organs including the instruments at St. Peter's Basilica in Rome and at the Cathedral of Notre Dame de Paris.

I asked Mac to describe his experience in one word. "Transcendent!" he exclaimed.

How did you get this opportunity? Is it like an organist’s summer camp?

"It is kind of like that. A refresher for organists to get to play some musical pieces on the kind of instruments they were written to be played on. I have a friend, Gabriel Margheri, who is the organist at Sacré-Cœur Basilica in Paris. He had a contact at St. Peter's in Rome which made that experience possible as well as facilitating playing the various organs in Paris."

Mac’s tour began in Venice where he played the organ at the Basilica di Santa Maria della Salute on the Grand Canal. This church, built as a votive offering for the city’s deliverance from an unusually devastating outbreak of the black plague in 1630, is dedicated to Our Lady of Health.

Next he went to Rome to play the organ at St. Peter’s Basilica.

"Part of the reason for me being a Catholic is St. Peter's. When I was in Europe studying German I took a trip to visit St. Peter's. I just remember the majesty and awe of it. It inspired me so much that I went back to the states and converted to Catholicism."

What was the best part of playing these organs? "Just sitting in the space, for example in the Royal Chapel in Versailles, and realizing what had occurred there over the years. And getting to play the piece on an instrument that it was designed to be played on, was a more than fulfilling musical experience. I heard sounds that I’ve never heard before."

The oldest organ he played was at Santa Maria della Salute which dated back to the mid 1700’s. St. Peter’s was about 25 years old while the one at Notre Dame is only 10 years old as it was recently totally renovated. All of the organs he played were about twice the size of our Noack organ which has 2,309 pipes.

Every organ, depending on where it was built, has different tonal qualities, which are designed for the type of music it was destined to play.

In Paris, he had the opportunity to play three different organs. At L’église de la Madeleine, which is the state funeral church for France (Chopin was buried there), Mac played romantic music whereas in the Royal Chapel at Versailles he played baroque music.

While at St. Peter’s in Rome he played Bach which Mac characterized as “an amazing experience.” Our Noack organ has a blend of romantic and baroque capabilities to be able to span a diverse musical repertoire.

In summary, Mac, said “This trip was one of the highlights of my professional career. It brought it home to me what my ministry has been and what it will be as it continues to grow.”
By Carol Letcher and Alizon McLaughlin
Photos by Bob and Carol Letcher

The Cathedral Council of Catholic Women held the biannual Cathedral Rummage Sale on Saturday, September 23. Hurricane Irma delayed the sale by two weeks, which did not deter the Rummage Sale enthusiasts who were in line at 7:00 AM waiting for the doors to open at 8:00. We had numerous repeat customers who look forward to this event, and tourists who stopped to see the Cathedral and take in the Rummage Sale too.

This is the 10th Cathedral Rummage Sale, which the CCW started in 2006. Because of the time and effort to prepare the sale, it has been moved to a biannual event. The CCW starts to collect donations from June to August. We are so grateful to the Cathedral families who donate many treasures to this event. The donations come in slowly, and before we know it the Parish Hall is overflowing with donations. This year was no exception; we received a wide variety of donations ranging from a boat anchor and crab trap to new (never used) Prada and Coach handbags. We also accepted donations of timeless Rummage Sale favorites; housewares, furniture, jewelry, baby furnishings, books, CDs, DVDs, artwork and much more. Almost every customer (including the CCW members) found some items to purchase. One couple got off the Trolley Tour at the Cathedral when they saw the Rummage Sale signs, and left with a few purchases.

We are very grateful to Fr. Schreck for his continued support of the Catholic Women’s ministry, especially this year when Hurricane Irma caused a three-week delay.

Many thanks to our wonderful CCW members who donated countless hours of their time to help arrange, price, meet our customers and sell these treasures. It is always a fun time to work together plus it gives us time to talk and visit with each other too. When the sale is over, we box up the left over donations, which are donated to the Salvation Army.

The proceeds from the Rummage Sale were $1,600.00, and over 10 years we have raised just over $30,000.00. These earnings have been used in many ways to support our Cathedral and special needs in our Diocese. This year’s profit will be used to fund two of our favorite programs, the Cathedral Preservation Society and the Social Apostolate Golf Tournament. We are grateful to our Cathedral parishioners for their ongoing support of the CCW. We look forward to another Rummage Sale in two years. Start saving your treasures now.
Over 250 parishioners of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist gathered on Lafayette Square for the 3rd Stewardship Appreciation Dinner on Sunday October 1 to enjoy each other’s company and bask in the warm glow of appreciation for their support.

Fr. Schreck thanked all the attendees for their generosity to the Cathedral as well as their dedicated service to the parish. In his recent appeal, he noted that “the Cathedral was a vibrant center of Catholic faith, where disciples meet with generous hearts, to share God’s goodness with others.” Our parishioners live out their beliefs by unselfishly giving their time and talents to pass on the faith to our young people, provide food and clothing to those less fortunate in our community and serve in the celebration of the Mass as Lectors, Extraordinary Ministers and Ushers.

They delighted in the fellowship of other parishioners while enjoying a delicious dinner of burgers and bratwurst in the shadow of our beautiful Cathedral, courtesy of the Knights of Columbus Council 631. Thanks to Dwight Sheley and his volunteers, who cooked and served the meal.

Everyone lined up for dessert supplied by Buster’s Real Ice Cream. Their “yummy” frosty treats were savored by young and old alike, including Fr. Schreck. The music was provided by The Fabulous Equinox Jazz Orchestra Quintet.

The ladies from the CCW were on hand from 1 PM until close, to help setup, serve, and clean up. Many of the CCW ladies brought their husbands to assist as well. We also had volunteers from St. Vincent’s, who helped, to earn community service hours.

This annual event is a small token of appreciation for all our faithful parishioners who share their time and talent for the good of the parish and the wider Savannah community. It obviously makes them feel good too. Just looking at all the smiling faces it is easy to see that this is indeed a very “Happy Place.”
October 2017

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