Twin Spires
The Cathedral of St. John the Baptist, Savannah, GA
November 2019

Parish Picnic – A PARTY for all ages
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I am so proud of our faith formation program. We have the perfect combination of dedicated parents, competent caring catechists and outstanding parish support. Many of the children in our program have returned from multiple prior years. Being familiar with the program results in happy children going to their new classrooms with familiar catechists and recognizable other students. One little boy in kindergarten came to Sunday school for the first time this year and needed a few moments of gentle encouragement to stay in the classroom without a family member, by the end of class he was smiling and looking forward to next Sunday. Our goal is to make life long members of the catholic faith starting with catechism at the appropriate grade level.

We have 6 catechists in our classrooms who are all very familiar with teaching children either from their role as a parent, their full time teaching position or being in our Children’s Religious Education program for many years. Julie Estvander teaches the kindergarten/1st graders, Holli Burgess teaches our Eucharist/Reconciliation prep class, Shannon Lancaster teaches the 3rd/4th graders, Alizon McLaughlin and Christine Wacta team teach the 5th/6th graders and Kristin Ensley is in charge of the Confirmation prep class. All of our catechists are dedicated to understanding the needs of the students and providing faith formation that will be memorable for years to come.

Our parish support is headed by Father Schreck who never is too busy to listen to my concerns and offer suggestions and financial support if needed. His administrative staff is always willing to step in when needed and keep us stocked with paper and supplies and technological support. The parish council is also there for us whenever needed. We are blessed.

To start the school year we celebrate the return of Sunday school by designating one of the 10:00 Masses as our Children’s Mass. This year Father Schreck welcomed the parents and families and wished us all a productive year ahead. One of our students, Isabella Josselyn, read the second reading with confidence and conviction. Great job, Isabella. Four of our returning students took up the gifts to represent all children at the cathedral. Many of the families sat together in the first four rows and actively participated in the Mass. It was wonderful to see so many children paying close attention to the Mass and their parents showing them the way. We have so many wonderful families in the cathedral parish.
We still have openings for more children. If you haven’t registered yet come by the Parish Hall on Sunday at 8:30. We will get your child enrolled and on to class that very day. Hope to see you soon.

As we go again into another fun and rewarding year of faith formation I ask each of you to pray for our success and thank our catechists for their time and efforts to teach our parish children. God bless you all.
October was Respect Life month and this year the Diocese and the Knights of Columbus Council #631 sponsored Life Chain at Daffin Park on Victory Drive on Respect Life Sunday, October 6. Over 100 parishioners from the Savannah deanery stood for an hour in silent prayer promoting the respect and dignity of human life from conception to natural death.

Six parishes were represented at the event: The Cathedral, Blessed Sacrament, Sacred Heart, St. James, St. Peter and St. Michael. Many priests and clergy, including Fr. Schreck, came and gave their support to all the participants. Georgia Southern Armstrong chaplain Fr. Patrick May gave a closing prayer.

SCAD CREED student Jillian Wenner (holding the blue sign, below right) designed the many new posters that were used at the event and added a poster on euthanasia. Eight college students attended, giving their support not only to their classmate Jillian who has worked diligently on the posters, but also to show their respect for of all human life.
On Sunday October 13, 2019, we held our sixth annual Cathedral Stewardship Picnic in “our front yard”, historic Lafayette Square.

Laid out along Abercorn Street in 1837, Lafayette Square was named for the Marquis de Lafayette, a Frenchman who served as Washington’s Aide de Camp during the American Revolution. Lafayette visited Savannah in 1825 and was highly regarded by the local citizens.

The fountain at the center of the square was installed in 1983 by the National Society of Colonial Dames of America to commemorate the 250th anniversary of the founding of the colony of Georgia.

In addition to the Cathedral are several historically and architecturally significant buildings on Lafayette Square:

—The Hamilton-Turner House on the east side of the square is one of the most beautiful homes in Savannah. Built in 1873 for Samuel Hamilton, the home reflects Second Empire baroque as well as Italianate architectural influences.

—Across from it on the Northwest corner of the square is the elegant Andrew Low House built in 1849. On March 12, 1912, Juliette Gordon Low founded the Girl Scouts of America and left the carriage house to the Girl Scouts of Savannah as their first headquarters.

—And the Greek revival style townhouse located at 207 East Charlton was the childhood home of prize-winning author Flannery O’Connor, who attended the Cathedral.
The Picnic was Fr. Schreck’s way of showing his appreciation and gratitude to all the parishioners who have so generously and selflessly given back to the Cathedral from the many gifts that they have been given. It was his opportunity to say “Thank You”, in whatever language of Savannah you chose, to everyone for their support of the Cathedral of St. John the Baptist. He particularly expressed his appreciation to everyone who made a sacrifice to support the Cathedral in our third Increased Offertory Appeal in six years. “This year we had an extra reason to celebrate, because we are now debt free! We have been able to retire the remaining debt on the Major Renovations of 1999-2000, and we have

retired the debt on the Steeple Repair Project of 2013. All of this we were able to do without a major capital campaign, thanks to your generous giving to the Parish Offertory each week, and your generous support of the Cathedral Heritage Endowment Fund.”

Around 250 parishioners gathered in the square on this Sunday afternoon to enjoy fellowship, food, and musical entertainment organized by the Parish Life Committee. The affair would not have been possible without the help of the ladies of the Cathedral Council of Catholic Women and their husbands who are always willing to lend a hand.

The music was provided by the jazz quartet from the Equinox Jazz Orchestra which performed big band sounds from the Swing Era. Volunteers from the Knights of Columbus, Council 638, prepared a delicious dinner which included BBQ chicken, BBQ pork, Italian sausage, pork and beans, coleslaw, and rolls. This year the dessert came by way of Leopold’s Ice Cream. Two “soda jerks”, along with their cart, served up six flavors of ice cream so there was something for everyone’s taste. It must have been delicious because someone said they saw Fr. Schreck in line three times!

Fr. Schreck also expressed his appreciation to everyone for giving their valuable time and talents, to participate in the vari-
ous ministries and activities of the parish. “It says a lot about your faith. I am grateful for the tremendous work done by all of you who volunteer in our parish ministries,” he concluded.

This special evening on historic Lafayette Square was also a wonderful opportunity to get to know people. The Cathedral is a big church, and sometimes it is hard for those who are new to Savannah to feel welcome and a part of things. Hopefully everyone took the opportunity to say “hello” to someone they’d never met before.
SILENT RETREAT
By Krystyna Swierczewski

Savannah Catholic Campus Ministry kicked off the year with a silent retreat for all college students in the Savannah area. The retreat was held at Wesley Garden Retreat Center on Saturday, September 21 from 9am-6pm. 10 students attended the retreat, 3 from Georgia Southern Armstrong and 7 from SCAD. For many of the students, this was their first time experiencing silence for a day. From 9:30am – 4:30pm they were not allowed to use their phones, listen to music, or talk amongst themselves. Fr. Pablo Migone, Chaplain of SCAD, and Fr. Patrick May, Chaplain of GSU, Armstrong, were available during the day for confessions and spiritual direction and that was the only time the students were allowed to talk. Fr. Pablo Migone provided scripture passages to help the students navigate their day in silence and enter into meditation. The students were encouraged to not feel as though they needed to be in prayer/meditation for the whole day but to be in silence. Whether that means they spend an hour in meditation and another hour sketching, journaling, or walking the grounds. The silence continued during lunch, it was hard for many students to not laugh during the awkwardness of silent lunch. At 3pm Adoration was available to the students followed by prayer of the Divine Mercy Chaplet. At 4pm Fr. Pablo Migone and Fr. Patrick May celebrated Mass. Following Mass the silence was lifted and the students reconvened and shared their experiences during their time in silence. Many of them enjoyed the silence and their only complaint was that there wasn’t enough time in silence.

If you or someone you know is a college student in the Savannah area, please reach out to Savannah Catholic Campus Ministry so you or the student you know can get connected with other Catholics and learn about upcoming events.

Email: savannahccm@diosav.org
Website: www.savannahccm.wordpress.com
Fr. Pablo Migone recently gave an update on the State of Vocations in the Diocese of Savannah. He was still basking the glow of the four ordinations that our diocese was blessed with this past year. Fr. Pablo had the good fortune to accompany Bishop Hartmayer to witness the ordinations of our three new priests in Nigeria. The experience was very meaningful for Fr. Pablo as Vocations Director because of his personal relationships with these young men. To be able to attend (L to R) Theodore Agba, Solomon Kaanan and Peter Lanshima’s ordinations at their Cathedrals in Nigeria on July 7 and 8 was a great experience. (Patrick May, bottom was ordained in Savannah June 1.) It was wonderful to be there with their families in their native country. Their Ordinations were joyful, with lots of singing and dancing.

Their Bishop expressed much appreciation and gratitude to the Diocese of Savannah that we were willing to accept and embrace these young men from Benue State in Nigeria, to educate them and allow them to serve here. It was a wonderful way to establish a new and ongoing relationship between these two Dioceses. The Governor of the State wanted to meet the Bishop, but his schedule would not permit, so he sent the Deputy Governor who expressed how grateful he was that our Bishop would allow these men to come to their homes and have this opportunity. The trip went by rapidly, with exhaustingly long days, however it was a beautiful experience. Fr. Pablo had become the Vocations Director the summer that Theodore and Peter arrived and Solomon came the following year. He has “walked with them” since they arrived and began their formation. Personally, it was very significant for him to go with them back to where they were from, meet their
families, and witness them being ordained “on their home turf.”

Looking ahead, Deacons Carlos Rivero and Robert (Bobby) Phillips, God willing, will be ordained to the priesthood next Spring. Deacon Nate Swann will be doing his Pastoral Year at St. John the Evangelist Church in Valdosta. Will Cook and Esteban Mallar will be doing their Pastoral Years at St. Joseph Church in Macon and St. Francis Xavier Church in Brunswick respectively.

Emanuel Antwi and Christopher Awiliba from Ghana will be ordained as Transitional Deacons next spring. Along with Deacon Nate Swann, they should be ordained as priests the following year in 2021.

We have one new seminarian this year, Fred Williams from the Atlanta area. Fred is studying at Franciscan University, Steubenville, Ohio. He is doing very well there in the Priestly Formation Program, the same one that Fr. Pablo attended. Fr. Pablo is very hopeful for the next few years. There is a good core group of young men who are very interested as potential candidates. Part of it has been the work from the Vocations Camp. Between vocations and a number of younger priests who have transferred here from other dioceses or orders, we are in pretty good shape.

Saying the Prayer for Vocations at every Mass has certainly helped make this happen.
The Cathedral of St. John the Baptist has just won a 2019 TripSavvy Editor’s Choice Award for Best for History Buffs worldwide. The TripSavvy Editor’s Choice Awards are unlike any other travel honors. They use a combination of data and real human vetting to recognize the very best attractions on the planet. Over 60,000 attractions and businesses were reviewed and only 1% of them made the cut. The Cathedral was one of them! The write-up says:

What started as a simple frame church for French émigrés from Haiti to Georgia in the 1700s became a French Gothic masterpiece with a nave, transepts and more than 50 stained glass windows that rival the gems of France. Tours are available when religious services are not underway.