



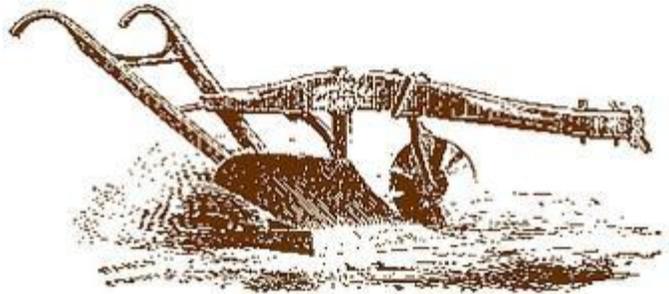
The Bells of Saint Mary

April 2012

Rising

By now you all know that we have paid off the mortgage on the church and are, for the first time in a l-o-n-g time, a debt free church. It seems so right that the actual paying off the mortgage came on the Fourth Sunday of Lent. It gives us the opportunity to do something really wonderful that we have all been working so hard to do...namely, **Burn the Mortgage**.

The Great Vigil of Easter will be at 8:00 pm on April 7th. The way that service begins is with a ceremony where we light a new fire, and the flame that rises from that new fire is used to light the Paschal Candle, and then, as the service progresses, all the candles in the church that we use to light the first part of the service. During the first part of the service we hear the great stories of the People of God...and how the world was created, and the Exodus, the Flood, all the saving acts of God through time...the great stories of the People of God. It leads us to the cry of joy that we have been anticipating where we declare that Christ has risen!



What I think would be a great way to begin that service would be to use the mortgage to be the fuel for the new fire of Easter. What better way to step into God's future together than by celebrating the tremendous accomplishment that you

Inside this issue:

[Reflections on the Easter Vigil](#)

[On Burning the Mortgage](#)

[April Birthdays](#)

[Finance Statement](#)

[Bede the Bat](#)

[Prayers of the People](#)

Editor's note: The photo on Page 2 of the March Bells was of Charlotte Compton, not Charlotte Hayes. I'm sorry about the mix-up.

have sacrificed and given for? Make no mistake about it, you have done a great thing. In the worst economic times our country has seen since the Great Depression, you have retired a \$405,000 mortgage in less than five years. You have pulled together, given sacrificially, worked in partnership with our diocese and our Bishop, and prayed and acted in faith knowing that we could do this. And now, we have.



*That's the check for the last mortgage payment in the middle of the picture.
Photo by John Beeler.*

I want to encourage you to plan on coming to the Great Vigil of Easter this year, and joining in striking the new fire of Easter together. This is not an ordinary day, nor is this an ordinary accomplishment. It seems right to me that we would proceed knowing that.

The next morning, Easter Sunday, we will have two services at 8:00 am and 10:30 am. The Lompoc Ministerial Association will also host the Easter Sunrise service at 6:00 am at La Purisima Mission, with the Lompoc Master Chorale singing at that Ecumenical service of Easter. What a glorious day we will have!

Our early service will be a spoken one, the late service a choral celebration, with baptisms. And we will have the opportunity to say thank you to one another for the great work we have done by paying off the mortgage on our church, and thank you to God for the opportunity to serve Him and the church as we go forward, Adelante! Into God's future, together.

God Bless you all this Easter and always,

Fr. Michael+

Reflections on the Easter Vigil

From childhood, one of the very special church services deposited in my memory bank is the **Easter Vigil**. Historically, it has been described as the most important service in the liturgical year. If I could attend only one service on Easter, it would be the Easter Vigil. The practice evolved into the modern observance of Easter Sunrise service, but its history is much richer.

The Vigil itself can begin at any time after sundown on Saturday. Here at St Mary's, our service will begin at 8:00 pm with some special surprises planned. If you haven't attended an Easter Vigil before, this would be a great year to try it out. The service consists of four parts:

- † Service of Light
- † Service of Lessons
- † Baptism/Renewal of Baptismal Vows
- † Holy Eucharist/Easter Communion

The **Service of Light** begins in darkness as a newly kindled fire is lit to light the Paschal Candle. During a procession to the chancel, the priest or cantor pauses three times in the darkened church chanting "The Light of Christ". Candles distributed to the congregation are then lit from the Paschal Candle as well as other candles in the sanctuary (except at the altar). This return of light symbolizes the light of salvation and hope through Jesus's resurrection from the grave and the triumph of light by God's grace and salvation over the darkness of death and sin.

Next follows the **Service of Lessons**, which includes both Old and New Testament readings to retell our history as God's children, and summarize the faith into which we are baptized. The lessons, start with the story of creation or the flood and remind us of our delivery from bondage in the exodus, of God's calling us to faithfulness through the prophets, of God dwelling among us in Jesus Christ, and of Christ's rising in victory from the tomb.

In the early church the Easter Vigil concluded with the **Baptism** of new converts celebrating not only Jesus' resurrection from death to life, but also the new life God brings to believers. Those baptized changed into new white clothes to symbolize their new life in Christ, which is the origin of the tradition of buying new clothes at Easter. Our vigil service at St Mary's will include **Renewal of Baptismal Vows** and baptisms on Easter Sunday.

The Vigil climaxes in a joyous celebration of the first **Holy Eucharist** of Easter. The candles at the altar are lit by the Paschal Candle as the Celebrant announces, "Alleluia, Christ is risen"...and the alleluia, absent during Lent, returns. As a child, this was my favorite part because we all brought our bells from home

to ring at this time (though trying to keep them quiet up to this point was, as I later discovered, a parental nightmare!). The risen Lord invites all to celebrate in the new life he brings by sharing the sacramental feast. The Vigil celebrates what God has done, is doing and will do. Don't miss it!

Louise Larson

On Burning the Mortgage

“EVERY path may lead you to God, even the weird ones. Most of us are on a journey. We're looking for something, though we're not always sure what that is. The way is foggy much of the time. I suggest you slow down and **follow some of the side roads that appear suddenly in the mist.**”

Anonymous Author

One of those “side roads” appeared in the mist during April of 2010. We knew we had a budget problem after the first quarter of 2010, when income was barely running even over the same time period the previous year. To complicate matters the 2010 budget had projected a 10% increase over our 2009 income.

“The side road” took us to 4245 Rigel, our debt free Rectory. After many strategy discussions by the Finance Committee and Vestry, the decision was made to sell the Rigel property and use the proceeds to pay down the church mortgage, thereby reducing our operating overhead.

A special meeting with Bishop Bruno was held on May 2, 2010 at St. Mary's to explain our situation, our solution and to ask his permission to sell the Rectory. He agreed to our plan. On May 23, 2010, a special 9:00 am parish meeting was held to discuss the plan, and to ask for your approval.

At this parish meeting we laid out the Finance Committee and Vestry plan. Father Michael gave us a vision of a balanced 2010 budget, a debt free church by selling the Rectory and a BTM campaign to pay off the remaining balance of the mortgage. I must admit this “side road” of bridging the 2010 budget gap AND paying off the entire church mortgage, looked pretty foggy to me. But, those rose colored glasses Father Michael was wearing that day allowed him to see much



*Fr. Michael, Treasurer Mary Sharp, and Howard Gould with the last check at the March 18th service.
Photo by John Beeler.*

farther down that road than I could imagine.

Fast forward to March 2012 and it all seemed too easy. Below is a recap of the BTM campaign, and the Church mortgage payoff.

Let me say that in my thirty years at St. Mary's, the only other financial campaign that rose to this occasion was the campaign to build the church. Hmm, that was kind of a "side road" in a foggy mist if I remember correctly.

In closing, given the recession, high unemployment and just plain economic uncertainty over the last two years, it is amazing what this parish has achieved. We should all be proud of the financial strength we have given St. Mary's for many years in the future.

Roger McConnell



Roger McConnell at the 2010 Annual Meeting. Photo by John Beeler.

Financial Summary of "Burning the Mortgage":

BTM Campaign	\$ 132,391
Less Amount to Balance 2010 Budget	\$ (36,000)
Add Net Proceeds From Sale of Rectory	<u>\$ 223,044</u>
Total Dollars To Pay Off Church Mortgage	\$ 319,435

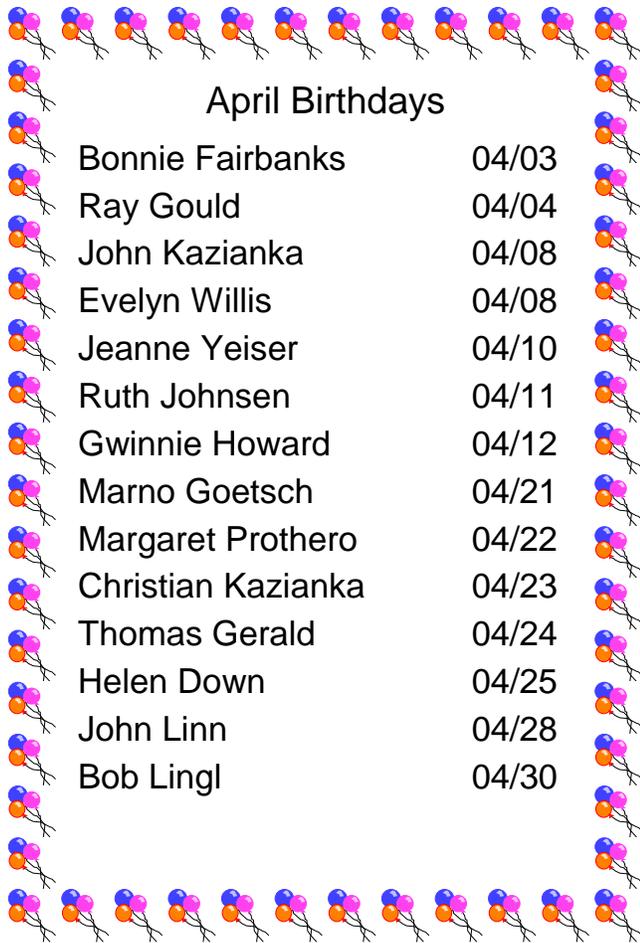
Writers Wanted!

If you have something to say that is relevant to the church or congregation, please write it up and send it to me at john.beeler@verizon.net. I'll put it in the draft *Bells*, and send it on to Father Michael for approval (you can always ask him before writing if he thinks the topic is a good one.)

I'm always looking for pictures, too, especially of events I didn't get to. I don't run all of them in the *Bells*, but you'll get credit if I use yours.

If you send me something and do not hear back from me within 24 hours, please call me at 735-8054. Thanks!

John Beeler



April Birthdays

Bonnie Fairbanks	04/03
Ray Gould	04/04
John Kazianka	04/08
Evelyn Willis	04/08
Jeanne Yeiser	04/10
Ruth Johnsen	04/11
Gwinnie Howard	04/12
Marno Goetsch	04/21
Margaret Prothero	04/22
Christian Kazianka	04/23
Thomas Gerald	04/24
Helen Down	04/25
John Linn	04/28
Bob Lingl	04/30

Sunday Eucharist
8:00 AM and 10:00AM

Church Office Hours
Monday - Thursday 10 AM - 4 PM

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Many Hands Make Light Work

Please join us for a Work Party on Saturday, April 14th at 8:30 AM. You can help with the gardening, vacuuming the sanctuary, changing lightbulbs, or many other things that help keep the church going!

Bede the Bat

Hello to all my friends at St. Mary's! It's me again -- Bede the Bat!

For those of you who know me well, you know how much I love to read. Some of you have seen me hanging upside down in various places in the church, and I usually have a book with me. I've been reading for as long as I can remember and so, of course, I have a list of favorite books a mile long. Reading is my favorite way to pass the time, and I must say that my favorite invention would have to be the printing press invented by Johannes Gutenberg, a very smart German fellow. He invented this miracle 572 years ago in 1440, and the Gutenberg Bible that contained 42 lines was the first major book printed ever in the world using movable type. For anyone who loves to read, we owe this smart gentleman a great debt.



Bede has a TV up in the belfry? How much is the electric bill for that? And what if the fog and driving rain short out the wiring?

And so my list gets longer, but at the top of the list is book called "Friday Night Lights". If you are a football fan (and I am), you know about this book. You probably also know about the movie. It was good, too, and then it went on to become a really fine TV series. During football season, the lights that draw people to their local high school football field is very exciting. It takes me awhile, but every Friday night that there is a local game, I start out early and fly over to watch. There are always good seats for folks like me. However, all good things come to an end and football season, unfortunately, is one of those things. But, I've found a good replacement for those games.

On some Fridays, at St. Mary's, they show movies. I have seen some of the best movies ever on those Friday evenings. Musicals and dramas and comedies and a real variety of movies have been shown. I particularly like movies with sports themes. "Remember the Titans" is one of those great movies. I love that movie. It's one I've seen on my TV, and it's one I could watch over again. I really love the movie nights. I pop my popcorn and get my Reese's Peanut Butter Cups, and watch with my church family. If you haven't been to movie night yet, you really should put it on your calendar. Fr. Michael always comes up with good ones.

So until the Friday Night Lights beckon me again this Fall, I'll enjoy the Friday Night Lights at St. Mary's. See you there!

Blessings from Me, Bede the Bat in the St. Mary's Belfry!



Prayers of the People

We ask that you hold these persons in your Daily Prayers.

Lord, open our hearts to Your perfect will, that we may faithfully intercede on behalf of those we bring to You now in prayer:

**Lee Bowles, Pat Day, Ray Down, Sr., Isla Hill, Lou Hodges,
Sheila Holley, Almedia Hutchinson, Shelie Jackson, Stan Sheldon,
Linda Smith, Kitty Wenk, Rachel Williams, Keith Wright,
MaryJo Wright, and Jeanne Yeiser.**

And those serving in the armed forces remembered by our parishioners:
Stefan, Robert, David Barrett, Jason D, Kevin and Patrick.

AMEN.

Please Note:

Prayers of the People will be updated monthly. If you would like to add or continue a name to the POP, please fill out a Prayer Request slip or Pew card, submit via our website www.stmaryslompoc.org call any of our Prayer Ring members, or email Stephanie Bastian at jeffnsteph95@msn.com. Thank you!

*“Whenever two of you on earth agree in prayer,
it will be done by My Father in Heaven.”*
Matthew 18:19