



**PARISH
ANNUAL
REPORT
2025**

**ST. MARY'S PARISH
BELLEVUE, NE**

MESSAGE FROM FATHER DEL

Dear St. Mary's Family,

The parish annual report provides me with the opportunity to reflect on the past fiscal year (July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025). Archbishop McGovern is challenging his flock to approach our stewardship and faith through the lens of gratitude. So it is with gratitude that this report is celebrating the ways that our parish has embraced prayer, participation and generosity this past year.

Over the past year, I have observed the prayer life of our parish in their devotional reverence of the Mass, the Eucharist and the Sacraments. St. Mary's had a blessed year in which we were able to celebrate all of the sacraments including Holy Orders with the ordination of our native son, Fr. Will Targy. I am inspired by St. Leo the Great who said "Whatever was visible in Our Redeemer has passed over into the sacraments." Through participation in prayer opportunities and the sacraments we are able to celebrate Jesus' life, death and resurrection which continues to bring us into closer union with him.

St. Leo also said "The faith of those who live their faith is a serene faith. What you long for will be given you; what you love will be yours for ever. Since it is by giving alms that everything is pure for you, you will also receive that blessing which is promised next by the Lord." I cannot help but celebrate when I think of St. Mary's generosity toward our parish and community, as well as participation in acts of mercy. The loyal stewards of St. Mary's eagerly responded to the call of "Let's Restore St. Mary's Church Interior!" We not only raised the amount needed for the restoration in 3 months but exceeded it! We also have School Auction attendees that give to our Fill-A-Need projects, golfers that raise money for renovations around our church campus and parishioners that have left estate gifts in their wills to assist with our endowments and needed capital improvements. Additionally, our parishioners generously donate to Archdiocese collections, SVDP, Columban Missions, the Bellevue Food Pantry, the Angel Tree, the homeless sock drive, EPS diaper drives, etc - the list goes on and on.

When our St. Mary's family engages in prayer, participation and generosity, it allows our church to minister not only to the needs of our parish but to the greater community as well. A specific example from this past year was when our parish and school welcomed several students and families after the closing of St. Matthew's Middle School. In showing gratitude to Our Lord by taking all that we've been blessed with and sharing it with others, we receive gratitude in return and hopefully inspire those we serve to continue to pay it forward. I, myself, am incredibly grateful for St. Mary's parishioners and all that you do every day to help this parish thrive.

Yours in Christ,



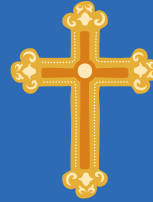
Reverend Lydell Lape

ST. MARY'S CELEBRATES OUR NUMBERS



1357
families

564
Daily Masses
celebrated



233
Sunday and Holy
Day Masses
celebrated



222
Students enrolled
in our school



66
Students enrolled
in Religious
Education



16
Baptism
Preparations

48
Baptisms



53
First Communions
and
Reconciliations



63
Confirmations

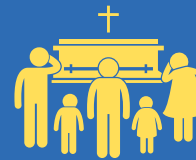


65
New families
joined our
parish



11
Wedding
Preparations

7
Weddings and
Marriage
Convalidations



42
Funerals

ST. MARY'S CELEBRATES THE SACRAMENTS

Baptism

Baptism is the first "Sacrament of Initiation", allowing us to enter into a new beginning in our lives of faith. St. Mary's celebrated 48 baptisms into our faith last year. Among them was 7 year old Francisco Alvarado Martinez who was baptized at the Easter Vigil.



First Reconciliation

School and Religious Education

This year, 41 students received their First Reconciliation. On February 1st, the students and their parents gathered for a First Reconciliation workshop, where they were able to practice going to confession. The following Saturday, February 8th, the students received their First Reconciliation. Many of them were nervous, only to find out that it's not that bad!

First Communion

School and Religious Education

The 41 students prepared for many months, learning not only about Jesus' true presence in the Eucharist, but also about His mercy, His holiness, and His great love for them.

The students gathered in the church the day before to practice their procession and to get out any last minute jitters before the big day. When the day finally arrived, April 27th, the girls dressed up in their beautiful white dresses and the boys in their best suits while they enjoyed the graces that poured in that day. Congratulations to all of them!



ST. MARY'S CELEBRATES THE SACRAMENTS

Confirmation

We had 43 students Confirmed this year on May 3rd, 2025. This was a bittersweet moment, as it was the last class Confirmed by the former Archbishop of Omaha, Archbishop Lucas before his retirement.



The students entered their second year of preparation beginning in early 2024. Their preparation focused on choosing a saint name, learning how to be a bold disciple of Christ, who the Holy Spirit is and why the Holy Spirit is so important in our lives as Catholics. Confirmation is not the end of their religious education, but the beginning of a lifelong journey marked by courageous discipleship and a deep sense of reverence for the Lord. Congratulations to the students who received this wonderful sacrament!



16 catechumens and candidates completed the OCIA, Order of Christian Initiation of Adults, program this past year. We had the pleasure of supporting and fully welcoming these individuals into our Catholic Faith when they were confirmed at the Easter Vigil.

The Sacrament of Matrimony is a vocation - a public commitment between a man and a woman to spend a lifetime together creating & nurturing life and helping each other to become their best self in Jesus, in life, and to others.

“The matrimonial covenant, by which a man and a woman establish between themselves a partnership of the whole life, is by its nature ordered toward the good of the spouses and the procreation and education of offspring; this covenant between Baptized persons has been raised by Christ the Lord to the dignity of a Sacrament” (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1601).

Holy Matrimony

Taylor and Maureen Willoughby took their marriage vows on May 31st.



ST. MARY'S CELEBRATES THE SACRAMENTS



Holy Orders

God has a loving plan for all of us and everyone is called to serve in a different way. For some men, God has placed inside them the desire to join the priesthood and carry out His work. By joining, men are prepared and guided to lead others to Christ through a priestly vocation. God has placed in their hearts the desire to be a priest; to pursue a rewarding, purpose-driven, faith-driven life in His name.

On June 7, 2025, St. Mary's saw native son Fr. Will Targy ordained into the priesthood.

Anointing of the Sick

All Catholics experiencing critical physical or mental health difficulties are encouraged to take advantage of the Anointing of the Sick, so that they may experience the healing of Jesus Christ. This also includes individuals who are preparing for surgery, treatments or procedures. The Anointing of the Sick brings spiritual healing and, at times, bodily healing to the person who is suffering. Please call the Rectory if you would like to receive an anointing from one of our priests.

Many individuals confuse this Sacrament with "Last Rites," "Extreme Unction," or "Viaticum" - which occur when a person's death is imminent. Last Rites prepare a person for death and often include the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Viaticum (the last Holy Communion a person receives before dying). The Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick is a separate, distinct Sacrament.



Bonnie Roos received the Anointing of the Sick before she had a medical procedure.

ST. MARY'S CELEBRATES THE MASS

St. Mary's is blessed with 36 Musicians, 16 Sacristans, 40 Lectors, 80 Eucharistic Ministers of Holy Communion, 37 Altar Servers and 4 Deacons that give of their time and talents to make it possible to celebrate our Masses throughout the year.



Four of St. Mary's students received the Serra Club Altar Server Award.

ST. MARY'S CELEBRATES THE EUCHARIST

Praise & Worship Night



A beautiful Praise & Worship Night was hosted by ChristLife on March 12th. The evening began with a video called “The Veil Lifted” about the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist. The Monstrance was placed on the altar followed by the singing of the Divine Mercy Chaplet. The night's music ensemble, which included Andy Severson , Cindy Menzel, Barry Wilkinson and Deborah Wilkinson, led the congregation in several praise and worship songs. Many of the participants came up on the altar to be close to Jesus and spent time in prayer on their knees in front of the monstrance. ChristLife hopes to make this a semi-annual event to be celebrated during both Advent and Lent.



First Friday Exposition

In 1673, a French nun named Sr. Margaret Mary Alacoque had visions of Jesus where He asked the Church to honor His Most Sacred Heart. One of the ways to honor Jesus is to spend time with Him in the Sacrament of the Eucharist, which is why we set aside special time on the first Friday of each month to expose the Sacrament on the Altar and invite all to come and adore Jesus. Quarterly, the First Friday Exposition is a 24-hour event from 8:00am Friday to 8:00am Saturday. On the other 8 First Fridays, Exposition takes place from 8:30am to 3:30pm.

Perpetual Adoration

Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament is a time we take to worship God in the person of Jesus Christ, who is truly present in the Eucharistic host. People will often spend an hour in prayer with the Blessed Sacrament, which is kept either in the Tabernacle or exposed for all to see on the altar. St. Mary's has been celebrating perpetual adoration since 1953.



ST. MARY'S CELEBRATES CHILDREN'S LITURGY



Children's Liturgy of the Word is an opportunity for children ages 4 through the 4th grade to gather for a time to speak about the Gospel in a way that helps them better understand Jesus' message. Children's Liturgy is celebrated at the 10am Sunday Masses.

Children's Liturgy began in the Fall of 1991 as an outgrowth of a conversation between Mike and Melissa Chesonis and Ted and Cindy Menzel. They had a desire to minister to the children of the parish ages 4 years through the 4th grade. A program that would allow them to participate in a way that modeled the order of the Liturgy of the Word but was easier for a child to understand. The parents of these young children would also benefit because they could focus more on their own participation in Mass.

After going to St. Bernard's to observe how they ran their Children's Liturgy of the Word, the leaders adapted the program to suit St. Mary's Parish. Fr. Tom Ward allowed a trial of this program as long as there was very little disruption to the flow of the mass, control of the children could be maintained regardless of how many participated, and it honored the essence of the Gospel. The program was a hit and has been running for 34 years!

About 85 parishioners have volunteered their time and gifts as catechists, supervisors and musicians over the years. The volunteers have been incredible. Children's Liturgy has taken place every Sunday that we've been scheduled regardless of weather conditions, the challenges of COVID, tight meeting spaces and various building renovations.

Given the longevity of the program, we now have second generation attendees and Children's Liturgy of the Word alumni serving as catechists and supervisors. We feel so blessed that the faith community of St. Mary's has been so supportive of this ministry over the decades.

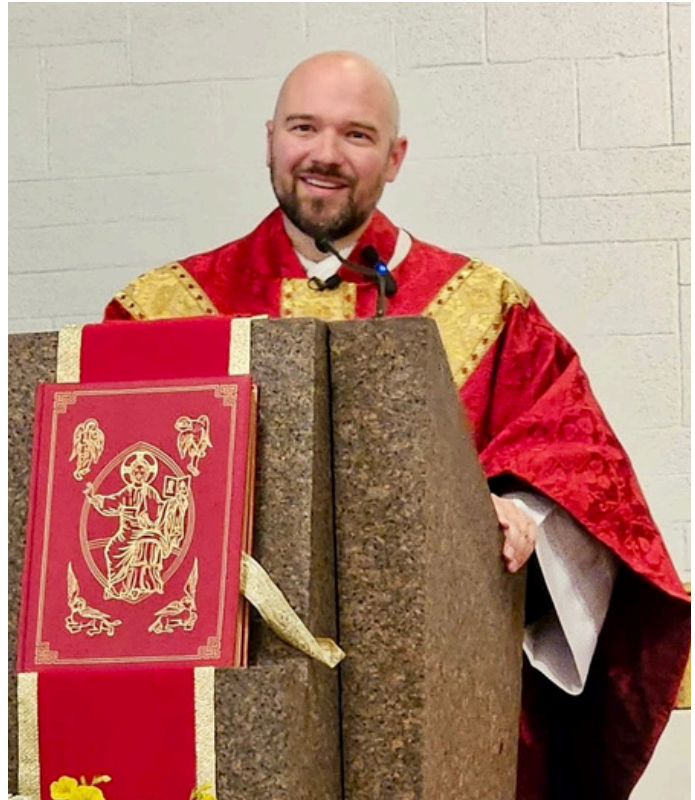


The three kings lead Children's Liturgy on Epiphany Sunday to teach the kids about the Holy Family's special visitors.

ST. MARY'S CELEBRATES HER **NATIVE SONS**

Father Will Targy

St. Mary's School Alum Will Targy was ordained into the priesthood on June 7, 2025. He then celebrated his first Mass at St. Mary's on June 8, 2025 with over 30 priests in attendance to support their newly ordained brother.



Father Chris Saenz

of the Missionary Society of St. Columban celebrated his

Silver Jubilee

on Saturday, June 28, 2025
at the noon Mass.

ST. MARY'S CELEBRATES OUR YOUTH

St. Mary's Youth Ministry provides children and teenagers with opportunities to participate in faith formation programs that help them encounter and grow in their relationship with Jesus. It also provides activities that are not only entertaining but spent within a safe and accepting peer group environment. With all of the cultural distractions that our youth are bombarded with, Youth Ministry provides positive experiences that will form these kids into spiritually engaged individuals. These important peer interactions and faith-building encounters help to cultivate our next generation of stewards for St. Mary's.

Youth Ministry hosted the following activities last year:

Summer Youth Events

Steubenville Youth Conference (High School): 16 students

Totus Tuus: (1-12 grade): 105 students

Youth Activities

Movie Night (Middle/High School): 7 students

Cookie Decorating with Catholic Daughters (Middle/High School): 7 students

Bellevue Berry Farm (Middle/High School): 37 students

Bowling Outing (Middle/High School): 5 students

Escape Room (Middle School): 7 students

Escape Room (High School): 5 students

Open Door Mission Service (Middle/High School): 18 students

Youth Bible Studies & Meetings

Middle School Youth Group (multiple sessions): 5 students

Eucharist Study (High School): 4 students

Advent Study (High School): 5 students

Lent Study (High School): 8 students

ST. MARY'S CELEBRATES OUR YOUTH



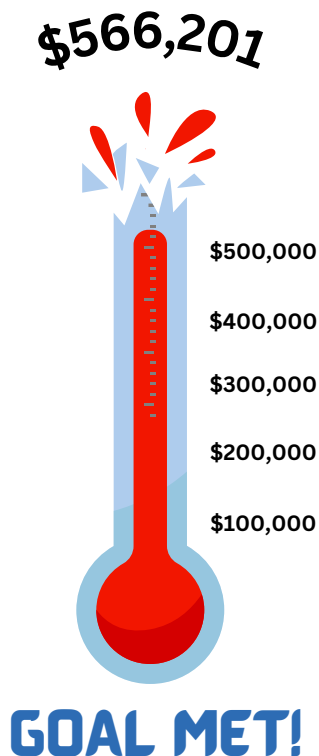
ST. MARY'S CELEBRATES A SUCCESSFUL CAPITAL PROJECT CAMPAIGN

At the beginning of April, we launched our **“Let’s Restore St. Mary’s Church Interior”** Capital Project. Within one month, we not only reached but exceeded our pledge goal! By the end of the fiscal year (June 30, 2025), we had received \$566,201 in paid contributions and a total of \$679,451 in pledges! We are overwhelmed by this outpouring of support for the restoration of our beloved church. These donations will stand as a legacy of the generosity and stewardship of our parish community for generations to come.

Our Capital Project will include the following improvements:

- *New pews
- *Flooring updates
- *Sanctuary updates
- *New sound system
- * Security upgrades with external cameras & key cards
- *Choir room and sacristy painting
- *Confessional updates

As of the publishing of this report, we finished painting the interior of the Church (with monies previously donated). We ordered the new pews and paid a \$50,000 deposit. The sample pew is in the Narthex for everyone to check out. We have begun the security upgrades with the installation of more cameras and a key card access system in three of our parish buildings. Father Del recently signed the contract with Midwest Sounds and paid \$51,315 as a deposit for the new sound system. We are continuing to work with Ratigan-Schottler on the designs for the Sanctuary and flooring and plan to share the finalized plans with you before we start. We hope to initiate the rest of the church interior restoration project after the first of the year. Once work begins, all Masses and services will be relocated to the Parish Center.



As of June 30, 2025, this Capital Project had received 251 pledges and \$566,201 in paid contributions. We not only reached our goal in 3 months but exceeded it!



ST. MARY'S CELEBRATES SCHOOL UPDATES



The School playground surface had become worn and damaged due to regular wear and tear from children playing during recess over the years. The playground was resurfaced using 2025 Auction Fill-A-Need donations.

The playground net was also replaced due to a generous private donation. This update was greatly needed to keep our kids safe while they play during recess.



BEFORE



Retaining Wall on Calhoun Street

The retaining wall on Calhoun Street was originally constructed of wooden railroad ties. This wall has had to be repaired multiple times over the years due to breakdown of the wooden materials with age and weathering. An estate gift from a generous supporter of our school paid to upgrade the wall to sustainable, low maintenance materials.

AFTER



Alumni Christian and Nick Swiecicki assist with making the Clay Street terraces maintenance-free by putting down weed barrier paper and covering with landscaping rocks that were paid for with school volunteer fees.



ST. MARY'S CELEBRATES RECTORY UPDATES

BEFORE



Proceeds from the 2024 St. Mary's Annual Centennial Golf Tournament paid for a beautiful renovation of the rectory's formal living room/dining room and front entry.

Emily and Russ Hjermsstad and Jane and Harry Bares spearheaded this rectory renovation. The main work was in the formal living room/dining room of the rectory. Emily and Jane wanted the decorations and furnishings to complement the building's midcentury modern architecture. Work began with pulling up the old carpeting which exposed an exquisite original parquet floor. The floor was professionally restored and looks like new. Emily, Russ and Jane thoroughly cleaned the entire room and made numerous improvements to the walls and cabinetry. The room was professionally painted and new blinds were hung. A new dining room table and chairs were purchased along with sleek overhead lights to replace an old ceiling fan. The outdated furniture was replaced with an elegant new sofa, loveseat and matching chairs. This incredible crew refinished the existing end tables to match the parquet floor. A lovely area rug was chosen to tie together the sofa/loveseat area. The rectory entryway received a refresh as well. The old couch and table were replaced with two new stylish armchairs and an end table. Fr. Del and Fr. Joe now have a welcoming space to meet with families and visitors. We owe Emily, Jane, Russ, Harry and the Golf Tournament Committee a real debt of gratitude for all their hard work in making this renovation happen.

AFTER



ST MARY'S CELEBRATES LOVE OF NEIGHBOR

Our parish is dedicated to generously supporting the Church, both on a diocesan level and worldwide, as well as aiding the needs of our local charities through special collections. Instead of envelopes in the pews, Father began utilizing a second collection for these good works and your generosity has been astounding. We were even able to sponsor 25 Nigerian Seminarians with our Kaduna collection!

SPECIAL COLLECTIONS	2024	2025
Seminary	\$75	\$2,737
Black & Indian Missions	\$0	\$1,857
Home & Foreign Missions	\$0	\$1,692
Catholic Relief Services	\$945	\$2,382
Communications	\$665	\$1,744
Peter's Pence	\$185	Will be on next fiscal year
World Mission Sunday	\$2,013	\$120
Catholic Charities	\$0	\$3,365
Mission Cooperation	\$2,797	\$7,059
Religious Pension Fund	\$1,120	\$2,088
Kaduna Mission		\$25,304
Rice Bowl	\$1,230	\$1,199
Columban Missions	\$10,789	\$13,026
Total Special "One-Time" Collections	\$19,819	\$62,573

ST MARY'S CELEBRATES **OUR FUTURE**

We celebrate the stewards of St. Mary's who created an Education Endowment, a Parish Endowment, and an Adopt-A-Student Endowment.

Parish leaders under former pastor, Cardinal Blase Cupich, created the Education Endowment. The principal funds can never be spent, only the earnings may be used to help the school and faith-based programs. Then, during Fr. Tom Ward's time as pastor, Anna Koch died and left the parish \$1,000,000 with no stipulations on how the funds could be used. Fr. Ward and the Pastoral Council made the decision to create a parish endowment. Again the trust states only the earnings may be used to support the mission of St. Mary's. The principal of these endowment funds continue to grow due to generous donations, memorials and estate gifts. This year, memorials and estate gifts increased the endowments by over \$100,000. These endowments provide earnings that play a key role in helping the parish balance our annual operating budget.

The Adopt-A-Student Endowment was started while Fr. Dennis Hanneman was pastor with an initial gift of approximately \$23,000. The interest earned by this endowment helps to provide financial assistance for students in need at St. Mary's School.

We ask that you prayerfully consider including St. Mary's Endowment Funds in your will or trust and estate planning.

St. Mary's Endowment Funds Report	
July 1, 2024 through June 30, 2025	
2025 Endowment Corpus and Donations	
Education Endowment	Principal
Balance as of July 1, 2024	1,032,006
Donations	10,285
Memorials	1,100
Estate Gifts	93,530
Balance as of June 30, 2025	1,136,921
Parish Endowment	Principal
Balance as of July 1, 2024	1,048,691
Donations	0
Memorials	17,576
Balance as of June 30, 2025	1,066,267
Adopt-A-Student Endowment	Principal
Balance as of July 1, 2024	92,770
Memorials	0
Balance as of June 30, 2025	92,770
2024 Endowment Distributions	
For Parish/School/Religious Education Budget and Programs	
Education Endowment	66,792
Parish Endowment	67,329
Adopt-A-Student Endowment	6,055
Total Distributions	140,176
Market Value as of June 30, 2025	
Education Endowment	1,550,774
Parish Endowment	1,617,751
Adopt-A-Student Endowment	122,252

ST MARY'S CELEBRATES AN INCREASE IN GENEROSITY

Your Stewardship at Work

Our Church, School, Religious Education and Adult Evangelization programs are the heart and soul of St. Mary's Parish and the operating budget keeps these efforts moving forward on our mission to support every person on their path to Heaven. This intangible mission becomes tangible through the work of our two priests, twenty-nine full-time staff and twelve part-time staff who work side-by-side with you, our volunteers and parishioners.

The bulk of the operating budget is funded through Sunday/Holy Day contributions and school tuition. We are pleased to report that both of these income sources increased last year: Sunday giving by 5% and tuition income by 40%. This significant improvement in tuition was a result of strengthened school enrollment due to St. Matthew's middle school closing and tuition collection efforts. Overall, our parish operating budget income increased by 16%.

Our overall operating expenses increased by 9.4% with rising building operating costs and employee costs continuing to impact our bottom line. Our liability and workers comp insurance costs increased by 10%, utilities (gas, electric, and water) by 11% and general building maintenance by 9.4%. Personnel costs (insurance, retirement and salaries) increased by 8.2% and, moving forward, rising health insurance costs and paying employees a livable wage will continue to be a challenge.

We are grateful to all of our parishioners for joining us in our mission to help everyone on their path to Heaven. Your stewardship in the form of prayers, participation, and generosity resulted in a decrease of the overall parish deficit this year. With your continued support, we will work towards sustainable practices to ensure that St. Mary's Parish thrives for generations to come.

Our FY2025 Operating Income and Expense Report

Parish and School Operating Income	
Sunday and Holy Day Giving	1,253,172
Building Fund	55,263
Votive Candles	9,160
Religious Education and Adult Faith Formation	1,930
Parish and School Other Income	181,582
School Tuition and Scholarships	559,657
School Registration and Extended Day Fees	112,294
Total Income	2,173,058
Parish and School Operating Expenses	
Employee Salaries and Benefits	1,568,920
Priest Salaries and Benefits	143,332
Archdiocese Assessment	129,809
Maintenance/IT/Liability Insurance	297,957
Utilities	90,144
Liturgical and Faith Formation	68,604
Instructional Supplies (School and RE)	37,023
Administrative and Other Operating Expenses	80,393
Total Expenses	2,416,182
Net Deficit Prior to Additional Financial Support	-243,124
Additional Financial Support	
Education Endowment Transfer	67,325
Parish Endowment Transfer	74,597
Parish Savings Transfer	57,547
Home and School Support	6,055
Adopt-a-Student Endowment Transfer	30,000
Ladies Guild Support	5,400
Knights of Columbus Support	2,200
Total	243,124