

To: Prospective parishioners of Stella Maris

From: Rev. Lawrence B. McInerny, Pastor

RE: Parish membership and boundaries

Thank you for your interest in joining our parish. We rejoice in the number of people who wish to join us, to serve and worship God here, and to grow in the virtues together. Members of a church rightfully have expectations of their parish and the Church has expectations of its members. Based on experience, I have found it helpful to let people know our policies about parish membership before registering. These policies are important because parishioners have rightful expectations about having a church for sacramental celebrations, receiving pastoral ministry as needed and other benefits of parish membership such as parishioner tuition rates in our Catholic schools.

Like most parishes in the Roman Catholic Church, Stella Maris embraces a geographical area. The parish boundaries enclose Sullivan's Island, the Isle of Palms, Goat Island, Dewees Island, and Fort Sumter. Like many parishes, Stella Maris distinguishes between inactive members (those merely living within its boundaries) and active members meaning those who are registered in the parish and faithfully attend Mass on Sundays and holydays of obligation, using the envelope system, which guarantees a convenient record of regular Mass attendance. Registration across parish lines is tolerated. A Catholic living within the boundaries of Stella Maris might wish to register in some other parish. If the Pastor of the other parish approves, that person is considered a member of the parish where registered. Likewise, with the approval of the Pastor, people living outside our parish boundaries of Stella Maris might be permitted to register at Stella Maris. Transfers by those already registered in another nearby parish must have my prior approval.

Over the years, we have had many requests to register here simply to have a wedding in our church. Unfortunately, after the wedding we saw no more of most of the couples despite assurances to the contrary. In order to address this, we will not consider a wedding for anyone from outside of our territory who is not already registered and actively participating in the parish for at least one year. We have also experienced a number of people who register here but do not attend Mass regularly. Please understand that if you join Stella Maris, we want and expect you to attend Mass regularly. At the time of registration, you will be asked to commit to this basic Catholic value, and we will commit to our responsibilities to you as a member of our parish. Please read, *The Covenant Between Parish and Parishioner*, and if you wish to proceed call our office (843-883-3108) and let Ann Thompson know you have read the Covenant and wish to register. If we have not met, please introduce yourself to me after Mass soon. Thank you.