



## Liturgy Schedule

### Saturday Vigil:

5:00 p.m.,

7:00 p.m. (Spanish)

### Sunday:

7:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m.,

11:30 a.m.,

4:00 p.m. (Lifeteen)

### Daily Mass:

Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri, 7:30 a.m.;

Wed, 12 p.m. (noon)

### Adoration:

Mon, Tue, 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.;

Wed, 8:00 a.m. - 8:30 p.m.;

Fri, 8:00 - 11:30 a.m.

### Confessions:

Sat, 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

## *A Life-Changing Experience:* *The Women's ACTS Retreat*

Whether a single professional, working mother, or stay-at-home mom, we as women have a tendency to put both God and ourselves at the bottom of a seemingly never-ending list. With errands to run, people to feed and activities to attend, life seems perpetually caught up in a whirlwind of activity, making it increasingly hard to find the stillness and quiet necessary for prayer. This is why, says parishioner Joy Medley, spiritual opportunities like the upcoming Women's ACTS Retreat are so important, helping us rejuvenate our spiritual life and become strengthened for our daily vocation.

"I think as women, most of us put our needs last on a long list of things that must get done daily for our families," Joy says. "We struggle to fit time in for our own spiritual, mental, and physical needs after making sure that everything else has been completed in the day. This retreat opens wide the love that Christ has for each of us – it creates such a desire to be fully present with our Lord and make that a priority in our daily life. And



*For parishioner Joy Medley, one of the most special aspects of the ACTS Retreat is the generosity of the women who help plan and facilitate the retreat, opening their hearts and sharing how the Lord has worked in their lives.*

when that happens, almost everything else naturally falls into place."

Joy attended her first ACTS weekend retreat in 2010. Relatively new to the community at the time, Joy was blown away by the witness of the female participants and her own personal encounter with Christ. Dramatically changing her spiritual life, the retreat also deepened her bond

*continued on page 2*

If you would like more information, please contact Joy Medley  
at 502-671-9035 or [jmedley@stmarkdenton.org](mailto:jmedley@stmarkdenton.org).

# *The Women's ACTS Retreat* continued from front cover

*“Through these retreats, I have learned what it really means to leave it at the foot of Jesus. I have learned to surrender my will – which is still a struggle, though I continue to work at it. I have gained a profound love for Eucharistic Adoration. What a truly beautiful gift we have in our Catholic faith. To be able to sit and talk, laugh and cry, be angry or happy in the presence of our Lord – to be able to sit and talk with Him.” – Joy Medley*

with the parish community through the relationships formed amongst retreatants and facilitators.

“The women who make this retreat happen open themselves up to the retreatants in a way unlike anything I have ever witnessed,” Joy says. “The sharing of our personal trials and struggles, along with celebrating the triumphs each of us goes through in our lives brings this experience straight to the heart of all who participate.”

Standing for “Adoration, Community, Theology, and Service,” ACTS Retreats help reveal the purpose and beauty of our Catholic faith in a life-changing way. Participants are able to feel God’s deep and abiding love for them, to learn more about His Word, to be strengthened through a community of sisters, and most importantly of

all, to surrender their minds and hearts more fully to Christ.

“Through these retreats, I have learned what it really means to leave it at the foot of Jesus,” Joy says. “I have learned to surrender my will – which is still a struggle, though I continue to work at it. I have gained a profound love for Eucharistic Adoration. What a truly beautiful gift we have in our Catholic faith. To be able to sit and talk, laugh and cry, be angry or happy in the presence of our Lord – to be able to sit and talk with Him.”

This year’s retreat will be held May 11-14 at the Briarwood Retreat Center in Copper Canyon. Retreatants will meet at St. Mark’s on Thursday evening, where there will be a sendoff blessing from Fr. George. Afterwards, they will be transported by bus to the retreat facility. Retreatants will return

to the parish Sunday afternoon for the 11:30 a.m. Mass. Finally, there will be a potluck luncheon hosted by the ACTS core team and faith community for retreatants and their families.

Registration will officially begin after the weekend Masses on March 25-26. The retreat is limited to the first 40 women, and registration is on a first-come, first-serve basis. The cost of the retreat is \$225 – a \$100 deposit is needed to reserve your spot. Scholarships are available on a limited basis.

Though the busy nature of life is unavoidable, the Women’s ACTS Retreat provides an important opportunity to leave it behind and to refocus ourselves on the true meaning of life. Only then can we become the wives, mothers, daughters, sisters, and friends that we long to be.



Members of this year's Core Team discuss, plan and organize this year's life-changing program.



*A Letter From Our Pastor*

# *Lent Is More Than Preparation for Easter*

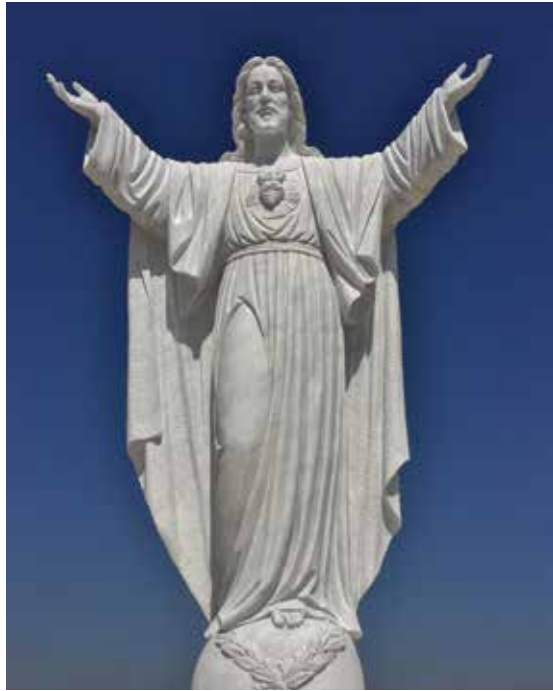
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In 2013, Pope Francis issued his first significant work. It was what is called an “apostolic exhortation” titled *The Joy of the Gospel* (*Evangelii Gaudium* in Latin). While Rome may use fancy words for some of these things, an “exhortation” of this sort does not change any official Church rules or traditions. However, it does offer advice and encouragement about how we should live our lives.

Pope Francis offers this kind of guidance on a regular basis, but this one in particular seems to present us with suggestions that are worthy of our consideration, especially during Lent. The pope called us to become missionary disciples: “The Church which ‘goes forth’ is a community of missionary disciples who take the first step, who are involved and supportive, who bear fruit and rejoice” (*Evangelii Gaudium*, 24).

Speaking about his exhortation, Pope Francis said, “One of the riches of the Second Vatican Council was to remind the Church of the two ‘lenses’ of the season of Lent: baptismal and penitential.” In fact, Vatican II noted specifically, “The two elements which are especially characteristic of Lent – the recalling of baptism or the preparation for it, and penance – should be given greater emphasis in the liturgy and in liturgical catechesis. It is by means of them that the Church prepared the faithful for the celebration of Easter, while they hear God’s word more frequently and devote more time to prayer” (*Companion to the Catechism of the Catholic Church* #1348).

It might be well for us to keep these in mind during Lent. There were vows made during our baptism, and this is the



time of year to try to fulfill those vows, in addition to reaffirming them. We are given various opportunities to renew these vows, and we may tend to do it automatically without a thought. Now, however, is the time to think. Perhaps during Lent, we can renew these vows as families – and we must not necessarily do it in church or at a Mass. Then, we need to do something during Lent to help each of us understand what that renewal means.

The other important part of Lent pointed out by Pope Francis has to do with penance. Most of us have heard the traditional practices of Lent – fasting, prayer, reception of the Sacraments, and

almsgiving. These are things that may bring us closer to Christ. By fasting, we may gain a greater understanding of the hunger the Lord feels for our souls; by increased prayer, we join in union with God; through the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Reconciliation, we become a greater part of that union with God; through giving alms, we empty ourselves in part, just as Jesus emptied Himself for us on the cross.

This is a time to do more than prepare for Easter. This is a time to change how we may approach living and our faith. God bless you now and throughout this holiest of seasons

In Christ,

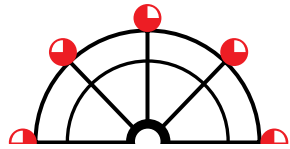
Fr. George  
Pastor

# *A Look Back on C*

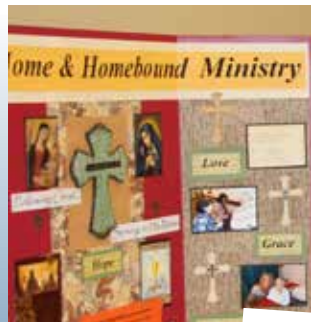
We thank everyone in our St. Mark parish family who attended our recent Ministry Fair, as well as the ministry leaders who promoted stewardship and involvement in our faith community.







# *Our Ministry Fair*





# Questions and Answers About Our Annual Stewardship Renewal

***Our annual Stewardship Renewal is the time when we ask ourselves to re-prioritize the way we use God's gifts in the Church. Every parish family received a "Stewardship Package" in the mail that included a booklet that describes every ministry in the parish, as well as your Commitment Card.***

***I feel like my life is already too full with family obligations and work obligations. I barely even have time to relax. How can I possibly share my time and talents with St. Mark's?***

We all have many obligations to our families, jobs, schools, and other endeavors. But we also all have the same number of hours in the day with which to accomplish these things. The issue is not how much time we have, but how we prioritize that time.

Take some time to reflect on your priorities, and where God fits into your day-to-day life. Remember, living as true stewards of God's gifts involves giving back the first fruits of what He has given to us in thanksgiving, not the "leftovers."

***I am happy with my current level of parish participation. Why do I need to keep filling out a Commitment Card every year?***

Sometimes, the call to stewardship involves the quality of service in addition to its quantity. In looking through the opportunities for ministry available at the parish, you may find yourself drawn to a new ministry you haven't tried before, or new ways to share of your time with God to enrich and enlighten your prayer life. So, even though your current level of parish participation might not change drastically, the ways in which you participate may evolve as you grow in living the stewardship way of life.

***I'm not very active in the Church and, frankly, feel like it may be too late to get involved. Why should I fill out a Commitment Card?***

It's never too late to renew your faith life, and filling out a Commitment Card is a simple step through which you can immediately re-enter the life of the parish. Our parish community is not here to judge you, but to welcome and nourish you in your faith journey.

***I'm physically unable to attend Mass or be active in parish life at St. Mark's. Is there any reason for me to submit a Commitment Card?***

Of course! Your prayers are just as important to the success of our parish community in carrying out its mission as ministry participation and financial contributions. Take a moment to look over some of the opportunities to spend quiet time with God listed in the "Stewardship of Time" section of the Commitment Card, and take a step towards growing in your relationship with Christ and His Church.

***I've expressed interest in a ministry in the past through filling out a Commitment Card, but nobody from the parish ever followed up with me about it.***

While we do our best to consistently follow up with everyone who has shown interest in the opportunities for ministry at St. Mark, we are human, and we sometimes fall short in our follow-up. If this has happened to you in the past, we sincerely apologize, and we encourage you to renew your interest in any activities in which you might like to participate by filling out a Commitment Card this year. Every year, we go into the renewal with every intention of making sure that everyone who has expressed interest is contacted, and we will do so again this year.

## ST. MARK CATHOLIC CHURCH 2017 Stewardship Handbook



TALENT (cont.)

☐ Renew Commitment Card

Outreach

☐ Adoration

☐ Charismatic Prayer Group

☐ Prayer Shawl Ministry

☐ Marian Movement of Priests

☐ Rosary Makers

Scribe Ministry

Spiritual Enrichment

☐ ACTS Ministry/Retreat

☐ Adoration

☐ Carmelite Spirituality

☐ Charismatic Prayer Group

☐ Prayer Shawl Ministry

☐ Marian Movement of Priests

☐ Rosary Makers

☐ Baptism

☐ Sacramental Preparation

☐ High School Confirmation

☐ RCIA Rites of Christian Initiation for Children

☐ RCIA Rites of Christian Initiation for Adults

☐ Marriage Preparation (Support Team)

Seasonal Ministries

ST. MARK CATHOLIC CHURCH

2017 STEWARDSHIP COMMITMENT CARD

My Offering of Time, Talent & Treasure

# Food and Faith Served in Youth Meals

When our parish high school and middle school students gather for their Sunday evening classes, there is a group of volunteers who makes sure the kids have a tasty, filling meal before the lessons begin.

The students might not know it, but while they're eating the delicious food to satisfy their physical hunger, their spiritual hunger is being satisfied, as well.

"The kids love it," says Brad Horn, Director of High School Youth Ministry. "They really enjoy it. Even though they all go to different schools, they're all great friends. There's so much bonding and friendship. The meals help with that. For 30 to 40 minutes, the kids can sit down and catch up, find out what's going on in each other's lives. They love having that opportunity to relax and because of that, they're more ready to go into the lesson."

About 250 youth are served the meals before the Sunday lessons. The middle school and high school students eat separately.

Before each semester begins – September through December, and January through April – Brad and volunteers sit down and develop a menu that will be both easy to prepare and something the teens will like.

"We post the items people can bring in, and they can sign up in the narthex, or online on the parish website, for either semester, with what they can bring in," Brad says.

Food donations can be handled in two ways. "One of the most popular ways is to cook a meal or a dish and bring it to the church," Brad says. "Or, someone can donate food, such as a can of beans in a crock-pot, or chips, or sodas. They also can help set up tables and chairs, serve food, and clean up afterward."

Brad says that the response from volunteers has been good.

"It's a great way for parents to see their teens, and not just their own kids, but the parish teens," he says. "The parents always want to get involved."

When the teens sit and eat together, not only are they forging friendships, but they also are growing together in Christ.

"The meals really help to solidify that," Brad says. "They rely on each other."

Many of the parish teens encounter other youth at school who have no belief in God.



*Parents like to sign up to serve meals to their teens and our parish teens for the meals served before each Sunday evening class.*



*Pizza and talk are on the menu as our teens catch up with each other before their Sunday evening classes.*

"This gives [our teens] an identity and they become more comfortable, and they have a community [in our parish] who shares their values," Brad says. "In school, they are more confident to interact with their peers who don't share the same values."

"It's more than a meal," he continues. "What we strive for, when you look at the Gospels, Jesus was always eating with people, inviting people to eat with Him. We're trying to bring that to the teens. The meal is more than eating. It's an intimate thing. It's family sharing a community, and we're trying to create that here. Teens are a family and they're coming together to share their lives with each other."



# *Saint Mark*

6500 Crawford Road | Argyle, TX 76226  
(940) 387-6223 | [www.stmarkdenton.org](http://www.stmarkdenton.org)

Non-Profit  
US Postage  
PAID  
Denton, Texas  
Permit No. 930

## *Holy Week Schedule*

### **Holy Thursday — April 13**

Mass 7:00 p.m.

Adoration 8:00 to 10:00 p.m.

### **Good Friday — April 14**

Stations of the Cross 3:00 p.m.

Lord's Passion, Veneration of Cross & Communion, 7:00 p.m.

### **Holy Saturday — April 15**

Easter Vigil Mass 8:30 p.m.

### **Easter Sunday — April 16**

Masses at 7:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m., 11:30 a.m., 1:30 p.m. (Spanish)