



## 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.

## St. Mark ACTS Offering Life-Changing Retreats

Ana Zmolik, facilitator of St. Mark's ACTS core group, best describes what ACTS isn't – and what it is.

"It's not a club, or a group, or something you become a member of," Ana says. "It's an experience – it brings us closer to our faith, Christ, and each other."

ACTS – which stands for Adoration, Community, Theology, and Service – is essentially a four-day retreat that will change one's life and faith, all in a positive way.

The movement started in Austin – St. Mark parishioners brought ACTS to Denton around 2003/2004, and our first retreat was in 2004.



"It then grew to include Immaculate Conception, with two men's and two women's retreats held each year," Ana says. "In 2011, we added Spanish retreats, also two men and two women per year. For a while, we were holding nine retreats a year, including the teen retreat. But now, we're taking it back to the parish level. Demographics changed and our needs are a little different."

The retreats that are the center of ACTS are held separately for men and women. There will be a men's retreat Nov. 17-20 at the Briarwood Retreat Center in Denton. There was a Teen Retreat in June

*continued on page 2*



# St. Mark ACTS Offering Life-Changing Retreats

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at the Lone Oak Retreat Center in Gainesville. A spring Teen Retreat is being planned tentatively for June 8-11 at the Briarwood Retreat Center.

There are other tentative retreat dates in 2017 – women, May 11-14; and men, Nov. 16-19, all at the Briarwood Retreat Center.

“During the retreats, there is a lot of contemplative time and community time,” Ana says. “We get together in discussion and prayer, and worship.”

To coordinate the planning for the retreats, each parish has an ACTS core group made up of 10 to 12 individuals, evenly split between men and women.

Each person has a different responsibility, Ana says.

In the earliest planning stages, a retreat director is selected and that director chooses a team from past retreat participants. About 30 to 35 persons are chosen, with the group meeting for about 13 weeks before the retreat to prepare.

“About one month before the retreat, we’ll start registering retreatants outside of Mass,” Ana says. “We’ll have about 40 retreatants, or it can be 10 – whomever the Holy Spirit calls to it. But we plan for 40 – it’s who’s supposed to be there.”

The retreat participants must be at least 21 years of age to attend an adult retreat.

There is a fee, which varies depending on the location.

“But no one will be turned down to go if they don’t have the money,” Ana says. “We’ll scholarship because others are willing to help financially.”

What makes taking part in an ACTS retreat is the uniqueness of the experience, she says. She herself became part of ACTS after her husband had attended a retreat in 2008.

“He was very changed by it,” she says. “He’s a ‘cradle Catholic’ and he became 10 times closer to understanding about what the Catholic Church teaches. He was wanting to learn more. When he came back on fire, he encouraged me to go. This is the case in a lot of couples – they see that

joy in them, and the other person ends up sharing that joy. The teens then want to go. They’re saying, ‘I knew I’d go on a retreat, it’s in my family, and it’s something I’ve always wanted.’ The kids come back on fire, as well.”

It was the family baby sitter who inspired Brittany Jackson and her husband to go on an ACTS retreat. Brittany now is communications coordinator in the St. Mark ACTS core group.

Lily Cantu, the sitter, was involved in the ACTS teen group at Immaculate Conception Parish, and she encouraged the Jacksons to go on a retreat. They did, and now they are working with our group.

The teens who have gone on the ACTS retreats have been moved by their experiences.

“The Teen ACTS retreat changed my life and made me a better man in the image of God,” says Preston Gottwald.

“Attending an ACTS retreat caused me to reenergize my faith and connect with my community,” says Sydney Tarvin. “Taking it one step further and serving on an ACTS team, really pushed me out of my comfort zone and in to a deeper relationship with Christ.”

“I went on my own ACTS retreat almost 10 years ago, and I still believe it affects my thoughts, my actions, my marriage and my prayer life every day,” says Kim Bonfield.

“The retreat and the encouragement of the Holy Spirit caused me to see that my life needed to revolve around God, not to revolve around me. The retreat and its after-effects – praying more, studying the Bible more, and sharing fellowship with other Christians – have given me the opportunity to obtain the peace that God promised us, a peace that surpasses understanding, if we will only trust in Him.”



If you would like more information about ACTS retreats, please email [smactscore@gmail.com](mailto:smactscore@gmail.com).

# *Pray, Smile, and Make the World a Better Place*

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

**W**e often in the Church speak of “new beginnings.” Those two words can have almost endless meanings to us and to how we live our lives. Now that the fall season is in full swing, even though we tend to think more of spring as being a “new beginning,” now is equally so. Think of all the things in our lives and in those of our families that have begun or begun again in the past several weeks.

Two thoughts come to me as I ponder the significance of this time of year. It seems that there is never a time of year when starting over and renewing are not appropriate. We speak often of prayer – Jesus certainly provides for us both an example and encouragement to have rich prayer lives. Now would be a great time for a personal spiritual renewal, both for us individually and for our families, if appropriate.

There are prayer groups and spiritual studies beginning and ongoing at our parish. You might consider getting involved in one. No matter what you choose to do, it is always a good time to extend and formalize your prayer life. Schedule more time for personal prayer. Even better, if you have a family, try to formalize the prayer lives of your family as a group. That can enrich your life so much, and often it is something which stays with children forever.

My second thought goes back to the theme often stated by Jesus to “love one another.”



Were you aware that studies done by healthcare groups have shown that people who try to be kind to others have less pain, less depression, and less stress in their lives? That is exactly what the Lord tells us will happen if we do even small things to demonstrate our love for one another.

That can begin with something as simple as a smile. Smiles certainly make others feel better, and they tend to help us, as well. Another way to show kindness is to get involved in ministries and activities. By committing ourselves to ministry

and to being volunteers in a variety of ways, we are actually making the idea of being kind routine and normal. Look for ways you can do things that match and fulfill your talents and interests.

Those two thoughts, although seemingly small, can make a huge difference in our lives, not to mention the lives of those around us. First, pray more on a fixed schedule. Second, smile and be kind. It is amazing how those two aspects of our lives can be fulfilled and fulfilling.

In Christ,

Fr. George  
Pastor

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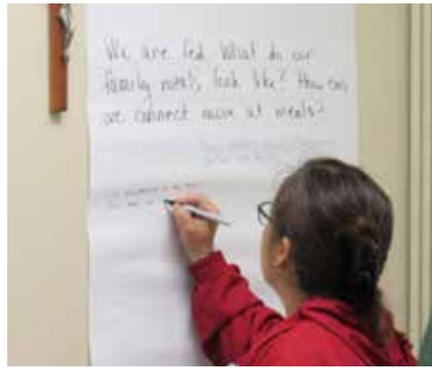
***Were you aware that studies done by healthcare groups have shown that people who try to be kind to others have less pain, less depression, and less stress in their lives? That is exactly what the Lord tells us will happen if we do even small things to demonstrate our love for one another.***

# ***A Look Back on Recent Activities***

*As we reached the end of the summer season and got ready for fall, there were still wonderful opportunities for fun and fellowship. One such event was St. Mark at the Water Park – with 450 in attendance! – coordinated by Andrea Woolums, Our Associate Director of Family Life.*

*And as we approached the start of the school year, our students and families enjoyed the Back to School Family Retreat!*

## ***Back to School Family Retreat***



# es and Goings-On at St. Mark

## St. Mark at the Water Park



# “Be Transformed by the Sacred Liturgy”

## *The Celebration of the Paschal Mystery*

In a limited way, the liturgy can be compared to a story or a film – upon a first reading or viewing, we might understand the basic outline of the narrative, yet through every subsequent encounter, the story further unfolds before us, becoming richer and more complex.

Often, inquisitive children teach us about how to understand a story or the Mass. As a child inquires about the priest’s green vestments, the foregrounded wreath or the presence of palm branches, we might pause to recall the symbolism undergirding the rich rituals of the liturgy.

There is a sense of the sacred in the liturgy, but its rituals and ceremonies can appear as empty pantomimes when divorced from their meaning. Far from empty signs, the liturgy is the celebration of the Paschal mystery, of Christ’s passion, death, resurrection and glorification by which He “accomplished the work of our salvation” (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1067).

From the Greek *leitourgia*, meaning public service or worship, liturgy in the Christian tradition refers to the communal participation of the people in the work of God, and God is always present and at work in the liturgy, acting in and with the Church through the sacraments.

Annually, the Church’s liturgical year is structured around the Paschal mystery, which we observe every Sunday. We begin each year with a season of anticipating Christ’s birth, and following a celebration of Christ’s Incarnation, we gradually enter a period of preparation for the Easter Triduum, for His passion, death and Resurrection. The year closes with a period of ordinary time – a time to grow in our faith and in living out the Gospel.

Daily, the Liturgy of the Hours unifies the Church Militant in prayers said by the clergy and increasingly by the laity. As the liturgical calendar structures our year, the Liturgy of the Hours structures our day, offering us an opportunity to consecrate each present moment to Christ.

Ultimately, the liturgical life of the Church “revolves around the Eucharistic sacrifice and the sacraments” (CCC 1113), for we receive God’s grace to fortify us in our spiritual lives and as His disciples through the sacraments, particularly the Holy Mass.

The Mass nurtures us spiritually, inviting us to reflect on the Paschal mystery and to lift our hearts to God as individuals and a community through spoken and sung prayer.

The Mass moves us corporally, drawing us to sit as we listen to the Word, to stand as we unanimously profess our faith, and to kneel as the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Christ.

The Mass inspires us apostolically, sending us out to proclaim the Gospel and to share Christ with our brothers and sisters.

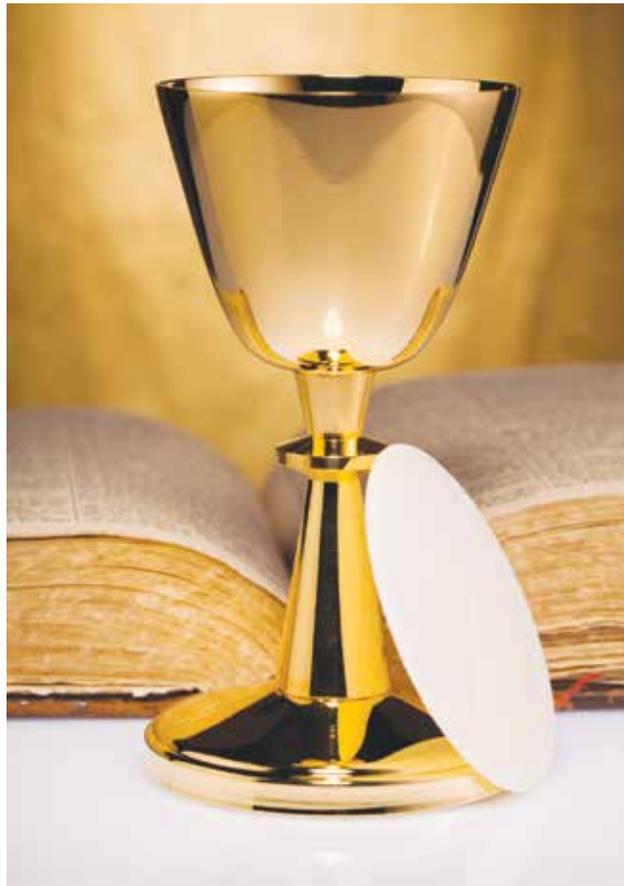
Though the “source and center” of all prayer, the liturgy and a sense of the sacred has, in some ways, become marginalized in the American Church. Once robust parishes are seeking to rebuild, but they frequently overlook the connection between the empty pews and the decentralization of the liturgy, which was underscored by Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI.

“I am convinced that the crisis in the Church that we are ex-

periencing today is, to a large extent, due to the disintegration of the liturgy,” Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI wrote in his autobiography *Milestones*.

Something in the simplicity of the child’s experience of the liturgy teaches us to return to what we might call the basics of the faith – meaning a love for the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass, the sacraments and the rituals of the Church. Only through the liturgy are we nurtured on our stewardship journey and inspired to proclaim the Gospel.

As Archbishop Alexander Sample from the Diocese of Portland, Ore., writes, “If we are transformed by the sacred liturgy, then we, as believers, can help transform the culture.”



# Meet Our Youth Ministers

Most of us can recall the ups and downs of middle school and high school. Whether it was drama among friends, striving for a balance of independence and trust with your parents, or doubts about the faith, the teenage years are an important time of development and formation. Here at St. Mark, we believe in the value of supporting and walking alongside our young people on their journey of faith and life.

With this in mind, we are pleased to welcome to new staff members to share their passion for Christ and His Church with our youth. Both from southern Texas, Amanda McGowan and Brad Horn grew to love their faith as teenagers, and are excited to share it with middle and high school students at our parish.

## Amanda McGowan – Middle School Youth Minister

Upon meeting this cheerful, recently graduated Texas A&M Aggie, you'd probably never know that her experience of middle school wasn't the best.

"I was dealing with bullying, I didn't have a lot of friends, and I just didn't have a place," Amanda McGowan says.

Amanda recalls meeting a friend, who, despite similar struggles, always seemed to have an underlying sense of peace and happiness.

"She was so happy, I was like, 'What does she have that I don't have?'" she says. "It was her faith."

And that was the start. She began learning more about what it meant to be Catholic and finding support through her parish's youth ministry program. She went on to become active at St. Mary's at A&M, always keeping in mind her goal of giving back to others through youth ministry.

So how does this movie buff hope that our middle school program will help our parish's young teens?

"It was having those friends that really solidified it in me, realizing that I couldn't do the faith thing alone," Amanda says. "I know that the only happy people I'd ever met were people who were into their faith. The reason why they come here is because they're not satisfied by what the world is giving them. They're desiring and longing for more – and Christ is going to fulfill them."

She hopes that young people will be drawn to participate in youth ministry for the same reason she originally was as a teenager.

"If we have that joy, that will draw them in," Amanda says. "They want that [joy], and they can't get that anywhere else."



## Brad Horn – High School Youth Minister

Unlike Amanda, who found support for her faith through her youth ministry program, Brad Horn grew up in a parish without a youth group. Although he was raised in a Catholic family, he began to fall away from the faith in high school.

"My faith really suffered from [not having a youth ministry program]," Brad says. "I didn't want to be Catholic when I went off to college, but I decided that before I left the Catholic faith, I was going to research and understand what I was leaving. The more I prayed about it and researched it, the more I fell in love with the faith."

Upon starting college at Texas Christian University in Ft. Worth, Brad began to take his faith more seriously on a personal level. As he became more involved in ministry during college, it became clear to Brad that he was called to serve young people.

"I don't want teens to go through what I went through," he says. "I want them, when they question if the Catholic Church is the true Church, to be able to get the answers now, so when they go off to college they're not led astray, because that almost happened to me."

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# Saint Mark

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## *Meet Our Youth Ministers* continued from page 7

Brad hopes that giving teens a solid foundation, while in high school, will help them grow in their relationship with Christ and the Church, long after they leave youth group.

“I want to let teens know that a relationship with the Lord is hard work is fun and rewarding and joyful,” he says. “My vision is to prepare them and give them the necessary tools, to show them what a relationship with Christ is like, and letting them know there’s always a place for them [in the Church].”

We hope that through the efforts of Amanda, Brad, and all of our St. Mark’s community, all our young people will know they have a place in our parish, and our Church.

*With the school year underway, Amanda and Brad look forward to meeting the young people of the parish. All middle and high school students are invited to attend our events held on both Sunday nights, after Mass, from 5:15 p.m. until 7 p.m., and/or Wednesday evenings from 6:45 p.m. to 8 p.m.*

*For more information on upcoming youth ministry events, please contact Amanda McGowan, Middle School Youth Minister, at 940-222-8290 or [amcgowan@stmarkdenton.org](mailto:amcgowan@stmarkdenton.org), or Brad Horn, High School Youth Minister, at 940-387-6223, ext. 192 or [bhorn@stmarkdenton.org](mailto:bhorn@stmarkdenton.org).*

# Saint Mark