



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 - Fri, 7:30 a.m.;
Wed, 7:00 p.m.

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:

Wed, 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.;
Sat, 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Parishioner Robert Zazula: Joining the Front Lines of Catholicism

In his book *The Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic*, Matthew Kelly reveals that roughly seven percent of Catholic parishioners are responsible for almost all outreach, maintenance and financial support of their faith community. This means that essentially the same core of people are involved in all the ministries, serving as the heartbeat of parish life.

For St. Mark's parishioner Robert Zazula, this surprising statistic has become a call to action, challenging him to join the front lines of Catholicism through active discipleship.

"I just feel that I need to be part of that percent," Robert says. "God has blessed me, giving me both the time and the strength to serve. Of course I have bad days, we all do, but that's what I'm called to do – to give back to the Lord."

Yet, Robert explains that he wasn't always active in his faith. Born into a traditionally Catholic family, Robert went through a period of searching, exploring different denominations, during the early years of his marriage.



Robert Zazula with his wife, Lori

"Catholicism was no longer big around me, having moved recently to Texas, and my wife was Baptist at the time," Robert says. "But for some reason, I kept feeling in my heart and soul a call to come back to the Catholic Church."

This yearning only grew stronger when Robert's oldest daughter, Lauren,

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Parishioner Robert Zazula continued from front cover

was born in 1995. Overwhelmed by the gift and responsibility of parenthood, Robert knew he wanted to raise his own child in the richness of the Catholic faith. This began a beautiful faith journey for the entire Zazula family, culminating in Robert's wife Lori's conversion in 2011.

"It's been quite a journey for our family," Robert says. "When you marry someone from a different faith background and they make you a better Catholic, it is such a gift."



Robert and Lori Zazula with a Pearl Harbor survivor during a family trip

Today, Robert's faith continues to thrive through his activism at St. Mark's. He can be seen regularly

driving to church on his Harley Davidson motorcycle in order to serve as a lector for Mass, participate in a Knights of Columbus function, or privately meet with an individual as a Stephen Minister. But in whatever capacity he serves, Robert feels blessed to give back to his faith community, becoming part of that seven percent.

"I have been truly blessed by God," Robert says. "I try to give back as much as I can. I want to be a vessel for the Lord and I'm striving daily to do my part in serving the Church."

Robert's role as a Stephen Minister, a ministry focused upon caring for individuals experiencing crisis situations, has been particularly rewarding.

"What's really interesting about a church is there is one thing that all people have in common, and that is there are a lot of people in pain," Robert says. "Often times, our pain is what brings us to church and to God. I get joy out of helping people through those situations – working with people, and seeing them change and realize that their difficult situations are temporary is so rewarding."

Having experienced his own "reversion" to the faith, Robert feels strongly that being Catholic needs to be more than a mere activity on the



Robert Zazula serving as a lector at St. Mark

weekend – it needs to be a way of life. Through stewardship and active participation in the Church, Robert has seen his family's life be transformed.

"I would just say that being involved in stewardship has made me grow as a father and as a member of my community," Robert says. "It's made me a better person – it's made me understand that many people need help and I have the time to do it. It has also made me realize that God needs soldiers. If we could just get more people participating in the Church, increasing that percentage, we could do so much more in our community and for the world."

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– Robert Zazula

Stained glass in Church depicting the Divine Mercy - In memory of Edith and Ike Gavitt. Given by their son, Frank Gavitt. "Come to me all you who are weary and find life burdensome, and I will refresh you. Your souls will find rest, for my yoke is easy and my burden light." - Matthew 11:28,30



A Letter From Our Pastor

Lent – A Time of Preparation, Introspection and Change

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

This is the holiest time of year for Catholics. Lent, of course, officially begins on Ash Wednesday. Most of us are familiar with the traditional Lenten practices of prayer, fasting and almsgiving. Those are important in relation to repentance and renewal. Everything we do should remind us that Lent is a penitential season.

In the midst of this serious time, however, we must keep in mind that the word “Lent” comes from a Middle English word, which means “springtime,” and the time of lengthening of days. When we think springtime, our thoughts tend to be lighter and brighter. That is how we need to view Lent, just as we recognize the joy, colors and brightness of Easter.

In the Church over the past few decades, we as Catholics have come to the insight that Lent is more than a time to give something up. It is also a time to add something, to take action about our faith in ways that make it more meaningful and real. This does not mean we should not make sacrifices – we need to consider that while sacrifices may mean denying ourselves something, they can also mean we are filling that denial with a positive action.

We are talking about conversion again. We are speaking of stewardship again. This is a time when we should be looking within ourselves. It is a time for introspection. How

can we improve? Maybe we need to be a bit more patient with people in our lives – perhaps we need to adjust some of our attitudes. One thing we all need to do is to see and find the good in many small things in our lives.

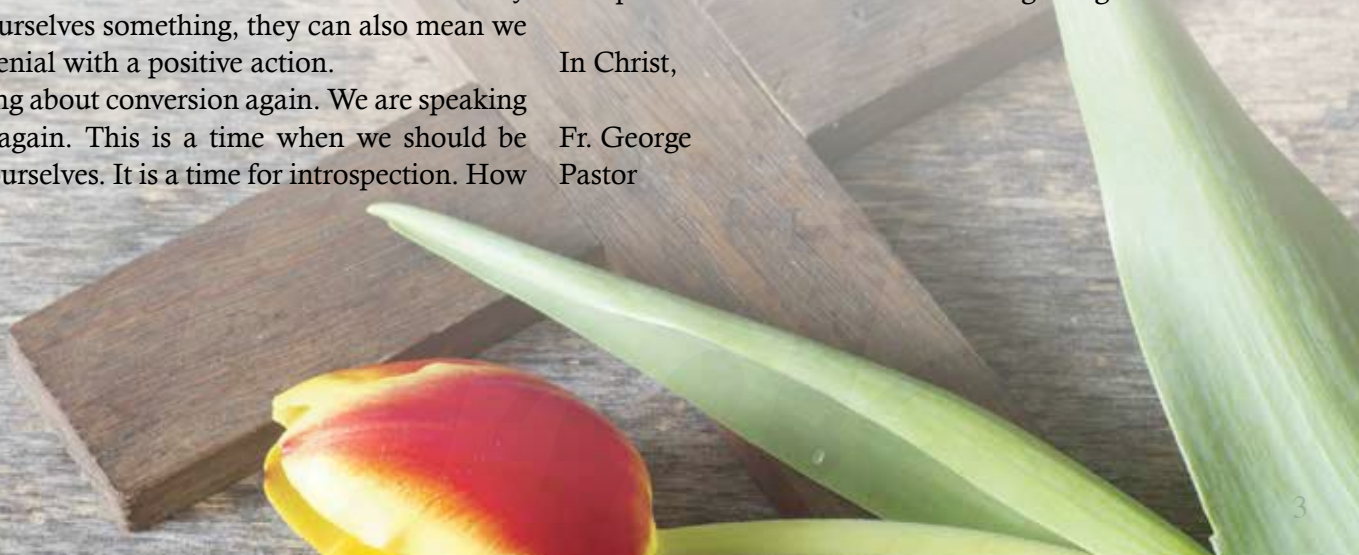
Do we spend quality time with God, and with our families? Do we help someone in need? Do we set aside a time each day to pray? The possibilities for change and positive action seem quite endless. The point is to do it. Stewardship is a life of action – Lent should be a time of action.

Rather than being concerned about how others see us, this is a time for us to look at ourselves. We may need to re-think and re-evaluate our faith and especially our relationship with God. The Lord has called each of us to love and serve. Every day and every season is a time for us to carry out that call – but now, during Lent in preparation for Easter, this is very important indeed.

The 40 days of Lent are a time for us to live life as a disciple and as a steward of our God-given gifts.

In Christ,

Fr. George
Pastor



A Look Back on Recent Events

This past December our parish families shared in fellowship and fun during our St. Nicholas Day, Choir Concert, Christmas Party and Christmas Mass celebrations. We thank all who attended and helped with these very special events.



Events and Activities at St. Mark



The Prayer Shawl Ministry: A Ministry of God's Love

With every stitch they sew, members of the Prayer Shawl Ministry plant seeds of peace, healing, love, comfort, and hope.

"It is truly, truly a ministry, and it will always be a *ministry*," says Shirley Royster, who coordinates the Prayer Shawl Ministry along with Nancy Casey. "The shawls are prayerfully made with love. I have given out so many shawls, and almost everyone cries when they receive one. The shawls not only touch the person making them and receiving them, but also the one gifting them. We often get notes and thank-yous with people saying that the shawl they received has touched their lives. We have even had shawls being buried with people."

The Prayer Shawl Ministry at St. Mark's was originally based on a Prayer Shawl Ministry that was founded by two Christian women in Connecticut in 1998. A group of women started it at our parish in 2007, and it now includes about 54 people dedicated to making shawls for anyone in need of prayer.

"There are no restrictions on who we give shawls to," Shirley says. "We give them for all sorts of reasons – such as for deaths, illnesses or joyful celebrations."

Over the years, they have given over 1,255 shawls to people all over the world, sending them to countries such as Africa and Greece. Along with the shawl, the recipient receives a brochure of prayers which explains the Prayer Shawl Ministry, and includes the name of the shawl maker.

"Very often, I include a personal note letting the recipient know that the shawl was prayerfully made," Shirley says. "I tell them that all of the past, present and future of their lives are being prayed for."

Each time a shawl is given to someone, the person's name is recorded in the ministry's prayer journal. All of the shawl makers get a list of who they are praying for each month, as well.

The shawls, which are always made with Lion Brand homespun yarn, are based on a three-stitch pattern.

"The pattern of three is really significant in the tradition of Christian faith because it represents the Trinity or the Holy Family," Shirley says. "All of the shawls are knitted or crocheted using patterns of three, such as with three stitches or three rows. They are all blessed by our parish priest or deacon, and always given freely as a gift. Donations for them in return are accepted but not required. We are very grateful that St. Mark's is so supportive of us, and donates the labels, yarn and other materials for the shawls."

The Prayer Shawl Ministry meets at our parish on the second Wednesday of each month at 10:30 a.m., as

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– Shirley Royster



New members of the St. Mark Prayer Shawl Ministry learn various crochet stitches during crochet class. Pictured are (clockwise around table) Jackie Bodine, Beverly Ankeny, Kitty Misiazek, Leslie Browning-Samoni, Bronwyn De Vore, and a young helper.

The Prayer Shawl Ministry *continued from page 6*

well as on the last Monday of each month at 7 p.m.

The meeting on the last Monday of January every year is a special ceremony where our parish priest or deacon comes and blesses the hands of those who make the shawls.

In addition, Nancy, who is a certified crochet instructor, conducts classes on Thursdays at 6:30 p.m. at our parish, according to need.

“It is a very, very touching ministry – one of love,” Shirley concludes.

For more information about how to join this beautiful ministry, or on how to gift a shawl, please contact Shirley Royster at 940-243-7408.



New Prayer Shawl Ministry members Beverly Ankeny and Kitty Misiizek practice the crochet stitches used in making shawls at a recent crochet class.

Lenten Schedule

Feb. 10 – Ash Wednesday
7:30 a.m., noon, 5 p.m., 7 p.m.

Holy Week/Easter

Holy Thursday, March 24
7 p.m. Mass

Eucharistic Adoration, 8-10 p.m.

Good Friday, March 25
Stations, 3 p.m.

**Lord’s Passion, Veneration of Cross
and Communion, 7 p.m.**

Saturday Easter Vigil, March 26
8:30 p.m.

Easter Sunday, March 27
7 a.m., 9 a.m., 11:30 a.m.

Fish Frys will be from 5-7 p.m. starting every Friday, Feb. 12, through Lent (no fish fry on Good Friday).

Stations of the Cross will be every Friday in Lent starting Feb. 12 at 7 p.m.



Saint Mark

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Get Ready for Our Stewardship Renewal!

Be sure to look out for your Stewardship Renewal packet, and please consider how you will give back your time, talent and treasure to God!

And remember, Commitment Weekend is Feb. 6/7!

