



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.

Blessed to Give Back The Waters Family

Many of us have grown up hearing the phrase, "To whom much is given, much is expected." Taken from one of Christ's sermons (Luke 12:48), these words remind us that our talents and blessings are not merely ours – they were given to us for a purpose. For parishioners Philo and Allena Waters, these words – told often to their three children – have become a kind of stewardship motto, reminding them of the importance of giving back in whatever way they can.

"I feel like our Church gives us so much and God calls us to build and continue to build it up, looking for ways to serve," Allena says. "We want to be examples of God's love, and to do that we serve others."

Like most things in life, the Waters' concept of stewardship was not born overnight, but rather grew as the couple's own faith life matured and deepened. Having known each other since kindergarten, Philo and Allena literally grew up together. Yet, it wasn't until college that the two began dating and then, as they say, the rest became history.



The Waters family – (from left) Atiana, Allena, Philo IV, Isabel, Philo

Raised Methodist, Philo did not officially convert to Catholicism until 10 years ago. For him, this was a gradual process, brought about by the witness of countless individuals, his own personal spiritual reading, and Philo's growing involvement within St. Mark's community.

"When Allena and I were first married, we attended a Methodist church a time or two, but it just never felt right to me," Philo says. "But the Catholic Church just always felt like home to me."

Blessed with three children – Atiana, Philo IV, and Isabel – Philo felt increasingly called to share in the faith in which

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Recognizing the Importance of Attending the Entire Mass

There seems to be an epidemic among Catholics in some parishes. They receive Communion and rush out the door, sometimes even before others have received the Eucharist. Some may remain, but often they, too, may depart before the final blessing, even before the celebrant priest processes out. This is an unfortunate circumstance – it is not that there is never a reason for an early departure, some sort of family emergency, a medical issue, or an unruly family member. However, assuring that you are the first out of the parking lot, being first in line at the local restaurant, seeing the kickoff of the football game, or getting to the golf course seem a bit trivial in relation to the beauty and the glory and the significance of the Mass and the Eucharist.

Rather than focus on the motivation for leaving before Mass is completed, we need to initially consider why we are even in attendance at Mass. The high point of the Mass is, or should be, the reception of the Eucharist. Jesus instituted the Sacrament of the Eucharist at the Last Supper. He held up the bread and said, “This is my body,” and then He held up the cup and said, “This is my blood.” The Catholic Mass is an awesome event for us as Catholics. Jesus Christ becomes truly present in the Eucharist. We gather at Mass to receive this gift, but we also gather in community to offer praise and worship to Him, to be spiritually fed, as well.

The *Code of Canon Law* makes it clear that we are to attend Mass – “On Sundays and other holy days of obligation the faithful are bound to participate in the Mass” (1247). It does not say “in part” or “in parts of the

Mass.” It would seem that the expectation is that each of us as Catholics will attend a complete Mass. That, it would seem, is a sticking point with some. How often have we heard or participated in a conversation, the gist of which is, “What constitutes a complete Mass?”

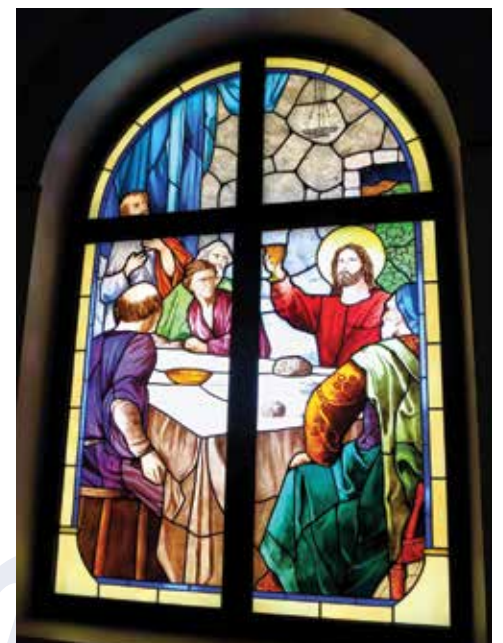
We are all familiar with the various answers, no doubt. However, it is not stated officially that Mass is completed once we receive the Holy Body and Blood of Christ. Some maintain that Mass is completed upon the closing blessing and the dismissal by the celebrant. Others say it is not complete until the celebrant has processed out. Still, others say, “Not until the recessional hymn has been completed.” The point nonetheless is that Mass is not finished upon receiving Communion.

There are so many considerations and perspectives about this issue. We might consider some of the counter-arguments. For example, only one person left the Last Supper early – Judas Iscariot. Jesus has invited us to a banquet. Would we go to a meal with someone else, and suddenly get up and leave after we had eaten? That would seem to be a bit rude. Are we truly there to be part of our faith community? If so, should we not as a community begin and end together?

The official *General Instruction of the Roman Missal* pertaining to the Mass says that at the end of Mass, we are “sent to do good works, while praising and blessing the Lord” (90). Our task as Catholics does not end with Mass. Christ has called us to mission – a mission of proclaiming God’s Word and serving others. There are 168 hours in a week. Even if we consider our Sunday Mass to

be a two-hour commitment, that is a mere 1.2 percent of our total week.

We cannot give God that much time and that much commitment? After the Last Supper, Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. He took with Him the Apostles Peter, James and John. However, when He returned to where He had left them, He found them asleep. His exact words to Peter were, “Could you not watch with me for one hour?” That is a question and a challenge evidently for some of us, as well. Are we not at Mass because we love the Lord and we care for those in our community? Or are we there for some personal and selfish reason? We reiterate that there may well be legitimate reasons for leaving a Mass before it is completed. God understands that. Nevertheless, we need to make sure that our reasoning is indeed sound and not something petty or minor. After we receive the Lord at Mass, we are, in effect, a walking tabernacle. We need to act that way.



Stewardship and Discipleship Begin With Love

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In John 13:35, Jesus says, “By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” So many times, the Lord calls us to love one another.

This was one of the Gospel readings back in April. On that particular Sunday, Pope Francis gathered with a large group of teenagers, and the whole theme of his homily was built around that message. It is a message that is equally appropriate for all of us, young and old.

Pope Francis is well aware of modern technology and modern communication, especially with how it is so prevalent among today’s youth. He also said in that April homily, “Happiness cannot be bought; it is not an app that you can download on your phones, nor will the latest update bring you freedom and grandeur in love.”

The pope explained that “Love is the Christian’s identity card, the only truly valid ‘document’ that identifies us as followers and disciples of Christ.” Nevertheless, we must work to constantly renew this card, because if it ever expires, we cease being witnesses of the faith. If we are really followers of Christ, then genuine love needs to shine forth in our lives. As Pope Francis said, “Before all else, love is beautiful, and it is the path to happiness.”

Who among us does not want to be happy? We all strive for that, and the Lord gives us a formula for achieving it. It may seem simple on the surface, but we all know how difficult it can be. Love – the kind of love to which

we are called by Jesus – is work. Lots of work. It takes effort, renewal, conversion, and persistence.

During his homily, Pope Francis completely captured

the essence of stewardship, and of love. He declared, “Look to the Lord, who is never outdone in generosity. We receive so many gifts from Him, and every day we should thank Him... Let me ask you something. Do you thank the Lord every day? Even if we forget to do so, He never forgets, each day, to give us some special gift. It is not something material and tangible that we can use, but something even greater, a lifelong gift. He offers us His faithful friendship, which He will never take back.”

Gratitude is, of course, at the very basis of

stewardship. It is this thankfulness that should inspire us whenever we run up against one of life’s many roadblocks – those things that make it hard for us to love as we should. If we rely on the Lord, we can accomplish this love. As the pope said in closing on that day in April, “Loving in this way, you will be recognized as disciples of Jesus. And your joy will be complete.”

In Christ,

Fr. George
Pastor



A Look Back on Vacation

This summer, our youth enjoyed fellowship, faith and fun during the 2016 Vacation Bible School program. We thank all those who attended, as well as all those who volunteered their time and talents to make this year's VBS program a success!



Bible School at St. Mark



The Assumption of Mary: A Time to Celebrate!

Can a pile of bones really be that exciting? Every year, tens of thousands of pilgrims visit St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, eager to glimpse the spot in which the alleged bones of St. Peter, our first pope, remain to this day.

The relics of saints have been venerated throughout the ages in every corner of the world – yet, the bones of the very first Christian, the Mystical Rose, are nowhere to be found.

When it comes to the day, manner or year of the Blessed Virgin Mary's death, nothing is certain. No account is given in Scripture. The Church turns instead to Tradition for an answer.

Since the birth of the Church, no Marian relics have ever been venerated – nor can they ever be – because her body was assumed, or taken up, into heaven. There exist, therefore, no remains of the Blessed Virgin's body on this earth. She lives, right now, body and soul, in heavenly glory.

Although the particular dogma of the Assumption cannot be found in the writings of Scripture, if we look at many other writings by the early Christians, it is clear that the Church has always held this dogma to be true. Even more, though there is no statement of fact in the Bible itself that Mary was assumed body and soul, the truths that we do know about Mary from Scripture simply serve to back up the reality that she was assumed into heaven. She gave herself wholly to the Lord and followed His will for her life, perfectly, to the end.

The Assumption of Mary reveals that the promises of the Lord – including the resurrection of the body – were fulfilled in Mary. She shared most intimately in the life, death and resurrection of her Son, and was free from original sin and its effects – including corruption of the body at death.

Therefore, it was no surprise when, in 1950, Pope Pius XII declared infallibly the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary as a dogma of the Catholic faith with these words: “The Immaculate Mother of God, the ever Virgin Mary, having completed the course of her earthly life, was assumed body and soul into heavenly glory” (*Munificentissimus Deus*, 44).

The Assumption of the Blessed Virgin is observed on the liturgical calendar as a solemnity – of higher importance than a feast. On Aug. 15, this wonderful celebration is accompanied by great hope in the resurrection of the body and everlasting union with God in heaven.

In the words of Pope Benedict XVI during his homily Mass on the Solemnity of the Assumption of Mary in 2006: “Mary is ‘blessed’ because – totally, in body and soul and forever – she became the Lord's dwelling place. If this is true, Mary does not merely invite our admiration and veneration, but she guides us, shows us the way of life, shows us how we can become blessed, how to find the path of happiness.”

Alongside Catholics throughout the country, be sure to celebrate the Solemnity of the Assumption on Aug. 15. This is a declared Holy Day of Obligation in the Church and a great liturgical feast. Mark your calendars!



Continued Improvements to St. Mark's Through Stewardship

The beauty and function of our church grounds and interior are made possible by the generosity of our parishioners through stewardship. When our parish family gives back in thanksgiving to God through stewardship, St. Mark's is blessed to be able continue to make improvements to the exterior and interior of our church, helping us all to better enter into worship of God, who gave us all we have!



Saint Mark

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The Waters Family *continued from front cover*

his children were baptized. So, having converted long ago in his heart, Philo began attending RCIA – Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults – classes and officially converted. Shortly afterward, Philo attended one of the ACTS retreats, which only deepened his interest in and zeal for the faith.

“Having just recently gone through RCIA, I was already very interested and on fire with the faith,” Philo says. “But the retreat only increased that, and it was great for me to connect with and share the Catholic faith with other men.”

At roughly the same time, Allena also attended the women’s ACTS retreat, describing it as a “pivotal moment” in her faith journey.

Since then, the Waters’ involvement has only continued to grow and flourish. Allena has sung with the choir, served as an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, assisted with the Funeral Meals Ministry, and been part of the Pastoral Council. Similarly, Philo has served as a lector and remains active in the Knights of Columbus. Allena and Philo have also both served as catechists for the parish Faith Formation program and have served on the ACTS retreat team. In the process, the couple has been blessed to

watch their relationships with other parishioners blossom as that feeling of “home” has continued to deepen.

“I just think that getting involved in parish life makes church so much more meaningful because you are truly part of something,” Allena says. “I feel like I get so much more out of Mass as a result. Yes, to be able to serve and be involved in different things within our church is a very giving thing, but it really is more about the tremendous gifts and blessings that I get back.”

“It just wraps us inside of His church,” Philo says. “Our involvement makes us truly part of the Body of Christ instead of simply being an outside observer.”

Over the years, stewardship has truly become a way of life for the Waters family, involving each member for the family. This has been perhaps the greatest blessing of all.

“Stewardship has become just part of what our kids do,” Philo says.

“We feel so blessed to just be a part of such a great faith community that our children feel a part of, as well,” Allena adds. “Our children want to go to Church. I think that has come from the fact that we love our church so much and have always been so involved.”

Saint Mark