



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.

Helping Children to Feel Christ's Love

“People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel.”

These famous words from author Maya Angelou encapsulate the way Dr. Jan Norton, our parish's new elementary Director of Religious Education

(DRE), has tried to live her life. For Dr. Jan, these simple yet profound words perfectly describe what her role as religious educator and administrator is all about – making children feel loved by her and, more importantly, by God.

Dr. Jan grew up in a large, faith-filled family in Dayton, Ohio. As a child, her

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Dr. Jan Norton with some of her colleagues and students.

Helping Children to Feel Christ's Love

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parents emphasized the importance of Catholic education, which she was blessed to receive from grammar school through college. She remembers her family being heavily involved in school life and teachers always being highly respected. This along with her own natural love for children made Dr. Jan desire a similar vocation for her own life.

Since that early calling, Dr. Jan has devoted her life to education, working to aid children of various ages in developing into the person God created them to be. Her extensive credentials include a bachelor's in Education, a master's in Gifted and Talented Education, and a doctorate in Administration and Supervision. In the process, she has been involved in almost every aspect and level of education, from curriculum instruction and administration to actual teaching at the preschool, middle school, high school, and even graduate level.

"I have loved every one of my jobs," Dr. Jan says. "Each position has given me new insights and experiences. As an administrator, when I was tired of being in my office, I went into the school halls for a 'kid fix.' The little ones would see me and come wrap their arms around my legs – bigger kids waved. I always went back to my office knowing I had made their lives better in a small way and that they could feel it."

In addition to her professional life, Dr. Jan and her husband of nearly 48 years, Deacon Vic Norton, have also been blessed with three children and five grandchildren. For her, this has been the most important vocation of all – raising healthy and holy children.

"Our best days are when we are with all of our children," Dr. Jan says. "Vic and I say over and over, 'Don't we have great kids? How did we get to be so blessed?'"

Seeking to move closer to family and to enjoy a well-earned retirement, Deacon Vic and Dr. Jan prayerfully decided last winter to move here to Denton, Texas.

Shortly after, they found themselves at St. Mark's where Deacon Vic could continue fulfilling his vocation as an ordained minister. Meanwhile, Dr. Jan planned to refine her golf game and to enjoy a slower pace of life. Yet, God had other plans when the DRE position at St. Mark's became vacant. With the new school year fast approaching, Fr. George called Dr. Jan asking her to take up the position, along with Andrea Woolums.

"After asking God for so much, how could I say 'no' when He asked me to come share my talents with His children?" Dr. Jan says. "I agreed to come help on the condition that I would have flex hours."

Although it wasn't what she initially intended, Dr. Jan feels blessed to once again be able to use her gifts and knowledge base in service of God's Church. For her, that's what stewardship is all about. And in the process, she hopes to show the children of St. Mark's that they have a place within the community, within God's Church.

"The Catholic Church is not a church building – it is a community of Christ followers," Dr. Jan says. "I want our little ones to *want* to come to St. Mark; to *want* to learn more about how much God loves them; to *want* to take part in the sacraments that only the Catholic faith can offer them for the rest of their lives."

Believing that every child should leave religious education classes smiling, Dr. Jan works hard to incorporate the joy of Christ's message into everything that she and her colleagues do. For her, teaching is all about making a child feel loved – helping them experience personally the love of God and the beauty of His Church.

"Sharing with others the things that I have been blessed to both learn and receive over the years is what stewardship is all about for me," Dr. Jan says. "I want the children to have the image that I am there to be a helper to them and to share with them the joy of Christ."

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Giving Thanks to God for the Gift of Time

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

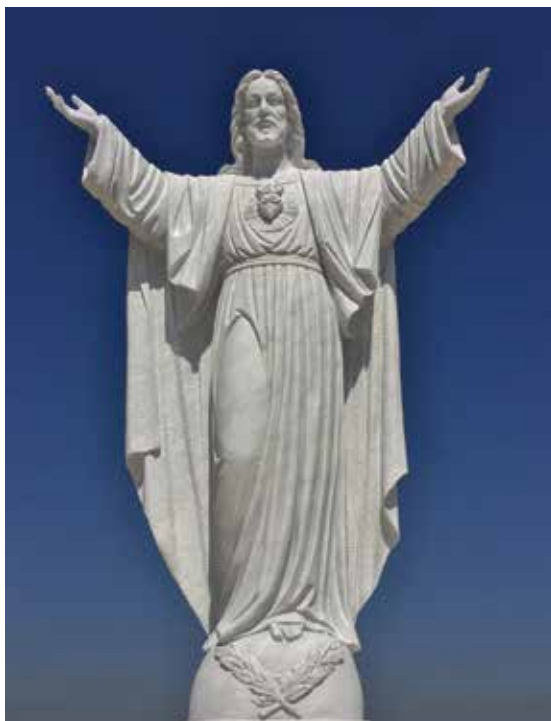
The next several weeks are certainly a busy time for us as Catholics, good stewards, good citizens, and faithful members of the Church and our parish. There are celebrations and commemorations both inside and outside the Church that are momentous in terms of faith, citizenship, and living as people of thanksgiving and gratitude.

We celebrate Veterans Day to honor and thank all those men and women who served in the United States Armed Forces in one capacity or another. Indicative of the importance of this day, every year at 11 a.m. Eastern, the President of the United States lays a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery.

On Sunday, Nov. 20, we culminate the Jubilee Year of Mercy on the Feast of Christ the King. In this Jubilee Year, our Holy Father Pope Francis has invited us to love, be kind, be generous, and to forgive boundlessly. How have we done? We all understand this is what we are supposed to be doing every day and every year, but this year reminds us of that, and hopefully renews us all in that reality and that hope.

We all understand that Americans celebrate a day of Thanksgiving on Nov. 24. What more can we say about this? It is a day that was faith-based from its very beginnings, and it is an indication of how much we have to thank God for in terms of the gifts we have received — our lives, our families, our Church, our Lord and Savior — everything we are and everything we have.

No sooner are Thanksgiving Day celebrations concluded, than we begin that glorious season called Advent on Sunday, Nov. 27. This prepares us for and leads to Christmas. Indeed, this is both a busy and extraordinary time of year! There is, of course, much more on which we could focus and about which we could think, meditate and pray,



but that is more than enough for us to consider and absorb.

From a stewardship perspective, I would like you to not only participate and focus on all the particular things that are about to happen, but also on one of our special gifts — the gift of time. The gift of time, which we all receive from God in equal amount, is precious because it is a non-renewable resource. Although some of our time is committed because of family responsibilities, work responsibilities or simply personal needs, we have an element of freewill with how we spend a certain amount of it. We need to spend some of that time in prayer, in thanksgiving, in worship, and in works of mercy and ministry.

Our time is perhaps more precious than any material gifts we receive from the Lord. How are we doing with that gift?

In Christ,

Fr. George
Pastor

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A Look Back on Our

On Oct. 2, our community shared in plenty of fun and fellowship



Our Oktoberfest Event

Thank you for your participation at Oktoberfest. We thank all who attended this year's event!



Building Our Parish From the Youth Up

While we are often reminded that we are called to a life of stewardship as Catholics, it can be easy to forget that our lives of stewardship take on different forms as we grow or go through various phases of life. Sharing of our time, talent, or treasure will always be a direct response to a need in our community, thus connecting us as a community and challenging us to grow. Seeking to help our youth embrace this lifestyle of stewardship, the Food Service Ministry has emerged. Its purpose is to build up our youth by supporting their fellowship and by connecting them with the church community as a whole.

“It takes a village,” says volunteer coordinator Heather Bobo. “Being a teenager is challenging. If we as adults can model being good stewards and being there, letting teens know that people care, that’s all fantastic.”

Having sent one child to college, Heather and her husband, Bob, felt that they both had a little extra time to share as well as a desire to help the youth ministry program that their own high school daughter was involved in. In the past years, our Youth Ministry program, which occurs every Sunday following the 4 p.m. Life Teen Mass for both high school students and middle school Edge participants, has offered a light snack to all attending youth. This year, however, Heather and Bob have used their talents for organization and delegation to coordinate a way for the youth to receive a full meal each Sunday.

“The parish is really trying to expand youth ministry and grow it,” Heather says. “We want it to be exciting for high schoolers and middle schoolers. This way kids can go to church together, share a meal together, and share their faith together. It’s a great way to excite the youth.”

And in the process of physically serving our youth and providing further opportunities for fellowship, parents and adult volunteers are also able to become role models of service to parish youth. This in turn further unites the Youth Ministry program to parish life as a whole.

Each week volunteers are needed to either bring food or to serve the food and clean up. Those who bring food are asked to bring an item between \$10 and \$15, while those who serve make themselves available to serve and clean up from approximately 5:15 to 6 p.m. that evening.



“It does really take the whole community to chip in with providing food and helping to serve,” Heather says. “To serve and clean up only takes about 45 minutes and we try to keep meals as self-serving as possible. If someone wants to do more home cooked items or if someone wants to do store bought items, they can do that. There’s a variety to choose from.”

All adults in the parish are invited to help if desired, not just those with teenage children. By creating a community that fosters the youth, the youth learn from a young age that a parish home has a place for everyone and that we can all be good stewards in our own ways.

If you would like to get involved, please contact Brad Horn, Director of High School Youth Ministry, at 940-222-6703, or Amanda McGowan, Director of Middle School Youth Ministry, at 940-222-8290.

“We’re All Like an Extended Family”

The Jackson Family Makes a Home in Denton and at St. Mark

For many people, college is a formative time that shapes their direction in life. For some, it might even be the start of a journey that will last a lifetime.

Originally from DeSoto and Wichita Falls, respectively, Brittany and Kurtis Jackson met “in the middle” at UNT. The college sweethearts fell in love, not only with each other, but also with Denton.

“We loved Denton, and decided to stay,” Brittany says.

Despite the fact that Brittany was not yet Catholic, the couple began attending St. Mark’s shortly after they met, in 1994. The couple was married at the old church, in 1998.

Although the couple attended Mass regularly from early in their relationship, it was after attending an ACTS retreat that they became even more engaged in parish life.

“ACTS was really pivotal for our family,” Brittany says. “It changed our whole focus towards giving back. We realized how much has been given to us, and we wanted to turn around and do more to serve.”

Brittany, Kurtis and their three children have found many ways to give back to the community of St. Mark’s over the years. Kurtis, a Knight of Columbus, cooks for many large parish events, such as Oktoberfest, and he serves with the men’s ACTS retreats. Brittany serves on the EDGE Core Team for middle school students, among other things. Kurtis and their children – Rachel, 15; Avery, 12; and Clara, 8 – have designed, built and painted the Vacation Bible School sets for the past several years. Rachel has also served on the Peru mission trip for the past two years. In addition, Brittany and Kurtis have served as a mentor couple with the Marriage Fully Engaged Ministry, helping to prepare engaged couples for marriage.

“Our kids are growing up with [service],” Brittany says. “They don’t know any different than to serve. It’s just become our lifestyle – it’s just become who we are. It’s definitely blessed us. We’ve grown closer to God and learned a lot. We’ve grown closer as a family through serving.”

Brittany also emphasizes the blessing that Catholic fellowship has been in their lives. Shortly after attending the ACTS retreat, the Jacksons began regularly meeting with nine other married couples who had also gone through ACTS together. The friendships that began developing over five years ago have been a source of support and encouragement for the Jacksons, both in their faith, as well as in their marriage and family life.

“We’re all like an extended family,” says Brittany of the couples and families, who meet monthly. “We just try to be there for each other through the ups and downs.



Kurtis and Brittany Jackson and their family celebrated their youngest daughter’s First Communion this past April.

“[Our Catholic friends] have the same value set,” she adds. “It’s a closer bond, even than friends I’ve had my whole life. We’re coming from the same viewpoint on everything. They encourage me to do the things I need to do when I’m struggling, to continue coming back to the sacraments and focusing on the right things.”

The Jacksons encourage other families to make their faith a priority and find ways to become involved in service within the parish.

“Make Mass a priority every week, because it teaches your kids, that’s what you do,” Brittany says. “[Going to Mass] also helps you connect to others. Connect, even if it’s just little things you show up at, or little bits of time you can volunteer.

“Start small, just do something – find the thing that fits you and your family,” she adds. “Every family has different gifts and is called to different things. Think about the gifts you have and what can you give back.”

Thank you to the Jackson family for the many ways you generously serve our parish family at St. Mark’s!

Saint Mark

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Holiday and Holy Day Mass Schedule

Thanksgiving Mass

Wednesday, Nov. 23 – 7 p.m. Vigil Mass

Thursday, Nov. 24 – 9 a.m. Mass

Solemnity of Immaculate Conception

Wednesday, Dec. 7 – 7 p.m. Vigil Mass

Thursday, Dec. 8 – 6 a.m., 7:30 a.m., 12 p.m., 5 p.m., 7 p.m. Masses

Advent Reconciliation Service

Monday, Dec. 19 – 7 p.m.

Christmas

Christmas Eve – Saturday, Dec. 24 – 4 p.m., 8 p.m., 11 p.m.

Christmas Day – Sunday, Dec. 25 – 8 a.m., 10 a.m.