



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.

Welcoming Committee Providing Extra Care for New Parishioners

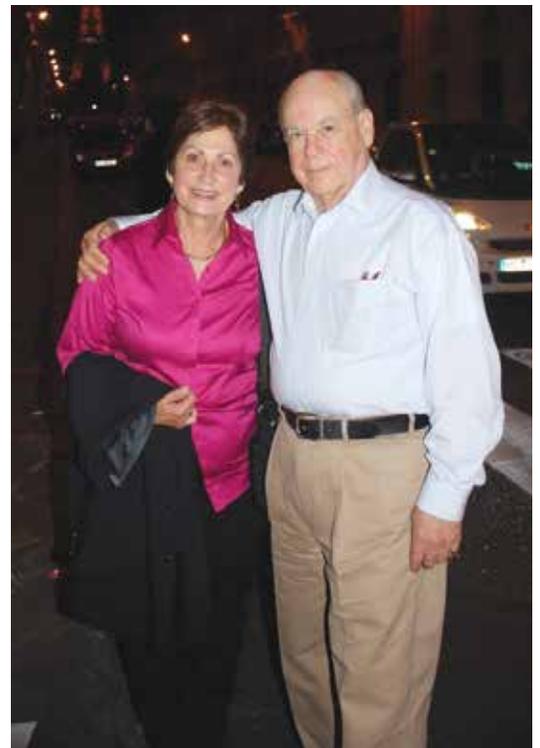
During their more than 50 years of marriage, St. Mark parishioners Tony and Maria Parra have been a part of many parish communities. And while each community has had its own unique gifts and feel, none has been more welcoming or “home-like” than our own St. Mark’s family.

“We’ve been in many different parishes all over the United States and people are always nice, but this is a parish that totally makes you feel at home,” Tony says. “That actually is one of the qualities of the parish that we love. People are extremely friendly to one another, whether you’ve been there for a day or for several years.”

“Our parish is a parish with a smile,” Maria adds. “One of our deacons always says, ‘You come as a visitor, but you leave as a friend.’ We felt that was such a beautiful saying and motto for our parish. That’s one of the main reasons that we chose to become parishioners here at St. Mark’s.”

Blown away by the hospitality that they experienced from the very beginning, Maria and Tony felt it was important that

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Parishioner Tony and Maria Parra first fell in love with St. Mark’s because of its welcoming environment. So, as current coordinators of the Welcoming Committee, their goal is to continue fostering that spirit of hospitality, welcoming each newcomer to our faith community.

Welcoming Committee Providing Extra Care for New Parishioners continued from front cover

they become involved and give back to the parish as soon as possible. So, examining their experiences and talents, they decided to become members of the parish's Welcoming Committee, helping to foster that spirit of hospitality that had made such an impact on them.

"We both felt that we needed to give back in some way," Tony says. "Since we are both bilingual, we felt that this was an area that we could help. There are some parishioners, and perhaps many new coming, who know very little English and are more comfortable speaking Spanish. I also speak French, although I haven't had many opportunities to use it within this ministry. We also just felt really called to share some of what we had received."

The Welcoming Committee, explains Maria, is responsible for giving that "extra care" to new parishioners. After filling out the registration form either at the church or online, each new parishioner's information is passed on to the Welcoming Committee. Then, members of the committee personally contact new parishioners, welcoming them into the parish family and telling them about the various ministries or activities available within the parish. The Welcoming Committee also sends each new family or individual a welcoming packet, containing information about parish life and a cross that has been blessed by Father.

"We just try to make them feel as welcomed as possible," Tony says. "It also gives them someone to contact

immediately, should they have any questions. We are there to help them in any way possible and to initiate them into parish life."

"When you move to a new community or a new town and you don't know anybody, it makes all the difference if someone comes by and introduces themselves or brings you a plate of cookies," Maria adds. "That's what we feel the Welcoming Committee does for others. It gives them that extra element of care."

For both Tony and Maria, the Welcoming Committee has become a concrete way to give back to God and His Church for the many blessings that they have received. The proud parents of eight children and grandparents to 24, their life has been filled with blessings. And by striving to focus on others, the couple feels that they move a little closer to become who God has called them to be.

"I'm not necessarily successful every day, but by trying to focus on our Lord and to be of service to others helps bring me so much closer to Christ," Tony says. "We are living out our calling to serve God through our fellow man. This is just one way in which we are doing something for Him, and we hope that it helps lighten the burdens that people are dealing with and wraps them in the love of the Church.

"We like to help open doors for other people to get to know the Lord," Maria adds. "This is one more thing that we can do to help make that possible."

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– Tony Parra

As our parish continues to grow, the Welcoming Committee is always looking for new members. Please consider helping us continue to make St. Mark's a warm and welcoming parish and to spread that "extra care" to others. For more information, please contact Tony or Maria Parra at 817-715-1222 or 817-715-0920.

We Are Blessed as a Church and a Nation

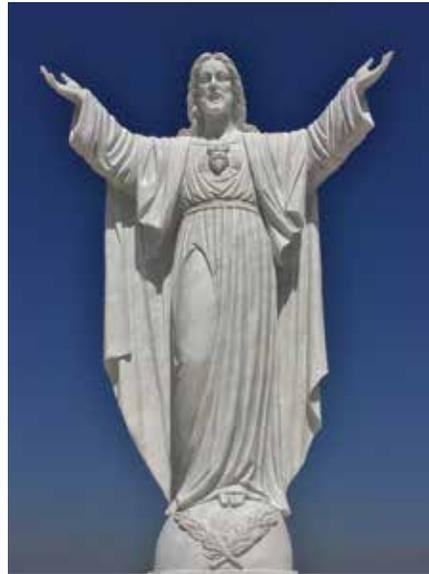
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The month of July may seem like a bit of an “in-between” month. Of course, it sits in the middle of summer. During this last month of June, we shared in a number of solemnities and celebrations – these served to remind us of the incredible gifts we have received as Catholics, from the Holy Trinity to the Body and Blood of Christ.

Now, a look at the calendar shows us that all of the Sundays this month are in Ordinary Time. We know that Ordinary Time is anything but “ordinary,” even though it might seem that way – especially after a month of celebrations.

However, one thing happens this month that is certainly unique to us as Americans – Independence Day. We are Catholics, but we also are Americans, and we should be proud to be both – grateful for the gift of faith, and equally grateful for the gift of liberty we receive as American citizens.

Yet, to be Catholic and American should not mean choosing one over the other. These allegiances should be complementary. Our Catholic faith states that we need to work together as fellow citizens for the common good of everyone in this great country. Through the Constitution, our Found-



ing Fathers guaranteed us of religious rights to contribute to our common life together.

Freedom is a special inheritance we have received, fought for by many at a great price, and it is a heritage that must be guarded – we are truly stewards of the gifts of freedom.

In 1886, just over 140 years ago, Bishop James Gibbons of Baltimore was made the second American Cardinal. He attributed the progress of the Church in America to the “civil liberty we enjoy in our enlightened republic.” He continued to say that “in the genial atmosphere of liberty, the Church blossoms like a rose.”

July is not just a time for us to celebrate – it is also a time for us to blossom. It is not a time to cease praying or working to build the Kingdom of Christ. Rather, it is a time to work even more diligently to express our appreciation for our many gifts, and to share them with others. We are blessed – by the gifts of our faith and the gifts of freedom – and we must always remember to thank God for that.

In Christ,

Fr. George
Pastor

Rosary Cenacle Brings Members

Although we honor Mary in a special way during the month of May, it's important for us as Catholics to have a relationship with Our Lady that lasts year-round! Here at St. Mark, a group of parishioners meet every week to pray for our priests and to grow closer to God through Mary.

"Jesus has taught us that through devotion to His Mother, she will draw us closer to His Sacred Heart," says parishioner Suzie Barger. "She was always close to Him when He was on earth. He answered her petitions. He took her to heaven to be next to Him as Queen Mother. With those of the Marian Movement of Priests, and all who turn to her, she promises that 'through the triumph of my Immaculate Heart there will come upon you the glorious reign of Jesus...and the earth will be renewed.' Through Mary to Jesus!"

The Marian Movement of Priests, or MMP, is a worldwide movement that was formed by an Italian priest, Fr. Stefano Gobbi, after he felt an interior call from Mary while praying in the chapel at Fatima. On Oct. 13, 1972 – the anniversary of the miracle of the sun at Fatima – Fr. Gobbi launched the movement with two other priests. The movement brings priests together in fraternal charity with Mary to pray for the Pope and

the Church, as well as lay people who form groups called "cenacles" to pray for the Holy Father, the Church and her priests.

"The movement, while not a religious order, has spread worldwide with the approval of the pope," Suzie says. "The word 'cenacle' itself reminds us of the time Mary spent with the apostles in the upper room after the resurrection of her Son, Jesus, awaiting the promised coming of the Holy Spirit. And so, our Blessed Mother assures us that she is with us whenever we gather to pray through her intercession.

"Praying for priests is one of the reasons why the movement was formed," she adds. "If we don't have priests, we don't have a Church, and support and prayer for the Holy Father as well – as a priest – is also very important."

Lay cenacles have been meeting in Denton for over 30 years. Several years ago, Suzie formed a cenacle at St. Mark at the request of the Immaculate Conception parish cenacle. Since then, the St. Mark cenacle has met weekly – currently on Mondays at 11:30 a.m.

"We are primarily a prayer group following Mary's direction that we join with her in prayer as we invoke the Holy Spirit, pray the Rosary, pray for our Holy Father and priests and pray



The members of St. Mark's cenacle – (front row, from left) Mary Ann Gilliard, Christina Taboada, Suzie Barger, Barbara Chriscuolo and Dottie Brown; (back row, from left) Helen Fairchild, Ruth Stanton, Beverly Pacheco, and Adrienne Norris (Not pictured, Sue Herring)

Closer to Our Lord and Our Lady

the consecration to our Blessed Mother,” Suzie says. “Our particular cenacle likes to sing hymns to Mary, too!”

“It is a wonderful experience to pray the Rosary with this group of ladies,” says cenacle member Christina Taboada. “We are relaxed, there is no hurry and there are no phones – only the Virgin Mary, present with us.”

“The cenacle group helped me to feel included at St. Mark, and I have met a great group of women,” says cenacle member Barbara Criscuolo. “I enjoy our friendships.”

After praying, the cenacle listens to readings from a book titled *To the Priest: Our Lady’s Beloved Sons*.

“These are interior locutions from Mary that Fr. Gobbi received from 1972 until 1998,” Suzie says. “These personal revelations have all been approved by the Vatican and by our international director.”

In addition to the weekly cenacle meetings, every May, the cenacle also facilitates the crowning of Mary with the parish children. And about every other year, members also attend a two-to-three-day conference with all the cenacles in the Denton area. These conferences are led by Fr. Ronan Murphy, a visiting MMP priest, and include Mass, talks, and opportunities for confession and spiritual direction.

By participating in the cenacle, Suzie and the other members of the group have not only been able to grow closer to Our Lord – they have also grown in their relationship with Our Lady.

“I have grown to understand and appreciate Mary as Co-Redemptrix and Co-Mediatrix,” Suzie says. “God chose her for these roles when He chose her to be the mother of Jesus, and it is through her participation in the will of God that Jesus came into the world. It was as He was dying on the cross that He gave her as our mother, also. Imagine how awesome that is – what a gift!

“I find greater belief and consolation in her presence whenever I pray to her and with her,” she adds. “Drawing close to Mary draws the spirit into a place of peace and certainty. I find the need often to turn my life over to her, and through her, to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. As a good mother does, she patiently continues to teach me what I must do to live out the consecration to her.”

“We are primarily a prayer group following Mary’s direction that we join with her in prayer as we invoke the Holy Spirit, pray the Rosary, pray for our Holy Father and priests and pray the consecration to our Blessed Mother. Our particular cenacle likes to sing hymns to Mary, too!” – Suzie Barger



In fall 2016, members of St. Mark’s cenacle made a pilgrimage to visit three holy doors in the Diocese of Fort Worth during the Holy Year of Mercy. Adrienne Norris, Ruth Stanton and Helen Fairchild visit St. Catherine of Siena in Carrollton, Texas.

All are welcome to visit or join the cenacle. For more information, please contact Suzie Barger at 940-387-9332.

Students Share in Service Opportunities and Faithful Reflection

The Hands of Love Middle School Service Camp took place June 5-8. The camp gave us the opportunity to grow in community with other middle schoolers, as well as serve our local community.

Throughout the week, we had time for small-group discussion, as well as time for reflection and offering up prayers for those whom we served this week. Prayer and reflection time included praying the Divine Mercy Chaplet, *Lectio Divina*, and Praise and Worship.



St. Mark's Suicide Support Group

"We Could Not Have Survived Without Support"

Seven years ago, Carol and Larry Walker lost their son, Christopher, to suicide. Almost immediately, they began to attend the Flower Mound Support Group, a group exclusively for people who have lost a loved one to suicide.

"We met people in various stages of their recoveries learning how to cope and to be a 'suicide survivor,'" Carol says. "We could not have survived without the support of our wonderful church family and the Holy Spirit."

In 2012, Carol and Larry recognized the need for another support group to serve Denton and other points north of Denton.

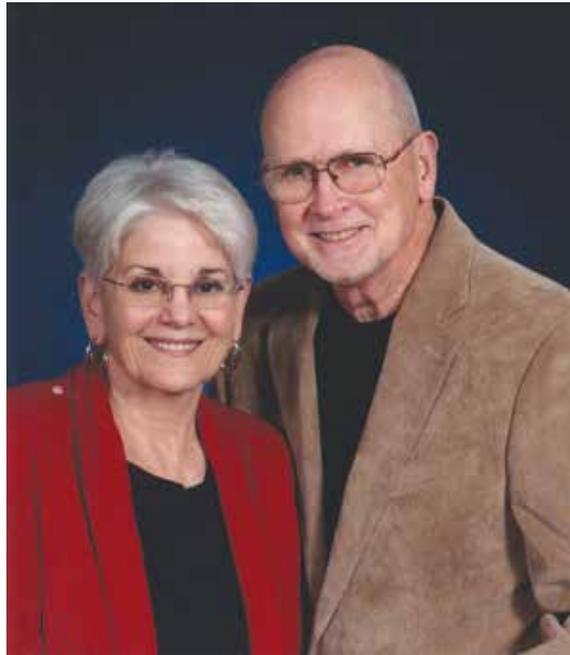
"Almost two years to the day of losing our son to suicide, we began our group meetings," Larry says. "We also felt an obligation to share our story of our own loss and our coping experiences."

St. Mark's Suicide Support Group is a non-denominational group under the umbrella of touchedbysuicide.net, and two similar groups exist in Denton County.

"We are not mental health professionals," Carol says. "Our 'expertise,' if we can call it that, comes from the experience of losing our son and learning to cope with it and integrate our loss into our lives."

Everyone who is at least 18 years of age and has lost a loved one to suicide is welcome to come to the "open group."

"An 'open group' means you can just show up," Larry says. "There is no set time limit or period when the group is 'over' for an attendee – some of our members come every meeting, and others come when they feel the need."



Carol and Larry Walker, the primary facilitators of St. Mark's Suicide Support Group

Though losing a loved one is always tragic, suicide losses are particular because they are most often unexpected.

"They leave family and friends with many unanswered questions and a sense of guilt," Carol says. "Suicide losses are accompanied by a 'stigma' that leaves one with a sense of isolation not experienced with other 'natural deaths.'"

The survivors that Carol and Larry have worked with share that "peer group" therapy helps them more than anything, as survivors can tell their stories to others who are listening and who understand.

"We heal by telling our stories about our loved ones and listening to the stories of others and by learning how others have learned to cope," Larry says.

Group members support each other, with members who have been with the group for a while assisting newer members as they struggle through the early days and weeks after losing someone.

Carol and Larry would like to tell anyone who has lost a loved one to suicide that they are sorry for your loss and that they actually know what you're going through. They point out that "time heals all wounds" isn't necessarily true for suicide survivors. It is sharing and support that leads to growth and health.

"It helps the healing process to talk about your loved one," Larry says. "This is a place you can do that and be assured that you'll be accepted and understood. Even if you can't attend a meeting, we're available to talk. Call."

If you would like more information about St. Mark's Suicide Support Group, please contact Larry and Carol Walker at 940-262-0877 (home), 940-367-1313 (Carol's cell) or 940-367-1170 (Larry's cell).

Visit the website — touchedbysuicide.net — for meeting times and locations.

Saint Mark

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Students Share in Service Opportunities and Faithful Reflection *continued from page 6*

