

Maneline

ST. Mark Catholic Community

Young Liturgical Musicians Active at ST. MARK

By Nancy Novelty

Some people say that we are a “dying Parish.” Mass attendance is down, and the number of funerals has increased, especially of many of our founding members. Six of our nine choirs are “aging in place;” Choir members who began their ministry many years ago continue to lead with energy and enthusiasm, despite graying hair! We all know that we will not be here forever and that the Church really belongs to our next generation.

With this in mind, our Director of Music and Liturgy Nancy Novelty and our ST. MARK School Music Teacher Elena Nickel have been actively seeking and training young musicians in the art of Liturgical Music. This year is the first that four of our five weekend Masses have young accompanists playing on a regular weekly basis.

Of the two sets of brothers, young pianists Mark Brown (age 15) and Matthew Brown (age 13) have been music students of Mrs. Novelty’s for the past six years. Mark has taken over as the main accompanist for the 11:45 a.m. Choir this year, and he continues his duties as accompanist for our once-a-month Sunday 6:00 pm Youth Mass. Matthew continues his weekly duties as accompanist for our ST. MARK School Choir;

this year, he has assumed the responsibility of main accompanist for our 8:15 a.m. Children’s Choir. Both boys have developed an expert and intuitive sense of what is appropriate for each liturgical moment; they frequently make song suggestions, improvise beautiful instrumental music during

Mass, and help guide their fellow Choir members in reverence and musicality.

Brothers Tomek (age 13) and Antoni Kleczek (age 11) rose to an amazing stature as classical pianists at a very young age. After appearances in our annual spring Young Artists Recital, they agreed to commit to weekly accompanying of our 10:00 a.m. Choir. Mrs. Novelty and Choir Director John Schultz have guided them in playing Liturgical Music and effectively accompanying the 10:00 a.m. Choir. They have already added much musicality to these Masses this fall!

Other young accompanists who regularly play for Mass include Michael Fronzaglia, organ (senior in high school); guitarists Elizabeth Brown and Dylan Scanlon (8th grade, ST. MARK School); trumpet player Macallan Campbell; violinist/cantor Frankie Anstett; violinist/Andriko Bilianuk; flutists Sofia Anderson, Evie Rienzi, and Banaue Mendoza; and budding accompanist Anna Fagella (6th grade, ST. MARK School).

Mrs. Novelty and Ms. Nickel hope to continue fostering our youth in the art of liturgical accompanying, and welcome any of our youth who play instruments to audition. They can be reached at nnovelly@stmark.org and enickel@stmark.org.



Celebrating Hispanic CHRISTMAS Traditions

By Kathy Aquilina

Can we better recognize, embrace, and promote the many gifts and talents that Hispanic people share in American life and society? One way to do this is to enjoy the stories of those in our midst; six very active Parishioners tell us about their family and community celebrations.

Carmen Toscano

“Everyone was invited to come,” remembered Carmen Toscano from Mexico about her childhood experiences of **Posadas**, which symbolizes Mary and Joseph’s journey from Nazareth to Bethlehem in search of a place for the birth of Jesus. Each day before CHRISTMAS, they walked with Mary and Joseph to visit a neighbor’s house to pray the Rosary. Her face broke into a smile as she spoke of the treats of *carapinados*, Christmas candies with peanuts nestled inside, which were passed around after each decade was recited. On CHRISTMAS Eve at midnight, they placed baby Jesus in his crib; the mother of the house where they gathered had the honor of being His godmother.

Kevin and Evelyn Flores

The tradition of eating tamales at CHRISTMAS created warm memories in Kevin Flores, *ST. MARK* Youth Minister: “My grandmother on my dad’s side played a serious role in my upbringing in California. I remember vividly visiting her and my grandfather on CHRISTMAS Eve and smelling the homemade tamales and desserts she had slaved over that entire day. My dad always tried to take some tamales home, but most times, they were all gone by CHRISTMAS Day! My aunt who lived with my grandmother taught us about the tradition of putting baby Jesus in the crib at midnight on CHRISTMAS Eve and the Three Wise Men on display on the *Epiphany*.”

Evelyn, Kevin’s wife, shared her memories: “During my family CHRISTMAS holidays in Northern California, my Mom and Dad made tamales and *menudo* in large batches for the Las Posadas Celebration. All of the Hispanic families brought their wonderful dishes to church for the Las Posadas dinner.

“Four young women were selected for a procession; they dressed in beautiful blue

satin robes and white dresses and held our blessed Mary and Joseph. I remember saying the Rosary and singing songs in Spanish in the neighborhood. We all ended up back at church for dinner, followed by the traditional piñata filled with candy.

“Being selected to hold the blessed Mary and Joseph was an honor for a young Hispanic woman. I remember when I became a teenager, I stood on my toes so I could reach the height requirement, and it worked! How thrilled and excited I was!”

Milagros Root

In Lima, Peru, Milagros Root’s family had their big christmas meal at 10:00 p.m. CHRISTMAS Eve; at midnight, they gathered around the crèche to pray in awe-some silence at the birth of the Savior. They then shared gifts. Mass was on CHRISTMAS Day, followed by a relaxed visit with Grandma. Milagros stressed that her mother strongly felt that CHRISTMAS was about Jesus and therefore would keep family gifts to a minimum. When Milagros came to the United States in her early twenties, she was shocked that this was not the case here. She found it hard to downplay christmas gift-giving with her own children.

Ana Maria Aldana

“One of the most observed holiday traditions in Colombia is celebrated on December 7 on the Eve of the *Immaculate Conception*,” added Ana Maria Aldana, a member of the Pastoral Council and a Eucharistic Minister. “On this day, people place candles and paper lanterns to honor Our Lady; usually families and friends get together and place the candles in front of their homes.

“From December 16 until CHRISTMAS Eve, many Colombians take part in *novenas*. These are special times when family, friends, and neighbors come together to pray in the days leading up to CHRISTMAS. They are known as the **Novena de Aguinaldos** (Christmas Novena), and often a different house hosts the meeting every night. The *Novena de Aguinaldos* includes a prayer for every day, a prayer to the Blessed Virgin, a prayer to St. Joseph, a prayer to Baby Jesus, and the Our Father, Hail Mary, and Glory Be. The people sing carols and eat lots of yummy foods.



“A very important christmas decoration in Colombia is a nativity scene or **el pesebre**. In early December, children write a **Carta al Niño Dios** (letter to the baby Jesus) asking for what presents they would like. The letter is placed in the pesebre. They hope that Jesus will bring those presents on CHRISTMAS Eve.”

El Salvador Traditions

“Traditions are different in each Latin American country,” shared one Parishioner, who responded to my question about the Hispanic tradition of celebrating the visit of the Wise Men. She said, “I left El Salvador when I was 10 years old and have not been back during the holidays since then. What I remember are bits and pieces.

“On *Epiphany*, we had a procession with three men dressed as the three Kings. The procession started at one end of the town; the three Wise Men went down the streets and threw candy to everyone. The procession ended at the church, where we gave homage to baby Jesus, followed by Mass.

“In most homes, we got gifts for the kids so that was like CHRISTMAS. We were very poor, so did not get gifts on Kings Day (*Día De Los Reyes*.) Most homes displayed beautiful homemade nativities/crèches during the holidays. I remember it being a very happy occasion even though I knew I would not get gifts; just being there and following the three Kings to the church was exciting. “In my early twenties, I started to realize how important and special January 6 is, and so on that day we gather around the Nativity Set and pray. Then we put the christmas tree and Nativity Set away to end the season.”

[Author’s note: The United States Catholic Bishops have launched *Encuentro V*, a chance for many in our churches to get to know some of the approximately 30 million people in the United States who self-identify as Hispanic Catholics.]

SHARING THE FAITH WITH CHILDREN OVER THE HOLIDAYS

Enjoy some family time together during the CHRISTMAS season. Our parish resource, Formed (www.Formed.org), provides some videos and other resources for young family viewing:

Brother Francis: O Holy Night (27 minutes)

Celebrate the wonder and joy of CHRISTMAS with Brother Francis in this heartwarming video presentation of the birth of God's Son! Two Christmas carols and "What is Christmas?"—a catchy, visualized song that reminds us of Who Christmas is really all about.

Nicholas (27 minutes)

Here is a video of the fascinating story of the boy whose love and care for others make him one of the most popular figures of all times. Today, more than 16 centuries later, the entire world celebrates the kindness and generosity of the man we call Santa Claus.

Kristoph and the 1st Christmas Tree, A legend of St. Boniface

It is CHRISTMAS Eve in the year 722, and the young orphan Kristoph is accompanying the missionary priest Boniface through the German countryside on their way to the first CHRISTMAS the boy will celebrate outside the orphanage. They are hurrying to reach the next village by nightfall, when they come upon a group of men worshipping a sacred oak tree and preparing to sacrifice the son of the village chieftain.

The Story of Christmas, an audio drama about the first Christmas (27 minutes)

Children will enjoy this heartwarming dramatization that recounts

the story of the very first CHRISTMAS, as told by Brother Francis. With music, songs, and engaging storytelling, they will experience the wonderful events that led up to the birth of God's Son and the story of redemption.

Christmas with Bernadette

Bernadette and her family are back in this new book! With CHRISTMAS approaching, Bernadette wants to give everyone gifts. But it is so hard with only the pocket change of a seven-year-old. And Mama's about to have a new baby.... which is exciting but seems to wear her out. Will everything at home and at school smooth out to give Bernadette and her family a beautiful and blessed CHRISTMAS?

The Story of the Nativity (59 minutes)

Join top scholars, inspirational speakers, and popular authors as they explain the story behind the story of the birth of Jesus. *The Story of the Nativity* includes stunning works of art depicting the Biblical story, from Fra Angelico to Rembrandt, and footage from the Holy Land showing the places where the Christmas story actually took place.

Christmas in Rome (26 minutes)

The film follows the celebration of the Nativity throughout history, from a tiny grotto in Bethlehem to the biggest Nativity scene in Saint Peter's Square, and from small groups of early Christians to the enormous multitude of believers at CHRISTMAS Masses in the *ST. PETER* Basilica.

Fr. Innocent: Update from Rwanda

Fr. Innocent served at *ST. MARK* for several years while he completed his doctoral studies at George Mason University. Upon graduation, he returned home to his native Rwanda, where he is working to continue that nation's healing process following the genocide in the 1990s.

In a recent email to the M&Ms, he expressed his deepest gratitude and recognized them for their "care, love, prayers, support, and greatness of hearts and minds. My life would not have been the same without you guys and ladies".

He is the Director of the Jesuit Retreat and Hospitality Center, Centre Christus, in the capital city of Kigali. The Center was founded in 1974 to provide a place of retreat from everyday life to allow people to draw closer to God.

He reported that his time has been spent mainly in spiritual and construction projects: giving retreats, workshops,

seminars, celebrating many Masses, re-creating the Center as a peaceful and spiritual place, and building teamwork among his staff. He has been renovating the Retreat Center Chapel and some guest rooms, adding toilets and hot showers.

In November, he attended a three-day conference, taking a break from his responsibilities at the Retreat Center and as Assistant Director of People Inspiring Community through Organizing (PICO). PICO is a network of faith-based organizations based in Oakland, California. www.picointernational.org.

His short-term plans include the following:

- Improving the kitchen building and classrooms/small conference rooms
- Bringing reliable wi-fi and creating a website and a newsletter for the Center



- Paving the parking lot
- Capturing rainwater and/or digging underground water
- Getting solar panels to lower utility bills

- Improving the gardens and cows
- Creating programs to bring more people to the Retreat Center
- Potentially putting up a new building with more comfortable rooms, especially for international visitors
- Getting a better car for the Center

Fr. Innocent also spends time helping his extended family. He is one of nine children.

Fr. Innocent's email address is innoruga@yahoo.com.

Follow him on Facebook Centre Christas Remera.

The Gospel of Mark: A Call to Discipleship

By Deacon John Allen

We have entered Cycle B of the Church Year. For all but nine of the Sundays in this liturgical cycle, the Gospels will come from the Book of Mark.

The early Fathers of the Church assumed that Matthew wrote the earliest Gospel. Biblical scholars now feel that Matthew, in fact, came *after* Mark. The general belief is that Mark was written very close to 70 A.D., the year that the Romans destroyed the Jerusalem Temple. In contrast, Matthew is usually dated to the late 70s or early 80s and Luke to the mid- or late-80s. (The Gospel of John is an independent account and was composed in the 90s.) The Books of Matthew and Luke rely heavily on Mark. Fully 97 percent of Mark's Gospel also appears in either or both of them, especially in Matthew.

If asked to nominate our favorite Gospel, few of us would likely opt for Mark! So too, the early Church seems to have preferred the other Evangelists. Although many ancient commentaries were written on Matthew and John — and to a lesser extent, on Luke — no commentaries on Mark were written until the Middle Ages.

The original name for Mark's Gospel was the "Memoirs of Peter." Mark highlights the role of Peter and offers details of events in Jesus's life that seem to be eyewitness recollections. Although we refer to the "Gospel of Mark," four Gospels were not given the names by which we now refer to them until the second century. Even then (as today), the Gospel is stated as "According to..." not "By..." The byline alludes to the *authority* behind the text and not necessarily to its actual composer.

Features of Mark's Gospel

Mark's Gospel lacks the magnificent parables found in Luke, such as the Good Samaritan and the Prodigal Son. Mark contains only seven parables, several of which are difficult to understand. Neither is Mark as methodically crafted as Matthew in showing how Jesus fulfills the Old Testament or in systematically recounting His preaching.

Mark portrays Jesus in a more "earthy" way than does John, who constantly proclaims Jesus as the Son of God.

The Marcan Jesus is described as having strong, human qualities — sorrow, disappointment, displeasure, anger, amazement, and fatigue. His description of Jesus's passion is more vivid and detailed than that in the other Gospels. Despite Our Lord's humanity, from the beginning of his Gospel Mark emphasizes that Jesus is *all powerful*. He constantly battles and triumphs over evil spirits and the forces of nature. Ironically, although in Mark's Gospel Jesus is usually addressed as "rabbi" or "teacher," He gives relatively little verbal instruction. Jesus teaches by His actions.

Mark's use of language is more conversational and less polished than the other books of the New Testament. His vocabulary is limited and concrete, and his sentences are short and direct. Two-thirds of the verses in Mark begin with the simple Greek word "kai" ("and"). Mark also writes in the action-oriented historic present tense to communicate excitement about Jesus. Jesus is constantly on the move. To highlight further the urgency of the mission, Mark frequently uses the Greek word for "immediately". Chapter 1 of Mark uses this word 11 times. Mark's writing style creates a very dramatic presentation of Jesus. **One commentator has observed that this Gospel is better heard than read!**

The concept of suffering runs throughout Mark's Gospel. The image of the cross stands always right behind the text. Jesus is the Messiah; at the heart of His Messiahship is *suffering*. **Fully one-fourth of Mark is devoted to Jesus's passion and death.** The theologian, Fr. Felix Just, has labeled Mark's Gospel as a "Passion account with an extended introduction". In Mark, Our Lord constantly reminds the Apostles that they are to follow Him. To do so requires that they "take up the cross".

"Latinisms" (Latin terms for objects rather than Greek ones) are common throughout Mark. He explains Jewish customs and Aramaic terms rather than assuming that his readers will already know about these. These features, as well as Mark's pervasive theme of suffering and persecution, suggests that the original audience for the Gospel was the

Church at Rome during Nero's savage persecution of 64-65 A.D. (Both Peter and Paul were probably martyred during this time). It could, however, be that the Gospel was originally addressed to some other Gentile community, such as Antioch, where there were also large numbers of Latin speakers as well as severe persecution.

Focus on Discipleship

A major theological theme of Mark's Gospel is *discipleship*. Jesus seeks out the 12 Apostles and He calls them by *name*. They enthusiastically follow Him, immediately leaving their families and livelihood. Sadly, as the Gospel story unfolds, it becomes increasingly obvious that the Apostles are rather obtuse and weak. Despite the enhanced instruction that Jesus gives them and the extra time He spends on their apprenticeship, the Apostles do not grasp the meaning of His message, especially the call to sacrifice and service rather than to self-aggrandizement. Although they are *amazed* by Jesus' power, they generally miss the meaning of the miracles, the parables, and His preaching. In Mark, the Apostles constantly let Jesus down! In His hour of greatest need for a friend, they run away. Although the women who follow Jesus are more faithful, even *they* are described as "standing *far off* from the cross" in Mark's Gospel.

The best models of discipleship in Mark are probably the "minor" characters — the destitute woman who contributes her two small coins to the Temple treasury; the once-blind Bartimeus, who casts aside everything that he owns and runs after Jesus on the way to Jerusalem; the generous Joseph of Arimathea, who donates his tomb for Jesus' burial; the spunky Syrophenician woman, who marshals the courage to ask the famous Jewish Rabbi to heal her daughter and who then verbally jousts with Him; the newly-sane demoniac who asks to follow Jesus; and the Roman soldier at the crucifixion, who is the first human to announce Jesus as the "Son of God."

Hearing Mark's Gospel at Mass

We are formed as a Christian Community. Our faith is renewed by both the EUCHARIST and by Sacred Scripture,

The Gospel of Mark

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especially as it is proclaimed in the Mass. How can we benefit more from hearing passages from Mark's Gospel at Sunday Mass?

■ At Mass, the text is presented in short sections. Unfortunately, there is the risk that the meaning of the text will be unclear since the passage is heard out of context. It would be good at some point simply to read or hear the Gospel in its entirety at a single sitting. This could be done in less than two hours.

■ A few days prior to the Sunday Mass, it would be fruitful to read the particular passage for the upcoming Sunday and to pray over it. St. Louis University maintains a website that gives a prayer for preparing for the upcoming Sunday readings (<http://www.liturgy.slu.edu/index.html>).

■ We can then reflect on the passage

either alone, or as a family, or as a member of one of the Small Communities of Faith in the Parish. We might ponder the critical question: "How does the Lord want this Gospel passage to change me?" Some texts, especially in Mark, are difficult to understand. There are excellent, readable commentaries by experts on Scripture that can bridge the gap between how the original readers of the passage understood it and how today we can discover its meaning. I particularly like Mary Healy's *The Gospel of Mark*, published in the series *Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture*.

Value of Mark's Gospel to Us

The persistent questions that Mark poses to his listeners — including us today — is "Who do you say that Jesus is, and what does discipleship demand?" Prior to *Pentecost*, the formally designated Apostles rarely answered this question

accurately or with any real understanding. Ironically, those who did understand the message are the peripheral characters in the Gospel. Of all of the humans who interact with the Lord, the only one to recognize Jesus as the "Son of God" is the pagan Roman soldier who crucified Him! Only at His death is it manifest that Jesus's identity as Messiah is wrapped up entirely in His service and sacrifice for us. Our secular world often demeans Jesus or denies that He is our Savior. In His faithfulness and His obedience to the Father, Jesus is the exemplar of our own discipleship.

Each of the Gospels provides unique and invaluable insights. With its emphasis on faith, suffering in discipleship, urgency of the message of salvation, and promise of ultimate victory in Jesus, Mark's portrait of Jesus is rich and irreplaceable.

ST. MARK Catholic School Focuses on Gratitude

By Kathy Aquilina

Have you considered the benefits of intentionally teaching virtue to our children? If you need help with ideas, visit a *ST. MARK* Catholic School assembly. At one recent assembly, 50 children were honored for demonstrating the previous month's virtue in their work and lives. The gym was filled with energy and joy, along with tremendous parental and grandparental pride. November's focus was on gratitude, and the 6th grade classes took on the theme with gusto.

"Gratitude is the quality of being thankful.... no word of praise is ever too little," stated one student in the opening remarks. The students' performance then covered four situations that demonstrate the practical application of gratitude from the perspective of a 12-year-old:

- How do we wake up in the morning?
- How do we interact over a meal?
- What do we act when we are anxious and worried, for example, before an exam?
- How do we thank God at the end of the day?

Each skit demonstrated two scenarios. In one, a student was grouchy and self-centered; in the other, the student acted in a way that honors others, showing a sense of gratitude and care. For instance, instead of refusing to eat the breakfast a father

has prepared, a young actor transformed the scene saying, "Thanks, Pa! You're the best!"

Prayer plays a big part in finding a way to interact peacefully. A tough test can lead to stress. Instead of cheating, it would be more beneficial to study and to turn to God in prayer. Other scenes demonstrated the importance of praying before a meal and before falling asleep at night to show our gratitude and feel a peace of heart.

For the month of November, students filled backpacks with self-care items for men and

women transitioning out of prison. The three students whom I interviewed were eager to share what they had learned. Pope Francis had visited a prison and shown how we could help those who were starting over. Students shared several different reasons why people end up in prison. Poverty, bad choices, and being in the wrong place at the wrong time can have unfortunate consequences.

I asked these three if they would now be able to morph from being grouchy to being good. They told me they are working

Gratitude at CHRISTMAS:

■ "Even if you don't like a gift, you have to be thankful because that person spent money on you and tried their best."

■ "You have to show gratitude because there are people who don't have gifts. You can give to those people by the Giving Tree."

■ "You have to be thankful for God's gifts to us — especially Jesus."

■ "CHRISTMAS isn't about the gifts you give or get; it's about the Lord coming to the Earth."

on it. One said she was making a decision to stop and find another way instead of fighting with her mother. A boy chimed in that he looks for constructive ways to release anger and "not put everyone in a bad mood." The third added that she listens to music to calm down. Students mentioned a happy pillow and a fighting pillow (to punch!). They shared great advice on how to treat others well.

The students had tremendous gratitude for *ST. MARK* Catholic School, describing very supportive students and

teachers. One said, "If you need to talk, they are always there".

The morning assembly, which was heartfelt, also honored military veterans, many of whom were parents of students. Each stood up and told of the duty to much applause. I was also touched by comments that a prayer card about vocations was attached to each student's report card and that fundraising contributions for hurricane relief exceeded the principal's goal. Thank you for your witness to God's love, *ST. MARK* Catholic School!

Faith-Filled Holiday Activities Abound

By Mary Fisk

Whether we will be entertaining out-of-town visitors or simply have time over the holidays to explore new opportunities, the Washington, D.C., area has an impressive array of faith-related exhibits and activities to enjoy well into the new year.

Religion in Early America National Museum of American History Runs to June 3, 2018

This exhibit explores the role of religion in the formation and development of the United States, from the colonial times through the 1840s. Artifacts include George Washington's 1732 christening robe; Thomas Jefferson's *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*, also known as "The Jefferson Bible"; Massachusetts Bay Colony founder John Winthrop's communion cup, circa 1630; a Torah scroll from New York's Congregation Shearith Israel, founded in 1654; a chalice used by John Carroll, the first Roman Catholic Bishop in the United States and founder of Georgetown University; and a first edition of the Book of Mormon. The exhibit showcases the range of Christian, Native American, and African traditions, as well as Mormonism, Islam, and Judaism.

Tomb of Christ: The Church of the Holy Sepulchre Experience National Geographic Museum Runs to August 15, 2018

Via a 3-D experience, visitors "travel" to Jerusalem to discover the fascinating history of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. They virtually visit the church



and learn about its history and enduring mysteries. Built in the fourth century, the Holy Edicule, or shrine, which surrounds the tomb of Christ in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, recently underwent a historic restoration. The actual tomb within the edicule has been covered in marble for at least five centuries. The exhibition details the restoration effort led by an interdisciplinary team of conservation experts, which used new technologies including LIDAR, sonar, laser scanning, and thermal imaging to preserve this important site. The exhibition requires timed tickets.

National Geographic also offers a stunning video, "Jerusalem 3D," on Saturdays and Sundays. The video is an aerial tour of Jerusalem; it is described as "a mosaic of cultures" based on interviews with the people who call the city home. The video is shown on Saturdays and Sundays until August 12, 2018.

Nativities of the World Display Franciscan Monastery Runs through January 7, 2018

This collection of over 150 Nativities from around the world displays the universality of the Catholic Faith.

Museum of the Bible

This exciting museum has an impressive array of exhibits that guarantees virtually everyone will find something of interest.

Three main theme areas are the history of the Bible, the Bible in world history,

and the Bible in American history, including art and literature and fashion. With over 400,000 square feet and seven floors, visitors can not possibly see everything in one trip, so there will be many trips to enjoy. Tickets to the museum are free but are recommended and are available online.

As a small sample of options, visitors can experience a reconstruction of an ancient city in the Valley of Elah, traditionally the site of the encounter between David and Goliath. They can see a replica of a village in Galilee and look into homes and work-



shops, hear the creak of the wine press and birds chirping, and walk under trees modeled on those in the Garden of Gethsemane. Others can enjoy a virtual

reality activity. One section focuses on children's learning and activities; another offers a permanent exhibit of priceless manuscripts and other treasures from the Vatican Museum and Library; another is dedicated to archeological discoveries from the Israel Antiquities Authority, including a foundation stone from the temple in Jerusalem destroyed by the Romans in 70 A.D. One section displays a replica of the Gutenberg press and describes the events of the Reformation.

The Broadway musical, "Amazing Grace," which tells the conversion story of former slave ship captain John Newton, is playing in the museum's state-of-the-art theatre until January 7, 2018.

Thanksgiving Clothing Drive a Resounding Success

By Paul Renard

Thanks to the generosity of all who participated in this year's Thanksgiving Clothing Drive, we were able to send about 17,000 pounds of clothes to 13 charities and over 100 family "shoppers."

We had nearly 200 volunteers from the CONFIRMATION Spirit Teams, Paul VI High School, Madison High School, and many other places. While the clothing tonnage was a little less than last year, two things made this year really great. First, the proportion of warm winter clothes, particularly coats, was much higher than normal. Second, the Parish responded wonderfully to our request to drop off the donations early, so we were able to do a far better job in meeting the specific needs of our charities and shoppers than in any prior year.

All in all, a great year!



M&Ms Activities

The M&Ms have been busy with activities that included a pre-Thanksgiving luncheon in the Msgr. Cassidy Activities Center on November 15; a trip to the Museum of the Bible in Washington, D.C., to tour the museum and enjoy the Broadway musical, “Amazing Grace”; and a White House tour on December 5.



Save the Date ST. MARK Parish Mission February 22—27, 2018

ST. MARK will host a Parish Mission from February 24-27, 2018. The theme will be “All Disciples Are on a Mission.”

The presenter will be Fr. Paul McCarren, S.J. He is a Scripture scholar, actor, writer, and director. He works at both Loyola on the Potomac Retreat House in Faulkner, Maryland, and at ST. IGNATIUS Chapel Point Parish. Previously, he was a Professor of Acting at Fordham and Georgetown Universities; an Associate at HOLY TRINITY in Georgetown; and Chaplain of the Georgetown University Medical Center. He is the author of the *Simple Guides to the Gospels*.

Fr. Paul will preach at all Masses on the weekend of February 24-25: the 5:30 p.m. Vigil Mass on Saturday, and the 8:15 a.m., 10:00 a.m. and 11:45 a.m. Masses on Sunday. He will also preach at the Monday and Tuesday morning 9:15 a.m. Masses.

The presentations will be in the Msgr. Cassidy Activities Center:

- Presentation One will be held both Sunday night from 7:30-9:00 p.m. and Monday morning from 10:00-11:30 a.m. The title of Presentation One is The Spirit Drove Jesus into the Desert — Why?
- Presentation Two will be held on both Monday night from 7:30-9:00 p.m. and Tuesday morning from 10:00-11:30 a.m. The Title of Presentation Two is This Is My Beloved Son — Listen to Him!

There is no charge to participate. A free will donation will be accepted during the Mission presentations.

Milestones

NEW PARISHIONERS

ST. MARK welcomes the following new Parishioners to our Parish family:

Andrew and Katy Aylward
James and Gina Friedlander
Michael Hoffman
Peter and Monica Klein
Maythee Castro and Alejandro Perez
Gustavo and Claudia Platero
Dhejo and Barila Vanissery

BAPTISM

Emma Maia Clark
Sebastian Eduardo Cross-Aldana
Nora June Giuffre
Daniel Edward Hughes
Grayson Henry Marti
Sophie Grace Whitaker

MATRIMONY

Margaret Ozga and Jacob Sentz

DEATHS

The following Parishioners entered into eternal life:

Larry Bruther
Betty Ford
Bob Lavey

Maneline is the publication of ST. MARK Catholic Community, 9970 Vale Road, Vienna, VA 22181. It is published nine times a year, with a December/January issue, a June/July issue, and an August/September issue. Individuals wishing to submit articles should contact a member of the editorial team.

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Mark Your Calendar

December

- December 17 Parish PENANCE Service
 December 24 CHRISTMAS EVE
 Masses at 5:00 p.m., 8:00 p.m.,
 10:00 p.m.
 December 25 CHRISTMAS
 Masses at 9:00a.m., 11:00 a.m.
 December 31 Feast of the *Holy Family*



January

- January 1 *Solemnity of Mary Mother of God*
 Masses at 9:00 a.m., 11:00 a.m.
 January 5 First Friday
 January 6-7 Creche Exhibit
 January 7 Solemnity of the *Epiphany of the Lord*
 January 8 Feast of the *Baptism of the Lord*
 January 13 BINGO workcamp fundraiser
 January 19 March for Life
 January 29 Catholic Schools Week

February

- February 2 First Friday
 February 9-11 Young Adult Ski Trip
 February 10 Spaghetti Dinner
 February 14 *Ash Wednesday*
 Masses 6:15 a.m., 9:15 a.m., 5:30 p.m.,
 7:30 p.m.

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