

# Maneline

ST. MARK Catholic Community

## Forgiveness and Reconciliation: Spiritual and Secular Sisters

By Fr. Innocent Rugaragu, S. J.

Although forgiveness and reconciliation differ, they complement each other in a very healthy way. In exploring the impact of forgiveness on reconciliation in Trudy Govier's book *Forgiveness and Revenge* (2002), Robert C. Roberts said, "The theology of forgiveness is reconciliation" (p. 77). He argues that reconciliation is the natural end, or purpose, of forgiveness" (p. 77). Forgiveness is a matter of "overcoming attitudes of bitterness and resentment" or "a rebirth of hopes, a reorganization of thoughts/heart, and a reconstruction of present and future dreams;" reconciliation is a matter of "repairing or rebuilding a broken or wounded relationship." A genuine reconciliation presupposes healing of the wounds first. But sometimes it is through reconciliation that we discover our wounded friend, family, colleague, Parish member, or neighbor for whom we need to care.

The consequences of not forgiving and reconciling are many, ranging from individual to group, emotional or psychological, to physical and spiritual. Some of these consequences can be seen easily, such as bitterness, resentment, fear, unjustified anger, unreasonable behavior, depression, trauma, lack of inner peace, and a desire for revenge. Such consequences are not an illusion. We have seen and experienced them in our own lives, families, churches, and political parties. Forgiveness and reconciliation are divine and human, spiritual and secular. As Jim Elliot says, in forgiving and reconciling, "you give what you can't keep to gain what you can't lose."

### Advantages of Forgiveness and Reconciliation

The critics of forgiveness have questioned why we must forgive. The following are some of the reasons why we should bother to forgive and reconcile without coercion, and what we gain by forgiving.

#### Spiritual Advantages

Spiritually, forgiveness and reconciliation have advantages on earth and in heaven for those who believe. While here on earth, we desire to live with people and in a society that is compassionate, forgiving, and reconciling (Lk 15: 11-32). We also ask God in the Lord's Prayer, which is shared by all Christians, to be forgiven in the same degree as we forgive others (Matt 6: 10 -13), 70 times seven (Mt 18:21 -35), so that our heavenly Father may in turn forgive us (Mk 11: 25-26). In the world to come, Jesus promised us, "Yes, if you forgive others... your heavenly Father will forgive you (Matt 6: 14-15). The Scripture demands that if we are offering our gifts at the altar, and there remember that our brother or sister has something against us, we should leave our gifts before the altar and go; first be reconciled to our brother or sister, and then come and offer our gifts (Matthew 5:23, 24). Hence, it is difficult to become an authentic Catholic or Christian without practicing reconciliation.

#### Therapeutic Advantages

Therapeutically, harboring anger and hurt feelings can actually make you sick over time, cause tremendous loss such as divorce, family dysfunction, and lead to isolation and unhealthy

addictions. Everett Worthington, Jr., a clinical psychologist and professor at Virginia Commonwealth University, has completed studies that show that people who won't forgive the wrongs done against them have more stress-related disorders, lower-functioning immune systems, and more cases of heart disease than people who forgive. The same red flag can be raised about un-reconciling families or communities. Above all, note this: psychiatrist Karl Menninger in his article "Forgiveness Therapy" said "if he could convince his psychiatric hospital patients that their sins were forgiven, three quarters of them could walk out the next day

#### Social, Political, Economic and Cultural Advantages

A child who is brought up in a gentle, forgiving and reconciling atmosphere that fosters understanding will be able to practice forgiveness and reconciliation more easily than the one who was never brought up in the light (<http://www.psychotherapist.com/RBloom>). Hence, teach them while they are still young and, yes, all of us have the capacity to be resilient, empathize and restore the broken relationships socially, politically, economically and culturally.

#### A Higher Need Advantage

According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, each of us is motivated by needs. Our most basic needs are 1) biological and physiological needs, 2) safety needs, protection, 3) belongingness and love needs, 4) esteem needs, and 5) self-actualization or self-transcendence.

## Forgiveness

Continued from page 1

In relation to forgiveness and reconciliation, if what Maslow said is true, then I will conclude that forgiveness and reconciliation are needs on level five, which is self-actualization or self-transcendence. And this might explain why some people are able to forgive and others are not. Seemingly people who forgive and reconcile are able to transcend their lower needs and strive to the higher with its characteristics. However, this explanation does not suggest that one is better and the other is not between those who transcend lower needs to higher ones and vice versa. To challenge Maslow's perception, perhaps forgiveness and reconciliation should rank among the first level of needs, given their effect on our physical and spiritual well-being!

### What Prevents Us from Forgiving and Reconciling?

While it is not possible to grasp all reasons for all people and without trivializing anyone's hurt, pain, suffering or sorrow, here are some of the reasons that communicate the experiences of many people. These reasons include: anger, deep hurt, seeking punitive justice, pride, power, moral intelligence of a victim, self-centeredness, self-pity, the failure to embrace Jesus's model of Leadership, failure to be generous, and fear of being labeled as weak and timid in the revenge culture.

### Conclusion

So the choice and the grace of God

to forgive and reconcile are in our reach, as children, men, and women of faith. Reconciliation and forgiveness are worth teaching and living as a freely available sacrament to each one of us Catholic faithful. Hence, without coercion, I beg you to be healed, forgive and reconcile with one another and God. Without reconciliation, peace and conflict resolution and prevention are impossible to embrace. Anytime I find myself struggling to forgive and reconcile, I remind myself of God's covenantal love, mercy and compassion "This brother of yours was dead and now he is alive" (Lk 15:31) and "Neither do I condemn you; from now on, go and sin no more" (Jn 8:11).

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## 50 Years: A Celebration in Music

By Nancy Novelty,

Director of Music and Liturgy

Music has always been prominent in our life as a Parish. From its first days, each weekend Mass has had a special choir to lead it. Other choirs have developed over the years: our Handbell Choir, Resurrection Choir, Festival Choir, School Choir, and Youth Mass Choir. Each of our nine choirs consistently graces our many liturgies with wonderful musical leadership

Therefore, it was no surprise to me to hear the 50th Anniversary Planning Committee call for a "year filled with music" in 2015. This challenge has been easily met! Many musicians have come forward to offer their talents and gifts this year in recitals and concerts. Some of them have been connected with our Parish in the past; some are parishioners at present. Almost all are talented performers with degrees in music from highly rated schools and conservatories.

The Planning Committee felt that we should involve our children, the future of our church, in the series. To that end, we will also feature our *ST. MARK* School Choirs and Bands; some of our best young student musicians; and the senior recital of a graduating high school student, Flannery Jamison. Flannery was Baptized at our *EASTER* Vigil in 2011.

Two of our Choirs asked to be featured in concerts of their own: our 10:00 a.m. Choir, under the direction of John Schultz, will present a fall concert of sacred music through the ages. Our Handbell Choir, under the direction of Don Ewan, will join with area handbell choirs to present a fall Handbell Festival. Various members from the rest of our Choirs will take part in the fall Composers' Concert, which will feature the original music of past and present music directors and instrumentalists.

The concerts are shaping up to be highly popular events, complete with light refreshments and a question-and-answer session. Each concert is free of charge and open to the public. A freewill donation is taken up for the performers, who have so generously offered to donate their time and talent.

This concert series affords our musicians, including myself, a wonderful opportunity to share the very best of our musical selves as a gift to God and to the *ST. MARK* community. We are all practicing hard and looking forward to sharing music with you!

We began with our first concert on Sunday, January 18, with Chris Jenkins, classical guitarist. On Sunday,

February 15, our second concert was with soprano Sarah Lundquist. The remaining concerts for March through November 2015 are as follows:

**Saturday, March 21:** Darryl Yoder, tenor, and Yooni Lee, piano, 8:00 p.m., Church

**Sunday, March 22:** Christopher Schmitt, piano, 4:00 p.m., Church

**Sunday, April 12:** Anne-Michele Maher, soprano, with Elisabeth Nisley, flute, 3:00 p.m., Activities Center

**Sunday, May 24:** Amelia Figueroa-Gil, soprano, 3:00 p.m., Activities Center

**Sunday, June 14:** Flannery Jamison, soprano, 3:00 p.m., Activities Center

**Sunday, July 5:** Nancy Novelty, organ, 3:00 p.m., Church

**Sunday, August 2:** Denise Argote and Friends, 3:00 p.m., Activities Center

**Sunday, October 18:** Sacred Music, 10:00 a.m. Choir, 3:00 p.m., Church

**TBD: "Common Ground,"** college women's a cappella choir

**TBD: young music students' classical concert** – piano, organ, voice

**TBD: *ST. MARK* School Choirs and Bands**

**TBD: Composers' Concert**

Since our schedule could change, please see our *ST. MARK* website for the most current schedule at [www.stmark.org](http://www.stmark.org). Click on the 50th Anniversary button on the front page!

## How Are You Celebrating ST. MARK'S 50th Anniversary?

By Eric Peterson

The schedule of planned activities commemorating the 50th anniversary is growing, but the important question is: How will you celebrate this landmark occasion in your personal faith journey, and have you invited anyone to join you?

The point of having a Parish anniversary celebration is to prepare for the future while honoring the past. While the parish as a community will come together at concerts, at special Masses, on days of reflection, and at retreats, each of us, as individuals, can use the commemoration of our Parish's founding as an opportunity to reflect on our personal faith founding, contemplate how we can grow in our faith, and invite others to join with us.

To help us in that reflection, Deacon John Allen has adapted a prayer by the Rev. Thomas W. Weitzel.

“God has blessed our Parish of ST. MARK with 50 years of grace and joy!

“We are a remembering people and we remember that He has chosen us, baptized us, nourished us with the Eucharist, forgiven our sins, and brought us together as His Parish. As a remembering people, we look back also at all the saving acts of God: the gift of creation, His faithful covenants, His freeing us from oppression by the Exodus, the Incarnation, the Redemption, and the establishment of the Church as His living presence in the World.” We are a joyful community brought together by God to be a holy fellowship: the Body of Christ, sharing, caring, working in the world, and living in the hope of the world to come.

With thanksgiving for the past and with hope for the future, we rededicate ourselves and all we have the mission that God entrusts to us. May He stay near us always and bless our service.”

**Happy 50th anniversary to all Parishioners and families.**

# PHOTOSofEVENTS



## Photos Needed for Parish Video

By Lynn Innocenzi

*Do you have family photos of ST. MARK events?*

Anniversaries are wonderful times to get friends and family together to celebrate life's milestones. Celebrating 50 years as a Parish is an incredible milestone!

Reminiscing and sharing stories about what we remember is always the best part for me. The Parishioners to whom I have spoken seem to think so, too. I have been hearing some wonderful stories and memories lately. I am sure there are many more out there.

As part of our 50th celebration, Tom Christie, Claire Fontaine, Joyce Kerrigan, and I are compiling photos of events taken to include in a video and slideshow for our August 1 and November 22 celebrations. We would love to see your wedding, BAPTISM, CONFIRMATION, First Communion photos, and, of course, anniversaries celebrated at ST. MARK.

ST. MARK has an incredible number of ministries, as well as many volunteers who have participated in activities throughout these 50 years. We welcome your photos taken at any of these events.

Do you have a story, anecdote, or memory that you would like to share? We would love to video and record these as well. Camera shy? We can do a voice over. Write these down and submit them to us; we can take it from there.

*Please contact Lynn Innocenzi at [lynninnocenzi@gmail.com](mailto:lynninnocenzi@gmail.com) or (703) 242-2545. Be a part of ST. MARK History!*

## Parish To Host 50th Anniversary Retreat

**2015 is the year in which ST. MARK will celebrate its 50th anniversary!**

50th anniversaries are typically a “big deal,” and that is certainly the case for ST. MARK. A Lenten Retreat will begin on Friday evening, March 13, and continue through Sunday afternoon at 4:00 p. m. Nearby Parishes are invited to help participate.

This retreat promises to be very enriching. It will focus on healing and renewing and will include talks, Eucharistic Adoration, and a Healing Mass. Fr. Augustine Vallooran from the Divine Retreat Center will lead the retreat. Meals (breakfast, and lunches, and dinner) will be included in the registration. Registration may be made by going to <http://retreat.divinemercuryva.org> or by calling Nancy Novelty at (703) 938-3293.

**Volunteers are welcome, particularly in the following areas:**

- Help is needed with the food service at dinner on Friday, as well as breakfast and lunch on Saturday, and lunch on Sunday.
- The Parish will provide a licensed babysitter on Saturday, but teens are encouraged to participate as assistants.
- Eucharistic Ministers are needed on Saturday afternoon.
- Ushers are needed.

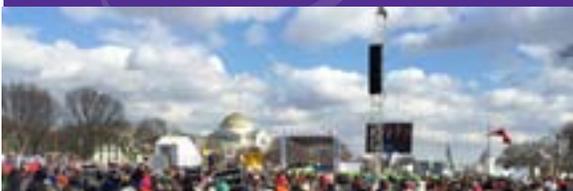
To volunteer and register, go to <http://retreat.divinemercuryva.org> or call Nancy Novelty at (703) 938 3293.



January 22, 2015  
Washington, D.C.

# *ST. MARK*

## Participates in Annual March for Life



# Volunteer Opportunities at the Jail

By Ann Ramish

As we think about our Lenten observances, we can consider the volunteer possibilities at the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center (ADC): “For I was... in prison and you visited me” Matt 25:35-36.

## Diocesan Jail Ministry

Diocesan Jail Ministry volunteers are needed to help with Catholic programs at the ADC, located next to the courthouse in the City of Fairfax. Spanish- and English-speaking volunteers who are willing to help with Mass or services without a priest, teach Religious Education, or mentor inmates should contact Bill Hall at (703)841-3832 or [whall@ccda.net](mailto:whall@ccda.net).

The Saturday routine at the ADC consists of three services or Masses serving 30 to 45 people. Except for EASTER and CHRISTMAS, the men and women worship separately, with a Spanish-speaking men's service, an English-speaking men's service, and a women's service.

The jail ministry is always in search of adult volunteers. Parishioner Mike Nobile says: “This is rewarding volunteer work. Most days you leave feeling good about what you've done. The singing provides a nice break in their routine.” You do not need to be musically inclined to volunteer. “We are always looking for people to join us to help hand out hymnals, missals, and rosaries, he said.”

## Education Program

The Education Program at the ADC is in need of volunteers to teach or assist with English as a Second Language classes or to tutor inmates. The immediate need is for literacy class volunteers to teach twice a week in the afternoons or evenings. Classes are an hour and a half. Facility in Spanish is a plus. Anyone interested can email [mmrustia@feps.edu](mailto:mmrustia@feps.edu) for more information.

## Mentor Program

Opportunities, Alternatives, and Resources (OAR) is seeking volunteers for the mentor program and classes at the ADC. Both programs require becoming a “badged” volunteer at the jail. *ST. MARK* provides financial support to OAR.

The Mentor program consists of a 15-month commitment to mentoring one inmate. This commitment includes meeting with an inmate in the jail for the final three months of incarceration, and out in the community for 12 months following release. Mentor pairs are always the same gender and are geared toward providing a sounding board for individuals from a responsible, conscientious source. However, volunteers should be aware that, sometimes, a mentor pairing ends due to lack of contact from the former inmate. This can be difficult for some volunteers; however, it does not indicate a failure by the mentor, but rather it illustrates the very reason mentors are valuable—to help teach the importance of communication and following through. Even a truncated pairing can be emotionally beneficial to both mentors and mentees.

The ADC instructor program consists of a one year-minimum commitment to teaching an OAR class in the ADC or the Alternative Incarceration Branch. Classes offered include anger management, employment, financial planning, parenting, and computer skills. Classes are held once a week, and classes cycles last from six to 10 weeks. Most instructors take a few weeks off between cycles, after which a new group of students is enrolled. Teaching these classes can be rewarding for several reasons, especially since the skills learned can benefit the students both pre and post release.

If interested in any of these programs, please contact Dana Hayden at (703) 246-3055 or visit the OAR webpage at [www.oarfairfax.org](http://www.oarfairfax.org) and look for volunteer opportunities posted.

## Christianity and the Cross

Christianity is not a philosophical doctrine, it is not a program of life that enables one to be well formed and to make peace. These are its consequences. Christianity is a person, a person lifted up on the cross. A person who emptied himself to save us. He took on sin. And so just as in the desert sin was lifted up, here God made man was lifted up for us. And all of our sins were there....

[Therefore] one cannot understand Christianity without understanding this profound humiliation of the Son of God, who humbled himself and made himself a servant unto death on the cross....

Thanks to the mercy of God, we glory in Christ Crucified. And that is why there is no Christianity without the Cross, and there is no Cross without Jesus Christ.

Source: Pope Francis, Papal Homily, Domus Sanctae Marthae, April 8, 2014

## Milestones

### Baptisms

We welcome the following new Christians into the community of the Church:

Hanson Sawyer Rajmaira  
Alaina Sophia Finn  
Anthony William Tellez Coogan  
Charles Anthony Kelly  
Juliana Paige Orf  
Seamus Robert Jude Wilcox

### New Parishioners

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

Karli Nickerson  
James and Crystal Wojciechowski  
William and Melissa Wright  
Marvin Olmedo and Beatriz Gadala-Olmedo  
Eligio and Kim Vazquez  
Sergio and Luz Vazquez  
Lou and Eileen Moritz  
Brian Alson  
John and Tania Lionato  
Melissa Grossman  
Andrew Patac  
Athina Talavera  
Gregory and Shirlye Kalbaugh  
Doug and Jennifer McIvor  
Khanghy and Allison Nguyen

### Deaths

The following parishioners entered into eternal life:

Sandra Reno  
Bradford Smith  
Jerry Maravetz  
Joseph Cavanaugh  
Therese Leonard  
Irene Bonfiglio

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## After Paris

By Ann Ramish

In the aftermath of the terrorist attacks in Paris, and with the atrocities of ISIS featured often on the news, it can be challenging to make sense of it all and what we can and should do about it. Specifically, some Muslims seem to be responsible for evil. For my part, I work with adult Muslims who are my students in a Fairfax County Public Schools classroom, along with other adults from around the world. The Muslims with whom I have worked seem more like us than different. I particularly think of the Muslim lady in the March for Life: I thanked her for coming, and she said it was her duty!

The Church has some insights and recommendations to guide us:

On January 17, 2015, the Catholics Confront Global Poverty of the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops (USCCB) and Catholic Relief Services issued the following statement:

“Recent tragic events in France and Nigeria remind us of our faith commitment to engage in dialogue, not just with Muslims, but with all people of differing religious beliefs. In this 50th anniversary year of the Vatican II declaration *Nostra Aetate* [NA], we remember our call to “recognize, preserve and promote the good things, spiritual and moral, as well as the socio-cultural values” found in other religions (NA, no. 2)... As the world mourns violence under the guise of religious fundamentalism, it is important to remember our teaching and recommit ourselves to the transforming power of dialogue and encounter. Please continue to pray for peace and for those impacted by violence in France and Nigeria.”

The USCCB’s Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs (CEIA), which receives its mandate to engage in dialogue with Muslims from NA, issued a formal statement on dialogue in August 2014. “With respect to Islam, the Council Fathers say that ‘the Church has also a high regard for the Muslims’ and that despite centuries of conflict ‘the sacred Council now pleads with all to forget the past, and urges that a sincere effort be made to achieve mutual understanding (NA, no. 3).”

Recent Popes have upheld the declaration. Pope John Paul II affirmed the need for dialogue with Muslims throughout his long pontificate. In *Crossing the Threshold of Hope*, he wrote, that “believers in Allah are particularly close to us” and that “the religiosity of Muslims deserves our respect” ([New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005], 91, 93)....”

In its formal statement, the CEIA stated, “Sadly, in recent years, there has been a deliberate rejection of this call to engage in dialogue with our Muslim brothers and sisters by some in the Catholic Church and in other ecclesial families. We understand the confusion and deep emotions stirred by real and apparent acts of aggression and discrimination by certain Muslims against non-Muslims, often against Christians abroad. We, and increasingly our Muslim partners in dialogue, are concerned about these very real phenomena. Along with many of our fellow Catholics and the many Muslims who themselves are targeted by radicals, we wish to voice our sadness, indeed our outrage, over the random and sometimes systematic acts of violence and harassment—acts that for both Christians and Muslims threaten and disrupt the harmony that binds us together in mutual support, recognition, and friendship.”

The CEIA affirmed that the most efficient way to work to end or at least curtail such violence and prejudice is through building networks of dialogue that can overcome ignorance, extremism, and discrimination and lead to friendship and trust with Muslims.

Pope Francis, in his address to the Pontifical Council for Interreligious Dialogue on November 28, 2013, stated: “[A]n attitude of openness in truth and in love must characterize the dialogue with the followers of non-Christian religions, in spite of various obstacles and difficulties, especially forms of fundamentalism on both sides” (no. 250)... often political or economic motives overlap with cultural and religious differences, which also play

upon misunderstandings and mistakes of the past: this is all likely to generate suspicion and fear. There is only one road for conquering this fear and it is dialogue and encounter marked by friendship and respect.”

The Pope continued: “Dialogue does not mean renouncing one’s own identity when it goes against another’s, nor does it mean compromising Christian faith and morals. True openness involves remaining steadfast in one’s deepest convictions, clear and joyful in one’s own identity’ (ibid., no. 251) and therefore open

to understanding the religion of another, capable of respectful human relationships, convinced that the encounter with someone different than ourselves can be an occasion of growth in a spirit of fraternity, of enrichment and of witness.... We do not impose anything, we do not employ any subtle strategies for attracting believers; rather, we bear witness to what we believe and who we are with joy and simplicity....”

In the 2007 document, *A Common Word Between Us and You*, 138 of the Islamic world’s most respected leaders asserted the following: “To those who nevertheless relish conflict and destruction for their own sake or reckon that ultimately they stand to gain through them, we say that our very eternal souls are all also at stake if we fail to sincerely make every effort to make peace and come together in harmony. . . . So let our differences not cause hatred and strife between us. Let us vie with each other only in righteousness and good works. Let us respect each other, be fair, just and kind to another and live in sincere peace, harmony and mutual good will.”

[http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/ecumenical-and-interreligious/interreligious/islam/dialogue-with-muslims-committee-statement.cfm?utm\\_source=Ecumenical+and+Interreligious+E-Monthly+-+September+2014&utm\\_campaign=SEIA+E-Newsletter&utm\\_medium=email](http://www.usccb.org/beliefs-and-teachings/ecumenical-and-interreligious/interreligious/islam/dialogue-with-muslims-committee-statement.cfm?utm_source=Ecumenical+and+Interreligious+E-Monthly+-+September+2014&utm_campaign=SEIA+E-Newsletter&utm_medium=email)

... pray for  
peace and for  
those impacted  
by violence...

# The Love Response

By Joyce Katherine Kerrigan

February warms our hearts with the celebration of love. We center on sharing our heartfelt sentiments with those closest to us, and we revel in being loved in return. It is a natural expansion of the love that lives in our hearts. As Christians, we seek to respond to God's love; we want to develop and enjoy a personal relationship with our Lord and discern how we are to express that love in service to others. Our earliest learning as children is the response to the question of why God made us — to know, love, and serve Him in this world and to live with Him in the next.

We learn from Sacred Scripture that from the beginning, God freely communed with those he had loved into being. After the Fall of man through pride and disobedience, it was His desire to save humankind; He responded with a plan of reconciliation and salvation. He raised Godly men through whom He made Covenants and promises of salvation and blessing.

## God Speaks, and Man Responds

Throughout the Scripture, we read life-affirming declarations of God's love. Prior to receiving the Ten Commandments at Sinai, but having knowledge of what the Covenant entailed, the response of the people to the Lord's invitation to be His holy people was that Moses should tell the Lord, "Everything the Lord has said, we will do." When Moses was long in returning from the mountain, they lost faith, built the golden calf, and reveled in depravity.

When Moses saw the actions of the people, he broke the tablets containing the Commandments and approached God to atone for their sin. The Lord was not pleased by the people's actions; Moses pleaded with Him on their behalf, and God withheld His wrath, reserving just consequences for a later time. In Exodus 34:5, we read: "Having come down in a cloud, the Lord stood with him [Moses] there and proclaimed His name 'Lord!' Thus, the Lord passed before him and cried out: 'The Lord, the Lord, a merciful and gracious God, slow to anger and rich in kindness and fidelity.'"

In Deuteronomy 30: 16-19, the Lord gave instructions on how He was to be loved and how He would bless His faithful people, as well as the consequences if His commandments were not obeyed.

"If you obey the commandments of the Lord, your God which I enjoin on you today, by loving Him and walking in His ways, and keeping His commandments.... Then you will live and grow numerous and the Lord God will bless you in the land which you are entering to occupy. If your heart turns away, and you will not hear, but are drawn away to worship other gods and serve them, I tell you now, that you will certainly perish; you will not have a long life in the land.... I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse.... Choose life, that you and your descendants may live."

In Leviticus, God enjoined Moses to speak to the congregation of the people of Israel and say to them, "You shall be holy, for I the Lord your God am holy." God renewed the commandments with Moses and this time spoke in greater detail and specifics.

God loved His people throughout salvation history, and He sent Prophet after Prophet to communicate His relentless love. In Jeremiah 31, we read: "With age-old love I have loved you; so I have kept My mercy toward you." In a long discourse in Hebrews 11, the faithful responses of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Moses are described in individual overviews. Gideon, Barak, Samson, Jephthah, Samuel, and the Prophets are referred to as those who by their response conquered kingdoms, did what was righteous, and obtained the promises.

God had promised to send a Redeemer. When the time came, His only Son incarnated through the power of the Holy Spirit in the Person of Jesus. His perfect servant, Mary, said yes, and God Himself came down from heaven, took on our humanity, lived among us, taught us personally, and revealed God. "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in Him will not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16). In the supreme act of love, He became the bloody sacrifice for the forgiveness of our sins.

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus affirmed that His mission remained within the framework of the Law, in that He came to fulfill the Law, not to abolish it. He went on to teach in the spirit of the Law behind

the Commandments all the lessons on how God expects us to love. Jesus taught that the Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve. "I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do." In the Attitude of a Servant in Luke 17, Jesus says, "When you have done all you have been commanded, say 'We are unprofitable servants; we have done what we were obliged to do,' meaning simply doing our duty is not enough.

## God Calls, We Respond

God pours down His limitless love and gifts upon us with the expectation that we will respond in imitation of Him. He is ever active and at work in our lives, drawing us to Him, inviting, directing, suggesting, speaking to us in our hearts or through others or through our experience; He is expectant of our immediate responsive love. He is already in our lives where we are, and we should not delay our response until we are less busy, less sinful, get the kids settled, get the house in perfect order, or whatever else delays our response to Him. This side of Heaven, there will never be a perfect time to know Him, love Him, and serve Him. The time to respond to God's call and ask "What more can I do?" is now, right where we are.

## M&Ms Plan Spring Schedule

Maturing Matters (M&Ms) has a full schedule of interesting, informative, and fun events planned.

### March

- **Wednesday, March 4:** Pancake Breakfast following 9:15a.m. Mass. Deacon John Allen will speak on Lent.
- **Saturday, March 21:** St. Patrick's Day Party at Auld Shebeen Restaurant from 1-4p.m.
- **Tuesday, March 24:** Trip to Gadsby's Tavern. Lunch in their café.

### April

- **Wednesday, April 1:** Coffee Social following the 9:15 a.m. Mass.
- **Wednesday, April 15:** Potluck lunch. The speaker will be Matt Quinn on "Our Own Antiques Road Show." Bring one antique to display.
- **Friday, April 17:** Trip to Arboretum and lunch at Ft. Myer.

## Mark Your Calendar

### March

- March 13-15 Lenten Retreat  
March 20 Movie Night  
March 21 Concert 8:00 p.m. in the Church  
March 22 Concert 4:00 p.m. in the Church  
March 22 Blood Drive  
March 29 *Palm Sunday*: Masses at 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., and 12:00 p.m.  
March 29 Parish PENANCE Service 7:00 p.m.

Stations of the Cross every Friday at 7:30 p.m. during LENT

### April

- April 2 *Holy Thursday* Mass of the Lord's Supper 7:30 p.m.  
April 3 *Good Friday* Celebration of the Lord's Passion 3:00 p.m.  
April 4 EASTER Vigil 8:30 p.m.  
April 5 EASTER Masses at 8:00 a.m., 10:00 a.m., and 12:00 p.m.  
April 12 Concert 2:30 p.m. in the Msgr. Cassidy Activities Center  
April 17 Movie Night  
April 19 Newcomer's Lunch 1:00 p.m.  
April 25-26 First EUCHARIST

## Save the Date! March 6, 2015

### Black and White Auction Gala

The ST. MARK Catholic School's *Black and White Auction Gala* will be held on Friday, March 6, at the McLean Hilton. As the School's premiere fundraiser for the 2014-15 school year, we need YOUR help to make this event a success!

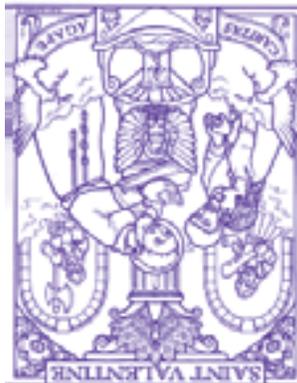
The Gala will raise funds to support vital curriculum and facilities enhancements at the School that otherwise would not be possible. Funds raised will assist the School in updating school security, technology advancements, STEM Education, and the Christian Formation Center debt reduction.

The success of the auction is based upon generous sponsors and donations from Parents, Parishioners, Teachers, Students, Friends, Families, and Business Leaders.

To become a sponsor, make an auction donation, or place an advertisement in the event program, please contact Jennifer Martin at [jlmartin1114@yahoo.com](mailto:jlmartin1114@yahoo.com) or (703) 851-8433. Stay tuned for event details by visiting and "Liking" the Auction Gala Facebook Page! [www.facebook.com/stmarkauctiongala2015](http://www.facebook.com/stmarkauctiongala2015).

We look forward to seeing you at the Gala

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