

Maneline

ST. Mark Catholic Community

Parish Volunteers Share Time and Talents

By Vito Florimonte

[Editor's note: Hundreds of volunteers give their time and talents to ST. MARK. Their contributions are not always obvious. During this time of Thanksgiving, we are pleased to highlight the behind-the-scenes woodworking skills that benefit the Parish. As a member of ST. MARK since 1972, Vito Florimonte has been involved in many aspects of the growth of the Parish. He was Property and Grounds Committee Chair for 16 years, working on such diverse projects as landscaping, designing and building the first Memorial Garden units, constructing the Memorial to the Unborn, building shelves and coat racks for the Preschool nursery, and building teacher podiums for the new Christian Formation Center. In this article, he describes the kinds of volunteer services he worked on with others to improve Parish life.]

Tom Becker was the building maintenance engineer for many years and a close friend, and most of my woodworking volunteer work resulted as a response to his request for assistance.

Alta Server Chairs and Tables

The Alta Server chairs and tables on the Main Altar are original equipment. Over the years, they have been used to the extent that structural repairs became necessary. Sometimes, simple re-gluing sufficed; at other times, replacement of wood parts was required. Matching wood parts with respect to wood species, such as white oak, and then staining repaired pieces to blend in with remaining parts can be tricky. The success of this work is evident in the fact that very few people attending Mass notice the repairs.

Chair Kneeler Units

The chair kneeler units in the Chapel began to fail during the austere days of the mortgage repayment effort. Elderly

Parishioners with knee and hip problems were intimidated by the wobbly furniture. Tom asked me to take a few units to my wood shop and see if I could make repairs that would hold things together until the mortgage was repaid and funds became available for new units. It took me a while, but I was able to repair a few units; a larger project repairing almost all of the units began. I enlisted the aid of Bill Miller and Sandy Struckmeyer, Knights of Columbus brothers. Eventually, we set up a small repair assembly line in my shop, taking four or five units at a time to re-glue, stain, and varnish new parts to match existing parts.

Altar Table for the Mass of the Resurrection

Barb Celio, the Mass of the Resurrection Coordinator, asked if I could make a new table to use in the Mass that would be taller than the other tables to elevate the urns with cremated remains for better visibility; she also planned to make a table tapestry or runner. We discussed the dimensions



and decided that the new table should match the design of the smaller tables. I was able to design a taller table of similar wood and finish the table.

Repair of the Processional Crucifix

The Processional Crucifix had been badly damaged and was unserviceable. I transported the Crucifix to my shop and formulated a plan for repair. It was a piece-by-piece project that took several weeks. The final repaired Crucifix

was eventually reinforced with some walnut splints, stained, and refinished. Ron Wilgenbusch assisted me, provided some materials, and did some of the refinishing.

Lenten Cross

Ron Wilgenbusch asked for help in constructing a Lenten Cross to set at the main entrance to the Parish. He had a rough plan in mind, and we discussed materials. One of my neighbors had a larger cedar beam, a surplus part from his recent home building. The neighbor, Chad Quenneville, a Parishioner, willingly donated the beam. The beam was 18 feet long and much wider than the dimensions Ron had in mind. It took a bit of head scratching, power tools, and labor in the wood shop to shape it and make it sturdy enough for outdoor service. The clear cedar beam is an extraordinary piece of wood; if purchased, it would have been cost prohibitive. We are indeed fortunate to find such materials; when these things happen, I usually think of Providential

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Share Time and Talents

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assistance. It is truly a great Lenten Cross and will serve much longer than its builders. Amen.

Damaged Hand-Carved Art Panels for the Stations of the Cross

The hand-carved Italian panels depicting the scenes of the Stations of the Cross were damaged during a fall to the floor. I was asked to look over an assembly of wood splinters to see if repairs were possible. It reminded me of a puzzle. I was able to get most of the parts in correct order, but some smaller pieces were lost. For the most part, the panels were re-glued, reassembled, and remounted to the brick wall.

Ron Wilgenbusch and I have been friends for many years. As I related the stories about the art panel repairs, he decided that the art panels should be mounted to larger wood panels for better viewing during the Stations of the Cross. He approached the Liturgical Art Committee with his plan;

upon approval by the Committee, he purchased the materials and constructed the panels in his wood shop. I agreed to help him mount the new large panels on the brick walls of the church. It was a particularly challenging project.

Science Lab Table Legs for St. Mark School

The most recent large project was to modify the science table legs for the School to enable teachers to have better eye contact with the students during class. We removed the table legs, cut them shorter, and reassembled them. This project sounds simpler than it was. The tables were composite acid-resistant tops, and the legs were 2.5-inch square white oak legs — very attractive, blemish free, and very hard wood. This task required indexing the legs from each table, taking them to the shop where a special jig was made



to cut precisely the legs, drilling holes for the special hardware to reattach the legs, and then returning them to the CFC for reassembly. Anyone who has ever attempted to trim a table leg knows how annoying it is to have one leg a whisker shorter or longer than its leg mates. I believe there were 18 tables to rearrange following modifications. Bill Miller and Sandy Struckmeyer assisted with the work. When completed, there were no rocky tables, and the Staff was very pleased.

[Note: Anyone interested in joining the woodworking team can email Vito at Vito.Florimonte@verizon.net.]

Celebrating a Golden Mark on a Great Journey

By Judy and Bern Diederich

More than 200 couples participated in the Diocese of Arlington's annual Marriage Jubilee Mass at *OUR LADY of HOPE* in Potomac Falls on Sunday, October 15, with Most Reverend Michael F. Burbidge, Bishop of Arlington. The couples were married in either 1967 or 1992; it was the 25th anniversary for 121 couples, and the 50th anniversary for 94 couples. Judy and Bern Diederich of ST. MARK were among the couples present. They have four children and 12 grandchildren. They share their lessons learned here to help other couples on their journey.

Bern

We were hometown sweethearts in a small midwestern town (DePere, Wisconsin), where the focus was dairy farming, paper mills, and our glorious sports stars, the Green Bay Packers. We met in college, dated, completed college, and headed out to the world, for me fulfilling a military service obligation and for Judy a short career as an airline flight attendant. We married, returned to the campus (law school for me and grade school teaching for Judy), and started a family. We moved to the DC area to

pursue a career as an aviation attorney with the federal government. We enjoyed over 40 years of very active lives, experiencing virtually one of everything. Now retired, we finally have the luxury of pausing and trying to summarize it all finally.

We have been blessed with good health and a wealth of family fun free of any hardships. The fast pace of area life made our lives rich and rewarding. Travel and sports were a mainstay of everyday life. Family members had tasks and responsibilities, ranging from school work to lawns, dishes, and pet care. Discipline was ever-present, meted by both parents, but strictures were minimal. Problems arose but were always solved on the spot with love and care. Regular weekly church attendance and CCD classes (with some years of Catholic school education) were routine. The kids never had regular allowances, but needs were met as family economics permitted. Everyday life was kept relatively pressure-free, with an active control of outside activities to make that a reality. Mom and Dad were always present, 24-7, without exception. Discussions were free but decorum was expected. Dating



was watched and curfews were enforced. Family life was good.

Yes, it seems that the travails of family life have become ever larger and more difficult, but modern life does have its rewards. The many tools of play, leisure, and education brought to the average family by the wealth of electronic devices has got to be noted. With reasonable oversight, the power of the computer chip can educate, enlighten, and entertain the family like nothing of yesteryear.

Yet the key for the happy family at the core of all is a home life with a knowledge and love of the Lord. It can be planted and maintained only by parents who themselves know and understand its importance. It can be found in the smallest of family routines and gestures.

Celebrating a Golden Mark

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Grace at meals and bedtime prayers are a simple start. Daily blessings from the parents to the kids are important, along with the never outdated reminder of *I love you*. Parenting is made easier with the presence of the Lord in the midst of all family activities. Kids from their earliest ages look to their parents to supply them with that grace. Next time you embrace one of your kids or grandkids, mark a simple cross on their forehead with your thumb. It will change their lives and yours, too.

Judy

Our faith life has always been a constant and very much at the center of our life. We know that our faith has been the foundation or crux (cross) of our relationship. We always knew that our marriage commitment was a sacred covenant with God as an equal partner. For many years when we helped with Pre-Cana

marriage preparation at ST. MARK, we discussed the realities of marriage and the “less than perfect days” that happen. It ain’t always easy! It was those times when we got on our knees or just threw up our hands and called on our Third Partner in our marriage to help us understand, forgive, and get over whatever had us at odds.

All except our first child were Baptized at ST. MARK, and they all received their other Sacraments there. Our children always attended either CCD or Catholic schools. For several summers, we joined eight or ten families for a week at Topsail, North Carolina, at the Christian Family Living Center operated by the Marianists. Our children were teenagers at the time; it was a perfect way for them to interact, see, and show what Christian living means with strangers who shared the same values.

We always attended Sunday Mass and said meal prayers as a family. I said, and later listened to, the children’s prayers at bedtime; when they got to be teens, before they left for the day we had a little mantra, “remember be Christ for others and find Christ in others today.”

Having Catholic friends has always been an important support. Thirty years ago, we made a Marriage Encounter Weekend; as part of the program, we joined with five other Encounter couples in a Love Circle for what was supposed to be six follow-up meetings. Our Love Circle continued to meet for 20 years — sharing all of life from new babies, marriages of children, and finally the death of one husband. ST. MARK has been our home parish for 45 of our 50 married years. It is a most important part of our life.

Praying College Moms Provide Care Packages for Students in Need



As part of the Care Package Program, the Praying College Moms packed a record number of boxes and reached more homeless college students than last year. The group also made a donation to Foster Care For Success (Foster Care College Students). The Care Package event is Praying College Moms’ signature event and would not be possible without the help of ST. MARK Parish and the donations received from individuals throughout the community.



Care for Our Common Home Ministry Began with Papal Encyclical

By Kathy Aquilina

Popes have written 240 encyclicals since 1854. For many years, I never fully read an encyclical, although I did read excerpts for theology classes in college. For many of us in the pews on Sunday, they seem formal and wordy, so one might conclude that they are best to be avoided!

I stood on the curb with thousands in Washington, D.C., to greet Pope Francis two years ago. I felt a wonderful surge of pride in being Catholic. Love and unity were in the air as we all shouted and waved at the smiling holy man, waving to us as he rode by. It was amazing to see the positive coverage of his outdoor Mass on otherwise very secular television channels. He evoked an outpouring of spirit, like St. John Paul II did on his travels.

I wanted to know more about him; when *ST. MARK* offered a study on his encyclical *Joy of the Gospel*, it seemed a perfect way to begin. Not many of us showed up, but the depth and fervor of Pope Francis's words moved us. This man of faith had a

strong message about Jesus who loves us. We are called to live the Gospel as a source of joy. We can love, because we are loved.

Having read one encyclical and found it inspiring, I thought about going for

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two. Jean Lupinacci was offering a study of *Laudato Si* Pope Francis's letter on the environment. My son was studying environmental science at the

university, so I thought I might go for his sake. The room was full of interesting people — scientists, retired college professors, a musician, men and women, older and younger — people who wanted to learn more and do something for the sake of their children and grandchildren.

God has blessed us with Creation, and what is our response? We saw the need to be practical in assessing our own lives. The Pope wonders if we "have the capacity to be happy with less?" That is a good place to start a spiritual inventory.

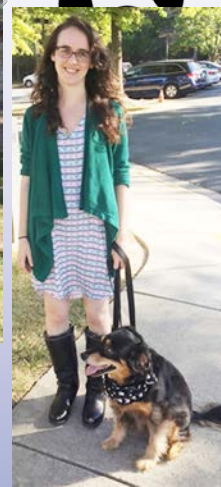
Our dear Pope has hope, especially if we work together, as the situation in the world is so complex. We at *ST. MARK* have started a Care for Our Common Home Ministry. We aim to reduce the amount our congregation pays for energy bills. That idea is making our Pastor and Council happy! Even more important, we hope to live in such a way that will energize efforts, as the Pope states, "to get to a place of self-giving responsibility".

ST. MARK Celebrates the Blessing of the Animals

By Annette Kane

Over 20 people brought their pets to *ST. MARK* on the Feast of *St. Francis of Assisi* in October for the Blessing of Animals. This traditional ritual offers praise to God for all of creation and reminds us of our connectedness to every creature. St. Francis called created beings his "brothers/sisters." As part of the prayer service preceding the blessing, Father Pat read from *Genesis* the account of the creation of fish, birds, "and living creatures of every kind... And God saw everything that God had made, and, indeed it was very good".

Following the prayer service, pets were brought forward for individual blessings.



Living Out *Laudato Si'*

Annette Kane, Co-Chair, Care for Our Common Home team

During the Season of Creation (September 1 to October 4), the Care for Our Common Home team invited *ST. MARK* Parishioners to sign the *Laudato Si'* pledge. By signing the pledge, these Parishioners joined a larger community of Catholics around the world who are committed to living *Laudato Si'* in their own lives and bringing it to their Parishes and communities.

The pledge is simple: Pray with and for creation; live simply; advocate to protect our common home. How can we translate these words into daily actions? A few suggestions follow.

- Pray with and for creation by adding a prayer of thankfulness for the world God has created, and pray that we act as good stewards of our common home. “Pray with the news” and incorporate people who are affected by climate or ecological changes in our prayers. Praying in our gardens or on walks is a great way to give praise and thanks for all of creation.

- Live simply. As Pope Francis writes, “There is a nobility in the duty to care for creation through little daily actions”. Before we purchase something, we might ask, “Do I need this or want it?” We can consider having a meatless meal once a week. (Beef requires 16 pounds of grain to produce one pound of meat.) We can reduce carbon emissions by driving less, consolidating errands, or walking for short trips. We can bag all of our purchases with reusable bags and buy a reusable water bottle and fill it with tap water.

- Advocate to protect our common home by connecting with local organizations engaged in environmental activities. The Virginia Catholic Conference invites people to write letters to newspapers about ecological issues. We can consider what is making it more difficult for to change our lifestyle — such as no composting or recycling options in our community or no options for clean energy — and

bring the community together to ask for change. We can become a member of the Care for Our Common Home team and join in activities that the team organizes, from visiting a recycling center to working with the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to ensure that proposed environmental improvements are adopted.

If you have signed the *Laudato Si'* pledge, let your friends and family know what you have done and invite them to take the pledge.

The Season of Creation was a reminder that we are all called to care for our common home, not just during a special month, but throughout all days and in every season. In his September 1 letter in 2015, establishing the World Day of Prayer for Creation, Pope Francis writes: “Living our vocation to be protectors of God’s handiwork is essential to a life of virtue; it is not an optional or secondary aspect of our Christian experience”.

Interfaith Blessings in a Backpack Program

ST. MARK partnered in an interfaith service project with a mosque, MakeSpace, and a synagogue, Olam Tikvah, to prepare Blessings in a Backpack, which contain weekend food for needy children in Fairfax County. Food was collected throughout the month of October and placed in the Backpacks at the MakeSpace location in Alexandria on Sunday, October 22. About 500 bags were assembled, and delivery was arranged. All who attended were excited about the project and working together as one community. Plans are underway for this to be an annual event. Bill Grossman declared, “For the first year, I think it was a huge success!”



Consider the Gift of a Chalice

By Ann Ramish

Are you looking for a memorial gift for your deceased loved one? Years ago, Bishop Justs suggested to us that a chalice for one of his seminarians would be a good choice. Since my Dad had asked to have a hundred Masses said for him, I thought this was a gift he would appreciate. My friend said her father left money in his will to have Masses said!

Some six months after my Dad passed away, I asked Fr. Paul about the desired specifications for a chalice. He recommended a 9 (8–10) inch common cup. He said not to get a crystal one. The inside of the cup should be gold plated. It

might cost about \$200. It is possible to order a chalice from Autom (Denise in the Parish Office has the catalog) or to buy one from Peter C. Munley Church Goods, Tyco Road, Vienna, who sells liturgical goods. Peter Munley said the chalice would probably need to be ordered.

I ordered one from Autom. I checked with Claire Fountaine, our retired Parish Office Manager, to see where to get it engraved. She recommended Master Engravers in Falls Church where the Parish has had chalices engraved, and the company did a nice job engraving a cross and my Dad's name.

Claire offered to help me pack the chalice and paten to send them to Latvia. She said the package needed to be labeled "charitable donation" and the chalice should be concealed in the middle of a box of socks and underwear. The reported value had to be less than \$200. I mailed it and it arrived safely. Claire alerted the recipients to watch for it.

I have learned that some seminarians in the United States are also in need of a donated chalices. The priests to whom I spoke said recipients would pray for the donor whose name was on the chalice. I am glad Bishop Justs made this recommendation.

M&Ms Enjoy Excursion to the Eastern Shore

By Barbara Walsh

The M&MS traveled to the Eastern Shore of Maryland on October 25 to visit the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Museum and the Blackwater Wildlife Refuge.

Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge

They started with a crab cake-inspired lunch at Snappers Cafe on the Choptank River. After a relaxing lunch, they drove through Dorchester County to visit the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge for an informative video on life in the marshes and the waterfowl that pass through the area. The fields of corn, clover, and sorghum provide a healthy diet for the wildlife that live there, as well as for those that only spend the winter there. During their four-mile bus tour through the marshes with their guide Michelle, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife employee, the M&Ms dant population of Canadian geese; the refuge is home to the largest breeding population of the American bald eagle, and they saw three of the eagles. There were great herons, Mallard ducks, and two white pelicans "snuggling" in the marsh. The refuge

maintains the marsh by dredging it periodically to provide healthy vegetation for all of the creatures that call it home. It was really a lovely afternoon as we sensed the arrival of fall, with the fields cut and ponds maintained. All was right with the world, so to speak.

Harriet Tubman Museum

From the Wildlife Refuge, we traveled to the Harriet Tubman Underground Railroad Visitor Center. An informative talk by one of the Park Rangers was followed by a brief video of some aspects of Harriet's life. She was born in 1822 and died in 1913. Her long life was filled with many adventures. She was born to slave parents, Harriet Green and Ben Ross, both of whom were enslaved to different families. Although illiterate, Harriet managed to bring over 70 family members and friends to freedom. She stated, "I never ran my train off the track, and I never lost a passenger." They traveled through Dorchester County, across many waterways, and reached Philadelphia on their way to Auburn, New York, and St.

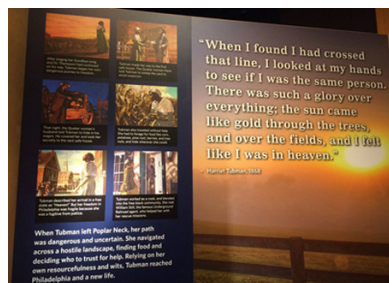


Catharines, Ontario. Harriet traveled mostly by night during the long winter nights, using the North Star as her guide. She finally was able to bring her parents out of Dorchester County to safety in St. Catharines, where a community of former slaves, her brothers, and other family members resided.

During the Civil War, she offered her services to the Union Army abolitionists, and she headed to South Carolina as a spy and armed scout. Harriet was the first woman to lead an armed expedition that resulted in the liberation of 700 slaves in the raid at Combahee Ferry. She felt that "master Lincoln," although a great man, needed to do "the right thing" and end slavery. She received an annuity from the government for her time spent during the Civil War.

Harriet was busy with the women's suffrage movement. For all of her efforts throughout her life in support of freedom, she will be remembered by having her name and face on the \$20 bill, replacing Andrew Jackson.

This tiny five-foot-tall black former slave will be remembered for always putting family first and "sticking to her guns" to keep the peace and make her point in life.



The Second Reading for the Mass on Thanksgiving Day from 1 Corinthians 1: 3-9

Brothers and Sisters: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. I give thanks to my God always on your account for the grace of God bestowed on you in Christ Jesus, that in Him you were enriched in every way, with all discourse and all knowledge, as the testimony to Christ was confirmed among you, so that you are not lacking in any spiritual gift as you wait for the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will keep you firm to the end, irreproachable on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is faithful, and by Him you were called to fellowship with His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Who We Are

“Do not lose hope..... We are not the sum of our weaknesses and failures; we are the sum of the Father’s love for us and our real capacity to become the image of His Son.”

Pope John Paul II, World Youth Day, Toronto 2002

A Call to Prepare the Way of the Lord: A Parish Morning of Recollection

All are invited to participate in a period of reflection on Saturday, December 9, in the Msgr. Cassidy Activities Center. This event is hosted by the Small Communities of Faith, and everyone is cordially invited to share in the experience. The goal of the morning is to focus our thoughts on spiritual preparation for the Lord’s coming at CHRISTMAS.

We will begin with optional Mass at 8: 00 a.m. in the Chapel, followed by a light continental breakfast. The program will begin at 9:15 a.m. and end by noon.

The morning’s reflections will be the following:

- The history and meaning of the Season of ADVENT
- Lessons and Carols
- Meditation on the Gospel for the Second Sunday of ADVENT

A Group discussion on how to make ADVENT a fulfilling spiritual experience will follow.

There is no need to make a reservation. All are invited! For further information, contact Celeste Sichenze at 703-938-3774.

Milestones

NEW PARISHIONERS

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

Segundo De Los Heros
and Maria Uriarte
Eric and Gianga Fernando
Brandon and Kendall Fleming
Jonathan and Mary Giuffre
Tony Nguyen and Farha Naqui
Alexander Saunders
and Hailey Stroop
Torres-Rios Family
Wendy Velazco-Weiss

BAPTISM

Lillian Kathleen Black
Ryann Allison Fleming
Declan Michael Mosher
Isla Kathryn Powers
Hannah Rene Ross
Francesca Josephine Wilson

MATRIMONY

Kevin Whitaker and Ellen Mains

DEATHS

The following Parishioners entered into eternal life:

Betty Ford
Jacqueline Lane
Bob Lavey
Martha Jane Dodd

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Mark Your Calendar

November

November 18-19 Pastoral Council Elections
 November 20-26 Thanksgiving Clothing Drive
 November 26 Solemnity of *Christ the King*

December

December 1 First Friday
 December 1 CYO Rally
 December 3 Youth and Family Mass
 December 8 Solemnity of the *Immaculate Conception*
 Masses at 6:15 a.m., 9:15 a.m.,
 5:30 p.m., 7:30 p.m.
 December 9 First PENANCE 11:00 a.m.
 Parish Morning of Recollection,
 Msgr. Cassidy Activities Center
 December 9-10 Giving Tree
 December 12 Feast of *Our Lady of Guadalupe*
 Mass 6:00 p.m.
 December 14 Taize Prayer and Blessing of Creche
 December 17 Parish PENANCE Service
 December 24 CHRISTMAS EVE
 Masses at 5:00 p.m., 8:00 p.m.,
 10:00 p.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



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