

Maneline

ST. MARK Catholic Community

Results of Parish Survey, pages 4–6!

ST. MARK Offers Care for the Soul Series

Five Monday Mornings,
January through May 2014
10:00 – 11:15 a.m.

“... put away the old self of your former way of life... and be renewed in the spirit of your minds, and put on the new self, created in God’s way in righteousness and holiness of truth.” Ephesians 4: 22-23

Program Description: When we understand and integrate our motivations, emotions, desires, and behaviors under God’s direction, we can better put off our old self and put on our True Self, which is God in us. Improving self-awareness, God-awareness and other-awareness heightens our understanding, allowing us simultaneously to deepen personal relationships with Christ and others.

This series for adult men and women includes monthly educational and interactive discussion group meetings, each focusing on a different topic connecting relational and spiritual growth. Participants are encouraged to think about the topic in advance and come prepared to discuss experiences in which they practice or struggle with the topic in their lives. In sharing experiences, we deepen our faith life, and our relationships with others and with God. We also have due opportunity to speak God’s encouragement into one another’s lives.

Information: Register before each session by calling or emailing Ellen Murphy at emurphy@stmark.org or (703) 281-9671. Space and format limit each session to 25 participants, so pre-registration is necessary. While there is no fee for participation, donations to ST. MARK are welcome. All donations will go to outreach programs that provide financial assistance to those in need of basic services.

About the Facilitator: Ellen Murphy, LCSW, of the Counseling Center, has served as Parish Counselor in her private practice since 2007. She assists individuals, adolescents, adults, couples, and families,

employing a holistic approach, as they grow and persevere through struggles in their lives. One area of particular interest is in helping clients experience their faith and spirituality as a healing resource in relationships. A graduate of Catholic University in clinical social work, Ellen holds a post-graduate certificate in *Spirituality in Clinical Practice* from The Catholic University’s Center for Spirituality and Social Work. She facilitates a women’s spirituality group, seminars, and leads retreats. She also holds a post-graduate certificate in *Gestalt Psychotherapy* from The Washington Center for Consciousness Studies and currently participates in a Christian *Interpersonal Neurobiology* study group. Ellen is an EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing) practitioner in the treatment of trauma and stress.

Session 2. Cultivating Compassion Monday, February 10

“When He went ashore, He saw a great crowd, and He had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd.” Mark 6:34

To have compassion for others we must first receive genuine compassion into ourselves. We will explore methods for cultivating awareness of God’s compassion for us to be strong in suffering and increase contentment, happiness, freedom, and extend compassion for others.

Session 3. Is There A Purpose for Suffering? Monday, March 10

“Not only that, but we even boast of our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance and endurance proven character, and proven character, hope.” Romans 5: 3-4

Many of us struggle to understand the paradox of why bad things happen to good people—or why does God allow suffering? Familiar examples are cited, like the Holocaust and the more current crisis in Syria.

The answers are complex and deep-rooted. We will explore ways of understanding our struggles and how we approach or interact with others in their suffering.

Session 4. Healing Power of Forgiveness Monday, April 7

“For if you forgive men when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.” Matt. 6: 14-15

Forgiveness, particularly self-forgiveness, can be one of the most powerful grace-filled experiences of our lives. There are countless physical, spiritual, emotional, and relational benefits to forgiveness, yet it can be so difficult to achieve. Why is it so hard to receive this gift ourselves or to forgive others? We will discuss what prevents forgiveness, the components of this sometimes difficult process, and what can result if we fail to forgive or if we choose to forgive.

Session 5. Letting Go: The Illusion of Control Monday, May 5

“...that you should put away the old self of your former way of life, corrupted through deceitful desires and be renewed in the spirit of your minds.” Ephesians 4:22

Part of our human conditioning is to want to manage or control that which we have difficulty understanding or accepting. The illusion has us believe that by working harder or faster we can control the circumstances and avoid pain. This compels us to try harder, often growing more frustrated when times are difficult. If we are habituated toward control, we may have difficulty releasing or letting go. Our true refuge is in connection, awareness, and openness to God. What illusions about control have a grip on your life, distract and obscure your focus on and access to God?

Spotlight on Parishioner Mike Nobile

by Rebecca H. McCormick

When you think of being called to minister, perhaps the guards and jumpsuits of the Fairfax County jail are not the first things to come to your mind, but for one committed *ST. MARK* volunteer, that is exactly where God's call led him. Mike Nobile, a parishioner since 1999, can be seen playing his double-neck guitar at the 11:45 a.m. Mass, teaching Religious Education classes, serving the Knights of Columbus, and volunteering in the Diocesan Jail Ministry.

Even before he came to *ST. MARK*, he was involved with the jail ministry at the Fairfax Adult Detention Center. In 1997, a friend nudged him to give it a try. "I felt called to do something. Now, every time I think about stopping, there is someone beyond me who wants me to continue," Nobile explained.

ST. MARK has a long history of helping with the jail ministry. At one time, the Parish had four volunteers. Mike Nobile recalls the late parishioner, Dave Perko. "He did a wonderful job mentoring. He was not involved in the Mass, but instead he focused on going cell to cell praying and helping to instill the faith." In addition, the late Nancy Cavicke assisted at Mass as a musician. Since Bob McIntire retired in 2001, Nobile is the only *ST. MARK* volunteer.

ST. MARK: Serving as Christ's Hands and Feet

The following examples illustrate the extensive range of activities in which *ST. MARK* participates:

- The **Tithing Allocation Committee** approved five grants to local organizations that will support a continuing Adult Education program, a bereavement organization, a shelter exclusively serving victims of domestic violence in Northern Virginia, a local after-school program to assist low-income immigrant youth acclimate to their new surroundings, and a homeless shelter in Washington, D.C.
- The **Hot Meals Ministry** cooked, delivered, and fed over 125 homeless and low-income folks in Fairfax County.
- The **Prayer Shawl Ministry** knitted over 100 hats, scarves, and baby blankets for homeless people and distributed them to the Hope Center and adopted families through our Giving Tree program.

Diocesan Involvement

However, that does not mean that the jail ministry is ignored by the Diocese. Nobile noted that Bishop Loverde ensures that a priest is assigned to each of Fairfax County's seven facilities once a month. For EASTER and CHRISTMAS, the Bishop himself says Mass at one of the facilities. This CHRISTMAS, Bishop Loverde presided over the center where Nobile volunteers.

Parish Contributions

ST. MARK serves the jail during the holidays with the CHRISTMAS Giving Tree, which requests donations of Spanish-English dictionaries and stamped envelopes. Nobile explained, "Inmates appreciate the envelopes most of all. They can't make much money while there, so the free postage can help them write a letter home or to someone close." The dictionaries help to aid inmates with the language barriers that they sometimes face.

The Saturday routine at the Fairfax Adult Detention Center consists of three services or Masses serving 30 to 45 people on any given day. 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.

Volunteers Needed

The jail ministry is always in search of male and female adult volunteers. "It's not as bad as you think considering what TV and movies show," Nobile joked. "This is rewarding volunteer work. Most days you leave feeling good about what you've done." Right now, Nobile is the only musician for the English services, but he hopes that more can join him. "Inmates really respond well to music. The singing provides a nice break in their routine." You don't need to be musically inclined to volunteer. "We are always looking for people to join us to help hand out hymnals, missals, and Rosaries."

"The most important thing for me was when I realized that they were giving me more than I was giving them. You learn a lot about yourself and your purpose. I learned that there isn't a lot of difference between people. They are the same, and they deserve to be ministered to just as much as anyone at *ST. MARK*. These folks need God as much as we do. Sometimes, they just need a nudge toward faith."

If you would like more information about volunteering for jail ministry, feel free to contact Mike Nobile at mjmobile@cox.net.

- The **Gift of Peace Ministry** made and delivered dinner to the Gift of Peace House in Washington, D.C., to help feed patients with AIDS and HIV.
- The **Support Our Troops Ministry** put together 89 packages of needed items and 129 plates of baked goods and mailed them to Troops overseas.
- The **ESL** program concluded the Fall session with a wonderful CHRISTMAS party hosting over 120 of the ESL students. Six computers were given away at the party, courtesy of our Computer Repair Ministry.
- The **Funeral Reception Committee and Funeral Bakers Committee** helped celebrate the beautiful life of long-time Parishioner Sebastian Suriani in the Cassidy Activities Center.
- The **Giving Tree Ministry** helped bring in and distribute 2,171 CHRISTMAS gifts and \$19,310 in Gift Cards to 13 local organizations and adopted families.
- The **Blood Drive** collected 33 pints of blood.
- The **Second Sunday Sustenance** group made over 100 sandwiches and delivered them to the Embry Rucker Shelter.
- The **M&M (Seniors)** group held the annual CHRISTMAS party, hosted a luncheon and speaker, went to a dinner, and went on several field trips.
- The **Catholic Social Teaching Committee** hosted a presentation on the current national health care situation.
- The **Hypothermia Shelter Ministry** is in the midst of helping two area churches that are hosting sites for the homeless throughout the winter.
- A **Small Community of Faith Group** donated \$660 to the Fairfax County Domestic Violence Action Center to provide emergency help with food, gas, and other necessities to assist victims of domestic violence regain control of their lives.

Ordinary Lives, Extraordinary People

by Mary Fisk

We may often think of Saints as people whose lives of virtue are a bit removed from ours, as admirable role models without doubt, but as perhaps “too good” for us to emulate. At the Basilica Shrine of the *Immaculate Conception*, near the main altar, are statues to the “Nobody Saints” – five regular people who did not achieve “greatness” in the eyes of the world, but who lived their “ordinary” lives with great love – so much so that they did achieve greatness in God’s eyes. Saint Therese of Lisieux is another “simple” woman whose message of how to achieve sanctity continues to inspire millions: Few of us are called to do great things for God, but we are *all* called to do little things with great love.

At a recent Mass, Fr. Pat spoke about a humble man, Brother Andre Bessette, now Saint Andre since his canonization in 2010, whose life exemplifies this approach.

St. Andre was born in Quebec in 1845, the ninth of 13 children. His father was a carpenter and lumberman who was

killed in an accident in 1849. His mother died three years later, and her son and his siblings were orphaned when he was 12 years old. St. Andre himself suffered from poor health from birth. Despite his poor health, and following the intervention of his Pastor and eventually the Bishop of Montreal, he was accepted as a novice by the Order of the Holy Cross in Montreal. He made his final vows and became known as Brother Andre at the age of 28 in 1874. He was assigned the duties of porter at Notre Dame College in Quebec, as well as sacristan, laundry worker, and messenger.

He also visited the sick in their homes and prayed with them. St. Andre had particular devotion to St. Joseph, and he recommended that the sick he visited pray to the Saint. Many of the people reported that they had been cured. After he had ministered to victims of an epidemic — in which no one died — his fame spread and the numbers of people writing to him increased so substantially that he received

80,000 letters a year. In every case, he insisted that the cures were the result of St. Joseph’s intercession.

The College decided that the great numbers of sick people coming to see him were interfering with his regular duties. He was allowed to meet with the sick people in a nearby public facility. More than 100,000 miraculous healings were credited. Two of those people, whose healings were confirmed by the Vatican’s rigorous review process, attended his canonization ceremony in Rome.

In 1904, Brother Andre built a small chapel in honor of St. Joseph near Notre Dame College. The chapel’s small size quickly became inadequate, and a larger church was built in 1917. Construction began in 1924 on what is now St. Joseph’s Oratory in Montreal, a landmark visited by 2 million people each year. When Brother Andre died at age 91 in 1937, more than 1 million people attended the funeral of this “ordinary” man who lived a simple life of service with such great love and devotion.

Hypothermia Shelter Season Is Underway

by Diane Smith

During the winter months, area faith communities take weekly turns opening their doors at night to feed and shelter homeless adults. *ST. MARK* has participated in this program for several years, sending in-shelter volunteers and serving nutritious meals to nearby churches.

Volunteer time commitment can be as short as an hour or two to prepare food at home, an evening visit to play cards or converse with guests, or several hours to keep watch for a quiet night-time shift. This year, *ST. MARK* is partnering with two local churches.

- From January 19-25, the *ST. MARK* volunteers helped *ST. JOHN NEUMANN* hypothermia shelter by serving in the shelter and by providing the food for the bag lunches.
- From March 9-15, *ST. MARK* will assist *Fairfax Baptist Church*, 10830 Main Street, Fairfax, by providing volunteers and meals.

Whom do we serve? According to Fairfax County <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/homeless>, approximately 1,350 people

in the Falls Church and Fairfax community were literally homeless in January 2013. While the 747 homeless people who are families with children are safely housed as soon as possible, the 603 individual adults are often more difficult to place, and the shelters are full. And why is it necessary to even have a program like Hypothermia Shelters in wealthy Fairfax County? Sadly, the number one reason for homelessness in our area is simply a lack of affordable housing.

If you would like to join this life-saving effort, we welcome new and returning volunteers. Visit the Hypothermia page at the *ST. MARK* website at <http://service.www.stmark.org> for more information and to link to the sign-up page. Once on the sign-up page, you can view and sign up for jobs and food donations, and link directly with partner churches to volunteer in the shelters. Please email Diane Smith at hypothermiashelter@yahoo.com with your questions. Thank you for your support and for your prayers for the hidden poor among us.



“Then the king will say to those on his right,

‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.’

Then the righteous will answer him and say,

‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?’

And the king will say to them in reply,

‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’ “

Mt. 25: 34-40

In 2011, the *ST. MARK* Pastoral Council, with Fr. Pat's consent, launched four initiatives intended to help the parish redress the ongoing decline in Mass attendance, parishioner volunteer participation, and financial support of the Parish. While the conditions experienced at *ST. MARK* were not unique to parishes in the Diocese of Arlington or to other parishes throughout the United States, they were troubling, especially given the nature of *ST. MARK* going back to its founding days in the mid-1960s.

The Council's four initiatives included an examination of the youth programs, the adult education and community outreach efforts, the communications strategy and media, and a survey to understand better the makeup and expectations of the Parish community.

The Parish Survey Process

After months of discernment and deliberation, the *ST. MARK* Pastoral Council recommended to Fr. Pat that a special task force be organized to develop a two-part survey of the Parish. The first part of the survey, administered in October 2012, sought to specify the demographic characteristics of the parishioners who attend Mass.

The second part of the survey, administered in early 2013, was designed to identify specific attitudes and practices of Mass-attending parishioners.

With the information gathered through this two-part survey, the task force produced a very thorough analysis that identified numerous steps that could be taken to address the perspectives offered by parishioners.

The task force, which included Parishioners Tom Christie, Donna Whitaker, Celeste Sichenze, John Allen, and Ken Hartwick, shared the analysis with the Parish Staff and the Pastoral Council in the spring of 2013, with the expectation that the Staff and Council would review the analysis and make recommendations to Fr. Pat on specific actions he and the Parish Staff could take to respond constructively to parishioner input. The Council presented its recommendations to Fr. Pat in September 2013. Since then, the Parish Staff, the Parish Commissions, and Fr. Pat have

been at work addressing the recommendations offered by the Pastoral Council.

Among the recommendations that the Pastoral Council presented to Fr. Pat were those in the following six areas.

Issue 1. Recommendations for Increased Participation in the Mass and Ministries, Particularly in Leadership Roles

Outcome: Increased attendance at Mass, and more parishioners participating in the various ministries.

Measure for outcome: New leaders and more volunteers for the *ST. MARK* ministries.

Activities: Form a task force comprised of representatives from various ministries to explore possible recruitment strategies.

1. Expand the base of people and engage newcomers in new and different ways, for example, a quarterly pizza and beer party with leaders of various groups in attendance. The goal is not to hard sell, but to meet informally with newcomers and engage in conversation about *ST. MARK* and what it does as a Parish. People are more likely to volunteer if they have enjoyed conversation in a casual setting than a hard sell approach or another sign up sheet. Second, the Parish needs to reenergize the Parishioners we already have (see Activity 2).
2. Reconsider a new and improved Ministry Fair.
3. Reevaluate some of the more struggling ministries to see whether they are still relevant. It is better to have fewer strong ministries that work well.
4. Consider a part-time Staff position of Volunteer Coordinator, channeling all volunteers through that position and placing them in their areas of interest. Hospitals, which rely heavily on their volunteer staff, do this. This process would allow for more accountability in conveying volunteer interests to their respective ministries.
5. Consider revising the Mass schedule to improve attendance. The survey expressed an interest in a Sunday

evening Mass. Eliminate one of the morning Masses, try a 9:00 a.m. and an 11:00 a.m. morning schedule, and add the Sunday evening Mass. This would not add an additional burden on Fr. Pat.

Issue 2. Recommendations for Improved Communications Within the Parish

The Parish is not adequately informed about the activities and programs at *ST. MARK*. The effectiveness of current communication tools should be evaluated, and new tools and strategies should be implemented to ensure greater parish awareness and understanding.

Outcome: Ideally, a greater sense of belonging and a better understanding of what is happening in the Parish. This should also lead to greater participation in both the Mass and ministries explored in Issue 1.

Measure for Outcome: Benchmark the "best practices" of other parishes and organizations to measure and compare the degree of acceptance, participation, and attendance that the various activities described below are having, and re-survey the Parish to determine if these efforts are recognized.

Activities: Communication can always be improved in any organization. Review and evaluate existing communication tools, identify the benefits and the shortcomings of each tool, and identify changes that will improve the tool's effectiveness. If not improvable and/or effective, eliminate its use.

1. *Profile Key Parish Members:* Identify to the Parish those members in leadership positions who can assist with the improved flow of communications. These leadership profiles should be published in the following Parish media:
 - Sunday Bulletin
 - *Maneline*
 - Bulletin boards
 - Pulpit announcements
 - *ST. MARK* website
 - Personal contacts.

For example, At-Large Council members should be profiled with their photographs in an annual *Mane-*

Recommendations to the Parish

line article, focusing on each Council member's background, family, current job/tastes/sports/ hobbies, and positions on parish issues. Other possible initiatives might include Have a "Meet the Council" town hall-type of meeting quarterly at which Parishioners receive updates on the Council's work with the Pastor.

2. *Narthex Loitering:* Parish leaders should spend some time before and after Mass in the Narthex to greet Parishioners and visitors as they come and go from Mass. Special effort should be made to talk to those whom the leaders do not know to ensure that a welcoming atmosphere exists, and that these people have a personal reason to return. Also, leaders should extend an invitation to these people to become involved in various ministries and activities.

3. *Improved Parish Website:* While the website has improved greatly in recent years, further enhancements are possible and prudent. Using some of the native expertise in the Parish, the present website should be upgraded to levels comparable to the best websites in the Diocese and local businesses. Parishioners expect that *ST. MARK* will present itself professionally and that its website should have all the capabilities that other churches and area businesses do.

- The website should be kept current and have offered a full array of timely information, including holiday Mass schedules, funeral announcements, and committee and Commission meeting schedules.
- The website should have interactive capabilities like chat rooms and links to other organizations with ties to *ST. MARK* and its ministries.
- The website should have all the Parish publications that are now only in print format and delivered by mail.
- The website should be able to

email these materials, Parish announcements, and communications from the Diocese and the Catholic Church to the Parish community.

- The website should establish and maintain an archive of information about the Parish and the Catholic Church in America, as well as instructional materials and Vatican documents, such as Papal Encyclicals, Diocesan conference presentations, and Parish Mission Statements.
4. *Parish Publications* All current parish publications should be reviewed and updated to give them a more contemporary look and readability. For example, instead of the clutter that is now a hallmark of the weekly Bulletin, all of the announcements that are scattered throughout the Bulletin could be placed into one prominent corner and titled "Important Announcements," making them easier to find and digest.
5. *Improved Parish Audiovisual Equipment:* Findings from the survey included many negative comments about the quality of the audio equipment in the sanctuary. Because of the acoustical character of the sanctuary, hearing is often difficult for the average listener. When speakers either talk too fast or not loud enough, the sound amplification system, even when functioning properly, is of little help. There is great need for a better balanced, stronger, and more dependable amplification system, augmented with hearing devices for the hearing-impaired, for the sanctuary. Similar upgrades would be in order for the Msgr. Cassidy Activities Center, and if the space could be found, a space with sound adjacent to the sanctuary where parents could take their crying children and still be able to participate in Mass would be useful.
6. *Alternatives for Families with Small Children:* Due to the absence of adequate space for a crying room, flat-screen monitors could be installed in the

Narthex and the Sunday Masses could be projected to enable parents who have small, restless children to observe Mass while tending to their children. These same screens could be programmed to carry important information and parish schedules before and after Mass.

Issue 3. Recommendations for Improved Accessibility to the Pastor and Staff

Outcome: The *ST. MARK* community would feel less exclusion from the core of the parish.

Measure for outcome: Mini surveys, positive feedback to the Council, Staff, and Pastor.

Activities:

1. Establish a suggestion box in the Narthex as part of the Information Desk.
2. Have the Office open after Masses, if not every weekend, then at least once or twice a month so that parishioners do not have to make special trips to conduct business, for example, to obtain Mass cards. The *ST. MARK* Office hours are not friendly to working parishioners.
3. Have an open Office hour scheduled for Father Pat, when parishioners can see him without appointments.

Issue 4. Recommendations for Improved Administrative and Facilities Services

The survey notes several deficiencies in the existing physical plant, such as inadequate restroom facilities, lack of a crying room for parents with babies, need for improved church audio equipment and better Web facilities, and the need for sprucing-up the many little dings around the church and church grounds. Some comments urging improvement went beyond brick and mortar and were addressed to the performance of people and units.

Outcome: The parish's physical plant will be attractive, well-maintained, and high functioning. Parish personnel will be committed to the highest levels of customer service, highly attentive to their fellow employees and parishioners, and tactful

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Pastoral Council Report and Recommendations

Continued from page 5

and courteous at all times. Service is not a burden; it is a joy.

Measure for outcome: No, or fewer, complaints about Staff service.

Activities:

1. Assemble a task force of parishioners to assess the condition of the physical plant and to make recommendations for physical improvements.
2. Recruit a human relations expert (possibly a parishioner) who can provide Staff mentoring, guidance, and instruction on phone manners, desk etiquette, and interpersonal interactions.
3. Provide orientation and training for the variety of lay ministers at Mass, including the Eucharistic Ministers and Ushers, on dealing with parishioners with grace.
4. Provide visiting priests with counsel and support to ensure that their experience at *ST. MARK* is rewarding for them and for the parishioners for whom they have come to celebrate Mass.
5. Reduce obstacles to scheduling events and meetings in *ST. MARK* facilities, especially the Msgr. Cassidy Activities Center and the Christian Formation Center gym. The current hurdles and subjective nature of the scheduling process produce unnecessary frustration and an overwhelming sense of unwelcoming.
6. Start Mass on time without regard to how many parishioners are in the pews.
7. Create a number of groups that come together to share enjoyment of a particular interest (for example, athletics, law, crafts, cooking) and their faith.

Issue 5. Recommendations for Improving the Quality and Content of the Religious Education Program

Outcome: A more strategic, coordinated, and driven Religious Education Commission (RE), with a curriculum and formation program that addresses the needs of the Parish for parishioners of all ages. Parishioners should feel that action has been taken on their concerns, gathered

through purposeful feedback and comments.

Measure of outcome: Better attendance at RE programs and positive feedback from parents and RE students, adults in religious formation, and anyone else preparing for the Sacraments. Less angst, better attendance, more positive feedback on programs.

Activities:

1. Complete efforts to identify the scope of what religious education at *ST. MARK* should be. This effort includes consultation with parents, RCIA alumni, and former and current Catechists about catechist training, curriculum, external speakers, schedule and timing of programs, and special community-building and formation activities.
2. Assemble a task force that includes representatives from all the Commissions to explore the potential for a scheduling realignment that would reduce the conflicts that occur between Sunday Mass, RE classes, and Adult Formation. Students and Catechists are rushed from the 8:15 a.m. Mass., and the timing of the Adult Sunday Program precludes many from attending if they are either at Mass or teaching RE. Proposals might include changing the RE time for Sunday morning by moving it to 8:30 a.m. so people can go to Mass afterward, or starting at 9:40 a.m. to give people at Mass enough time to get doughnuts and socialize.
3. Inform the Parish about RE changes and developments. Provide regular updates through the weekly Bulletin, *Maneline*, and *ST. MARK* website. Because most parishioners are not actively engaged with the RE Commission or its programs, the column might be called, "We're Listening."

Issue 6. Recommendations for Improving the Experience with the Content and Quality of the Mass

Outcome: Higher parishioner satisfaction with the Mass experience.

Measure for outcome: Fewer complaints about Mass and higher attendance.

Activities:

The Worship Ministry has already organized a task force to address the wide range of issues identified in the survey regarding the celebration of Mass. Among the issues already addressed, or in the process of being addressed, are punctual starting and ending of Mass, length of hymns, need for more Lector training, clutter in the hymnal racks, too many announcements at the end of Mass, more welcoming atmosphere for parishioners (see Issue 3), quality of the sound system (see Issue 2), appropriate apparel for Eucharistic Ministers and others involved in Mass, and lack of appreciation on the part of many parishioners for the teachings, practices, and traditions of *ST. MARK* and the Catholic Church. Since May, Fr. Pat and Nancy Novelly have informed parishioners about changes that were or are being made, as well as why some things are the way they are and will not be changed.

Epilogue

The ideal outcome from all of Council's initiatives, including the survey, is to identify practical, cost-efficient, and achievable solutions that produce benefits to include increased fellowship, improved relationships, and a basis for future problem solving. Solutions will likely range from simple ones with immediate application to ones that will require further study and overcoming of obstacles. Pray for strength of conviction where it is clear that the extra efforts have a potential to deliver highly desirable results.

In the end, as Pope Francis reminds us, the people of the Church are the Church. What people desire of their Parish requires individual and collective efforts. That commitment is how *ST. MARK* came to be established nearly 50 years ago, and that is how it will perpetuate itself in the future.

This summary of the Pastoral Council's report and recommendations was prepared by Eric Peterson.

Affordable Housing for Low-Income Neighbors

by Gerry Williams

Many of us know people who would like to be able to live here but cannot because of the high cost of rental housing. Fairfax County is currently considering a change in the zoning ordinance that would help some of these people find affordable housing.

A proposed zoning ordinance amendment is being considered that establishes a new use, *Residential Studios (RSUs)*, that will consist of efficiency apartments (zero bedrooms) of not more than 500 square feet in size, each including a kitchen and bathroom, in multi-family residential buildings. In each project, at least 80 percent of the units would be occupied by individuals whose income does not exceed 60 percent of the median household income in the Washington, D.C., area — approximately \$45,000 a year. Although the target population is low-income singles, up to three people could occupy a unit, depending on its size. The "limitations on occupancy" chapter of the Virginia Maintenance Code, which is part of the Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code, chapter 4, section 404, would limit the number of occupants in each unit.

These units could serve a range of people in our community: new graduates, returning veterans, those who are retired

on fixed incomes, persons with disabilities who have limited incomes, and those with extremely low incomes who provide the services we all depend on, for example, child care providers, sales people, and cleaners. These are all people who want to live in our community, but with the current housing market choices, they have few options. Many of these people may pay more than 50 percent of their monthly income for rent.

Citizen groups have responded to this proposal with strong emotions and concerns. Some of these concerns are legitimate and merit consideration; some are based on fears and misconceptions regarding the design and scale of development, and the kinds of people who might live there.

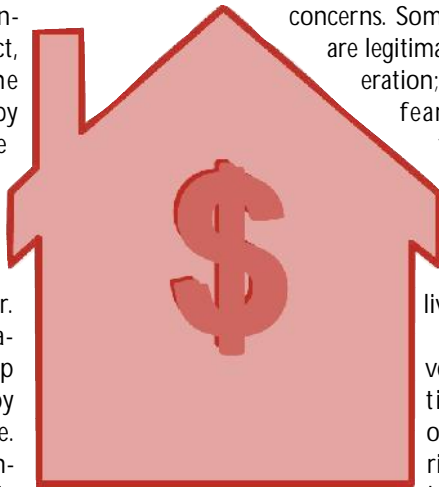
Some of what drives this strong negative reaction is the overcrowding occurring in certain neighborhoods in the county. These neighborhoods fear that RSUs could be a way to legitimize overcrowded housing situations.

However, people do not choose to live in overcrowded, unsafe conditions; they are forced to do so when they have no other options. Housing advocates believe this new housing type could actually eliminate overcrowding in neighborhoods. Developing residential studio units throughout the county will provide more affordable opportunities for those persons living in illegal, overcrowded housing and those paying more than 50 percent of their income for housing costs.

How To Support RSUs

What you can do to support approval of the RSU zoning amendment:

- Contact your Supervisor and let him or her know you support this zoning amendment. This is particularly effective if you have a friend or family member who would benefit from its passage.
- Become a member of the *ST. MARK* Advocacy network and get regular updates on the progress of this



Maneline is the publication of *ST. MARK* Catholic Community, 9970 Vale Road, Vienna, VA 22181 (703-281-9100). 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.

Editors

Mary Fisk
maryfisk2@gmail.com

Ann Ramish
ramishteam@outlook.com

Artist

Mary Ellen Larkins
melarkins@verizon.net

Milestones

BAPTISM

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

Maximus Neumann Barbato
Alaura Allison Velarde
Hannah Katherine Sherry
Simone Audra Ubale
Michael Martin Verderese



New Parishioners

We welcome the following new parishioners to our parish family:

Christopher and Carol Ann Garner
Fé Vivas Patriciu
Maurice and Esther Mbata
Carlos and Thais Lima
Justin Patterson
Matthew Osborn
Michael and Jeanne Garone
Robert and Kathleen Tardiff
Amalia Mamaed
Michael and Victoria Nestor
Heather O'Shaughnessy



MATRIMONY

We wish the following couple many joys and blessings in their marriage:

Caitlin Nichols and Jamie Francis



Deaths

The following parishioners entered into eternal life:

George Schirmacher
Frank McMahon
Amy Marsden

amendment and advocacy efforts being organized to support its passage. Send your contact information to (pgncwms@aol.com), and you will be added to the list.

For more information about the proposed RSU amendment, go to <http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/planning/rsu/rsu.htm> and www.nvaha.org.

Mark Your Calendar

February 9

Youth and Family Mass 6:00 p.m.

February 16

Fellowship (Donuts) after 8:15 a.m.
and 10:00 a.m. Masses

February 17

Presidents Day: Mass at 10:00 a.m.

February 17

Youth Group Ski Trip

March 1

Spaghetti Dinner

March 2

Youth and Family Mass 6:00 p.m.

March 5

Ash Wednesday.

Masses at 6:15 a.m., 9:15 a.m.,
5:30 p.m., and 7:30 p.m.

March 7

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

March 16

Fellowship (Donuts) after 8:15 a.m.
and 10:00 a.m. Masses

March 22

Lion Prowl 5K and Fun Run

March 24–27

Parish Mission

Non-profit Organization
U. S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 15
Vienna VA



Address Service Requested

Maneline
ST. MARK Catholic Church
9970 Vale Road
Vienna, VA 22181