

The WINGED LION

DEC/JAN 2022

A Reflection from Fr. Dennis Aréchiga

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REJOICE IN THE LORD

“O God, who see how your people faithfully await the feast of the Lord’s Nativity, enable us, we pray, to attain the joys of so great a salvation and to celebrate them always with solemn worship and glad rejoicing.”

“Collect or Opening Prayer for 3rd Sunday in Advent”

“The Opening Prayer”, “The Prayer Over the Offerings” and the “Prayer after Communion” for the Sundays of Advent enrich our understanding of the liturgical season we are celebrating. When we hear them prayed in Mass, however, we can be distracted and miss the opportunity to clearly hear and thus ponder their meaning. As we begin our new liturgical year with the First Sunday of Advent, we have transitioned from Cycle C “The Gospel of Luke” to Cycle A, “The Gospel of Matthew”. The first week of Advent focuses on our need to be awake for we do not know the time of Christ’s return. We hear on that Sunday from the “Prayer After Communion” a plea for us to profit from the mysteries we have participated in “for even now, as we walk amid passing things, you teach us by them to love the things of heaven and hold fast to what endures.” The second and third Sundays of Advent draw our attention to John the Baptist.

The Third Sunday of Advent is called “Gaudete” Sunday, meaning to rejoice; the rose color, more cheerful than the deep violet hue used on the other three Sundays, reminds us that we are fast approaching the great Solemnity of Christmas. The Collect for that Mass shown above, calls us to celebrate the incarnation, the gift of salvation that the Christ child will usher in. The fourth and final Sunday of Advent focuses our attention on Mary, Our Blessed Mother. The following is the Prayer Over the Offerings for that Sunday: “May the Holy Spirit, O Lord, sanctify these gifts laid upon your altar, just as he filled with his power the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary.” As we journey through Advent, may we participate in both the penitential and joy filled aspects of this season by seeking to be reconciled to God and reflecting upon the great mystery of the Incarnation. Let us honor Mary with the other two feasts that fall in December as we recall her Immaculate Conception and the apparition of Our Lady of Guadalupe. Truly this is a season to rejoice as we make room for Emanuel, God with us.

Fr. Dennis



Our mission is to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ to all God’s people by word and action.

What do you appreciate about your Catholic Faith? 2022 Women's Guild and Knights of Columbus Scholarship Applicants Respond.

Growing up I never considered myself a Catholic, because I would attend Mass once a month, stopped attending catechism classes after my first communion, and did not attend church events. However, taking Edge and Lifeteen classes throughout my middle and high School career shifted my outlook of what the Catholic faith really was. Over the pandemic I was given the honor to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation. During this time through quarantine I was in the midst of preparing for my confirmation, and I wanted to make sure that I knew what it entailed to receive it, so I read many books on what Catholics really believed. I quickly realized that receiving this sacrament is what I wanted, and not what my family would be persuading me to do. What I appreciated most about my Catholic faith is the tradition of the Church, Eucharist, and the prayers, because they help us worship Jesus the way he wants to be worshiped.

I love that Jesus founded the Catholic church, and gave Peter the keys to become the first Pope and for the Holy Spirit to guide him (Matthew 16:18). That alone makes me appreciate the Catholic Church, because I would never want to leave a church that Jesus founded. The

community of the church is what makes me feel grounded, and the ability to walk into any Catholic church and hear the same gospel because of the beauty of the universal Church. The popes are guided by the Holy Spirit to lead us with the catechisms and the Bible. I believe that the Catholic faith in the church is the truth, and the true way Jesus wishes to be worshiped.

I love that in my family, whenever somebody passes away we pray 2 novenas in their honor. This past year I lost 5 family members, and it was very difficult saying goodbye to each one of them; however, the rosary prayer that I prayed with my family truly brought me closer to God. The act of praying the rosary every day with my family, taught me a lot about sacrifice and revealed to me the importance of works as a Catholic. My connection with God felt stronger every single day I did this rosary with my family and taught the importance of sacrifice, dedication, and obedience to the Lord.

I love the meaning of the Eucharist. What we believe as Catholics sets us apart from all the other Christian denominations. Whenever I am in Mass every Sunday to receive the Bread of Life, I at times feel myself tear up, and I never knew why. I told

my friends this about a year ago a few months after I was confirmed, and they said it's because I have the Holy Spirit moving through me. Because of this I truly know that when the priest consecrates the Eucharist it truly is the blood and body of Christ. In John 6:53 he even says that "unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you." Therefore, whenever we eat the bread we have Jesus with us, which is such a gift to have as Catholics.

I appreciate the Catholic faith because I know it's the truth. I know that I choose this path for myself, and that it is the right path. I might not have grown up like the other kids at St. Mark who grew up with their parents teaching them about the Catholic faith, but I know that I needed to find Jesus on my own time in order to truly appreciate the love I have for God and the love he has for me. I want to continue to grow in my faith, because being a woman of God is a big responsibility and a big part of my identity.

Essay written by one of our Knights of Columbus Scholarship recipients.



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What do you appreciate about your Catholic Faith? 2022 Women's Guild and Knights of Columbus Scholarship Applicants Respond.

A close friend once told me, "The Lord will never leave any prayer for a community unanswered." The community that is given through being an active member in my faith has become the thing I appreciate most about my Catholic faith. When I feel lost in my faith journey, God never fails to give me a supportive community that leads me back to Him.

Growing up in the faith, going to Mass every Sunday with my parents, my four siblings, and my grandparents, I was reminded of how important community can be for your faith life, which is what I learned when I was encouraged to go to weekly Adoration with a friend of mine. Weekly adoration at 8:15 pm every Wednesday helped me

learn how powerful God was in my life. Not only was he there with me at Mass and Adoration, but He was with me in the community around me. Sometime afterwards the group of us that went weekly decided to get dinner together. We went to Bible study, Lifeteen, adoration, Freddies, and eventually we made a group chat where we would even ask each to pray for us daily. That was something I never thought I would ever do with a group of friends. Not only did we offer friendships that would be lifelong, but we encouraged each other to strengthen our relationship with the Lord. I learned how to truly pray the rosary, I consecrated my life to Jesus through Mary, and these friends turned my faith life into something

more than it was before.

God never fails to give me foundation, and community has been a very firm one that I have come to rely on. I am not abandoned when I feel like the lost sheep in my faith life. I open my heart to Him. Although I didn't see it before, he worked through my life in the most powerful way. He gave me a real sense of community, from the people I grew up with to the people that I continue to meet today. This sense of community leads me closer to Him daily and is a constant reminder that we are never alone.

Essay written by one of our Knights of Columbus Scholarship recipients.

It's Scholarship Time Again!

If you are a senior in high school and planning to attend college in the fall, make sure you apply to the St. Mark the Evangelist Women's Guild and Knights of Columbus 2023 Scholarship.

To be eligible to apply for a \$1,000 scholarship, you must be:

- A high school senior
- Registered at St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church
- Planning to attend a certified college, junior college, vocational school or community college in 2023-2024.
- Involved in St. Mark the Evangelist and/or other church related activities

This scholarship is based on merit and service with emphasis on Church related activities.

To apply please follow the these instructions:

1. Each applicant must complete and submit his or her own sealed application packet to the St. Mark Pastoral Office no later than noon, January 27, 2023. Failure to follow all instructions may result in penalty or disqualification. The following

must be included in your application packet:

- a. Complete the application and attach it as the front of the application packet.
- b. A digital photograph or a copy of a standard photograph (head and shoulders at least 2" high with student's name printed on the back. This must be a separate item.
- c. A current official or unofficial copy of your most recent high school transcript.
- d. A 400 (or less) word, computer printed essay, not to exceed 1 page. Evaluation includes MLA (Modern Language Association) writing style as well as content. Applicant cannot receive assistance in writing or proofing the essay. The essay will address one of the following topics:

What is your opinion about Social Media? or

Which Church Sacrament is the most important to YOU and why?

Please be sure your envelope is addressed to the "Women's Guild and Knights of Columbus Scholarship

Committee."

Interviews with the scholarship committee will be scheduled for the week of Feb 6, 2023 between 6:00 PM -8:30 PM in Christopher Hall. Arrange your schedule so you can attend. Consider this to be like a job interview. The purpose is to determine how well you present yourself and communicate verbally.

For more information, please contact Deacon Steve Marques at (210) 269-1339 or Mary Jo Quinn at (210) 818-7006 or go to the St. Mark website @stmarkevangelist.com





By Tracy Earl Welliver

“What could happen next?” How many times have you asked yourself that question? Unfortunately, we most often use that expression when things don’t seem to be going our way. Then when the stars seem to align just right we might use the same expression to explain our feelings of being overwhelmed by blessings and good things.

Whether it will be a pleasant or dreadful experience, we can say with certainty tomorrow will not go exactly as we envisioned. Our lives are influenced by so many factors and the world is complex. Rather than be surprised by the unexpected, maybe we should expect the unexpected.

Living in this manner causes us to cherish more deeply the gifts we have been given. It helps us to live in

the present and become mindful of those around us. Our relationships deepen. Our sense of responsibility builds. Our stewardship way of life finds new meaning and purpose.

This Advent will not be the same experience as last Advent. It remains to be seen what the coming days and weeks have in store for each of us. However, no matter what happens, Jesus Christ is there to welcome us to the unexpected. He will celebrate with us in joy and he will even feel our pain. You can count on the unexpected, but you can also count on Him to be there with you. He is now and forever Emmanuel, “God with us.” He is the expected in all things unexpected.

<https://4pi.com/blog/first-sunday-advent-2017/>



2022 Advent & Christmas Calendar of Events at St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church

The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary (Holy Day of Obligation)

Vigil Wednesday, December 7 | 6:00 PM

Thursday, December 8 | 8:15 AM & 6:00 PM

Parish Reconciliation Service

Saturday, December 10 | 9:00 AM

Wednesday, December 14 | 6:30 PM

Lessons and Carols - A Service of Scripture and Song

Friday, December 16 | 7:00 PM

Las Posadas - Community Center Gymnasium

Sunday, December 18 | After 2:00 PM Mass

Mary Mother of God

Saturday December 31 & Sunday January 1 | Regular Mass Schedule

Epiphany of the Lord

Saturday & Sunday January 7 & 8 | Regular Mass Schedule

The Most Wonderful Time



By Megan Byers

Advent and Christmas are my favorite seasons in the liturgical calendar; in combination with the Hallmark season of Christmas, it's the most wonderful time of the year! On September 18th, we kicked off Life Teen with a session about the Birth of Jesus. We ended the night by venerating the Creche (Manger) in the Day Chapel. When I asked to use the Manger from our parish nativity scene, everyone was confused. "It's not time for that yet Megan..." The misunderstanding being that Christmas is in December not September. When I explained that we were discussing the birth of Jesus and I wanted the teens to see a physical reminder of the Incarnation, the confusion lessened, but didn't disappear.

The liturgical calendar is a great gift to the Church that allows us to cyclically celebrate the birth, public ministry, death, and resurrection of our Lord year after year. Sometimes, I feel that the routine gets in the way of experiencing wonder and awe when confronted by the truth of our faith.

God became man. Word became flesh so that we might know the Father's love for us!!

It was a gift to discuss the life of Jesus with our teens, to bring them back to the beginning, to the story of the Nativity that we know so well.

I knew most of the information we covered wasn't going to be brand new, but wanted to stress that the Gospel message is important to revisit, even outside of the liturgically appropriate season.

We asked our teens preparing for Confirmation to complete a few reflection questions to see how they connected with the life of Jesus. Many of our teens remained curious about Jesus' childhood - the time of his life that we know the least about. We can read about his birth, the visit from the Magi, his family's flight to and return from Egypt, the presentation... but from the time he is found in the temple at twelve years old until his Baptism and the start of His public ministry the Gospel of Luke tells us, "Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and favor before God and man." Luke 2:52

I knew that they were taking the reflection seriously when most of their questions were about the stories that don't appear in scripture. They let themselves become captivated by the life of Jesus so much that they now have questions about the stories we don't get to hear: the hidden life of Jesus. This brings me great joy, but is also a source of frustration because I can't give them a clear, definite answer.

Based on what we know historically and a few details in scripture, we can imagine what Jesus' life

looked like as a child. Joseph was a carpenter, so he probably learned His earthly father's trade. Jesus came from a family of faithful Jews, they went to the temple in Jerusalem, had Shabbat dinners, and celebrated Passover. Jesus memorized scripture and prayers as was custom, but some of the more mundane moments of life aren't recorded in scripture. The moments where Jesus played games with his friends and the chores he completed for Mary remain a mystery.

But their curiosity is good! It is a gift to not have an answer because it means I get to encourage them to bring their questions to Jesus himself in prayer. Imagining the hidden moments of Jesus' life will hopefully allow each teen to invite Jesus into the hidden moments of their own lives. This is when prayer comes alive.

I want to challenge all of you reading this article in the same way I challenged the high schoolers at Life Teen. Allow yourself to hear the stories of the Annunciation and Nativity and Visit of the Magi with new ears. Ask for the grace to be open to receiving what the Lord wants to give you. Let the beginning of the Gospel message, the Incarnation, strike you and transform the way you live and celebrate the Christmas season. Invite Jesus into the hidden moments of your life: the shopping, preparation for family, time around the dinner table, travel.

I pray that the members of this parish may encounter the Lord in a new and powerful way that allows us to receive the Gospel with joy! May this season be less about routine and more about approaching the birth of Jesus with a sense of wonder and awe. May it be the most wonderful time of the year!

Megan Byers is the Director of Youth Ministry at St. Mark the Evangelist.

Festival of Lessons and Carols

By Joshua Frilling

The Festival of Lessons and Carols is a service of Scripture and song that dates to the late 19th century.

In this service, we listen to nine Scripture lessons which recount the Fall, the promise of a Messiah, the Incarnation, and the Great Commission to preach the Good News.

Each lesson is followed by a carol or other song that reflects on the lesson's message and a brief prayer.

You are all invited to join us for this year's presentation of Lessons and Carols here at St. Mark the Evangelist featuring our Music Ministry on December 16, at 7:00 pm in the main sanctuary. Admission to this event is free. We are looking forward to this event and to be able to listen to scripture and join in song with our parish community.

Joshua Frilling is the Music Director at St. Mark the Evangelist.

The Yvonne Cosgrove Concert Series

PRESENTS

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Save the Date

Feast Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe

The Society of Our Lady of Guadalupe cordially invites you to the Las Mañanitas Rosary and Our Lady of Guadalupe Feast Day Mass

Date: Monday, December 12, 2022

Time:

- 6:30 AM Rosary
- 7:00 AM Las Mañanitas Mass

Location: St. Mark's Main Sanctuary

Join us for breakfast in Shalom after Mass!

For information on St. Mark's Society of Our Lady of Guadalupe contact Diana Palacios at dpalac68@gmail.com

Christmas Pageant

Children ages 5-10 years old are invited to participate in the re-enactment of the Christmas Gospel story during the Children's Christmas Eve Mass on Saturday, Dec. 24 at 4PM. Costumes will be provided.

A mandatory rehearsal will be held on Monday, Dec. 19, from 4:00-5:00pm in the Main Sanctuary.

The children will receive their costumes at that time.

(There is a \$15 deposit fee, which will be reimbursed when the costumes have been returned after the Christmas Eve Mass).

Children MUST be dressed in their costume by 3:30pm on Saturday, Dec. 24, 2022

We invite you to the Baby Shower for Mary & Joseph Sunday, Dec. 11, 2022 from 8:30-9:45am and 11:30am-12:45pm in the Gym
Gifts brought will go to Guadalupe Home for Unwed Moms.

Christ Calls His Young Church



By Blake Tamez

What does it mean to be called by God, to “have a vocation” as we commonly hear? The catechism defines vocation as “the calling or destiny we have in this life and hereafter. God has created the human person to love and serve him; the fulfillment of this vocation is eternal happiness.” In this way, each one of us “has a vocation”! This call to eternal happiness is a gift that each of us must respond to and pursue with abandon, trusting in the grace of Christ to enliven and sustain us on the journey. A life of love and service, in response to our universal call to holiness, is manifested through a particular state of life: dedicated single life, marriage, priesthood, the diaconate, or consecrated life. This past semester has provided several opportunities for the young people of our parish to discover the meaning of vocation and discern how they can best offer their lives in loving service to God and neighbor.

In October, a couple of our high school boys participated in the Archdiocesan Vocation Office’s Come and See at Assumption Seminary.

The day-long experience was led by seminarians and included a tour of the seminary, presentations on prayer and discernment, Mass and conversation with Bishop Gary Janak, one-on-one spiritual chats, as well as a time of recreation. The day’s events gave participants a small peak into life at the seminary and resources on furthering their discernment of the priesthood.

In early November, we celebrated National Vocations Awareness Week (NVAW). What is NVAW? The USCCB explains: [NVAW] ...is an annual week-long celebration of the Catholic Church in the United States dedicated to promoting vocations to the priesthood, diaconate, and consecrated life through prayer and education, and to renew our prayers and support for those who are considering one of these particular vocations.” St. Mark had the honor of receiving Bishop Gary to celebrate the Sunday evening Mass as a kickoff to this week of prayer and education. It was a joy to have so many of our families gathered for worship with one of our bishops as he encouraged them to be generous in their response to Christ. The promotion of

vocations within our parish is a year-round endeavor, and each of us has a role to play through our prayers, encouragement and example given to young people, and commitment to celebrate the unique beauty of the different states of life.

Be sure to follow the Vocation Office on Facebook (www.facebook.com/SAVocations) and Instagram (@savocations) to see updates on opportunities to promote a culture of vocations in our archdiocese. Please pray that our young people will embrace their call to holiness, seriously discern their particular state of life within the Church, and dedicate themselves to the mission of Christ.

Blake Tamez is the Former Director of Youth Ministry at St. Mark the Evangelist.

**LAS POSADAS
2022**



St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church

**Your are invited
to join a live
representation
depicting the
moments when
Joseph and Mary
were unable to find
lodging in Bethlehem
when the birth of
Jesus was at hand.**

**SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18TH
AFTER THE
2:00 PM MASS
IN THE COMMUNITY
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St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church

The
WINGED LION

DEC/JAN 2022

Pastor: Rev. Dennis Aréchiga

Mass Schedule

Saturday	5:00 pm
Sunday	8:00am, 10:00 am, (livesreamed) 12 Noon 2:00 pm (Spanish) 5:00 pm
Monday	8:15 am
Tuesday	8:15 am
Wednesday	8:15 am, 6:00 pm (Day Chapel)
Thursday	8:15 am
Friday	8:15 am

First Saturday Mass 9:30 am
Holy Days
8:15am & 6pm

Eve of Holy Day
6pm

Reconciliation
Saturday 3:30-5pm

Adoration
Tuesday-Thursday, 9am-4:45pm
Wednesday 9:00 am - 8:45 pm

Our mission:
TO SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS
OF JESUS CHRIST TO ALL GOD'S
PEOPLE BY WORD AND ACTION.

He said to them, "Go into the whole world and
proclaim the gospel to every creature..."

Mark 16:15



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