

ST. MARK THE EVANGELIST CATHOLIC CHURCH

THE WINGED LION

★ COMMUNITY NEWS

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SUMMER 2026 EDITION



TO SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST TO ALL GOD'S PEOPLE IN WORD AND ACTION.

ST. MARK THE EVANGELIST MISSION STATEMENT

From Blossom Athletic Center to West Campus in 50 Years

By Rev. Dennis D. Aréchiga

This September, we will begin a year-long celebration of the 50th anniversary of the founding of our parish. Much has changed from the time when our founding parishioners began meeting to dream about what a new parish would be like for this northern section of San Antonio. The parish began meeting in the Spring of the bicentennial year of our nation, 1976, and the first Mass was celebrated on September 19, 1976, at the N.E.I.S.D. Blossom Athletic Center Facilities. There were 325 Founding Families of our parish. Some of the fond names given to St. Mark were "St. Blossom" and even "St. Mark of the Folding Chairs!"

In February 1979, ground was broken on our current campus for the building of the first church. It was dedicated in December of that same year. Our parish also opened the St. Mark Catholic Preschool. Within those first three years, the parish doubled in membership to 600 families. In 1981, sports fields and a multipurpose field house were completed in what are now the Scout Hut, our main church, and the adjacent parking lot locations. On June 30, 1985, a multi-functional Community Center was built, which offered classrooms for religious education instruction, a gym, offices, and other meeting spaces.

As the C.Y.O. sports program continued to grow and develop, there was a need for larger ballfields. In 1997, the parish purchased 18 acres of land on Bulverde Road, just north of Wetmore Road, for a new Sports Park. With more families worshipping at St. Mark, there was a dire need for a larger church.

The parish made a bold move in building our current church, dedicated in 2000, which can accommodate 1,500 people. Since our church can hold more people than any other parish in our Archdiocese, we soon became pivotal in hosting large, archdiocesan liturgies and gatherings such as the Rite of Election, Adult Confirmation Masses, the Chrism Mass, Ordinations of both permanent and transitional deacons, priests, and even bishops! Every August, we host the Catholic School Convocation Mass before the beginning of

the school year, and we often host baccalaureate Masses for local Catholic High Schools, such as Incarnate Word. Bishop Gary Janak jokingly said that St. Mark should be called the "Co-Cathedral" alongside San Fernando Cathedral since so many archdiocesan gatherings are held here!

Artist Donna L. Dobberful, a nationally known studio sculptor who received her M.F.A. at the New York Academy of Art and a graduate degree from the School of Figurative Art in Manhattan, designed the wall mural depicting the "Ascending Christ," a symbol of hope and welcome for all people. This trademark work includes mosaic tiles that radiate like rays from the central figure; there is also a recessed area for the positioning of the Processional Cross. A visitor from Long Island was extremely impressed by this incredible work of art and asked whether the outline of Christ was intentionally shaped like the state of Texas! The answer is "No!"

Artist and sculptor Jerry McKenna, who received his BFA from the University of Notre Dame and a graduate degree from Webster University, created the bronze baptismal font from his studio in Boerne. The late Sister Mary Peter Tremonte, O.P., created the: "Risen Christ" image in the chapel; tabernacle; Stations of the Cross; Marion bas-relief; Ambry, which houses the three oils of the church – Oil of Catechumens (OS), Oil of Chrism (SC), and the Oil of the Sick (OI); bronze bas-relief plaque of John the Baptist baptizing Jesus; and stained glass window in the Reconciliation Room showing a repentant sinner on his knees receiving a blessing from Our Lord.

The stained-glass windows in our worship spaces were purchased from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia. They were designed by French and German artists for St. Bonaventure and St. Edward the Confessor Catholic Churches in inner-city Philadelphia. The Beyer Studio in Philadelphia saved the windows before those churches were demolished and renovated them. They then transported and installed the following windows: "Peter and the Apostles" in the Gathering Space;

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Un reflexión en el segundo año misión cuaresmal en español



By Ciro Barragan

El sábado 28 de marzo de 2026, la parroquia de San Marcos Evangelista, por segundo año consecutivo, llevó a cabo la Misión Cuaresmal en español, la cual fue presentada por el P. Antonio Ponce, OMI, con el objetivo de fortalecer y ayudar a los feligreses a prepararse para la Pascua y la Resurrección de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo. La Misión Cuaresmal 2026 en español se definió como “Cuaresma, tiempo de escucha, arrepentimiento, confesión, y conversión.”

El Padre Antonio guió a los feligreses dando ejemplos y explicando que la vida espiritual sigue un orden claro: primero viene la escucha – donde abrimos el corazón para oír a Dios y tomar conciencia; luego el arrepentimiento – al reconocer nuestros pecados y sentir un dolor sincero por ellos; después la confesión – cuando acudimos a Dios, especialmente en el sacramento, para recibir su perdón; y finalmente la conversión – que nos lleva a cambiar de vida y caminar de nuevo con Él.

Es un proceso: Dios habla → el corazón responde → Dios perdona → la vida cambia.

El Padre Antonio enfatizó, “La Cuaresma no es solo un tiempo de reflexión, sino una misión – un llamado concreto de Dios a transformar el corazón.” Así como Cristo fue enviado al desierto para prepararse en oración, ayuno, y entrega, también cada cristiano recibe una misión personal durante este tiempo santo. “Nuestra misión cuaresmal tiene un propósito claro: volver a Dios con todo el corazón.” Es una tarea espiritual que nos invita a dejar atrás el pecado, ordenar nuestras prioridades, y renovar nuestra relación con Él. No es algo pasivo, sino una acción decidida: orar con más profundidad, ayunar con sentido, y practicar la caridad con amor sincero.

“Esta misión también es un envío.” No caminamos

solos ni nos quedamos encerrados en nosotros mismos. Dios nos envía a ser luz para otros – en nuestra familia, en el trabajo, en cada encuentro diario. La conversión personal se convierte en testimonio vivo. En la misión cuaresmal, Cristo mismo es nuestro modelo. Él no solo nos muestra el camino, sino que nos acompaña. Nuestra misión, entonces, es unirnos a la suya – amar, perdonar, servir, y confiar en el Padre.

Al final, la misión cuaresmal no termina en la cruz, sino en la esperanza de la Resurrección, porque toda misión en Cristo tiene un propósito eterno: la vida nueva. Aunque la Cuaresma es un tiempo especial, y la fiesta más grande es la Resurrección de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo, la misión continúa todos los días de nuestra vida. No es solo para guardarla dentro de nosotros, sino para compartirla con el mundo en nuestra vida cotidiana y en la vocación a la que hemos sido llamados, ya sea como consagrados o como laicos.

El evento contó con una concurrida asistencia de feligreses de esta parroquia, en la cual tanto el presentador como los asistentes estuvieron activos – escuchando, haciendo preguntas, y compartiendo entre sí. También convivieron durante el desayuno y una buena comida; pero, más importante aún, se comprometieron a vivir el mensaje.

Ciro Barragan is a parishioner who attended the Spanish Lenten Mission.





Laying Out the Welcome Mat for Our New Families to Help Form Lasting Connections

By Marybeth Green

The Welcome Committee serves as a friendly first connection for new parishioners at St. Mark, guided by our goal to warmly welcome all who enter, foster meaningful connections, and help each person feel known, valued, and at home in our parish community. Each quarter, we host a Welcome Table in the Narthex after each Mass, where we have the opportunity to meet and greet new parishioners, answer questions, and begin building relationships. During this time, we provide helpful materials that introduce parish ministries, share the history of St. Mark, and include a coloring book highlighting our priests and locations within our parish. Just as important, we take time to listen, learning about the needs, concerns, and hopes of those joining our community.

At the heart of our ministry is a commitment to building genuine community. We strive

to create opportunities for new parishioners to connect with others, feel comfortable asking questions, and begin forming relationships. By introducing them to parish ministries and inviting them to participate in events and service opportunities, we help open doors for deeper involvement. Our goal is to walk alongside each person as they move from feeling like a visitor to becoming a valued and active member of our parish family.

Since January, our outreach has expanded to include phone calls to new parishioners, offering a personal touch and ensuring they feel supported beyond their first visit. These conversations provide an opportunity to check in, answer questions, and help individuals and families feel more connected as they begin to find their place within the St. Mark community.

As our parish continues to grow, so does the need for warm and welcoming faces.

This ministry requires a small time commitment, with involvement taking just a few minutes after Mass during our quarterly Welcome Table events or a few minutes making a friendly phone call. If you have a heart for hospitality and enjoy helping others feel at home, we invite you to consider joining the Welcome Committee. Your smile, your listening ear, and your presence can make a lasting difference in someone's journey at St. Mark. Please come by our table at the next Ministry Fair, or contact Marybeth Green at marybe6262@aol.com or John Green at docgreen3@aol.com.

We are also always looking for more ways to make our new parishioners welcome. If you have ideas that you have seen implemented at other parishes, please send them to the email addresses above.

Marybeth Green is the lead of St. Mark's Welcome Committee.



Champions Who Abide

By Megan Byers

This Spring has been a fruitful and spirit-filled time for St. Mark Youth Ministry. We hosted two retreats for the young people of our parish; both retreats broke attendance records as the largest retreats since 2020 for middle and high school!

Our Edge retreat had a Super Bowl theme, entitled "Champions." The teens were led through various team building activities throughout the day and reflected on perseverance in life and faith. Fr. Dennis and Fr. Albert offered the Sacrament of Reconciliation to all who attended and Fr.

Albert stayed to lead the teens through Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. We were also blessed to have the help of some of our adult core team and high school teen leaders to give talks about striving for virtue and Christ's victory He won for us! The middle schoolers loved praise and worship. It was a particular gift to see the high school leaders and middle school retreatants interact, talk about their faith, and praise the Lord together. One of our high schoolers gave a talk about her journey of faith and shared that, "I used to go to Mass because I had to, now I go because I know Who is there."

Our theme for the high school spring retreat was taken from

chapter 15 of the Gospel of John, "abide." The youth were guided through meditations about how to remain in God's love and were given the tools for how to abide in Christ even when they are not on retreat and life gets hard. There really is nothing like witnessing a group of young people praise the Lord together and give their hearts, doubts, anxieties, and lives to Christ.

It was a blessing to have Fr. Albert with us for the weekend, providing Sacraments and ministering to the youth. He gave a powerful talk right before Mass and asked the teens, "Are you in love with Jesus?" So many of them got to reflect on where they are in their faith, what they want their relationship with Jesus to look like, and what it will take to get there.

This group of young people is special. They are desiring to grow in their faith and are actively choosing to follow Jesus. Please keep them in your prayers.

Megan Byers is the St. Mark Youth Ministry Coordinator.





Spreading the Kingdom

By Elaine Diaz

The Tuesday Morning Bible Study (TMBS) is thrilled to present our 2026-2027 study, *Acts: The Spread of the Kingdom*. The Acts of the Apostles is a compelling story of how a few Christians, empowered by the Holy Spirit, were chosen to bring Christ and the Good News to the ends of the earth. They faced secular forces, internal strife, and hostile crowds, and despite all of this, they brought the kingdom of God to a broken world and the love of God to the hearts of men.

Acts: The Spread of the Kingdom provides a historic framework for understanding the rest of the New Testament. In Acts, you will:

- See how the Gospel witnesses spread outward in waves, from Jerusalem to Judea and Samaria and finally to the ends of the Earth;
- Share with the early Christians the joys and struggles of living the life of Christ;
- See how the Holy Spirit guided the apostles in the Truth;
- Observe the way the Spirit-filled Church adapted to new cultures when proclaiming the Gospel;
- See your place in the Church as a disciple of Christ;
- And so much more!

This 20-week study, written by Jeff Cavins and Sarah Christmyer and narrated by Jeff Cavins, will begin on September 15, 2026, and run through February 23, 2027. Registration will take place in the Narthex after all Masses the weekend of August 1st and 2nd. For more information about this study, please contact Elaine Diaz at (210) 725-9718.

Elaine Diaz is a member of the Tuesday Morning Bible Study Core Team.



TnT Extends Gratitude

By Carol Haman

St Mark parishioners, it is with sincere gratitude for all your contributions, for the women and men's hours of labor to move and set up our sale, and for inviting customers who discover your secondhand treasures, that our Women's Guild accomplished yet another super successful Trash and Treasure (TnT) sale. The TnT crew work hard throughout the year as a mission to do God's work.

Every sale is an adventure, and this was no exception. It's like searching a "Where's Waldo?" picture puzzle when you enter the Event Center! Enter at your own risk, with no budget in mind! There's really no trash because, you know, one person's trash is indeed another person's treasure!

Our goal remains to help as many as possible by continuing to do God's will. Donation collection has resumed from 10 am to 1:30 pm. We'll see you in front of Building #9 to begin a new adventure for the August 28-30 sale.

Carol Haman is the Women's Guild Trash & Treasure lead.



Staff Highlights



YOINEL SUAREZ

Felicidades to Yoinel & Damayanti

With heartfelt joy, we celebrate Yoinel and Damayanti's convalidation and this beautiful step in their sacramental journey. May their marriage continue to be blessed with grace, unity, and enduring love.



Gloria Hernandez

We Can't Wait to Meet Baby Olivia!

We are delighted to share the joyful news of an expected little one this August! Please keep Gloria and Baby Olivia in prayer, that they may be surrounded by strength, safety, and God's abundant grace throughout this journey.

Daniel Mendez

Welcome to Our New Facilities Manager

We are pleased to welcome our new Facility Manager, Daniel, whose leadership and expertise will support the smooth operation of our facilities.



Sarah Tarrillion + Rita Cabello

Saying Goodbye...

We said goodbye to Sarah as she is focusing on her family, and we wish her many blessings.

We also congratulate Rita on her retirement after 18 years of service, and we wish her a wonderful and well-earned retirement!



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From Blossom Athletic Center

“The Holy Family” and “Mary Magdalene and Jesus” in the Eucharistic Reservation Chapel; the 13 total geometric style windows in the Main Sanctuary; and six in the Day Chapel. The Cavallini Company of San Antonio designed the seven small windows depicting the Sacraments. These windows are in the wall between the main sanctuary and the Eucharistic Reservation Chapel and Reconciliation Room. Artist Mark Humenick from Humenick Liturgical Arts based in Santa Fe, NM, designed the: altar; ambo; processional cross; lamp with the perpetually lit candle that accompanies the tabernacle; candlesticks; holy water fonts; cantor stand; and credence tables – the tables used in the sanctuary to hold the sacred vessels.

“On November 21, 2009, the John-Paul Buzzard Opus 38 Organ was dedicated in our parish. The Buzzard Co. is based in Champaign, IL, and the organ includes 35 independent stops, 43 ranks of pipes, and three manuals – “Great,” “Swell,” and “Choir.” One of the manuals, the “Choir,” is connected to the secondary set of pipes that are located behind the choir area. We also have a beautiful set of pontifical trumpets that hover over the central entrance of our church. Every Spring, First Presbyterian Church in downtown San Antonio hosts an organ competition for undergraduate and graduate-level organists enrolled in colleges and universities within our state. The winner performs at St. Mark in the Fall; don’t miss the upcoming concert this Fall.

In 2012, artist Cathy Haley made the 5’4” tall Ten Commandment monument, with the Beatitudes on the other side, for our grounds. In 2013, the former Church of Christ sold their land and property to St. Mark for what we now call our West Campus. This provided a valuable access from Highway 281, as well as our current Event Center, Guadalupe Room, multiple classrooms, C.Y.O. gym, the kitchen where meals are prepared for Traveling Loaves and Fishes, several portable buildings used for storage and the TLF office, Building 9 – currently used for the Prayer Shawl Ministry, Rosary Makers Ministry, and storage for the Women’s Guild Trash & Treasure and Book Sales, and an additional storage building. The rooms on West Campus are used for Bible Study, meetings, and also house our counselors. A 15-year, \$4.5 million loan was secured in 2013, which has a current balance of \$349,417 as of this May, and is our only current parish debt.



Looking back, a lot has happened these past 50 years at our parish! We continue to use all of our facilities, worship spaces, visual and musical arts, and even our sports venues to live out our mission statement in the year 2026 and beyond. Let us be grateful for all the past pastors, parochial vicars, religious sisters, lay staff members, volunteers, and parishioners who have supported our parish with their time, talents, and treasures, making St. Mark the Evangelist the great community of faith we have today.

Rev. Dennis D. Aréchiga, Pastor



**N.E.I.S.D. Blossom
Athletic Center**



Main Sanctuary



West Campus