



Join us for our 3rd annual Blue Mass on Thursday, September 11, 6:30 pm to honor our First Responders. See page 8 for details.

SAINT MARK

23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time, September 7, 2025, Spanish Page 16

Welcome to St. Mark



Thank you to all of our parents, catechists, and staff who make this ministry possible through your time, dedication, and love for our young people.

As our campus will be extra busy, we kindly ask everyone to use caution and patience in the parking lot for the safety of our children and families.

Please keep all of our students, catechists, staff, and families in your prayers as we begin this new year of growing together in faith

Today is the 23rd Sunday in Ordinary Time. The readings can be found on page 1184. Music handouts are at the entrances; see an usher if you did not receive one.

Thank you for being a part of our parish, either as a visitor or a long-time parishioner. We are thankful that you are here and welcome you back anytime for Mass, prayer in our Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration Chapel or any of our programs.

At St. Mark, we believe we are all called as one by Christ to embrace the spirit of stewardship and engagement to Grow in Christ, Serve One Another, Share Our Gifts and Connect in Faith. This mission is our quest for holiness. It is by our intentional discipleship that each of us become stewards of the gifts God has given us and to share them with others. Our time, our talent and our treasure are given to us by God to share with others by spreading the Gospel and building His kingdom.

If you are interested in registering as a member of St. Mark, please go to stmarknc.org/registration or use

the QR code. You may submit the form online or bring a paper copy to the Welcome Desk during business hours, including Sunday 8:30 am-12:15 pm. Forms can be found in the narthex. Please know, you do not need to be Catholic to join and come to our parish.



At the close of Mass, join us in the Prayer to St. Michael. Please do not leave the church until after the priests, deacons, and servers have exited the church. Thank you



aint Michael, the Archangel, defend us in battle. Be our protection against the wickedness and snares of the Devil. May God rebuke him, we humbly pray; and do Thou, O Prince of the Heavenly Host, by the Power of God, cast into hell, Satan and all the evil spirits, who prowl about the world seeking the ruin of souls. Amen.

Guidelines for Communion For Catholics

- 1. To be in a state of grace, that is to say, to be free from any unconfessed mortal sin.
- To abstain for at least one hour before Holy Communion from any food and drink, with the exception of water and medicine.
- 3. To know what you are receiving and to approach the altar with devotion.
- St. Mark uses altar rails. Please go to the far end of the rail and either kneel to receive Holy Communion on the tongue or remain standing to receive in your hand. The distribution of the Precious Blood remains suspended.
- Please consume the Holy Eucharist in front of the minister of Holy Communion, before walking away.

For Non-Catholics: We welcome you to Holy Mass and are glad you are here. Please feel free to participate by singing, standing, kneeling, etc. However, the reception of Holy Communion is reserved for Catholics in a state of grace. At the time of Communion, please feel free to come forward with your arms crossed over your chest for a blessing or to remain in your pew.

See page 1302 in the hymnal for more information.

FROM THE PASTOR



Today's readings make very clear the demands that will be made of those wanting to be called disciples of Christ. We must be prepared to give our all to Him. But in the end, the life of discipleship

— the stewardship way of life — is the only life that can truly satisfy.

In the Gospel passage from Luke, Christ says, "If anyone comes to me without hating his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, and even his own life, he cannot be my disciple." Our Lord is speaking here not of emotions but rather of priorities. He must come first in all aspects of our lives. Period.

He goes on. "Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after me cannot be my disciple." In other words, it's all or nothing. Compromise is simply not possible. Christ wants us to give all of ourselves, all aspects of our individual lives, our family life, our parish over to Him and to the pursuit of His kingdom. And just when we think our Lord might soften His message to make it a little more palatable, He goes further! "Anyone of you who does not renounce all his possessions cannot be my disciple." Why is our Lord being so demanding? Only because He knows us so well and loves us so much.

He knows that if we do not live by putting Him first before all else, we will easily be swallowed up by the earthly cares that weigh us down — our material things, our status, and our egos. He knows these things cannot satisfy us. He knows this because He is our Maker, and He made us for more.

We are made to be His disciples, to seek after Him and His Kingdom. Embracing stewardship as a way of life allows us to count the cost and then run after Him with all our might.

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Pastoral Pondering - Over the last several years, I have noticed, and statistics seem to bear this out, that suicides and attempted suicides have been on the rise, especially among young people. The 18-30 demographic seems to be especially susceptible. I'm sure the roots of that type of despair start much younger, but funerals that I have celebrated or know about are always very heavy, spiritually. I have been speaking with my leadership team about ways that we, as a parish, could address this issue and be proactive in providing outreach and support. I thought it would be helpful to provide an outline of the Church's teaching on the topic and encourage us all to think of ways that we can be a help in slowing the tide.

Hope in Christ: A Catholic Reflection on Suicide

The Gift of Life

The Church proclaims that every human life is sacred and created in love by God. "God alone is the Lord of life from its beginning until its end" (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2258). Suicide is a grave matter, because it rejects the gift of life entrusted to us (CCC 2280–2281). Yet the Church also teaches that grave psychological suffering, fear, or illness can lessen a person's responsibility. For this reason, we do not despair of the salvation of those who have taken their own lives but entrust them with hope to the mercy of God (CCC 2282–2283).

Why Young Adults Are at Risk

Many young people today face loneliness, anxiety, and the pressure to be "perfect." Pope Francis, in Christus Vivit, reminds the Church that young adults need to know they are not alone: "The Church must be a place of compassion, where they are listened to and accompanied with respect" (CV 242 –247). Suicide often grows out of a crisis of meaning, when life feels empty or burdensome. The Gospel answers with a

promise: each life has a God-given purpose that no failure or suffering can erase.

Our Christian Response

Compassion and Mercy. The Church rejects judgment and instead offers prayer, accompaniment, and hope for those who have died and for their families

A Community of Belonging. Gaudium et Spes teaches that we only find ourselves through sincere gift of self (GS 24). Our parishes must be places where every young person knows they belong.

Seeking Help Is Holy. The Catechism calls care for health a moral duty (CCC 2288). Turning to counseling, medical support, or trusted mentors is a way of honoring God's gift of life.

The Cross Brings Meaning. Saint John Paul II wrote that our suffering, united with Christ's Passion, can become a source of redemption (Salvifici Doloris 18–19). No suffering is meaningless in Christ.

A Word of Hope

As followers of Jesus, we must say clearly: if you are struggling, you are not alone. Your life is not a mistake. God loves you. The Church loves you. Reach out — to a friend, to your priest, to a counselor. Asking for help is an act of courage and faith.

Prayer

God of mercy, embrace all who struggle with despair,

especially our young people. Fill their hearts with the light of Your love. Receive into Your peace those who have died,

console their families, and make our parish a home of hope, healing, and belonging. Amen.

If you or someone you know is struggling, please reach out. In the U.S., dial 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline).

Help. Hope. Healing. Stephen Ministry at St. Mark

The Stephen Ministry is made up of St. Mark parishioners who have received extensive training to give emotional and spiritual care/support to fellow parishioners as well as to those in our community. This ministry is a confidential, one to one opportunity to receive Christian care in a comfortable meeting place, whether in your home, parish hall, or even in a park setting. We all go through difficult times. Stephen Ministry is here to serve you, so you don't have to suffer alone. For more information, please contact Leanne Vaccaro at leanne.vaccaro@stmarknc.org or Rich Kull at rkull@optonline.net or visit our website at stmarknc.org/Stephen-ministry.

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Please Pray For Julie Andrews Sarah Armstrong **Donald Arrup** John & Casey Ball Daisy Bayona Deidre Beck Richard Biddy Beatrice Bilodeau Brian Blatchford & Family Virginia "Gini" Bond Kathy Brandt Dave Breen Helen Sally Buff Elaine Burkinshaw Carmen Cabranes Anne Caestecker Michelle Chichone Murphy Clark Beth Collins William Conklin Janice D'Angelo Sheila DeArmon Judy and Rich Deboer John Deluca Henry Diener Jane & William Dragoon James Dupree Barbara Dutty James P. Durcan Jack Evans Frances & Kai Ferell & Family Charles Fillipo Al Fischlein

To submit a prayer request, visit: stmarknc.org/prayerchain

Hank Griffin John Grivizas Helen Haddad Kevin Herman Sr. Hannah Hopkins Frank Hunnicutt III Jerry Jackson Jr. Cathi Kalberier Karen Kastle Gary Katz Carol & Frank Kenny Dennis Koenig Jackie Kopicki Peggie Lauricella Joan Lesch Marie Ligon Peter R. Loew Kitty Long Mary Jo Lucey Dr. Sivaramalingam Manickavasagar Patrick & Annette Mann Rosina Marcucci Vernon McCord Cathy Milligan Terry Milstead Lucille Modica Vincent Montoya Haleigh Moss Elizabeth Mulligan Jamie Mulvihill Angeles Murphy

Vernon McCord
Cathy Milligan
Terry Milstead
Lucille Modica
Vincent Montoya
Haleigh Moss
Elizabeth Mulligan
Jamie Mulvihill
Angeles Murphy
Maria Magdalena Murphy
Carl Muti
Paul Nealon Jr.
Margaret Nelson
The Ober Family
Blanca Yolanda Ojeda
Margaret Paquette
Hazel Palmer
The Patterson Family
Fernando Paverpai
John Pecoraro

Doug Peterson Angela Piraino Gianni Piraino Ella Postlewait Nicole & Bruce Preiss Thomas Ranney Gretchen Rasheed Joette Reid Lindsay Remington **Butch Remesch** Lola Rodriguez Madge Root Maria Rubinos Thomas Rynne Phyllis Searles Daniel Sheffield Deacon Ronald Sherwood

Deacon Ronald Sherwo & Family Mark Shields Sue Sia Todd Singh Robert Somerville Betsy Spartz Jeff Stark Dr. Edward Staudinge John Williams Stoker &

Family
Terri Summers
The Tate Family
Kenneth Terry & Family
Cheryl Thompson
Mike Tolbert
Alston Torres
Zaida Torres

Zaida Torres
Zaida Torres
Lucia Solis Vallarino
Robert Virgint
Caroline Vogel
Jonathan Wark
Welcome Retreat Staff
Paul Widman
Carol Woodard
Mary Jane Zimmerman

MASS INTENTIONS

Sunday, September 7

7:30 am St. Mark Parishioners 9 am Liam & Kyla Heidtman 11 am † Michael Warner

1 pm † Manuel Serafin Velazquez

4:30 pm † Rita Schenosky

Mrs. Campbell & Mrs. Blain

5 pm Todd & Mark Singh

Monday, September 8

7 am † Rachel A. Guerrero 9 am † Michael Otto

Tuesday, September 9
7 am † John Donahue

9 am † Rosina Manganiello Marcucci

6:30 pm Gretchen Brinkman

† Paul Fortin Thursday, September 11

7 am † Jane M. Coester 9 am † Jose Mendoza

Friday, September 12

7 am Maria Benedikovicova 9 am Respect Life Ministry 7 pm Souls in Purgatory Saturday, September 13

9 am Hannah Nobers 5 pm † Jon Ross Sunday, September 14

7:30 am † Dominick Belardo Jr. 9 am St. Mark Parishioners 11 am Adam Kennedy

4:25 pm † Carol Anne Moran 5 pm Juancisman Nunoz

†Deceased

May God's grace be with the families of our recently deceased.

Juana Alvarez Flores, Mother of Jorge Perez Alverez and family

Johannah Holleran, Mother of Dan Holleran

Pray for Our Military

Joseph Fiore

Alan Friedl & Family

Denny & Monica Golden

Maureen K. Frost

Carmine Gallo

Josette Grace

Robert Graham

Tom Fox

Teri Gay

Air Force: Airman Gregory Burke; Airman Antoinio Diaz; Lt. Col. Michael Dragoon; Capt. Stephen Hack; Lt. Col. Douglas Lincoln; Capt. Ryan Loyd; Alejandro Martinez; Sgt. James McCormick; 2nd Lt Connor Milligan; SrA. Benjamin Salber; Airman Chloe Scott

Army: 2nd Lt. Amelia Andretti; 1st Lt. Patrick Camatcho; 1st Lt. Sarah Camatcho; Major Robert Caraccilo; SSgt. Darcy Fisher; Kyle Hawk; PFC. J. Parker Hogan; Capt. John Hughes; Pvt. Chaz Margo; Maj. Daniel McCormick; 2nd Lt. Maria Morell; PV2 Matthew Pressley; Maj. Stephen J. Romeo; Andrew Santos; Capt. Ramon Ricardo Tapia; Spl. Forces Nolan Tillotson; Josh Wagner; 1st Lt. Nick Worth

Marines: LCPL. Richard Breier; Sgt. Andrew Sales; Maj. Matthew Santoli; Cpl. Ben Holden; 1st Lt. Nathanael Rusciolelli

Navy: Matthew J Bixler Jr; LCDR. Matthew Giannone; SR Chase T. Golden; Lt. Albert Remmey, Jr.; LCDR. Jordan Mayo; ENS. Rory Moran, OSSN. Daniel Pressley; LCDR. Jenna Henn Quist; ENS. Tyler Spear; LCDR. William Vey; CTT2. Zachary Wortham and all service members not listed.

READINGS

Sunday Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time Wis 9:13-18b; Ps 90:3-4, 5-6, 12-13, 14 and 17; Phlm 9-10, 12-17; Lk 14:25-33

Monday Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Mi 5:1-4a or Rom 8:28-30; Ps 13:6ab, 6c; Mt 1:1-16, 18-23

Tuesday Memorial of Saint Peter Claver, Priest Col 2:6-15; Ps 145:1b-2, 8-9, 10-11; Lk 6:12-19 **Wednesday** Col 3:1-11; Ps 145:2-3, 10-11, 12-13ab; Lk 6:20-26

Thursday Col 3:12-17; Ps 150:1b-2, 3-4, 5-6; Lk 6:27-38 **Friday** 1 Tm 1:1-2, 12-14; Ps 16:1b-2a and 5, 7-8, 11; Lk 6:39-42

Saturday Memorial of Saint John Chrysostom 1 Tm 1:15-17; Ps 113:1b-2, 3-4, 5 and 6-7; Lk 6:43-49 **Sunday** Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross Nm 21:4b-9; Ps 78:1bc-2, 34-35, 36-37, 38; Phil 2:6-11; Jn 3:13-17



Walking With Moms in Need: Diaper, Formula, and Wipe Drive!

When: Sept. 13-21

Where: Leave donations in Narthex Bin

We are excited to announce the relaunch of our Walking with Moms in Need ministry here at St. Mark! This beautiful initiative is part of our parish's commitment to walk alongside mothers and families facing challenging circumstances, offering not only our prayers but also practical support.

As we begin anew, we invite you to participate in our Diaper, Formula, and Wipe Drive from September 13–21. These essential items will provide immediate help and hope to moms in our community who often feel alone or overwhelmed.

We especially need diaper sizes 3-5 and Similac Baby Formula, although all sizes and brands are welcome.

Your generosity can make a life-changing difference—reminding every mother that she is not alone and that her parish family is here to support her and her child with love. Your donations will go to parishioners, local moms in need, and local agencies serving this community.

Please bring donations to the collection bin in the Narthex during the drive week. Together, let's live out Christ's call to "love one another" and surround moms and babies with the care they deserve.



Fall 40 Days for Life Campaign

When: Wed., Sept. 24-Sun., Nov. 2 Where: Abortion Centers in Charlotte

Join us for prayer, fasting and community outreach to stop abortion! The Fall 2025 40 Days for Life campaign, a peaceful, prayerful and law-abiding campaign, starts on Wednesday, September 24, and ends Sunday, November 2.

There will be two campaign locations in Charlotte this fall:

- Planned Parenthood 700 Torrence St., Charlotte, from 7 am to 7 pm Monday through Saturday.
- A Woman's Choice facility 421 N. Wendover Rd., Charlotte from 8 am to 8 pm, Monday through Saturday.

For more information go to <u>40DaysForLife.com</u>. If you need more information, on the Planned Parenthood location please contact Maureen Barrett at <u>mbarrett25@gmail.com</u> or 571-236-9583.

If you need more information on the Woman's Choice location, please contact Savannah O'Brien at 516-302-7112 or email at charlotte40dfl@gmail.com.

Please come! When even one person prays outside the no show rate for abortions can go as high as 75%.

Go to <u>40DaysforLife.com/charlotte</u> for more information and to sign up or just show up.

There will be a closing rally on Sunday, November 2, at 3 pm in front of the Charlotte Planned Parenthood facility.

PARISH LIFE

Special Event in October! Called and Gifted Charisms Gifts Discernment Workshop

When: Sat. Oct. 25; 9 am - 3:30 pm Where: Kerin Family Center/ Parish Hall



St. Mark has the unique opportunity to host the Catherine of Siena Institute for their transformative *Called and Gifted* workshop on Saturday, October 25. This one-day experience will help you discover the unique spiritual gifts, called charisms, that God has given you, not only for your personal journey but to serve others and reflect Christ's light in the world.

Whether you're navigating one of life's transitions, a new or returning Catholic, a young adult or simply wondering, "How can I follow Jesus' plan for my life?". this workshop is for you.

This event is the first step in a three-part discernment process which also includes a personal interview and small group discernment. There is a \$20 registration fee. Lunch will be provided. Register at stmarknc.org/small-group-registration of scan the code.

PARISH LIFE

Join the Knights of Columbus Ladies' Auxiliary!

When: Mon., Sept 15,6-7 pm Where: Family Center Room 200



The Knights of Columbus Ladies' Auxiliary is a fun and supportive community of like-minded women. Our organization offers women a chance to form friendships, do the work of the parish, and support the mission and activities of the Knights of Columbus.

We raise funds through flower sales at Christmas, Mother's Day, and Easter to provide funding for the St. Joseph College seminarians and Daughters of the Virgin Mother sisters. We provide and sell baked goods at the annual Lenten Fish Fry, help the parish with hospitality at receptions, and run the annual children's Cupcake Walk at SeptemberFest.

Our meetings always include a meal, hospitality, and time to socialize plus we have an annual Christmas party and end-of-year dinner. All women of the parish are invited to our first meeting for the 2025-26 year. We will have a potluck dinner, meetings only last for one hour, however we generally stay and socialize for a while. Please consider joining this wonderful group of women whose mission is to help the community of St. Mark Parish.

Information: MaryJane Zimmerman, email stmarkkocladiesauxiliary2011@gmail.com

Interested in the Nursery?

We are considering restarting the Nursery and would like to get feedback from those families who are interested in participating.

Please take a moment to complete information form on our website at www.stmarknc.org/Nursery, so that we can plan for a reopening.

If you are interested in working in the Nursery, please contact Karen Donahue at karen.donahue@stmarknc.org. You must be 18 years or older and complete our Safe Environment requirements.

Save the Date: Coat, Blanket and Toy Drive

When: Sat., & Sun., Oct. 11 and 12 Where: Family Center Parish Hall

Just a friendly reminder to set aside any gently used or new items for the annual St. Mark Coat/Blanket/Toy Drive! We will collect items in the Kerin Family Center on Saturday and Sunday, October 11 and 12. We are collecting coats for children (birth to 12), teens, women and men; blankets and

comforters; and toys, games, puzzles, books for all ages (birth to teens). We will also take bikes. No clothes please! Tax receipts available.

Thank you in advance for helping those in need in our community! Questions: Katherine Ducey

duceyfive@yahoo.com



Fill us at daybreak with your **kindness**

Psalm 90:14



PARISH LIFE



Singles 45+ Fellowship Event

When: Sun., Sept. 7, 4 pm

Where: 760 Craft Works, 100 Gilead Rd., Huntersville

Come join us for a fun, relaxed afternoon of fellowship. Enjoy great conversation, a lively atmosphere, and delicious eats from the on-site food truck (Butcher Grill). This is a great chance to connect, make new friends, and build community.

Bring a friend—we'd love to see you there! Scan code or RSVP here so we can plan for you:

https://www.signupgenius.com/ go/10C0548A5A82DA6FDCF8-57949268-760craft.





Men's Bible Study – What We Believe: The Beauty of the Catholic Faith

When: Most Wednesday evenings 7:15–8:45 pm, beginning Sept. 10

Where: Room 200 Parish Center

In this study, you will uncover the amazing riches of the Catholic faith. You will also discover:

- What the Catholic Church is all about
- What it means to be Catholic
- What Catholics actually believe
- Who Catholics truly are and how we are called to live
- The profound gift of the sacraments, especially the Holy Eucharist, the source and summit of our Faith
- How to imitate Christ through prayer, through personal conversion, and through love for others

Founded by Christ himself, the Catholic Church is where we encounter God in his Word, his sacraments, and his saints. Maybe you've been Catholic your entire life, recently returned to the faith or converted into the faith. Wherever you may be in your journey, you will be profoundly moved by the beauty and the richness of the Catholic Church.

For Registration & information: Ray FitzGerald (Rfitzg@aol.com or 704-992-1702)

There is a fee for purchase of workbook or online access to video and course materials.

Young at Heart Ministry Luncheon

When: Wed. Sept. 24, 11 am Where: Parish Hall

Pokeno Luncheon

Wednesday,
September 24
11:00 a.m.
Parish Hall
\$15.00 donation

Cutoff September 15
Please deposit in the black box at the Reception Desk.



Coming Up at Saint Mark

Tuesday, September 9

Coffee and Conversation Resumes

Thursday, September 11

Annual Blue Mass, 6:30 pm

Friday, September 12

Healed and Restored Gala

Saturday, September 13

Put on the Armor of God Conference

September 13-21

Walking with Moms in Need Diaper Drive

Wednesday, September 24

Young at Heart Luncheon

Saturday, September 27
SeptemberFest Annual Parish Social

Saturday, October 4

Wings and Trivia

Sunday, October 5

Prayer Chain for Life

October 11 and 12

Coat and Blanket Drive

Sunday, October 12

Pro-Life Ministry Fair

October 18

Thanksgiving Food Drive Begins

October 25

Called and Gifted Workshop

Saturday, November 1

First Saturday Dinner

November 2

Christmas Giving Tree Gift Campaign

November 8 and 9

Men's Welcome Retreat

Saturday, November 15

Mass of Consolation

Wednesday, November 19

Young at Heart Luncheon

Sunday, November 30

Advent Begins, St. Nicholas Brunch

Saturday, December 6

First Saturday Dinner

Monday, December 8

Immaculate Conception Holy Day of Obligation, Offices closed

Saturday, December 13

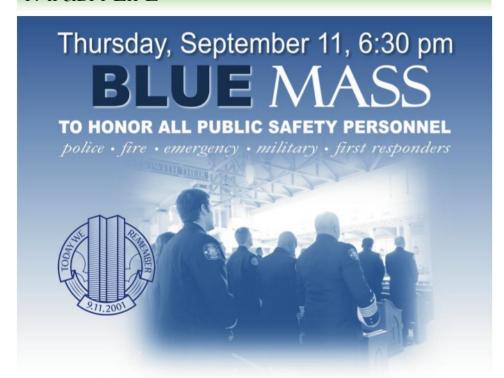
Holiday Celebration

Thursday, December 25

Christmas, Holy Day, Offices closed

Events Scheduled to Change. Details in the bulletin and newsletter in the weeks before event.

PARISH LIFE



St. Mark will offer a special Blue Mass September 11 to give thanks to those who protect and serve in law enforcement, emergency management, and fire safety.

All area police officers, firefighters, law enforcement officials, military personnel, first responders, and their families – Catholic and non-Catholic – are invited to be a part of this special Mass. Uniforms may be worn.

The Blue Mass is being held this year on the Anniversary of September 11, 2001. A reception will follow in the St. Mark School Cafeteria after the Mass.

Thank you to the Knights of Columbus and the Ladies' Auxiliary for organizing this special Mass and reception.



Your Legacy Matters

This is a perfect time to reflect on the legacy you'll leave behind. A gift to St. Mark Catholic Church through your will or estate plan is a powerful expression of faith, ensuring our parish continues to flourish for future generations.

We're deeply grateful to those who have already included us in their plans. If you've done so and haven't yet informed us, please contact

Karen Donahue, at 704-948-0231 or<u>karen.donahue@stmarknc.org</u> so we can honor your generosity and welcome you into the St. Mark Legacy Society.

Diocesan Support Appeal (DSA)

Thank you to those who responded and gave to the DSA. If you have not yet made a donation, please go to charlottediocese.org/dsa to make a donation. No amount is too small. Thank you for supporting the essential work of the Diocese.

Countdown to SeptemberFest 2025 September 27, 6-9 pm

Parish-Wide Family Social!

DJ Dance Party•Game Truck•Food Trucks

Beer and Wine Tent•Cupcake Walk•Inflatables•Bingo
Photo Booth•Cornhole•Children Crafts•

Face Painting•Ice Cream•Kona Ice



Celebrating Children

To the parents of our young children, may we suggest... Relax! God put the wiggle in children: don't feel you have to suppress it in God's House. Sit toward the front where it's easier to see and hear. Quietly explain the parts of the Mass. Sing the songs, pray and say the responses. Children learn liturgical behavior by copying you. Feel free to leave Mass with your child if you need to, but please come back!

The way we welcome children in church directly affects the way they respond to the church, to God and to Jesus. Let them know that they are at home this liturgical gathering.

To the members of the parish... A smile of encouragement and a kind word are always welcome to parents with small, active children.

Spotlight on Stewardship: The Legacy of Jesus

The Crowds traveling with Jesus in our Gospel today knew he had something they sought. Jesus came as a divine man to overcome the wages of our sin by conquering death and leading us to eternal life. His Body and Blood, present in the Eucharist, along with the Holy Spirit and all the sacraments, continue to accompany and guide us in His church today. "The legacy of His divine work continues in all the churches of the world, through all the ages." (Lawrence Feingold, *The Eucharist: Mystery of Presence, Sacrifice and Communion, p.* 8)

Whether we first came to St. Mark before our current campus formed, today, or somewhere in between, we sought what only He provides. In Jesus, we find what our souls yearn for. He lives in our Tabernacle, Monstrance, and in us at every Holy Communion. He entrusts us with the Eucharist and all his gifts. This legacy of His love, passed on through the ages, is ours now, for our good and the good of all His church.

Jesus further teaches us the importance of finishing our work beyond the foundations. He calculated the cost and gave it all. We follow him when we carry our crosses to choose Him over everything else, even our own lives. When we refuse to hold anything else as good stewards, with a level of detachment that allows us to release them, we have them as false idols, and we fail in discipleship.

We steward His legacy well when we seek to live all aspects of our lives for Him. "Whatever you do, do from the heart, as for the Lord and not for others, knowing that you will receive from the Lord the due payment of the inheritance; be slaves of the Lord Christ." (Colossians 3:23-24) Praise be Jesus Christ, now and forever.



ADOR ATION

Ten Reasons to Make a Holy Hour According to Fulton J. Sheen (Part One)

But why make a Holy Hour? Here are ten reasons.

1. Time Well Spent

It is time spent in the presence of Our Lord Himself. If faith is alive, no further reason is needed.

2. Shake Noonday Devils

In our busy lives, it takes considerable time to shake off the "noonday devils," the worldly cares, that cling to our souls like dust. An hour with Our Lord follows the experience of the disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13-35). We begin by walking with Our Lord, but our eyes are "held fast" so that we do not "recognize him." Next, He converses with our soul, as we read the Scriptures. The third stage is one of sweet intimacy, as when "he sat down at table with them." The fourth stage is the full dawning of the mystery of the Eucharist. Our eyes are "opened," and we recognize Him.

Finally, we reach the point where we do not want to leave. The hour seemed so short. As we arise, we ask: "Were not our hearts burning within us when he spoke to us on the road, and when he made the Scriptures plain to us?" (Luke 24:32).

3. Jesus Asked

Our Lord asked for it. "Had you no strength, then, to watch with me even for an hour?" (see Matt. 26:40). The word was addressed to Peter, but he is referred to as Simon. It is our Simon nature that needs the hour. If the hour seems hard, it is because "the spirit is willing enough, but the flesh is weak" (Mark 14:38).

4. Balance Spiritual & Practical

The Holy Hour keeps a balance between the spiritual and the practical. Western philosophies tend to an activism in which God does nothing, and man everything; the Eastern philosophies tend to a quietism in which God does everything, and man nothing. The golden mean is in the words of St. Thomas: "action following rest," Martha walking with Mary. The Holy Hour unites the contemplative to the active life

of the person.

Thanks to the hour with Our Lord, our meditations and resolutions pass from the conscious to the subconscious and then become motives of action. A new spirit begins to pervade our work. The change is effected by Our Lord, who fills our heart and works through our hands. A person can give only what he possesses. To give Christ to others, one must possess Him.

To become a scheduled adorer or sub, please contact

donna.fodale@stmarknc.org.

YOUTH MINISTRY



High School Youth Ministry: An Open Letter from Gus Free, High School Ministry

Coordinator — Welcome to High School Ministry at St. Mark! Our mission is to take everything that your teens have learned so far in Faith Formation, and to help them to turn that knowledge into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. We also strive to promote and provide an environment where teens can be around other like-minded Catholic teens, and have a chance to just have fun, and escape the many cares and worries of their everyday lives. We meet (most) Sunday nights from 6-8 pm and always serve dinner. Our Sunday meetings are called Life Nights. High School Ministry at St. Mark is open to ALL high school teens. Please do not hesitate to email me with any questions!

Want to receive message notifications?

We use the REMIND app to message parents and teens weekly activities, reminders, or schedule changes. To sign up, download the Remind App, and type in the class code smhsym2025.

Other Ways to Stay Connected!

Instagram: @stmarkncyouth

Sunday Bulletin - Updates Every Sunday

Email List: augustine.free@stmarknc.org



FAMILY MINISTRY

PUTTING ON THE Conference ARMOR OF GOD

SEPT 13 2025

\$20 Single-\$35 Couple

Join Us for a Day of Spiritual Strengthening!

GUEST SPEAKER: DR. DAN SCHNEIDER

8-9 AM: Confession in the Church, followed by 9 AM Mass. (Optional)

9:40 AM: Registration opens.

10-12 PM: Talks on Spiritual Warfare Tactics and Spiritual Protection for Families.

12-1 PM: Lunch from Viva Chicken.

1-3 PM: Talks on Home Enthronement and the Importance of Marian Devotion, and Q&A Session.

3 PM: Conference ends and confessions available in the Church.

St. Mark Catholic Church 14740 Stumptown Rd. Huntersville, NC 28078





Register by September 8 stmarknc.org/family-ministry

Our Lady of Sorrows

Feast Day September 15

The Church honors Our Lady of Sorrows on September 15, remembering Mary's deep union with Jesus' suffering, especially at the foot of the Cross. Tradition reflects on her Seven Sorrows: Simeon's prophecy, the flight into Egypt, losing the Child Jesus in the Temple, meeting Jesus on the way to Calvary, His Crucifixion, His body placed in her arms, and His burial.

The Chaplet of Our Lady of Sorrows

The Chaplet is prayed on seven groups of seven beads. Begin with the Sign of the Cross and an opening prayer asking to share in Mary's sorrows (bolded). For each group:

- 1. Scan QR code for opening and closing prayers.
- 2. Announce one of the Seven Sorrows.
- 3. Pray 1 Our Father and 7 Hail Marys.
- 4. At the conclusion of each Sorrow, pray "Holy Mother hear my prayers, and renew in my heart each wound of Jesus my Savior."
- At the end, three additional Hail Marys are prayed in honor of Mary's tears.

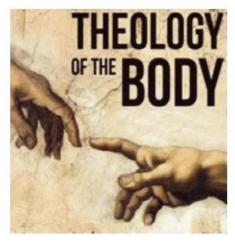
This devotion unites us with Mary in her grief and draws us closer to Christ's Passion, giving strength in our own sufferings.





Fall 2025 Small Groups: An Introduction to The Theology of the Body by Christopher West

Registration now Open! Study is 10 weeks long.



The Theology of the Body is a series of teachings by Pope John Paul II that explore what it means to be human—male and female—created in the image of God. Far from being abstract theology, it is deeply practical: it reveals how our bodies, our relationships, and even our daily struggles reflect God's plan of love.

At its heart, Theology of the Body answers questions we all ask: Who am I? Why am I here? What is love? How can I find lasting happiness?

The teaching begins with the simple truth that our bodies are not just biological machines but part of our spiritual identity. They speak a "language" of love, showing us that we are made for communion—both with God and with one another.

This is not just for the young or for those preparing for marriage. It speaks to every stage of life, because the call to love never ends. Whether single, married, widowed, or consecrated, every person's body and vocation tell the story of God's love. In later years, when life experience deepens our understanding, these teachings can bring new peace, healing, and joy.

John Paul II's vision is not about rules but about rediscovering the beauty of being human. It is an invitation—for all ages—to see our lives as a gift and to live love as God intended.

Cost is \$10 registration and \$5 for materials, follow the QR code or go to the website at www.stmarknc.org/small-groups.

The videos are from the "Awaken" platform from the Theology of the Body Institute. Contact Paul Laskowski with further questions: paul.laskowski@stmarknc.org



See in every human face the face of Christ

POPE ST. JOHN PAUL II

What Is Small Groups?

Definition & Purpose:

Small Groups at St. Mark are intimate faith-sharing communities, typically consisting of 6–12 members, where participants come together to discuss faith, reflect on the weekly message, and support each other in their spiritual journey.

Structure & Activities:

Groups may participate in parishoffered studies or choose their own during key seasons such as Summer, Fall, and Lent. These gatherings are great ways to build community and grow in faith.

Why Join a Small Group?

Small Groups offer more than study—they create belonging. In a parish as large as St. Mark, it's easy to feel anonymous, but small groups make the parish feel like family. They provide a place to grow in faith, form friendships, and be supported in life's joys and struggles.

As the National Catholic Register points out, small groups transform "large parishes into communities of communities." They give people a chance to be known by name, to share faith on a personal level, and to strengthen their relationship with Christ and His Church. Many parishioners have found that belonging to a small group makes coming to Mass even more meaningful—because they know the faces and the stories around them.

Participation & Leadership:

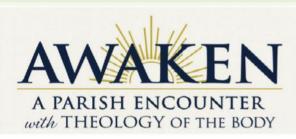
You can browse existing groups and register, or if none fit your schedule or interests, you're encouraged to start your own, provided you meet the parish's Safe Environment requirements.

Prospective Small Group leaders can express interest through a Small-Group Leader Form, indicating preferences such as meeting time, group size, childcare availability, or demographic focus.

For more info, scan the QR code to the left or go to www.stmarknc.org/small-groups.



EVANGELIZATION



AWAKEN: A Parish Encounter with Theology of the Body

Discover who you are and what you were created for.

As part of the Made for More event we hosted last January, St. Mark has been granted six months of access (Aug-Feb) to the Theology of the Body Institute's Parish Platform.

This platform contains a rich library of beautiful resources for individuals and families, helping us better understand God's plan for our lives, our relationships, and our ultimate purpose. This Fall, our parish Small Group study will draw directly from these inspiring materials.

If you would like to gain access to this platform for personal or family use, please contact: Paul Laskowski at paul.laskowski@stmarknc.org.



A Special Opportunity for Men

- What? An incredible experience that will help you discover what's missing in your life and what to do about it
- When: Sat./Sun. November 8th & 9th
- · Where: St. Mark's Kerin Center
- Why? You deserve a break! Join fellow parishioners for a weekend of respite, renewal, fellowship, & good food!
- How to Sign up: Scan the QR code below or register at https://stmarkretreat.com/
- Questions: Call joe Smith (610) 883-7753





September 8 is the 460th Anniversary of Catholicism in the Americas

By Paul Laskowski, Director of Evangelization
I recently returned from a vacation to St. Augustine, Florida.
Beyond the beautiful beaches and the charming old town, I was struck by the incredible Catholic history preserved there.
St. Augustine is not only the oldest continuously inhabited European settlement in the continental United States, but also the birthplace of the Catholic faith in our nation.

Founded by the Spaniards in 1565 under the leadership of Admiral Pedro Menéndez de Avilés, the expedition landed on September 8, the feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary. As the settlers came ashore, the first thing they did was celebrate the Holy Mass, offered by Fr. Francisco López de Mendoza Grajales.

This historic event marked the first parish Mass in the Americas and planted the seeds of the Catholic faith that would spread throughout the New World. Following the Mass, the Spanish shared a meal with the native Timucua people, which many historians point to as the first communal Thanksgiving meal on American soil—long before Plymouth in 1621.

This site became the location of the first parish in what is now

the United States: the Cathedral Basilica of St. Augustine, which continues to serve the faithful today as the nation's oldest parish. Nearby stands the beautiful Mission Nombre de Dios, the very grounds where that first Mass was celebrated, now marked by a great cross that can be seen for miles.

A special devotion also took root here with the establishment of a shrine to the Blessed Virgin Mary under the title *Nuestra Señora de La Leche y Buen Parto*—"Our Lady of the Milk and Good Delivery." This is the first Marian shrine in the United States, where pilgrims have come for centuries to pray for healthy pregnancies, safe deliveries, and strong families. Even today, thousands of pilgrims visit the shrine annually, seeking Our Lady's intercession for the gift of life and the blessing of



AROUND THE DIOCESE



Retrouvaille Charlotte Marriage Help

When: Oct. 3-5

Do you feel alone? Are you frustrated or angry with each other? Do you argue ... or have you just stopped talking to each other? Does talking about it only make it worse? Retrouvaille (pronounced retro-vi with a long i) helps couples through difficult times in their marriages. This program has helped tens of thousands of couples experiencing difficulties in their marriage.

Retrouvaille Marriage Help offers a welcoming and loving space to couples who have been living with the misery of a failing marriage. Retrouvaille offers hope: hope that it is not too late, hope of a different and better marriage. Retrouvaille helps couples to show each other mercy through the opportunities it provides to listen, to forgive, to be reconciled and to move into their futures believing that God loves them and with His help and their efforts, their marriages can be healed and restored. Retrouvaille provides help for marriage problems/difficulties/crises.

For more information about an upcoming Retrouvaille Weekend program in Charlotte area on Oct. 3-5, 2025 for couples, Email: 3062ac@helpourmarriage.org or Call: 727-343-6701

Website: HelpOurMarriage.com

Men's Program at St. Therese: That Man is You!

When: Saturday Mornings, beginning Sep. 13 Where: St. Therese Catholic Church, Mooresville

That Man is You! Is about a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, who wants to meet you right where you are and take you further. Come join us Saturday mornings to receive one of the most rewarding experiences of your life. *Information and to register:* sainttherese.net/mens-groups Contact: Kevin Coyne, 704-664-3992, kcoyne@sainttherese.net

Two Catholic Charities Job Opportunities

Fundraising Events Director

Do you thrive on creating events that inspire generosity and build community? Catholic Charities is seeking a dynamic and organized Fundraising Events Director to lead the planning and execution of mission-driven events that engage donors and advance our work of service.

In this pivotal Charlotte-based role, you will design and implement event strategies, cultivate corporate and foundation support, and maintain a growing donor base. Your leadership will ensure events run seamlessly, generate meaningful support, and strengthen

relationships that sustain our mission. Visit www.ccdoc.org/careers or scan the QR code for a full job description and application details.

Onboarding and Employee Support Specialist

Do you enjoy helping new employees feel welcomed and supported from day one? Catholic Charities is seeking a detail-oriented and people-focused Onboarding and Employee Support Specialist to provide vital support across the employee lifecycle.

In this key part-time role, you will coordinate recruitment and onboarding processes, lead orientations, and deliver ongoing training and support. By guiding staff through each stage of employment, you will foster a positive workplace culture that empowers employees to serve our mission with confidence and care. Visit www.ccdoc.org/careers or scan the QR code for a full job description and application details.

Be part of a team that puts faith into action and brings hope to neighbors in need.



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Early Bird discount before Monday, Oct. 13!

APPLY NOW

Married and engaged couples are invited to the 7th annual Together in Holiness conference. Hear from national speakers Mallory Smyth, Greg Schutte, and more as we discuss Courageous Hope in Marriage and Family! REGISTRATION: togetherinholiness.org/charlotte

Early Bird Price: Couple \$54/ Individual \$35

Scholarships are available; on-site Childcare (pre-registration required) \$5/ child Complete info:

togetherinholiness.org or email th@forlifeandfamily.org.



Saint Mark Parish Directory

stmarknc.org | 14740 Stumptown Rd, Huntersville NC 28078 Parish Office | Mon-Thur 9 am-7:30 pm, Fri 9 am-4:30 pm

Sun 8:15 am-12:15 pm | Phone: 704-948-0231

Pastor

Very Rev. John T. Putnam, JV

Parochial Vicars

Rev. Kevin Martinez

Rev. Christopher Angermeyer Rev. Aaron Huber (in residence)

Rev. Mr. Thomas Martin

Rev. Mr. Richard McCarron

Rev. Mr. Thomas McGahey

Rev. Mr. Tom McMahon

Rev. Mr. Louis Pais

Rev. Dr. Ronald Sherwood

Rev. Mr. Ramon Tapia

Director of Parish Operations

Scott Bruno

scott.bruno@stmarknc.org 704-948-0231, Ext. 118

Sacristan

Sr. Mary Agnes

sacristan@stmarknc.org 704-948-0231, Ext. 211

Liturgy Coordinator/Office Manager

Emily Bixler

emily.bixler@stmarknc.org 704-948-0231, Ext. 102

Annulments, OCIA

Rev. Mr. Rich McCarron deacon.rich@stmarknc.org 704-948-0231, Ext. 113

Sacrament Admin/Adoration

Donna Fodale

Donna.fodale@stmarknc.org 704-948-0231, Ext. 104

Director of Sacred Music

Manuel Mora

manuel.mora@stmarknc.org 704-948-0231, Ext. 130

Director of Finance

Richard Cataldo

richard.cataldo@stmarknc.org 704-948-0231, Ext. 116

Hispanic Ministry Coordinator

Emilio Gómez

emilio.gomez@stmarknc.org 704-948-0231, Ext. 117

Parishioner Assistance

Stewardship Coordinator

Karen Donahue

karen.donahue@stmarknc.org

704-948-0231, Ext. 136

Calendar Management

Sue Bruce

sue.bruce@stmarknc.org 704-948-0231, Ext. 123

Director of Evangelization and

Catechesis

Paul Laskowski

paul.laskowski@stmarknc.org 704-948-0231, Ext. 121

Director of Faith Formation

Sarah Rider

sarah.rider@stmarknc.org 704-948-0231, Ext. 137

Elementary Faith Formation

Coordinator

Maddie Torres

elementary@stmarknc.org 704-948-0231, Ext. 124

Middle School Youth Ministry/

Confirmation Coordinator

Mariana Vazquez

middleschool@stmarknc.org 704-948-1306, Ext. 105

High School Youth Ministry Coordinator

Augustine Free

augustine.free@stmarknc.org 704-948-0231, Ext. 122

Director of Preschool

Amanda Rametta

amanda.rametta@stmarknc.org

704-948-8015

Office of Faith Formation

Faith Formation Main Office Line: 704-948-0231, Ext. 103

Tribunal Advocate

Rod Brostrom

rnbrostrom@rcdoc.org

Bulletin Team

bulletin@stmarknc.org

Al-Anon

Financial: St. Vincent De Paul Society:

Emily.Bixler@stmarknc.org

Life Crisis: Stephen Ministry

Food Insecurity:

Parish Office

stmarknc.org/assistance or Emily.Bixler@stmarknc.org or

704-948-0231, Ext. 102

Ellen | 704-907-8555

Alcoholics Anonymous

Tom | 704-604-7739

Alateen program

stmarknc.org/stephen-ministry Paul G. | 704-641-0654

Divorce Support Group

For anyone going through separation and/or divorce. Meetings are held Monday evenings at 7 pm in Room 204. If parish offices are closed, meetings are held at Lowe's Foods, exit 23.

Contact: divorce.support@stmarknc.org

Mass Schedule

Mon/Tue/Thu: 7, 9 am Wed: 7 am, 6:30 pm

7. 9 am

7 pm (Spanish) 9 am, 5 pm Vigil

Sun: 7:30, 9, 11 am, 1 pm (Español), 5 pm

All Masses may be watched live: stmarknc.org/livestream Please use Online Giving or mail in your offertory

stmarknc.org/Online-Giving

Please do not attend Mass if you are sick, have a fever or are in a high-risk group.

Confessions

Sat:

Confessions are held 45 minutes prior to the start of Mass for a 30 minute duration.

In addition, Wednesday: 6 pm - 7:15 pm and Saturday:

3 pm - 5 pm

Rosary in the Church

Tue: 7-7:30 pm

Wed: Immediately preceding 6:30 pm Mass Sat: Immediately preceding 5 pm Mass Sun: Immediately preceding 7:30 am Mass

Perpetual Eucharistic Adoration

Available in the Monsignor Bellow Adoration Chapel in the Family Center. See stmarknc.org/adoration for complete details.

Hospitalization

If you or your loved one are in an area hospital, call the Parish Office to reach one of the Priests. The Priests offer Confession, bring the Holy Eucharist to you or administer the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick.

Baptisms & Weddings

The use of the Church for Baptisms, Weddings and other Sacramental events is available to active parishioners. Contact the Parish Office. (Please note that weddings and baptisms cannot be celebrated during Lent.)

Financial Counseling

Complimentary and confidential services are available to provide financial literacy training, personal financial coaching, and/or advocacy support for you and your family. Contact the Parish Office.

Carolina Catholic Corner Gift & Book Store

Open daily in the Family Center

Coffee & Conversation Social Gathering

Tuesdays, 9:30 am, Parish Hall.

Cursillo

Visit www.CharlotteCursillo.com for information on upcoming retreat weekends, ultrevas and group reunions.

Natural Family Planning

Joe and Kathy Hack; Sympto-Thermal Method;

704-548-1834; hackhouse@bellsouth.net; ccli.org

Elisabeth Laskowski; Creighton Model;

creightonmodel@gmail.com; 484-332-9084

Crisis Pregnancy Help

Community Pregnancy Center of Lake Norman:

704-727-0535

benotafraid.net

Catholic Charities: 704-370-3262; Birthright: 704-975-8572; Post Abortion: 1-800-5-WE CARE Poor prenatal diagnosis? You're not alone. There is help.

Taken Abortion Pill? It may not be too late: Abortion Pill Reversal 877-558-0333 or abortionpillreversal.com

ANUNCIOS EN ESPAÑOL | DEL PASTOR



Las lecturas de hoy dejan muy claras las exigencias que se harán a los que quieran ser llamados discípulos de Cristo. Debemos estar preparados para darle todo a Él. Pero al final, la vida de discipulado, la forma de vida de

mayordomía es la única vida que realmente puede satisfacer. En el pasaje evangélico de San Lucas, Cristo dice: "Si alguno viene a mí sin odiar a su padre y a su madre, a su mujer y a sus hijos, a sus hermanos y hermanas, y aun a su propia vida, no puede ser mi discípulo". Nuestro Señor no habla aquí de emociones, sino de prioridades. Él debe ser lo primero en todos los aspectos de nuestras vidas. Punto.

Continúa. "El que no lleva su propia cruz y viene en pos de mí, no puede ser mi discípulo". En otras palabras, es todo o nada. El compromiso simplemente no es posible. Cristo quiere que entreguemos todo de nosotros mismos, todos los aspectos de nuestras vidas individuales, nuestra vida familiar, nuestra parroquia a Él y a la búsqueda de Su reino.

Y justo cuando pensamos que nuestro Señor podría suavizar Su mensaje para hacerlo un poco más aceptable, ¡Él va más allá! "Cualquiera de ustedes que no renuncie a todas sus posesiones no puede ser mi discípulo". ¿Por qué nuestro Señor es tan exigente? Solo porque Él nos conoce muy bien y nos ama tanto.

Él sabe que si no vivimos poniéndolo a Él primero antes que a todo lo demás, seremos fácilmente absorbidos por las preocupaciones terrenales que nos agobian: nuestras cosas materiales, nuestro estatus y nuestros egos. Él sabe que estas cosas no pueden satisfacernos. Él sabe esto porque Él es nuestro Hacedor, y nos hizo para más.

Estamos hechos para ser Sus discípulos, para buscarlo a Él y a Su Reino. Abrazar la mayordomía como una forma de vida nos permite calcular el costo y luego correr tras Él con todas nuestras fuerzas. © Consultores de mayordomía católica, 2025

Reflexión pastoral: en los últimos años, he notado, y las estadísticas parecen confirmarlo, que los suicidios y los intentos de suicidio han ido en aumento, especialmente entre los jóvenes. El grupo demográfico de 18 a 30 años parece ser especialmente susceptible. Estoy seguro de que las raíces de ese tipo de desesperación comienzan mucho más jóvenes, pero los funerales que he celebrado o que conozco siempre son muy pesados, espiritualmente. He estado hablando con mi equipo de liderazgo sobre las formas en que nosotros, como parroquia, podríamos abordar este problema y ser proactivos en brindar alcance y apoyo. Pensé que sería útil proporcionar un resumen de la enseñanza de la Iglesia sobre el tema y alentarnos a todos a pensar en formas en que podemos ser una ayuda para frenar la marea.

Esperanza en Cristo: Una reflexión católica sobre el suicidio El don de la vida

La iglesia proclama que toda vida humana es sagrada y creada en amor por Dios. "Solo Dios es el Señor de la vida desde su principio hasta su fin" (*Catecismo de la Iglesia Católica* 2258). El suicidio es un asunto grave, porque rechaza

el don de la vida que se nos ha confiado (CIC 2280-2281). Sin embargo, la Iglesia también enseña que el sufrimiento psicológico grave, el miedo o la enfermedad pueden disminuir la responsabilidad de una persona. Por esta razón, no desesperamos de la salvación de aquellos que se han quitado la vida, sino que les confiamos la esperanza a la misericordia de Dios (CIC 2282-2283).

Por qué los adultos jóvenes están en riesgo

Muchos jóvenes de hoy enfrentan soledad, ansiedad y la presión de ser "perfectos". El Papa Francisco, en *Christus Vivit*, recuerda a la Iglesia que los jóvenes adultos necesitan saber que no están solos: "La Iglesia debe ser un lugar de compasión, donde sean escuchados y acompañados con respeto" (CV 242-247). El suicidio a menudo surge de una crisis de significado, cuando la vida se siente vacía o agobiante. El Evangelio responde con una promesa: cada vida tiene un propósito dado por Dios que ningún fracaso o sufrimiento puede borrar.

Nuestra respuesta cristiana

Compasión y misericordia. La Iglesia rechaza el juicio y, en cambio, ofrece oración, acompañamiento y esperanza por los que han muerto y por sus familias.

Una comunidad de pertenencia. Gaudium et Spes enseña que solo nos encontramos a nosotros mismos a través de la entrega sincera de nosotros mismos (GS 24). Nuestras parroquias deben ser lugares donde todos los jóvenes sepan que pertenecen.

Buscar ayuda es santo. El Catecismo llama al cuidado de la salud un deber moral (CIC 2288). Recurrir a la consejería, el apoyo médico o los mentores de confianza es una forma de honrar el regalo de la vida de Dios.

La cruz trae significado. San Juan Pablo II escribió que nuestro sufrimiento, unido a la Pasión de Cristo, puede convertirse en una fuente de redención (*Salvifici Doloris* 18-19). Ningún sufrimiento carece de sentido en Cristo.

Una palabra de esperanza

Como seguidores de Jesús, debemos decir claramente: si estás luchando, no estás solo. Tu vida no es un error. Dios te ama. La Iglesia te ama. Acércate a un amigo, a tu sacerdote, a un consejero. Pedir ayuda es un acto de valentía y fe.

Oración

Dios de misericordia, abraza a todos los que luchan contra la desesperación,

especialmente nuestros jóvenes. Llena sus corazones con la luz de Tu amor. Recibe en Tu paz a los que han muerto, consuela a sus familias y haz de nuestra parroquia un hogar de esperanza, curación y pertenencia. Amén.

Si usted o alguien que conoce tiene dificultades, comuníquese con nosotros.

En los EE. UU., marque 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline).









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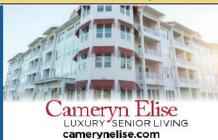
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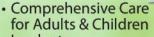








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