

COME REST IN HIS PRESENCE

An Evening for Married Couples

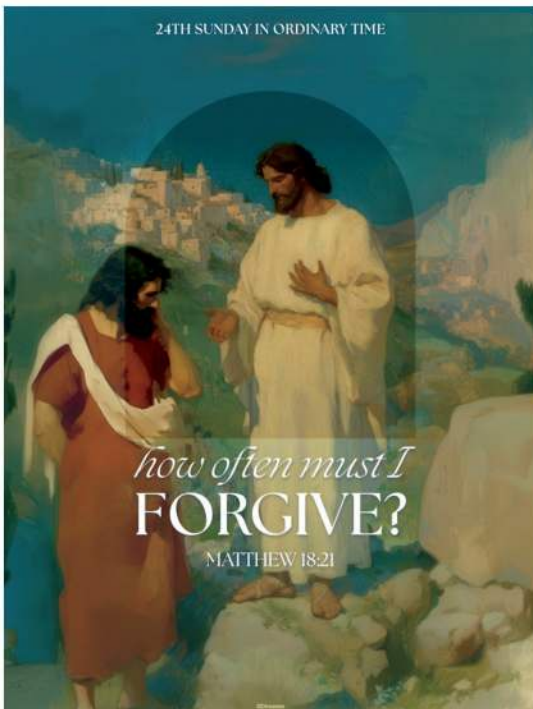
Saturday, September 19, 7 pm



SAINT ✝ MARK

24th Sunday in Ordinary Time • September 13, 2026 • Espanol Page 16

WELCOME TO ST. MARK!



Today is the 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time. The readings can be found in the music handouts or in the St. Augustine Hymnal on page 930. The Order of the Mass can be found on page 7; Mass prayers are on the last page of the hymnal.

We invite you to make St. Mark your parish home!

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, 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.



Please join us in the Prayer to St. Michael after the Final Blessing. **Please do not leave the church until after the priests, deacons, and servers have exited the church. Thank you.**

Saint 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 of any unconfessed mortal sin—this includes, if married, being married in a way recognized by the Catholic Church.
2. 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.
4. You may receive Holy Communion standing or kneeling.
5. *Please consume the 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 information.

Thank you for generously sharing your gifts with the parish.



Online Giving

DID YOU KNOW THAT YOU CAN GIVE YOUR OFFERTORY ONLINE?

*Planned
Proportionate
Intentional
Consistent*

sign up at stmarknc.org/online-giving

FROM THE PASTOR



Today's readings invite us to examine the state of our hearts — our thoughts, attitudes, and emotions. In our First Reading from Sirach, we hear about the destructive power

of anger: "Could anyone nourish anger against another and expect healing from the Lord?"

All of us have been hurt by others at some point, some more deeply than others. While our emotions are gifts from God, we are called to steward them well rather than allowing them to control us. How do we do that? Sirach gives us the answer: "Remember your last days, set enmity aside... Remember the Most High's covenant and overlook faults." Instead of dwelling on past hurts, we choose gratitude. We remember God's countless blessings, His unfailing mercy, and His faithful love, placing our trust in Him.

In today's Gospel, Jesus reminds us of who we are before God through the parable of the unforgiving servant. A king forgives a debt so enormous it could never be repaid, yet the servant refuses to extend that same mercy to someone else.

The story should sound familiar. God has given us life, forgiven our sins through His Son, and opened the way to eternal life. We could never repay such a gift. The only fitting response is to offer Him our whole lives and to extend the same mercy and forgiveness He has shown to us.

That is the freedom and joy found in the Stewardship way of life. ©Catholic Stewardship Consultants, 2026



Pastoral Pondering – I have been listening to a few podcasts about holiness in daily life and most recently about the virtues and life of G.K. Chesterton. We keep the saints in stained glass and on the calendar, which is good. It is also a way of keeping them at a safe distance. We remember Francis with the birds, Thérèse with the roses, and the martyrs with their palms, and we quietly conclude that holiness is a specialist's job. It belongs to people who lived long ago, or far away, or under circumstances that will never be ours.

Chesterton is a useful corrective, not because the Church has declared him a saint — she has not — but because he refused that distance. He was a married journalist. He wrote against deadlines. He argued in public, laughed in public, and went to Mass. He was large, rumped, and fond of the ordinary gifts of creation. When people began to speak of him as holy, the surprise was part of the point. He did not look like our idea of a saint. He looked like a man who had a job.

That was not an accident. Chesterton once wrote that he knew of no reason, in heaven or on earth, why a barmaid should not one day be canonized. The question, he said, is not her trade. The question is with what motive and in what spirit she minds the bar. He was not being cute. He was stating Catholic doctrine. Baptism is the ordinary door to holiness. Most of the saints the Church will ever know will never have a feast day. They will have been mothers, mechanics, nurses, teachers, cashiers, and men who came home tired and still chose to be gentle.

The danger in admiring Chesterton is that we make him the stained glass: the clever convert, the man of paradoxes, the exception. He would have hated that. His whole vision was that grace does not wait for an extraordinary résumé. It waits for consent. The childlike wonder he never outgrew, the refusal to despise an opponent, the habit of gratitude, the sense that the world is gift and not raw material — these are not literary devices. They are the shape of a soul that has begun to see as God sees.



So the invitation this week is not to start a petition. It is to look around.

Look at the couple who still arrive early and sit where they have sat for thirty years. Look at the grandmother who brings two children who are not her own. Look at the usher who knows the name of the stranger. Look at the man who goes to confession on Saturday afternoon when no one is watching. Look at the young mother who is exhausted and still sings. Look at the parishioner who quietly pays a bill for someone else and does not need the story told. Look at the person who has every reason to be bitter and is not.

That is not sentiment. That is how the Church actually grows saints. Heroic virtue rarely announces itself. It looks like fidelity on a Tuesday. It looks like a father who is present. It looks like a woman who will not let illness make her cruel. It looks like someone who forgives the same offense more than once. It looks like the person beside you who has carried a cross you know nothing about and has not dropped the faith.

Chesterton helps us because he makes holiness recognizable again. If God can sanctify a Fleet Street journalist, He can sanctify the life you are already living, and the lives you brush against in this church and in this town. The extraordinary thing is not the biography. The extraordinary thing is charity that does not quit.

Ask for the grace to notice it. When you see it, do not keep the secret. Thank the person. Imitate what you can. And remember that the Communion of Saints is not only a list of the officially recognized. It is also the hidden holiness already at work among us, waiting for eyes that have learned how to see.

REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Please Pray For...

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

Tom Addison	Charlie Donovan	Farnejad Family	Sarah Obermiller
Julie Andrews	Jane & William	Dennis Koenig	Louise Painter
Donald Arrup	Dragoon	Jackie Kopicki	Donna Paniagua
Maryann Bahret	James P. Durcan	Aubrey Lamb	Fernando Paverpai
Lizzy Balzer	Joanne Errick	Craig Leiker	Jack Parley
Daisy Bayona	Jack Evans	Carolina Liendo	Doug Peterson
Deidre Beck	Charles Fillipo	Marie Ligon	Nicole & Bruce
Barbara Benner	Al Fischlein	Peter R. Loew	Preiss
Richard Biddy	Padraic Foley	Kitty Long	Angela & Gianni
Brian Blatchford & Family	Alan Friedl & Family	Wilfredo Lostaunau	Piraino
Virginia "Gini" Bond	Tom Fox	David Luongo	Johnathan Rametta
Kathy Brandt	April Gallo	Margaret Lynch	Joette Reid
Dave Breen	Valeria Gerbasi	Utelia Malwitz	Lindsay Remington
Lynne Bridges	Daniel Gilbridge	Tom & Colette	Butch Remesch
Carman Butler	Denny & Monica	Manente	Natalie Roberts
Helen Sally Buff	Golden	Sharon Marshall	Thomas Rynne
Carmen Cabranes	Corbin Golightly	Melissa McDonald	Jack Schneider
Anne Caestecker	Tom Goodwin	Cathy Milligan	Phyllis Searles
Anthony Cain	Lucas Graf	Terry Milstead	Mark Shields
Michelle Chicoine	Paige Grieshop	Lucille Modica	Todd Singh
Rod Clair	Rachel Grieshop	Linda Morella	Bill Sirnack
Jim Clark	Helen Haddad	Mary Morgan	Robert Somerville
Beth Collins	Victoria Hart	Haleigh Moss	Betsy Spartz
William Conklin	Fran Hehn	Niall Mulkeen	Mike Tolbert
Vic Crognale	Laura Hehn	Elizabeth Mulligan	Alston Torres
Ridge Curwood	Allan Helmbrecht	Angeles Murphy	William and Sharon
Janice D'Angelo	Madeline Louise	Maria Magdalena	Tumidanski
Sheila DeArmon	Henwood	Murphy	Mario Valinhas
Judy and Rich	Bill Hille	Carl Muti	Haley Velez
Deboer	Hannah Hopkins	Emily Nash	Julio Velez
John Deluca	Frank Hunnicutt III	Paul Nealon Jr.	Karen Vogel
Joan Demarco	Cathi Kalberier	Paul Sr. and Sally	Elise Weiss
Henry Diener	Mary Kate Knight	Nealon	Al Wiltz
	The Kibbee and	The Ober Family	Patricia Zeggert

Stay Connected With St. Mark.
Find us on all social media platforms



or sign up for our weekly enewsletter at
stmarknc.org/emailnewsletter

PRAY FOR OUR MILITARY

Air Force: C3C **Andrew Bauders**; Airman **Gregory Burke**; Airman **Antoinio Diaz**; Lt. Col. **Michael Dragoon**; Capt. **Stephen Hack**; Capt. **Ryan Loyd**; **Alejandro Martinez**; Sgt. **James McCormick**; SCANG Sgt. **John Andrew McCormick**; 2nd Lt **Connor Milligan**; Airman **Chloe Scott**; Airman **Michael F. Yellico**

Army: 1st Lt. **Amelia Andretti**; Capt. **Patrick Camatcho**; Capt. **Sarah Camatcho**; Maj. **Robert Caraccilo**; Sgt. Maj. **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**; SSG **Andrew Sales**; **Andrew Santos**; Capt. **Ramon Ricardo Tapia**; Spl. Forces **Nolan Tillotson**; **Josh Wagner**; 1st Lt. **Nick Worth**; 2nd Lt. **Matthew Zagar**

Marines: LCPL. **Richard Breier**; 2nd Lt. **Drew Brenner**; Maj. **Matthew Santoli**; Cpl. **Bobby Holden**; Cpl. **Baylin Prescott**; Capt. **Nathanael Rusciolelli**

Navy: MIDN 3C USNA **Kellan Azzopardi**; DCFN **Matthew J Bixler Jr**; LCDR. **Matthew Giannone**; SR **Chase T. Golden**; MIDN 3C USNA **Malerie Lague**; Lt. **Albert Remmey, Jr.**; LCDR. **Jordan Mayo**; LTJG. **Rory Moran**; OSSN. **Daniel Pressley**; LCDR. **Jenna Hehn Quist**; ENS. **Tyler Spear**; LCDR. **William Vey**; MIDN 3C USNA **Patrick Walsh**; CTT2. **Zachary Wortham**

Coast Guard: BM2 **Hannah Schramke** ..and all service members not listed.

MASS INTENTIONS

Sunday, September 13

7:30 am † Richard B. Smith
9 am † Patricia Anderson
11 am † Patrick McDonald
1 pm † Esperanza Rodriguez
4:30 pm † Robert Tremblay
5 pm St. Mark Parishioners

Monday, September 14

7 am † Johnny Ocampo Hernandez
9 am † Thuc-Cuong-To-Van-Hang-Dau

Tuesday, September 15

7 am † Roland Luze
9 am † Patricia Anderson

Wednesday, September 16

7 am † Rafaelina Crisostomo
† Santos Siao & Margarita Moral
6:30 pm † Carolyn Cancarano
† Marilyn Hayes

Thursday, September 17

7 am Joseph Cruz
9 am Mary's Women of Joy

Friday, September 18

7 am † Mary, Josephine, & Catherine Cleary

9 am Blaise Redpath

7 pm † Martha Ortiz

Saturday, September 19

9 am † David Cross
5 pm † Nancy Stone

Sunday, September 20

7:30 am † Rosalie & Frank Sternisha
9 am St. Mark Parishioners
11 am St. Mark Parishioners
1 pm † Jose Edgar Flores
5 pm † Marilyn Bissinger

† Deceased

READINGS

Sun. Twenty-fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sir 27:30-28:7; Ps 103:1-2, 3-4, 9-10, 11-12; Rom 14:7-9; Mt 18:21-35

Mon. Feast of the Exaltation of the Holy Cross

Num 21:4b-9; Ps 78:1bc-2, 34-35, 36-37, 38; Phil 2:6-11; Jn 3:13-17

Tue. Memorial of Our Lady of Sorrows

1 Cor 12:12-14, 27-31a; Ps 100:1b-2, 3, 4, 5; Jn 19:25-27

Wed. Memorial of Saints Cornelius, Pope, and Cyprian, Bishop, Martyrs

1 Cor 12:31-13:13; Ps 33:2-3, 4-5, 12 and 22; Lk 7:31-35

Thu. 1 Cor 15:1-11; Ps 118:1b-2, 16ab-17, 28; Lk 7:36-50

Fri. 1 Cor 15:12-20; Ps 17:1bcd, 6-7, 8b, 15; Lk 8:1-3

Sat. 1 Cor 15:35-37, 42-49; Ps 56:10c-12, 13-14; Lk 8:4-15

Sun. Twenty-fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Is 55:6-9; Ps 145:2-3, 8-9, 17-18; Phil 1:20c-24, 27a; Mt 20:1-16a

Couples ADORATION & OUTDOOR WINE & CHEESE NIGHT

*Come rest in the presence of Christ,
reconnect with your spouse,
and enjoy an evening of
faith and fellowship.*

 **SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19**



7:00–8:00 PM
**COUPLES EUCHARISTIC
ADORATION**
(in the Church)
Confession available



8:00–9:00 PM
**OUTDOOR WINE &
CHEESE RECEPTION**

- ♥ Eucharistic Adoration
- ♥ Confession available
- ♥ Peaceful music and prayer
- ♥ Time to place your marriage before the Lord

- ♥ Couples are invited to bring a favorite bottle of wine to share (optional)
- ♥ Cheese, appetizers, and light refreshments provided
- ♥ Relaxing outdoor atmosphere
- ♥ Quiet instrumental music
- ♥ Meaningful conversation
- ♥ Fellowship with other married couples

*Come rest in the presence of Christ, reconnect with your spouse,
and enjoy an evening of faith and fellowship.*

Free Event

 Register online at
www.stmarknc.org/marriage-ministry

ST. MARK MARRIAGE MINISTRY



Together in Holiness Marriage Conference

When: Sat., Nov. 21; 8 am–3:15 pm

Where: Charlotte, NC and
Greensboro, NC

Married and engaged couples are invited to the 8th Annual Together in Holiness Catholic Marriage Enrichment Conference, presented by the St. John Paul II Foundation and the Diocese of Charlotte. Spend a day strengthening your marriage through dynamic speakers, quality time together, and opportunities for Mass, Adoration, and Confession. Childcare will also be available.

Cost: \$64 per couple/
\$40 per individual.

**Register by October 5
for a discounted rate.**

Visit

TogetherInHoliness.org or use the QR
code to register.



Marriage Troubles? There is Help.

If your marriage has become troubled and stressed, unloving or uncaring; if you might have grown cold and distant; or even if you are divorced or separated, or are thinking about it, Retrouvaille can help...as it has already helped tens of thousands of others. Our next program begins **Oct. 2-4, 2026.**

For information, visit

www.helpourmarriage.org, or call Bill & Lyn Folsom (727) 343-6701. Not counseling or group therapy. All contacts and names held in absolute confidence.



Invitation to Learn About the Annulment Process

When: Mon., Sept. 14; 7 pm

Where: Parish Hall

Are you or someone you know seeking clarity, healing, peace, or a fresh start after a divorce?

You are warmly invited to an informational meeting about the Catholic Annulment process on Mon., Sept. 14, at 7 pm in the Parish Hall.

Widow's Ministry

When: Thurs.; 10 am - 12 pm (weekly)

Where: Kerin Family Center, Room 204

We welcome you to join our widow's ministry, a caring and supportive community where widows come together to share experiences, offer encouragement, and support one another.

Contact: Karen Lynn, 405-305-9380, cwik2016@aol.com

STEWARDSHIP

Caring for the Priests Who Have Cared for Us: Priests' Retirement & Benefits Collection Next Weekend!

Throughout their years of ministry, our priests walk with us through some of life's most important moments. They baptize our children, celebrate our weddings, hear our confessions, visit us when we are sick, bury our loved ones and bring us Christ in the Eucharist.

Next weekend's Priests' Retirement & Benefits Collection is an opportunity to care for them in return. The collection helps provide pension and health benefits for retired diocesan priests while also helping provide for the future retirement of the priests serving our parishes today.

This collection is important to St. Mark, too. Every parish in the Diocese of Charlotte is assessed an amount for priests' retirement and benefits. If contributions fall short of our assessment, St. Mark must make up the difference from parish operating funds. That isn't theoretical for us; St. Mark's own financial communication has explained that shortfalls in this mandatory assessment must be covered by operating funds.

Please prayerfully consider supporting the collection next weekend in gratitude for the faithful shepherds who have given so much to the Church.

Thank you.



Honoring Our Faithful Shepherds

The annual appeal for
Priests' Retirement Benefits Collection
will be held in every parish
September 19-20, 2026.



Calendar: of Events

September Now-20

Diaper Drive

Tuesday, September 15

Coffee and Conversation

Saturday, September 19

Couples Adoration, Wine and Cheese Night

Saturday, September 26

SeptemberFest

Tuesday, September 29

Prayer and Praise

Saturday, October 3

Men's Evening

Sunday, October 4

Prayer Chain for Life

October 10 & 11

Coat/Blanket/Toy & Baby Drive

Saturday, October 17

Blue Mass

Wings and Trivia

October 24-November 1

Thanksgiving Food Drive

Sunday, October 25

New Member Meet & Greet

Middle/High School Fall Fest

Monday, October 26

Concert in the Church

Sunday, November 1

All Saints Day

Monday, November 2

All Souls Day

Mass of Remembrance

November 7-8

Men's Welcome Retreat

Saturday, November 14

Marriage Date Night

Wed, November 18

Young at Heart Luncheon

Friday, November 20

Middle School Craft & Football

Tuesday, November 24

Prayer and Praise

Sunday, November 29

Advent Begins

St. Nicholas Breakfast

Saturday, December 5

Family Christmas Event

Tuesday, December 8

Immaculate Conception

Thursday, December 10

The Vigil Project

Saturday, December 12

Rorate Mass, Our Lady of Guadalupe

December 15-23

Posadas

December 25

Christmas

Wednesday, January 6

Young at Heart Luncheon

January 15-17

Marriage Retreat

YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

Stewardship Spotlight: Young Adult Group

If you are 21 -39 and looking for ways to connect with other faithful, our Young Adult Group would love to have you join them. Activities include both group study and social events. This group may be especially helpful for those new to the parish or otherwise looking to build new friendships.

The best way to learn about upcoming events for this ministry is through their GroupMe: https://groupme.com/join_group/87871689/ffPiyWbp.



St. Mark Young Adult September Events

September 18: Dinner with a Priest

7 pm, Parish House

September 20: Mass & Coffee

9 am Mass, Waterbean Coffee

September 24: Bible Study

7 pm, Parish House

September 26: Septemberfest

6 pm, St. Mark

Contact group leader Sean Meier at seanmeier1@gmail.com if you have any questions about this group.



Catholic Sports Ultimate Frisbee League

Catholic Sports is bringing Ultimate Frisbee to Charlotte this fall! Young adults ages 18 and older are invited to join the 5v5 coed league. All skill levels are welcome.

Games will be played Sundays from 4-7 pm, October 11 through November 22, at Providence Baptist Church in Charlotte. Register with a team, a small group of four or fewer, or individually as a free agent.

Register at catholicsports.net/charlotte-sports.

Questions? Contact Liz Kenney at elizabethmkenney@gmail.com

Young Adults: A Place in the Life of the Church

For young adults, the years after high school and college can bring a lot of change. A first job. A new city. Marriage. Children. Graduate school. A career change. New friendships and new responsibilities.

It can also be a time when staying connected to the Church becomes more difficult.

The U.S. bishops have made ministry with young adults a renewed priority in the Church. In their national pastoral framework *Listen, Teach, Send*, they encourage parishes not simply to provide programs for young adults, but to listen to them, accompany them in their faith and give them meaningful opportunities to participate in the life and mission of the Church.

That matters because young adults are not simply the future of the Church. They are part of the Church now.

At St. Mark, our Young Adult Ministry offers an important place to begin. Through opportunities for prayer, faith formation, fellowship and friendship with other Catholics, young adults can meet people who are navigating many of the same questions and stages of life.

That community is important. But Young Adult Ministry does not have to be the only way a young adult finds a home at St. Mark.

In a parish as large and active as ours, there are countless ways to become part of parish life.

A young adult who loves the Mass might consider serving as an usher, lector, greeter or Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion (homebound EMs also needed.) Those with musical gifts may find a place in the choirs or even help relaunch the Psalm 150 band for the Sunday 5 pm Mass.

Someone looking for a deeper prayer life can spend an hour with Our Lord in our Perpetual Adoration Chapel. Others may find community through a Small Group, OCIA, a Bible study, Welcome retreat or another faith formation opportunity.

Young adults can also help form the generation coming behind them. Life Teen, EDGE and Faith Formation depend on adults willing to share their faith, listen to young people and simply be present. A Catholic in his or her 20s or 30s can be a particularly powerful witness to a teenager who is beginning to ask what living the Catholic faith looks like beyond school and Confirmation.

There are opportunities to serve, too. Outreach ministries, food and supply drives, the Knights of Columbus, Rosary Makers and many other ministries throughout St. Mark put faith into action. Parish events need volunteers. Ministries need organizers, workers, hospitality volunteers and people willing to carry tables, greet newcomers, make phone calls or lend whatever particular talents God has given them.

And sometimes becoming involved begins with something much simpler: showing up.

Come to Mass regularly. Stay for coffee or a parish event. Introduce yourself to someone. Attend a Young Adult gathering. Try a Small Group. Stop by Adoration. Volunteer once. Ask a ministry leader what help is needed.

You do not have to wait until you know everyone, understand everything about the faith or feel as though you have reached some particular stage of Catholic adulthood.

In fact, involvement itself is often how a large parish begins to feel smaller.

The U.S. bishops describe young adult ministry as connecting young adults with Christ, with the Church, with a community of their peers and with the mission of the Church in the world. That is a good reminder that belonging to a parish is about more than finding a program designed for your age group. It is about discovering where your own gifts, interests and vocation fit within the Body of Christ.

St. Mark's Young Adult Ministry can help make those first connections. But the invitation goes further.

There is a place for you in the life of this parish.

Come pray with us. Learn with us. Serve with us. Bring your gifts. Meet the people sitting beside you at Mass. And help us build the Church together.

A complete Stewardship Guide can be found at stmarknc.org/stewardship-directory or reach out to Stewardship Coordinator Karen Donahue at karen.donahue@stmarknc.org.

RESPECT LIFE



Walking with Moms in Need Diaper and Wipe Drive!

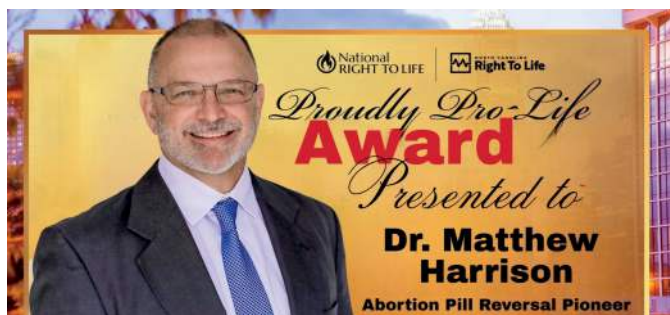
When: Now through Sept. 20

Where: Leave donations in Narthex Bin

St. Mark's Walking with Moms in Need (WWMIN) ministry is **collecting diapers and wipes** to support mothers and families facing challenging circumstances in our parish and local community.

Most needed: Diaper sizes 3-5 although donations of all diaper sizes, formula and wipes are welcome.

Thank you for helping Walking with Moms in Need offer practical support and remind mothers in our community that they are not alone. Please bring donations to the collection bin in the Narthex.



St. Mark Parishioner Dr. Matthew Harrison to Receive National Pro-Life Honor

St. Mark parishioner Dr. Matthew Harrison will be honored this week for a decision he made 20 years ago that helped change the course of pro-life medicine.

National Right to Life and North Carolina Right to Life will present Dr. Harrison with the Proudly Pro-Life Award during the Proudly Pro-Life Gala Sept. 17 in Charlotte. One of National Right to Life's highest honors, the award recognizes individuals whose leadership and commitment have made a lasting contribution to the defense of human life.

Previous recipients include St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta, President Ronald Reagan and St. John Paul II.

Dr. Harrison's contribution began in 2006, when a woman contacted him after taking the first drug in the two-drug chemical abortion regimen. She regretted her decision and wanted to know whether there was anything that could be done to save her baby.

Drawing on his medical knowledge and research by Dr. Thomas Hilgers, founder of NaProTechnology, Dr. Harrison administered progesterone in an effort to counteract the effects of the abortion drug.

The treatment succeeded, and months later a healthy baby was born.

It was the first known successful case of what became known as Abortion Pill Reversal, a treatment intended for women who have taken the first medication in a chemical abortion and then change their minds. Dr. Harrison's work helped open the door to further development and use of the protocol.

"Dr. Matthew Harrison represents the very best of the pro-life movement: courage in the face of uncertainty, compassion for a mother in crisis, and an unwavering determination to save a child's life," said Carol Tobias, president of National Right to Life.

She said his willingness to respond when that mother sought help ultimately contributed to an effort that has offered other women a second chance to continue their pregnancies.

The Proudly Pro-Life Gala will be held Thursday, Sept. 17, at the Hilton Charlotte Uptown. Rachel Campos-Duffy, co-host of FOX & Friends Weekend, will be the keynote speaker.

We congratulate Dr. Harrison on this national recognition and give thanks for his commitment to protecting the dignity and sanctity of human life.

National RIGHT TO LIFE **NORTH CAROLINA Right To Life**

Proudly Pro-Life
GALA

September 17, 2026
Hilton Charlotte Uptown

Featuring
Rachel Campos-Duffy
NY Times bestselling author and FOX News television personality

Proudly Pro-Life
AWARD RECIPIENT
Dr. Matthew Harrison
Abortion Pill Rescue Pioneer

JOIN US
nrlc gala.com
events@nrlc.com 222 East 3rd St., Charlotte

Ongoing Food Gift Card Collection

We are running a little low on grocery gift cards to help parishioners in need. If you are able to donate \$25 gift cards to local grocery stores (ALDI and Food Lion especially needed), please leave donation with the receptionist at the Welcome Desk in the Family Center. Thank you!

MUSIC MINISTRY



Help Fill St. Mark with Sacred Music

As our parish continues to grow,
so should the voices
that help lead us in worship.
Music is an important part of the life of
St. Mark, and there is a place
for parishioners of all ages
to share their gifts.

This fall, our Children's Choir, Psalm 150
and Adult Choir are all welcoming new
members, from young singers
discovering the joy of sacred music to
teens, young adults and adults ready to
lend their voices or musical talents.
Help us ensure that the beautiful sound
of a parish singing its faith
continues for generations to come.

Prayer to St. Cecilia

*St. Cecilia, patron saint of
music and musicians, pray for
our parish and all who serve
God through sacred music.*

*Inspire those who have been
given the gift of song to offer
their voices in praise of the
Lord.*

*Encourage the young,
strengthen those who already
serve, and call new voices to our
choirs.*

*May the music of St. Mark lift
hearts to God and resound in
our church for generations to
come.*

St. Cecilia, pray for us. Amen.

"In the liturgy, to sing and to play music means to pray."

Pope Leo XIV • August 19, 2026

Children's Choir Grades 3–8

Does your child love to
sing?

The St. Mark Children's
Choir welcomes children
in grades 3–8 to discover
the joy of sacred music
while growing in faith,
friendship and
confidence. Children
learn to use their voices
in service to God and our
parish as they help
provide music for Mass
and other special celebrations throughout the year.

The new season begins September 9 but you can still join. To register or learn more,
contact Children's Choir Director Lorie Gabriel at lmgabriel@stmarkcatholic.net.



St. Mark Adult Choir: Your Voice Is Needed

Practice Begins September 17

You don't need to be a professional singer to have a place in the choir. You need a love
of sacred music, a willingness to
learn and a desire to serve. Our
Adult Choir sings at the Sunday
9 am Solemn Mass and helps
bring the Church's rich tradition
of sacred music to life at St.
Mark.

In a parish of more than 5,000
families, there is tremendous
room for our choir to grow.
Whether you have sung in a choir
for years or have wondered if this
might be the time to begin,
consider adding your voice. Every
new member strengthens the choir and helps ensure that sacred music remains a
vibrant part of worship at St. Mark for generations to come.

Rehearsals are Thursday evenings. To learn more or join, contact Director of Sacred
Music Manny Mora at manuel.mora@stmarknc.org.



Psalm 150 Relaunch: Calling Musicians, Vocalists & Mentors

Psalm 150 is being refreshed and rebuilt!

This ministry offers teens and young adults ages 13+ an opportunity to share their
musical gifts through spiritually grounded, contemporary Catholic music.

We are looking for vocalists and experienced instrumentalists, as well as adult
musicians who would enjoy helping lead and mentor our young people.

Those interested in learning soundboard and audio support are also needed. There is
no Mass commitment yet. The first step is gathering a core team, rehearsing together
and building the ministry.

Interested? Contact Katie Bolstad at katrina.bolstad@gmail.com or 760-585-5634.

WHAT
MATTERS
MOST?

WHO IS
GOD
CALLING
YOU
TO BE?

THERE IS
MORE TO
LIFE.



MEN, THERE IS MORE TO LIFE.

MEN'S WELCOME RETREAT NOVEMBER 7-8

Maybe you've asked yourself: What am I here for? What matters most? Am I becoming the man God is calling me to be?

Sometimes we need to step away from the demands of everyday life long enough to ask the questions that matter.

The St. Mark Men's Welcome Retreat is a 1½-day experience created by Dynamic Catholic and led by men of our own parish.

Through personal witness, fellowship, prayer, Mass, Adoration and time for reflection, Welcome offers an opportunity to look more deeply at your life, your faith and your relationship with God. It is a time to build genuine friendships with other Catholic men along the way.

Since 2020, more than 400 men of St. Mark have attended a Welcome Retreat. This fall, we invite you to be part of our eighth Men's Welcome Retreat.

You don't need to be at a particular place in your faith.

Welcome is for the man who feels close to God, the man who feels far away, and everyone in between.

Come as you are.

There is no cost to attend, but space is limited.

REGISTER TODAY:

Please use the QR code or go to stmarknc.org/welcome-retreat



Welcome.

There is More to Life



Find Your Small Group This Fall

Registration is now open for fall Small Groups and our eight-week study of *Romans: The Gospel of Salvation*.

When parishioners shared their Small Group experiences at Mass recently, we heard something worth remembering. Many joined hoping to learn more about Scripture and their Catholic faith, but found something more: friendships, people who pray for one another, and a community that walks together through the joys and sorrows of life.

In a parish as large as St. Mark, those smaller communities can be a great gift.

Groups are available for men, women, couples, singles, young adults and others, with a variety of days, times and locations. You don't need to be a Scripture expert, and you don't need to know anyone before you come.

Find the group that fits you and join us this fall. \$15 /Optional workbook \$10
Register at stmarknc.org/small-groups or scan the QR code.



FORMED: Free Catholic Streaming for St. Mark Parishioners

Did you know that St. Mark provides every parishioner free access to FORMED? Often called the "Catholic Netflix," FORMED offers thousands of Catholic movies, documentaries, Bible studies, audiobooks, and children's programs. Whether you're looking to deepen your faith, learn more about the saints, study Scripture, or find wholesome entertainment for your family, FORMED is available anytime on your computer, tablet, or smartphone. To create your free account, visit signup.formed.org and search for St. Mark Catholic Church.



formed
Forming Catholics for Life.

The Seven Sorrows of the Blessed Virgin Mary

The Seven Sorrows of Mary is a traditional Catholic devotion featuring meditations on sorrowful episodes in the life of the Blessed Virgin Mary. Join us in prayer as we celebrate the feast of Our Lady of Sorrows.

Our parish has a free Formed subscription for you! Simply scan the QR code or visit formed.org/signup to create your account and select our parish to get free access to this content and much more!





Somewhere Quiet to Pray...

By: Donna Fodale/Adoration Coordinator

This past week the events happening in the world and things happening to those around us felt particularly heavy on my heart. So many things are going on. Things that are out of our control. At times, many of us just simply feel helpless. When that happens, it is especially important to stop and ask the Lord... what is it that you want me to do to help? How can I help? What can I do Lord?

For me in those moments, without fail, the desire to pray more intensifies and I find myself spending more time in Adoration.

Have you ever felt a pull to just go to the Adoration chapel? Have you ever felt a pull to go somewhere quiet to pray?

While we know praying can be done most anywhere, why not go to the place where Jesus is truly present? A place where you can ask Him those difficult questions that weigh heavily on your heart. A place where you can offer the one thing that we are all called to do for our brothers and sisters that are suffering. To pray for them.

St. Padre Pio once said that *Prayer is the best*

weapon we have; it is the key which opens the heart of God."

That quote from St. Pio has been one that I re-read repeatedly especially during the times that I feel powerless. It is a reminder that when we pray from our hearts, we possess something much greater than all the riches in the world. We possess the ability to move the heart of God. Though sometimes we don't always get the answers that we want, we trust that God is at work and will work out all things for the good of those who love him.

So, next time you feel that pull to pray, make your way to the Adoration Chapel. Send your Guardian Angel ahead to save you a seat and go to the place where Jesus waits for you and remember what Philipian's 4:6-7 tells us...

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus." It teaches trust in God and the calming power of prayer.

Please prayerfully consider committing to a Holy Hour. Register at: www.stmarknc.org/adoration

TO BE A SUB PLEASE CONTACT donna.fodale@stmarknc.org



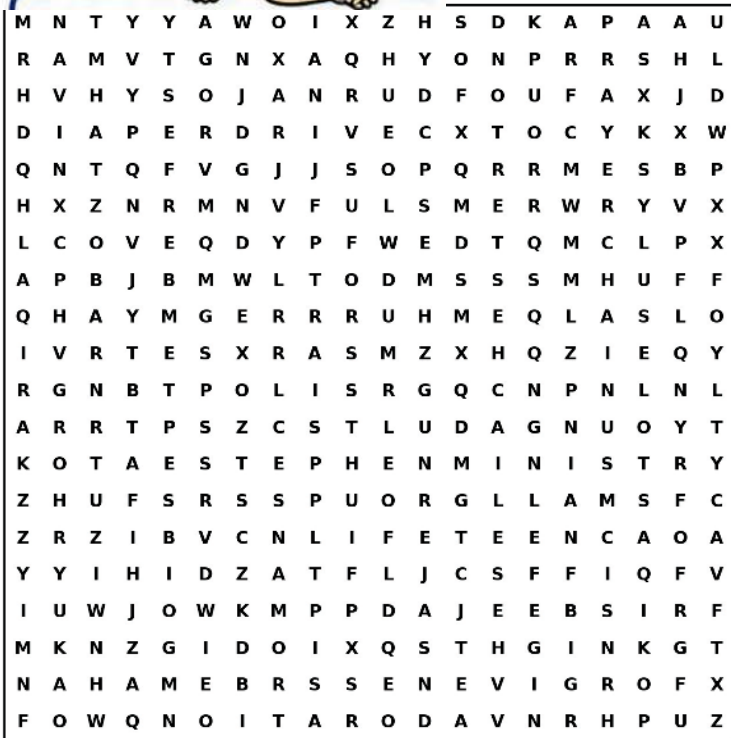
Stephen Ministry: Help, Hope, Healing

Life brings seasons when we all need someone to listen, encourage, and pray with us. Whether you are grieving the loss of a loved one, facing illness, caring for a family member, experiencing divorce or separation, struggling with loneliness, unemployment, parenting challenges, or another difficult life circumstance, you don't have to walk through it alone.

Stephen Ministers are trained parishioners who provide one-on-one, confidential Christian care to those who are hurting. They offer a compassionate presence, a listening ear, and ongoing support rooted in Christ's love.

If you or someone you know could benefit from the care of a Stephen Minister, please contact Leanne Vaccaro at leanne.vaccaro@stmarknc.org or Rich Kull at rkull@optonline.net.

Learn more at stmarknc.org/stephen-ministry.



Can you find these words from this week's bulletin?

Words may be hidden across, down, backward or diagonally.

Find: FORGIVENESS, CHESTERTON, PRIEST RETIREMENT, YOUNG ADULTS, SMALL GROUPS, ROMANS, ADORATION, SEPTEMBERFEST, LIFE TEEN, SACRED MUSIC, PRAYER CHAIN, DIAPER DRIVE, COUPLES, FRISBEE, FORMED, STEPHEN MINISTRY, KNIGHTS, SORROWS



Off to a Great Start!

Our Faith Formation year is underway!

No classes this weekend.
We'll see you again
September 20-22!

Please keep our students, families and catechists in your prayers as they grow together in faith.



Our Lady of Sorrows

Feast Day: September 15

When we picture Mary, we often think of her joy at the birth of Jesus or her loving care for Him as a child. But Mary also knew great sadness.

The Church remembers **Seven Sorrows of Mary**, moments in her life when she suffered because of what was happening to Jesus. That is why Our Lady of Sorrows is often pictured with seven swords piercing her heart.

Mary's sorrows began when Jesus was still a baby and Simeon told her that a sword would pierce her own soul. She and Joseph later fled to Egypt to protect Jesus from King Herod. She experienced the fear of losing the 12-year-old Jesus in Jerusalem and, years later, the terrible sorrow of seeing Him carry His Cross, die on Calvary and be placed in the tomb.

Through every sorrow, Mary remained close to Jesus and continued to trust God.

Our Lady of Sorrows reminds us that being faithful does not mean we will never be sad or afraid.

When something hurts, we can bring that sorrow to Jesus just as Mary did. We can also ask Mary to stay close to people who are suffering and help us notice when someone else needs our prayers, kindness or friendship.

Our Lady of Sorrows, pray for us.



HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH

New Life Teen Year!

All high school students are invited to join us for another exciting year of Life Teen.

Life Teen gathers on Sunday evenings after the 5 pm Mass throughout the year with engaging talks, small group discussions, games, prayer, fun and opportunities to form friendships.

And dinner is always included!

September 13: Themed Movie Night

September 20: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

September 27: Color Games

October 4 : The Incarnation

October 11: Life in the Church

**October 18: Harvest Festival
(Middle and High School)**

Stay connected by signing up for Flocknote!

Scan to sign up or go to <https://stmarknc.flocknote.com/lifeteen>

Info contact Gus Free at
augustine.free@stmarknc.org.



LIFE TEEN ANNUAL

COLOR

GAMES

Sept 27
Rescheduled to September 27!



PARISH LIFE

Coffee & Conversation

Every Tuesday after
9am Mass in the
Kerin Family Center

Meet new people.
Enjoy old friends.
Connect to the community.

STARTS BACK SEPT 15!



St. Mark Prayer Chain Ministry

Everyone is invited to become a Prayer Warrior through the St. Mark Prayer Chain.

Each volunteer prays for the requests submitted through the private prayer form found on the St. Mark website in addition to praying for the people whose names are listed in the St. Mark bulletin.

Each prayer warrior prays for these prayer intentions separately, at different times, and in different ways.

For example, in nightly family prayer time, during times at the Eucharistic adoration chapel, at home, using the rosary, or through the intercession of saints.

If you would like to become a member of the St. Mark Prayer Chain Ministry please contact us.

"For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them." — Matthew 18:20

Peace, Kevin & Janet Urban,

Contact us: urbkev@yahoo.com, 704-689-3847



PARISH LIFE

Join the Knights of Columbus Ladies' Auxiliary!

When: Mon., Sept 21, 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 meet on Monday, September 21 at 6 pm in Room 200 in the Kerin Family Center. The potluck dinner meetings only last for one hour (officially) however we generally stay and socialize for a while. Please consider joining this year a wonderful group of women whose mission is to help the community of St. Mark Parish.

Information: MaryJane Zimmerman, email stmarkkocladiesauxiliary2011@gmail.com



Singles 45+ Fellowship Event

When: Sun., Sept. 27; 5-8 pm
Where: The Serve Pickleball + Kitchen
20220 Chartown Dr, Cornelius

Join us for an evening of fellowship and fun for those aged 45+! Whether you are a regular or a newcomer, we invite you to bring a friend and meet us for a great time of community. It's the perfect opportunity to connect and make new memories.

RSVP Today: Please let us know you're coming so we can plan for you.

Questions? We are here to help! Feel free to reach out to us at 45plussingles@gmail.com.

We look forward to seeing you there!



Second Annual



SK David Calabrese MEMORIAL GOLF TOURNAMENT

MONDAY, OCTOBER 26, 2026

Event Details
Cowan's Ford Golf Club,
761 Club Drive, Stanley, NC 28164
18-hole Captain's Choice with cart and lunch
Sign-in: 8:30 am
Shotgun start: 10:00 am
Registration: \$160 per player /
\$640 per foursome

Registration and Sponsorship Opportunities:

Please pre-register and submit payment for players, teams, and sponsorships by scanning the QR code or visiting tournevents.com/kofcgolf.

A sign-up drive will be held after Masses the weekend of September 19 & 20.

Contacts:
John Knight, 703.618.3779;
Rick Szafran, 704.564.2814;
Bill Pugh, 704.309.7466




Countdown to SeptemberFest 2026 September 26, 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



Candid Captures
photobooth



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. John Cuppett (in residence)

Deacons

Rev. Mr. Thomas Martin
Rev. Mr. Richard McCarron
Rev. Mr. Thomas McGahey
Rev. Mr. Tom McMahon
Rev. Mr. Louis Pais
Rev. Mr. Ramon Tapia

Director of Sacred Music

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

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Sacrament Admin/Adoration

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Annulments, OCIA

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704-948-0231, Ext. 124

Middle School Youth Ministry

Coordinator

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olivia.digiovanni@stmarknc.org
704-948-0231, Ext. 105

High School Youth Ministry

Coordinator

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

Tribunal Advocate

Rod Brostrom
rnbrostrom@rcdoc.org

Angelo Sedacca
asedacca@rcdoc.org

Bulletin Team

bulletin@stmarknc.org

Mass Schedule

Mon/Tue/Thu: 7, 9 am
Wed: 7 am, 6:30 pm
Fri: 7, 9 am
7 pm (Spanish)
Sat: 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

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, ultreys 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

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.

benotafraid.net

Taken Abortion Pill? It may not be too late: Abortion Pill

Reversal 877-558-0333 or abortionpillreversal.com

Parishioner Assistance

Financial:

St. Vincent De Paul Society:

Emily.Bixler@stmarknc.org

Life Crisis: Stephen Ministry

stmarknc.org/stephen-ministry

Food Insecurity:

Parish Office

stmarknc.org/assistance or

Emily.Bixler@stmarknc.org or

704-948-0231, Ext. 102

Al-Anon

Ellen | 704-907-8555

Alcoholics Anonymous

Tom | 704-604-7739

Alateen program

Paul G. | 704-641-0654

Divorce Support Group

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

Contact: divorce.support@stmarknc.org

DEL PÁRROCO



Las lecturas de hoy nos invitan a examinar el estado de nuestro corazón — nuestros pensamientos, actitudes y emociones. En nuestra

Primera Lectura de Sirácias, escuchamos sobre el poder destructivo de la ira: "¿Podría alguien alimentar la ira contra otro y esperar sanación del Señor?"

Todos hemos sido heridos por otros en algún momento, algunos más profundamente que otros. Aunque nuestras emociones son dones de Dios, estamos llamados a cuidarlas bien en lugar de permitir que nos controlen. ¿Cómo hacemos eso? Siraj nos da la respuesta: "Recuerda tus últimos días, deja a un lado la enemistad... Recuerda el pacto del Altísimo y pasa por alto las faltas." En lugar de recrearnos en los heridos pasados, elegimos la gratitud. Recordamos las innumerables bendiciones de Dios, su misericordia infalible y su amor fiel, depositando nuestra confianza en Él.

En el Evangelio de hoy, Jesús nos recuerda quiénes somos ante Dios a través de la parábola del siervo implacable. Un rey perdona una deuda tan enorme que nunca podría ser saldada, pero el siervo se niega a extender esa misma misericordia a otro.

La historia debería sonar familiar. Dios nos ha dado la vida, ha perdonado nuestros pecados por Su Hijo y ha abierto el camino a la vida eterna. Nunca podríamos devolver tal regalo. La única respuesta adecuada es ofrecerle toda nuestra vida y extender la misma misericordia y perdón que Él nos ha mostrado.

Esa es la libertad y la alegría que se encuentran en el modo de vida de la administración. ©Consultores Católicos en Mayordomía, 2026



Reflexión pastoral – He estado escuchando algunos podcasts sobre la santidad en la vida diaria y, más recientemente, sobre las virtudes y la vida de G.K. Chesterton. Mantenemos a los santos en vidrieras y en el calendario, lo cual es bueno. También es una forma de mantenerlos a una distancia segura. Recordamos a Francisco con los pájaros, a Teresa con las rosas y a los mártires con los salmos, y concluimos en silencio que la santidad es trabajo de un especialista. Pertenece a personas que vivieron hace mucho tiempo, o lejos, o bajo circunstancias que nunca serán nuestras. Chesterton es un correccional útil, no porque la Iglesia lo haya declarado santo — no lo ha hecho — sino porque rechazó esa distancia. Era un periodista casado. Escribía contra los plazos. Discutía en público, reía en público y iba a misa. Era grande, desaliñado y aficionado a los dones ordinarios de la creación. Cuando la gente empezó a hablar de él como santo, la sorpresa fue parte del punto. No se parecía a nuestra idea de santo. Parecía un hombre con trabajo.

Eso no fue un accidente. Chesterton escribió una vez que no tenía ninguna razón, ni en el cielo ni en la tierra, por la que una camarera no debería ser canonizada algún día. La cuestión, dijo, no es su oficio. La cuestión es con qué motivo y con qué espíritu cuida el bar. No estaba siendo gracioso. Estaba exponiendo la doctrina católica. El bautismo es la puerta ordinaria a la santidad. La mayoría de los santos que la Iglesia conocerá nunca tendrán un día de fiesta. Habrán sido madres, mecánicas, enfermeras, profesoras, cajeras y hombres que llegaron a casa cansados y aun así eligieron ser gentiles.

El peligro de admirar a Chesterton es que lo convirtamos en la vidriera: el converso astuto, el hombre de las paradojas, la excepción. Eso le habría odiado. Toda su visión era que la gracia no espera un currículum extraordinario. Espera el consentimiento. La maravilla infantil que nunca superó, la negativa a despreciar a un oponente, el hábito de la gratitud, la sensación de que el mundo es un regalo y no materia prima — estos no son recursos literarios. Son la forma de un alma que ha empezado a ver como Dios ve.

Así que la invitación de esta semana no es para iniciar una petición. Es para mirar alrededor.

Mira a la pareja que todavía llega temprano y se sienta donde lleva treinta años sentada. Mira a la abuela que trae a dos hijos que no son suyos. Mira al

ujer que sabe el nombre del desconocido. Mira al hombre que va a confesarse el sábado por la tarde cuando nadie está mirando. Mira a la joven madre que está agotada y sigue cantando. Mira al feligrés que paga silenciosamente la factura de otra persona y no necesita que se cuente la historia. Mira a la persona que tiene todas las razones para estar amargada y no lo está.

Eso no es sentimentalismo. Así es como la Iglesia realmente forma santos. La virtud heroica rara vez se hace presente. Parece fidelidad un martes. Parece un padre presente. Parece una mujer que no deja que la enfermedad la haga cruel. Parece alguien que perdona la misma ofensa más de una vez. Parece la persona a tu lado que ha llevado una cruz de la que no sabes nada y no ha abandonado la fe.

Chesterton nos ayuda porque hace que la santidad vuelva a ser reconocible. Si Dios puede santificar a un periodista de Fleet Street, puede santificar la vida que ya llevas, y las vidas que rozas en esta iglesia y en esta ciudad. Lo extraordinario no es la biografía. Lo extraordinario es la caridad que no se rinde.

Pide la gracia para notarlo. Cuando lo veas, no guardes el secreto. Agradece a la persona. Imita lo que puedas. Y recuerda que la Comunión de Santos no es solo una lista de los oficialmente reconocidos. También es la santidad oculta que ya actúa entre nosotros, esperando ojos que han aprendido a ver.



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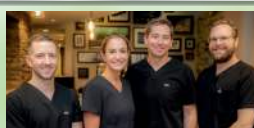
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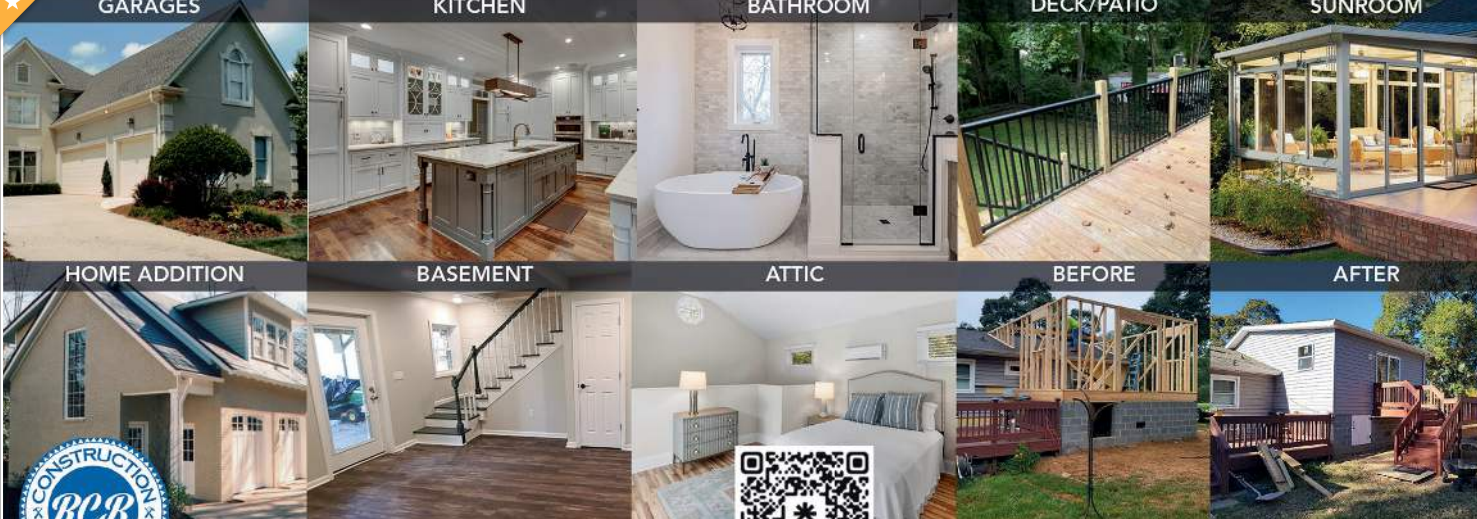
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