



Liturgy Schedule

Saturday Vigil:

5:00 p.m.,
7:00 p.m. (Spanish)

Sunday:

7:00 a.m., 9:00 a.m.,
11:30 a.m.,
4:00 p.m. (Lifeteen)

Daily Mass:

Mon, Tue, Thu, Fri, 7:30 a.m.;
Wed, 12 p.m. (noon)

Adoration:

Mon. - Thurs. 8:00 a.m. - 8:00 p.m.
Fri. 8:00 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.

Confessions:

Sat, 3:00 - 4:00 p.m.

Vacation Bible School ROARed Into Fun!

Our Vacation Bible School youngsters had plenty to ROAR about when they gathered on June 3 to 7 here at St. Mark's for a week of fun-filled activities grounded in faith.

Crystal Kulle directed the week that brought the theme, "ROAR! Life Is Wild — God Is Good" to life for about 300 attendees. The youngsters met from 9 a.m. to noon each day, and on June 6 there was a family pizza party. The ages ranged from 4 years old through those in fifth grade. Once youngsters have completed sixth grade, they may serve as team helpers.

"We want them to be excited about participating and strengthen their sense of community with our church," Crystal says. "We want them to come back each year and be excited, to love God more and want to be more a part of our community."

And come back they do — Crystal found she had plenty of volunteering team leaders because they had enjoyed



Everyone enjoys lifting their voices in song.

themselves so much in earlier years that they returned to help.

During the week, the youngsters rotated through five stations to cover the theme material, in addition to the opening and closing exercises.

"This year the material covered the Book of Exodus, about the Israelites wandering in the desert," Crystal says. "We covered the plagues in Egypt, and the Israelites crossing the Red Sea, and then the time they spent in the wilderness."

Each day featured a "Bible point" that noted God is good in different

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The Traits of the Christian Steward

*E*ach day, we strive to live stewardship in our lives, recognizing our roles as “God’s co-workers” in His creative, redemptive and sanctifying work. But in our quest to live as disciples of Christ, many obstacles often arise.

One of the most prevalent roadblocks in living stewardship is understanding the traits that make up a good Christian steward. Surely, it would be much more convenient if we had some sort of “stewardship list” that could lay out the necessary steps to becoming a good steward. Unfortunately, it more often feels like living stewardship is a lifelong journey that we will never fully comprehend.

Fortunately, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops’ pastoral letter on stewardship, *Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, gives some insight into the characteristics that make up a good Christian steward.

The Christian steward should display some of the following traits:

INSIGHT — Before the disciples could live what we know as the stewardship way of life, they needed a flash of insight, or a certain way of viewing the world and their relationship to it in a fresh light. This “divine grandeur,” more than anything else, is often what sets people on the path to Christian stewardship (*Stewardship: A Disciple’s Response*, 39).

CONSCIENTIOUSNESS — Stewards are fully conscious of their accountability in sharing of

their time, talent and treasure. As caretakers of the gifts that God has given them, they have the opportunity and responsibility to use them to their fullest potential to spread God’s Kingdom on Earth (40).

GENEROSITY — Christian stewards are generous out of love as well as duty. They should display a desire to share with and care for others based on the sacramental graces they have received. And they are also cognizant of the many warnings that the New Testament presents to those who fail in charity and authentic love (40).

JOY — Christian stewards are often presented with difficult obstacles, but they should remain joyful in the face of challenges to their lives of stewardship. Like Paul, the good steward is able to say, “I am filled with encouragement, I am overflowing with joy all the more because of all our affliction” (2 Cor. 7:4). Only by serving with a joyful spirit will stewards fully reap the rewards of their service, both in this life and the next.

Indeed, living as a Christian steward is a lifelong journey with many ups and downs along the way. But if we strive to consciously incorporate each of these characteristics into our giving of time, talent and treasure, we will find that the responsibilities of a good Christian steward will become much clearer with each experience of service.

Remembering America is a Gift from God

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

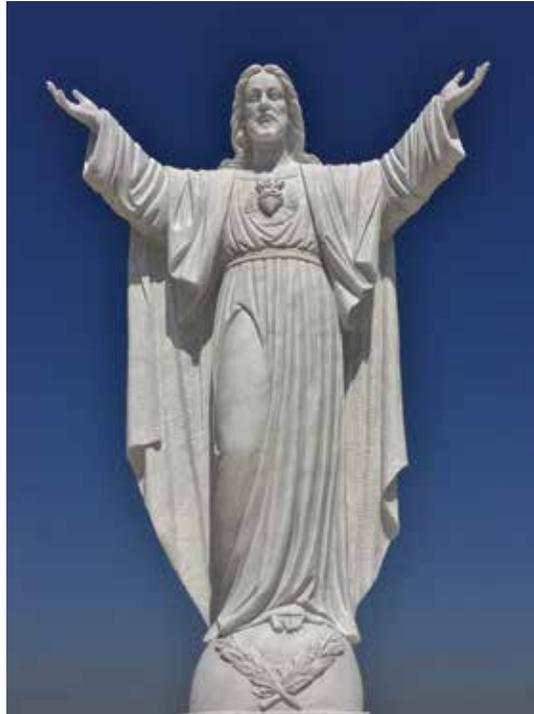
We're all familiar with the song "America the Beautiful." Many of us share the feelings that inspired Katharine Lee Bates when she composed it as a poem.

*O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea.*

Katharine Bates drew her inspiration from her experiences during the summer of 1893. An English professor at Wellesley College in Massachusetts, she went to teach summer school at Colorado College, necessitating a journey across the country. The trip's highlight came when she reached the pinnacle of Pikes Peak and could gaze upon range after range of the Rocky Mountains on one side and the expanse of the Great Plains on the other.

Moved by the vistas around her and the varied features of America she had seen, an idea for a poem and some of its words formed in her mind atop the mountain. That night, back in her hotel room, she completed the poem.

I think the reason for the popularity of "America the Beautiful" is that it combines several themes into one coherent whole. The beauty and immensity of America's natural creation, the rich abundance of our harvests, and



the recognition of God's generosity are woven together. The final product forms a hymn of thanksgiving for our land that goes beyond national pride to prayer, for God is the spiritual source for all the goodness we have.

I think it's a suitable theme for July, the month we celebrate Independence Day, our national holiday. Thankfulness, after all, is the basis of stewardship, the recognition that we've been given all we have. We're then responsible to the Giver for the use we make of His gifts.

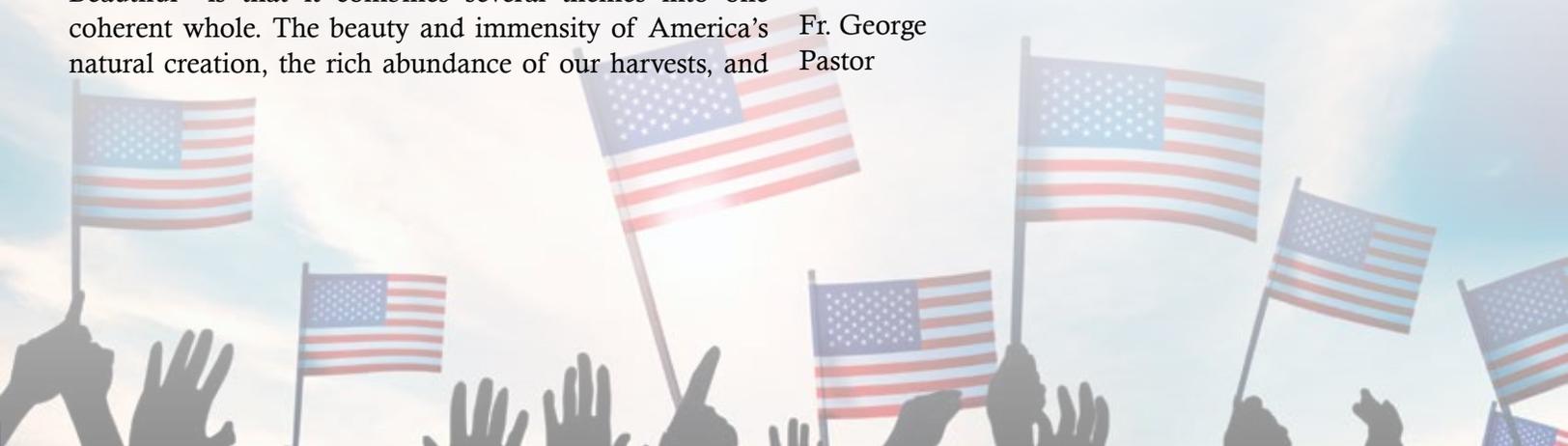
The gifts we celebrate are manifold. Some are of a spiritual nature — our salvation by Christ and the sacraments, for example. Others are in the natural order, such as the beauties of creation and

abundant harvests. Still others relate to social relationships, like families, friends and national life. Whatever the class of these gifts, God is their ultimate source, and they are blessings.

Let us then receive these gifts — the time, talent, and treasure entrusted to us — with thanksgiving. Let us offer praise to the Father of mercies for them, and let us use them in His service.

In Christ,

Fr. George
Pastor



More Than 60 Receive Blessing of First Holy Communion

“While they were eating, he took bread, said the blessing, broke it, and gave it to them, and said, ‘Take it; this is my body.’ Then he took a cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, and they all drank from it. He said to them, ‘This is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed for many.’” — Mark 14:22-24



Yuriana Isabel Figueroa read the second reading during the First Holy Communion Mass on May 11.

This May, 63 of our young parishioners heard this reading from the Gospel of Mark as they celebrated their First Holy Communion.

“I want to empathize that as Catholics, we believe that we receive the true Body and Blood of Christ at every Mass, not a representation,” says Dan Heredia, Coordinator of First Communion and RCIA Adapted for Children. “They are also participating in what Christ did with His disciples at the Last Supper, like we heard in Mark’s Gospel.”

About 10 of the students were chosen to proclaim the readings and Prayers of the Faithful.

“They did very well,” Dan says.

Deacon Vic used time during the sermon to ask the communicants some questions about the Gospel from Mark.

“All of the students who spoke answered the questions very well,” Dan says. “They really talked and they weren’t shy at all. Their catechists taught them very well.”

All of the young people spent some portion of the last year attending an additional class outside of their usual Sunday Catechism

Young People First Holy Communion



Over 60 students received the First Holy Communion on May 11.

program. There are three different tracks to specifically prepare for First Reconciliation and First Communion. Some students attended a monthly class, others a weekly class and others a bi-monthly class. They also attended a one-day retreat with various stations to help them prepare even further.

“Students practiced receiving an unconsecrated host,” Dan says. “They also made a banner with various symbols associated with First Holy Communion.”

The banner included a personal prayer, written by each communicant to be said in the pew after they received their First Communion.

“I explain to them that is the time you talk to Jesus,” Dan says. “That is the closest you will ever be to Him.”

The retreat also included a running game to help students understand the parts of the Mass and a sort of “science experiment” that demonstrated the importance of Reconciliation.

“They learned that it’s best to have a clean soul to receive Communion,” Dan says.

On Saturday, May 11, even the overflow areas of church were utilized to seat all those in attendance for the First Holy Communion Mass.

“I really enjoyed seeing the smiles on the parents’ faces as their child went up there to receive First Holy Communion,” Dan says.

Dan knows that many communicants had parents, siblings, grandparents and Godparents there for them on this special day.

“It was a packed church,” he says.

Each communicant received a gift bag with a children’s Bible, a certificate and a prayer book.

“I enjoy seeing how excited they are to receive the Body and Blood of Christ,” Dan says. “I make sure to tell them the Eucharist is like a Christmas present you can receive every Sunday at Mass.”

Dan would like to thank Andrea Woolums for developing the First Communion program and all the catechists who volunteer to teach the students.

“None of this would be possible without them,” he says.

If you would like more information on First Communion classes at St. Mark, please contact Dan Heredia at 940-222-8290 or dheredia@stmarkdenton.org.

Encompassing All Aspects



Gala patrons socialize around a table that was carefully decorated by parish volunteers.



Guests enjoyed the delicious food provided.



Truly a labor of love, every aspect of the Gala was made possible through the loving support and generosity of parish members.

*L*aissez les Bon Temps Rouler — Let the Good Times Roll!

The good times certainly did roll on Friday, May 3, during St. Mark's annual parish Gala. Described by event chairwoman Linda Green as a "true labor of love," this parish-wide fundraiser was able to raise \$114,000 — bringing us even closer to fulfilling our dream of building a new sanctuary.

"All of the money we raise goes toward the future building of our new sanctuary," Linda says. "Thanks to the success of last year's event, our goal this year was to make over \$100,000 in profit. And everyone's hard work and generosity made it possible for us to surpass that goal."

A big contributor to this success, says Linda, was the Gala Committee's decision to switch to an online platform for the silent auction. Though auction items were displayed as usual, all of the actual bidding took place remotely online. This meant that people could participate in the fundraiser and purchase some of the amazing auction items, even if they couldn't physically attend the event.

"This really allowed everyone to participate," Linda says. "In fact, our highest bidder of the evening wasn't even present! I think this has been a really important aspect of the Gala, especially with the event taking place the first weekend of May, which tends to be such a busy time."

And for those not financially able to bid on auction items, there are always plenty of ways to support the Gala through gifts of time and talent. So many people work behind the scenes each year to transform our Parish Activity Center into a classy venue. Ladies spend hours hunting through flea markets and creating masterful centerpieces which help set the mood for the evening, or baking delicious items for the Gala's popular dessert bar. And then there is the auction itself, containing countless valuable items donated by local businesses, parishioners and ministries.

"Everyone just pitches in, taking care of their little niche and ensuring that very little comes out of the Church's pocket," Linda says. "To see what the ladies

of Stewardship

through the 2019 Parish Gala

come up with each year in terms of our theme and decorations is really cool. Then we always need people to help solicit or donate items for the auction. We had several ministries come together this year, making really unique baskets that could be auctioned off. The Knights of Columbus are always so incredible, donating a party for 50 people in the live auction that they will provide and service. They also do a 'honey-do' list, which is basically just a bunch of Knights and their families doing chores for the person who wins the item. And then there are parishioners themselves donating things. Last year, for example, a little girl and her mother put together a dog walking package."

Thus besides being a truly good time, the Gala manages to encompass all aspects of stewardship each year. It brings us all together as we work side by side to support our faith community. In the process, it brings all a bit closer.

"We want faith to become a way of life for people, and this is just another way to help bring that about," Linda says. "We're so grateful to everyone who helped make this year's Gala a success. If we can get 100-percent volunteerism and contributions toward this event in the future, then this will only continue to grow and prosper."



Inspired by its theme Laissez les Bon Temps Rouler, the Gala incorporated Mardi Gras-inspired decorations and desserts.



Not only did the Gala help raise needed funds for our Church sanctuary project, but it also provided a special opportunity for parishioners to enjoy fellowship and fun with one another.

Saint Mark

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Vacation Bible School ROARed Into Fun! *continued from front cover*

situations. The points included “when life is unfair;” “when life is scary;” “when life changes;” “when life is sad;” and “when life is good.” “Bible buddies” introduced each day helped reinforce the Bible points, and featured the animal characters of Mack, Hooper, Zion, Savanna and Marge. During her preparation of the material, Crystal added Catholic elements to the program to put more focus on our Catholic faith.

Vacation Bible School is so popular that most families had signed up in mid-May.

“They just love it!” Crystal says of the children. “They are so excited. They come out of their shell and get into the songs and talk to the crew leaders. They talk to each other more. They have so much fun and so much enthusiasm.”

The Vacation Bible School leaders work on a three-year rotation, and this year was Crystal’s third. But chances are good she will return to help next year.



Adult volunteers don costumes to bring Bible stories to life.

Saint Mark