



St. Mark Parish

St. Mark is a Catholic parish committed to fostering discipleship through the Word of God and the Sacraments. We are dedicated to providing Catholic education to our youth, to bringing a deeper relationship with Christ to our adults, and to supporting those in need through the Spiritual and Corporal Works of Mercy. We encourage all of our parishioners to participate in the shared responsibility of worship, prayer, study and service.

December 22, 2024

4TH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

“Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to you by the Lord would be fulfilled.”
- Lk 1:45

Excerpts from the Lectionary for Mass ©2001, 1998, 1970 CCD, ©LPI

PASTORAL STAFF

Rev. Adam Zajac
Pastor

Mrs. Karen Cocita
Principal

Mrs. Meaghan McCarthy-Silver
Pastoral Minister

Mrs. Julia Wallace
Music Ministry Director

Mr. Michael Kay
Youth Ministry Director

Mrs. Jeannette Puckett
Parish School of Religion
(PSR) Director

COMMUNITY & SACRAMENTS

New Parishioners: All are welcome to join the parish! Visit the website or call the parish office to arrange to meet a pastoral staff member.

Become Catholic: Interested in becoming Catholic? Call the parish office for an appointment with a pastoral staff member to learn more.

Infant Baptism: As you celebrate a new birth, make sure to arrange for the child's baptism. The third Sunday of the month is our regular schedule.

Reconciliation: Mercy and peace are here for you. Confession is available on Saturdays from 3:00pm to 3:45pm, or by appointment.

Marriage: Over six months we will prepare you to exchange vows before the altar. Whether engaged or civilly married, contact us to get started.

Anointing of the Sick: If you or a loved one is seriously sick, please call the parish office to arrange for a priest to visit and anoint.

Homebound: We are happy to bring Communion to you if you are unable to participate in the celebration of Mass.

LITURGY AND PRAYER INTENTIONS

Papal Intention

December: For pilgrims of hope. We pray that this Jubilee Year strengthen our faith, helping us to recognize the Risen Christ in our daily lives, and that it may transform us into pilgrims of Christian hope.

Liturgy Schedule

Scripture readings can be found online at:
bible.usccb.org

Monday, December 23

8:30am Mass.....Maureen Gale

Tuesday, December 24-The Vigil of the Nativity of the Lord

4:00pm MassMaggie Willmitch

6:00pm Mass @ St. Mel

10:00pm Mass @ St. Mel

Wednesday, December 25-The Nativity of the Lord

8:30am Mass..... For the Parishioners of St. Mark Parish and the Parishioners of St. Mel Parish

10:00am Mass @ St. Mel

Thursday, December 26-St. Stephen

Friday, December 27

6:45am Mass @ St. Mel

Saturday, December 28-The Holy Innocents

3:00pm Confessions

3:00pm Confessions @ St. Mel

4:00pm MassMadeline McMahon

4:30pm Mass @ St. Mel

Sunday, December 29-The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

7:00am Mass @ St. Mel

8:30am Mass..... For the Parishioners of St. Mark Parish and the Parishioners of St. Mel Parish

10:00am Mass @ St. Mel

11:30am Mass The Weir and Zitnik Families

Pray for the Sick

We commend to your personal prayers parishioners who have asked to be prayed for:

| | | |
|------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| William Adams | Irene Gurchensky | Nora Sudetic |
| Gianna Andolina | David Kurth | Lena Sunyak |
| Carol Behnke | Pat McAndrew | George Surovec |
| Jack Behnke | Gerald McArthur | Herb Tippie |
| Katy Brent | Jim McIlwee | Georgieann Treible |
| Henry Buehner | Mary Miller | Shirlee Toth |
| James Coyne | Maisie Nowlin | Joe Wantz |
| Matthew Craven | Bill Retzer | Charlotte Whiting |
| Nicole Foerstner | Mary Stark | Lillian Zahara |
| Mary Frantz | Sr. Josette Obodzinski | Lew Zahara Jr. |
| Theresa Fridrich | | Joseph Zavatchen Jr. |

Pray for the Deceased

Deacon Neal Novak


May perpetual light shine upon them

Other Intentions

Weekly Luke McGraw Memorial Candles Intention

Dolly Tinnirello

| Liturgical Ministers | emHCs | Lectors | Servers |
|---------------------------------------|--|------------------------------|--|
| Saturday, December 28 @ 4:00pm | Marian Lundeen Mary Price Gloria Morin | Gary Morin | Owen Glazier Grant Glazier Lucas Sambrook |
| Sunday, December 29 @ 8:30am | Tim Schmidt Austin Tousley Michael Kay | Mary Lewis NOT FILLED | London Dinya Gabriela Santos Jacob Spolarich |
| Sunday, December 29 @ 11:30am | Annamaria Masterson Deirdre Mueller Shawn Wroten | Deborah Roscoe NOT FILLED | Reese Reichel Jackson Wroten Cormac Wroten |



Join us in prayer and worship during

The Christmas Season

Wednesday December 25

The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)

| | | |
|------------|---------|----------|
| Tue Dec 24 | 4:00pm | St. Mark |
| Tue Dec 24 | 6:00pm | St. Mel |
| Tue Dec 24 | 10:00pm | St. Mel |
| Wed Dec 25 | 8:30am | St. Mark |
| Wed Dec 25 | 10:00am | St. Mel |

Sunday December 29

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

Regular Sunday mass schedule

Wednesday January 1

The Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God

| | | |
|------------|---------|----------|
| Tue Dec 31 | 7:00pm | St. Mark |
| Wed Jan 1 | 6:45am | St. Mel |
| Wed Jan 1 | 8:30am | St. Mark |
| Wed Jan 1 | 12:00pm | St. Mel |

Sunday January 5

The Epiphany of the Lord

Regular Sunday mass schedule

Sunday January 12

The Baptism of the Lord

Regular Sunday mass schedule

Christmas is a ray of light for all, because it reveals to us God's love and makes us feel the presence of Jesus with everyone, especially with those who are suffering. Just for this reason Jesus willed to be born in poverty and in the abandonment of a cave and to be laid in a manger.

Saint Pope John Paul II, *Address to Young People*, 1978

Background: Peter Paul Rubens, *Adoration of the Magi*, 1633

NEWS AND EVENTS

Offertory Collections

In-Pew Collection 12/8\$ 3,716.00
Faith Direct (past month total)\$ 5,300.00
Thank you for your generosity!

Parish News

Eucharistic Ministers, Lectors, Altar Servers

Please see sign-up sheets in the Sacristy for Christmas masses and The Solemnity of Mary.

We Give Catholic

Thank you for your support

Once again, the parishioners, school families and friends of St. Mark have come through on We Give Catholic with generous donations for our project. We raised a total of \$14,305 this year that will be used for campus improvements, including new signage and replacing a few of the oak trees. Thank you for your continued support in helping to keep St. Mark the best it can be!

The Nativity of the Lord (Christmas)

Wednesday, December 25th, Holy Day of Obligation

Please see Page 3 for the Holy Day mass schedule.



Angel Scholarship Fund

Catholic Community Foundation

Did you know the State of Ohio scholarship tax credit program makes a “no-net cost” donation possible that greatly benefits St. Mark School students and Catholic school students throughout the Diocese of Cleveland?

Donors to the Angel Scholarship Fund may be eligible for a 1:1 state tax credit against their Ohio tax liability (up to \$750 for individuals or \$1,500 for married couples filing jointly, when both spouses contribute \$750).

Our hope and prayer is that more of our families will participate in this wonderful scholarship tax credit program by making a “no-net cost” donation for the 2024 tax year, and that we will be able to secure funds for our Angel scholars in 2025/2026.

To Donate: www.CatholicCommunity.org/angel-contribution

Contact the ASF office for more information on how to “Be an Angel!” 216-902-1312/asfinfo@catholiccommunity.org

*Merry Christmas and God's Blessings
to you and your families during this
Christmas Season!*

Fr. Adam and Staff

**The 2025 Calendars are
available at all Church
entrances**

Reminders and Regular Events

Holy Name Society Meetings

Fellowship, prayer, and service for all parishioners

All men and women of the parish ages 18 and older are welcome to join the St. Mark Holy Name Society. Meetings are the second Tuesday of the month at 6:00pm in either the Picnic Pavilion or Social Hall. At these gatherings, we dine together and discuss what event we will be doing next to help the community of St. Mark. If you would like to know more, contact Jim Cocita at: jimcocita@gmail.com

From the members and families of the Holy Name Society. May all the parishioners and their families at St. Mark and St. Mel have a very Merry and Blessed Christmas! As we gather together to celebrate the Holy Birth of Our Savior, please remember in your prayers those less fortunate.

Young Family Gatherings

Connect with other young parents

Once a month after the 8:30am mass, young families are welcome to gather in the Social Hall (or Pavilion) for bagels, coffee, and community. Dates vary each month. For questions contact Briana Dave at: bciancibello@gmail.com

Upcoming Dates: December 22, January 12, February 9, March 16 and April 13

Donut & Coffee Social

Once a month after all masses in the Social Hall. Gather with fellow parishioners. For questions contact Michael Kay at mkay@stmarkcleveland.com

Upcoming Date: January 4 & 5

Sunday Rosary

A devotion to enrich your prayer life

Please come to pray with Mary, Our Blessed Mother, in this beautiful devotion. Parishioners gather in the church to pray the rosary after the 8:30am mass every Sunday. Contemplating the mysteries of the life of Christ, we pray for peace and grace in the world.

General Parish Calendar

| | | |
|-------------------|--------------------------------|------|
| Saturday, | December 21 | |
| 9:00am-1:00 pm | CYO Basketball | G/FR |
| 3:00 pm | Confession | |
| 4:00 pm | Mass | |
| 5:30 pm | Basketball Tournament | G/FR |
| Sunday, | December 22 | |
| 8:30 am | Mass | |
| 8:30 am | Sunday PreSchool | CR |
| 9:30 am | Rosary | |
| 9:30 am | Young Families | SH |
| 11:30 am | Mass LS | |
| 1:00 pm | Basketball Tournament | G/FR |
| Monday, | December 23 | |
| | School Closed | |
| 8:30 am | Mass | |
| 3:00 pm | Youth & Children's Choir Prac. | CH |
| 4:00pm-9:00 pm | Basketball Prac. | G |
| Tuesday, | December 24 | |
| | School Closed | |
| | Parish Office Closed | |
| 4:00 pm | Mass w/Children's Choir | |
| Wednesday, | December 25 | |
| | School Closed | |
| | Parish Office Closed | |
| 8:30 am | Mass | |
| Thursday, | December 26 | |
| | School Closed | |
| 5:00 pm | Basketball Tournament | G/FR |
| Friday, | December 27 | |
| | School Closed | |
| 5:00 pm | Basketball Tournament | G/FR |
| Saturday, | December 28 | |
| 3:00 pm | Confession | |
| 4:00 pm | Mass | |
| 5:30 pm | Basketball Tournament | G/FR |
| Sunday, | December 29 | |
| 8:30 am | Mass | |
| 9:30 am | Rosary | |
| 11:30 am | Mass LS | |
| 1:00 pm | Basketball Tournament | G/FR |

Note: (LS)=Livestreamed

PARISH GRADE SCHOOL

Our STREAM Lab has been very busy these last few weeks. As mentioned earlier, our Entrepreneur Club has been working on prototypes of Christmas ornaments to mark our 75th Anniversary. Earlier in their STREAM class, 2nd Grade students colored turkeys and attached them to ziplines to "race". Students were allowed to adjust the height of turkey starting points and the height of the string during the race. Our 6th graders designed ziggurats in Tinkercad for a Social Studies project, and our 4th graders created balloon "floats" to attach to Dash robots. They learned about the origin of parade balloons and how they are created for the Macy's Day Parade each year. Students then programmed the robots to carry the class balloons along a similar route.

Our fifth graders experienced the magic of light reflecting and refracting! They were amazed as pencils seemed to bend, coins appeared to float, and drawings changed direction before their eyes. But guess what? It wasn't magic—it was science at work! In addition to this project, Mrs. Tanya Allen, one of our tutors from CMSD, presented her African travels to the 5th Grade as part of their study of Ghana, population density and Ghanaian story, "One Hen". Thank you to both our 5th Grade teachers, Mrs. true and Mrs. Baillis, for making these special events occur in your classrooms!

Through hands-on experiments, the students discovered how light behaves when it passes through different materials. It was a fun and eye-opening way to learn about the wonders of physics!

LifeAct is an organization affiliated with University Hospital's Rainbow Babies and Children's Hospital. Their mission is to teach young people to recognize the warning signs of depression and the importance of coming forward to seek professional help for themselves or others. Early identification is the first step in getting assistance. LifeAct visited our school to present programs on Stress Management to our students in Gr. 5-8 and Suicide Awareness to students in Gr. 6-8. Some key points they mentioned included:

- Identifying the differences between stress, anxiety, and uncomfortable feelings
- How our bodies react to stress
- When is anxiety a problem
- The importance of turning off the TV when trying to sleep; the light prevents our brains from resting!

Congratulations to our Classroom of Champions team! Classroom of Champions consists of students in Gr. 7 & 8 who are willing to practice studying various topics like American History, British and American Literature, Science, European History, and Geography (just to name a few topics) during their recess periods. Every month they compete at St. Edward High School against schools from all over Cleveland and its suburbs. Accuracy and quick recall are two key components of this monthly competition. At the end of the year, a champion is named. Last year, St. Mark's team placed first overall, they are on pace to do the same this year. (I hope I have not jinxed them!) The competitions are amazing to watch every month. Good luck to them as they continue to compete, and a special note of thanks to Miss McLaughlin, Mrs. Gallagher, and Mrs. Hanna who work with these students weekly. Thank you, St. Edward High School, for hosting this academic competition for our schools.

Special thanks to the St. Ignatius Cat-o'-Tonics who performed for our children the last day of school before Christmas break. The Cat-o'-Tonics meet after school twice per week and specialize in singing a Capella pop music. The award-winning Cat-o'-Tonics sing at a variety of school and community events annually. Our children loved their performance and it certainly made the highly anticipated Christmas break quite joyous! I could hear our children singing Christmas carols just before dismissal!

On behalf of all of St. Mark School, I want to wish all of you a very Merry and Blessed Christmas. I thank you for the gift of your children, for your support, and for your prayers. The support we receive from special projects like our Thanksgiving Food Collection, We Give Catholic participation, the school-wide used coat drive sponsored by two St. Mark alumni, Joe Butinski and Hank McGowan, your participation in St. Mark's Giving Tree program, and the children's participation in their beautiful Christmas play, When Jesus Was Born followed by performances by the school choir, our Percussion Ensemble, and Stick Drama ensemble, certainly added to our Christmas spirit. What a joy and blessing it is to experience Christmas every year through the eyes of our precious children.

Mrs. Cocita



General Audience of Pope Francis, on 11 December 2024

Cycle of Catechesis. The Spirit and the Bride. The Holy Spirit guides the people of God towards Jesus our hope 17. The Spirit and the Bride say: "Come!". The Holy Spirit and Christian hope

We have arrived at the end of our catecheses on the Holy Spirit and the Church. We will devote this final reflection to the title we gave to the entire cycle, namely: "*The Holy Spirit and the Bride. The Holy Spirit guides the People of God towards Jesus our hope*". This title refers to one of the last verses of the Bible, in the Book of Revelation, which says: "The Spirit and the bride say, 'Come'" (Rev 22:17). Who is this invocation addressed to? It is addressed to the risen Christ. Indeed, both Saint Paul (cf. 1 Cor 16:22) and the *Didaché*, a text from apostolic times, attest that in the liturgical meetings of the first Christians there resounded the cry in Aramaic, "*Maràna tha!*", which indeed means "Come, Lord!". A prayer to Christ, for Him to come.

At that earliest time, the invocation had a background we would describe today as eschatological. Indeed, it expressed the ardent expectation of the glorious return of the Lord. And this cry, and the expectation it expresses, have never been extinguished in the Church. Still today, in the Mass, immediately after the consecration, she proclaims Christ's death and resurrection "*as we await the blessed hope and [His] coming*". The Church awaits the coming of the Lord.

But this expectation of the *final* coming of Christ has not remained the one and only. It has also been joined by the expectation of his *continuous* coming in the present and pilgrim situation of the Church. And it is this coming that the Church thinks of above all, when, animated by the Holy Spirit, she cries out to Jesus: "Come!".

A change, or better, let's say, a development, full of meaning, has occurred with regard to the cry "Come", "Come, Lord!". It is not habitually addressed only to Christ, but also to the Holy Spirit Himself! He who cries out is now Him to whom we cry out. "Come!" is the invocation with which we begin almost all the hymns and prayers of the Church addressed to the Holy Spirit: "Come, Holy Spirit", we say in the *Veni Creator*, and "Come, Holy Spirit", "*Veni Sancte Spiritus*", in the sequence of Pentecost; and so on, in many other prayers. It is right that it should be so, because, after the Resurrection, the Holy Spirit is Christ's true "*alter ego*", He who takes His place, who makes Him present and operative in the Church. It is He who "declare[s] ... the things that are coming" (cf. Jn 16:13) and makes them desired and expected. This is why Christ and the Spirit are inseparable, also in the economy of salvation.

The Holy Spirit is the ever-gushing source of Christian hope. Saint Paul left us these precious words, this is what Paul says: "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the

power of the Holy Spirit" (Rm 15:13). If the Church is a boat, the Holy Spirit is the sail that propels it and lets it advance on the sea of history, today as in the past!

Hope is not an empty word, or a vague desire of ours that things may turn out for the best; hope is a certainty, because it is founded on God's fidelity to His promises. And this is why it is called a theological virtue: because it is infused by God and has God as its guarantor. It is not a passive virtue, which merely waits for things to happen. It is a supremely active virtue that helps make them happen. Someone who fought for the liberation of the poor wrote these words: "The Holy Spirit is at the origin of the cry of the poor. He is the strength given to those who have no strength. He leads the struggle for the emancipation and full realization of the people of the oppressed".

The Christian cannot be satisfied with *having* hope; he or she must also *radiate* hope, be a sower of hope. It is the most beautiful gift that the Church can give to all of humanity, especially at times in which everything seems to be dragging down the sails.

The apostle Peter exhorted the first Christians with these words: "Sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts. Always be ready to give an explanation to anyone who asks you for a reason for your hope". But he added a recommendation: "But do it with gentleness and reverence" (1 Pt 3:15-16). And this is because it is not so much the strength of the arguments that will convince people, but rather the love that we know how to put in them. This is the first and most effective form of evangelization. And it is open to everyone!

Dear brothers and sisters, may the Spirit always, always help us to "abound in hope by virtue of the Holy Spirit!"
Thank you.