

# STEPPING STONES

## Fr. Mark White



Dear Parishioners and Friends,

The Lord decided that you need a tall pastor. I am unworthy to untie Father Rene's sandals, or to change the oil in Father Kevin's

Subaru. But authorities higher than ourselves have brought about the now-famous Francis of Assisi- St. Joseph Martinsville/Rocky Mount cluster.

In January, I walked into the Archbishop of Washington's office and volunteered to go to a priest-shortage-ravaged area. Little did I know that Providence would reward me with such a plum assignment.

Thank you for welcoming me so lovingly. I cannot imagine a better place to live (for 3.5 days a week) than Rocky Mount, Virginia. (Martinsville, Virginia is

also perfect for 3.5 days.) Since it will take double the time to rack-up history in these two splendid counties, I intend to say twice as long. I told Bishop DiLorenzo to throw away my phone number. You are stuck with me.

I especially thank Larry Fischbach for all his gracious help. And thanks to everyone who contributed to the clustering process with thoughtful comments, hard work, and prayers.

I am looking forward to many happy years together. May the Lord prosper our efforts and fill our parish family

## Our Clustering with St. Joseph's in Martinsville

Our desires are often at odds with our reality as Catholic Christians here in Southwest Virginia. Our desires, whether they be healthy or unhealthy, are to have Mass whenever we want it, with our very own priest, in our own building. The reality is that we have to share a priest, get up early in the morning on Sunday to go to Mass, and are sometimes asked to go to fellowship, even worship with other Catholics in the area.

I think we should be optimistic about this opportunity to cluster with our fellow Catholics in Martinsville.

The bright side of our clustering with St. Joseph's is Father Mark. We may want to claim Father for ourselves, but it seems to be the will of God that we share. Such a wonderful grace can be shared and we can be better off for sharing as God wills.

The two parishes also have other things in common that could be the basis of sharing: We both have significant numbers of parishioners who are Hispanic and

who are Vietnamese. These cultural groups might make sharing easier in some cases. Also, there is a history of sharing between Francis of Assisi and St. Joseph's. A number of Francis parishioners attended at St. Joe's at one time or another.

Fellowship, common worship and shared education can be our goals. It is only important that we do the will of God.

St. Joseph Catholic Church, 2481 Spruce Street, Martinsville, VA 24112

### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- ◆ Spanish Mass for The Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, December 12.



### INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Annual Report:</i>	P.2
<i>Justice and Peace Expenses</i>	P.2
<i>The Third Edition of the Roman Missal</i>	P.3
<i>1st Communion and Our Lady of Guadalupe</i>	P.3
<i>Vacation Bible School</i>	P.4

## Annual Report: Statistics

Several people have asked about the physical makeup of Francis of Assisi Parish. We are growing! Fr. Mark reported in the financial report for FY 2010-2011 that "Our parish family consisted of 271 families comprised of 640 individuals -- increases of 13% and 14%, respectively, from last year."

There are 206 men, 252 women and 182 children registered in our parish. Of course there are unregistered individuals whom we

see regularly. And there are registered individuals whom we do not see.

The record of registered individuals breaks down to ninety five adults 18 – 30 years of age, one hundred ninety 31 – 59 and one hundred fifty one 60 and over. Twenty two did not list their age.

Only three children under 1 are listed in our records, but experience at Mass might suggest that this is a partial number. Thirty two children are 1 – 5, seventy six

are 6-12, and sixty one are 13 – 17, and ten did not state their age.

This past year we had six funerals and thirty one baptisms. The old adage is that a parish is growing if it has more baptisms than funerals.

Complete papers have been written explaining why there are fewer church weddings recently, and we celebrated only one wedding during the last fiscal year. However, twenty five people received First Communion and ten the sacrament of Confirmation..



Kelly Barbour & Matthew Nguyen at First Communion



John Kennedy & Elizabeth Rutherford at their wedding.

## Annual Report: Finances

Unfortunately, our parish's financial growth during the fiscal year ended June 30 did not keep pace with the growth in the number of parish families (as reported above). Offertory contributions grew less than 3%, while expenses increased 8%, primarily as a result of having our senior pastoral associate with us for a full year as opposed to half a year in the prior year.

Of greater concern is the fact that our fiscal 2012 budget contemplates that expenses will exceed revenues by \$21,000. While we will continue to do everything possible to control our expenses, it is unlikely that

our expenses will be significantly less than the amount budgeted. So our best opportunity to reduce the anticipated deficit would be to generate additional revenues. Since our budget contemplates less than a 1% increase in offertory contributions, this would seem to be an area where we can do better.

On a positive note, offertory contributions for the first three months of fiscal 2012 are nearly 5% from the comparable period last year. If this trend continues for the remaining nine months of fiscal 2012, it will translate into additional revenue of approximately \$7500.

## Justice and Peace Expenses

Francis of Assisi Catholic Church is committed to being a Justice and Peace church. Fiscal 2011 support of not-for-profit organizations and individuals amounted to \$22,909. \$2,859 of that amount went to individuals, either from offertory funds or the Diocesan Fuel and Hunger Fund.

Some of the income from spaghetti dinners went to not-for-profit organizations selected by the spaghetti workers and the Justice and Peace committee. \$6,000 from net proceeds from

spaghetti dinners went to these not-for-profits.

The fiscal 2012 budget includes \$15,300 for support of not-for-profit organizations and individuals, of which \$7,200 will be funded from the proceeds of spaghetti dinners. We wish the church could give more to individuals and not-for-profits in the area. We will apply for Fuel and Hunger funds again this fiscal year.

(None of these figures include Giving Tree activities.)

***"A Budget is a moral document."***  
(Sojourners Magazine)

## *The Roman Missal: Third Edition*

As Fr. Mark says, “We are a people of the book.” That is, we pray the Mass from the book and the book for the Mass in the Roman Catholic Church is the Roman Missal.

The Roman Missal is written first in Latin and then translated into the languages of the world. The newest English translation becomes the standard, official English language version of the Ro-

man Missal on the first Sunday of Advent, this November.

The changes to the prayers said by the people are minimal compared to the changes to the priest parts. However, there are a few changes to which we will have to become accustomed in order to pray together.

Some of the changes have affected the sung parts of the Mass, and we will begin using the new music set-

tings and the new words immediately. We will begin with the Belmont Mass settings.

The priest’s spoken parts and the people’s spoken responses will not change until November, as we usher in the new liturgical year. The new book is coming for the priest-presiders. We will have pew cards available to help the people respond together.

May Jesus Christ be praised!



Choir members lead us in the sung parts of the Mass.

## *The Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe — December 12*

San Juan Diego (1474 - 1548) era un pobre indio azteca que vivía en un pequeño pueblo cerca de la ciudad de México. Vivió durante un tiempo cuando la cultura indígena estaba siendo diezmada por los conquistadores españoles. María, en la forma de una princesa azteca, se apareció a Juan tres veces en un cerro del Tepeyac. Ella le dio instrucciones de decirle al Obispo que construía una iglesia en el lugar de sus apariciones. Después de las

dos primeras apariencias, siguió el mando de la joven doncella, pero el Obispo no le prestaba atención a su petición. Cuando se presentó por tercera vez, Nuestra Señora ordenó a Juan que recogiera rosas en su tilma y se las presente al Obispo. El valiente Juan logró obtener otra audiencia con el Obispo. Durante su visita con el Obispo una milagrosa, imagen de varios colores de Nuestra Señora apareció en el lu-

gar de las rosas. El Obispo creyó y una capilla se construyó. Hasta el día de hoy, la devoción a Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe florece.

Vamos a celebrar la fiesta de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe en San Francisco de Asís este año con una misa la noche del lunes, 12 de diciembre. La Misa será seguida por una fiesta. Por favor, vea a Joanna Cruz sobre los alimentos para la fiesta,



música para la Misa, y otras maneras que usted y su familia pueden celebrar este día tan especial con la gente de Francisco de Asís y de toda la Iglesia.

The 2nd grade First Communion class is a pivotal point in the development of a child’s Catholic faith. It is a busy year of building on and learning more about the tenets and traditions of The Catholic Church.

This class walks these young people through the meanings and rituals of Baptism, Penance and Reconciliation, For-

giveness of Sins and the Liturgy of the Eucharist.

The culmination is the glorious procession of innocent beauty and faith potential of the children as they walk to the front of the Church in May to make their First Holy Communion.

An important goal of this class is teaching the children

## *First Holy Communion*

to become familiar with the particular rituals of the Catholic Mass. It is thus hoped that afterwards it will inspire them to regularly attend Mass with their families, to continue with their religious education, and to enable their growth in spiritual faith.



1st Communion class, May 2011

**FRANCIS OF ASSISI CATHOLIC CHURCH**

15 Glennwood Drive  
Rocky Mount, VA 24151

Phone: 540-483-9591

Fax: 540-483-5232

E-mail: churchsecretary556@gmail.com

**Vacation Bible School**

CATHOLICS IN  
FRANKLIN COUNTY,  
VIRGINIA

**WE ARE ON THE WEB:**

***WWW.FRANCIS-OF-  
ASSISI.ORG***



The theme of this summer’s Vacation Bible School was SonSurf – Beach Bash for 1st through 6th graders.

The classes were divided by age level and named appropriate sea life names. Each night began with an overview video where beach man Dr. Cool spoke to us, his Dudes & Dudettes, to explain our relationships with God, Jesus and each other by asking a Big Question and giving us the Big Answer.

An example is, “What does Jesus want me to do?” The awesome answer is that Jesus

wants me to know and love Him and get fired up about sharing Him with others.

The children rotated between five (5) activity groups: Food, Games, Bible stories, Crafts and Songs. A typical evening might include eating yummy “octopus” hot dogs, playing sharks and seals, discussing a parable of Jesus, creating clay crosses, and lifting our voices and hands up in praise.

Although the turnout was lighter than anticipated, those that did attend shared memorable evenings of fun, friendship and fellowship.



Eduardo Escobar-Garcia and Jack Shanahan slowed down only to eat.



Emily Cruz and Emily Ayles share a moment at VBS.



Rebekah Ayles helps Eduardo Cruz with the bucket race.

Hey Dudes and Dudettes, it’s so awesome that Vacation Bible School will be back again next summer!