FEBRUARY 2024

Stewardship in the New Year

Stewardship is a commitment of mind and heart to the Lord; a way of life that needs constant renewal and transformation. This time of year has always been one of looking forward to a new year, reflecting on the changes we need to make in our lives and resolving to follow through on those changes. Perhaps those who seek to make resolutions to be better stewards might find inspiration in one or more of the following samples:

- **Stewardship of Prayer:** Resolve to strengthen your relationship with the Lord through prayer. Notice how often you pray and what hinders you from praying. If you are a beginner, commit to short, daily prayer times.
- Stewardship of Family: Resolve to set aside more time to stay connected with your family. Eat dinner together, schedule regular dates with your spouse, plan family outings, and go to Mass together. Practice patience and forgiveness.
- Stewardship of Health: Resolve to get those medical and dental checkups. Adopt healthier eating habits. Add exercise and other physical activity to your daily routine.
- Stewardship of Possessions: Resolve to possess a little more "lightly" this year. Consider ways you can reduce the amount of all that stuff you own. Distinguish between those items that are necessary and those that are considered luxurious and unnecessary.
- Stewardship of the Parish Family: Resolve to serve your faith community in some way this year such as at liturgy, in the parish's outreach or education and formation efforts. Is it also time to enhance your generosity to the parish?
- Stewardship of Money: Resolve to render sacred your annual budget. Reprioritize your financial goals to ensure that the Lord comes first in your spending. Take positive steps to improve your financial health.
- Stewardship of Work: Resolve to be faithful to your daily, work-related tasks and offer them up to the Lord. Cultivate your skills. Deepen your knowledge. Be mindful of how you are building the Kingdom of God.
- Stewardship of Mind: Resolve to keep your mind active. Commit to being more informed on the issues of the day. Read your bible. In this presidential election year in the United States, become even more familiar with Catholic social teaching.
- Stewardship of Neighbor: Resolve to be a person of hospitality and mercy. Make time and space for others who enter your life. Be more aware of times when a neighbor, co-worker, fellow parishioner or stranger, needs a moment of kindness, a little attention or an affirming gesture on your part.
- Stewardship of the Poor: Resolve to live with more compassion and in solidarity with those less fortunate. Remember the poor in prayer, and commit to helping relieve in some way the plight of those who are impoverished or marginalized.

Reflection from the International Catholic Stewardship Council

2024 Lumen Gentium Recipients

Mr. & Mrs. Gary and Sylvia Richmond are the St. Mark the Evangelist Recipients of the 2024 Lumen Gentium Award. Each year representatives from each of the parishes in our Archdiocese along with their pastors gather on the Feast of the Presentation of the Lord to acknowledge an outstanding individual or couple from each parish. Gary and Sylvia have been active members of our parish for 28 years. Gary is a common sight at our KC Hall as he oversees the reservations and is active with the Knights of Columbus; he also serves as an Usher and is a member of our Pastoral Council. Sylvia has a great love of the liturgy and is a member of our Liturgy Committee, a lector, and oversees and schedules our Extraordinary Ministers of the Eucharist; Sylvia also belongs to our Finance Council. Join me in congratulating them for their service to our parish.



The Rite of Christian Initiation, Following God's Calling

By John Farrell

Every Sunday until the Easter Vigil, you have probably noticed a group of adults and children sitting in the front row center aisle during the 10:00 Mass that suddenly get up and leave after the Homily. Let me introduce you to YOUR Catechumens and Candidates seeking to enter our Catholic faith through the Sacraments of initiation. Having begun their spiritual journey during the period of the pre-catechumenate, also known as Inquiry, these seekers of our faith were meeting every Sunday to get to know our faith, ask questions, and decide if Catholicism is the right choice for them. Once they pray and discern if they want to move forward, they officially enter the Order of the Catechumen by participating in the Rite of Welcome and Acceptance. The process they will go through is known as the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA), which usually takes about one year but will take longer for

The rite of Christian initiation has its roots in ancient religious history. From the very beginning of the Church's life, the faithful found themselves surrounded by hostilities from not only their fellow Jews but also many Gentiles, nearly all of whom were polytheistic, the worship of or belief in more than one God, who resisted the Gospel message. As Christianity began to spread more widely in the Roman Empire in the first few centuries of its growth, resistance by the Romans increased, and they legally forbade its practice. Despite these obstacles, Christianity grew very strong, and the Church developed a structure for initiating adults into the faith.

The earliest record of Christian initiation originated by Saint Hippolytus (170–235), who described a three-stage process for becoming

Catholic. The early Church Fathers referred to this preparation period as the catechumenate; the word catechumen means one receiving instruction in the Word (e.g., Galatians 6:6). The Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC) states that: "From the time of the apostles, becoming a Christian was accomplished by a journey and initiation in several stages. This journey contained certain essential elements that would always have to be present: the proclamation of the Word, acceptance of the Gospel entailing conversion, the profession of faith, Baptism itself, the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, and admission to Eucharistic communion" (CCC 1229).

Here at Saint Mark the Evangelist, the Rite of Christian Initiation (RCIA) is designed for adults, adapted for children, and practiced year-round. This rite includes not only the celebration of the sacraments of initiation, Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist but all the rites belonging to the catechumenate, including the Rite of Sending, the Rite of Election, the Penitential Rite, Minor exorcisms, and Scrutinies. This preparation, teaching, and learning come to a beautiful conclusion, celebrated at the Easter Vigil.

So how do we make all this happen at Saint Mark the Evangelist? Yes, we have an RCIA Team that prepares the seekers of our faith, but it also takes our entire church community to accomplish this spiritual task. "Only through an intimate relationship with the members of Christ's body will one touch, hear, and see Christ at work in the world. So, if you want your seekers to learn how to be the body of Christ, they must be trained by those who are the Body of Christ: the entire Christian community." (Nick Wagner, Team RCIA). The involvement of friends and acquaintances, catechists, and priests prayerfully takes an active role in the joyful celebrations in the different phases of this process. Conversely, since the entire community of the baptized is indeed responsible for forming the catechumens, we must get the Catechumens and Candidates involved in the community.

Our parish's baptized members are often the best teachers for the catechumens and candidates. Therefore, as parishioners of Saint Mark the Evangelist, I ask you to get to know them and make them feel part of the Body of Christ. Remember, we became Priests, Prophets, and Kings by being "born anew" by faith in Christ through the Sacrament of Baptism. "The whole People of God participates in these three offices of Christ and bears the responsibilities for mission and service that flow from them." (CCC 782)

John Farrell, MA(Sp) is the Director of RCIA at St. Mark the Evangelist.

WELCOME TO OUR New West Went Wembers:

Robert King Lou & Yvonne Leal Josephine Harfoush Jaime, Estrada Fajardo & Lila Moreno Jose Ruben & Annette Ontiveros Rachel & Justin Copeland Sergio & Melissa Guerrero **Brandon & Aime Eldridge** Derek & Estefania Rodriguez Erik & Bethany Luis Benjamin & Jennifer Pavlosky George, Ravenbrg & Vicki Weynand Ingrid & Brian Skop Haley & Clinton Shodrok Brandon Sifuentez & Olga Gonzalez Jasmine, Alionso & Michael Delfin Ashley, Oliver & Charles Cummings Joel, Lisa & Gabriella Salinas Mitzi & Denny Frazier, Eric & Jennifer Mary Bello, Carlos Nunez, Camila & Carlos Joshua Ficarro & Bridget Santana

Trash and Treasure Highlights

By Carol Hamann and Claudia Montgomery

The Women's Guild Trash and Treasure Sales are very popular and successful fundraisers at St. Mark and are held three times a year.

The dates of upcoming sales will be posted on St Mark's website and Facebook. Each sale occurs on a Friday, Saturday, and "Half Price" Sunday weekend, normally during April, August, and December in the Event Center. Mark your calendars when the dates are published. You don't want to miss out on these volunteer and shopping opportunities.

We are grateful for the talents and efforts of those who help with our fundraiser, and we are thankful for the support and assistance we receive from everyone throughout the parish. Likewise, we appreciate our new shoppers and loyal return shoppers.

Our volunteers price and box donations received from parishioners and from estate companies who donate to us. We are blessed with many volunteers from the Women's Guild, The Knights of Columbus, our parish staff, and various parish ministries, including Life Teen and The Young Adult Community. To volunteer to help with our sales, please contact us. Donations are accepted every Tuesday from 10 AM - 2 PM at Building #9.

Did you know we do much more than fundraising? Trash and Treasure proceeds have benefited numerous causes throughout the parish. Here are some of the recipients of our sale proceeds this past year:

- Scholarships for five high school seniors from Women's Guild funds.
- Infant/toddler items were donated to Texas Right To Life.
- St. Mark Campus, Parish Offices, and Ministries received donations.
- The Mobile Loaves and Fishes received equipment.
- Every other week we alternate donating excess items and clothing

to Texas Paralyzed Veterans and The National Children's Cancer Society. Other groups receive donations upon request (i.e. animal shelters).

- Art and Environment received supplies to decorate the church.
- Prayer Shawl Ministry received donated supplies.
- The Quilters received supplies.
- Habitat For Humanity; Trash and Treasure assisted in furnishing a tiny house for an 80-year-old homeless woman.
- Catholic Charities receives all unsold sale items.

Our shoppers become part of the Trash and Treasurer family and every sales event has its own wonderful stories. Here are a few from our most recent event.

A shopper came to our sale on his bicycle. The bicycles we had for sale were in much better condition than his, but he did not have enough money to purchase one. So we lowered the price, and he was thrilled. He was even more thrilled when another shopper, who overheard our conversation, offered to purchase a bike for him. He was overwhelmed and tearful, as were many bystanders.

Santa and Mrs. Claus came incognito. Santa admitted that he purchases all his Christmas gifts from Trash and Treasure. When Mrs. Claus heard about a parish family with a daughter who had limited bedroom furniture, she offered her own daughter's dresser. They delivered the dresser and sent a note and a picture for the little girl. In the spirit of giving, we added a box of linens, towels, and other supplies the family could use, along with a Christmas tree and some Christmas presents.

A shopper brought us a wonderful gift...an angel with lights that she had made from supplies she purchased at our previous sale. She added 15 gift boxes with delicious pecan clusters for the volunteers. Many other gifts were offered anonymously and graciously accepted.

Please keep the donations coming and keep volunteering, and we will continue doing God's work. It takes a parish!

Carol Hamann and Claudia Montgomery are the Women's Guild's Co-Committee Chairs for Trash and Treasure.





After 19 + years of great dedication, Don. Gil Hernandez retired in 2023. Thank you, Don, Gil, and your family, for your great dedication, sacrafice and service to our community of St. Wark the Exangelist.



Meet Our Director of Liturgy



We are pleased to introduce Katherine "Kathy" Tragos, our Director of Liturary

Although born in New York, Kathy spent most of her life in Boston, MA, but attended the American School of Lima (Lima, Peru) for High School. She earned her B.S. and M.Ed. at Boston University and moved to San Antonio in 2007 to work at UTSA (and also enjoy San Antonio's mostly permanent summer weather.)

Around 2012, Kathy's life took an unexpected turn when she felt called to start working at Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church in Helotes.

She then completed coursework in Pastoral Ministry at Oblate while working as the Pastoral Associate. Feeling truly blessed to work with a dedicated pastor, parochial vicars and seminarians in her role at OLG in Helotes, Kathy has since been learning about listening to God in everyday matters.

Kathy recently moved to Oak Park- Northwood and, again, feels blessed to find herself here at St. Mark the Evangelist. She looks forward to meeting all of our parishoners and continuing to answer God's call in service to our community.

Kathy enjoys living with her daughter and 2 granchildren. She also has 4 cat fur-babies at home. Her Husband is Greek, and she fluently speaks Greek! She loves to travel and noted her most memorable places she has traveled so far were the Holy Land and Greece.

Kathy's favorite part about her position here at St. Mark is preparing for the Masses. Particularly, reading the daily readings and Gospel ahead of time have been an incredible gift.

Please join us in welcoming Kathy to St. Mark the Evangelist!

You're Invited!

to come hear Tim Ballard, whose efforts to stop sex trafficking inspired the movie "SOUND OF FREEDOM," at Saint Mark's Catholic church in San Antonio, TX.

Tim will discuss the movie, how sex trafficking ties in with abortion, and how you can help.



Event is sponsored by A WOMANS HAVEN PREGNANCY CRISIS CENTER which is one of the largest and most successful pregnancy centers in the entire country serving over 3,000 woman annually at risk for abortion.

Event Location
St Mark The Evangelist Catholic Church
1602 Thousand Oaks Dr • San Antonio, TX 78232

To get your FREE ticket to attend, go to www.TimBallardChurchEvent.com (Tickets are required to enter the venue) Due to limited seating and sensitive topic, event is for adults 21 years of age and older.

Lector Committee Update

In 2023, Mary Solis and David Muñoz took on the task of scheduling lectors for all Masses and special services. When Marge Dunlap vacated the position, it became a big learning experience for Mary and David. Through trial and error, things are running smoother now. It is a labor of love and a blessing and honor to be on the lector committee.

If you are interested in joining the lector ministry, contact David Muñoz at 210-857-0751.

WATCH ONE HOUR WITH ME | EUCHARISTIC ADORATION

"Could you not watch one hour with me?" (Matthew 26:40)

COMMITTED ADORERS ARE STILL NEEDED

TUESDAYS
5-6PM (1 VACANCY)
6-7PM (2 VACANCIES)
8-8:45PM (2 VACANCIES)



<u>THURSDAYS</u> 5-6PM (1 VACANCY) 6-7PM (2 VACANCIES)

TO SIGN UP CONTACT ALICE MCKINNEY @ 210-490-0297 | 4AMCK2@SWBELL.NET





Pictured are Jacob De La Garza and Madeline Ellis, our outstanding lectors at the Children's Mass on Christmas Eve. 2023.

Rosary Ministry Recap

By David Nelson

2023 was a wonderful and busy year for our Rosary ministry (English and Spanish.) Here is what we have been up to:

- We led rosaries before both Christmas Day masses. This was a first.
- My wife (Ludivina) and I lead a very responsive and successful bilingual rosary (we think it's the first bilingual rosary ever prayed at St. Mark) in the sanctuary. We have recieved feedback after the bilingual Mass on how parishioners loved it.
- We led a rosary before the 8:00

am Mass on Thanksgiving Day and Monday 1/1/24 on the Solemnity of Mary, The Holy Mother of God.

- We lead 52 rosaries in English on Sunday in 2023 and 53 in Spanish.
- In October we lead a Rosary Rally the Park.

Here are a few comments from our rosary team members about the

• "A long with the rosary a few times a week, I have started with trying to pray some of the liturgies of the hours every day. It has been amazing on keeping me mostly calm! Better than talking with a therapist over my depression issues."

• "The Rosary is a Ministry. You can pray the Rosary at home and with other members of your family. We do 2 or 3 times per week with special intentions for those that are ill. I feel good things happen to me after saying the Rosary. It really calms me down and makes me feel I have done something good by praying for others that are in need of the prayers."

David Nelson and his wife, Ludvina *Nelson, lead the Rosary Ministry at St.* Mark the Evangelist.

What is Happening in Bible Study?

By Ann Swihart

1.

5.

and

Let's start with a little Bible Trivia I will include the answers at the end of this article.

How many books

are in the Catholic Bible?	
2. are in t	How many books he Protestant Bible?
3. what a	In the Old Testament re the first five books?
4.	, and
	t five books in the Old Testa-

are the first four books?

In the New Testament what

What is another name for the first four books of the New Testa- verse-by-verse study, join Fr. Patrick ment?

We started the Study "Mary, A Biblical Walk with the Blessed Mother" on Tuesday, January 9, 2024. This year we did two short studies. The first was Hebrews, lead by Andrew Swafford and Jeff Cavins. Now we are doing the study of Mary, necessary for the Christ to suffer. lead by Edward Sri. Both studies are published by Ascension Press. Hebrews was a deep study. Mary seems to be a very interesting study about her life.

We are now preparing for next year's study which will be "Mark: The Gospel through the Eyes of Peter". The study has a commentary by Trivia Answers Michael Pavaluk, PhD. There will be 1. videos presented by Michael Pavaluk, PhD and Fr. Patrick Winslow, JLC. The whole study comes to us from Catholic Scripture Studies.

According to Catholic Scripture Study, the Gospel of Mark has long been regarded as the authoritative teaching of Peter, composed by his follower, Mark. This study is a deep dive into this most foundational book of the Bible. Catholic Scripture Study at its finest.

In this engaging eighteen-week Winslow, JCL, and Michael Pakaluk, PhD, as they examine this compelling introduction to the Christ. See Jesus through the eyes of Peter. Experience him first as a "worker of mighty deeds" who expels demons and heals the sick, who teaches that the Kingdom of God has arrived in power. Learn with Peter why it was

This study sounds exciting. We plan to start registering at the end of July or beginning of August. Please look for our announcements as to the dates and times. I really hope you can come and be part of our Bible Study.

- 73
- 3. Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy
- 4. Torah or Pentateuch
- 5. Matthew, Mark, Luke, John
- The Gospels

Ann Swihart is the lead for the Tuesday Bible Study at St. Mark the Evangelist.

St. Mark's Prayer Shawl Ministry

By Velma Spruel Williams

First of all...We just want to say "Thank You!" Our St. Mark's Prayer Shawl ministry has met and exceeded our wildest dreams! We could not have imagined how a ministry where we gather each week and practice a skill we learned as a hobby, knitting, and crocheting, would be so needed, well received, and appreciated.

We meet for 2 hours on Fridays and while we are working, we discuss what each of us is working on. We "Show and Tell," discussing what special projects we have undertaken since we met last.

We have handmade over 2,000 items and donated many hundreds of our Prayer Shawls, Lapghans, and other items. We have made and donated Baby Caps to the NICU Dept. at a local Hospital, and Adult Caps to Travelling Loaves and Fishes, to distribute to the homeless and others in need. We also donate Prayer Shawls and Lapghans to several local Hospice Care Facilities.

We have also used our skills for

special projects such as providing items to a nearby Dialysis facility, where the rooms must be cold for their treatments; for the People of Uvalde, during their recent trauma; for a special red/white/blue project for a Veterans Facility. We also look forward to another donation for Veterans com-



The main purpose of starting our ministry was to provide comfort to our church families and their loved ones who were ill, dealing with the loss of a loved one, immobile, or unable to leave their homes. We have brought joy and comfort to many of our parishioners, their friends, and relatives. Our items have been received as far away as Germany, and many, many states, in the USA!

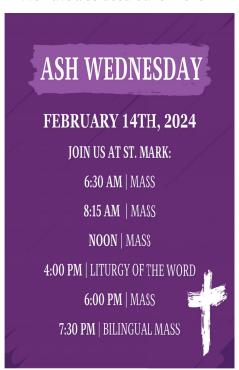


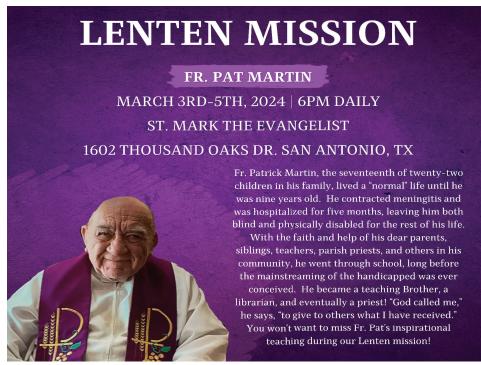
Locally, the requests are heartwarming, because we know many of those who request our items. We have started some upcoming new projects for the winter months, and beyond.

We thank those who donate funds or yarn. We only use acrylic yarn, to assure our customers are not allergic to our items, and try to have an ample supply of items and colors from which to provide just what may be needed.

If you love to knit or crochet, and would like to join us, I would love to talk with you about our beautiful ministry.

Velma Spruel Williams, 210-416-5563, is the lead for the Prayer Shawl Ministry at St. Mark the Evangelist.





Dying to Self

By Br. Simon Faber

On August 15, 2023, the Feast of The Assumption of Our Lady, I professed First Vows in the Servants of Christ Jesus. As I knelt before the Eucharist and professed my vows, I remember being overcome by peace, joy, and deep security in the Lord's love, as one would feel when the person he loves, loves him in return. The experience is like a bride professing vows to her bridegroom. The covenants the Lord established with the patriarchs of the Bible are fulfilled in Jesus Christ. The covenant is a promise that He will be our God and we will be His people by His own choosing. When Jesus comes, He is the ultimate bridegroom calling His spouse to come home to Him. The Gospel of John reveals this when John the Baptist says, "He who has the bride is the bridegroom" (John 3:29). John the Baptist is pointing to the reality that all humanity is called to be the bride of Christ. I responded to this call in a unique way by professing religious vows.

When I professed the vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience, I made a complete offering of myself to God, forsaking the world for Jesus, the bridegroom. Although this state of life is beautiful, it involves a personal death. The one requirement is total surrender of self. This involves renouncing the option to have a wife and children, the luxuries of time with friends and family, and the comforts of money and job security. In surrendering our own wills, we enter the death that Jesus experiences to fulfill the will of His Father. The beautiful reality of suffering these losses is that it images the crucified Lord, the purest form of love. Isn't it true, that love is what will remain in Heaven when this world passes away? So, you could say that by living the evangelical counsels here on earth we live for Heaven. Jesus says, "But seek first the kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be yours as well" (Matthew 6:33).

In college, the example of St. Francis inspired me so deeply that I began to ask God how I could become poorer so that I could grow closer to Jesus. I remember he called me to give all that was excessive to the poor. Afterwards, I experienced an ease in loving others with generosity and joy. It reminded me of Matthew 6:19-21, "Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and

where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consume and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is there will your heart be also." The evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience free the heart to be with Christ, the greatest treasure of all. Although religious life is the highest form of living the evangelical counsels, all Christians are called to live them in the capacity of their own vocations. May God give us the grace to surrender our own wills and empty ourselves as Christ did in his passion, that we may enter the Kingdom of Heaven to be fully united to the One we love who loves us in return.

Br. Simon Faber, son of John and Elizabeth Perry, with the Servants of Christ Jesus



Be a part of our 29th Habitat House

Our 29th Habitat House build will begin Friday, February 9, 2024. We are in great need of your help to build and be sure our workers are well-fed as well as hydrated every workday!

Interested in working? We need 25 volunteers per work day, 11 days. No experience or tools are needed, just the joy of helping to build a 'home.' Have friends or relatives who may be interested? They are welcome to sign up to help, too.

Would you like to donate food? Snacks, lunches, and water are needed for each workday. Snacks such as any breakfast bars or fruit such as 3lb. grapes, apples, tangerines, etc. work great. Lunches can be donated in entirety for 30, or parts of a meal for 30 such as 30 sandwiches, 35-50 bags of chips, or 5 dozen cookies. For water, cases of small bottles are greatly appreciated.

To sign up to work or to donate food, visit scan the QR code. For help signing up call or text Nancy Forget at 210-410-8589.

Interested in supporting our ministry financially? You can contribute through the general collection dur-

ing Mass any weekend at St. Marks. When contributing be sure to mark your check and envelope for "Habitat" before placing it in the basket. March 9th and 10th the "red bag" second collection at all Masses will be specifically for our Habitat Ministry. Thank you to everyone for your prayers for our safety and success.

We invite you to be a part of this 29th Habitat House; be a part of Christ's work on earth!



St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church

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Tuesday-Thursday, 9am-4:45pm Wednesday 9:00 am - 8:45 pm

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St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Church reserves the right to publish article submissions and edit all submissions for form and content.

Sunday

8:00am,

10:00 am,(Livestreamed)

5:00 pm

Mass Schedule

Saturday 3:30-5pm 8:15am & 6pm Reconciliation **Eve of Holy Day Adoration** First Saturday Mass 9:30 am

Our mission:
TO SPREAD THE GOOD NEWS
OF JESUS CHRIST TO ALL GOD'S
PEOPLE BY WORD AND ACTION.



Monday Tuesday

Wednesday

8:15 am 8:15 am 8:15 am, 6:00 pm (Day Chapel)

Thursday

8:15 am 8:15 am

Pastor: Rev. Dennis Aréchiga

St. Mark the Evangelist Catholic Churc **FEBRUARY 2024**

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proclaim the gospel to every creature... He said to them, "Go into the whole world and

Mark 16:15