



ST. MARK CATHOLIC SCHOOL

WHERE FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE MEET

LIFETIME LIONS ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

December 2015

PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

Dear St. Mark Alumni and Parents of Alumni,

As fall turns to winter and we look forward to the Christmas season, we want to extend some special invitations to our former students and families.

First, we have our annual Christmas Pageant coming up on Thursday, December 17 at 6:30 PM in the church. I'm sure many of you remember this tradition well, and we'd love to have you in our audience this year. Our fifth grade class will present the story of the Nativity, which will be enhanced by our preschool and elementary classes who each contribute a song. Father Cliff continues to add elaborate costumes and props, making the program more beautiful each year. What better way to celebrate the season than with students presenting the true meaning of Christmas? Our students will present the story of the Nativity once again at the 5:00 PM Mass on Christmas Eve.

Are you a high school or college student who will be home during Christmas break?



**A NATIONAL SCHOOL
OF EXCELLENCE**

St. Mark Catholic School is a two time recipient of the U.S. Department of Education National Blue Ribbon Award, and has been nominated to apply for a rare third award in 2015. This means that St. Mark students consistently score in the top 15% in the nation on standardized tests.

[VISIT OUR WEBSITE](#)

St. Mark students return to school on Tuesday, January 5. If you are home, we invite you to come and visit us anytime that week! Have lunch with a younger sibling, drop in and say hello to your former teachers, or just check out your class composite and the recent enhancements we've made on campus. We'd love to see you, and I would particularly like to meet you, so please take a moment to stop by my office. My door is always open.

Catholic Schools Week is just around the corner and will take place from January 31-February 5. This is our chance to celebrate and be grateful for a Catholic education. Stop by any day that week, pick up a visitor sticker from the front office, and join us in the celebrations. The calendar of events is shown below.

Our annual Dinner & Auction takes place on Saturday, February 6. This year's theme is "Sweethearts Gala." Volunteer and sponsorship opportunities, as well as high school service hours, are available. Of course, anyone over the age of 21 is also invited to join us for this Valentine's Day celebration. It'll be a wonderful evening that includes dinner, dancing and bidding on some fabulous auction packages. See more details below.

As we look forward to celebrating Christ's birth, I, and the entire St. Mark community, wish you a blessed Christmas season and a Happy New Year filled with faith, family and friends. God bless all of you during this season of joy.

Sincerely,

Follow us and stay connected!



HELP SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT ST. MARK CATHOLIC SCHOOL!

Do you know anyone interested in a Catholic education for their child? St. Mark has limited openings for the 2015-16 school year, and registration is now open for the 2016-17 school year. [Click here](#) for more details.

2016 Open House Dates

Pre-registration is available at www.stmcs.net/open-house-registration.

*Tuesday, February 2, 2016,
9:00 - 10:00 AM, School Cafetorium

*Tuesday, February 9, 2016,
6:00 - 7:30 PM, School Library

*Wednesday, April 27, 2016 (Early Childhood), 4:30 - 6:30 PM, Early Childhood Education Bldg.



LIFETIME LIONS

St. Mark alumni are invited to join Lifetime Lions, our official alumni network. Keep up with former classmates, become a mentor to current students, and learn about

Patricia Opon

Patricia Opon, Principal
patricia.opon@stmcs.net

UPCOMING OPPORTUNITIES

All alumni and alumni parents are invited to volunteer and participate in our upcoming events. High school service hours are available for certain events. Please email the individuals below for more information. All volunteers over the age of 18 must be [Safe Environment](#) cleared.



Catholic Schools Week: Join us as we take part in this national celebration of Catholic education where St. Mark recognizes everyone in our community who contributes to the success of our school:

January 30-31: Students represent St. Mark in uniform at parish Masses.

February 1: Pastor Appreciation Day --
Pastor Assembly & Laps for Leukemia Fundraiser

February 2: Family Appreciation Day
-New Family Open House - 9:00-10:00 AM
-Family Lunch Day & Student Art Show -
11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

February 3: Student Appreciation Day --
Spring Pep Rally & 8th Grade vs. Faculty
Volleyball Game at 2:30 PM in Bacot Gym

opportunities to earn service hours. Click [here](#) to register.

LIONS DEN

Get the gear! Brand new St. Mark logo merchandise and spirit wear are available in our Lion's Den Spirit Store. Order your St. Mark gear [online](#) anytime!



BASKETBALL SCHEDULES

Our Lions will soon be back on the basketball court! Check out upcoming games by [clicking here](#).

LIONS MENTOR LIONS

Abbie Vela '12 visited the St. Mark campus as part of the John Paul II High School PAL program and helped to mentor our 5th graders on topics such as self-esteem and communication skills.



Tom Scott '04, Captain of the U.S. Karate Team, paid a visit to St. Mark for the second year in a row during our Anti-Bullying/Kindness Assembly. He used sports analogies

February 4: Teacher Appreciation Day --
8th Grade Teacher Switch Day

February 5: Community & World
Appreciation Day -- International Tasting
Faire

[Click here](#) for further information.



**St. Mark Alumni (21+) and Alumni
Parents
are cordially invited to attend the
29th Annual St. Mark Catholic School
Dinner & Auction!**

When: February 6, 2016

**Where: Marriott Hotel at Legacy Town
Center in Plano**

Tickets:

* \$65 if purchased by 12/14/15

* \$75 if purchased from 12/15/15 until sell
out

Click here to buy tickets:

www.stmcs.net/auction

The auction promises to be a fun evening filled with good food, good friends, and a chance to bid on some great auction packages. Proceeds from this year's event will go towards enhancing key facilities including upgrades to the gymnasium bleachers, ceiling, flooring, walls and concession stand area, in addition to playground enhancements.

to speak to our students about anti-bullying techniques such as using a good "offense" and a good "defense" when confronted with a negative situation.



Parker Thompson '11 is now studying to become a priest at Holy Trinity Seminary in Dallas. He returned to St. Mark during Vocations Week and talked to our middle school students about the life of a seminarian.



AROUND CAMPUS

Monsignor Smyth Golf

Tournament: Many current school families, as well as alumni families, gathered on September 18 for our annual Monsignor Smyth Golf Tournament at The Courses at Watters Creek in Allen. A great time was had by all. Players enjoyed a Friday afternoon on the course, followed by an enchilada dinner, drinks and lots of great giveaways and prizes. First place winners were

Want to help plan this fun night? Contact Eric Libre at eric.librea@sbcglobal.net, or Paola Colon at paolabcolon@icloud.com for more information, as well as volunteer and sponsorship opportunities.

ALUMNI UPDATES

Alums Represent St. Mark at Seminarian Dinner: A special thank you to our alumni who assisted St. Mark at the Holy Trinity Seminary "Spes Gregis Seminarian Dinner" held on September 18. St. Mark had a large presence at this year's dinner, which welcomes the new seminarians to the Catholic community. These alumni, who are current high school students, joined several St. Mark 8th grade students, faculty, staff and school families who helped raise money for the seminary at the event, and provided support to the seminarians. Thanks to: **Alonso Medina '14** (Cistercian), **Jace Bartz '15** (Cistercian), **Karen Bell '12** (Ursuline), **Emily Vengalil '13** (Ursuline), **Elizabeth Reed '14** (Ursuline), **Valeria Marques '14** (Ursuline), **Celine Manalansan '14** (Ursuline), **Dylan Condino '14** (JP II), **Daniel Arnouk '14** (JP II), **Angelisa Taquino '15** (JP II), **Scott Johnson '12** (JP II), and **Eric Rohmer '14** (Clark High School).



Jesuit Debate Sweeps Season Opener: Jesuit senior **Patrick Bender '12** and his

John Matusik, Michael Matusik, Warren Thomas and Bryan Ashley. Closest to the Pin winner was Michael Matusik, and the Longest Drive winner was John Matusik. Special thanks to our sponsors, Classic BMW, Dal Tile, Golfsmith and The Courses at Watters Creek, and especially to **Bryan Ashley '02** for organizing this great event that benefits the St. Mark Athletics Department!

Look for St. Mark to get back on a spring schedule for the Monsignor Smyth Golf Tournament in 2016!



All Souls 1K/5K Run: A big thank you to all of our school families, alumni families and members of our community who participated in the second annual St. Mark All Souls

teammate faced 20 of the best debate programs in the DFW area at the Plano Senior Tournament earlier this school year, and won first place. Patrick also placed 5th in individual speaker awards.

And Jesuit Succeeds at UNT Debate

Tournament: Ethan Jackson '15, a current freshman at Jesuit College Prep, won First Place in the Individual Speaker-Novice Division at the University of North Texas Debate Tournament in October. He competed against 80 other participants from schools across Texas, Oklahoma and Louisiana. **Patrick Bender '12**, senior at Jesuit College Prep, and his fellow teammates on the Jesuit Debate Varsity Team, were the Champions of the UNT Tournament. Way to go, gentlemen!

Tristan Smith '12 and former St. Mark student **Gabe Brace**, both current seniors at Bishop Lynch, are the BL Varsity Football Captains this year.

Jordan Smith '13 and **Emma Williams '13**, current juniors at Bishop Lynch, are Varsity Cheer Captains at BL this year.

Alum Art Installation: A few months ago, we told you that **Nick Mercado '05** was working on a "sunflower" public art installation for a pocket park in Wichita, Kansas. We are pleased to report that the piece has been completed and officially installed in the park, which is located in the downtown section of the city. It is huge, and is made of approximately 3,600 pounds of steel. The installation has already garnered much attention from the public. [Click here](#) to see a video that shows what people experience when viewing Nick's installation.

Remembrance Run, which kicked-off our Parish Fall Festival on October 31. It was a cold, wet morning, but we were all warmed by the friends and family who surrounded us, and by thoughts of running in memory of our loved ones in the Catholic tradition of All Souls Day. Proceeds benefitted our Athletics Department.



Parish Fall Festival: The annual St. Mark Parish Fall Festival was once again, a huge hit! Great food, great company, fun games, a craft fair, a book sale, and trick-or-treating were just some of the many wonderful activities enjoyed by our community this year!



Vocations/Career Week: Our students enjoyed learning about career options from nearly 50 school parents, while our middle school students learned about the many



JPII Homecoming Court: Congratulations to **Rafael De La Garza '12**, who was voted John Paul II High School's Homecoming King, and **Caroline Garvey '14**, who was voted Sophomore Duchess!

Alums Serve on Congressional & State Youth Councils: Congratulations to **John Michael Hoyt '12** who was chosen to serve on Congressman Sam Johnson's Congressional Youth Advisory Council. During CYAC activities, high-achieving students explore the role citizens, lawmakers, experts, and institutions play in a democracy. Congratulations to **Emily Ward '14** who was chosen to serve on Texas House Representative Jeff Leach's Student Leadership Advisory Council. SLAC students participate in meetings with Rep. Leach covering various topics including the significance of community involvement, the role and functions of state government and the overall legislative process.

Ambassadors at Ursuline Academy: This fall, Ursuline Academy inducted its newest Ambassadors, special UA representatives to incoming or prospective students, alumnae, parents and others in the community. Students are chosen for their leadership and school spirit. Congratulations to **Uyen Le '14** and **Isabelle Vidamo '13** who are among the

ways they can engage in vocations through the church. Special thanks to **Parker Thompson '11** for speaking to our students about his journey to the seminary and his life as a seminarian.



Halloween Parade/Parties: How many of you remember the St. Mark Halloween traditions of the second grade Spunky Pumpkin play, the Preschool/ Kindergarten Halloween Costume Parade, and the fun class parties? This year was no exception! It's one of the "cutest" and most fun days of the school year!



Theater Production I: A new fall elective has been added to the St. Mark line-up. Father Cliff taught a Theater Production I elective this fall that incorporated many aspects of theater performances including staging, costuming and make-up. Our students had a great

new inductees. They join **Karen Bell '12**, **Elizabeth Liese '12**, and **Katie Pace '12** who are current members.

JPII Alums Visit on Day Off:

We are always happy to see alumni faces on campus! Four **2015** alums currently attending JPII chose to spend part of a day off by bringing lunch for some younger siblings: **Isabella Figures**, **Nicola Librea**, **Hannah Penney** and **Kaitlin Cava**.



At a recent Plano City Council Meeting, Plano's Mayor and City Council recognized **Tom Scott '04**, who won the gold medal in Karate at the Pan Am Games this summer in Toronto. Tom represented his home and country with pride in the second biggest sporting event after the Olympics. Congratulations Tom!



Alums in Honors Societies:

Congratulations to the following alumni who were recently inducted into academic honors societies at Bishop Lynch High School: **Margaret Gannon '13** - Math, English and Social Studies; **Brianna Torres '13** - Math and English; **Trey Thomas '13** - Social Studies.

time! Father Cliff has expanded our drama program with the goal of preparing students interested in the performing arts for the broader programs offered by our Catholic high schools. We are even starting reciprocal relationships with the Catholic high school drama departments where costumes, props and stage equipment resources will be shared.



Boy Scout Troop 285 50th Anniversary Celebration: St. Mark Troop 285 Boy Scouts and troop leaders, both past and present, gathered on Saturday, October 10 to celebrate 50 years of scouting at St. Mark. The troop held a Court of Honor where many merit badges, rank advancements, and Eagle Scout ranks were recognized. Bishop of Dallas, Kevin Farrell, sent a letter of congratulations and thanks to the troop for their 50 years of guiding young men, and State Senator Van Taylor issued a Proclamation in honor of the event. Congratulations to the following St. Mark alumni who officially received their Eagle Scout ranks at this special ceremony: **Jason Bondi '14**, **Joseph Bondi '12**, **David Fox '12**, **Joseph Gannon '11**, **Kevin Gonzalez '12**, **Tyler Stecker**

Foreign Language Honor Society

Inductees: Congratulations to **Brianna Torres '13** (Spanish) and **Trey Thomas '13** (French) who were both recently inducted into their respective foreign language honor societies at Bishop Lynch High School.

Congratulations to **Ryan Mackey, 2012 St. Mark alumnus** and current senior at John Paul II High School who has committed to playing soccer for the Colorado School of Mines.

Congratulations to **Conar Ehring, 2011 St. Mark alumnus** and 2015 Jesuit College Prep alumnus, who recently earned a bronze medal as a member of the University of Delaware Crew team at the Head of the Schuylkill Regatta in Philadelphia.

Ivanka Perez '14, current sophomore at Ursuline Academy, was recently announced as a member of the 2016 TPSMEA All-State Choir after qualifying at the regional level.

The John Paul II High School Drumline recently competed against drumlines from all over Texas in the TAPPS State Drumline Competition and placed 5th.

Congratulations to **Eric Noe '12**, a current senior who plays snare drum, and was part of this accomplishment.

The John Paul II High School Cardinal Belles recently competed against drill teams from more than 30 schools across the state of Texas and not only won their division, but were the overall highest scoring team. Five St. Mark alums took part: **Audrey Edel '12**, **Caroline Garvey '14**,

'12, and **Mark Velasquez '15**. In addition, **Kolbe Bauer '14** earned his Eagle Silver Palm.



FAVORITE ST. MARK MEMORY

When registering for "Lifetime Lions," you are asked to share your favorite St. Mark memories. **Jennifer Cahill Newel '95** recalls having a great time at the International Tasting Faire and Student-Teacher Switch Day -- two events that our students are already looking forward to during the upcoming Catholic Schools Week!

STAY CONNECTED

Keep us posted! As we receive alumni updates, we incorporate them into our social media posts, weekly school bulletins, and alumni communications. Tell us about your recent activities and accomplishments -- we'd love to hear from you! Need to update your contact information? Simply contact debbie.reed@stmcs.net with all of your updates.

[Forward To A Friend](#)

[Join Our Mailing List](#)

Lacey Lucia '12, Mary Kate Tinkham '14,
and Mary Woods '13. Nice job, girls!

**"ONCE A LION,
ALWAYS A LION!"**



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