



Parish Office: 304 Sinclair Lewis Ave.
 Sauk Centre, MN 56378
 (320) 352-2196
 parishesontheprairie.org

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Weekend Mass Schedules

Saturday

- 4:00 p.m. St. Paul's, Sauk Centre
- 6:00 p.m. Our Lady of the Angels
Sauk Centre
- 8:00 p.m. Sts. Peter & Paul, Elrosa

Sunday

- 8:00 a.m. Our Lady of the Angels,
Sauk Centre
- 8:15 a.m. St. Alexius, West Union
- 10:30 a.m. St. Francis de Sales,
Belgrade
- 10:30 a.m. St. Paul's, Sauk Centre

See our website for a full listing
 of daily Mass & confession times.

Hispanic outreach from page 7

"It helps them too whenever they go to Mass because they don't have a Spanish Mass (in Sauk Centre)."

Garcia and Meyer do what they can to ensure newly-arrived Hispanics feel welcome in the area. In December 2024, they celebrated the Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe by gathering Hispanic community members, especially mothers and women who would otherwise be at home, and praying the rosary and singing mañanitas, traditional morning songs to Mary.

Part of the welcome, though, involves helping people adjust to Minnesota's weather.

"The first snowfall this year, I took kids outside, and they'd never played in snow before," Meyer said. "They made their first snowman, had their first snowball fight, made their first snow angel. It's fun to be a part of those memories with those kids."

One of the biggest challenges Hispanic outreach has had to manage in recent months has been people's concerns about deportation and whether it will affect them or their families.

"People have been staying inside their houses more, not getting out," Meyer said. "(They) don't feel comfortable going to Walmart to buy basic things."

In the midst of the fear, Hispanic outreach gives their prayers and advice which, at a minimum, can be a comfort.

Hispanic Outreach is doing well in terms of donations, especially as they often have trouble finding places to store items such as furniture. In these times, though, Meyer and Garcia encourage the community to be welcoming no matter where they stand on immigration issues.

"These are people, and we are called to love people," Meyer said.

"Being kind and giving a smile is huge. People tell me stories, ... 'I went to Walmart and people just looked at me funny, and I didn't feel welcome.' I haven't seen that ever, but I believe that's how (they) felt."

Looking down the road, Garcia and Meyer hope their ministry will result in an overall stronger and better-connected community and church, one where the Hispanic population is actively and confidently participating.

"I love the job," Garcia said. "I love helping others. ... I know how it's hard when you come to a country (where) you don't know the language. ... There are a lot of people we just met who don't have even a year in Sauk Centre, so the goal too is to get to know them and make them feel they're welcome here and help them with anything."



ST. DONATUS



ST. ALEXIUS



ST. FRANCIS DE SALES



ST. PETER & PAUL



OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS



ST. PAUL'S

MARCH 2025



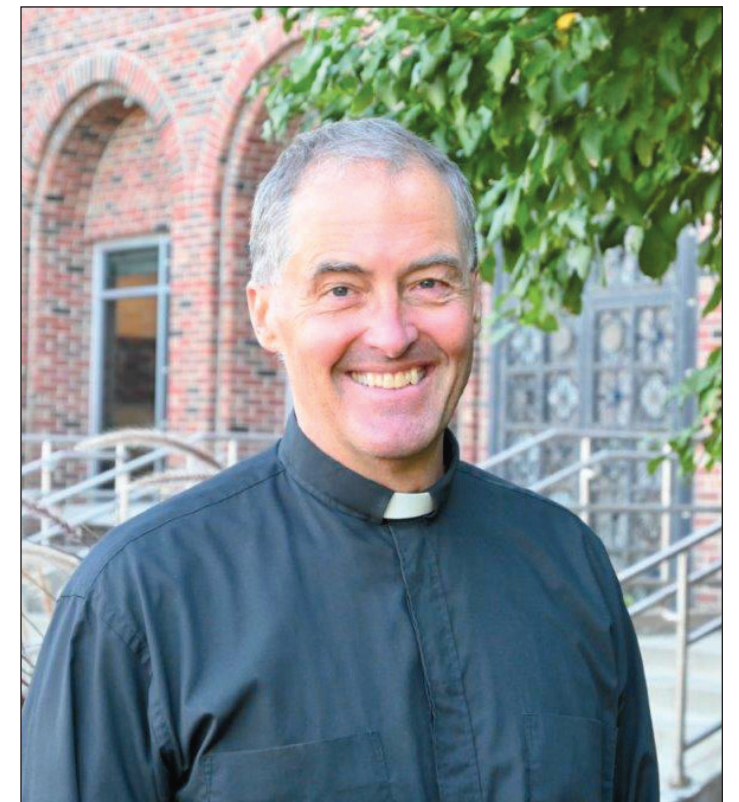
The classroom of prayer
 Father Stang, Otrembas to speak at ACC retreat

"(Jesus) was praying in a certain place, and when he had finished, one of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, teach us to pray just as John taught his disciples.'" (Luke 11:1)

Prayer is conversation with God, and the Parishes on the Prairie Area Catholic Community is inviting parishioners to join them for the annual ACC parish retreat, held on Saturday, March 15, at the Centre for Christ in Sauk Centre and featuring guest speakers Father Mark Stang and Jim and Maureen Otremba. Through the retreat, the ACC is looking forward to reintroduce people to prayer and its place in everyday life.

"I'm hoping each person who encounters the retreat will be enriched in their personal and public prayer," Stang said. "We all have different gifts and all pray in different ways, and it isn't like one is so much better than the other, but when we can learn from one another and let the Spirit take over, that's how we can grow."

The retreat begins at 8:30 a.m. with registration and a light breakfast. Stang's presentation will be from 9 a.m. until lunch at 11 a.m. Jim and Maureen Otremba will speak in two sessions from noon until 3 p.m., with a 15-minute break at 1:15 p.m.; the retreat will conclude with a final blessing.



Fr. Mark Stang

To join the retreat, people are asked to RSVP to 320-429-8450 by March 10.

In his presentation at the ACC retreat, Stang aims to share how his prayer life has grown and have people reflect on how they use their imagination in their conversations with God, as well as allowing each Mass to be a healing Mass.

"When you go to Mass, ... do you go to watch or do you go to worship?" Stang said. "That's one of

the questions we'll meditate on."

Growing up in St. Nicholas as one of 10 children, Stang was certain he wanted to take over the family dairy farm. Eventually, though, he felt a call to enter the priesthood, and, after wrestling with that call for a while, he decided to enter the seminary to see what he would discern out of it.

"I was very shy and

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UPCOMING EVENTS

First Saturday Devotions

Saturday, March 1
Our Lady of the Angels
Confession: 7:45 a.m.
Adoration: 8:00 a.m.
Rosary: 8:30 a.m.
Mass: 9:00 a.m.

Springfest

Sunday, March 2
Holy Family School
Doors Open: 10:30 a.m.
Raffle drawing: 12:30 p.m.
Live auction: 1:00 p.m.
Silent auction closes: 3:00 p.m.

RCD Square Dance

Sunday, March 2
Location: St. Alexius Church
Time: 1:00 – 4:30 pm

Confirmation

Sunday, March 9
Location: St. Paul's Church
Time: 2:00 p.m.

Knights of Columbus Meeting

Tuesday, March 11
Location: St. Paul's Church Basement
Time: Rosary at 6:30 p.m., meeting at 7:00 p.m.

St. Theresa/St. Margaret Mission Group

Thursday, March 13
Locations: St. Paul's Church Basement
Time: 1:00 p.m.

Parish Retreat

Saturday, March 15
Registration: 8:30-9:00 a.m.
Guest Speakers – Father Mark Stang and Jim and Maureen Otremba
Topic: "Prayer"
No Cost to attend

Stang from front

didn't think I was smart enough or articulate enough to preach — and definitely not holy enough," Stang said. "I told my dad, 'I just need to go into the seminary to get this out of my system in order to feel at peace.'"

However, the call only became stronger with discernment, and so Stang continued with his studies. With one year of his seminary training left, he was diagnosed with cancer; even treatment at the Mayo Clinic did not help his condition, and the doctors did not expect him to live to ordination. The Bishop of St. Cloud at the time, Bishop Jerome G. Hanus, ordained Stang early in 1990.

"During the ordination, I felt some warmth flow through me," Stang said. "After being evaluated by the Mayo Clinic, the doctors discovered the large tumors had dissolved down to a small plum size. Three different times a bishop approached me and stated, 'You thought you had it made on your way to heaven after your ordination, but God has more work for you here first.'"

Stang has served various churches in Long Prairie, the Holdingford area, and the Belgrade-Broten-Elrosa area. Since 2014, he has been the chaplain at the CentraCare-St. Cloud Hospital. He co-authored the 2019 book "Finding the Water" with Carol Sanders talking about his journey to the priesthood and toward surrender to God.

Having ministered in Long Prairie for 12 years and BBE for 2 years, Stang is familiar with the Sauk Centre area and was one of the priests who concelebrated at Kelly Marthaler's first Mass as a deacon at the Church of St. Alexius in West Union.

Hospital ministry can be intense and exhausting for Stang, but there is often much beauty to be found in it.

"I do a lot of end-of-life care, and I often don't know who will be on the other side of the door when I knock," he said. "I enter, and I don't focus so much on the body and how it looks because they're usually pretty weak and in a vulnerable state. What I see is a soul, and I see the beauty of that soul, and I know that's what Jesus has His eyes on. I get

to sit beside this soul, whether it's going to stay with us longer on this earth or ... if it's getting close to stepping out of the body and going to Heaven. I get to be there during that precious time."

During the ACC retreat, Jim and Maureen Otremba will be speaking on different kinds of prayer — single vs. married prayer as well as male vs. female prayer. As frequent speakers for events, workshops and retreats, the Otrembas use high energy, humor and their combined counseling and education expertise to move their audiences toward healing and joy.

Married since 1995 and both holders of advanced theology degrees, the Otrembas are members of St.

Luke's Parish in Clearwater and are the primary authors of the Catholic premarital inventory and marriage preparation program "Fully Engaged: Growing Toward Lasting Fidelity," used in over 100 dioceses and over 800 individual parishes. They also created the online marriage enrichment

program "Banquet of Love: The Eucharist as Weekly Marriage Enrichment," available for free to all members of the St. Cloud Diocese through April.

Jim is a licensed therapist who owns the Center for Family Counseling in St. Cloud, and he has over 25 years of experience working with married couples and individuals; Maureen's background includes teaching, writing, faith formation, and pastoral ministry. The Otrembas are parents of seven heavenly children and three young adult children on earth, and they know the challenges and joys of special-needs parenting.

As he prepares for the retreat, Stang expects to learn as much about prayer from the participants as they may learn from him.

"I've learned so much from the people in Belgrade, Broten, Elrosa and Long Prairie," he said. "I learned with interactions with people, just being in a group and thinking about our faith life and how we pray, how we talk to God. ... The main message I'd like to do is to go back to that theme: 'Lord, teach us how to pray.'"

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- Fr. Mark Stang

Hispanic outreach

from page 6

Previously, Garcia had worked for the Cura of Sauk Centre care center, and then Meyer invited her to join Hispanic Outreach. Garcia's family had moved to the United States when she was about 9 years old, so she remembered the challenges of being a newly immigrated child.

"I didn't know the language, I struggled at school (and) everywhere, and my parents struggled the same," Garcia said. "I know how they feel, so I want to help (people) so they know they have somebody who will help them if they don't have anybody."

Much of the Hispanic outreach's ministry is centered on building relationships with everyone, including the children.

"Especially during the summertime, I would go over to the trailer park on the north end of town and



start playing with the kids," Meyer said. "(I) got to know them (and) their parents, and for the fall, invited them to come to faith formation classes. ... The things that aren't catechetical or faith-based lead to the Faith."

Hispanic outreach has about 20 children who come to religion and faith for-

mation classes on a weekly basis, as well as adoration once a month in the chapel at St. Paul's Church in Sauk Centre. Last summer, they also ran a pilot program of English classes through Sauk Centre Public Schools Community Education; they hosted them at the Centre for Christ in Sauk Centre at first,

and they now continue at the school while Meyer also teaches additional English classes twice a week.

"Some people want to learn (English) to understand when they go to the store," Garcia said.

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Refuge with the Church

ACC hispanic outreach ministry offers support

When settling in a new country, the obstacles of language, law and resources can hinder people's spiritual as well as physical flourishing. The Parishes on the Prairie Area Catholic Community's Hispanic outreach ministry has been working with immigrant populations in the Sauk Centre and Brooten areas to help them overcome these obstacles bringing them closer to God and their neighbors.

"We saw that there's a need, that there's a lot of people living in Sauk (Centre) who are Hispanic and more people coming," said Emma Meyer, one of the Hispanic outreach coordinators. "The vast majority of them are Catholic, whether or not they're practicing, the goal is to reach out to them and help them in practical and spiritual ways, to grow in their faith and be a part of the church community and Sauk Centre."

The ACC's Hispanic outreach ministry started a couple of years ago — spearheaded by Fr. Greg Paffel, Blanca Barragan from Melrose and others — after a parishioner from Our Lady of the Angels donated a sum of money toward that initiative.

Meyer started part-time with Hispanic outreach about a year and a half ago, and she has been doing the ministry full time for about seven months so far. From

2020-22, she had served as a missionary in Honduras learning Spanish, teaching kindergarten and helping with orphans and women's ministries.

"When I moved back to the states, I knew I wanted to stay connected, keep practicing my Spanish and just be a part of the Hispanic community, in a sense," Meyer said. "I knew Blanca, who was previously working here; I asked her to ask Fr. Greg if I could do a summer program with the kids. I was working at Holy Family School and had that lined up for the next school year. I was just looking for something for the summer, and it turned into a longer thing."

Sonia Garcia, another of the Hispanic outreach coordinators, has been part of the committee for about five months, focusing more on ministering to adults. She and Meyer help with translation, transportation and connecting people with resources like the Sauk Centre Food Shelf, the Options for Women Pregnancy Resource Center, Stearns County WIC and the Fe y Justicia program for insurance and legal resources.

"They know they're not alone and have somebody to help them when they don't know how to speak English," Garcia said. "We're here for anything they need, if we can help them."

Hispanic outreach page 7



Emma Meyer (left) and Sonia Garcia

Family fast

As I grew up, my parents formed and shaped me in our annual Lenten practices. We ate fish on Friday. The candy dish was empty as we gave up sweets and pop. We would pray the Rosary as a family. I remember these being done ever since I was 4 years old; the other thing that would come out later would be the Rice Bowl, where we would put in our pocket change to help the less fortunate.

We are entering into the Lenten season, a kind of desert time in the liturgical year, when we take things away to really prepare us for that Easter celebration down the road. Catholics from ages 18-59 are obliged to observe days of fasting during Lent. On Ash Wednesday and Good Friday, a person may eat one full meal as well as two smaller meals that do not equal a full meal together; no snacking between meals. Abstinence from red meat is a specific form of fasting and is required for Catholics from age 14 onward. Specifically, on Ash Wednesday and every Friday of Lent, we abstain from meat. For those who have serious need to eat such as pregnancy, a heavy labor job, or a medical prescription, eating in moderation is common sense.

By doing these things, we take a timeout from the ordinary way we live during the rest of the year, and this allows us to go deeper with Our Lord in prayer. That is the number-one thing and what I've always loved about Lent; it's a season to slow down, do something different, really focus more in the Sacred Scriptures and other devotions, and spend more time with Our Lord. Then, when the candy dish comes out with a lot more candy, we are celebrating a more joyful, hopeful Resurrection.

God bless,
Fr. Mark Botzet



Fr. Botzet pictured with his dad



Fr. Botzet pictured with his mom

Fundraising with fellowship



George Bentfield (left) and Tom Miller with the St. Joseph's Society

St. Joseph's breakfast set for March 16

Breakfast is served at St. Alexius Church in West Union as they continue to hold the annual St. Joseph's Breakfast fundraiser in the church basement.

"The best part (of the breakfast) is to see the fellowship of the parishioners and members of the St. Joseph's Society, working together for a good cause," said Tom Miller, president of the St. Joseph's Society. "You see a lot of people who are very satisfied; there are donations made to us, and then there's a lot of gratitude from the parishioners."

This year's St. Joseph's Breakfast

will be held Sunday, March 16, the weekend closest to the March 19 solemnity of St. Joseph's feast day. The meal begins at 9:15 a.m. after the 8:15 a.m. Mass at St. Alexius. The menu includes sausage from Schaefer's Market in Sauk Centre, pancakes, scrambled eggs and all the trimmings.

The breakfast is put on by the St. Joseph's Society, an organization headquartered at St. Alexius.

"Our mission is to follow St. Joseph as a leader," Miller said. "He is the father of the Holy Family, so (we) encourage prayer and follow the example of St. Joseph to lead families in whatever capacity needed."

Fundraising page 5

Fundraising from page 4

The breakfast has been held at St. Alexius for approximately 10 years. It started because of a discussion at one of the St. Joseph's Society meetings; the idea was brought up, and they decided to give it a try.

"It's been successful in several ways," Miller said. "It's a function for the parish, a social event, and we do our 50-50 raffle, which will start before then, but the drawing will be held on that morning."

Proceeds from the raffle as well as the freewill offerings from the breakfast go toward a list of causes the St. Joseph's Society supports including seminarians from the area and deacons-in-training. Each year, the breakfast makes about \$800 in donations some of the proceeds go toward covering the breakfast's expenses, costing about \$400, while the rest is donated with the raffle money.

Breakfast preparation starts around 6 a.m. the day of the event when five volunteers arrive at St. Alexius to preparing the kitchen and making the scrambled eggs, which can take a while. Pancake batter is mixed not long after 7 a.m., and the sausage is heated in roasters. Once Mass is over and the breakfast is underway, the number of volunteers grows to 10 to making sure everyone is served.

"We have some new

members who will be in for the experience of helping serve and prepare the food," Miller said. "We set everything out at 8 a.m. so it's all ready to go. ... Everything is purchased the day before and brought down into the cooler, and from the cooler, it's gotten out on Sunday morning and prepared."

The meal is served until about 10 a.m. Leftover sausage is usually sold to parishioners, while pancakes and eggs are given away to whom-ever wants them. Milk and juice can be sold for a freewill donation.

Cleanup typically lasts an hour.

"In the past, one of the big things was the eggs," Miller said. "When we put them in the roaster, they would get baked onto it, so now we've gone to where we have liners for the (egg) roasters."

While the breakfast is a major fundraiser for the St. Joseph's Society, its main importance in Miller's estimation is the community gathered around the tables.

"It's a parish event," Miller said. "We're generating profit, but the best part of it is seeing the fellowship of the parishioners who attend and the members of the St. Joseph's Society working together for a good cause."

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- Tom Miller

