



# St. Rita

catholic community

A Letter From Our Pastoral Administrator

## Our Father Is Younger than We

Dear Parishioners,

It is a repetitive and sometimes maddening rush that comes upon us this time of year. Planning routines and rituals, and then the routines and rituals themselves sometimes take us through the holiday season so quickly that we forget or seemingly never have a chance to enjoy the beauty of the Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany seasons – this beautiful time in the Church's year that opens up to us the story of our own salvation and of the new humanity that is the peaceable Church of God. Often, by the very routine of the holidays, we are hastily ushered past the shining grace of the coming of our Savior. We catch our breath, and it's gone.

Now, I have no secret wisdom or experience to impart to keep you from the frenzy of the season other than to say that there is grace, virtue and joy in the simplicity of the Church's biblical rhythm of prayer, worship and celebration of Christ's birth and the promise that He will come again upon the clouds in great glory. That is, Scripture and

the Church – if we'll pay attention – can offer a more graceful schedule, a more spiritual rhythm by which we can be brought to gaze upon the Christ born for us. In this Gospel rhythm (as opposed to the rhythms of sales, parties, and so on), we are ushered into something of the joy, vitality and exuberance of the infancy of God. That is, there is something beautiful and true in our salvation being wrought in the birth of a child. It shows us not only what God goes through for our salvation, but it also shows something of the character of God's love for us. His love is like the inexhaustible love of a child, love that is constant and always hopeful about the love it seeks. That God was born a child means that He still has hope for us.

Perhaps, then, we can take heart in the constant newness of God. Perhaps we cannot so much look to escape the routines and rituals of the season as to transform them more into the shape of our original story. When we are lethargic and

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## Our Father Is Younger than We

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dull-hearted about what we are doing, then perhaps we can pause and remember the infant-like exuberance with which God loves us and saves us. It may not be the routines that are the problem. It may be that we need to remember the childishness of God. This point is made wonderfully by G.K. Chesterton in his classic book *Orthodoxy*:

*The thing I mean can be seen, for instance, in children, when they find some game or joke that they specially enjoy...Because children have abounding vitality, because they are in spirit fierce and free, therefore they want things repeated and unchanged. They always say, "Do it again"; and the grown-up person does it again until he is nearly dead. For grown-up people are not strong enough to exult in monotony. But perhaps God is strong enough to exult in monotony. It is possible that God says every morning, "Do it again" to the sun; and every eve-*

*ning, "Do it again" to the moon. It may not be automatic necessity that makes all daisies alike; it may be that God makes every daisy separately, but has never got tired of making them. It may be that He has the eternal appetite of infancy; for we have sinned and grown old, and our Father is younger than we.*

During this busy time of year, when we're run down by the rush, perhaps we can reflect upon the infancy of God and be renewed. Prayers for you in this season of God's infancy, this season of our hope!

God bless you,



Fr. Joshua,  
Pastoral Administrator



# Following the Good Shepherd

## Meet Fr. Steve Antes

Our new Parochial Vicar, Fr. Steve Antes, is direct when he expresses his vision of what a priest does.

"I believe you don't need a CEO or a banker, you don't need an enterprising priest," he says. "What you need is a shepherd, who will always be there when you need them the most."

Born and raised in the Philippines, Fr. Steve grew up in a Catholic family and entered high school seminary at the age of 12. After 12 years of seminary, he was ordained at the age of 25. After 13 years of serving locally in the Philippines, his bishop requested that he serve in the Diocese of Richmond, Va., "on loan" from his home diocese.

Fr. Steve notes that he initially came to the United States "out of obedience" to his bishop, and found that it took a little while to adjust to American culture.

"Here, the traffic signs are meant to be followed strictly – for example, the speed limit, you have to follow it strictly," he says, with a laugh. "In the Philippines, it's more of a suggestion."

But it wasn't long before he came to love being in the United States.

In fact, when his 10 years of serving in Virginia came to an end, he jumped at the opportunity to



*Fr. Steve Antes was recently assigned to serve as Parochial Vicar at St. Rita's.*

experience "the west," and happily accepted the invitation to serve in the Diocese of Dallas, beginning as the new parochial vicar at St. Rita's.

"I will be helping in my capacity to be of service to the parish with the guidance and direction of the new pastor," Fr. Steve says. "We don't know who will be coming, but we pray."

Fr. Steve looks forward to being a shepherd to the people of St. Rita's, the next step in his journey of following God's call as a priest – a journey that began many years ago.

Over the years, Fr. Steve has found inspiration in his vocation from Psalm 23, "The Lord is my shepherd, there is nothing I shall want."

"I am also a shepherd," Fr. Steve. "The Lord is my shepherd and I want to follow in His footsteps."

He loves the community he's found at St. Rita's, and he looks forward to getting to know and serve the members of the parish.

"The people here at St. Rita's, they are very happy, very accommodating," Fr. Steve says. "They are doing their best to live as a family. I am amazed to see how friendly they are. Just being there, I want to be available for whatever [parishioners] need. I want to be approachable."

While he's only been part of our parish for a month, Fr. Steve finds that the community has already had an impact on him.

"If you become a member of St. Rita's Catholic Church, it will make a big difference in your life," he says. "You will never be the same again."

While there are many things to which he must adjust, Fr. Steve has already found that he's enjoying the weather and Texas steak.

"And I know I will be learning more about the Texan way of life," he says, with a smile.

If you would like to contact Fr. Steve Antes, please call, 972-934-8388, ext. 6509.

# 2016 Advent and Christmas Calendar

## **Advent Confession Schedule:**

*Communal Reconciliation Services, Thursdays, 7 p.m.*

Dec. 1

NO CONFESSIONS on Dec. 8

Dec. 15

Dec. 22

**Holy hour is canceled for all Thursdays in December**

## **Wednesday, Dec. 21**

"Catholics Come Home for Christmas," 6:30-9 p.m.

## **Saturday Confessions**

Dec. 3

Dec. 10

Dec. 17

NO CONFESSIONS on Dec. 24

## **Family Advent Celebration**

### **Sunday, Dec. 4:**

"Lo, How a Rose E'er Blooming," 3 p.m.

## **Holy Day of Obligation, Dec. 8**

**The Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary**

### **Mass Schedule:**

Wednesday, Dec. 7

5:30 p.m., Vigil Mass

Thursday, Dec. 8

6:25 a.m., Mass

8 a.m., Mass

12:10 p.m., Mass

5:30 p.m., Mass

7 p.m., Bilingual Mass

NO CONFESSIONS on Dec. 8

## **Our Lady of Guadalupe Celebrations**

Dec. 11, 6-9 p.m., Mañanitas

Dec. 12, 6:15 p.m., Procession of Our Lady of Guadalupe

Dec. 12, 7 p.m., Misa de Guadalupe and Dinner

## **Solemn Vespers**

Sunday, Dec. 11, 4:30 p.m.

## **Posada y Pastorela**

Friday, Dec. 16, 6:30-10 p.m.

## **Advent Lessons & Carols**

Sunday, Dec. 18, 7:30 p.m.

## **Christmas Schedule**

### **Saturday, Dec. 24**

4 p.m., two Masses (in Church with Children's Choirs)/  
in Sweeney/Simulcast in Dining Hall)

6 p.m., one Mass with Lux Mundi Contemporary Ensemble  
(in Church/Simulcast in Dining Hall)

9 p.m., Caroling with St. Rita Choir and Strings (in Church)

9:30 p.m., The Solemn Mass at Night (in Church)

12 a.m., Misa de Gallo with Mariachi (in Church in Spanish)

### **Sunday, Dec. 25**

10 a.m., Mass with Festival Brass (in Church)

### **Dec. 26 thru Dec. 31**

#### **Regular Mass and Confession Schedule:**

Monday thru Friday, 5:30 p.m., Mass (No 8 a.m. Masses  
this week)

Thursday, 7:30 p.m., Confessions (No Holy Hour)

Saturday, Dec. 31, 8 a.m., Mass

Saturday, Dec. 31, 9 a.m., Confessions

## **Holy Day of Obligation, Jan. 1**

### **The Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God:**

Dec. 31, 5:30 p.m., Vigil Mass

Jan. 1, 7:30 a.m., Mass

Jan. 1, 9 a.m., Mass

Jan. 1, 10:45 a.m., Mass

Jan. 1, 12:30 p.m., Mass

Jan. 1, 5:30 p.m., Mass

# *“A Great Way to Live Out Our Catholic Faith”*

## *Our St. Rita St. Ignatius of Loyola*

### *Knights of Columbus Council #11169*

**T**hanks to the efforts of Fr. Michael J. McGivney in New Haven, Ct., the Connecticut State Legislature chartered the first Knights of Columbus Council in 1882. From that one council, the Knights have grown from a few members to more than 15,000 Councils and almost two million members in the United States and sixteen other countries. Fraternity and charity are the two key marks of the Knights, who in the past decade alone have donated \$1.475 billion to charity and given as good stewards almost 700 million hours of volunteer service. And we are blessed in our St. Rita Catholic Community to have Knights of Columbus St. Ignatius of Loyola Council #11169.

All the good works done by the Knights of Columbus are based upon their four core principles – Charity, Unity, Fraternity, and Patriotism. Our local Council #11169 is an excellent example of what it means to give and to be good stewards.

“Being a member of the Knights of Columbus is a great way to live out our Catholic faith,” says parishioner Rich Dake, who is the current Grand Knight of our Knights of Columbus Council. “Knights are



indeed good stewards, and this is exemplified by how we give back to our parish, to the Church, to our community, and especially to God in so many ways.”

With a membership of more than 110 men, our Knights Council performs as if it has twice that many members. Throughout the year, the Knights offer events and activities, and serve quite often as cooks at various parish events. For example, they offer a community breakfast on the third Sunday each month. It is a complete breakfast including pancakes, sausage, scrambled eggs, and more. There is a minimal charge and people can eat as much as they wish.

“The Community Breakfast, like much of what we do and offer,

is not an effort to raise money, but to give our community a chance to gather, to share, and to really live out community in the sense of stewardship,” Rich says.

They are also particularly well known for their beer-boiled bratwursts – one of their specialties, and not to be missed. As cooks, they work with Vacation Bible School and other religious education and formation events.

In addition, the Knights sponsor the popular annual Father-Daughter Dinner Dance in late January or early February. They arrange and sponsor Scout Sunday when we honor our Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts. They recently held Shred Fest as a service to the people of the parish. The Knights and our council are strongly committed to the Right to Life and participate in many related functions.

“We do so much that sometimes, it is impossible to remember them all,” Rich says. “Our members are the ones who work and make it all possible. The Knights are a great organization and I would encourage any young man over 18 – or even older, much older – to consider joining and being a part of us.”

*If you would like more information about our Knights of Columbus Council, please contact Grand Knight Rich Dake at 214-704-0927 or email him at [rich@csutexas.com](mailto:rich@csutexas.com), or visit the website at [kofcknights.org/CouncilSite/?CNO=11169](http://kofcknights.org/CouncilSite/?CNO=11169).*

## The Eucharist and Stewardship as a Way of Life

More than 20 years ago, the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops approved a pastoral letter titled *Stewardship: A Disciple's Response*. This document was an invitation to follow Christ Who gave of Himself for us. Each of us is called to serve our neighbors and to be stewards of God's creation and of all that has been entrusted to us. However, to truly understand stewardship, we must look to the Holy Eucharist. The Holy Eucharist is the total gift of our loving Savior to us. Stewardship is our response to that gift.

Even the word "Eucharist" implies stewardship. The word "Eucharist" finds its roots in the Latin word *eucharistia*, which in turn came from the Greek word *eukaristos*, which meant, quite simply, "gratitude" or "thanksgiving." How fitting that we, who are called to be a stewardship people, celebrate at the focal point of every Mass an act of thanksgiving and gratitude — namely, the reception of Jesus' gift to us — the Eucharist.

In their pastoral letter on stewardship, the bishops speak of the Eucharist in this way: "The Eucharist is the great sign and agent of this expansive communion of charity... we enjoy a unique union with Christ and, in Him, with one another. Here His love — indeed, His very



Self — flows into us as disciples and, through us and our practice of stewardship to the entire human race."

When we receive Christ's Body in the Holy Eucharist, we hear the minister say, "The Body of Christ." To this, we respond, "Amen" — which means in Hebrew, "Yes; it is so." This is the essence of stewardship. We should enter the Church for Mass out of "gratitude." We recognize the presence of the Lord in Holy Communion, and then we truly receive the Lord. What is left for us to do is the fulfillment of stewardship — that is, sharing what we have received in love of God and neighbor. Our entire experience speaks to

stewardship — we are grateful; we recognize the real presence of the Lord; we receive the Lord; and then we share what we have received.

Christ's gift to us through the Eucharist is an invitation to us. We are called to give beyond what is convenient or what may be comfortable. We are called to forgive even when forgiveness may not be deserved; we are called to love even when that love is not returned. We are called to love as God loves us.

The Eucharist is stewardship celebrated. The Mass is more than a ritual. It is an actual encounter with God, with the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. We need to respond to the Eucharist with our complete selves. What we experience in the Eucharist should, in turn, translate into our daily lives. We are committed to the Church, which is Christ's body. We show our love for His body by acts of charity and generosity. We spend time in prayer, expressing our gratitude and our love.

God's greatest gift to us is Christ's great love for us — this was shown when He was crucified on the Cross to pay the penalty for our sins and to give us eternal life. God's love for us is without limit, and He offers Himself to us in the Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist. Stewardship is how we respond to that gift.

## Making Time to Spend With Our Eucharistic Lord

When we think of stewardship, we often think of sharing our time, talent or treasure with others in the community. While this is true, it's easy to forget that our acts of charity arise out of an overflowing of love for God in our hearts. Thus, making time to spend with our Lord in prayer is another way for us to be good stewards of the time given to us. Here at St. Rita's, there are two opportunities for parishioners to spend some time with our Eucharistic Lord in adoration and open our hearts to receive God's grace.

"Adoration gives you a time to be centered," says Coordinator of Youth Ministry Maribel Waldon. "Mass is the highest form of prayer we have as Catholics, and it is wonderful to be in community in those moments, but adoration is another way to spend time in the presence of the Lord. It allows you to have a quiet time and spend some time centering or reading through Scriptures for the following Sunday's liturgical readings. Any time that you're in the Presence of Christ, it is a rewarded time."

Traditionally, adoration is a time when the Eucharist is exposed in a monstrance, allowing believers to come before Him in worship – to adore and praise, to intercede for

*"St. John Paul II said that the Church has a great need for Eucharistic Adoration. Jesus waits for us in this sacrament of love. I encourage everyone to come to spend an hour with our Lord in this way." – Kay Neuhoff*



*During adoration, we are invited to spend time in our Lord's Presence, receiving both His love and graces to know Him in a deeper way.*

others and to express thanksgiving. It begins with prayers led by a priest or deacon called Exposition and ends with Benediction. Because Christ is truly present in the Eucharist, when exposed He should never be left alone.

"St. John Paul II said that the Church has a great need for Eucharistic Adoration," says Kay Neuhoff, coordinator of the First Friday

Adoration sign-up. "Jesus waits for us in this sacrament of love. I encourage everyone to come to spend an hour with our Lord in this way."

At St. Rita's, there is Eucharistic Adoration every Thursday evening from 7:30-8:30 p.m. During this time, there is also a priest available to hear confession for those who desire to receive the sacrament. Each second Thursday of the month is

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**Weekday Masses**

*Monday-Friday, 5:30 p.m.*  
*Wednesday-Saturday, 8:00 a.m.*

**Weekend Masses**

*Saturday, 5:30 p.m.*  
*Sunday, 7:30 a.m., 9:00 a.m., 10:45 a.m.,*  
*12:30 p.m. (Bilingual), 5:30 p.m.*

## Making Time to Spend With Our Eucharistic Lord

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accompanied by Praise and Worship as a form of prayer, while the rest of the Thursdays of the month allow for silent prayer.

The second time adoration is made available is on the First Friday of the month. Each First Friday after the 8 a.m. Mass Jesus is exposed in the monstrance until 5 p.m. Volunteers sign up to spend an hour of time with Jesus throughout the day to ensure that He is never alone during these hours, but all are welcome to come and pray throughout the day.

"This is a great way to pray for our faith community at large and to really take up personal prayer," Maribel says. "This is another opportunity, another form of prayer that not everyone is familiar with."

For those who might wonder what to do for an hour of silent prayer, Maribel encourages people to

divide up their time into 15 minute slots and then to dedicate those slots to 15 minutes of giving thanks, 15 minutes of meditation on a Scripture passage or the cross, 15 minutes of petition and praying for other people's needs, and 15 minutes of praise. People are invited to come alone or with their families to spend time in prayer, whether they can stay for the whole hour or not.

If you are looking for a way to grow in your faith, please consider making time for a holy hour to spend in adoration with our Lord. The week before each First Friday, a sign-up book is set out if you would like to sign-up for a time slot, otherwise you are free to join us every First Friday or every Thursday evening as your schedule permits.

*If you have any questions about Eucharistic Adoration here at St. Rita's, please contact the parish office at 972-934-8388.*