



THE LION'S MARK

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER FOR SAINT MARK'S CHURCH, PHILADELPHIA

A COMMUNITY THAT GATHERS IN FAITH, SERVES IN LOVE, AND PROCLAIMS HOPE, THROUGH JESUS CHRIST.

CLIMBING THE DAWN WALL

— FR. SEAN MULLEN —

IT TAKES DETERMINATION, PLANNING, AND PERSISTENCE TO MAKE IT TO THE TOP.

In mid-January two rock climbers successfully concluded a 19-day effort to free climb the Dawn Wall of El Capitan — the beautiful and monolithic rock formation in Yosemite National Park in California. Free climbing is climbing without the use of ropes to aid your climb — the only ropes used are to prevent disaster should you fall.

This accomplishment had taken years of planning, immense hard work, and considerable skill and persistence. It is being called one of the greatest climbing achievements ever.

On January 14, one of the climbers, Kevin Jorgeson told the New York Times, "I hope it inspires people to find their own Dawn Wall, if you will. We've been working on this thing a long time, slowly and surely. I think everyone has their own secret Dawn Wall to complete one day."

Though I've done a fair bit of hiking and some trekking in the mountains, I am not a climber and have no ambition to be; yet I have been following these climbers' attempt with great interest. As I look toward Lent, I find this feat of rock climbing inspirational.

I am often tempted to think of Lent as something to be endured till at last we get to Easter. Lent is the dark and stifling night before Easter's bright and sunny morning. I am less ready to think

of Lent as a project in and of itself that could bring its own deep sense of meaning and accomplishment. But in reading accounts of this tremendous and difficult free climb of the Dawn Wall — and in learning of the celebration of success that took place at the

summit of El Capitan — it is clear that wondrous though the arrival at the summit may have been, it was the climb that mattered. The climb that it is the accomplishment, that climb that will be admired (and attempted again) for years to come.

The Dawn Wall is steep and stark. In many places it is difficult to find a place to hold on with hands or feet. One section requires a lateral jump in order to continue the ascent. It is a sheer, hard climb, and mistakes do happen. It takes de-

termination, planning, and persistence to make it to the top.

Lent is the climb, and as we anticipate it, it's worth considering the climb for its own sake. Obviously Lent can be as easy and insignificant as you want it to be. Your daily life may not be much affected by the omission of the Gloria in excelsis on Sunday mornings; you may find that every day unfolds much as the days before and after Lent even though our altars are draped in violet vesture. The liturgical adjustments of Lent are not what might make it a fruitful climb — they are meant to encourage you and to find meaning as you go, since the way can be steep and stark.



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DATES TO REMEMBER

- Feb 1** 3pm - Solemn Evensong and Benediction for Candlemas
- Feb 15** 9:45am - Annual Parish Meeting
- Feb 16** Presidents Day
Offices are closed • Daily office prayed privately
- 10:00am - Low Mass
- Feb 17** 6pm - Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper
- Feb 18** Ash Wednesday
7:30am - Low Mass
12:10pm - Sung Mass
7:00pm - Choral High Mass
(all Masses with imposition of ashes)
- Feb 20** 5:30pm - Evening Prayer with Stations of the Cross
- Feb 22** First Sunday in Lent
11am - One Book One Lent - Open Reading Group
(with Mother Johnson; open to all)
- Feb 27** 5:30pm - Evening Prayer with Stations of the Cross

20S/30S UPDATES

FEB 11 • SIMPLE SUPPER

Starts 6:30pm • Hosted by Matt and Azy Pimental

Join us for an evening of simple and holy worship, lively conversation and laughter, and delicious food. To RSVP and for directions please contact Mother Takacs.

FEB 7 • SHROVE TUESDAY PANCAKE SUPPER

If you are able to help us purchase supplies or flip flapjacks, please contact Brian Alvarez at brian.j.alvarez@gmail.com.

APR 15 • CCYE

Center City Young Episcopalians (CCYE) Assemble in the Chapel at St. Luke and The Epiphany (330 South 13th Street) for a drinks, food and

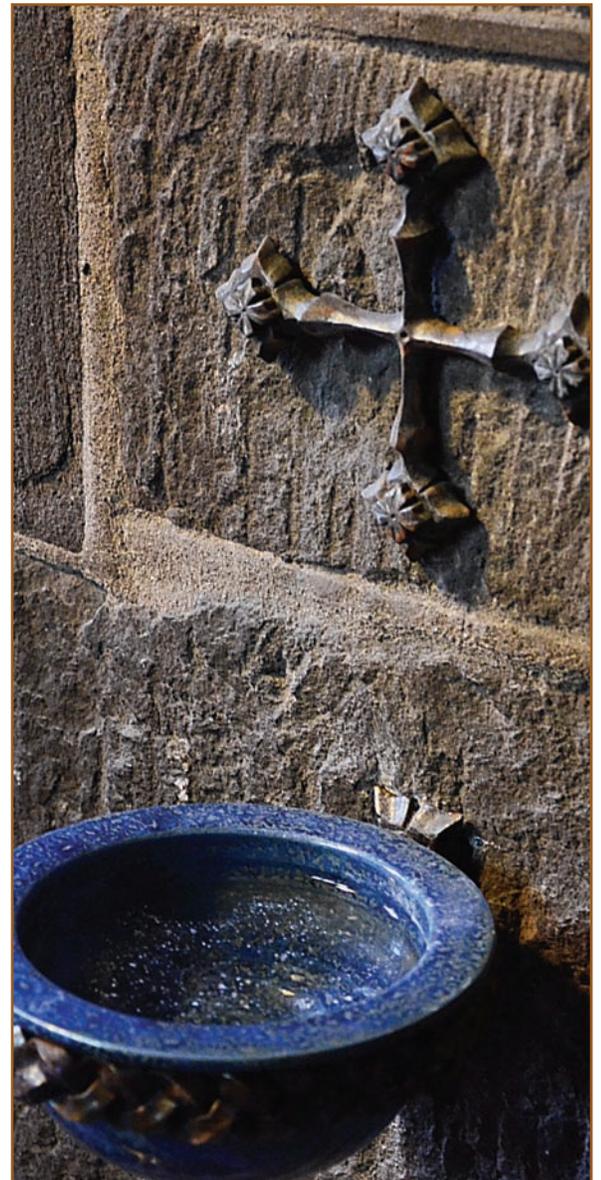
fellowship. These events are always a nice way to get to know other young Episcopalians from around the city. We hope you and lots of your friends can attend. Stay tuned for more.

FEB 26 • MAKING SOUP FOR SATURDAY SOUP BOWL

Soup Bowl is calling on the 20's/30's to help cook! In early December, we joyfully made batches of soup that were served up to our Soup Bowl community. Each person brought an ingredient (including the largest carrots I've ever seen that Lily brought). If you're interested in helping out (or getting an ingredient) please get in touch with James Roll at rollj@saintmarksphiladelphia.org

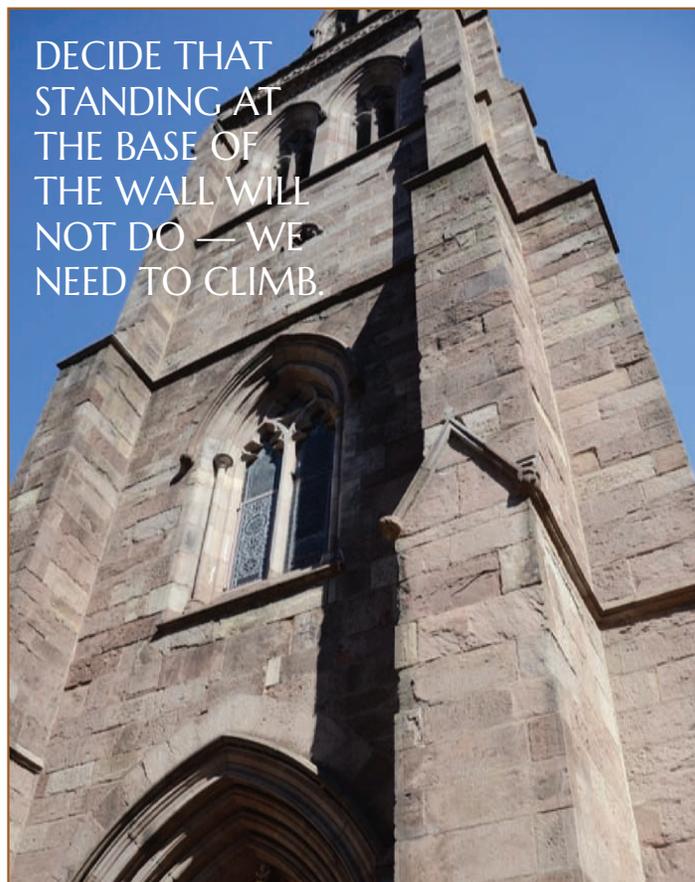
ADULT BAPTISM, CONFIRMATION, AND RECEPTION

Beginning January 18 and continuing through March 22, Saint Mark's will be offering classes on Sundays after coffee hour (1:00-2:30) for all those who would like to explore the possibility of being baptized, confirmed, or received into the Episcopal Church. We would love to have you join us even if you are uncertain whether to make this deeper commitment to your faith. This is also a great place to come if you would like to think, learn, pray, and talk about your relationship with God—whether you have been an Episcopalian all your life or never want to be one! Our conversations are lively, warm, and we hope gently challenging. Mother Johnson, Father Mullen, and Mother Takacs would also be very happy to speak with you individually as you consider this opportunity.



It is important for us to locate our own Dawn Walls — the places where we are called to climb even though the way is steep and stark — and to be willing to do the climbing. And it's important for others to see that the church is not done climbing: we have challenges to face and work to be done, and hope to proclaim to a world that is often down in the dumps not up on the heights. Others see the steep granite walls of the world and have not decided yet whether or not they are climbable. There is peace to work for in our own city and throughout the world; there are hungry and homeless people to be cared for; there is racism to be battled; there are the elderly to be loved as they suffer the pains and indignities of growing older in America; there is this beautiful earth to care for and protect; there is forgiveness to practice and to teach. The church climbs these walls when we (her members) decide that we are ready to climb. Often it starts with one or two people deciding to do something — like making the most of Lent.

This Lent perhaps your challenge and mine is to find our Dawn Wall and to decide that standing at the base of it will not do — we need to climb. Let's look for ways to give things up, take things on, adopt new disciplines, undertake a project. Let's look for ways to climb. And let's remember that it's called the Dawn Wall because it faces east, where the sun rises day by day. Let's embrace our climb on the sheer, steep expanse of the Dawn Wall of Lent, where the sun still rises day by day. The summit will still be there waiting for us when the time comes.

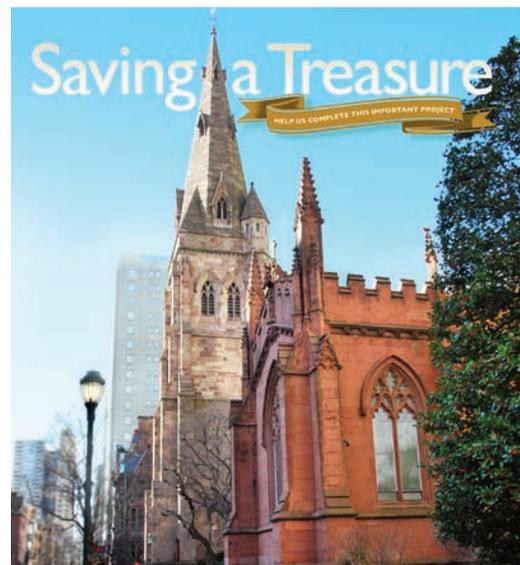


SAVING A TREASURE

Throughout February much of the work of historic preservation of the upper reaches of the church should be drawing to a close. As the masons finish the work the roofers can replace the roofs over the north and south aisles, having already completed a lot of roofing work in various areas of the Parish House. The crumbling masonry of the Rectory chimney has been removed and will soon be replaced with new stone work. The plastic sheeting that has kept the Parish House tower tented and concealing the restored stonework will soon be uncovered. The stained glass windows of the clerestory (the upper-most level of the church) have been cleaned and repaired, and the exterior masonry around them extensively repaired and restored. Soon some minor work around the Fiske doors will be accomplished, and the only remaining area of work will



be some work on the west wall, which will probably wait till spring. This is a lot of needed attention for our beautiful and historic buildings. All of this work has been made possible because of many generous donors, and as of early January we had met our fundraising goal of pledges for the campaign to Save a Treasure: nearly \$1.2 million pledged to add to the large grant of \$700,000 from the Save America's Treasures program. The deepest and most sincerest thanks go out to all of you who have supported this work and helped us to save the treasure that is Saint Mark's Church!



TIME: ANOTHER FORM OF STEWARDSHIP

— BARRY LEVIS



The Stewardship Committee often talks about stewardship in terms of time, talent, and treasure. However, the congregation generally only hears about the treasure part of that triad. Certainly providing the financial support necessary to keep St. Mark's open and operating represents a center aspect of our charge, but time and talent are owed their due.

Many members of the congregation make a considerable financial sacrifice in their pledges, and they understand that they only have so much to spare. Our financial resources are not actually finite. While we might consider that we have done as much as we can this year, it is quite possible that our financial picture will improve, even significantly. I am not talking about prosperity theology a la Jim and Tammy Faye. Your financial resources, however, can grow. You might win the jackpot in Megamillion, or your Aunt Tilly — whom you have forgotten even existed — could leave you with a large sum. More realistically you might get that job promotion with the nice new paycheck or the raise that you had been promised three years ago. So our financial resources could potentially improve for the better.

On the other hand, our time on this mortal coil is definitely finite. Aunt Tilly cannot will us an additional ten years to our lives. So in some respects giving of our time represents a loss that we cannot replenish. For that reason, some folks would rather stroke a check than give of their time which they realize is irreplaceable. Just as we are urged to be good stewards of our treasure, we are also even more urgently called to be stewards of our time. Thus a contribution of time through some volunteer effort can be even more meaningful than a financial contribution (don't tell the vestry I said that.)

Tithing is the traditional level of giving espoused by many religious groups. If we were to use the same measure for contributions of our time, that would work out to be 2½ hours per day, perhaps an excessive expectation. Yet 2½ hours per week would not seem unreasonable. Consider that this is less time than we spend watching reruns of *Downton Abbey*, and the need for volunteers is always great.

Opportunities abound at St. Mark's. The soup kitchen constantly needs help, especially for those who can prepare the soup. The food pantry can use stockers. One could sing in the choir (although that's where the talent part coming in). Volunteers essentially staff the parish office, but they always have room for more. A number of committees help with the work of the parish, the stewardship committee for instance.

If the parish office gets too crowded there are plenty of opportunities for service outside of St. Mark's. St. James School needs tutors or mentors for the kids. The Episcopal Community Services runs the St. Barnabas Mission which always needs help. Plus there are innumerable other agencies in Philadelphia which could use your 2½ hours per week.

So if the Stewardship Committee spends an inordinate amount of time discussing treasure, we don't want you to forget time. There's lots of work to be done in God's kingdom, and every 2½ hours counts.

SAINT MARK'S BOYS AND GIRLS CHOIR

NEW FAMILIES ARE
WELCOME!

— DARRYL ROLAND



Please join me in welcoming several new families to Saint Mark's Church and the Boys and Girls



Choir! Jade Marquez (8 years old) and Jordan Marquez (11 years old) join their mother Dr. Shannon Marquez from Center City. Jada Dantzler (11 years old), Kevine Dupree (12 years old), Nydira Harvery (12 years old) and Tynae Drain (13 years old) join us from Saint James School.



These young singers have made a smooth transition to their new choir schedule, rehearsing 1 ½ hours twice a week and singing for our weekly Family Mass. During this time, they sing vocal warm-ups for choral blend and learn choral repertoire as well as study music theory, sight singing and ear training. Many choristers also sign up to participate in our piano studio and take a ½ hour lesson each week.



The Boys and Girls Choir accepts new students throughout the year. So everyone at Saint Mark's Church is encouraged to invite friends and family to learn more about the program and set up a time to meet with me!



MUSIC SCHEDULE

FEBRUARY 1

Communion Service "Collegium Regale" - Herbert Howells
The fountain of all Wisdom - Thomas Tomkins
I will Love Thee - Vassily Kalinnikov

Solemn Evensong and Benediction for Candlemas 3pm
When to the Temple Mary went - Johannes Eccard
Evening Service "Collegium Regale" - Herbert Howells
Totus Tuus - Henryk Gorecki
O Salutaris - Thomas Tallis

FEBRUARY 8

Mozart Missa Brevis in D
Benedictus sit Deus - Mozart
Laudate Dominum - Mozart

FEBRUARY 15 | LAST SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

Missa Brevis - Grayston Ives
Seek him that maketh the seven stars - Jonathan Dove
O Nata lux - Morten Lauridsen

FEBRUARY 18 | ASH WEDNESDAY 7PM

Missa "Ave Jesu" - George Oldroyd
Miserere mei - Gregorio Allegri
Domine non secundum peccata nostra - James MacMillan
Call to remembrance - Richard Ferrant

FEBRUARY 22 | LENT 1

Great Litany - Thomas Tallis
Short Communion Service - Tallis
Denn er hat seine Engeln befohlen - Mendelssohn
O Saviour of the World - Ousley

ONE BOOK, ONE LENT

— MOTHER NORA JOHNSON

This Lent, groups throughout Saint Mark's will be meeting to discuss the great writer Flannery O'Connor's book of short stories, *Everything That Rises Must Converge* (1965). O'Connor was a deeply religious intellectual whose work has been hailed by some as a vehicle of deep grace for the modern world and denounced by others as excessively provocative. She wrote comic fiction in a mode that's often called "Southern Gothic" or "grotesque"; we may find ourselves laughing knowingly as she mocks a stereotype and then recoiling in horror as violence brings a painful truth to the surface. Her characters seethe with frustration and resentment. They are almost always wrong—dead wrong—about themselves and the world around them. They resist the grace of God even in their most adamant attempts to be "biblical." And yet, for O'Connor grace and redemption are the fundamental realities of God's creation. Her characters suffer because sin is everywhere, and when sin is everywhere grace may break through in tremendously painful ways. These stories are not for the faint of heart, but when they touch you they tend to stay with you.



O'Connor graduated from Georgia State College for Women in 1945 as an accomplished cartoonist and would-be journalist. She sharpened her eye for satire and caricature through her cartoons, and then discovered her immense talent for fiction at the University of Iowa. Embraced by the literary circle of her day and well on her way to a significant career in the Northeast, she was forced to return to her mother's farm in a small Georgia town when she was diagnosed with lupus in her late twenties. Ill and isolated culturally, O'Connor lived with her mother, writing as much as her energy allowed, until she died of lupus at age thirty-nine. Her fiction, essays, and personal letters attest not only to her deep Catholic spirituality but to a kind of fundamental humility and charity that led her to embrace a thoroughly fallen modern world.

It's a real challenge to us to claim these short stories as our "one book" for Lent. We will have a lot to discuss. Is the world really that fallen? Why should we dwell on human violence? What are we to make of the familiarity O'Connor shows with racism and

explicitly racist language, even as she is exposing racism, greed, and self-aggrandizement as deep sins? I admit that, as chief instigator of this reading series, I myself find at least one of the stories in this volume, "A View of the Woods," almost too disturbing to read. If you decide to skip it I won't blame you.

I'm haunted, though, by the idea that a volume like this one requires us as readers to be the Body of Christ. The stories are in a way about conversion, about the way God reaches through to people we can't stand, including ourselves. They are stories about repentance. They are stories about how foolish we can be when we try to make ourselves invulnerable by twisting the Bible for our own purposes, by elevating ourselves above outsiders, the "unsophisticated," or those whose differences we judge to be inadequacies. They are stories about how we victimize each other because we are obsessed with our own personal goal of "rising above" the mundane world.

We hear a lot these days about "free speech" and the dangers of intolerance. But what does

Christian conversation look like? How do we actually talk to each other about some of the world's grotesque realities? How do we stay in communion with one another when one person is appalled by something that another person loves? I know there is deep grace in our community, and I am looking forward to hearing the answers we discover to these questions. I think Flannery O'Connor, in her tough, unflattering way, can help us.

"One Book, One Lent" will take two forms. During the Sundays in Lent, the 10:00 Forum will address O'Connor's work. The first and last Sundays will be larger "overview" sessions, and the middle four will be discussions of specific stories. Please feel free to join us even if you aren't reading the stories. These will be great discussions! But do read whatever you can. We will also be holding a number of small group discussion meetings at other times during Lent, listed below. You can obtain copies of *Everything That Rises Must Converge* through any local bookstore, or as an e-book or audio book online. Join the conversation a little or a lot.

Wishing you a holy Lent!

ONE BOOK,
ONE LENT:
EVERYTHING
THAT RISES
MUST
CONVERGE

Join the rest of the parish in reading Flannery O'Connor's powerful volume of short stories, first published in 1965. You can participate in conversations about the book during Lent by attending some of the following:

Sunday 10:00 Forum: Open to all, schedule of O'Connor discussions posted in this newsletter.

ADDITIONAL EVENTS

Open Reading Group with Mother Johnson, open to all: Saturday February 28 at 11am. "Parker's Back"

Open Reading Group with Mother Johnson, open to all: Saturday March 21 at 11am. "Revelation."

Wednesday Bible Study: Special session devoted to discussing O'Connor, March 4, 6pm.

Inquirers' Class: session on O'Connor February 22, "Parker's Back"

20's/30's Group: Simple Supper with Mother Takacs on "Revelation," March 18

Servant Year Residents: meeting with Mother Johnson on the works of O'Connor, date tba

SUNDAY FORUM

FEBRUARY & MARCH

Come join us any Sunday at 10am in the Parish Hall. We will be having rich discussions on everything from the environment to Southern fiction. Grab a cup of coffee, share an insight.

FEBRUARY 1: BEES AT SAINT MARK'S!

In an exciting new chapter of our life as a parish, St. Mark's will be keeping bees on our grounds in the coming season. Come hear from the volunteers who are heading up this project, and learn more about how and why bees are to become part of our ministry in this city.

FEBRUARY 8. WENDELL BERRY, CHRISTIANITY, AND THE NATURAL WORLD

Mother Nora Johnson will lead class on Wendell Berry and other influential environmental writers. We will be talking about those bees again! And the larger context for their arrival.

FEBRUARY 15: NO FORUM PARISH MEETING

FEBRUARY 22: ONE BOOK, ONE LENT

"Why I Love Flannery O'Connor"

Andrew Kellner, Diocesan Canon for Family and Young Adult Ministries.

Come hear Andrew talk about what falling in love with Flannery O'Connor means to him. Along the way we will have a chance to think together about why we would turn to a quirky writer of sometimes-shocking comedy as a spiritual practice for Lent.

MARCH 1: ONE BOOK, ONE LENT

Phillip Cary, Professor of Philosophy at Eastern University, "Revelation."

In this short story by Flannery O'Connor, a self-righteous woman has a vision of souls ascending to heaven and begins to consider whether she is on the wrong path. Join Phil Cary for a discussion of grace and redemption in this ironic tale.

MARCH 8: ONE BOOK, ONE LENT

Mother Nora Johnson, Professor of English at Swarthmore College, "Everything That Rises Must Converge."

An educated white liberal son despises his simple-minded Christian mother for her racism, her pretensions, and her determination to sacrifice everything for him. Tensions simmer on a bus ride downtown. We'll talk about seeing ourselves in Flannery O'Connor's deeply flawed characters.

MARCH 15: ONE BOOK, ONE LENT

Roy Clouser, Emeritus Professor of Philosophy at the College of New Jersey, "The Enduring Chill."

A young white writer with a mysterious illness moves in with his mother in the South, and makes painfully awkward attempts to associate with her African-American farmhands. Roy Clouser will lead us in a discussion of Flannery O'Connor's brutal insights into self-delusion and redemption.

MARCH 22: ONE BOOK, ONE LENT

Phillip Cary, Professor of Philosophy at Eastern University, "Parker's Back."

An unruly young man marries a fundamentalist and ends up bearing the image of Jesus almost in spite of himself. We'll talk about how grace pursues us in the most unlikely places.

MARCH 29: ONE BOOK, ONE LENT

Panel Discussion: Mother Johnson and members of the Saint Mark's community, "What it was like."

An open discussion about what we experienced when we chose Flannery O'Connor for our companion this Lent. Were we "One church?" What does it mean to be one church?

APRIL 5, EASTER: NO FORUM.

WATCHING THE 9:00 FAMILY MASS GROW

— ELLEN DOSTER

Sundays are early mornings for me. I start the day at 7:30 in the parish hall, where one of four wonderful volunteers and I put together a quick breakfast for choristers arriving early before their 8:00 rehearsal. Upstairs the library is bustling as the children of the Boys and Girls Choir (who get up even earlier than I do to get to rehearsal every Sunday) put on their vestments and begin warming up to sing for the 9:00 Family Mass. Things are getting a little crowded as more and more children have joined the choir, but the kids don't seem to mind, and in listening to them learn more music and sing more confidently every week, I don't really mind either. Even in the few short months I've been here, I've seen the Boys and Girls Choir, the Family Mass, and Schola grow so much. Our very first Advent pageant that took place a few weeks was a huge success,



evidence of the eagerness of even our youngest members to participate in our life here at Saint Mark's. I can't tell you the joy I experience in hearing a young chorister, after an uncertain start and weeks of practice, blossom all of a sudden into a confident singer with a sure voice; or in listening to children in Schola offering thanks to God for their blessings both big and small and praying that God will help a friend who is sad or a family member who is sick; or seeing children sitting on the floor of the church hanging on the preacher's every word. This ministry is new and exciting and, yes, at times uncertain, but it is in these moments that we can also see how precious and valuable it is in helping our parish grow and welcome these bright and eager children and help nourish their faith. I encourage you all to come see for yourselves how the children of Saint Mark's are bringing their voices, their enthusiasm, and their love to this service.



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ASH WEDNESDAY: FEBRUARY 18

