

THE *Spirit* OF ST. FRANCIS NEWSLETTER



Summer
2014

Your Official News Source for St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church, San Antonio, Texas

A New Journey Begins

AN INTERVIEW WITH FATHER SERVANDO GUERRERO

By Charles T. Ramirez

Upon his arrival to the parish, I sat down with Father Servando and we spoke about his new journey as a young priest in the Catholic Church. I asked him about his family, the road to ordination, and his first assignment here at St. Francis of Assisi. We also spoke about his favorite part of seminary life and what he likes to do for fun.

Tell us a little about yourself. Do you have family in San Antonio?

My name is Father Servando Guerrero Ponce and I was born on February 13, 1983, in San Luis Potosi, Mexico. I have a big family with loving parents, Mr. J. Cruz Guerrero and Mrs. Maria Francisca Ponce, and six brothers and four sisters. All of my family resides in Mexico.

When did you first feel the call from God to the priesthood?

When I was five years old I started to ask my mother about the Mass and the Church. She says my little mind wanted to absorb anything dealing with the Church. I still remember some of the questions I asked, but I did not feel the call to the priesthood until I was eleven years old. I lived with my family until the age of fourteen when I entered the minor seminary in Ciudad Valles, S.L.P., Mexico.

How did you come to San Antonio, Texas?

I graduated from the high school minor seminary and was transferred to Monter-



Father Servando Guerrero stands by the statue of St. Francis of Assisi outside of the church. Photo by Charles Ramirez

rey, Mexico, to study in the Philosophy program (1997-2003). After I graduated from the philosophy program, I decided to discontinue my seminary studies and pursued a degree in Computer System Designs. However, in August 2007, I was invited to join the Archdiocese of San Antonio. After discerning this invitation, I accepted and became a seminarian at Assumption Seminary. One of my favorite activities at the seminary was the community prayer we had every day, which I look forward to doing with the St. Francis of Assisi community

Speak a little about your journey to priestly ordination.

I completed my pastoral year, which is like a seminarian internship, at Our Lady

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Renewed & Refreshed:

Father Larry's Summer Message

Summer Renewal and Refreshment



It's hard to believe that it's mid-summer already! Hopefully you've had some time to be refreshed and renewed with time off and a little vacation. Parents

are probably already thinking about when school begins again! My blessings and prayers are with you as you take some well-deserved rest.

At St. Francis of Assisi, we are already preparing for the fall months and the re-start of many of our programs and ministries. Religious education, Habitat for Humanity, Theology Cafe, and many other things are right around the corner, not to mention annual events like our parish festival!

But summer is not time off from our spiritual lives, our community life, and our relationship with God. Part of this time of relaxation and renewal is precise-

ly meant to enable our hearts to be open to the promptings of God's Spirit within us; to reconnect with the wonder of creation, the joy of play, and the love of family and friends.

We need you!

There are two things I ask you to consider in relation to your St. Francis community this summer. The first is that we still need you! Our ministries continue on through the summer, whether that's St. Vincent de Paul, MLE, Kids' Day Out, and so forth. But also our liturgical ministries continue each weekend and we need your help.

The second thing is to think about and pray for those who should be invited to be a part of the St. Francis family. On the weekend of September 13th and 14th, we will celebrate a "Welcome Sunday" along with all other parishes in the Archdiocese of San Antonio. Notice I said "Welcome Sunday." Everyone is welcome that Sunday. It's not that we're going to do anything unusual on that day, but rather

that we want to extend the hand of hospitality and joy to all who want to be a part of our community.

What part can you play in this? Just think of someone you hope would come to St. Francis and experience what it means to be Church with us. Invite them to accompany you to Mass that weekend. Maybe offer to take them out to breakfast or lunch afterwards. If they could just experience the warmth of being invited and wanted, and the joy of our liturgical worship, they may want to stay! And we will be more than happy to help them grow in their faith.

Sometimes we worry about something like evangelization. Our images of evangelism are tainted by people screaming at others or waving Bibles over their heads! But if we look at how our Lord called his disciples, it was by simple invitation. In the Gospel of John he simply says, "Come and See." And that's what "Welcome Sunday" will be all about.

He's Invited, Too!

Annual Parish Festival | October 5, 2014

The *Spirit* of St. Francis
NEWSLETTER

Very Rev. Larry Christian

Pastor

Rose Kruppa, CDP

Chief Editor and Staff Writer

Charles T. Ramirez

Layout Designer and Writer

Cedar Joiner

Chief Publication Consultant

Please send comments, questions, and creative ideas for future publications to Charles at cramirez@sfasat.org.

of Guadalupe in Helotes (2012-13) and was ordained as a deacon in November 2013. My last parish assignment as a seminarian was at Our Lady of Good Counsel in the west part of San Antonio, during which I completed my Masters of Divinity at Oblate School of Theology and graduated on May 9th. By the grace of God, I was ordained to the priesthood on May 17, 2014 at Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Selma, Texas. It is a great blessing to be ordained, particularly for this Archdiocese, and at the same time it is a wonderful gift to serve and love the church in all possible ways as a priest.

When did you find out you were assigned to St. Francis of Assisi? How did you feel?

I was informed about my assignment to St. Francis of Assisi during Holy Week and I felt grateful for this opportunity to serve and experience my faith and life as a priest. I look forward to working with Fr. Larry Christian, whom I knew as a rector when I first entered Assumption Seminary and who is now my brother priest. I look forward to embracing this community's spirituality and love for God and one another. I love every dynamic of parish life, especially liturgy and walking together with God's people in their journey of faith and life.

What do you like to do for fun when you are not busy with priestly responsibilities?

When I am not working as a priest I become, "Nacho Libre." I am just kidding! That is one of my favorite comedy movies. I love to watch movies, go out with my friends, swim, read magazines about other countries and cultures, and listen to music, especially Jazz. And I never miss my power nap!

What is your favorite type of food?

It is hard to say which my favorite type of food is because I like both seafood and Italian food.



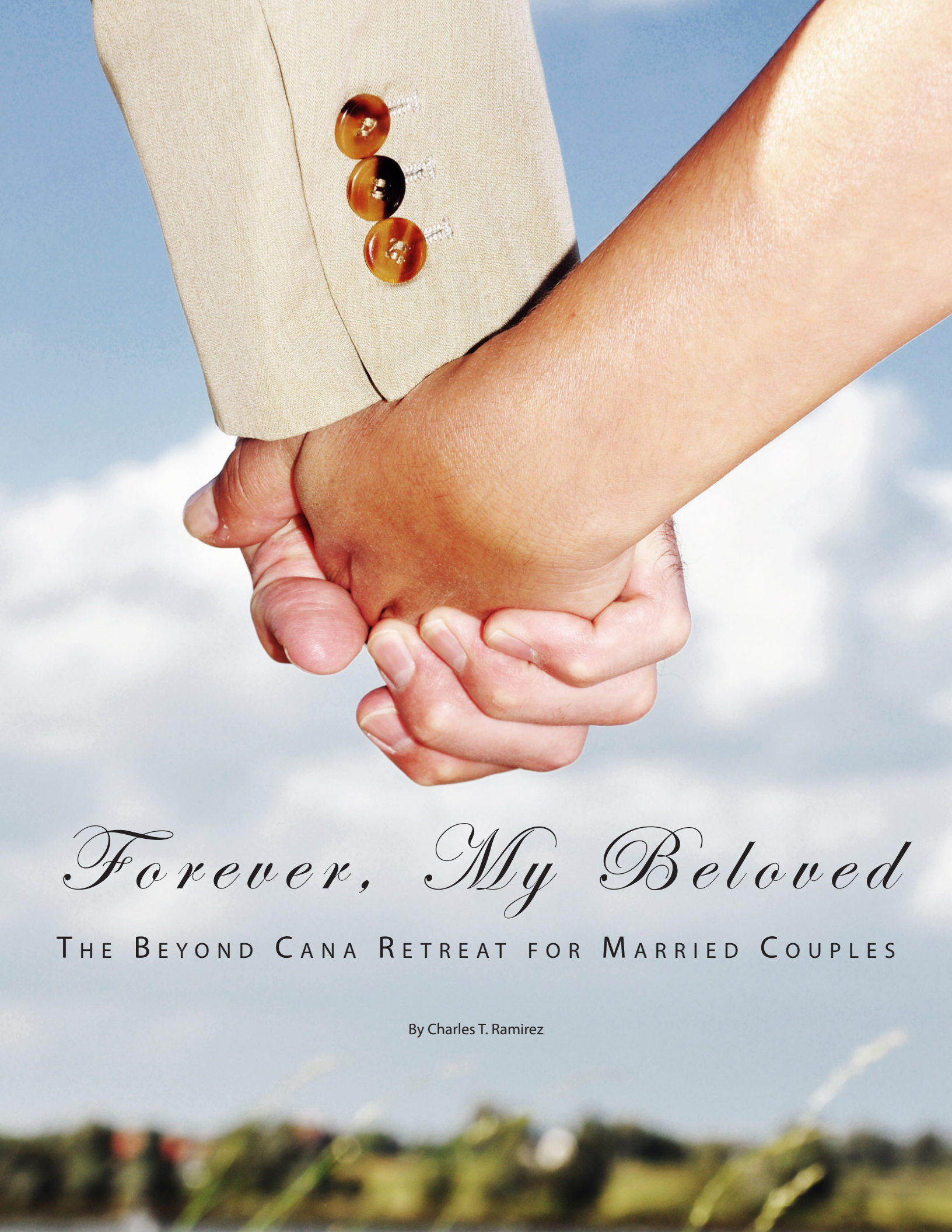
Above: Father Servando looks for a chasuble in the priest's vesting sacristy to wear for the celebration of Mass. Below: Father Servando prepares to celebrate Mass. Photos by Charles Ramirez.

Is there anything else that you would like to tell parishioners?

I have no greater desire than to do God's will by committing myself to the St. Francis community. I ask my new com-

munity, St. Francis, to please help me grow in my understanding and configuration with Christ, as priest and person of faith.





Forever, My Beloved

THE BEYOND CANA RETREAT FOR MARRIED COUPLES

By Charles T. Ramirez

The Beyond Cana Marriage Enrichment Ministry boasts years of providing married couples with a life-changing retreat that unites them more closely—emotionally and spiritually. Retreatant Adele Novak describes the retreat perfectly: “It’s not group work, and it’s not having to be best friends with someone else or other people. It’s about becoming better friends with your best friend—your spouse.”

Founded at St. Francis of Assisi in 2002, over 500 couples have since attended the Beyond Cana Retreat. Currently, David and Marilyn Aguilar oversee the ministry and say that the retreat is founded on the covenant of marriage. Marilyn states, “The ministry helps couples to focus on their marriage covenant and the commitment they made to each other and to God when they were married.”

The retreat incorporates testimonial presentations from other couples, a facet that enables an objective self-reflection on one’s own marriage. Adele found this aspect of the retreat helpful. “The presentations from the other couples make the retreat unique,” says Adele, “because they let people know that everybody has got something that they are dealing with, some things are more serious, some things are less serious; but it’s a process that all married couples go through.”

Additionally, couples are given a conducive time and setting to speak openly and candidly with one another about their relationship. But it does not stop at the retreat, says David and Marilyn. “During a Beyond Cana retreat, couples learn a process that they can continue to use throughout their marriage,” says Marilyn. David continues, “And since marriages are impacted over time as our lives change, this process can be used by couples at any stage in their marriage—newly married or married for many years.”

Prayer, reflection, and the sacraments are other key components of this retreat. Couples learn tools to help them pray together and deepen their relationship with God as a unit. Adele attests to the inte-

gral role prayer plays in the retreat. “The sacred space that was there during the whole retreat was wonderful and made us aware of God’s presence at all times,” says Adele. “I don’t think the weekend would have been nearly as effective or as memorable without the time for prayer.”

Retreat team leader Dan Kasprovicz has received a joyous response from all attending couples after the retreat. “We have had many couples tell us how much this retreat improved their marriage,” says Dan. “The couples tell us on the Sunday they return how glad they are for attending and how encouraged they feel to do this retreat on their own yearly – to reexamine their progress and add new goals.”

The effect of this retreat on married couples is evident in the discipleship of our community. Retreat team leader Beverly

Kasprovicz says that many couples feel called to serve in ministry together after attending the retreat. “Beyond Cana promotes discipleship in the parish by couples doing ministries together such as hospitality greeters and Mass coordinators,” says Beverly. “They show their enjoyment at being together as a couple and encourage others to participate as a couple in our church activities.”

According to David, this retreat is the best gift spouses can give to each other. “Making the time to focus on your marriage for an entire weekend is probably one of the best gifts you can give each other,” says David. “Couples can enjoy ‘date nights’ each evening on the weekend to once again revel in some alone time, free from the demands of work, children, and grandchildren.”

FAST FACTS

Dates

Friday, August 1 - Sunday, August 3, 2014

Begins

At 10:00 am on Friday

Ends

With the 11:15 am Mass

Place

Comfort Inn and Suites in Boerne, Texas

Cost

\$250.00 per couple

Included

Lodging for two nights,
breakfast and lunch, as well as retreat materials.

Deposit

\$150.00 to reserve your spot

Registration

Forms are available in the Gathering Space
and online at www.sfasat.org

Contact

David and Marilyn Aguilar
at 210. 887. 5915 or tgeagle1@att.net
to register or for more information.



What Do You Want Of Me, Lord?

The Transformational Power of the ACTS Retreat

By Charles T. Ramirez

The ACTS community of St. Francis of Assisi is excited for a promising and transformational fall season with two retreats scheduled in consecutive months. The Men's ACTS retreat will be September 18 – 21 and the Women's ACTS retreat will be October 16 – 19, 2014. The experience of an ACTS retreat profoundly renewed everyone who has previously attended.

"I went on this retreat thinking that I don't know why God wants me here," says Erica Eavenson, a past retreatant, "but when I was there, God opened my eyes to see things going on in my life. I came back transformed with a renewed

sense of where my focus needs to be and how I need to be living my life as a Christian."

The time away from regular, daily routines that an ACTS retreat provides, helps retreatants refocus on God working in their lives. "The retreat showed me how chaotic life is," says retreatant Rene Esquivel, "and it showed me that I need to slow down in life sometimes and enjoy the little miracles that God blesses me with."

"It reinforced me spiritually," says retreatant Larry Boghs, "It's like a recharge. Once you get into it and start talking with the other retreatants, you notice

that you have a lot in common."

Jeanine Johnson says that she enjoyed making new friends on the retreat and focusing her prayer life. "My favorite aspect of the retreat was the inspiration I took from the women I met and the enduring friendships that I have made," says Jeanine. "The retreat brought a focus to my prayer life that made Christ more central."

The ACTS retreat has shown to be transformational in ways that can only be attributed to God. The power of this retreat testifies to the grace of the Holy Spirit working through it. Keith Morgan, a past retreatant, says that he was



ACTS RETREAT DETAILS

Men's ACTS

Dates

Sept. 18 - 21, 2014

Check In

Sept. 18 | SFA | 5:00 pm

Check Out

Sept. 21 | SFA | 11:15 am Mass

Place

Cordi Marian Retreat Center
11624 W FM 471, SA, TX 78253

Cost

\$200.00 per retreatant

Included

Lodging, meals, retreat materials

Deposit

\$75.00 to reserve your spot

Registration

Forms in the Gathering Space
and online at www.sfasat.org

Contact

Joe Cantu at 210. 601. 2262
or jocantu20@yahoo.com
to register or for more information.

Women's ACTS

Dates

Oct. 16 - 19, 2014

Check In

Oct. 16 | SFA | 5:00 pm

Check Out

Oct. 19 | SFA | 11:15 am Mass

Place

Omega Retreat Center
216 W. Highland Dr., Boerne, TX

Cost

\$200.00 per retreatant

Included

Lodging, meals, retreat materials

Deposit

\$75.00 to reserve your spot

Registration

Forms in the Gathering Space
and online at www.sfasat.org

Contact

Jody Nash at 210. 643. 5639
or jnash207@gmail.com
to register or for more information.

never a very religious person before he went on his first ACTS retreat. "I was taken to the retreat kicking and screaming," recalls Keith, "I didn't want to go at all. I thought it was going to be a shoving-God-down-your-throat type of thing and that turned me off."

However, Keith was happily surprised to discover that the retreat was anything but uncomfortable. "Everybody was very welcoming and I didn't feel judged for a second," says Keith. "It was more about opening up and having conversations with others. The crazy thing about it is that because you don't know these people, it is easier to talk about certain

things."

Keith cannot stress enough the profound transformation he underwent through the ACTS retreat. "Going on the ACTS retreat changed everything for me," says Keith. "I have been going to church every Sunday since and becoming more involved. The ACTS retreat was the single, most life-changing event in my life."

And for those men and women who are still hesitant about registering for the retreat, Keith has a few words of encouragement. "It's only three days out of your entire life. Go with an open mind. If you just give it a try, you are going

to get something out of it," says Keith. "Everyone who was part of my retreat, everyone who was there was changed in some way. Everybody came away with a positive feeling."

Erica echoes Keith's advice and can testify to witnessing the same. "Don't be afraid," says Erica. "Go by faith and give it one-hundred percent! You won't regret it. I don't know of anyone who ever regrets going on an ACTS retreat."

For more information on the ACTS Retreats at St. Francis of Assisi, please visit our website at www.sfasat.org/acts.



St. Francis of Assisi Catholic Church

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San Antonio, TX 78249
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Save the Date

- Aug. 1-3 The Beyond Cana Retreat
- Aug. 2 St. Francis of Assisi Parish Dance
- Aug. 2-9 Living Water Mission Trip
- Aug. 18, 19, 20 Catechist Orientation & Training
- Aug. 22 Karaoke Night
- Sep. 18-21 Men's ACTS Retreat
- Sep. 19-20 Catholic Women's Conference
- Oct. 3 Festival Dance
- Oct. 5 Parish Festival
- Oct. 16-19 Women's ACTS Retreat

Liturgy Schedule

Weekends

Saturday | 5:00 pm
Sunday | 8:30 am | 11:15 am |
5:00 pm

Weekdays

Mon | Tue | Thur | 8:30 am
Wed | 6:00 pm
Fri | 6:30 am

Liturgy of the Word & Communion Service

Monday - Thursday 6:30 am

Reconciliation

Sat. | 3:30 pm - 5:00 pm

www.sfasat.org

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