

BARN MASSES AND OUTDOOR MASSES

(including the Farmer's Mass at Cuba)

"Jesus was born in a barn. There's something good about being simple. I enjoy that. It's my style. God has always talked to me in the simple... the trees, the birds, etc."

Note: Fr. Mark started having Masses in Four Seasons Park to help people get used to the idea of going out there. The park was in the initial stages when he got here and now, in addition to having weekend Masses and retreat Masses out there, we had our Mission Fest at the park last year and this weekend we will gather there for his farewell party!



DRIVE THRU NATIVITY AND OUTDOOR STATIONS OF THE CROSS (During Covid)



"The one thing I will always remember about the drive thru nativity is the angels (kids) leaving their post and going over to Tom & Alice Brinkman's and bringing Christmas to them. They went over and sang them a song. That was just neat. I also remember Honkey the Donkey...you gotta put that in there."



As for the drive thru Stations of the Cross, it was amazing how many artists were willing to help us out with the artwork, from 7th grade girls to high school kids and professionals. Then the number of people who circled the block doing the stations. People from other towns and other states. You never know how far and wide things will go. And there were some neat things in the paintings that made people look at the stations differently because every artist had a different perspective."

THE 2021 MISSION FEST SWITCHING FROM SUNDAY TO SATURDAY

"There was threat of bad weather on Sunday, so on Thursday, we switched the day from Sunday to Saturday. Would the word get out? Would people show up? Things worked out better than we could have ever imagined. It was just the right mix of things that made it so successful."

TELEVISED MASSES (Channel 70)

"John Phillips wanted the Mass on TV and with his son Chris working for the telephone company, he made it happen. The first Mass that was televised was All Souls Day 2016. That was also the year John died. That television station has touched a lot of people, especially during the pandemic and those who are homebound and in the nursing home."



REMINISCING WITH FR. MARK

When you think of your ministry in Kalida, what first comes to mind?

"The first thing is Fr. Elmer. He changed a lot of the dynamics in the house and in the parish. He felt good being here; enjoyed being here. I always told him I'd take care of the ministries and he could take care of the social. He did very well at that, and I think that is an important part of what Church should be. It wasn't just taking care of him, but being with him was an important part. When he died, I missed meals with him the most. We would always talk fun things, Church things and the differences in the way we were trained. There were a lot of good things and a lot of funny things. I think Fr. Elmer got renewed energy being here."

Side Note: Fr. Elmer started living in the rectory with Fr. Mark in the winter of 2013-14, a few months after his fall, which stopped him from being able to go back to his mission work in Hong Kong.



What are some of the events that stand out over the past 13 years?

We had to limit him to five. Here they are in no particular order:

MISSION TRIPS

A couple memories from Africa (2013)

"The first is when Connie and I were at the well. The people were so grateful and overwhelmed that they had a well (that St. Michael's funded) and they were exceedingly happy. That was neat. The other memory was when Bob Buss kidnapped an orphan. All these kids were around us and Bob was carrying one and was going to take him from one orphanage to another. It was just a natural thing for him to hold a child and he just wanted to bring the boy with him. Of course, we had to remind him that he couldn't take the child from one orphanage to another, lol."



Appalachia (2014 - 2021)

"With Appalachia, what instantly comes to mind is Dick Bockrath. He was project manager for this room which was being added on to store supplies and food for the needy in Appalachia. He figured out angles and measurements for work we were going to do on this storage room. When we got there, we realized the group before us starting constructing the room twice as big as was anticipated. So Dick redid everything and it worked out amazingly well and we got a ton of work done. Dick knew the hand of God was in that and he wasn't afraid to say it. It was amazing. We went back later and this 80-year-old woman (Dora, pictured with Fr. Mark to the right) who was in charge at this center, did a dance on the scaffolding because she was so happy."

People would cry when we would get jobs done. I remember putting a floor in half of a house and we had to take all the furniture out and get it all ready and we got it all done in half a day. The mom came home and saw it and cried. She knew it would have never gotten done had we not come (her husband was disabled). There were tears of joy and accomplishment and you knew you touched someone's life.

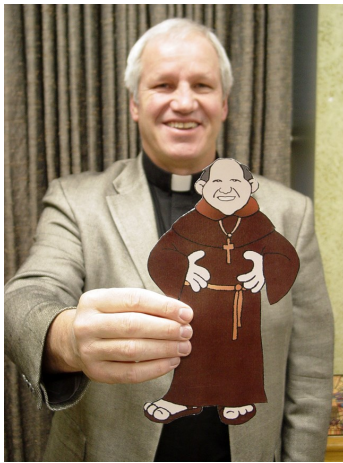
There were times during the mission trips you knew it was a God moment. From the smiles, to the tears, to people to just spontaneously praying...it was just Church in action."

More events continued on page 6...





Fr. Mark took many people up in the tower



Who could forget Flat Friar Fred, the paper likeness of Fr. Mark who traveled with parishioners all over the world in 2011.



Butchering Parties



Fr. Mark was big on inviting people into his home. He had two years of the “Haunted Rectory” when they needed a fundraiser for the CYO program. This was a big hit! Before Fr. Mark came, many people had never been in the rectory. In 2011, St. Michael’s held the event “A Together Again Christmas.” There was a tree lighting ceremony, memories of our loved ones who had passed, St. Nicholas and, especially unique, parishioners were invited into a Christmas-themed rectory with hors d’oeuvres and a Live Nativity in the garage. Fr. Mark also hosted groomsmen in his house before weddings and made all kinds of meals for parishioners in his home.



In 2020, an electronic sign was added to St. Michael’s Church yard.



Derecho 2012

Fr. Mark saw there was a lot of wasted food at the elementary cafeteria (three and a half tons per year), and began to collect the excess food and feed it to pigs he raised at Elmer & Jane Landwehr’s farm. This led, of course, to the butchering parties. He recalls a story of Klara Frommherz, who after suffering a stroke, still wanted to help butcher. She was very happy to take the fruits of their labor and gift it to people at the nursing home and those who helped her over her final years of life.



Fr. Mark, like his cousin Fr. Lochtefeld, taught square dancing to many, including elementary students during gym class. Of course, he was well known for calling them at weddings...and dancing to “Brick House.”



Fr. Mark coached CYO girls and boys teams. He also had a unique connection to Kalida Schools. He would have Friday Donuts and Prayer at the high school. He presented a “New Zealand Christmas” to first graders and helped spruce up the raised garden beds at the high school.



THE FLOOD

When the town of Kalida flooded, in 2015, Fr. Mark had a few extra hands at his home. A couple he had known from Florida brought a group of kids to the area (pictured below) to do volunteer work. They stepped up and placed sandbags at people’s homes and in St. Michael’s gym.



Vacation Bible School was always a lot of fun for Fr. Mark!



On the Left: Fr. Mark was very proud of getting the mailbox location changed to the driver’s side.



He participated in the High School Quiz Bowl, where the students would take on the teachers. He officiated over a mock ceremony of the marriage of “Q & U” the past couple of years, where they showed kindergartners how Q and U always go together. He also appeared in two productions (several years apart) of the High School Musical “25th Annual Spelling Bee.” To the left, he is shown strutting his stuff after spelling a word correctly. If memory serves us, it took them a little longer to get him out than anticipated!



IT’S THAT EASY! In 2011, Fr. Mark made a video where he made a half court shot (he actually did make it on the second take). He went on to beat TV 44’s Andy Lynch in a half court competition at a high school game.



2015 Battle of the Bloods Softball Game: after Mass at the ballpark, Fr. Mark orchestrated a softball game between our parish and St. John’s, Glandorf.