



Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

With gratitude to God, we can look back on 2017 to see bountiful blessings for St. Bernard's ACTS. In January, adults and youth teamed up to present the fourth Teen ACTS retreat for our parish. In the spring, we helped our friends at St. Benedict's in Broken Arrow with their second mission retreat. In July, we put on our own men's and women's retreats at the University of Tulsa. **More than 450 people have now attended the 10 sets of ACTS retreats at our parish since 2011.** Additionally, the Tulsa ACTS Chapter got off the ground in 2017, incorporating five Oklahoma parishes as a regional outreach for San Antonio-based ACTS Missions. What's next?

In 2018 we look forward to a teen retreat in February, followed by women's and men's retreats right after Easter. Thanks to directors Gabrielle Hansen and Paul Dudley for their faith-filled response to God's call. Here is how you can help:

- ✓ Serve on a team. When you take part in presenting a retreat, you enrich your spirituality, expand your generosity, and get to know fellow parishioners – plus, it's fun.
- ✓ Personally invite someone to attend. Registration for the men's and women's weekends costs just \$100 during our special discount in December.
- ✓ Take an hour of Eucharistic Adoration during the retreats.

ACTS Core wishes you a holy Advent, a merry Christmas, and a blessed 2018. May the Lord continue to guide, renew, refresh and strengthen the people of St. Bernard's Church in joy and love.

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Registration is now open!
Women's retreat * April 5-8, 2018
Men's Retreat * April 19-22, 2018
Camp Christian

Teen Retreat * Feb. 15-18, 2018
Camp Loughridge

The fifth St. Bernard's Teen ACTS retreat is set for President's Day Weekend, under the direction of Phil Doeringhaus and Karen Johnson along with teen directors Ashlyn Clifton and James Taber. They've selected Blessed Stanley Rother as patron of the retreat.

High school students in grades 9-12 are encouraged to sign up for this a opportunity to deepen their Catholic faith and make friends from the parish. Look for registration forms in the church Commons. Don't miss out on the fun, energy and divine dynamics of the Holy Spirit at work in teenagers!

A Soup & Salad Fundraiser to support the teen retreat is set for Saturday, Dec. 16, in the gym. Thank you for your prayers and financial donations.



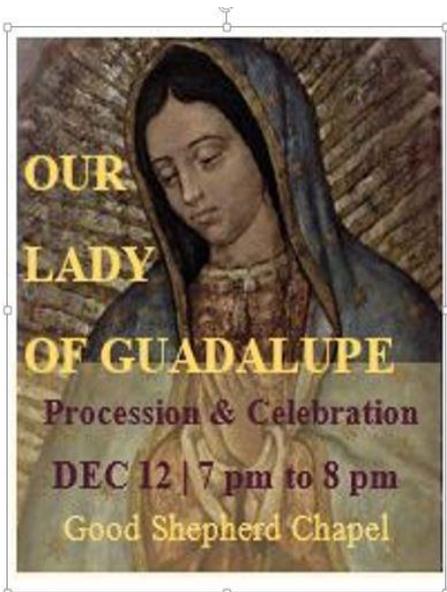
Becoming Our Lord's Disciples

Adoration

We adore God through worship and prayer. During Advent, consider attending daily Mass, meditating on the Scriptures, or spending time with Jesus at Eucharistic Adoration.

A very special prayer service is coming up Dec. 12, the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe. St. Bernard's Church will commemorate the patroness of the Americas by venerating the Blessed Sacrament in a Eucharistic procession through the church building – with stops to pray the rosary and reflect on our need today for Mary's new evangelism.

The Virgin of Guadalupe sparked conversions by the millions through her apparitions to St. Juan Diego outside Mexico City in 1531. The famous image imprinted on Juan Diego's tilma contained rich symbolism that brought faith to the indigenous people.



Please make plans to attend in honor of Our Lady of Guadalupe, the mother who calls us to protect the dignity of life and who points us to her Divine Son.

Community

A crowd of about 130 people came out for parish movie night in a private showing of "Same Kind of Different As Me" on Nov. 6. Moviegoers brought items that filled five baskets donated to the Tulsa Day Center for the Homeless. Thank you to Lesa Clark for coordinating this social-service event!

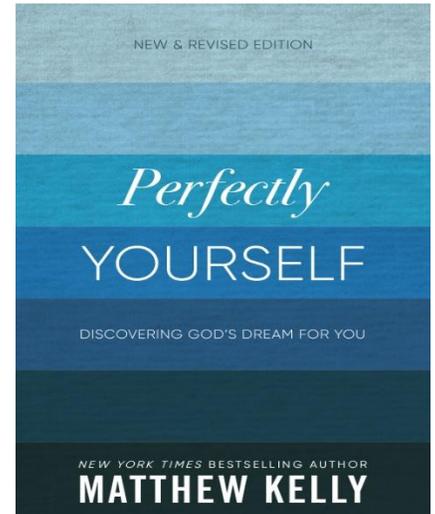
Theology

Faith-sharing groups bring people together to support one another, praise God, and expand their knowledge of Catholic teaching.

Here's what's going on (open to all):

- Men of the Upper Room meets at 5:30am Wednesdays in the gym. Bishop Emeritus Edward Slattery begins the spring session of MOUR on Jan. 17.
- "True Reformers: Saints of the Catholic Reformation" book discussion on the third Thursday of every month at 7pm in room E-4.
- "Epic: A Journey Through Church History" DVD series at 9:30am Tuesdays in G8. Lessons ongoing.
- "Pivotal Players" DVD series at 6:30pm Tuesdays in room G-8. Six episodes beginning in January.
- "A Biblical Walk through the Mass" DVD series at 10am Thursdays in room D-12. Ongoing through mid-January.
- "Walking with Mary" DVD series at 10am the second Wednesday of every month in room D-12.
- "Beyond the Blindness" book discussion at 7pm, Feb. 6, community room.

Service



Where can you share your time, talent and treasure in ways that reflect generosity and gratitude?

One service idea during the month of December is to help buy the books our parish gives to every family at Christmas Masses. ACTS is paying half the cost for the 1,000 copies of "Perfectly Yourself" that will be handed out in 2017. **Please make a donation to support this evangelism outreach.** Every little bit given helps to defray the expense.

Checks for the Christmas book giveaway should be made out to "St. Bernard's Church." ACTS Core members be in the Commons to collect the donations the weekend of Dec. 9-10. Thank you!

"Perfectly Yourself: Discovering God's Dream for You" discusses topics including virtue, passion, integrity, knowing your unique purpose, fasting, simplicity, and freedom from anxiety.

By helping pay for these books, you're generously supporting a gift that educates, inspires and says "Merry Christmas" from the parish.

Meet the Shahwan family: Giving to Others

Michel and Nadia Shahwan and their sons, 20-year-old Emmanuel and 16-year-old Daniel, have all attended ACTS retreats at St. Bernard's. They give back through ACTS teams, the Knights of Columbus, feeding the homeless, and teaching religious education. Nadia gave one of her paintings to the parish; it hangs by the offices on the E level.

The Shahwans bring an international flair to St. Bernard's.

Michel was born in Bethlehem, Nadia was born in Aruba, and Emmanuel was born in France. Daniel was born in Omaha, Neb., after the family moved to the United States in 1998. Together they can speak four languages: Arabic, French, Spanish and English.



They came in 2011 to St. Bernard's, where the whole family started participating in parish life. Prompted by multiple invitations from Francis Peek, they went on ACTS retreats in 2016.

One of the blessings for Michel was humility. The ACTS weekend taught him about the presence of Christ whenever the faithful gather in Jesus' name. He feels a sense of belonging at St. Bernard's – and a great appreciation for Msgr. Gaalaas. He continues to enrich his faith by studying the saints and the writings of Church Fathers. A one-time student of Islam and Buddhism, he used to explore other religions because he was searching for a God of mercy. Now back to his Catholic roots, he thrives on apologetics and on Christian debates. Michel's favorite prayer? "Lord, make me an instrument of peace." Nadia cites the rosary as her favorite prayer.



"I feel inspired by the Lord, who flows me with new inspiration every day." – Nadia

The Shahwans want their fellow parishioners to know the value of belonging and involvement wherever a need exists. They treasure the people who make up St. Bernard's.

"We love them like crazy," Michel said. "We are honored to be blessed in their presence whenever we go to church. I see the presence of God in them."

"We are happy to live in Oklahoma the Beautiful," Nadia said.

Nadia works at Kohl's on Riverside. Her hobbies include acrylic painting, composing poetry and composing music. Michel works as a senior engineer at AEP. He studies theology, enjoys sports, and is organizing a 10-day pilgrimage to the Holy Land in May 2018. For more information about the trip, contact him at michel@nativitypilgrimage.com.



The ACTS Core governing group has a two-fold mission: 1) to sponsor weekend retreats and 2) to encourage continued spiritual growth, servant hearts and strong community among the people of St. Bernard's. Core meetings, at 7 pm on the second Monday of each month in room D14, are open to everyone. We appreciate your prayers, feedback and suggestions!

Also, ACTS always needs volunteers, including four new Core members each September to replace those completing their terms. So if you feel the Holy Spirit is calling you to be involved, what other answer can you give but YES?

St. Bernard's Church ACTS Core 2017-2018

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