

FOCUS ON FAITH

Community should focus on 'inclusion of all'

The Rev. Michael Forge is the pastor of Mary Immaculate Church in Farmers Branch, where he leads Mass for about 4,000 people each weekend. Forge, who took the position in 2008, also oversees Mary Immaculate Catholic School, which has a student body of more than 500 children in kindergarten through eighth grade.



REV. MICHAEL FORGE

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Q: How do you think people of faith are most likely to make a difference this year?

A: I think people of faith make a difference each year in the area of social outreach, education and entrepreneurial activities. 2013 will be no different, but perhaps more of an emphasis on social outreach to the poor and the immigrant.

Q: What are your hopes for the faith community in 2013?

A: My hope is that the faith community will continue to focus on inclusion of all people regardless of socioeconomic status or ethnicity.

Q: What challenges and opportunities do you anticipate for congregations of all faiths in 2013?

A: I think the challenges that present themselves as opportunities to our local congregations will be for our churches to set the example for the entire community of Carrollton-Farmers Branch on how we are not isolated units but truly one community in the one family of humanity.

Q: What are some of the needs you see in the Carrollton/Farmers Branch/Addison community in 2013, and how do you hope the faith community will address them?

A: I believe there is a need for taking pride and ownership in our neighborhoods and business community. We need to continue to work together with and for each other as true neighbors tending to the welfare of each other.

Q: What changes would you like to see in the Carrollton/Farmers Branch/Addison

community in 2013?

A: Quite bluntly, I'd like to see a healing and moving forward over the illegal immigration issue in our community of Farmers Branch. Regardless of the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals' forthcoming ruling, we need to move forward as one community of people.

Q: What are some of your congregation's goals for the year, and how do it plan to carry them out?

A: Our goals for the future are to continue to offer a place of worship that leads people to an ever-deeper encounter and relationship with God. We do this first and foremost when we gather on Sunday for Mass and then we take that encounter and relationship to our neighborhood, our place of employment and to the world.

Q: How will your faith community members serve in their neighborhoods, the country and internationally?

A: Our parish, through the St. Vincent de Paul Society, serves countless families who need assistance with food, clothing and shelter. Our school recently took up a collection for the Staten Island Catholic School system to assist those adversely affected by Hurricane Sandy. Lastly, we will be sending a group of 30 young adults on mission to Peru while on their pilgrimage to Brazil to see Pope Benedict XVI at World Youth Day.

Q: Is there anything else you would like to share?

A: I love being a pastor here in Farmers Branch and I love the entire community here.

FACES OF THE MILITARY

JROTC looks forward to spring semester trip

Retired Lt. Martin Caro is the senior naval science instructor at R.L. Turner High School. During his 25-year Navy career, he served two deployments in Japan and one in the Persian Gulf. He's now head of the Junior Reserve Officer Training Corps program at Turner.



MARTIN CARO

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Q: What are various members of JROTC looking forward to in 2013?

A: Seniors in high school are looking forward to graduation and moving ahead with their lives. For everyone else, it's the second semester and they are preparing for more drill meets and various other competitions such as air rifle, orienteering, academics and physical fitness. Instructors are scheduling field trips to military bases, universities and museums.

Q: What are some of the goals of JROTC regarding working with other community and civic groups in the North Texas region?

A: We work very closely with various groups and organizations in our community such as churches, homeless shelters and the Metrocres and Farmers Branch Chambers of Commerce. Each cadet is required to have 20 hours of community service per year.

Q: What does JROTC hope to accomplish in terms of military awareness in 2013?

A: There is no obligation to join the military after NJROTC. What we do is promote patriotism and develop informed and responsible citizens. We also groom future leaders and develop a high degree of personal honor, self-reliance and individual discipline.

Q: Are there any apprehensions or concerns for JROTC in the coming year?

A: With the fiscal cliff looming, we are a little concerned about funding for this great program. We are not sure how, but it most currently will affect us with billions of dollars being cut from the defense department. The war fighter on the front lines will not see many cuts, but training will, and that's the area we fall under.

Q: What were some of your JROTC members' fondest memories of 2012?

A: Having our cadet commanding officer get his first choice of college (Texas A&M) and a \$180,000 scholarship due to all he has accomplished in JROTC. Also, winning second place in the fitness competition and third place in marksmanship with our Air Rifle team at the Lewisville drill meet. And also our Armed Drill team won third place at the Denton Ryan High School drill meet in September.

Q: What big projects are set for the coming year for ROTC?

A: We have our annual inspection where we get everything inspected from our cadets uniforms, our academics and all the equipment we have been issued. But moreover, we are always excited about the end-of-school-year trip. Last year, we went to San Antonio to visit the Air Force base. We will start planning for it in January.



Members of R.L. Turner High School's ROTC give a salute during the annual Veterans Day ceremony in November.

Contributor photo by SHILLEY GAMMON

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