“Jesus does not demand great actions from us, but simply surrender and gratitude.”

St. Thérèse of Lisieux
Dear Parishioners,

We have to give credit to the ancient Greeks for giving us a word we may not always recognize as needing to be translated. The word in English is Eucharist, a translation of the Greek ‘Eucharistia’. In English we have appropriated it as a noun “We celebrate the Eucharist” and as an adjective “We had a Eucharistic celebration this morning.” It is the most important thing we celebrate and believe-the real presence of Christ hidden in the sacrament of bread and wine, in communion, in thanksgiving.

What genius that Jesus gave us his body and blood as bread and wine! The mislabeled ‘Last Supper’ (better, ‘middle supper’) is the prototype of our gathering for the Eucharist. It is in thanksgiving for the life, death and resurrection of Jesus that we gather to tell our story of God at work in our lives throughout human history. It is in thanksgiving that we gather to know we are not defined by our failings, by our sin, but that we are forgiven and unconditionally loved. It is in thanksgiving that we gather to praise God for untold miracles of new life because of divine love. It is in thanksgiving that we are sent from the altar to our families, our work places, our communities to preach the Good News and to feed others.

What genius that as Americans the ideals of our country are rooted in peaceful gathering with strangers and friends alike to celebrate our common humanity and our common home. The American holiday Thanksgiving is genius in its focusing on food and family. No gift giving, no costume, no elaborate clothing is required. We celebrate the gathering in peace as family with food as our excuse for spending time loving each other.

As a parish family, through the generous donation of a parishioner (and friend of Bill Bright), 180 turkeys will be distributed to our sharing parishes and other recipients. For more years than I know, the Turano family has donated the bread that decorates our altar on Thanksgiving Day. It’s the best liturgy of the year. Not only does the delicious smell of the bread hit you as you come into church, but at the end of Mass people take the bread to their tables at home. To borrow an image from Pope Francis, is it too much to say the people smell of the bread? I don’t think so.

I celebrated my first Thanksgiving at SJC in 2007. I barely knew anyone, including the other priests. Yet many of you had been praying for me by name for months as I recovered from lung cancer. As we have come to know each other over the years I have only become more and more thankful for the gift of belonging to this community. Your prayers this past year since my laryngectomy have been a source of tremendous strength and gratitude. God is good. I am reminded of that, as if I could ever forget, every time I look at your faces. My heart is full. You are my Thanksgiving.

Until the Breaking of the Bread,
Fr. David
Thank you for your generosity to the second collection for the Catholic Campaign for Human Development. In the United States, one in six people lives in poverty. With this collection you support programs that address the causes of poverty and provide a sustainable future for those who are struggling across the country. In addition, 25 percent of funds collected remains in our diocese to fund local anti-poverty projects. Please prayerfully consider how you can support this collection and work on the margins. More information about the Catholic Campaign for Human Development can be found at www.usccb.org/cchd/collection.

God of Justice,
open our eyes
to see you in the face of the poor.
Open our ears
to hear you in the cries of the exploited.
Open our mouths
to defend you in the public squares as well as in private deeds.
Remind us that what we do to the least ones, we do to you.
Amen.

WE GATHER TOGETHER
The Christian Faith Communities of Western Springs invite you to a
Thanksgiving Prayer Service
“Thanksgiving and praise to our beneficent Father who dwelleth in the Heavens.”
–President Abraham Lincoln

Wednesday, November 22
7:00pm
First United Methodist Church
4300 Howard Ave, Western Springs
wwwfumcws.org

Reception to follow.
You are invited to bring a nonperishable food item for donation.
All are welcome!

“In Him you are built Together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.” --Ephesians 2:22

Share Christmas Volunteers Needed
Volunteers are needed before and after all Masses on the weekends of Share Christmas to help facilitate Sign Up. Help is needed on November 23, November 25-26 and December 2-3. Please sign up on the parish website or call the office if you can donate an hour to assist us. Thanks!
Thanksgiving is a time of gratitude to God, our Creator and Provider, whose guidance and care go before us... and whose love is with us forever.

Thanksgiving is a time to reflect on the changes, to remember that we, too, grow and change from one season of life to another.

Thanksgiving is a time of changing seasons, when leaves turn golden in Autumn’s wake and apples are crisp in the first chill breezes of fall.

Let us remember the true meaning of Thanksgiving. As we see the beauty of Autumn, let us acknowledge the many blessings which are ours... let us think of our families and friends... and let us give thanks in our hearts.

- Author Unknown

For each new morning with its light, For rest and shelter of the night, For health and food, For love and friends, For everything thy goodness sends.

- Ralph Waldo Emerson

You are beauty, you are gentleness. You are our protector, our guardian and defender. You are courage, your are our haven and our hope. You are our faith, our great consolation. You are our eternal life, great and wonderful Lord, God almighty, merciful Savior.

St. Francis of Assisi

Be thankful... And with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God. And whatever you do, in word and deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Colossians 3:15-17

Thanksgiving Table Prayer

O Gracious God, we give you thanks for your overflowing generosity to us. Thank you for the blessings of the food we eat and especially for this feast today. Thank you for our home and family and friends, especially for the presence of those gathered here. Thank you for our health, our work and our play. Please send help to those who are hungry, alone, sick and suffering war and violence. Open our hearts to your love. We ask your blessing through Christ your Son. Amen.

From Celebrating Faith: Year-round Activities For Catholic Families, by Mary Cronk Farrell
Background on the Gospel Reading

This week’s Gospel speaks of how Jesus’ disciples are to conduct themselves as they await the Kingdom of Heaven. In the preceding passages and in last week’s Gospel, Jesus taught that there is no way to predict the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven. His disciples must, therefore, remain vigilant and ready to receive the Son of Man at any time.

Jesus’ parable talks about Christian discipleship using economic metaphors. Before he leaves on a journey, the master entrusts to his servants a different number of talents, giving to each according to their abilities. A talent is a coin of great value. Upon the master’s return, he finds that the first and second servants have doubled their money, and both are rewarded. The third servant, however, has only preserved what was given to him because he was afraid to lose the money. He has risked nothing; he did not even deposit the money in a bank to earn interest. This servant is punished by the master, and his talent is given to the one who brought the greatest return.

Read in light of last week’s parable and foolish bridesmaids, this parable teaches that God’s judgment will be based on the service we render to God and to one another in accordance with the gifts that God has given to us. Our gifts, or talents, are given to us for the service of others. If we fail to use these gifts, God’s judgment on us will be severe. On the other hand, if we make use of these gifts in service to the Kingdom of Heaven, we will be rewarded and entrusted with even more responsibilities.

This Gospel reminds us that Christian spirituality is not passive or inactive. Our life of prayer helps us to discern the gifts that have been given to us by God. This prayer and discernment ought to lead us to use our gifts in the service of God and our neighbor. God’s grace allows us to share in the work of serving the Kingdom of Heaven. 

Living the Gospel

The master gave to the three servants in the Gospel “each according to his ability.” We have not all been given the same sum of talents, but Jesus, our Master, has invested in every one of us. We are not judged according to the amount given us, but we are judged by the choices we make to use to the fullest potential what Jesus has invested in us. The most important choice we make in life is fidelity to whatever we are called to do—even in what seems to be small matters. The continuation of Jesus’ saving work depends upon this fidelity. If we are faithful, Jesus will judge us worthy beneficiaries of the greatest return on any investment: a share in the riches of the “master’s joy”—eternal life. The Christian life and journey of discipleship begins with our being given an unmerited share in God’s Life. When we are faithful it will end wondrously—we will enter fully into the “master’s joy.” If we are not faithful . . .

The master commends the two faithful servants for their industriousness and then tells them he will give them “great responsibilities.” For us Christians our “great responsibilities” are, of course, to be faithful disciples making present the kingdom of God in our daily lives. Another part of these “great responsibilities” is to live now the Master’s joy, confident that one day we will enter even more fully into that joy. Responsibility means to use our Master’s “investments” in us to spread God’s goodness as well as appreciate now the joy of all that has been given us. Joy isn’t something only in the future; it is a fruit of the Spirit we enjoy now.

May we use well and increase the “talents” given us to continue Jesus’ saving work.
May we faithfully make the wise and prudent choices that further Jesus’ saving work.
A friend of mine was stuck in traffic in New York City late on a summer Friday afternoon. He was really stuck—sitting in his car on a narrow east-west cross street in Manhattan, going nowhere. He grew impatient, then angry. After a while, he started to think about how pitiful his life was. His friends were smarter, wealthier, happier than he was. He hadn’t accomplished anything significant. He was stuck in life, just as he was stuck in traffic.

Then he called a friend and asked for help. The guy said, “If you’re just sitting there in traffic, make a gratitude list.” So my friend pulled out a notebook and pen and made a list of all the things he was grateful for. A few were big things—family, friends, job—but most of them were little things. The weekend coming up. An excellent novel he was reading. A compliment from his boss the previous day. An exhilarating jog along the East River that morning. His comfortable car. Soon his mood lifted. The exercise in gratitude restored balance to his thinking. It wasn’t a trick. My friend saw that his life really was full of good things. Gratitude was the truth.

I recently ran across a comment on gratitude by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. “We pray for the big things and forget to give thanks for the ordinary, small (and yet really not small) gifts,” he said. We strive for the grand spiritual adventure, which we haven’t had, and neglect the many gifts from God that we do have. Bonhoeffer urges us to “be satisfied with the small measure of spiritual knowledge, experience, and love that has been given us.”

Make a gratitude list.

Father of love, Lord of creation, we give you thanks for your many blessings to us: for the gifts of the earth which sustain and nurture our lives, for the gifts of your Spirit which make our lives complete and whole in your love. May we give you thanks for your many gifts by sharing them with one another. May we be worthy of your great love for us by working constantly to make these prayers for peace and compassion a reality. We offer these prayers to you, O Father, in the name of your Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.
Thank You Blanche Heaney, Retiring Parish Respect Life Coordinator

SJC would like to thank parishioner, Blanche Heaney, for her leadership as our parish Respect Life Coordinator. Blanche and her husband, Tom, have been parishioners for 50 years. They raised their 4 children here and are now grandparents to 12 (with 2 more coming this year) and great-grandparents to 2. It was when her kids were toddlers that Fr. Joe McDonnell asked her to be the parish Respect Life Coordinator, and she has continued serving us for over 30 years. In the early days of her ministry, the Respect Life group met monthly to pray, discuss issues, and also to coordinate baby clothes collections for pro-life groups. Blanche also served for many years on the Illinois Citizens for Life Board which has since merged with Illinois Right to Life, Chicago. Over time Blanche’s role as the parish Coordinator has shifted primarily to communication in an effort to help parishioners understand, value and be continually engaged in supporting the God-given dignity of every person, which leads to protecting the gift of every person’s life. Thank you, Blanche, for sharing your passion for the gift of life with our parish.

Light the way for family & friends this Christmas…Begin a holiday tradition your children will love!

LUMINARIA KIT FUNDRAISER

Each Luminaria Kit is $10 and includes 5 white bags, 5 long burning candles and enough sand to assemble your luminaries. Free home delivery for seniors! Pick up at the Parish Center on December 16 from 9am-1pm or December 17 from 1-3pm. Drop off your order at the Parish Center or order online on the parish website before December 9. If you are a senior, be sure to include your address for delivery. Call Julie Misarti 773-294-9099.

Men of the Parish - Save the Date for a SAM Gathering with Fr. Bill!

The next gathering in the Spirituality Among Men (SAM) series for this season will be Wednesday, December 6 at 7:00pm in the Parish Center. Our guest speaker will be our own Father Bill Vollmer, Associate Pastor of SJC! Our topic will be: “Evangelization and the Mass – We’re Working on It!” Fr. Bill will share his thoughts on the ongoing process of evangelization that we are called to, and how the Mass is a source of strength for each of us. “We are different every time we hear God’s word.” Come, listen and share your experiences with the men of the parish as we discuss the interaction between the Mass, evangelization for ourselves and the people whose lives we touch at home, at work and in our communities.

The Men’s Club presents SJC Trivia Night VII
Save the date: Saturday January 27, 2018
Be a Part of the Choir on Thanksgiving
All singers in the parish are invited to join voices with all of our parish choirs at our Thanksgiving Day Mass at 9:30am. Please come for warm-ups and rehearsal at 8:30am on Thanksgiving morning. There will not be a 7:45am Mass that day.

Parish Babysitting for Children ages 1-5 Years Old
Did you know our parish offers free babysitting in the Garden Room of the rectory during the Sunday 9am and 10:45am Masses? No fees, no registration, just ring the bell and drop off your child so you can attend Mass. The Garden Room is in the basement of the rectory, the building just south of church by the Mary Garden. The front glass doors face north. Please note there is no sitting on holiday weekends such as Thanksgiving weekend, November 26.

Children’s Liturgy of the Word
Our parish offers Children’s Liturgy of the Word for children from kindergarten through third grade at the 9am and 10:45am Masses. The children meet in the church community room to listen to and discuss the Sunday Gospel from the Children’s Lectionary and offer prayers. They return to the main church after the Prayer of the Faithful.

Parish Center Office
Our Parish Center office will be closed on Thanksgiving Day and the day after the holiday. Office hours will resume on Saturday, November 25 from 9am to 6pm. As always, you may reach a priest in an emergency by calling the main number and following the voice prompts. 708-246-4404.

Family Style Preschool: December 9
Bake the cookies...hang the lights...wrap the presents...FREEZE!
We’re waiting for Jesus!!

On Saturday, December 9 preschoolers and their parents will celebrate the Season of Advent and prepare to welcome baby Jesus at Christmas. Join us in the Parish Center on Saturday from 10:45-12:00 noon for crafts, games, songs and Bible stories.
New Families: Call the Parish Center office at 708-246-4404 to register for the FAMILY STYLE PRESCHOOL series, which includes the Advent session plus 2 more: February 17-Lent and the joyful celebration of Easter, April 21-Caring for God’s creation.
The best legacy children can receive from parents is faith.

Recently our 8th grade confirmation candidates and their sponsors gathered for an Evening of Reflection. As they prepare to be confirmed in January, they discussed their faith journeys and the road to Emmaus, in which our eyes are opened to the Lord. The walls of the Parish Center were filled with names of people who walk with us on our journeys.

Family Faith Connections gather monthly to grow in faith. November’s meeting focused on the Beatitudes and the lessons Jesus teaches us. Understanding the Be-Attitudes gives us a beautiful guide to living life as God asks us to.

Our 7th and 8th graders are the hands of Christ to others. We are so blessed at SJC not only that our youth serve, but that so many families get involved and make meals for BEDS Plus. BEDS Plus is one of the service organizations we partner with to change lives close to our home.

YC: Excellence in Religious Education
Parish School News

St. John of the Cross Parish School is now accepting applications for the 2018-19 school year. St. John of the Cross Parish School provides a dynamic Catholic environment where faith is nourished and knowledge grows. We offer unique educational experiences that foster success, promote unity, and respect the individuality of each student. If you are interested in visiting the school, please call Jennifer Jermano Miller, Director of Advancement, at 708-246-4454 to set up an appointment or visit our website at http://www.stjohnofthecross.org/school/apply-today/

Crossroads

Thank you to all of our Harvest Saturday volunteers and to all those who donated food. Pictured below are Flyer Day teen volunteers who distributed Harvest Saturday reminders to homes in Western Springs.

Pictured below are some of the 8th grade confirmation candidates on Box Night, assembling the boxes for Harvest Saturday.

Church League Basketball
Boys Church League Basketball kicks off its season on Sunday, November 26 with a mandatory player/parent meeting in the school multi-purpose room at 6pm. After the meeting, teams will scrimmage and warm up for a great season!
For the past several weeks five parishioners and their sponsors have been meeting to inquire about becoming Catholic. Two weeks ago they were welcomed into the next phase of their preparation in the RCIA, the Catechumenate.

This year all of those in our parish seeking to become Catholic have been baptized in a different Christian faith tradition. Because they are already one with us in baptism, they are welcomed as Candidates. Over the next several months they will be preparing to be received into full communion of the Catholic Church through the sacraments of Confirmation and Eucharist. Unlike previous years, this year we do not have any Catechumens, those who are seeking baptism.

In the Rite of Welcome, the Candidates publically declared their intent to be received into full communion. During this Rite, the presider (on behalf of the SJC community) greeted them at the door of church welcoming them with joy. After being welcomed and greeted by the presider, the Candidates and their parish sponsors came into the nave (the main body of the church) to be signed with the cross. The presider traced the sign of the cross on their foreheads and the sponsors and RCIA team assisted in the signing of each of the senses (i.e., ears, eyes, lips, shoulders, hands, and feet) to strengthen them with this sign of Christ’s love. After the homily, each candidate was presented with a Bible.

It is with great joy that we will welcome these individuals into the Catechumenate. As they begin to study and reflect on the teachings and rituals of our Catholic faith, we, the SJC faith community, will pray for them as we look forward to the day they will share fully with us at the Lord’s Table.

Pictured clockwise from the left are Jennifer Stott, Andrew Getz, Kristi Griffin, Jilen Bouwer and Gretchen Hamilton.
St. John of the Cross Parish congratulates the following families who had their infants baptized last Sunday by Fr. Bill Vollmer, assisted by Baptism Team Leaders, Andy and Elizabeth Turcich. Pictured from the left are: Nicholas and Emily Hebein with Andrew Valentin, Marshall and Kaite VanVlymen with Dillan Marie, Paul and Danielle Rudolph with Madelyn Reese, and Scott and Lisa Thyer with Connor Jude.

God of all creation, we are made in your image and are signs of your love. Bless these children who were given new life as your adopted sons and daughters through the waters of Baptism. May they grow up to know your name and give you praise. Bless the mothers and fathers of these children. Fill them with your strength so that they will be models of faith for their children, nurturing and teaching by word and example to know you and walk in your love. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

New Baby? Ready for Baptism?
Call Theresa or Mary Beth in the Parish Center between 9am and 4pm to learn all about baptism at our parish.

New to SJC?
Call or email Elizabeth Russell-Jones, Welcome Coordinator, to learn how you and your family can get involved and how our parish can serve your family. Elizabeth’s office is in the Parish Center. Or email her at erussell-jones@stjohnofthecross.org. She has a wealth of information and is a terrific person to know.

St. John of the Cross Parish
November 19, 2017
33rd Sunday in Ordinary Time
Page 12
SJC Sponsored Programs at The Well ~ 1515 Ogden Avenue in LaGrange Park
~ Free for SJC Parishioners ~ Call the Parish Center Office to Register~

Jack Shea & Kathy Sherman, CSJ: Seeing Haloes During this Advent morning of reflection, Jack will share his poetry and Kathy her songs, opening our hearts and bringing us into Christmas memories we may have forgotten and experiences we may have overlooked. Saturday, December 9, 9am-noon. Cosponsored by SFX and SJC; free to parishioners.

The Shock of Advent, Pat Bergen, CSJ As we are drawn more deeply into Advent and Christmas something wonderful is beginning to dawn on us. When it comes to light, everything changes. If you can't figure out what is happening in the world and you are tired of walking around in the dark, join us! Offered twice: Monday, December 18, 7-8:30pm and Tuesday, December 19, 9:30-11am. Cosponsored by SFX and SJC; free to parishioners.

Little Blue Books for Advent Prayer
Advent begins on Sunday, December 3. Once again SJC is offering Little Blue Books as a prayer companion for Advent. The right hand side of each page will cite a part of the Gospel for the Mass each day followed by a reflection. The left hand side has timely thoughts, quotes and information. You might want to share some of it at dinner with your family. It should not take more than 6 minutes each day—an easy commitment. Let the Little Blue Book slow you down and let you be with Christ in a special way each day this Christmas season. Give them to your family members as a personal invitation to pray this Advent. Reflections begin on the First Sunday of Advent and end on the Baptism of the Lord. The Little Blue Books will be available at the exits of church after all Masses November 25-26. Extra copies will be available in the church or Parish Center Office during the week. Suggested donation $1.

A Built Form of Ideas: Baroque Art and Architecture as an Expression of Catholic Reformation Theology in the 16th and 17th Centuries
Thursday, November 30, 2017 from 9:30 - Noon
The Visitation Parish Catholic Book-of-the-Month Club will be hosting a presentation by renowned Catholic architectural historian Denis McNamara on Thursday, the 30th of November 2017 at Chesterton Academy of the Holy Family, 339 4th Street in Downers Grove. Dr. McNamara, author and Associate Director and Associate Professor of the Liturgical Institute of Mundelein Seminary, will speak on the impact of the Catholic Reformation on the rise of Baroque art and architecture in the decades following the Council of Trent. Dr. McNamara’s expertise in the theology of sacred architecture and sacramental aesthetics will enable participants to appreciate the art of this period as an expression of the Catholic worldview and of the unique spirituality of the newly-founded Jesuit order.

All are invited to this presentation. While there is no charge to attend, we do ask that you respond in advance if you will be present so that we can make adequate provision for all guests. With questions and to respond, please contact Madonna Muscarello at 630.325.7990 or gracicakes@gmail.com.

The Week Ahead
Monday, November 20
9:30am Spiritual Journeying
10:30am Step 11 Christian Meditation
1:00pm Little Rock Scripture Study
2:30pm Adoration
5:30pm Finance Council Meeting
7:00pm Boy Scouts
7:00pm Seasons of Hope Grief Support

Tuesday, November 21
8:30am DRE Cluster Meeting
9:05am Tuesdays with Mary Rosary
9:15am School Mass
7:30pm Christian Meditation
7:30pm Ensemble Rehearsal

Wednesday, November 22
2:30pm Christian Meditation
3:30pm Combined Children’s Choir Rehearsal
3:30pm St. John of the Cross Study Group
6:00pm Eagle Scout Ceremony
7:30pm Traditional Choir Rehearsal

Thursday, November 23
9:30am Thanksgiving Day Mass

Friday, November 24
Parish Offices Closed
Saturday, November 25
7:00am Christian Meditation
Sunday, November 26
1:30pm Baptism Prep
6:00pm Crossroads Basketball Meeting

We cannot change the world alone, but together we can spread the joy of the Gospel by staying close to those most in need.

Pope Francis @Pontifex November 12
Several years ago I received an email that literally stopped my breath. A man who had been for many years an intellectual and faith mentor to me, a man whom I thoroughly trusted, and a man with whom I had developed a life-giving friendship, had killed both his wife and himself in a murder-suicide. The news left me gasping for air, paralyzed in terms of how to understand and accept this as well as how to pray in the face of this.

I had neither words of explanation nor words for prayer. My heart and my head were like two water pumps working a dry well, useless and frustrated. Whatever consolation I had was drawn from an assurance from persons who knew him more intimately that there had been major signs of mental deterioration in the time leading up to this horrible event and they were morally certain that this was the result of an organic dysfunction in his brain, not an indication of his person. Yet ... how does one pray in a situation like this? There aren't any words.

And we have all experienced situations like this: the tragic death of someone we love by murder, suicide, overdose, or accident. Or, the exasperation and helplessness we feel in the face of the many seemingly senseless events we see daily in our world: Terrorists killing thousands of innocent people; natural disasters leaving countless persons dead or homeless; mass killings by deranged individuals in New York, Paris, Las Vegas, Florida, San Bernardino, Sandy Hook, among other places; and millions of refugees having to flee their homelands because of war or poverty. And we all we know people who have received terminal sentences in medical clinics and had to face what seems as an unfair death: young children whose lives are just starting and who shouldn’t be asked at so tender an age to have to process mortality and young mothers dying whose children still desperately need them.

In the face of these things, we aren’t just exasperated by the senselessness of the situation we struggle too to find both heart and words with which to pray. How do we pray when we are paralyzed by senselessness and tragedy? How do we pray when we no longer have the heart for it?

St. Paul tells us that when we don’t know how to pray, the Spirit in groans too deep for words prays through us. What an extraordinary text! Paul tells us that when we can still find the words with which to pray this is not our deepest prayer. Likewise when we still have the heart to pray, this too is not our deepest prayer. Our deepest prayer is when we are rendered mute and groaning in exasperation, in frustration, in helplessness. Wordless exasperation is often our deepest prayer. We pray most deeply when we are so driven to our knees so as to be unable to do anything except surrender to helplessness. Our groaning, wordless, seemingly the antithesis of prayer, is indeed our prayer. It is the Spirit praying through us. How so?

The Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit, is, as scripture assures us, the spirit of love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, longsuffering, fidelity, mildness, faith, and chastity. And that Spirit lives deep within us, placed there by God in our very make-up and put into us even more deeply by our baptism. When we are exasperated and driven to our knees by a tragedy which is too painful and senseless to accept and absorb our groans of helplessness are in fact the Spirit of God groaning in us, suffering all that it isn’t, yearning for goodness, beseeching God in a language beyond words.

Sometimes we can find the heart and the words with which to pray, but there are other times when, in the words of the Book of Lamentation, all we can do is put our mouths to the dust and wait. The poet, Rainer Marie Rilke, once gave this advice to a person who had written him, lamenting that in the face of a devastating loss he was so paralyzed that he did not know what he could possibly do with the pain he was experiencing. Rilke’s advice: Give that heaviness back to the earth itself, the earth is heavy, mountains are heavy, the seas are heavy. In effect: Let your groaning be your prayer!

When we don’t know how to pray, the Spirit in groans too deep for words prays through us. So every time we are face-to-face with a tragic situation that leaves us stuttering, mute, and so without heart that all we can do is say, I can’t explain this! I can’t accept this! I can’t deal with this! This is senseless! I am paralyzed in my emotions! I am paralyzed in my faith! I no longer have the heart to pray, it can be consoling to know that this paralyzing exasperation is our prayer – and perhaps the deepest and most sincere prayer we have ever offered.

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser
Mass & Reconciliation Schedule & Intentions

Monday, November 20  Weekday
7:45am Casimir Bonkowski; William Albertson, Sr.

Tuesday, November 21  Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
7:45am Janet Peters; Ed Nelson

Wednesday, November 22  St. Cecilia
7:45am Tony Partipilo; Our Beloved Dead

Thursday, November 23  Thanksgiving Day St. Clement I; St. Columban; Bl. Miguel Agustin
No 7:45am Mass
9:30am Byrd Kelly; John Broderick

Friday, November 24  St. Andrew Dung-Lac
7:45am Dolores Rafferty; Joseph Piszczor

Saturday, November 25  St. Andrew Dung-Lac
8:00am Joan Kravcik; Dolores Rafferty
~ Reconciliation Follows Mass ~
5:00pm Robert Plechaty; Kevin Dumin

Sunday, November 26  Solemnity of Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe
7:30am Bruno Shukis; Hank Dematteo
9:00am Anna & Charles Ward; Loy Hovious
10:45am Jack Johns; Gene Gallagher
12:15pm Anne Donnersberger; John Gannon
5:00pm Joan Kravcik; Dolores Rafferty

Pray for Our Sick
Ginny Beutell
Kathleen Carpenter
Crystal Deters
Nick Dombrowski
Fr. David Dowdle
Lynn Freking
Thomas Halm
Alice Hogan
Kay Holden
Karen Hult
Don Hussey
Virginia Jakubczak
Mona Khalil
Cathy Laske
Erin Lively
Carol Martin
Marty McGuire
Olivia Murphy
Deacon Pablo Perez
Geno Pesce
Terry Pepin
Frank Pipal
Marie Principe
Joe Pustejovsky
Joel Rivera
Rachael Schopp
Cathy Siciliano
Pete Smykowski
Claudine Snow
Brooks Tonn
Don Vollmer
Sharon Wildman

Pray for Our Loved Ones Serving Our Country
Staff Sgt. Steven Foody, son of Sandra Foody
Sergeant Sebastian Grabacki, son of David & Jan Grabacki
Sr A Joshua Tischler USAF Pararescue, grandson of Betty & Frank Madler & Mary Tischler
Lance Corporal Daniel Pett, nephew of Kathryn Stimetz
Capt. James Maiche, grandson of Phil & Mike Maiche
Sgt. Robert Marburger, son of David and Kathleen Marburger
Staff Sgt. Larry Waszak, grandson of Bruno and Barbara Gacek
Petty Officer 3rd Class Mathew Strafaci, grandson of Sandra & Jim Strafaci
Lance Corporal David Strafaci, grandson of Sandra & Jim Strafaci
Seaman Emily Strafaci, granddaughter of Sandra & Jim Strafaci
Sgt. Michael Grabarek, relative of the LeFavour and Schillaci families
PFC Michael Frazee, grandson of Kay and John Johnson
Spc. Douglas Junius, grandson of Ann Junius and son of Sue Junius
PFC Kevin Lawinger, grandson of Roe and Bob Lawinger

Pray for Our Beloved Dead
Edward Wojcik, father of Laura Gerstner
Janet Constance Leach, sister-in-law of Ruth Richards, aunt of Mary Lawrence, and Kevin Richards
Gerald Loftus, husband of Mary Clare, father of Mary Frances, Amy, Brian, and Dan
Debbie Medlin, wife of Jay, mother of Zachary
Michael McGivern, brother of Fr. John McGivern

O Lord, in whom all things live, who commanded us to seek you, who are always ready to be found: to know you is life, to serve you is freedom, to praise you is our souls' delight. We bless you and adore you, we worship you and magnify you, we give thanks to you for your great glory, through Jesus Christ our Lord. -St. Augustine

Marriage Banns
Kerry Fox and Brian Bean

Rev. David P. Dowdle, Pastor
ddowdle@stjohnofthecross.org
Rev. William J. Vollmer, Assoc Pastor
bvolmer@stjohnofthecross.org
Deacon John Schopp, Deacon
john.schopp@sbcglobal.net
Bill Bright, Director of Outreach
bbright@stjohnofthecross.org
Janet Caschetta, Director of YC
jcaschetta@stjohnofthecross.org
Kathleen Gorman, Principal
gorman@sjc.pvt.k12.il.us
Katie Hayes, Dir of Crossroads
khayes@stjohnofthecross.org
Jessica Koch, Director of Music
jkoch@stjohnofthecross.org
MJ Martin, Director of Operations
mjmartin@stjohnofthecross.org
Katie Nicholson, Crossroads Coord
knicholson@stjohnofthecross.org
Steven Weigand, Pastoral Assoc
sweigand@stjohnofthecross.org
Share Christmas has been a beautiful annual tradition at our parish for over thirty years. Through Share Christmas, generous parishioners make Christmas special for thousands of individuals in the Chicago area who would otherwise not have gifts to open or be able to share a Christmas Day meal with their family.

Sign-Up for Share Christmas begins this weekend and runs through early December in the church narthex. You can sign up to give:

- An unwrapped gift for a child (infant to 18 years old)
- A food gift card from Jewel or Walmart for a Christmas meal
- Gift cards for families from Sears, Walmart, Kohl's, Target or JC Penny
- Food and gift cards for a Christmas meal and presents for a family

Bring your gifts to the Parish Center on December 4, 5, or 6 from 9am until 5pm. They will be delivered to grateful recipients at Blessed Sacrament Church, St. Agatha, BEDS Plus, and Little Brothers/Friends of the Elderly, St. Gall Parish, St. Thomas of Canterbury, Helping Hand, and SJC.

For your convenience our parish Scrip reps will be available in the church community room for you to purchase food and gift certificates. Cash, checks or credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, Discover) will be accepted. A 3% convenience fee will be applied to credit card purchases.

Providing food and gift cards allows our recipients to select the sizes and colors that best meet their needs and choose food that they like and can eat. Gift cards should be from Jewel, Walmart, Kohl's, JC Penny or Target. You can also choose to purchase an unwrapped gift for a child aged newborn to 18. Donations can also be made on our parish website. Click on the Giving Tab and go to Special Collections -Share Christmas. Your donations will be used to buy Share Christmas food and gift cards.

**New This Year:** At Sign-Up, along with the names and ages of your recipient(s), you will receive a blank card that will be delivered along with your gift. We invite you to write a warm, personal note in the Christmas card, decorate it as you can, and make a point to pray for your recipient(s) daily. It may not be within our power to change the situation of those helped by Share Christmas, yet your encouragement, prayers, Christmas wishes and gifts let them know that they are not alone or forgotten. Thank you for participating in this work of mercy.