prepare
the way of the
Lord,
make straight
his paths

Second Sunday of Advent   December 10, 2017
Dear Parishioners,

Even though this is just the Second Sunday of Advent I bring you tidings of great joy! Beginning in January we will have a second priest as an associate pastor. Reverend Richard Milek was the pastor of St. Francis Borgia, a predominantly Polish parish in Chicago. He is just finishing up a sabbatical and is available to help us out. He would like to be a pastor of a Polish parish again, but the process for naming pastors doesn’t take place until the beginning of 2018 with the appointments being effective July 1. Fr. Rich was born in Poland and has been a part of the archdiocese of Chicago for twenty eight years. Currently he is in Poland with family and friends as they mark the passing of his mother earlier this year. He will be here the weekend of January 13-14. We’ll have his picture and more information about him in the bulletin when we welcome him at that time.

Fr. Rich’s coming will be a great help to Fr. Bill, as was Fr. Elliott Dees’s help for the spring months. He is very outgoing and enthusiastic about his priesthood. I trust you will like him for the time we have him. We are fortunate enough to have priests who help out on the weekends and for daily Mass. It’s the Monday through Saturday workload that we could use some help with. A big part of that work is funerals and being able to respond to the day-to-day business of the parish. I very much look forward to his being with us.

This weekend at the Sunday 10:45am Mass we celebrate the nearly 30 years of diaconal ministry by Deacon Tom McGorey. Ordained in December 1979 he was first at St. Simeon’s in Bellwood. Deacon Tom has ministered particularly to the elderly, especially at King-Bruwaert House in Hinsdale. He and his late wife, Mary Kay, also ministered to the shut-ins of the parish and coordinated the schedule for the Ministers of Care who visit and bring them communion. He particularly enjoyed baptizing babies, including his own grandchildren and great grandchildren. Most parishioners might have come in contact with Deacon Tom at the 10:45am Sunday Mass when he proclaimed the Gospel and assisted by performing the deacon’s ministry of the altar.

Share Christmas, which has been an important part of our parish outreach since 1982, moves into the next phase by distributing your most generous donations. Many of you dropped off the gifts you purchased and the gift cards that will go to individual families, the Little Brothers of the Poor and some of our long-term partners in ministry. Thank you, one and all, who participated in this year’s effort to help brighten the Christmas season for many children and families. Bill Bright, our Director of Outreach, will have more exact numbers when he gives a report later on. A special thanks to all who helped out behind the scenes in the critical organizing of so many details. It’s another example of how SJC puts its faith into action by reaching out to brothers and sisters in need with compassion and generosity.

It is just two more weeks until the great feast of the Incarnation, otherwise known as Christmas. Find some time for yourself between now and then so that you have the energy to focus on others in your family. The birth of Jesus makes this life holy, especially when we give it away.

Until the Breaking of the Bread,
Fr. David

For you, O Lord, my soul in stillness waits; truly my hope is in you.”
—Marty Haugen, “My Soul in Stillness Waits,” based on Psalm 62
Parish Sponsored Advent Program at The Well Spirituality Center

The Shock of Advent

Evening Session: Monday, 7-8:30pm December 18
Morning Session: Tuesday, 9:30-11am December 19
Facilitator: Pat Bergen, CSJ

As we are drawn more deeply into Advent and Christmas something wonderful is beginning to dawn upon us. Can you perceive it? It is really quite shocking. 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! If you are eager to discover what is dawning on many of us, gather with us. If you are ready for a shock that will change your life, be present for “The Shock of Advent.”

This program at The Well Spirituality Center in LaGrange Park is sponsored by our parish allowing our parishioners to attend free. Just call the Parish Center office to register. 708-246-4404.

An Online, Interactive Retreat for Women ~ Advent: An Invitation to Intimacy with God Dec. 3-24, 2017

Join the School Sisters of Notre Dame in taking time to nurture your relationship with God this Advent, using reflection materials provided by Sister Carolyn Sur, SSND. Deepen your personal reflection and prayer by interaction with a spiritual companion, a sister with whom you will be paired to meet with weekly by phone, skype or in person. To RSVP or for more information, contact Sister Stephanie Spandl, SSND, at ssandl@ssnd.org or 651-278-4498, or visit ssnd.org/events/advent-retreat-2017 for more details.

Archbishop’s Christmas Concert TODAY
Sunday, December 10@ 2-3pm at Holy Family Catholic Church, Chicago

Join Cardinal Blase J. Cupich and The City Lights Orchestra conducted by Rich Daniels for the Annual Archbishop’s Christmas Concert. The concert will feature sacred as well as secular favorites such as "Holy Night," "Sleigh Ride," "White Christmas" and "I'll be home for Christmas." In addition, Cardinal Cupich will read the Christmas Gospel according to Luke accompanied by the orchestra. The soloists will be Suzanne Palmer and Paddy Homan. Both Suzanne and Paddy have appeared internationally and will be sure to help you find the spirit and meaning of the Christmas season with their voices! No tickets necessary. This is a free concert. Kid Friendly.

Labyrinth Walk with a Harpist
Let beautiful music and candlelight wash over you as you pray and walk the labyrinth on Wednesday, December 20 at 7pm at the First Congregational Church of Western Springs.

“A voice of one crying out in the desert: ‘Prepare the way of the Lord, make straight his paths.’” MARK 1:3
Morning of Meditation

The Gift of Quiet
The Gift that Keeps on Giving

How do we keep peace in the hectic days before Christmas?
Give a gift of quiet time to yourself so you can share it with others.

Presenter:
Dr. Karen Pedigo, Psychologist

All are invited: Those who meditate
Those who want to know more about meditation

Saturday, December 23
9:00am – 11:30am, Hospitality 8:30am

St. John of the Cross Parish Center, Western Springs
Sponsored by the Christian Meditation group(wccm-usa.org, wccm.org)
Free will offering accepted  Reservations requested
Contact: Betsy—708-246-8315 or wccmchgo@gmail.com
Advent Taizé Prayer

Tuesday, December 19
7pm in Church

Taizé prayer, a contemplative, candlelit prayer service, has its roots in the tiny village of Taizé, located in the eastern part of France. Since 1940, Taizé has been home to an international ecumenical monastic community whose prayer for peace, reconciliation, and unity is the center of their life. Today, visitors of all ages from many and diverse countries and religious traditions go to Taizé in pilgrimage to experience peaceful communion with God and with one another.

Taizé prayer consists of simple, repetitive music interspersed with scripture readings and long periods of silence. The repetition of mantra-like musical phrases draws us into deep meditative prayer, to a space where we invite God’s voice to speak deep within us. Instruments such as flute, oboe, and cello help to elevate the music and create a truly prayerful environment.

Sing, Listen & Be Silent
Living the Gospel

The Church gives us the opening verses of Mark's Gospel for the Second Sunday of Advent. As a lion, Mark pounces on his subject matter. A one-line intro is followed by a mishmash of Scripture quotes attributed to Isaiah. In actuality, Mark combines Malachi 3:1a with Isaiah 40:3 and applies both to the enigmatic figure of John the Baptist. It's as though Mark doesn't have the time for precise details. He charges in. This is why Mark is often portrayed as a lion. With John the Baptist's unkempt appearance and fiery, apocalyptic preaching, he gathered crowds of those acknowledging their sins and seeking forgiveness. He proclaims, "One mightier than I is coming after me." This person will baptize with the Holy Spirit. In these short verses the stage is set for Jesus. Mark has no infancy narrative such as Matthew or Luke would have it. There is no dramatic, cosmic prologue attuned to the opening words of Genesis as the Gospel of John would have it. Instead, Mark charges in, immediately quoting Scripture before introducing John the Baptist. We readers are swept up in the story. Perhaps it is appropriate that we read these opening verses on the Second Sunday of Advent with our busy lives, shopping lists, and details to which we must attend. The gospel, instead of Mark's, is coming after us. He will baptize with the Holy Spirit and our lives will never be the same.

Background on the Gospel

Today's Gospel is taken from the beginning of Mark. Unlike Luke and Matthew, Mark does not include any details of Jesus' birth. Instead Mark begins with the appearance of John the Baptist in the desert. On this the Second Sunday of Advent, we are invited to reflect upon the role of John the Baptist, who prepared the way for Jesus and the salvation that he would bring to us.

Mark's description of the appearance of John the Baptist highlights John's continuity with the Jewish prophetic tradition. Mark combines quotations from the Old Testament books of Malachi, Isaiah, and Exodus. Mark's description of John as an ascetic, living in the desert, clothed in camel hair, and eating locusts and wild honey, is reminiscent of the description of the prophet Elijah found in Second Kings. The people of Judea and Jerusalem flock to him, listening to his message of repentance and forgiveness; they also come to him to be baptized. Mark's Gospel is clear, however, that John the Baptist's role is only to prepare the way for another who will come, one who is greater than John.

Many scholars believe that the Gospels reflect the tension that likely existed between followers of John the Baptist and disciples of Jesus. Each of the four Evangelists report on John's preaching and baptizing, and they each emphasize the importance of Jesus' baptism by John. The four Gospels also explain that John was sent to preach in preparation for another. In the Gospel of Luke, the question is raised as to whether John the Baptist was himself the Messiah. Just as in today's Gospel, however, John speaks quite explicitly that the Messiah was to come after him.

In today's Gospel we hear John the Baptist contrast his baptism of repentance with the baptism that Jesus will inaugurate. John says that he has baptized with water, but that the one who is to come will baptize with the Holy Spirit. John's baptism was not yet a Christian baptism, but a preparation for the Sacrament of Baptism through which sins are forgiven and the gift of the Holy Spirit is received.

John the Baptist is presented to us as a model during Advent. We, too, are called upon to prepare a way for the Lord. Like John the Baptist, we are messengers in service to one who is greater than we are. Our Baptism commissions us to call others to life as disciples of Jesus.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
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<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
<th>3rd Sunday of Advent</th>
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<td>Ps 85:9ab and 10, 11-12, 13-14</td>
<td>Jdt 13:18bdce, 19</td>
<td>Ps 103:1-2, 3-4, 8 and 10</td>
<td>Ps 145:1 and 9, 10-11, 12-13ab</td>
<td>Ps 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6</td>
<td>Ps 80:2ac and 3b, 15-16, 18-19</td>
<td>Luke 1:46-48, 49-50, 53-54</td>
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Personal Reflection

- How can you prepare others to encounter the Lord, i.e. prepare the way of the Lord for them?
- What does John's preaching about Jesus, the one to come, tell you about this Jesus? Does it make you want to meet him?
- Imagine yourself in the crowd listening to John the Baptist. Let your mind wander.
- After listening to John, are you eager to be baptized with the Holy Spirit? What will that demand of you?

©Living Liturgy
Rooted and Grounded in Love

The only thing that matters is faith expressing itself in love. —Galatians 5:6
Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. . . . No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and [God's] love is perfected in us. —1 John 4:7-8, 12

In light of Scriptures like these, you might think that the primacy of love would be a settled matter in Christian faith. But here we are two thousand years into this religion, and for many beliefs still rule, and love too often waits out in the hallway, hoping to be invited in and taken more seriously. (Even Pope Francis seems to be facing some resistance in this regard among his bishops, who fear that his emphasis on mercy and love violates the tradition.) True, we may have decentered old behavior-correctness codes, but in essence, many of us have merely exchanged them for new belief-correctness codes. We couldn’t handle the call to faith expressing itself in love, so we reverted to beliefs expressing themselves in exclusion instead.

Could it be that now is the time, at long last, for Christians to migrate to the vision shared by its original founder and his original followers? . . . If Christian faith can be redefined in this way, if our prime contribution to humanity can be shifted from teaching correct beliefs to practicing the way of love as Jesus taught, then our whole understanding and experience of the church could be transformed . . . [into] a school of love.

What I believe can and should happen is that tens of thousands of congregations will become what I call “schools” or “studios” of love. . . . What I care about is whether they are teaching people to live a life of love, from the heart, for God, for all people (no exceptions), and for all creation. . . .

If our churches make this migration, if they make the way of love their highest aim, they will experience what Paul prayed for in his Epistle to the Ephesians: their members will be "strengthened in [their] inner being with power through [God’s] Spirit, [so] that Christ may dwell in [their] hearts through faith, as [they] are being rooted and grounded in love" (3:16-17). They will employ every text, prayer, song, poem, work of visual and dramatic art, ritual, rite of passage, and other spiritual resource to help people comprehend “what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, so that [they] may be filled with all the fullness of God” (3:18-19).

Gateway to Silence:
Rooted and growing in Love

Lord Jesus,
Master of both the light and the darkness,
send your Holy Spirit
upon our preparations for Christmas.
We who have so much to do
seek quiet spaces
to hear your voice each day.
We who are anxious over many things
look forward to your coming among us.
We who are blessed in so many ways
long for the complete joy of your kingdom.
We whose hearts are heavy
seek the joy of your presence.
We are your people,
walking in darkness,
yet seeking the light.
To you we say,
“Come, Lord Jesus!”
Amen.

Henri Nouwen

Lord God, may we, your people,
who prepare a way for the Lord
experience the joy of salvation
and celebrate the feast of Christ
with love and thanksgiving.
Amen.

Lord, hear the prayers of your people who anxiously
await your coming. Help us to straighten the crooked
roads of our lives so that we might create a highway for
you to enter our homes and hearts with the peace of
Christ Jesus, your Son in whose name we offer these
prayers. Amen.

Richard Rohr/ Brian McLaren

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prayers. Amen.
Women’s Club Fashion Show Thank You

Thanks you to everyone who came out to the Women’s Club Fashion Show November 16th! It was a great night out socializing with fellow parishioners and friends. And the fashion show, silent auction, raffle baskets and lite shopping did not disappoint! If you didn't make it this year check it out again in 2019! Next year Advent by Candlelight will be back again in early December! And don't forget to order your luminaria kit today!! See the next page for ordering information.
Women’s Club Luminaria Last Chance

Each Luminaria Kit is $10 and includes
5 white bags, 5 long burning candles (10+ hours) and
enough sand to assemble your luminaries.
Free home delivery for Seniors!

Order Deadline: Sunday, December 10
Pick Up Date: Sunday, December 16 or 17
from 9am-1pm in the back hall of the Parish Center.
Kits will be labeled with your name.
Order online at www.stjohnofthecross.org

To order by cash or check (made out to Women’s Club) with payment to the Parish Center by 12/10.

Name: ___________________________________________________________
Phone:_________________  Email: ___________________________________________
Luminary Kits x $10 = Total Due __________________
Senior Address for Delivery:  ___________________________________

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

Parish News

A Surprise for Sr. Josephine!
Every Monday morning for many years our Sr. Josephine
would stop in the Parish Center office to check the convent
mailbox before attending Spiritual Journaling. All too often
Sister would complain that, “No one writes anymore.” So
since she has moved and is dearly missed by SJC, we
decided to fill her mailbox with
Christmas cards from all of her
friends at SJC. She will love
hearing from you. Keep it a secret!
All are encouraged to send Sr.
Josephine a Christmas card to her
new home at Casa San Carlo:
Her new address is:
Sr. Josephine O’Brien
Casa San Carlo  420 N. Wolf Road
Northlake, IL 60164

Thank You to our Scouts
Thank you to our parish Scouts and Men’s Club for a
delicious pancake breakfast and to all those who attended! Proceeds from the breakfast benefit
scouting activities throughout the year. Each year our
Scouts donate the 3 large wreaths that are hung on
our church, Parish Center and school buildings.
Thank you boys for your thoughtful generosity to SJC.
Thank You from St. Gall Sharing Parish

Dear Fr. David,

Every Thanksgiving I’m overwhelmed with excitement! It is the perfect time to say “Thank you” to benefactors like you and the whole St. John of the Cross family who believe in St. Gall’s mission. Because of you and your parish, we have been able to serve and help many needy families in our parish community. Thanks to your faithful and generous support we have been able to accomplish several renovation projects in our facilities—new windows, stairs, reception area, plumbing, carpeting, and a new budget to assist the poor.

Thank you for sharing your gifts and talents with St. Gall and for your generous commitment to the work of Jesus Christ through his Church.

Have a blessed Thanksgiving Day, a Merry Christmas, and a Happy New Year!

In our Lord’s Peace,
Fr. Rene Mena, Pastor

Thank You from Precious Blood

Dear PBMR Partners,

I want to thank you for your contribution to the mission of Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation. Your generosity helps us fulfill the mission of accompanying those who have been impacted by violence and incarceration.

We do a lot of training for staff and volunteers in a host of areas: trauma training, mentoring, restorative justice, de-escalation, etc. But out of all the programs and trainings, the only thing that really works is that they know that they are loved.

I know it sounds “churchy” or “soft,” but research tells us that having someone in your life that is there for you—a mentor—enables a young person to feel as though they are worthy. Ask any mentor, it is anything but “soft.” Too many of the youth we serve have been victims of violence and neglect and live in that pain. It takes a lot of care and encouragement for them to see beyond the trauma in their lives.

Cornelius is a kid who has had multiple incidents of violence in his life. He lost his mother a couple months ago and it is having a huge impact on him. He stopped going to school, stopped participating in our woodshop—basically he just gave up. His mentor from PBMR—Jonathan—was relentless in contacting him. He would go to the house, see him on the streets, and go to school on those days he did attend. Ultimately, wherever Cornelius was, Jonathan showed up.

Today, Cornelius is back in school and comes to the Center looking for Jonathan. Jonathan’s relentless engagement helped Cornelius realize that he was not alone.

I wish I had a thousand Jonathans. I wish each youth had a mentor who would go as far as Jonathan did. We are working on it and thanks to you we are able to build up our mentoring program a bit more. Your support means so much to all of us. You are making a difference. Thank you for all you do.

Peace,
Fr. Dave Kelly
The best legacy children can receive from parents is faith.

YC Classes

During the season of Advent we are challenged to step out and try NEW ways to grow in relationship with Christ. Crossroads teens had a chance to experience something new at the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC) in November. Check out their thoughts on the conference and how unique, different opportunities help us connect to our faith:

“People should go to NCYC because it was a fun time to meet new friends and there was a lot of energy that helped our group become closer with God. All the Catholic youth who attended reminded us how we are not alone in our journey through life and we have many people who support us throughout the way!” —Cara

“NCYC was fun because you can meet other people from all around the country. It was fun to listen to music like at a concert and dance with 25,000 other people.” —Sarah

“It’s so special and fun because you have a great opportunity to meet so many people around the country and they are all sweet. This is also a great opportunity to go to a 25,000 person Mass and you don’t do that often! You get to hear amazing music and jam out with so many new people, have fun, and get to talk to them.” —Skylar

“I think you should try NCYC—you meet lots of different people, the music was great, and it’s fun!” —Erin

We also got to spend time with Dan Korenchan, a Crossroads graduate and first-year seminarian! Here’s what he had to say about NCYC: “I hope all of you can take the encounter with Jesus with you in whatever way he wants you to. Don’t be afraid to fall deeper in love with him! He’s the best!”

On Saturday, Dec 9th, Bishop Manz confirmed three of our youth in the YC Adaptive Catechesis Program: Grace Cecilia Geraghty, Charlotte Catherine Coyne and James Thomas Truesdale. The youth have learned the Gifts of the Holy Spirit, participated in numerous service experiences and provided a faith leadership role in their adaptive YC classes. The whole class joined them in writing a letter (pictured above) to Fr Dave and Fr Bill telling them they are ready to be confirmed. Please pray with us for these youth as we celebrate their growing faith.

YC: Excellence in Religious Education
**Adult Programs in January**

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**the Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work**

“The Gottman Seven Principles Program is the definitive guide for couples who truly desire practical education about how they can create a deeper relationship.” Bill & Theresa Simantirakis, Gottman 7PP Educators

**Give your Marriage the Gift of Love**

- Register at stjohnofthecross.org
- Attend three Saturday workshops, January 13, January 20 and February 3 from 9am to 12pm in the Parish Center
- Practice tried-and-true ways to build your relationship

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**Q. Who should attend?**

**A.** The Principles for a Happy Marriage program is based on over 40 years of research with over 3,000 couples by Dr. John Gottman and is based on the book The Seven Principles for Making Marriage Work to assist couples in: identifying the factors that undermine happy marriages, learning to manage conflict positively, deepening their friendship and love for one another, thriving instead of just surviving. The 7 Principles program is ideally suited for couples married five years or longer, but is open to any couple in a committed relationship.

**Q. Does my partner have to attend?**

**A.** Yes. The success of the Gottman method is dependent upon couples practicing skills that are learned at each of the 3 sessions.

**Q. Will we be expected to discuss our marriage details with others?**

**A.** Absolutely not. Trained instructors teach the easy to understand principles in a positive and engaging way that makes it fun for couples to practice what they learn as a couple. No one is asked to share information about their relationship.

**Q. What is the cost?**

**A.** The $195.00 per couple cost includes: 9 hours of instruction by trained Gottman educators, 1 copy of the book ‘The 7 Principles for Making a Marriage Work’, 2 workbooks, and light snacks.

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**2018 Winter Book Study**

The Book of Joy: Lasting Happiness in a Changing World

**DALAI LAMA & DESMOND TUTU**

**HOW DO WE LIVE A LIFE OF JOY IN THE FACE OF ADVERSITY?**

Join two of the most joyful people on the planet—His Holiness the Dalai Lama and the Archbishop Emeritus of Southern Africa Desmond Tutu—who are also beloved friends—share their hard-won wisdom of finding enduring happiness and joy in the face of life’s challenges.

**Group Discussion Dates:**

6 Wednesdays 1:00—2:00pm
Parish Center
January 10—February 14

Copies of the Book of Joy will be available through the Parish Center office for $20.

Register on our parish website or stop in the Parish Center office today!

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Call Steve Weigand at the Parish Center with any questions.
Please help us welcome our new members to the St. John of the Cross Parish faith community.
Michelle Preissler and Family
Robert Rabe
Julietta Falla and Oscar Ramirez and Family
Yvonne and Jonas Umbrasas and Family
Jill Bastedo and Howard Miller and Family
Monica Betz and Christian Frederick
Paula and William Tomczyk
Laura and Jim O'Keefe and Family
Kristen and Bret Solnoki and Family
Georgia and Alex Holmberg
Mary and Joshua Markou and Family
Andrew Gamboa and Family
If you recognize the name of a friend or neighbor be sure to extend a welcome and encourage them to become involved at SJC. If you would like to register to become a member, please contact Elizabeth Russell-Jones in the Welcome Center or visit our website at: www.stjohnofthecross.org/welcome. For more information call 708.246.4404x155 or erussell-jones@stjohnofthecross.org or stop in the Parish Center.

Parish School students decorated special Welcome Bags which are given to our new parishioners.
YC students also help by making Welcome cards.
Thank you as we continue to embrace our new members.

Feast of St. John of the Cross
The SJC Study Group would like to invite any parishioners to join us this Wednesday, December 13 from 3:30-4:30pm in the Parish Center to watch a movie of the life of SJC in anticipation of his feast day December 14.

Prayer From a Canticle
by Saint John of the Cross
"We must dig deeply in Christ. He is like a rich mine with many pockets containing treasures: however deep we dig we will never find their end or their limit. Indeed, in every pocket new seams of fresh riches are discovered on all sides." ---St. John of the Cross
Through the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the intercession of Saint John, may we treasure the gifts of life which God have given us!
In all healthy people there’s a natural reticence about revealing too much of themselves and a concomitant need to keep certain things secret. Too often we judge this as an unhealthy shyness or, worse, as hiding something bad. But reticence and secrecy can be as much virtue as fault because, as James Hillman puts it, when we’re healthy we will normally “show the piety of shame before the mystery of life.”

When are secrets healthy and when are they not? When is it healthy to “cast our pearl” before others and when is it not? This is often answered too simplistically on both sides.

No doubt secrets can be dangerous. From scripture, from spirituality in every tradition, from what’s best in psychology, and, not least, from the various “12-Step Programs” that today help so many people back to health, we learn that keeping secrets can be dangerous, that what’s dark, obsessive, and hidden within us has to be brought to light, confessed, shared with someone, and owned in openness or we can never be healthy. Scripture tells us that the truth will set us free, that we will be healthy only if we confess our sins, and that our dark secrets will fester in us and ultimately corrupt us if we keep them hidden. Alcoholics Anonymous submits that we are as sick as our sickest secret. Psychology tells us that our psychic health depends upon our capacity to share our thoughts, feelings, and failings openly with others and that it’s dangerous to keep things bottled up inside ourselves. That’s right. That’s wise.

There are secrets that are wrongly kept, like the dark secrets we keep when we betray or the secrets a young child clutches to as an exercise in power. Such secrets fester in the soul and keep us wrongly apart. What’s hidden must be brought into the light. We should be wary of secrets.

But, as is the case with most everything else, there’s another side to this, a delicate balance that needs to be struck. Just as it can be bad to keep secrets, we can also be too loose in sharing ourselves. We can lack proper reticence. We can trivialize what’s precious inside us. We can open ourselves in ways that take away our mystery and makes us inept subjects for romance. We can lose our depth in ways that makes it difficult for us to be creative or to pray. We can lack “the piety of shame before the mystery of life.” We all need to keep some secrets.

Etymologically to keep a secret means to keep something apart from others. And we need to do that in healthy ways because a certain amount of honest privacy is necessary for us to nurture our individuality, for us to come to know our own souls. All of us need to keep some secrets, healthy secrets. What this does, apart from helping us know more deeply our individuality, is that secrets protect our mystery and depth by shielding them under a certain mystique, from which we can more richly offer our individuality to others.

We derive both the words mystery and mystic from the Greek word myein which is a word that’s used to describe what we are left looking at when a flower closes its petals or a person closes his or her eyelids. Something’s hidden then, something of beauty, of intelligence, of wit, of love. Its depths are partially closed off and so that individual flower or person takes on a certain mystique which triggers a desire within us to want to uncover those depths. Romance has its origins here, as does creativity, prayer, and contemplation. It’s no accident that when artists paint persons at prayer normally they are depicted with their eyelids closed. Our souls need to be protected from over-exposure. Just as our eyes need to be closed at times for sleep, so too our souls. They need time away from the maddening crowd, time alone with themselves, time to healthily deepen their individuality so as to make them richer for romance.

Some years ago in an American television sitcom, a mother issued this warning to her teenage daughter just as this young person was leaving for a party with friends: “Now remember your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit – not a public amusement park!” Inside that wit, there’s wisdom. The mother’s warning is about properly guarding one’s body, but the body is connected to the soul and, like the body, the soul too shouldn’t be trivialized and become fodder for recreation.

Jesus warns us not to give to the dogs what’s sacred or throw pearls to swine. That’s strong talk, but what he’s warning us about merits strong language. Soul is a precious commodity that needs to be properly cherished and guarded. Soul is also a sacred commodity that needs to be accorded its proper reverence. We protect that preciousness and sacredness when we confess openly are sick secrets and then properly guard our healthy ones.
# Mass & Reconciliation Schedule & Intentions

**Monday, December 11**  
St. Damasus I  
7:45am Margaret Albertson; Joseph Piszczor

**Tuesday, December 12**  
Feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe  
7:45am Maxine Pusinelli; Our Beloved Dead

**Wednesday, December 13**  
St. Lucy  
7:45am Margaret Kirtley; Dorothy Voros

**Thursday, December 14**  
St. John of the Cross  
7:45am Brigitte Rose Newman; Dave O'Brien

**Friday, December 15**  
Advent Weekday  
7:45am Thomas Cusack; Deceased Members of the Maier & Gora Families

**Saturday, December 16**  
Advent Weekday  
8:00am Edwin Malone; Delaney O'Connell  
~ Reconciliation Follows Mass ~  
5:00pm Phylis Yocum; Joan Kravcik

**Sunday, December 17**  
Third Sunday of Advent  
7:30am Catherine Negus; Randy Nowak  
9:00am Coretta Spalo; Deceased Members of the Westerhoff Family  
10:45am Joan Jung; Timothy Schick  
12:15pm Robert Neri; Marge Anderson  
5:00pm George Zurowski; Maria Pertile

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**Pray for Our Sick**  
Ginny Beutell  
Kathleen Carpenter  
Crystal Deters  
Fr. David Dowdle  
Lynn Freking  
Kathleen Gros  
Thomas Halm  
Kay Holden  
Karen Hult  
Virginia Jakubczak  
Cathy Laskey  
Erin Lively  
Carol Martin  
Palma Martorano  
Marty McGuire  
Michael McNamara  
Abby Meehan  
Rosemary Morrissey  
Olivia Murphy  
Alice Myers  
Deacon Pablo Perez  
Geno Pesce  
Terry Pepin  
Frank Pipal  
Marie Principe  
Joe Pustejovsky  
Rachael Schopp  
Julie Schurba  
Cathy Siciliano  
Claudine Snow  
Don Vollmer  
Sharon Wildman

**Pray for Our Beloved Dead**

Brooks Tonn, son of Nora and Rob, brother of Hunter, Griffin, & Scarlett, nephew of Trish Kinsella  
Alice Gill, mother of Tracey DiSanto, grandmother of 15 great grandmother of 5  
Curtis Kerzich, husband of Donna, father of Joseph and Christopher, grandfather of 2

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**Our Lady of Guadalupe**

Our Lady of Guadalupe has often been called the Evangelizer of the Americas. You too can be a great evangelizer through simple actions: invite someone to a parish Christmas event or Mass, or introduce yourself to someone new this weekend at Mass.

Virgin of Guadalupe,  
Patroness of unborn children,  
we implore your intercession  
for every child at risk of abortion.  
Help expectant parents to welcome from God  
the priceless gift of their child's life.  
Console parents who have lost that gift  
through abortion,  
and lead them to forgiveness and healing  
through the Divine Mercy of your Son.  
Teach us to cherish  
and to care for family and friends  
until God calls them home.  
Help us never to see others as burdens.  
Guide our public officials  
to defend each and every human life  
through just laws.  
Inspire us all to bring our faith into public life,  
to speak for those who have no voice.  
We ask this in the name of your Son,  
Jesus Christ, who is Love and Mercy itself.  
Amen.

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**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 Stinemetz  
Capt. James Maiche, grandson of Phil & Mike Maiche  
Sgt. Robert Marburger, son of David and Kathleen Marburger  
Sgt. Staff 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 LeFevour 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

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**Rev. David P. Dowdle, Pastor**

ddowdle@stjohnofthecross.org

**Rev. William J. Vollmer, Assoc Pastor**

bvollmer@stjohnofthecross.org

For a complete Pastoral Staff Directory  
see our parish website.

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St. John of the Cross Parish  
Second Sunday in Ordinary Time  
December 10, 2017  
Page 15
Advent Weekday, Saturday, December 23  8:00am Mass  No Confessions after Mass

4th Sunday of Advent, Sunday, December 24
Saturday 5:00pm, 7:30am, 9:00am, 10:45am
No 12:15pm Mass  or 5:00pm Mass

Solemnity of the Nativity of the Lord Mass Schedule
Christmas Eve, Sunday, December 24
4:00pm Church  Combined Children’s Choir  Carol Prelude begins at 3:30pm
4:15pm School First Floor Multi-Purpose Room  Carol Prelude begins at 4:00pm
4:30pm Second Floor School Gym  Carol Prelude begins at 4:15pm
6:00pm Church  Carol Prelude begins at 5:45pm
10:30pm Church  Traditional Choir  Carol Prelude begins at 10:00pm

Christmas Day, Monday, December 25
7:30am
9:00am  Contemporary Choir
10:45am  Traditional Choir
12:30pm  5 Alive! Teen & Young Adult Choir  Mass begins 15 minutes later than the usual start of 12:15pm
No 5:00pm Mass
At each Mass on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, music will be led by a cantor, organ and/or piano, and various instruments in addition to the choirs noted above.

Tuesday, December 26—Friday, December 29  7:45am Weekday Mass
Saturday, December 30  8:00am Mass  Confessions after Mass

Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph
Saturday December 30: 5:00pm Mass of Anticipation
Sunday December 31: 7:30am, 9:00am, 10:45am, and 12:15pm only. (The 5:00pm Sunday evening Mass is the Mass of Anticipation for Monday, the Solemnity of Mary.)

Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God/The Octave Day of the Nativity of the Lord
Sunday, December 31: 5:00pm Mass of Anticipation
Monday, January 1: 10:00am

Sacrament of Reconciliation
Parish Advent Reconciliation Service  Tuesday, December 12 at 7:00pm
A Communal Service of Reconciliation with individual confession and absolution will take place in church.
Individual Reconciliation  Saturday, December 16
Extended individual confessions will be offered on Saturday, December 16 following the 8:00am Mass, with the opportunity for private or face-to-face confession. Our parish offers reconciliation every Saturday throughout the year at 8:30am except on December 23 when there are no confessions.
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