The Epiphany
of the Lord

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS
JANUARY 6, 2013
Before leaving class for the Christmas break I had a conversation with a British friend about the break. Asking if he was returning to London for Christmas, he replied, "Nope, I'm headed to Bethlehem, but we don't yet have a place to stay." Knowing it was only a few days from Christmas he continued, "it'll be a bit like Mary and Joseph looking for room at the inn...we will probably end up going door to door looking for a place to stay." His comments, quite comical at the time, have become insightful this Christmas as I am also traversing the Holy Land these days with classmates from the North American College.

"Home for Christmas," this phrase has been sticking around my thoughts and prayers these last couple of days. Admittedly, this is my not my first Christmas away from the cold weather, comfort and cookies I've become accustomed to enjoy on the 25th day of December. Alas, I am not the only soul away from home this Christmas. How often in the midst of answering the doorbell, passing the cellphone, serving a hearty round of seconds we forget to remember so many who are away from their familiar homeland. I know how easily I can forget these people in the midst of this day. So many of our sailors traversing the seas, airmen flying the skies and soldiers and Marines standing guard this cold night. We should remember these men and women as we live this season. So many people not home this Christmas.

Christmas morning in the Holy Land I began reflecting on "home". Not home in the physical location, but our true home, the place we belong and are "on camino" toward. Yes, if we are able to spend Christmas day with those we love and the places of familiarity this is home. As Catholics on our earthly pilgrimage where is our true home? Ok, easy question, or at least I hope. It is heaven. An obvious question and answer for some but it begs us to go deeper. While we are traversing this earth enroute to this heavenly home we can find home in the Eucharist. On Christmas morning, I found a renewed home in the Eucharist. Christmas morning I found a home in the tabernacle. This became evident during Christmas Mass in both English and German and in the midst of some people who didn't speak either language.

We see this analogy of "home for Christmas" in the Scriptures as well. The first Christmas did not take place in the comfort of Nazareth, the home of Joseph and Mary, but the city of David or Bethlehem. Look at Luke and Matthew's account of the Birth of Jesus (Luke 2:1-20 and Matthew 1:18- 2:12) and see how many people in the story were not "home" for the first Christmas. Obviously, Our Lord, the Blessed Mother and St. Joseph. Then there were the three wise men (Mt 2:1-12) who where from "the East". Probably, the closest thing we find in these accounts of participants being close to home were the shepherds who are written as being "in that region" (Lk 2:8). While they were close to Bethlehem it is not known where they actually originated.

During these Christmas days I've come to see there is something about being "home for Christmas." While some are unable to spend these days with their family, we as Catholics are in one since home is every time we visit our Lord in the tabernacle. No matter where we are traversing this globe, home exists for us Catholics in the Eucharist. Please know of my prayers as I traverse this sacred land this Christmas.
Reflections on the Gospel

Living the Gospel

Arriving in Jerusalem, the magi ask, “Where is the newborn king of the Jews?” This is the burning question that prompted them to follow a distant star to a distant place. Their journey to find the Infant was long and convoluted, yet guided by heavenly light. We, too, will find Christ if we search. We, too, will be led by God’s light. We, too, will be satisfied with fullness of life. What leads us and prompts us to seek the divine is more than simple light; it is always God’s power acting in Christ to lead us to encounter the divine. The Light brings us to God and elicits from us the homage we instinctually know we must render God. The magi’s epiphany journey is the pattern of our Christian living: we follow God’s promptings, seek God diligently, overcome many obstacles, and finally, finding God, we offer homage and give over the treasure of our heart. Rather than gifts of things, we offer God the greatest gift we can—our very selves.

God leads us just as surely as the star led the magi to Bethlehem. We are not in control but must trust in God’s loving presence and sure guidance. There will be setbacks and challenges before we attain that for which we seek: our everyday lives are filled with obstacles and restlessness which can get us off track. We must “search diligently”: God and God’s will can be found in many circumstances of our family life, work, and leisure times. Sometimes we must change course and take “another way”: conversion is an ongoing milestone in Christian living. This feast day of the Lord’s epiphany reminds us that the Light of Christ is a diffuse one; it permeates all the world, and diffuses salvation everywhere. Our response: give of the treasure of our hearts.

Closing Prayers

May we always be enlightened by God’s guiding presence and follow where God’s Light leads us.

May we search diligently for Christ in our lives and receive the fullness of life he brings.

Our Father . . .

Readings for the Week

Monday
1 John 3:22–4:6
Ps 2:7bc-8, 10-12a
Matt 4:12-17, 23-25

Tuesday
1 John 4:7-10
Ps 72:1-2, 3-4, 7-8
Mark 6:34-44

Wednesday
1 John 4:11-18
Ps 72:1-2, 10, 12-13
Mark 6:45-52

Thursday
1 John 4:19–5:4
Ps 72:1-2, 14 and 15bc, 17
Luke 4:14-22a

Friday
1 John 5:5-13
Ps 147:12-13, 14-15,
19-20
Luke 5:12-16

Saturday
1 John 5:14-21
Ps 149:1-2, 3-4, 5-6a and
9b
John 3:22-30

©Living Liturgy 2012

The Collection for the Church in Latin America will be taken up January 13 at all the Masses. Thank you for your generosity.

ARCHDIOCESE OF CHICAGO

January 6, 2013

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As thousands of young people in the United States and around the world prepare to attend World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro, nearly 25,000 young people in nearby Maraba, Brazil are struggling to subsist surrounded by a world of violence, poverty and little hope for the future.

Fortunately, the parishioners of Nossa Senhora de Nazare parish in Maraba have begun a series of programs targeted at these youth enabling them to grow in their relationship with Christ and acquire skills to break the cycle of poverty that encircles them. The parish was able to provide for these programs as the result of funding from the Collection for the Church in Latin America.

In twenty-two countries of South America and the Caribbean, funds from this collection provide the assistance that individual parishes need to sustain and enrich the faith of their parishioners. Additionally, your generosity will assist in the formation of seminarians, permanent deacons, religious sisters and brothers, and lay ministers of the Gospel.

Please know that I am grateful for your support and generosity. During the upcoming season of Lent, you and those you love will be in my prayers; please keep me in yours.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I.
Archbishop of Chicago

Readings for the Week

Monday
1 John 3:22–4:6
Ps 2:7bc-8, 10-12a
Matt 4:12-17, 23-25

Tuesday
1 John 4:7-10
Ps 72:1-2, 3-4, 7-8
Mark 6:34-44

Wednesday
1 John 4:11-18
Ps 72:1-2, 10, 12-13
Mark 6:45-52

Thursday
1 John 4:19–5:4
Ps 72:1-2, 14 and 15bc, 17
Luke 4:14-22a

Friday
1 John 5:5-13
Ps 147:12-13, 14-15,
19-20
Luke 5:12-16

Saturday
1 John 5:14-21
Ps 149:1-2, 3-4, 5-6a and
9b
John 3:22-30

Baptism of the Lord
Isa 42:1-4, 6-7
Ps 29:1-2, 3-4, 3, 9-10
Acts 10:34-38
Luke 3:15-16, 21-22 (or
other readings)

www.stjohnofthecross 01/06/13 3
“Same-sex Marriage:” What do Nature and Nature’s God say?

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

The Illinois General Assembly is being asked to consider a bill called “The Religious Freedom and Marriage Fairness Act.” This is a deceptive title that ignores basic truths.

Marriage comes to us from nature. The human species comes in two complementary sexes, male and female. Their sexual union is called marital. It not only creates a place of love for two adults but also a home for loving and raising their children. It provides the biological basis for personal identity.

It is physically impossible for two men or two women to consummate a marriage, even when they share a deep friendship or love. Does this mean nature is cruel or that God is unfair? No, but it does mean that marriage is what nature tells us it is and that the State cannot change natural marriage. Civil laws that establish “same-sex marriage” create a legal fiction. The State has no power to create something that nature itself tells us is impossible.

Neither did the Church create marriage. The Church asks if a man and woman proposing to marry are mature, responsible and free, willing to commit themselves to one another before the Lord in the presence of the community of the faithful to a lifelong relationship of fidelity to one another and openness to the creation and care for new life in their children. Christ raised marital union to the dignity of a sacrament, giving it significance beyond that given it by nature; but, like the State, the Church cannot change the natural basis of marriage. Does this mean that the Church is anti-gay? No, for the Church welcomes everyone, respects each one personally and gives to each the spiritual means necessary to convert to God’s ways and maintain friendship with Christ.

The Catholic Church in the Archdiocese of Chicago has consistently condemned violence toward or hatred of homosexually oriented men and women. Good pastoral practice encourages families to accept all their children and not break relationships with them.

The Archdiocese offers Mass and other spiritual help to those who live their homosexuality anonymously (Courage groups) and also to those who want to be publicly part of the gay community (AGLO, which celebrates its twenty fifth anniversary this year). People live out their sexual identity in different ways, but the Church offers the means to live chastely in all circumstances, as the love of God both obliges and makes possible. Should the lame duck legislature or the new Assembly take up the passage of a “same-sex marriage” law, it will be acting against the common good of society. We will all have to pretend to accept something that is contrary to the common sense of the human race.

Those who continue to distinguish between genuine marital union and same sex arrangements will be regarded in law as discriminatory, the equivalent of bigots. This proposed legislation will have long term consequences because laws teach; they tell us what is socially acceptable and what is not, and most people conform to the dictates of their respective society, at least in the short run.

What happens next? If we ignore in law the natural complementarity of man and woman in creation, then the natural family is undermined. Our individual lives become artificial constructs protected by civil “rights” that destroy natural rights. Human dignity and human rights are then reduced to the whims of political majorities. When the ways of nature and nature’s God conflict with civil law, society is in danger. It is to that danger that we direct your attention.

We urge you to visit www.ilcatholic.org to stay updated on the effort to redefine marriage in our state and to find information on how to contact your state legislator.

Pray for our State.

Cardinal Francis George, O.M.I.  Bishop George J. Rassas
Bishop Francis J. Kane  Bishop Alberto Rojas
Bishop John R. Manz  Bishop Andrew P. Wypych
Bishop Joseph N. Perry

January 5-6, 2013
Adore

To adore is not merely to admire, although we use the word “adore” in this loose sense. When I adore someone or something, I center my life on this person or thing. To adore is to worship. To adore is to hold in awe.

Each human being will adore someone or something. We have a drive within us to center our lives this way. Faith tells us that only God is worthy of our adoration, but people can adore the false gods of money, pleasure, status, and even their own convenience.

Every time we kneel before the altar at Mass, we profess our commitment to adore God alone, our true center. “We adore you, we glorify you, we give you thanks for your great glory, O God, almighty Father.”

Year of Sunday Mass: Question of the Week

The magi from the east “were overjoyed at seeing the star” which stopped over the place where Jesus was.

What things in my life, guide or direct me to seek Jesus?

Like the magi, I feel a driving desire to find Christ when . . .

I know my life is incomplete when . . . Christ satisfies me with fullness when . . .

Mass is Moving to Parish Center!

On Saturday, February 2, 2013 we will gather in the Parish Center for the 8:00 a.m. Mass because of the Matthew Kelly Live Passion & Purpose event in our church. There will be no confessions following the 8:00 a.m. Mass that day.

This Week at SJC

**Monday, January 7**
- 10:30 a.m. Step 11 Christian Meditation
- 1:00 p.m. Little Rock Scripture Study
- 2:30 p.m. Eucharistic Adoration
- 2:30 p.m. Spiritual Journaling

**Tuesday, January 8**
- 9:30 a.m. Focus on Sunday Scriptures Group
- 1:00 p.m. Rediscover Catholicism
- 4:00 p.m. Confirmation Interviews
- 1:30 p.m. Sr. Josephine’s Bible Study
- 7:00 p.m. Rediscover Catholicism
- 7:00 p.m. RCIA
- 7:00 p.m. SJC Teacher Recognition Trust

**Wednesday, January 9**
- 9:00 a.m. Faith Sharing Group
- 9:30 a.m. Bible Study 3
- 1:00 p.m. Prayer Shawl Ministry
- 2:00 p.m. Christian Meditation
- 4:00 p.m. Confirmation Interviews
- 7:30 p.m. Christian Meditation

**Thursday, January 10**
- 9:00 a.m. Mom’s Club

**Friday, January 11**
- 7:00 p.m. Rediscover Catholicism

**Saturday, January 12**
- 7:00 a.m. Christian Meditation
- 4:00 p.m. Choir Christmas Party

**Sunday, January 13**
- 4:00 p.m. BEDS, YC

**Confirmation Prayer Tree**

Families and individuals are encouraged to take a dove off the Prayer Tree in the Narthex. Each dove has the name of an 8th grader making their Confirmation on January 26th. Pray for the person on your dove and all the eighth graders as they prepare to receive the Holy Spirit.

**SJC Shawl Ministry**

If you knit or crochet, please join us in the SJC Shawl Ministry. There is always a need for shawls. We have distributed over 400 shawls and yours would be most welcome.

We gather at 1 p.m. Wednesday, January 9 in the Parish Center. Please call Sheila Gallagher at 708-246-7836 with questions or requests.
Give Thanks to God for the Gift of Life

Join us in prayer at Eucharistic Adoration in the main church on Monday, January 21st from 2:30 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. At 2:30 p.m. the Rosary will be prayed and from 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. Fr. Filbert will lead us in a Holy Hour for Life.

Holy Hour for Life 8-9 p.m.
Monday, January 21st
Main Church

Prayer is the foundation of all that we do in defense of human life. Say a short prayer, meditate or ask God's intercession. Devote some time to pray a Holy Hour, or commit to a novena or Stations of the Cross. Special prayers are called for those who have lost a child due to miscarriage, abortion or other cause. Everyone can find a way to praise and thank God for the gift of life and to ask for protection for each sacred human life.

Today may there be peace within.
May you trust God
that you are exactly where you are meant to be.
May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith.
May you use those gifts that you have received,
and pass on the
love
that has been given to you.
May you be content knowing you are a child of God.
Let this presence settle into your bones,
and allow your soul the freedom to
sing,
dance,
praise
and love.
It is there for each and every one of us.

― St. Thérèse de Lisieux
Adult Faith Formation

Little Rock Scripture Study
Begins January 7, 1 p.m.
Parish Center

Paul’s Epistles to the Galatians and Romans
This is a fourteen-week study of Paul’s letters to these early Christian communities that included both Jewish and Gentile converts. Paul responds to the challenges they faced by instructing and guiding them in the Faith. The associated commentary references selected scriptures in the Old and New Testaments.

Each week a section of Paul’s letter with associated commentary is read by the Little Rock group in preparation for a discussion based on questions in a study guide. The discussion is followed by a video lecture by a bible expert about the study for that week. Meetings of the group are on Mondays from 1:00 to 2:30 p.m. The cost of the materials for this study is $20. Please call Joan Roeder at 708-354-4862 to register even if you have previously participated in Little Rock. All are welcome.

Christian Meditation is an inner journey of silence, stillness and simplicity and is the missing contemplative dimension of much of Christian life today. To enter the simplicity of it demands faith, discipline and courage. If we are faithful and patient, meditation will bring us into deeper and deeper realms of silence. The fruit of this prayer is in our daily lives and relationships.

Times for Christian Meditation at the Parish Center are:
Mondays: 10:30 a.m. ~ 11th Step Christian Meditation
Wednesdays: 2:00-2:45 p.m. & 7:30-8:15 p.m.
Saturdays: 7:00-7:45 a.m.
All are welcome. No experience necessary.

2013 New Thinking for a New Era:

flourish

The Women’s Club faith sharing group has begun! Join us at the next meeting on November 7th to discover and celebrate God’s unique dream for each of us!

Join us anytime throughout the year!
Contact Sue Bidstrup at jsbidstrup@ameritech.net for info

Wednesday mornings, 9 to 10:30 p.m.
January 9 & 23,
February 6 & 20, April 3 & 17

Preparing for Sunday Mass
Reflect and pray on the Sunday readings before you get to Mass. There are two different groups who meet weekly and welcome you to join them.

Tuesdays from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. our Focus on Sunday Scripture group meets to reflect and pray on the coming Sunday’s readings. The material used is from the St. Louis University Center for Liturgy. Feel free to join this group any week you can or prepare at home by going to www.liturgy.slu.edu. Direct any questions to Mary McGovern at 708-246-1835.

For many years our Sr. Josephine has led a Sunday scripture study group on Tuesdays from 1:30 p.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the Parish Center. Even if you have never attended one of Sister’s sessions, the group welcomes you to join them. Sister’s faith and holiness is contagious!!

Mothers, Midwives and Metaphors: Women in Scripture are models for modern times and relevant for us today. Come and meet the ordinary and the extraordinary: leaders, lovers, warriors and prophets. Sister Marianne Race, CSJ, who leads women’s pilgrimages to the Holy Land, facilitates this program on Saturday, January 12th, from 9 – 12 noon. The cost is $25.

The program is held at The Well, located at 1515 W. Ogden Ave., LaGrange Park. To learn more about The Well’s programs and to register, please call 708-482-5048 or visit the website at www.csjthewell.org.

Tuesdays with Mary in 2013
We have much to pray for as a parish community and as a nation. Join us as we pray the rosary in the Mary Garden on Tuesdays at 3 p.m. (In case of inclement weather, join us in the community room of church.)
Moms’ Club
Moms of Young Children — All are welcome!
FRIDAYS, 9:30-11:00 a.m. in the Parish Center

Moms and kids gather for friendship, fun, support, learning, and fellowship. Please join us for any or all of our upcoming events!

Friday, January 11 - Time for Moms! Babysitting will be provided, giving moms the chance to participate in a thoughtful discussion. Topic suggestions are always welcome!

Friday, January 18 - Winter Wonderland! Join us for a celebration of snow. We will decorate snowmen, read winter stories, and have a sled relay race.

Friday, January 25 - Time to get physical! We will meet at the Western Springs Recreation Center at 1500 Walker Street to enjoy open gym time with our little ones. Balls, mats, etc., will be set up and available for use. Open Gym is $2 per child and runs 9 a.m.- 1:30 p.m.

The Moms’ Club would like to wish you and your families a Happy New Year! Look for information about January's meetings in the Christmas bulletin.

Please contact Colleen Whittingham at whitting910@yahoo.com if you have any questions.
Please contact Ellen Twomey at ellenkoz@yahoo.com if you would like to be added to the email list.

Saint John of the Cross
Trivia Night II
Hosted by the SJC Men’s Club
Saturday, January 26th, SJC Parish School Gym
Doors open at 6:00 p.m.; Games begin at 6:45 p.m.

Here’s how it works:
* Organize a group of up to 10 people (ages 21 and over only) to form your team. Name your team.
* Brush up on your trivia knowledge.
* Send in your table reservation with a check(s) totaling $200 for each table of ten; (note: cost per table is $200 even if there are less than ten participants on your team). Make all checks payable to St. John of the Cross. Seating is limited, so RSVP soon.
* Return the form below with your check(s) to SJC Parish Center attention Men’s Club
* That night, bring your own appetizers, food, and your favorite beverages. Alcoholic beverages are permitted.
* Winning Team to receive fabulous prizes and many accolades.

Table Captain and Team name: ________________________________
Table Captain’s e-mail address ________________________________
Names of the rest of the team:
1. ____________________________________
2. ____________________________________
3. ____________________________________
4. ____________________________________
5. ____________________________________
6. ____________________________________
7. ____________________________________
8. ____________________________________
9. ____________________________________

Questions? Contact Barrett Long 708-784-9224
Happy New Year!

AS YOU re-commit to your NEW YEAR’S RESOLUTIONS consider giving your time to lead our SECOND SEMESTER EVENTS:

(events will be cancelled by dates in parenthesis if no leaders volunteer)

Prayer Experiences for Juniors & Seniors on March 3 (Jan. 14) Need 2 adults & 1-2 teens

Fish Fry…on March 1 (Jan. 14)
Need 2 adults & 1 teen

Easter Basket Project March 10 (Jan. 28)
Need 2 teens

Spring Mass April 28 5pm (March 10)
Need 1 adult & 2 teens

Leader’s End of the Year Dinner on May 19
Need 2 adults

What could it be? Here are some hints:

It opens your eyes, it helps you listen, it touches your heart, it will stay with you for a long time, it seems hard to unwrap—but once the exploring begins you won’t know what you did without it!

This is an amazing gift for you, but you have to choose to open it. Are you willing? Do you dare? It’s the gift of mentoring.

You will benefit more than you will give and you can share your faith & support teenagers.

Contact Katie to learn how! 708-246-4404 or khayes@stjohnofthecross.org

WELCOME HOME to our Frosh-Soph IDENTITY Retreat Participants!

Many thanks to our teen leaders:

Chris Zurowski, Matt Pesch, Kate Foody,
Bella Watts, Audrey McGee, Maureen Klopp,
Caroline Bednara

Adult leaders:

Katie Wojtowitz, Norah Scanell, Jim Messina,
Aaron Bubis, Fr. Filbert Ngwila

And participants:

T.J. Williams, Noah Smith, Robert A Perona,
Patrick Falvey, Amanda Ng, Thomas Korenchan,
Andrew Lichtenauber, Anna Rivera, Clare
Mikulski, Jessica Sholler, Clare Schuch, Matt
Miller, Taylor Griffin, Maja Kosic, Kevin Foody,
Michael Gilger, Michael Salina, Matt Bonistalli

(bulletin went to print in December so apologies for emissions/changes)

Prayers continue as you grow in your God-given IDENTITY to be your best this new year!

Photos will be shared online soon!

Registration for our Junior/Senior Kairos 13 retreat is available online at www.stjohnofthecross.org/crossroads/retreats

The team has been working on this over the break & are excited to invite you to join us!

Limited space is available so register now!
During our last YC class on December 16th and 17th, the third grade class led an Advent Prayer Service for all the students grades Kindergarten through 6. It was a beautiful way to bring the joy of the third Sunday of Advent to our children, before the busy-ness of the Christmas season catch up with us. The students enjoy participating in our large group activities, such as prayer services, stations of the cross, saints day and praise & worship. Just as the Wise Men brought gifts to the baby Jesus, our children bring gifts to the Lord as they minister to each other through these special occasions.

In three weeks, we’ll begin our annual observance of Catholic Schools Week, when we celebrate the high standards Catholic Education instills in our students and the value it adds to our community. See the next few bulletins for the schedule of events.

The 2013 nationwide theme supports the recent launch of the National Standards and Benchmarks for Effective Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools, that ensure the effective operation and responsible governance Catholic schools across the country, thus promoting high academic standards and Catholic identity.

**Dates:**

January 7 School resumes  
12 Catholic High School Testing day

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**YC Schedule**

| Classes K-6 | 10:15-11:30 a.m. | Sunday, Jan 13 and 27  
6:15-7:30 p.m. | Monday, Jan 14 and 28  
FFC | Noon to 1:30 p.m. | Sunday, Feb 3  
Home Groups and Special Needs | Sunday, Jan 13 and 27

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**Youth Catechesis Office**

yc@sjcross.org * 708-246-6760 * www.stjohnofthecross.org/yc  
Sunday during class ~ Monday 8:30am-7:00pm ~ Tues thru Thurs 8:30am- 4:00pm
Volunteers Needed

Start the New Year Right -- Feeling good by doing good! School and Tutors on Wheels, the free mobile adult English literacy program of the Congregation of St. Joseph urgently needs volunteer tutors for its newest site in Darien, Ill. at Lace Elementary School at 75th St. and Cass Ave. Volunteers are needed just one hour per week to help teach adults living in the suburbs learn to speak, read and write English. Enjoy the health benefits of volunteering and feel good inside and out! Attend a free training on Saturday, January 12 from 1-4:00 p.m. at Indian Prairie Public Library, 401 Plainfield Rd., in Darien, Ill. No second language skills are needed! For more information, call 708-482-5085.

Aging Care Connections

Income Tax Assistance Program

Aging Care Connections, La Grange, has announced that experienced, AARP-trained tax volunteers will be available by appointment for those aged 60+ who would like assistance preparing their income tax returns. To schedule an appointment, which is required, please call 708-354-1323. Appointments will be scheduled for Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday mornings Monday, February 4 through Friday, April 12.

The following documents must be brought to the appointment: last year’s federal and state returns; all federal and state tax forms and booklets; all records of interest, dividends, pensions, Social Security, and retirement annuities; and property tax bills. Referral to a professional tax consultant may be made, if the volunteer determines this is necessary.

Volunteers are needed to provide tax assistance. AARP training will be available. Please call Aging Care Connections at 708-354-1323 if you are interested.

It’s a New Year!

Time for a New Perspective on Your Job Search

Interfaith Career Network invites you to join us for an uplifting, practical, motivating and insightful program delivered with humor, wit and charm. Join us on January 17 from 7:00-9:00 p.m. Our speaker this evening will be Conor Cunneen and his topic is SHEIFGAB the World: 8 Building Blocks to Successful Job Transition. Conor demonstrates a true passion for those in transition and has spoken to thousands on the subject. He is an acclaimed humorist and winner of the Chicago Toastmasters Humorous Speaker of the Year award. So what in the world is SHEIFGAB? It’s an outstanding presentation for anyone in transition. This program is open to everyone and there is no fee to attend. We look forward to welcoming you at St. John of the Cross Parish Center.
One of my jobs as a priest is to preside and preach at funerals. Never an easy task. The deep truths of our faith which can be so consoling at other times often don't spin their magic when death is still raw. Later on they can do their work; but, at a funeral, the pain is often too all-absorbing for the words of faith to effectively break through and do much in the way of real consolation. Their full effect will take place in a way and in a time that respects the rhythm of human grief.

One sentence of consolation that I do often offer at a funeral is this one: He is now in hands safer than ours. She is now in hands much gentler than our own. The truth of those words can be particularly consoling when the deceased is a young person, someone whom we feel still needs the hands of an earthly mother and father and whom we would want to trade places with because we feel that he or she is too young to have to leave us and go off in death, alone. That is also true in the case of someone who dies in a far-from-ideal manner, suicide or a senseless accident. Our unspoken fear is always that there should have been more time, that we should have done something more, been more vigilant, been more supportive, and we worry about a loved one departing this earth in so unfortunate a way. Finally, we have this same anxiety about someone who dies and has had a life that somehow never seemed to be free of extraordinary bad circumstance and frustration, and we wish we could somehow do something to make things better. In each of these cases, nothing can be more consoling than to believe that our loved one is now in far safer and gentler hands than our own.

But is this simple wishful thinking, whistling in the dark to keep up our courage? Fudging God's justice to console ourselves?

Not if Jesus can be believed! Everything that Jesus reveals about God assures us that God's hands are much gentler and safer than our own. God is the father of the prodigal son and, as we see in that parable, God is more understanding and more compassionate to us than we are too ourselves. We see too in that parable how God does not wait for us to return and apologize after we stray and betray. God runs out to meet us and doesn't ask for an apology. We see too in the stories just preceding the story of the prodigal son how God does not leave us on our own after we sin, to come to our senses and return repentantly to him. Rather he leaves the ninety-nine others and comes looking for us, anxious, longing, and ready to carry us home, in spite of our sin.

Jesus gives us too the assurance that God does not give us just one chance, but seventy-seven times seven chances, infinite chances. We don't ruin our lives forever by making a mistake or even by making that mistake inexcusably again and again and again. Finally, in St. Paul's farewell message to us in his Letter to the Romans, he assures us that, even though we can't ever get our lives fully right, it doesn't matter because in the end nothing, absolutely nothing, can separate us from God's love and forgiveness. We are, in this life and the next, in hands far safer and gentler than our own.

God is not a God of punishment, but a God of forgiveness. God is not a God who records our sins, but a God who washes them away. God is not a God who demands perfection from us, but a God who asks for a contrite heart when we can't measure up. God is not a God who gives us only one chance, but a God who gives us infinite chances. God is not a God who waits for us to come to our senses after we have fallen, but a God who comes searching for us, full of understanding and care. God is not a God who is calculating and parsimonious in his gifts, but a prodigal God who sows seeds everywhere without regard for waste or worthiness. God is not a God who is powerless before evil and death, but a God who can raise dead bodies to life and redeem what is evil and hopeless. God is not a God who is arbitrary and fickle, but a God who is utterly reliable in his promise and goodness. God is not a God who is dumb and unable to deal with our complexity, but a God who fashioned the depth of the universe and the deepest recesses of the human psyche.

Ultimately, God is not a God who cannot protect us, but is a God in whose hands and in whose promise we are far safer than when we rely upon ourselves.

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser, theologian, teacher, and award-winning author, is President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, TX. He can be contacted through his website www.ronrolheiser.com.
Lord Hear Our Prayer

Pray for our Sick

God of love, ever caring, ever strong, stand by us in our time of need. Watch over _______ who is sick. Look after him/her in every danger, and grant him/her your healing and peace. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen.

Mass Intentions

Monday, January 7, St. Raymond of Penyafort
6:30 Mona Costello; Ellen McGowan
7:45 Matthew Flood; Jorge Paez

Tuesday, January 8
6:30 Catherine Cunnea
7:45 Thomas Albertson; Jack McDonnell

Wednesday, January 9
7:45 Purgatorial; Anthony Madaio

Thursday, January 10
7:45 Theresa Ripoli; Josephine Sakowicz

Friday, January 11
7:45 Peter Sakowicz; C. Richard Marshall

Saturday, January 12
8:00 Laura Ann Minotis; Alice Triplett
5:00 Tony Adolf; Stanley Ziembra; Joe Levato

Sunday, January 13, The Baptism of the Lord
7:30 Helen Mary Devereux; Theresa Ripoli
9:00 SJC & St. Mark Parishioners
10:45 Jerry Lutzen; Betty Reilly
12:15 Andrew Applegate; Dorothy Di Salvo
5:00 Patricia Cebula; Kathryn Christensen

Eternal Rest Grant unto These, O Lord
Lawrence Hickey, father of Shawn Sweeney
Lillian Kopsa, mother of Karen Ziemba
Susan McGuire, wife of Matt, mother of Benjamin, Declan and Fox and daughter of Dave & Mike Fox
Stephen Siedlaczek, husband of Kellie and son of Myra Sowa

As a parish family, we continue to acknowledge the many ways in which we have grown in faith and fellowship together. We have socialized, prayed, witnessed and celebrated our faith in every season with every age.

As a parish family, we continue to acknowledge the many ways in which we have grown in faith and fellowship together. We have socialized, prayed, witnessed and celebrated our faith in every season with every age. We are continually humbled and thankful for all you do to support our parish with your time, talent, and treasure. We strive to be welcoming, living out our mission as a parish community loving God and one another. Each of us is called to discover, to grow, to be all God has asked us to be. Our parish is a blessing in our lives, providing for our families – every day – encouraging us to live our Catholic faith.

Our Parish Finance Council continues to promote online giving. Many of you already pay your bills or purchase things online. Making your donations electronically will work to your benefit as well as our parish’s. Go to our Giving page on our website www.stjohnofthecross.org to donate electronically.

Together let us join hands to make our parish be all that it can be.

Trying to get in touch with us? More info is on our website: www.stjohnofthecross.org

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Make Your New Year’s Resolution!
Join SJC for 2 faith formation opportunities!

In December all parish families received a copy of the bestseller, *Rediscover Catholicism* by Matthew Kelly. If you did not receive your copy, stop in the Parish Center today!

Beginning next week, on **Tuesday, January 8th** through March 8th all are invited to participate in a 5 session Book Study-Faith Sharing Series in the Parish Center. Sessions are scheduled every other week to give you ample time to read the section that will be discussed. There are 3 different days-times to choose from for each session. Study guides will be provided. There is no cost for the book, study guide or to participate.

To reserve your spot please fill out the form below or register on our parish website.

Name:

Phone:

Email:

- [ ] Tuesdays 1-3:00 p.m.
- [ ] Tuesdays 7-9:00 p.m.
- [ ] Fridays 7-9:00 p.m.

Please contact MJ at the Parish Center with any questions. 708-246-4404 x123 or mjmartin@stjohnofthecross.org

Come!
Bring a friend!

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Matthew Kelly’s *Passion & Purpose Live* event is an inspiring yet practical experience of dynamic teaching and application of the genius of Catholicism to every aspect of your life, including prayer, work, dating, marriage, personal finances, health, parenting and more. Gain insight to live more fully the life God has created for you.

Tickets for this event are $39 and are available in the Parish Center or on our parish website. Seating is limited. We suggest you purchase your ticket today. Consider inviting your teen, sibling, spouse or parent to this event. Join them for a "date" and enjoy together!

The 8:00 a.m. Mass on February 2nd will be moved to the Parish Center to accommodate this event. There will be no regular confessions that morning.

Be Energized, Educated, and Inspired.