Mark 1:9-11

baptism of the Lord Jesus
Every year people from all around the country gather in Washington, D.C. around this time of the year to protest against abortion. In the midst of a brutal January winter, men and women of all ages, races and religions march and pray for life to be respected from conception to natural death. People stand for hours, sometimes in the midst of snowstorms, listening to speeches which call for a change in our laws. It is a march that we are all called to participate in not only because we are Catholics, but fundamentally because we are human. As Catholics we are motivated by our faith and teachings of our Church to honor and respect life with no compromise. God is the Author of life, and as human beings we are called to honor and respect it.

We live in a world where violence, mass killing, the death penalty, euthanasia and militarism continue to find their roots. The late Cardinal Bernardin's "Consistent Ethic of Life" ideology was that Catholics can't be "pro-life" if they simply oppose abortion; they have to be against the death penalty, euthanasia, militarism, social and economic injustice, etc.

Pope John Paul II once said, “The promotion of the culture of life should be the highest priority in our societies. If the right to life is not defended decisively as a condition for all other rights of a person, all other references to human rights remain deceitful and illusory. This becomes true when the Grace of God illumines our understanding of the sacredness of human life. To be pro-life means we respect life for its sanctity. God is the Author of life. He created us in His own image.”

The account of creation in the Book of Genesis 1:26-31; 2:4-25 tells us that God created man and woman in his own image. His love overflows into life and parents cooperate in the creating power of God. “Truly, children are a gift from the Lord: the fruit of the womb is a reward” (Psalm 127:3). There is joy when new life comes forth and interrupting it in anyway is sinful. God who loves us calls us to love His creation.

Sometimes people become caught up in debate about whether the fetus is truly a human being or when the fetus ‘really’ becomes a person. We believe that that the child in the womb is truly a human being, who even has a relationship with the Lord. “You knit me in my mother’s womb … nor was my frame unknown to you when I was made in secret” (Psalm 139:13, 15). God has a mission for every person right from the beginning. “God … from my mother’s womb had set me apart and called me through his grace” (St. Paul to the Galatians 1:15). Indeed the baby in the womb is God’s creation and is loved by God.

We have just celebrated the Nativity of Our Lord. It is this Infant Jesus who gathers people everywhere with joy and peace and love. The message of Christ the Messiah reminds us that He came so that we may have life, life in full. Abortion is death which Jesus came to conquer. Let us embrace the pro-life teachings of our Catholic faith. Let us preach the Gospel of life to our world, especially to our children. Let us not be deterred by the political debate. Let us stand for life.

This year the 40th anniversary of Roe v. Wade will be on January 22nd and the March for Life will be held on January 25th in Washington, D.C. On Monday January 21st I will lead a pro-life holy hour from 8:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. in church. You are invited to take part in Eucharistic Adoration in the main church from 2:30 p.m. which will conclude with the Holy Hour and benediction. Together we will pray for our nation and our leaders to enact laws that respect life from conception to natural death.

Remember, when it comes to making a choice - LIFE WINS!

Peace!
Fr. Fil Ngwila
40th ANNIVERSARY OF ROE VS. WADE

Please remember in your prayers the pilgrims from our diocese who will be journeying to Washington, D.C. to observe the solemn anniversary of the legalization of abortion in our nation. If you can't join them, there are opportunities locally to participate.

On Saturday, January 19 Northwest Families for Life are sponsoring a March for Life at 1 p.m. Gather at St. Theresa's Lower Dolan Center, 455 N. Benton, in Palatine, for prayer and to hear inspiring speakers, Joe Scheidler from Pro-Life Action League, Carol Rybacki of Silent No More, and Jim Sable of Conceived in Rape. The March will proceed at 1:30 p.m. down the sidewalk of Northwest Highway to Hicks corner. For information: <http://www.northwestfamiliesforlife.weebly.com/> or call Laura 847-651-4877.

On Sunday, January 20 there will be a Chicago March for Life, following the 12:30 p.m. Mass at Holy Name Cathedral, 730 North State Street, Chicago. Call 630-953-8293 for more details. Also, please try to watch the National March for Life on Friday, January 25 (because of the Inauguration) on EWTN. It is always an inspiring and hope-filled event.

On Sunday, January 20 at 2:00 p.m. people from the surrounding area will gather to pray for an end to abortion at the ACU Health Center, 736 N. York Road in Hinsdale. For more information call Maureen Greene at 630-850-9199.

Dear Friends,

Over the years you have given me so much support and affection that I don't know where I would be without you. This past Christmas so many of you sent me cards, prayers and gifts that I can only tell you how very grateful I am to each and every one of you. I know how many of you have been praying for me, especially this past year when I had a setback or two. By the grace of God and with your friendship and affection I was overwhelmed to celebrate this 32nd Christmas together with you. I pray that Jesus will guide you every day of this New Year, 2013.

God love you,
Fr. Joe

The theme of this year's Respect Life Program is one often expressed by Pope Benedict XVI: "Faith opens our eyes to human life in all its grandeur and beauty." He reiterated this insight during his recent visit to Lebanon:

*The effectiveness of our commitment to peace depends on our understanding of human life. If we want peace, let us defend life! This approach leads us to reject not only war and terrorism, but every assault on innocent human life, on men and women as creatures willed by God. ... The grandeur and the raison d'être of each person are found in God alone. The unconditional acknowledgement of the dignity of every human being, of each one of us, and of the sacredness of human life, is linked to the responsibility which we all have before God. We must combine our efforts, then, to develop a sound vision of ... the human person. Without this, it is impossible to build true peace.*
2013 ARCHDIOCESAN ANNUAL CATHOLIC APPEAL CONTINUES
“Love Never Fails!” 1 Cor 13:8

Many of you have responded to the Annual Catholic Appeal mailing from Cardinal George. On behalf of those served by the ministries and services funded by the ACA, we thank you for your gifts. If you received the mailing and have not responded, please do so as soon as possible.

In addition to providing for ministries and services throughout the Archdiocese, the Appeal also funds services that are of great help to other ministries here in our parish.

This year, the theme of the Appeal is: “Love Never Fails!” In his first Letter to the Corinthians Paul instructs that love is the greatest virtue. God loves us always and gives us everything.

As we contemplate His gifts to us, we should also reflect on our gratitude for these gifts. Your financial support for the work our parish, of our Archdiocese and of the Church throughout the world is, in fact, one way to express this gratitude. Please give generously to the 2013 Annual Catholic Appeal.

When our parish reaches its goal of $133,927 in paid pledges, 100% of the additional funds received will be returned to us for use in our parish.

Our faith is lived in schools and parishes, soup kitchens and counseling centers, on street corners and in churches, where people of all backgrounds in every neighborhood of the Archdiocese of Chicago are served.

Your gift to the Annual Appeal helps to sustain Catholic schools, religious education, ministerial formation, and initiatives for life, peace and justice. Through its support of Catholic Relief Services, the Appeal serves people worldwide, without regard for religious affiliation, whose lives are devastated by natural disasters, illnesses, wars and famines.

Please make a pledge to the 2013 Annual Catholic Appeal.

Any funds raised are carefully spent; it is money for God’s work, and we will use it accordingly. Your generosity will make a difference in the lives of many.
KNOW THE MASS, ONE WORD AT A TIME

The Mass is no classroom, but it is the place where we come to know the most important things about ourselves, our world, and our future. “To you has been given the secret of the kingdom of God,” Jesus says. If we pay attention in the Mass, we come to know extraordinary things.

In and through the Mass, we know that God loves us. We know that forgiveness is in reach. We know that death does not have the last word. We know that Jesus, the Bread of Life, walks with us and sustains us.

Amazingly, at Mass we come to know the inner life and intentions of God. The words of Jesus become true for us: “And no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him” (Matthew 11:27).

Year of Sunday Mass: Question of the Week

“The people were filled with expectation, and all were asking in their hearts whether John might be the Christ…” and John the Baptist directs their attention away from himself toward Jesus.

Has the celebration of Mass ever empowered me to direct others to Jesus?

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 our eighth graders as they prepare to receive the Holy Spirit.

Greetings,

As always, I am amazed at the way the people of St. John of the Cross Parish step up and help whenever called upon. The Christmas Masses would not have been possible without the assistance of so many people. Parishioner, Heidi Drescher, and her team spent weeks planning and preparing the Advent and Christmas decorations and environment in our three worship spaces (the church, multi-purpose room and gym). Transforming the multi-purpose room and gym into worship spaces is no easy task, and Heidi and her team did a beautiful job. The maintenance men also played an important role behind the scenes, especially Andy Mola, who not only assisted Heidi and her team, but also worked with Frank DiPompeo making sure everything was set for the Christmas Masses. Frank coordinates the ordering and setup of chairs, staging, sound equipment, parking and many other behind the scene tasks. SJC is very lucky to have someone like him.

The Christmas Masses also would not have been possible without the ministers to staff them. Thank you to John Kravcik for Ushers and Rich Bornhoff for Sacristans who put in time beforehand to make sure the Masses ran smoothly. And of course the Masses wouldn’t have been possible without the many Communion Ministers, Lectors, Ushers, Altar Servers, and Sacristans. And last, but certainly not least, a big note of appreciation goes to Jessica Koch, our Director of Music and her choirs, cantors, instrumentalists and accompanists. We thank each of you for sharing your time and gift of your ministry with our parish.

That being said we can always use more help in our liturgical ministries. In the coming weeks we will be doing a recruiting push for new Communion Ministers and Lectors. Although it may seem like we have plenty of people to perform these ministries, in actuality we are very short-handed and have been stretching many of our volunteers to the max.

Thank you again to all who made the Christmas Masses a success. It wouldn’t be possible without you.

God Bless,
Jim Clauer
Director of Worship
Living the Gospel

Because of the power of John’s baptism, the expectation of the people in the gospel is that they have found the Christ in John. John points the people, however, to Jesus who will bring an even more powerful baptism. This is the baptism that showers on us unexpected gifts. The Holy Spirit descended on Jesus, so does the Holy Spirit descend upon us; Jesus is the beloved Son, so are we beloved children; God was well pleased with Jesus, so is God well pleased with us. All of us who share in the wisdom of Christian living through the years know that it takes a whole lifetime to repent, to turn toward God, to internalize the appropriate response to the great gifts God freely and lovingly gives us. Baptismal living takes a lifetime of fidelity. It takes a lifetime of learning. It takes a lifetime of discerning expectations—our own and God’s—and doing whatever we need to fulfill those expectations. It takes a lifetime of opening ourselves to the Holy Spirit, hearing God’s voice calling us beloved, living in such a way that God continues to be well pleased.

As in Jesus, baptism must be made flesh in us. Reborn in Christ, we are to lead a good life; we are to reject anything that takes us from God and live rightly. We all spend our whole life growing into the realization that baptism doesn’t happen on one day, but calls us to a way of living. Each time we say yes to doing good, we are living our baptism. Each time we recognize the giftedness of others, we are living our baptism. Each time we avoid doing something harmful, we are living our baptism. But most of all, we live our baptism when we relish the gift of God’s life within us.

Closing Prayers:

May we come to know ourselves as God’s beloved children, filled with God’s gracious gift of Life. May we live Gospel values (our baptism) in such a way as to bring God’s love to others.

For Reflection:

· My expectations for my life are . . .
  for my baptismal living are . . .
· Knowing I am a beloved child of God, I . . . Knowing God is well pleased with me means

Readings for the Week

Monday
Heb 1:1-6
Ps 97:1 and 2b, 6 and 7c, 9
Mark 1:14-20

Tuesday
Heb 2:5-12
Ps 8:2ab and 5, 6-7, 8-9
Mark 1:21-28

Wednesday
Heb 2:14-18
Ps 105:1-2, 3-4, 6-7, 8-9
Mark 1:29-39

Thursday
Heb 3:7-14
Ps 95:6-7c, 8-9, 10-11
Mark 1:40-45

Friday
Heb 4:1-5, 11
Ps 78:3 and 4bc, 6c-7, 8
Mark 2:1-12

Saturday
Heb 4:12-16
Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 15
Mark 2:13-17

2nd Sunday in OT
Isa 62:1-5
Ps 96:1-2, 2-3, 7-8, 9-10
1 Cor 12:4-11
John 2:1-11

Almighty ever-living God, who, when Christ had been baptized in the River Jordan and as the Holy Spirit descended upon him, solemnly declared him your beloved Son, grant that your children by adoption, reborn of water and the Holy Spirit, may always be well pleasing to you. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever.
Adult Faith Formation

flourish

The Women’s Club new faith sharing group has begun! Join us at the next meeting on January 23rd 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 23,
February 6 & 20, April 3 & 17

Nurturing Your Child’s Spirituality – “Christian Meditation with Children” is a simple and prayerful way to enter into “the mystery of the sacred.” As you take the journey facilitated by our parishioner, Joan Binder, learn how to teach your child to be still and silent in order to be attentive to God's love. The program is Thursday, January 17th, from 9:15 – 10:45 a.m.

The cost is $10. Free babysitting is available. Please call in advance to reserve a space, 708-482-5048.

Waking Up in the Sacred Universe reignites the spirit of God within each one of us as the story of creation is told and comes alive to bring new theological understanding and meaning into your life. Bridget Sperduto facilitates this thought-provoking and powerful program on Wednesdays, January 23rd, 30th and February 6th, from 7 – 9 p.m.

The cost is $60.

The programs are 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.


Spiritual Journaling
Mondays, 2:30 p.m.
SJC Parish Center

Beginning Monday, January 28 we will be studying Breathing Under Water by Richard Rohr. If you need a copy of the book, contact Betsy Spiering at 708-246-8315.

“Substance addiction like alcohol and drugs are merely the most visible form of addiction but actually we are all addicted to our own habitual way of doing anything, our own defenses and most especially, our patterned way of thinking, or how we process our reality.”

Richard Rohr

A Joyful and Holy New Year to You!
Are you looking for a sign that God loves you? Here it is!
Tune in daily to hear the breadth and length and height and depth of His love for you.
Chicago 950AM, Chicago West 930AM, NW Indiana 1270AM
(Listen online at www.relevantradio.com)

Living God’s Word
We pray as Jesus prayed that we might hear the voice of the Father, a voice that speaks of God’s love for us. We ask that we might allow that Spirit, God’s holy breath that came upon us at our own baptism, to move us out into the world in service to those most in need whom God has set before us.

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Crossroads

CALENDAR EVENTS:
Jan. 13 Home Group Meetings
Jan. 16 HG Leaders Mtgs 9 a.m. or 7 p.m.
Jan. 27 Home Group Meetings

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

Limited space is available so register now!

AS YOU 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

Seniors in high school lead this time away from the usual routine to connect with what really matters—God, Family & Friends!

OUR FROSH/SOPH RETREAT GROUP HAD A FABULOUS TIME AWAY!

Our teen leaders made a weekend of fun & faith possible by giving of their time & energy...many thanks to Chris, Caroline, Bella, Kate, Maureen, Audrey & Matt (below) and all our participants (above) for sharing themselves & exploring their IDENTITY!

The ropes course & snowball fights were awesome!

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This weekend most of our eighth grade students will be testing for the Catholic High School Entrance exam. Last year, our acceptance rate into the Catholic High Schools was a phenomenal 99%, with many students in the class of 2012 attending the following schools: Benet, Fenwick, Nazareth, and St. Ignatius.

This week also provided our eighth grade students with some enjoyment as they sculpted and designed their “Who am I?” masks. These masks are sculpted from their own faces and represent their personalities.

We’d also like to take the opportunity to invite all families to a “Story and Craft Time” at Barbara’s Bookstore in Burr Ridge Center on Saturday, January 19, from 10:30 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Mr. Casper, art teacher, will be doing crafts with the children and some of our students from the older grades will be reading to the children. We hope you will join us and bring your friends and neighbors, especially those who may be thinking about Catholic education.

This week we completed meeting with all the 8th graders in preparation for their upcoming Confirmation. The students gathered in small groups with a staff member or a high school member of the Day of the Spirit team and discussed which sacramental experiences were most meaningful to them. They explained why they chose their saint for their Confirmation name. The candidates also talked about the importance of their service experiences and described the gifts of the Holy Spirit that they recognize in others and themselves.

Confirmation is their “yes” to becoming involved in our Catholic faith. Please join us in prayer for all our youth who will receive the sacrament this month. We pray they will embrace the gifts of the Holy Spirit that will become alive within their hearts and that they continue to live faith-filled lives.

This Week at SJC
January 14, All School Liturgy, 9 a.m., Church
January 15, School Advisory Board Meeting, 7 p.m. Parish Center
January 19, Story and Craft Time, 10:30 a.m.-12 p.m. Barbara’s Bookstore, 810 Village Center Dr. Burr Ridge Center

Praying for our 8th graders

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Journey Toward Healing - 2 Grief Support Groups

- Share your unique journey
- Grow through listening and working with others
- Understand normal grief reactions
- Move through your grief process
- Begin to heal, not to forget, but to heal

There are no fees, but donations are accepted. Advance registration is necessary to ensure small groups for sharing.

**Grief 101**
*Understanding grief after the recent loss of a loved one.*
*For adults who are newly bereaved.*
**Tuesday, January 22, 6:30—8:00 p.m.**

**General Journey Toward Healing**
*For adults who are grieving the loss of a loved one.*
**6 consecutive weeks**
**Tuesdays, February-March 26, 6:30—8:00 p.m.**

**Infant-Perinatal-Neonatal**
*HUG (Honoring Unspoken Grief)*
*Group centers around topics most common in Perinatal grief.*
**6 consecutive weeks. Call for further information.**

**Young Widow / Widower Group**
*For adults 50 years of age and younger who are grieving The loss of a spouse.*
**6 consecutive weeks**
**Tuesdays, April 16—May 21**
**6:30—8:00 p.m.**

**Widow / Widower Group**
*For adults who are grieving the loss of a spouse.*
**Thursdays, March 7—April 11**

**Adult Loss of a Parent Group**
*For adult men and women who are grieving the loss of a parent.*
**Tuesdays, February 5—March 12, 6:30-8:00 p.m.**

**FOR MORE INFORMATION**
**Nancy Kiel, Bereavement Coordinator**
*Center for Home Care and Hospice*
*Two Westbrook Corporation Center, Suite 600*
*Westchester, IL  60154   708-216-1646*

**St. Francis Xavier Parish Bereavement Ministry**
St. Francis Xavier Parish Bereavement Ministry is once again hosting a support group series for all those walking through grief and loss. The Healing Journey Grief Support Group is open to all those journeying through loss and will meet on four consecutive Thursday evenings during the late/early spring in the St. Francis Parish Office from 7-8:30 p.m.  **Winter / Spring Series: February 28, March 7, March 14 and March 21**

Support group meetings are held in the Parish Offices located on the corner of Greenleaf and 9th Street in Wilmette, IL.  There is no cost to attend.  This year, selections from the book “The Healing Journey Through Grief: Your Journal for Reflection and Recovery” will be used.  The book will be available during the sessions and will also be available for purchase.  All are welcome.  Refreshments are served.  Reservations will be required and the meetings will be closed after the first session.

“How does one cope with the powerful emotions, chaos, and confusion that follow loss...what can one do to work through loss and the grieving process?...”  The materials and support provided through these sessions will give you tools to cope as you walk your journey.  Taken from “The Healing Journey Through Grief, Journal for Reflection and Recovery...”

For information on the support group, please contact Group Facilitator Julie Berggren at julie.Berggren@hotmail.com or you may leave a confidential voice mail at the St. Francis Ministry of Care Office: 847-256-2273 x1.
Interfaith Career Network

It’s 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, 2013 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, 5005 S. Wolf Road in Western Springs.

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Interfaith Career Network
Winter Workshop, 2013

Interfaith Career Network invites you to join us when the First Presbyterian Church of La Grange will host a six-week job support skills workshop on Tuesday evenings beginning January 22, from 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.. Whether you are unemployed, under-employed, looking for a career change or a recent grad looking for your first professional position, this informative workshop is for you. FPCLG is located at 150 South Ashland Avenue; meetings will be held in Westminster Hall. Please enter church on Catherine Avenue. For further information, call the FPCLG church office at 708.354.0771. This workshop is open to all and there is no fee to attend. We look forward to welcoming you!

Interfaith Career Network offers job support through various programs throughout the month. For further information, please visit our website: www.interfaithcareernetwork.org.

From our friends at St. Thomas of Canterbury Parish…..

Dear St. John of the Cross Parishioners,

Thank you so much for your annual Harvest Saturday food collection. I was amazed to see the food stacked to the ceiling in our food pantry! We are so grateful for your faithful generosity.

Time has been flying by in this season of giving and thanksgiving! The distribution of Thanksgiving turkeys seems like ages ago as we prepare for our annual distribution of Christmas gifts for the children of families who come to our Food Pantry. The guests of our Soup Kitchen receive gifts as well, around the time of Epiphany, when the magi from the East brought gifts for the Christ Child. With your support, we are able to provide those who come to our door with some of their basic needs, and also something special in this season of joy.

May your holiday be holy and blessed. You are in our prayers with gratitude in this season of Advent and Christmas.

Sincerely,
Fr. Tirso S. Villaverde, Jr.
Pastor

From St. Mark Parish….

Dear SJC Parishioners,

On behalf of all of us at St. Mark Parish, I would like to thank you for your Christmas gifts. Your generous support to our Parish brought happiness and hope to our parishioners. Our families obtained clothes, food for their Christmas dinner, and toys and clothes for their children.

This is my first time as St. Mark’s Pastor to witness so much joy, care, sharing and love during the past few days. Thank you so much for sharing God’s blessings with us this Christmas season. Thank you so much for giving us so much joy. Thank you so much for caring for us. Thank you so much for your love.

I want to thank all your marvelous volunteers who worked for weeks collecting presents for my parishioners, and those who delivered them to us. I am truly humbled and grateful for all the joy, care, and love we have received from you and the Lord.

I pray and ask our gracious and loving God to grant you a New Year filled with abundant blessings.

Yours in Christ,
Rev. Jesus Medina
Aging Care Connections
Lecture Series

Physiology of Aging
Wednesday, January 23, 1 p.m.
This lecture will discuss the many changes people experience as they age.

Taking Charge of Your Health
Wednesday, February 20, 2 p.m.
Most older adults cope with a variety of chronic health conditions. This lecture will focus on our need to know more about chronic disease self-management and medical choice.

Preparing for the Journey
Wednesday, March 27, 2 p.m.
This lecture will discuss Estate Planning, Advanced Directives, financial and legal considerations and the accompanying emotional and practical considerations for seniors and their children.

To register for any of these free programs, or for more information, please contact Libby Kolar @ 708-579-86828 or email ekollar@fnblg.com

Lectures are held at the First National Bank of LaGrange, Annex, 600 West Burlington Ave., La Grange. Community Forum is presented free of charge, but space is limited to 25, so advance registration is required.

Need Host Families for Two Foreign Students

Two "Host Families" are needed for two Turkic university students who plan to attend a short-term management orientation program approximately May 4-18, 2013. In recent years, SJC parish members have offered their homes and motivation to help with foreign students’ career development. The success rate is 100%, with students becoming entrepreneurs or entering academia and earning their doctorate degrees.

Student registration deadline is January 21, 2013. INFORMATION: 708-246-5556 or lepinske@sbcglobal.net

Church Women United Annual Brunch
Friday, January 18th

All women are invited to attend the Church Women United LaGrange/Western Springs Chapter Annual Brunch/Meeting on Friday, January 18, 2013, 9:30 a.m. being held here at St. John of the Cross Parish Center. Guest speaker will be the Church Women United Illinois Board Member and State Gathering Chairperson, Karen Ziemba. Her presentation: CWU 101 - Agreeing To Differ, Uniting To Serve, will give insight to all aspects of the CWU movement and focus on the function of our local unit. Donation is $7.00. Please call Carolyn Grela for more information and/or to make your reservation.
In virtually all of his novels, Milan Kundera, manifests a strong impatience with every kind of ideology, hype, or fad that makes for group-think or crowd-hysteria. He is suspicious of slogans, demonstrations, and marches of all kinds, no matter the cause. He calls all these the great march and, to his mind, they invariably lead to violence, all of them. Kundera likes artists because they tend to steer clear of causes, wanting to paint or write rather than march.

There are causes worth fighting for and there are injustices and wounds in our world that demand our involvement beyond our wanting rather to paint or write. Still Kundera's severe judgment on marches and demonstrations of all kinds, the great march, is fair warning. Why?

Because in our more reflective moments we know how hard it is not to get caught up in ideology, hype, fad, group-think, and crowd-hysteria in a way that leaves us mindless. It's hard to know what we really think and believe, as opposed to what the cultural circles we move within prescribe for us. It's hard not to be caught up in the fashion of the moment.

But it's even harder for us to ground ourselves in something deeper; to root ourselves in a perspective outside what Thomas Hardy once called the maddening crowd. How can we ground ourselves in a depth that immunizes us from ideology, fad, hype, fashion, and the subtle group-hysterias that plague every culture?

In Luke's Gospel, the disciples sense that Jesus is drawing his wisdom, calm, strength, and power from somewhere beyond himself, that he is grounding himself in something beyond both the enticements and threats of the present moment. Their hunch is that he is finding this depth in prayer. They too want to connect to this depth and power and they have come to realize that prayer is the route, the only route, to take them there. And so they ask Jesus to teach them how to pray. What did he teach them? How do we pray in such a way so as to ground ourselves in something truly beyond our own individual and collective narcissism?

Metaphorically, this is described for us in the passage in Scripture which records the martyrdom of Saint Steven. This is the scene:

A crowd of very sincere, though misguided, persons, driven by religious fervor, but caught up in some group-hysteria, gather to stone Steven to death. Here's how scripture describes it: "They were infuriated when they heard this and ground their teeth at him. But Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at God's right hand. 'Look! I can see the heaven thrown open,' he said, 'and the Son of man standing at the right hand of God.' All the members of the council shouted out and stopped their ears with their hands; then they made a concerted rush at him, thrust him out of the city and stoned him." (Acts 7, 54-58)

Steven's death was real, but the description of his dying is replete with metaphors that tell us what it means to pray and what it means to not pray.

What does it mean not to pray? The crowd, notwithstanding their religious fervor and sincerity, do not pray. The description here says it all: Their gaze is on in Steven, at whom they are looking with misunderstanding and hatred. Moreover, his message of love is at that moment an inconvenient truth so they are stopping their ears so as not to hear. And they are in the grip of group-hysteria. They are not seeing the heavens laid open, but rather a very earthly person whom they hate; and they are not in the flow of the Holy Spirit but in the grip of hysteria. That is why their gaze never rises above their bitter glare at Steven. They are solely in the moment, in the now, seeing only what is below the heavens, and that is non-prayer. No matter how sincere we are religiously, what has just been described is not prayer. Indeed sometimes even our sincere prayer together is nothing more than the deepening of our group narcissism and a deeper enslavement to the maddening crowd. Our eyes are still on each other and not on God.

Stephen, on the other hand, is praying. He is described as having his eyes turned upward (a metaphor, not a pictorial description) and he is gazing into heaven and seeing the heavens laid open. His gaze is beyond the crowd, beyond the moment, beyond human divisions, beyond hatred, beyond even the fear of his own death. He is gazing into something beyond the crowd and the present moment. This, and only this, is prayer.

I share Kundera's fear about the great march and how easily and blindly I, and most everyone else, can fall into step. His hunch is that art can help ground us outside the maddening crowd. I would add that prayer is even more helpful.

Father Ron Rolheiser, OMI
SJC Women’s Club Cooking Night
Wednesday, January 30th 7 p.m. Parish Center
$10 per person

Mary Gail Bennett of Deliciously Yours in Western Springs will present an evening of family friendly dinners that are quick and easy to make. Also, David Trout of the popular Savory Spice Shop in Hinsdale will provide a sampling of spices for any evening’s menu to help you get cooking deliciously!

RSVP by January 28th to the Parish Center. Cash or check payment saves your spot for this wonderful evening. Space is limited.

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

Thursday, January 24, 7 p.m. - Mom’s Night Out! If you’ve never done a Zumba class, or if you are an old pro, you must come on Thursday, Jan. 24 at 7 p.m. to the Parish Center where the Mom’s Club is having local Zumba instructor Megan Albee teach a one-hour class. Wear your workout clothes and bring a bottle of water. You’ll have a blast, get in a high-energy workout, and can socialize with your friends, because we’ll have some refreshments after. Bring a friend and join us! Cost is $12 per attendee.

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.

Please contact Colleen Whittingham at whitting910@yahoo.com if you have any questions.

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.

To sign up your team captain and team members for Trivia night please go to the SJC website.
Questions? Contact Barrett Long at 708-784-9224.
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.

Eternal Rest Grant unto These, O Lord

John DiMonte, father of Jim and grandfather of
Jeremy, Olivia and Chloe

Dr. Casey Firlit, brother of Bob Firlit

Jim Gallagher, brother of Rosalie Lawinger

Fr. Charles Gallagher,
pastor emeritus of St. Cletus

Richard Rumpf, brother of Roberta Gilbert

Julia Tarpinian, mother of Stacy Schlehofer and grandmother of Samantha, Stephanie and Frank

Mass Intentions

Monday, January 14
6:30 Raymond Matusik; Randal Zorrow
7:45 Bill Alberts; Beth Eichler

Tuesday, January 15
6:30 Donald Gallagher; Sue Martin
7:45 Muriel Albertson; Robert Maliszewski

Wednesday, January 16
6:30 Tina & Nunzio Ferraro; Fred Impastato
7:45 Susanne Walsh; Pete Capellani

Thursday, January 17, St. Anthony
7:45 Mildred Domagal; Dorothy DiSalvo

Friday, January 18
7:45 Special Intention; Ellen McGowan

Saturday, January 19
8:00 Frank Gorcowski; Theresa Ripoli
5:00 John Fash; John DenBesten

Sunday, January 20, Second Sunday Ordinary
7:30 Helen Devereux; Therese Brda
9:00 Matthew Flood; Jorge Paez
10:45 SJC & St. Thaddeus Parishioners
12:15 Jerry Albertson; Katie Courtemanche
5:00 A. George Zurowski; Eileen McCarthy

Mass is Moving to Parish Center! On Saturday, February 2, 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.

The Lord will bless his people with peace.

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

Fr. David P. Dowdle    Pastor    ddowdle@stjohnofthecross.org
Fr. Filbert F. Ngwila    Associate Pastor    fngwila@stjohnofthecross.org
John Schopp    Deacon    john.schopp@newhemispheres.com
Bill Bright    Outreach    bbright@stjohnofthecross.org
Janet Caschetta    Director of Youth Catechesis    jcaschetta@stjohnofthecross.org
Jim Clauer    Worship    jclauer@stjohnofthecross.org
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Session 2 which covers pages 63-138 will be held on:

**Tuesday, January 22nd at 1:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m.**
OR **Friday, January 25th at 7:00 p.m.**

There are 3 different days-times to choose from for each session. Sessions are held every other week. All 5 Sessions are held in the Parish Center. Come to Session 2 even if you were not able to keep up with the reading or missed the first Session.

The Study Guide which was given out at Session 1 is also available electronically on the parish website. Additional paper copies of the Guide are available in the Parish Center.

It's not too late to participate! Call the Parish Center or register on our parish website. Extra copies of the bestselling book by Matthew Kelly were ordered and are now available in the Parish Center or the Community Room of church if you did not get your copy! There is no cost for the book, Study Guide or Book Seminar.

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**See Matthew Kelly at SJC on February 2nd, 9-1:30 p.m.**

Matthew Kelly’s *Passion & Purpose Live* event is a mini-retreat that will help you to apply the genius of our Catholic faith 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 before the event is sold out!

**Matthew Kelly has spoken at archdiocesan events for our priests and deacons so feel free to ask Fr. David, Fr. Filbert, Deacon John, or Deacon Tom about Matthew Kelly!**

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.