When the wine ran short, 
the mother of Jesus said to him, 
“They have no wine.” 
And Jesus said to her, 
“Woman, how does your concern affect me? 
My hour has not yet come.”

His mother said to the 
servers, 
“Do whatever he tells you.” 
John 2:3–5
Dear Parishioners,

Many people complain that this time of year can be boring and they are looking for things to do. The post-Christmas blahs and the cold of January combine to keep people indoors and can be the beginning of ‘cabin fever’ if it lasts too long. In a parish, the busy-ness of December rolls right into the busy-ness of January. There are lots of things happening around here to fight being bored or isolated.

The book discussion/faith sharing for Matthew’s Kelly’s *Rediscover Catholicism* is being well attended, with over 220 participants. In every other week cycles, you are more than welcome to attend whenever you’d like. This coming week will be the second of the five part series. The same session is offered three times a week: Tuesday, afternoon, Tuesday evening and Friday evening. Please see elsewhere in this bulletin, on our website, or the posters near the exits for the section of the book being covered this coming week.

Next Saturday, 203 eighth graders will receive the Sacrament of Confirmation from Bishop Manz in two ceremonies. They began their preparation as 7th graders in small groups. Over the course of that time they completed 20 service projects. They have chosen saints’ names as their confirmation name, asked adults whom they admire to be their sponsors, reflected on their baptisms with their parents and (hopefully) memorized the 7 gifts of the Holy Spirit. Thank you for taking a dove with one of their names on it from the Prayer Tree and please continue to pray for these young people as they move toward the adventure that is high school and the rest of their life.

The day after Confirmation, Bishop Manz will return to be with us for the 9:00 am Sunday morning Mass. We begin Catholic School’s Week next weekend and one of the students from the school will speak briefly after communion at all the Masses. Bishop Manz will be with us to thank the parishioners for their generosity and support of the school, without which the awarding of the Blue Ribbon would not have been possible. Please join us for hospitality after the Masses.

One of the gifts in a parish like ours is that talented, gifted, generous people step forward and take responsibility for a ministry like Marriage Preparation or Baptismal Preparation. One of the dangers is that they do it so well and so faithfully that over time they inadvertently get ignored by the pastor and staff dealing with other challenges. We are gathering both groups this month to review what has been happening in the ministry, to see what support they may need and to give them a boost of support and enthusiasm.

And of course, this is the time of year, when the annual budget is being prepared for the archdiocese. The parish Finance Committee will meet this week, the School Advisory Board is looking at next year’s needs and possible tuition increases, and every aspect of parish life will evaluate financial realities.

We are close to the limit for Matthews Kelly’s tickets for his February 2nd presentation. If you don’t want to start February with the winter blahs, you might want to get your ticket soon.

Peace,
Fr. David
KNOW THE MASS, ONE WORD AT A TIME

Serving means making ourselves available to meet the needs of others. Jesus served us in the most remarkable way. He identified his mission and his service when he said “the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). He serves us by giving up his life for us and for our redemption and healing. And we meet him serving us every time we celebrate the Mass—"This is my body, which will be given up for you."

In the Mass and outside the Mass, we take the service of Jesus to our hearts. We know that we too must make ourselves available to meet the needs of others. We too must serve.

Annual Catholic Appeal

Saint Paul reminds us that Love Never Fails! Let us better understand God’s love and express our own love of the Church by supporting initiatives that serve those in need through the Annual Catholic Appeal.

Catholic Relief Services represents the Church’s healing presence throughout the world. Their work promotes human development by responding to major emergencies, fighting disease and poverty and nurturing peaceful and just societies. Through the Annual Catholic Appeal, the generosity of the people of the Archdiocese of Chicago is passed on to support this important ministry.

Parish News

This Week at SJC
Monday, January 21
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
5:30 p.m. Finance Council Meeting

Tuesday, January 22
8:30 a.m. Parent Association Meeting
9:30 a.m. Focus on Sunday Scriptures Group
1:00 p.m. Rediscover Catholicism
1:30 p.m. Sr. Josephine’s Bible Study
3:00 p.m. Tuesdays with Mary
7:00 p.m. Rediscover Catholicism
7:00 p.m. RCIA

Wednesday, January 23
9:00 a.m. Faith Sharing Group
9:30 a.m. Bible Study 3
2:00 p.m. Christian Meditation
7:00 p.m. Faith Sharing Group
7:30 p.m. Christian Meditation

Thursday, January 24
7:00 p.m. Mom’s Night Out
7:00 p.m. Kairos Parent Meeting

Friday, January 25
9:00 a.m. Mom’s Club
6:00 p.m. Confirmation Rehearsal
7:00 p.m. K 13 Meeting
7:00 p.m. Rediscover Catholicism

Saturday, January 26
7:00 a.m. Christian Meditation
10:00 a.m. & 2:00 p.m. Confirmation
6:00 p.m. Trivia Night

Sunday, January 27
Catholic Schools Week Reception after the 9 and 10:45 a.m. Masses

“We want to teach our children how important it is to support the work of the Church.”
The Rogowski Family
St. John of the Cross Parish
Reflections on the Gospel

Living the Gospel

Jesus’ epiphany—the revelation of his glory—did not end with the sign he performed but with the belief to which his followers came. Not only does Jesus change water into wine, but he transforms his disciples from being mere companions to becoming those who believe in him. They move from fellowship to the intimacy of belief and their lives will never be the same. He changed them. He will change us. And our lives will never be the same. Here is the Good News: spending ourselves for the sake of another is how we actively believe, how we achieve salvation, how we march steadily toward messianic abundance, how we share in Jesus’ glory. By thus spending ourselves do we achieve the fullness of abundance Jesus promises in the age to come. No, our lives will never be the same.

The messianic age announced in the gospel is given a different concrete description in the first reading from Isaiah. There God is the Spouse and rejoices in us who are God’s beloved. Like the disciples in the gospel, we are to “believe in him.” This lays out for us a lifelong task of accepting all the signs of Jesus’ presence and messianic abundance among us. It means that we are to make a lifelong covenant with God. Traditionally, this is how we understand our baptism. It is our initial celebration of a relationship with God that is intimate, loving, lasting. Our fidelity during this life assures us that death is not a separation but an entrance into eternal life where the wine never runs out, the rejoicing never ceases, and the depths of love are never exhausted. During Ordinary Time we journey with Jesus through a gospel (this year, Luke’s gospel) toward our fulfillment at the messianic banquet. Let us taste the wine, and know that the good only gets better! No, our lives will never be the same.

Closing Prayers

May we have our lives transformed by the generosity of those who believe in Jesus and live his Gospel.

May we grow in our intimacy with Jesus through our love for each other.

Our Father . . .

Readings for the Week

Monday
Heb 5:1-10
Ps 110:1, 2, 3, 4
Mark 2:18-22

Tuesday
Heb 6:10-20
Ps 111:1-2, 4-5, 9 & 10c
Mark 2:23-28

Wednesday
Heb 7:1-3, 15-17
Ps 110:1, 2, 3, 4
Mark 3:1-6

Thursday
Heb 7:25-8:6
Ps 40:7-8a, 8b-9, 10, 17
Mark 3:7-12

Friday
Acts 22:3-16 or Acts 9:1-22
Ps 117:1bc, 2
Mark 16:15-18

Saturday
Acts 22:3-16 or Acts 9:1-22
Ps 96:1-2a, 2b-3, 7-8a, 10
Mark 3:20-21

3rd Sunday in OT
Heb 8:2-4a, 5-6, 8-10
Ps 19:8, 9, 10, 15
1 Cor 12:12-30 or
1 Cor 12:12-14, 27
Luke 1:1-4, 14-21

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Meditation by Richard Rohr

The Feminine Has a Head Start

Historically speaking, in most cultures the role of men has been to create, to make new things, to fix broken things, and to defend us from things which could hurt us. All of these are wonderful and necessary roles for the preservation of the human race.

However, most children saw their mother in a different way. She was not a creator, a fixer, or a defender, but rather a transformer. Once a woman has carried her baby inside of her body for nine months and brought it forth, through the pain of childbirth, into the world, she knows the mystery of transformation at a cellular level. She knows it intuitively, yet she usually cannot verbalize it, nor does she need to. She just holds it at a deeper level of consciousness. She knows something about mystery, about miracles, and about transformation that men will never know (which is why males had to be initiated!). Women who are not mothers often learn it by simply being in the “community of women.”

The feminine body can be seen as a cauldron of transformation. Her body turns things into other things—her body turns a love act into a perfect little child. Yet, in her heart, she knows SHE did not do it. All she had to do was to wait and eat well, to believe and to hope for nine months. This gives a woman a very special access to understanding spirituality as transformation—if she is able to listen to her own experience and her own body. Admittedly, not all women do.

Adapted from On Transformation: Collected Talks, Volume 1: The Maternal Face of God (CD)
(Read Adam’s Return on the concept of male initiation, and why women did not need initiation in the classic sense.)

Year of Sunday Mass: Question of the Week

In the Gospel of Luke Jesus turns water into wine, “and his disciples began to believe in him.”

How does celebrating Mass help me believe in Jesus?

www.stjohnofthecross.org 1/20/13
Adult Faith Formation

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. There are a limited number of tickets left for purchase so do not delay.

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.

2013 New Thinking for a New Era:

Holy Hour January 21st

On Monday January 21st Fr. Filbert 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.

Parents, consider bringing your whole family to Adoration each week.

flourish

Join Flourish, the Women’s Club new faith sharing group, 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

Spiritual Journaling  Mondays, 2:30 p.m.
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. All are welcome!

Join over 200 parishioners!

Come to our parish Rediscover Catholicism Book Seminar-Faith Sharing Group

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.

*All the earth shall bow down before you, O God, and shall sing to you, shall sing your name, O Most High!* Entrance Antiphon Psalm 66
Happy New Semester!

As you can see many of our events have found their leaders! With just a couple remaining, the time to check in is NOW! (events will be cancelled by dates in parenthesis if no leaders volunteer)

Prayer Experiences Night on March 3 (Jan. 21)
Need 1-2 Juniors or Seniors & 1 adult to facilitate the organizing of the gathering of home groups to experience various prayers offered by spirituality committee

Leader’s End of the Year Dinner on May 19
Need 2 adults (preferably parents) to act as hosts for the catered dinner (order, greet, serve, pack & clean) while Katie runs the meeting with teen & adult leaders

Teen Battle of the Bands (tentatively on June 13) (Jan. 21) Need 2 adults & 2 teens to coordinate alongside

MANY THANKS TO OUR CHURCH LEAGUE BASKETBALL TEAM of ADULTS who ensured our year got off to a great start!

Marty Kearney coordinated coaches & scheduling, Mike Mohler trained & scheduled scorekeepers, Heidi Lopez coordinated registration & rosters, David Pipal ordered & distributed t-shirts, ongoing Gym supervisors include Karan Payne, Steve Greska, Matt Minik, Berni McCloskey, Carol Christian, and team coaches are: Mike Cunningham, Colin Plunkett, Jack Forde, Greg Koerner, Mike Dulla, Mike Delaney, Steve Thomas, Hansterfer, Tim Murphy, and Glen Somers.

Without a committed group of adults who stepped up, this season would not have happened. THANK YOU ALL!

Please continue the prayers for our K13 team of teen & adults as they prepare for an awesome retreat.

Our youth desire God in their lives—evidenced by our retreat roster being FULL two months prior to the actual retreat!

How else can we engage our teens in their faith life? How else can we help them develop their relationship with God? If you’ve asked these questions it might mean you are being called to serve our teens.

Call Katie for details on how you can share your faith & encourage teens to seek God in this world. 708-246-4404 khayes@stjohnofthecross.org.

Efforts are in the works to bring a version of 4U3...if you are interested in supporting our teens please contact Katie Hayes to join us!

SUMMER CONFERENCE & WORK TOUR INFORMATION WILL BE AVAILABLE SOON: please check our website for the info packet and details!

Many thanks to Joe Gazdacka, Maribeth White, Michael Grabis & Kim Vitale for all their efforts to organize our adventures!

Girls Church League Basketball….

Is there an interest? Would any of our high school female parishioners like to play, March-May?

Please let Katie know & spread the word. We are in the need of 1-2 more adults to ensure we can join the Church League so please contact Katie Hayes for details. khayes@stjohnofthecross.org or 708-246-4404
Parish School

Life in Christ
Catholic Morality

Thursdays, February 7, 14, 21 & 28
6:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

presented by
Sr. Mary McNulty, OP

Open to all adults seeking to grow in faith. Offered at no cost to you, courtesy of the Religious Education Burlington Cluster of area churches. This course can lead to certification with the Office of Catechesis and Youth Ministry. Workshop will be located in the Parish Center.

Register to learn about...
• Sources of Knowing How to Live Justly
• Decalogue: Living in Right Relationship
• Jesus Christ: Primary Point of Reference for Moral Living
• The magisterium: Moral and Social Teaching

Register TODAY at 708-246-6760 or yc@sjcross.org

St. John of the Cross Parish School Raises the Standards – Catholic Schools Week
Please join us for our annual observance of Catholic Schools Week, beginning next Sunday, January 27. This year’s theme is “Catholic Schools Raise the Standards,” which celebrates academic excellence, high moral standards, and faith development. We’ve planned a variety of activities to show how we’re raising the standards.

Sunday, January 27 – Catholic School Raise the Standards:
In Our Parish
Students will greet and thank parishioners at each Mass for helping provide them with a strong Catholic Education. After the 9:00 am and 10:45 am Masses there will be a celebration in the Parish Center. Bishop Manz will be celebrating the 9:00 a.m. Mass with us.

Monday, January 28 – Catholic Schools Raise the Standards:
In Our Community
Students will attend an all-school liturgy at 9:15 a.m. in the Church. At school, the day will begin with the Prayer of the Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta and the students will begin the week by participating in an all school service project. We will be collecting gently used jeans for the homeless. If you have gently used jeans you would like to donate, please drop them at the school or Parish Center. If we collect the most jeans in the country, we will be awarded a $10,000 grant from Aeropostale.

Tuesday, January 29 – Catholic Schools Raise the Standards:
In Our Students
Students will begin the day today with a Students’ Prayer for the Future. The day will be filled with activities focusing on the students. The 6th graders present their puppet shows. The 8th graders will host the “Invention Convention,” while other students are writing letters and becoming pen pals with students at Saint John of the Cross School in Lemon Grove, CA.

Wednesday, January 30 – Catholic Schools Raise the Standards:
In Our Faculty, Staff, and Volunteers
Our day will begin with a Prayer for our Teachers. Faculty and Staff will be treated to a special lunch prepared by our Parent Association and will be presented with many surprises throughout the day to thank them for all they do.

Thursday, January 31 – Catholic Schools Raise the Standards:
In Our Vocations
The daily prayer will be a Prayer for Vocations. Please join us for our annual Open House from 9:15-11:15 a.m. and from 1:30-3:00 p.m. You will be delighted to see the students’ work on display.

Friday, February 1 – Catholic Schools Raise the Standards:
In Our Nation
Today’s prayer is a Prayer for Catholic Schools. Faculty, staff, and students will join together to celebrate our school with a spirit day and a conclusion of our service project.

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

www.stjohnofthecross.org
A simple prayer: "Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those who are without a bowl of soup to eat" is inspiring a youth-led movement to help hungry and hurting people around the world.

Join YC students during Super Bowl by placing an "O" in Super for Souper Bowl Sunday

More than 22 years ago, a Super Bowl Sunday prayer inspired a group of young people to do something more than celebrate a football game. They created Souper Bowl of Caring, and have rallied youth across the US to raise over $90 million for people in need. On Sunday February 3rd, millions of Americans will tune in to the Super Bowl football game. There will be parties with abundant food, friendship and fellowship. At the same time, there will be people worrying about staying warm, finding shelter and a warm meal.

Please join the young people of our Youth Catechesis Program as they demonstrate God’s love by caring for their neighbors through the Souper Bowl of Caring. It is a simple, yet significant act. Drop off a can of soup, non-perishable food items or a monetary donation at the signs: “SOUPER BOWL OF CARING” at YC classes and church narthex on February 2nd and 3rd.

Our youth are developing hearts for giving that can last a lifetime. Please support their efforts.

Everything collected will be donated to a area food pantry chosen by SJC YC Council. Please give generously.

Outreach

Let's put an End to Domestic Violence

Did you know that 1 in 4 women in the U.S. will be a victim of Domestic Violence sometime in her life? This cuts across all races and socio-economic classes. The most effective weapon to battle Domestic Violence is information and outreach. Please help end Domestic Violence in our community by attending the following presentation hosted by Pillars Constance Morris House:

Saturday, January 26, 9 a.m.–12 p.m.
St. Francis Xavier, 124 N. Waiola, LaGrange, IL
Types of Abuse, Cycle of Violence, Why Women Stay, Grief, Safety Planning

Saturday, February 9, 9 a.m.–12 p.m.
St. Francis Xavier, 124 N. Waiola, LaGrange
Effects of DV on Children, Civil/Criminal Order of Protection, Rights of Clients, Confidentiality

Interfaith Career Network

Winter Workshop, 2013
First Presbyterian Church of La Grange will host a six-week job support skills workshop on Tuesday evenings beginning January 22, from 7 p.m.- 9 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!

Free Resume Review
Free resume review on Saturday, February 2, from 9-11:30 a.m. at St. Cletus Education Building, 700 West 55th Street in La Grange. Have a helpful 20-minute one-on-one conversation with a Human Resource. Please enter the building at the flagpole entrance.
Please join the SJC Women’s Club for our Annual Cooking Night!
Wednesday, January 30th from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. in the Parish Center

Mary Gail Bennett of Deliciously Yours in Burr Ridge will present an evening of family friendly dinners that are quick and easy to make. Also, David Trout of the Savory Spice Shop in Hinsdale will provide a sampling of spices from the evening’s menu to help you get started on your dinner.

Space is limited! RSVP with cash or check by January 28th!
$10.00 per person
Make checks payable to: St. John of the Cross Women’s Club

NAME: ___________________________ NUMBER OF GUESTS: __________
ADDRESS: ______________________ E-MAIL: _______________________
PHONE: __________________________ AMOUNT ENCLOSED $___________

Questions? Contact: Elizabeth Turcich at elizabeth@turcichfamily.com

The SJC Men’s Club
invites all men of the parish to a morning with
Rev. Terry Keehan
Pastor of Holy Family Catholic Church, Inverness, IL
For an engaging and relevant talk on
“Our Work – the Primary Call from God”
Saturday, February 9th, 9:00 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.
Light morning refreshments will be served.

Father Terry Keehan became the third pastor of Holy Family Catholic Community in 2009. Fr. Terry spent most of his childhood in Arlington Heights and attended St. Viator High School. He attended the University of Nebraska at Omaha on a basketball scholarship and played in the NCAA Division II Tournament three of his four years. Prior to entering the seminary in 1982, Fr. Terry earned a Bachelor of Science in Speech Pathology and a Master of Arts in Organizational Communication. He was employed in sales for a pharmaceutical company and became very involved in the Young Adult programs at Old St. Pat’s Parish and was instrumental in forming the popular Theology on Tap. After ordination, Fr. Terry worked in the Vocation Office of the Archdiocese of Chicago from 1986 until 1994. During that time he was in residence here at SJC. In 1994, he became Associate Pastor of Queen of Angels Parish in Lincoln Square. Then in 1999, Fr. Terry became the Pastor of St. Matthias and also became the Pastor of nearby Transfiguration Parish where he served until coming to Holy Family.
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!

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 whitting910@yahoo.com if you have any questions.

SJC Men’s Club Hosts Trivia Night II
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. ____________________________ 5. ____________________________
2. ____________________________ 6. ____________________________
3. ____________________________ 7. ____________________________
4. ____________________________ 8. ____________________________
9. ____________________________

Questions? Contact Barrett Long 708-784-9224

Boy Scout Troop 117

SJC Men's Club
Pancake Breakfast
Sunday, February 10th

8:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
Parish Center
Nicholas Lash, in a deeply insightful essay on God and unbelief, suggests that the God that atheists reject is often simply an idol of their own imaginations: “We need do no more than notice that most of our contemporaries still find it ‘obvious’ that atheism is not only possible, but widespread and that, both intellectually and ethnically, it has much to commend it. This might be plausible if being an atheist were a matter of not believing that there exists ‘a person without a body’ who is ‘eternal, free, able to do anything, knows everything’ and is ‘the proper object of human worship and obedience, the creator and sustainer of the universe.’ If, however, by ‘God’ we mean the mystery, announced in Christ, breathing all things out of nothing into peace, then all things have to do with God in every move and fragment of their being, whether they notice this and suppose it to be so or not. Atheism, if it means deciding not to have anything to do with God, is thus self-contradictory and, if successful, self-destructive.”

Lash’s insight is, I believe, very important, not first and foremost for our dialogue with atheists, but for our understanding of our own faith. The first thing that Christianity defines dogmatically about God is that God is ineffable, that is, that it is impossible to conceptualize God and that all of our language about God is more inaccurate than accurate. That isn't just an abstract dogma. Our failure to understand this, perhaps more than anything else, is the reason why we struggle with faith and struggle to not fudge its demands. What's at issue here?

All of us, naturally, try to form some picture of God and try to imagine God's existence. The problem when we try to do this is that we end up in one of two places, both not good.

On the one hand, we often end up with an image of God as some superman, a person like ourselves, except wonderfully superior to us in every way. We picture God as a superhero, divine, all knowing, and all-powerful, but still ultimately like us, capable of being imagined and pictured, someone whom we can circumscribe, put a face to, and count. While this is natural and unavoidable, it leaves us, no matter how sincere we are, always, with an idol, a God created in our own image and likeness, and consequently a God who can easily and rightly be rejected by atheism.

On the other hand, sometimes when we try to form a picture of God and imagine God’s existence, something else happens: We come up dry and empty, unable to either picture God or imagine God's existence. We then end up either in some form of atheism or afraid to examine our faith because we have unconsciously internalized atheism’s belief that faith is naïve and cannot stand up to the hard questions.

When this happens to us, when we try to imagine God's existence and come up empty, that failure is not one of faith but of our imagination. We are living not so much inside of atheism as inside of God's ineffability, inside a "cloud of unknowing", a "dark night of the soul". We aren't atheists. We just feel like we are. It's not that God doesn't exist or has disappeared. It's rather that God's ineffability has put God outside of our imaginative capacities. Our minds are overmatched. God is still real, still there, but our finite imaginations are coming up empty trying to picture infinite reality, tantamount to what happens when we try to imagine the highest number to which it is possible to count. The infinite cannot be circumscribed by the imagination. It has no floor and it has no ceiling, no beginning and no end. The human imagination cannot deal with that.

God is infinite and, thus, by definition unimaginable and impossible to conceptualize. That's also true for God's existence. It cannot be pictured. However the fact that we cannot imagine God is very different than saying that we cannot know God. God can be known, even if not imagined. How?

We all know many things that we cannot imagine, conceptualize, or articulate. Inside us there is something the mystics call "dark knowledge", namely, an inchoate, intuitive, gut-sense within which we know and understand beyond what we can picture and give words to. And this isn't some exotic, paranormal talent that fortune-tellers claim to have. The opposite; it's our bedrock, that solid foundation that we touch in our most sincere and deepest moments, that place inside us where when we are at our best we ground our lives.

God is ineffable, unimaginable, and beyond conception and language. Our faith lets us bracket this for a while and lets us picture God as some idolized super-hero. But eventually that well runs dry and our finite minds are left to know the infinite only in darkness, without images, and our finite hearts are left to feel infinite love only inside a dark trust.

Rev. Ron Rolheiser, OMI

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.
IRA Charitable Gifts are **BACK IN BUSINESS**

If you’re age 70½ or older, you may be able to take advantage of an important incentive for charitable giving.

*Congress has re-authorized for 2012 and 2013 the provision that allows individuals to make gifts of up to $100,000 per year from their IRA accounts to one or more charities, without first incurring income tax on the withdrawal. Your gift may also count as your annual required minimum distribution from your IRA.*

This means that you can direct up to $100,000 a year from your IRA to St. John of the Cross with *no federal income tax liability.* The IRA Rollover may provide you with an excellent opportunity to make a gift during your lifetime from an asset that would be subject to multiple levels of taxation if it remained in your taxable estate.

Now, there are some details and restrictions:

1. You must be 70½ or older when you make your gift, and the gift must be made from an IRA – no other retirement plans (such as 401k, 403b or SEP accounts) qualify.
2. Your gift must come to us outright
3. Although the distribution will be free from income tax, it will not generate an income tax charitable deduction.

There are other details which we’ll be happy to guide you through.

Because Congress acted after the end of 2012 to pass this legislation, they have provided two ways you can make this type of gift and still have it count for 2012.

**Option One** is to make an IRA transfer by January 31, 2013 and elect for it to count as a charitable gift for 2012. The administrator of your IRA plan will make the actual distribution to us. We can provide a sample letter of instruction that you can send to your plan provider (see below for details).

**Option Two** applies if you took a distribution from your IRA in December 2012. In that case, you are allowed to send us a check in the amount of your December 2012 IRA distribution by January 31, 2013. Then elect on your tax return for the December 2012 distribution to count as an IRA rollover.

Rich Goode, the Archdiocese’s Director of Planned Giving, can provide a sample letter of instruction that you can send to your IRA plan provider. For more information, please feel free to contact Rich at rgoode@archchicago.org or 312/534-7848.

*REMEMBER, 2012 Charitable IRA distributions can be made*

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Making your Sunday offertory donation electronically (from your checking account or credit card) is easier than ever. Go to our parish website. Click on the Giving Tab. Click on the Donate Now button and fill out the information. Donating electronically is safe, convenient, good for the environment and is a much more effective means for generating revenue for our parish.

*Let us join hands to make our parish the best it can be!*
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

Virginia Kuchta, wife of Jerry, mother of Nancy, Susan, Gary and Gail

Helen Fanning, sister-in-law of Bill Fanning

Melissa Beacom  Garth Christie  Marie Coyne  Ashley Davis  Mary Sue  Donohue  Karen Hult  Emily Johanns  Lois Corrine Johnson  Maureen Knoernschild  Lee Lepinske  Yvonne Lowry

Nancy Olin  Greg Palaschak  Terry Peterson  Karen Philipp  Barbara Redling  Arlene Rehak  Bob Sturenfeldt  Sally Verde  Liz Wojtowicz  Christian Zacher

Mass Intentions

Monday, January 21, St. Agnes
6:30 Donald Gallagher; Raymond Matusik
7:45 Joseph Malezska; Mary Platek

Tuesday, January 22, Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children
6:30 John & Elizabeth Treacy; Bernard Warkey
7:45 Carol Delaney; Al Dougherty

Wednesday, January 23, St. Vincent
6:30 Don & Jim Gallagher
7:45 Margaret Albertson; Jack McDonell

Thursday, January 24, St. Francis de Sales
7:45 Purgatorial; Don Spiering

Friday, January 25, The Conversion of St. Paul
7:45 Dennis Callaghan; Dorothy Poro

Saturday, January 26, Ss. Timothy & Titus
8:00 Ellen McGowan; Doug Schley
5:00 The Den Besten Family; The Lukowsky Family

Sunday, January 27, Third Sunday Ordinary Time
7:30 Don Winkel; Jack McDonell
9:00 Robert Maliszewski; John Goldrick
10:45 Anthony Jacyno; Frances Grady
12:15 SJC & Kolbe House Parishioners
5:00 Joseph Munch; Gerald Gardner

Italics—Living

Almighty ever-living God, who governs all things, both in heaven and on earth, mercifully hear the pleading of your people and bestow your peace on our times. 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.

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.

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  jcascetta@stjohnofthecross.org
Jim Clauer  Worship  jclauer@stjohnofthecross.org
Kathleen Gorman  School Principal  gorman@sjc.pvt.k12.il.us
Katie Hayes  Crossroads High School  khayes@stjohnofthecross.org
Jessica Koch  Music  jkoch@stjohnofthecross.org
MJ Martin  Operations  mjmartin@stjohnofthecross.org
SJC Saintly Senior Club invites you to their Valentine Luncheon & Program Friday, February 15 11:30am William Tell Terrace Room

Cost is $25 per person at the Parish Center. Entrée choices below. RSVP by February 11th. Sorry, no refunds can be made after this date. William Tell is located at 6201 Joliet Road in Countryside. Park in the southwest corner of the lot and use the west entrance. Questions to Trudy Schmitt 246-4696.

Name: ...........................................................................................................................

Phone: ________________________________ Email: ________________________________

Entrée Choice: Butt Steak, Chicken Marsala, or Tilapia List each guest’s name and entrée choice. Lunch includes a glass of wine.

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__________ Reservations @ $25 per person ___________ Total Enclosed