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Dear Parishioners,

I think we are experiencing the ancient Chinese proverb, ‘May you live in interesting times’, over and over again. While not unprecedented, Pope Benedict XVI’s resignation this week has certainly made things interesting, and historical. Pope Gregory the XII was the last pope to resign the papal office, and he did it in 1415 AD. While doing a little research about this topic, I found it interesting that another Pope Benedict (the IX) also resigned his office, in the 1040’s AD.

The history of the role of popes in the church is long and storied. There is evidence that as early as 235 AD the resignation of a pope was considered. Let me quote an interesting little paragraph on another pope, Celestine V.

"At the end of the 13th century, a very holy hermit named Peter was elected as Pope Celestine V in order to break a deadlock in the conclave that had lasted nearly three years. He was elected because of his personal holiness, sort of a unity candidate. And once he got there, being a hermit, not used to the ways of the Roman Curia, he found himself somewhat unsuited to the task, that it wasn't just holiness but also some shrewdness and prudence that was also required. So within six months he knew that he was really unequal to the task, and so he gathered the cardinals together in a consistory… and he announced to the cardinals his intention to resign. Because of the pope's position as the supreme authority in the Church, Celestine declared that the pope could freely resign, that it was permissible."

(Professor Donald Prudlo on Vatican Radio)

Cardinal George spoke of Pope Benedict in somewhat the same terms. He describes the Pope as being an introvert and the most difficult part of being pope for him was all the public ceremonies, international travel, meetings, speeches etc., that are all part of the position. Extraverts are energized by that kind of stimulation and introverts are drained by them. Cardinal George thinks Pope Benedict is drained. Having achieved his 85th birthday, he is too tired to fulfill his role as the Bishop of Rome and the Vicar of Christ on earth.

I am very grateful that Pope Benedict is gracious enough to have made this difficult decision. I think it is an indicator of how he truly loves the church. Pope John Paul II’s suffering and illness at the end of his life was a remarkable public witness of faith in the midst of suffering. But there was also a price to pay by having the leader so physically and mentally disabled for such a long period of time. Pope Benedict has spared us from traveling that same path again.

Maybe this will be precedent setting in so far as his successors begin to see that their own physical frailties may indicate the time to relinquish their public responsibilities. There is great wisdom in the Church asking for bishops’ resignations at age 75 (and pastors at 70) to retire from administrative responsibilities. There is a tendency to forget that the pope is the pope only because he is the bishop of Rome. ‘The first among equals’, he serves as other bishops’ serve: as head of their local diocese. As successor of the first bishop of Rome, St. Peter, he also is the Vicar of Christ, meaning he is in the person of Christ who has not left us orphaned or abandoned. He truly becomes our ‘Holy Father’.

He remains Pope Benedict the XVI, deacon, priest and bishop, cardinal and now retired pope. Pray in gratitude for all he gave to the church and pray for his successor as well. May the Holy Spirit lead and guide the selection of the next bishop of Rome, ‘Servant of the Servants of God’.

Peace,
Fr. David

P.S. Oh yeah, the holy season of Lent has begun. Elsewhere in this bulletin you can find Lenten regulations, the many opportunities the parish is offering for spiritual growth during Lent, the importance of the catechumens and candidates for the Easter sacraments and the upcoming Parish Mission March 10-13th. May the ‘interesting times’ of this Lent draw you closer to the Risen Lord.
Lenten Parish Mission: March 11, 12, and 13 at 7 p.m. in Church

And God said: “Who told you that you were naked?”

March 9 – 13, 2013 (Weekend Masses & M, T, W at 7pm)

We are created in the Divine Image, but spend our lives costuming false images of ourselves, which disguise our deepest truth, separating, stressing and shaming us. Lent is a time to refine our vision to see who God sees and live from that belovedness, which God delights in. Come home to a party where costumes and masks are unnecessary: a celebration of the naked beautiful truth of who we are. Fr. Bob Colaresi, O. Carm. will lead us in reflecting on what images of God define us, what has to die or be stripped away to become more whole and healed and authentic.

Monday: Who is that stranger in the mirror?
Tuesday: Now we see dimly as in a mirror.
Wednesday: You are my beloved, in you I delight.

“All of us, with our unveiled faces, reflect like mirrors the brightness of the Lord, as we are gradually turned into the image that we reflect.”

2 Corinthians 3:18

Fr. Bob Colaresi, O. Carm., has been Director of the Society of the Little Flower since 1991. A native of New Britain, CT, he entered the Carmelites in 1959. Ordained a Priest in 1967, he served in Catholic high school ministry in Louisville, KY and then served as Principal of Joliet Catholic High School in Joliet, IL from 1975 to 1988. He has Masters Degrees in Theology, Medieval History, and Religious Education. Fr. Bob claims "St. Therese is my friend, as well as my boss!"
Monday mornings 9:30am  
Wednesday evenings 7:00pm  
Thursday afternoons Noon  
Thursday evenings 7:00pm School Chapel  

All in Parish Center except Thursday evenings.

A one time free will offering of $6 is suggested.  
Monday afternoons 1:00pm  
Monday evenings 6:30pm  
Wednesday mornings Flourish 9:00am  
Wednesday afternoons 2:00pm  
Thursday mornings 9:30am  

All in Parish Center  
Free Will Offering of $2  

Sacred Space is a way to look for God’s presence in your life through daily prayer scripture and meditations and weekly small group faith sharing. Fill each day of your Lenten journey with growth and inspiration. Enrich your prayer life.

Continue on your spiritual journey toward spiritual transformation and a more contemplative peace-filled life. Contemplative living is a way of responding to our everyday experience by consciously attending to our relationships. It deepens our awareness of our connectedness to others and this becomes a meaningful direction in our lives. The program involves weekly readings and time for reflection that will be discussed in the small groups.

Name: ________________________________________________________

Email and Phone: _______________________________________________

Bridges:  **Mondays 9:30am**  **Wednesdays 7pm**  **Thursdays Noon**  **Thursdays 7pm**

Sacred Space:  **Mondays 1pm**  **Mondays 6:30pm**  **Wednesdays 9am**

**Wednesdays 2pm**  **Thursdays 9:30am**

Circle Your Choice ~ Drop form at Parish Center or Sign-Up Online

Join anytime.
This Lenten Retreat is co-sponsored by our parish at The Well. The $60 registration fee is waived for our parishioners. We ask that you bring $10 cash that day for your lunch. Register by calling the Parish Center receptionist by February 24th.

ATTHEWELL

JULIAN OF NORWICH AND CONTEMPLATIVE LIVING:
A Lenten Day of Retreat

Saturday, March 2, 10 a.m.—4:30 p.m.
Facilitator: Father William Meninger

Father Meninger will explore with us the life and spirituality of mystic Julian of Norwich who had a series of visions of Jesus in 1373.

We’ll see how Julian’s contemplative posture was, in the words of St. Paul, “praying without ceasing,” or seeing God in all creation at all times and is a way of life accessible to us today.

Father Meninger will share several experiences of contemplative living that may be familiar to us in our own lives. Allowing such experiences to deepen in us can be life altering.

COST: $60 (includes lunch).

The Well is located at 1515 W. Ogden Ave. in LaGrange Park.

Go to our parish website to learn all about Lent at SJC!

Lent began last Wednesday, February 13th Ash Wednesday. The Church invites us to fast, pray and give. Through many programs that our parish offers we draw strength as we fall back into our inner selves to find God. Lent is also a season in which our RCIA catechumens and candidates participate in various rites as they get closer to the reception of the sacraments at Easter Vigil. Toward the end of last year, we celebrated the Rite of Acceptance in which our catechumens and candidates made their commitment to the program, and the parish community welcomed them and assured them support in their journey to becoming full members of the Catholic Church and St. John of the Cross Parish. In two weeks they will celebrate the Rite of Sending in which we will send our catechumens and candidates for the Rite of Election at Holy Name Cathedral. There they will join other catechumens and candidates from other parishes throughout the Archdiocese, and they will be welcomed by the bishop as the Elect who will receive the sacraments at Easter Vigil.

When we think about Lent we should first of all think about Christian initiation as the engine that drives it. The reason we have Lent is because of the catechumenate. The first feast in the liturgical calendar to emerge in the early Church was Easter. Lent came centuries later. People were celebrating Easter first, and it took a long time to develop Lent. Lent appeared in connection with the preparation for baptism. People found that the people who were preparing to be baptized at Easter needed the time of intense spiritual preparation before Easter. And that was why the season of Lent began.

Peace!
Fr. Fil Ngwila
This Lent, we are invited not so much to think of what we will “give up,” but more, to think about how we will enhance, renew and develop our relationship with Jesus. As a parish community, we will participate in CRS Rice Bowl as a way to encounter Jesus through others, especially the most vulnerable around the world. Expressing love for those in need expands our hearts in hope.

Along with 13,000 faith communities across the U.S., our parish will participate in Catholic Relief Services’ Lenten Rice Bowl. This program invites us to pray with our families and fast in solidarity with those who are hungry, and at the same time learn about the people who will receive help from our sacrificial contributions.

At Masses this weekend each parish family will receive a cardboard Rice Bowl to fill with spare change and a Lenten Calendar with prayers, recipes and reflections.

Then each week in Lent we will learn about hunger and poverty in a different country. In addition, children in our parish school and YC program will receive Rice Bowls in their classrooms and will participate in special activities to help them deepen their awareness of needs throughout the world.

Your Rice Bowl can be brought to Mass on Palm Sunday, March 24, or dropped off at the Parish Center after Palm Sunday.

**Growing Food in Burkina Faso**

In the small West African nation of Burkina Faso, 80% of the population are farmers. Frequent droughts make it difficult to produce enough food for the entire year. Often, farmers can only grow enough to feed their families for seven months. The rest of the year is called “the hungry season.” This week, we pray for families in Burkina Faso and give to CRS Rice Bowl to help small-scale farmers.

**Recipe From Burkina Faso: Bean Cakes**

Place black-eyed peas in a blender with the onion, carrots, and egg.

- 1 can black-eyed peas, drained
- 1 small onion, chopped
- 2 carrots, peeled & chopped
- 1 egg, whisked
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp black pepper
- 1 cup flour
- ¼ cup oil
- 2 cups cooked rice

Blend to a smooth paste and add salt and pepper. If bean mixture has too much liquid to form balls, then add a ¼ cup of flour to thicken. Shape mixture into 2 inch balls and roll in flour. Pat into flat discs and fry in vegetable oil until browned (about 5-7 minutes), turning occasionally. Serve with rice. Serve 4 people.

For more recipes, go to CRS Rice Bowl 2013.

**First Sunday of Lent — Luke 4:1-13**

How does the world, society, or community in which we live tempt us to live for ourselves, without regard to others?

In Sunday’s Gospel, Jesus commands that God alone is worshiped and served. How do we serve God through our compassion and service to others?

**REFLECTION**

In your prayer this week, ask Jesus to show you the areas that most tempt you to follow your own agenda over God’s plan for you. Ask for the grace to break the hold those temptations often have over you. Make this the work of your Lenten fast.
Family Rosary
Thursdays in Lent (except Holy Thursday) 6:30 p.m. in the Community Room. The Rosary is also prayed every Tuesday at 3 p.m. in the Community Room. The Rosary is also prayed daily before and after the 7:45am Mass in the Mary Chapel.

Evening or Morning of Meditation
In addition to ongoing meditation opportunities listed to the right, during this Lenten season you are cordially invited to join us for a special meditation program, Progress not Perfection. We will meditate, share, watch A Symbol of the Journey, a dvd presentation narrated by Laurence Freeman, OSB, and there will be a period of Lectio Divina, a way of prayerful listening to scripture. All are invited: those who meditate, those who want to learn to meditate, and those who want to know more about meditation. Reservations are requested but not required—contact: Mary at 708-246-5108 or mary105105@gmail.com
Saturday, March 9, 2013, 9 – 11:30am, 8:30am hospitality or Friday, March 15, 2013, from 7 – 9:30pm, 6:45pm hospitality

Kolbe House Online Retreat
This year’s Kolbe House Lenten email retreat will reflect on the words of the psalmist, “Be still and know that I am God” (Ps.46:10). Volunteers and staff who visit youth who are detained at the Cook County Juvenile Center will offer stories and reflections to help you along your Lenten journey. Whether you have participated in the past or are new to the Kolbe House Lenten email retreat, we invite you to embark on a familiar journey. To start go to http://www.kolbehouseministry.org/lentretreat2013_welcome.htm

Stations of the Cross
Stations help us to make a spiritual pilgrimage of prayer through meditating upon the chief scenes of Christ's sufferings and death. It has become a staple during Lent at our parish and is often performed in a spirit of reparation for the sufferings and insults that Jesus endured during His Passion. All ages are welcome on Fridays at 6-6:30pm in church.

Taize Prayer
Taize Prayer is an ecumenical form of prayer consisting of song, scripture, light and meditation. Join us on Friday, March 22nd following Stations.

Fasting
Abstinence from meat is to be observed by all Catholics 14 years old and older on Ash Wednesday and on all the Fridays of Lent. Fasting is to be observed on Ash Wednesday by all Catholics who are 18 years of age but not yet 59. Those who are bound by this may take only one full meal. Two smaller meals are permitted if necessary to maintain strength according to one’s needs, but eating solid foods between meals is not permitted. The special Paschal fast, as well as abstinence, are prescribed for Good Friday and encouraged for Holy Saturday.

Practice Fasting by…
- Joining the Church in it observance of the Lenten Fast
- Choosing to add your own day of fasting each week
- Abstaining from negative talk and attitude such as gossiping, complaining, or stereotyping, etc.
- Incorporating a new and helpful discipline into your schedule such as exercise, a new volunteer commitment, or bible reading etc.
- Identifying and changing the choices, actions and habits that keep you from being fully alive
Our SJC Lenten Experience at a Glance…

Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowls: This weekend at all Masses. Weekly interactive website and bulletin information help us to give alms and pray for the poor around the world.

Lenten Small Faith Sharing Groups: See Page 4

Stations of the Cross: Each Friday at 6pm in church

Crossroads-Men’s Club Annual Fish Fry: Friday, March 1

Lenten Retreat at the Well: Saturday, March 2

RCIA 1st Scrutiny: 9am Mass on Sunday, March 3

Morning of Meditation: Saturday, March 9 beginning at 8:30am

RCIA 2nd Scrutiny: 12:15 Mass on Sunday, March 10

Crossroads Easter Basket Service Project: Sunday, March 10

Parish Mission: March 9-10 weekend at all Masses and March 11, 12 and 13 at 7pm in church

Evening of Meditation: Friday, March 15 beginning at 7pm

RCIA 3rd Scrutiny: 10:45 Mass Sunday, March 17

Parish Lenten Reconciliation Service: Tuesday, March 19 7:00 p.m.

Taize Prayer After Stations on Friday, March 22 at 6:30 p.m.

Return Your Rice Bowl to Mass Palm Sunday, March 24 at any Mass

Kolbe Lenten Retreat: ongoing via email

Holy Thursday: March 28

Good Friday: March 29

Holy Saturday: March 30

Easter Sunday: March 31
Matthew Kelly spoke at St. John of the Cross on Saturday morning, February 2nd to 800 people...and counting...from their teens to those in their 80's. He certainly doesn't make being a Catholic look dull and boring. His energy is contagious and his suggestions to become more engaged with your spirituality exemplify that getting to know the Shepherd can be exciting and fulfilling. But WE need to do our part, each and every single one of us. We need to take ownership to help sustain our Church.

Matthew states, "Jesus wants to turn your life upside down so it will then be right side up and transform our lives." Here are his three "game changers." Pick one. One just might lead to another…

1. **Read the Gospels.** Don't start at the beginning of the Bible because most people who do that stop at Leviticus. Start with the Gospels and read them for 15 minutes a day for a year. "Jesus wants to have a radical impact on our lives."

2. **Confession.** Many people have excuses as to why they don't want to go to confession. Matthew Kelly used a car wash analogy when talking about confession. When we get our car washed, there is a "newness" about it, and we don't want to get it dirty or cluttered with trash inside. Like this, after we go to confession, "we are sensitive to the things that keep us from being the best version of ourselves. If we don't go to confession, who are our spiritual coaches? You can't be good at anything without a coach. Coaches see things we don't see. We almost never see things as they really are." Choose this game changer and go to confession once a month for a year.

3. **A Mass Journal.** Either get a Mass journal from Matthew Kelly or go out and get a notebook of your choice and take it to Mass, listen, and write down what speaks to you. "Every relationship changes when we listen. When we listen to God, we look past the bad music, parking lot issues, bad coffee, etc." (Basically all the reasons people give excuses for not going to Mass or disliking this church or that church). Take your mass journal and don't be afraid to get it out and take notes as you listen. Lent is the greatest time of year to pick a game changer that will lead us to having good answers for the Shepherd when we meet Him!

"A good and necessary way to prepare for Easter is to turn back to God if we have been away from Him. God loves each one of us with a most tender and personal love. His longing for me is dearer than my longing for Him. If we are truly humble, we will see what keeps us away from Him, and will want to take it away. If you want to grow in holiness this Lent, put your hand in Mary's and ask her to help you to come meek and humble." Mother Teresa

Marie Gerken, Parishioner
At different points in the Mass, we are invited to pray or even urged to pray. We hear: “Let us pray,” “We pray to the Lord,” “Pray brothers and sisters.” What does this mean? Certainly, it means that we don’t pray on autopilot. We must decide and direct ourselves to pray to God. We must also recognize what we are doing. When we pray, we are going into God’s presence. We thank God, we praise God, and we ask God for what we need. And there is more.

When we pray at Mass, we do not go before God as strangers. We pray as members of the household of God, as sons and daughters who have received the Holy Spirit who enables us to cry out to God, “Abba, Father.” We pray, because we are at home.

**Year of Sunday Mass: Question of the Week**

**LK 4:1-13**

If receiving Eucharist unites us more closely to Jesus, how does Sunday Mass strengthen me to resist temptation from the devil?

**Guest Singer at Sunday 5 p.m. Mass**

We are excited to announce that Tina Jenkins Crawley, contemporary/gospel singer, will be joining our teens on Feb. 24 at the 5:00 p.m. Mass to provide inspirational music and prayer. Tina is singer/songwriter from the area who is on a mission to spread the good news. Don’t miss this uplifting evening of great song and worship.

For more than a year, our parish has been singing a setting of the Mass called “The Glendalough Mass” by Liam Lawton. Many have found this setting of the Gloria, Holy, Mystery of Faith (When We Eat This Bread), Amen, and Lamb of God to be tuneful, singable, and prayerful. Having spent a whole year singing this one setting helped us to navigate the revised Roman Missal transition more smoothly and to become familiar with the new words through consistency. Hopefully, this strategy has given us the time to make the revised text our own and to turn the words into the prayer of our hearts. Thank you for all your efforts to learn the new text and music and for actively participating in song!

Yet, it is useful to have more than one setting of the Mass in our parish repertoire. Changing settings of the Mass can mark the change of the liturgical seasons and renew our prayer and our spirits. Singing a new setting can make us more conscious of the prayer we raise. A different composer’s perspective can help us glean new meaning from the words we sing each week. Changing the setting of the Mass periodically ensures that our music ministry meets the needs and desires of a wide set of individual musical preferences.

This Lent and Easter, we will mark the changing of the liturgical season by singing the revised “Mass of Creation” by Marty Haugen. This setting continues to be a staple in parishes throughout the English-speaking world, and remains beloved for its familiarity. There are only two changes to the Eucharistic Acclamations (Holy, Mystery of Faith, & Amen): 1) the first line of the Holy, Holy; 2) the text of the Mystery of Faith (“Christ has died…is no longer an option in the revised Roman Missal, so we will use the text, “We proclaim your death, O Lord, and profess your resurrection, until you come again.” See the Word and Song missalette, no. 288-291 for words and music for the “Mass of Creation.”

I encourage you to join in singing these acclamations, and I hope that the music will help you to prayerfully mark the turning of the liturgical season and lead you to a deeper awareness of the mysteries we celebrate at Mass. May your observance of Lent be blessed!

Jessica Koch
Director of Music Ministries
jkoch@stjohnofthecross.org
Living the Gospel

Twice the devil entices Jesus to give into temptation by saying, “If you are the Son of God . . .” Jesus resists the devil’s temptation to put aside his humanity and act like God, thus remaining true to himself and to why he came. But Jesus’ resisting the temptations has implications for us, too. By fully embracing his humanity Jesus lifts us up to be who we are in our relationship with God. Only from this relationship do we have the inner strength and conviction to make right choices in face of the temptations that are an inevitable part of being human.

Whatever Lenten practices we undertake, it is important to remember their purpose. Lenten practices are not about losing weight or finally stopping smoking, but they are about deepening our baptismal identity as children of God and members of the Body of Christ. By remaining faithful to who we are—God’s children, members of the Body of Christ—we can resist temptations and grow in our relationships with God, self, and others. Traditionally, Christian penance has always included three prongs: fasting, prayer, and almsgiving (charity). This suggests to us that penance isn’t only a matter of “giving up” something, nor is it a single act—even if performed faithfully over a long period like forty days. Christian penance has as its purpose genuine conversion of life, so that at the end of Lent when we renew our baptismal promises we are able to do so with full throat, well aware of our own wonderful identity as sons and daughters of God. The new life we celebrate at Easter cannot happen without our dying to ourselves, without our going to Jerusalem with Jesus and willingly embracing whatever death is in store for us. For that is the road to new life. That is the road we travel during Lent.

Closing Prayers:
May we enter this season of prayer and fasting with confidence in our ultimate victory over temptation and evil….May our identity as sons and daughters of God be strengthened through our Lenten penance.

For Reflection:
· I find myself struggling most with temptations about . . .
· They tell me this about myself . . .
· I find myself drawing on my relationship with God when .

Meditation by Richard Rohr

It seems to me that it is a minority that ever gets the true and full Gospel—in any denomination. Most of us just keep worshiping Jesus and arguing over the right way to do it. The amazing thing is that Jesus never once says, “Worship me!” whereas he frequently says, “Follow me” (e.g., Matthew 4:19).

Christianity is a lifestyle—a way of being in the world that is simple, non-violent, shared, and loving. However, we made it into an established “religion” (and all that goes with that) and avoided the lifestyle change itself. One could be warlike, greedy, racist, selfish, and vain in most of Christian history, and still believe that Jesus is one’s “personal Lord and Savior” or continue to receive Sacraments in good standing. The world has no time for such silliness anymore. The suffering on Earth is too great.
CALENDAR EVENTS:

Feb. 23 Work Tour First Formation mtg
10 a.m. in the Parish Center
Feb. 24 Home Group Meetings
March 1 FISH FRY 5pm or 6:30 p.m.
PURCHASE TICKETS at Masses!
March 3 Home Group Meetings
Juniors & Seniors at PC 6 p.m.
March 10 Easter Basket Service Project
Teens arrive 3 p.m., 2nd graders
3:30 p.m.
March 14-17 Kairos 13 retreat
Please pray for teams as they prepare!

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES
As you can see most of our events have
found their leaders!
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.

CONFERENCE & WORK TOUR
spots are available!
pick-up in the Parish Center office or
download from our website
www.stjohnofthecross.org/crossroads/
service
REGISTER ASAP to join in fundraising &
formation efforts!

WHAT HAVE YOU ENJOYED
AS AN ADULT LEADER with CROSSROADS?

When I think about leading a team, it brings a
sense of confidence and joy. Leadership is a set of
principles and values that is expressed through my
actions. We live in challenging times. We have big
problems to solve. When we are on work tour I enjoy
guiding the teens to serve the community. The problems
we solve may seem small to us, but they are huge to the
people we serve. We do this in an environment of
Simplicity and we reinforce it with Prayer. The end result
of leading is not only an inner sense of joy for me, but it
is also the formation of a strong connection and
expression of openness between all members of the
group. An exhilarating sense of growth, and a darn good
feeling that we did the right thing, not as individuals, but as
a TEAM!!

~Gene Swinotek, work tour
leader

I love being a leader because I
was never exposed to all of these great
ways to share and deepen my faith, as a
teen, and so now I get the opportunity
to participate in some of those things
that I missed out on, with the added
bonus of interacting with such enthusi-
astic and energetic young people; it's an
amazing experience!

~Jen Riskus, retreat & work
tour leader

The Crossroads teens have brought so much joy to us
and our family and have helped us to
reexamine and deepen
our faith.

~Kathleen & Brian King
Home group leaders

Crossroads

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Love Day!

Our fourth grade students brought a loved one with them to class this week and had a very special time together. They were able to introduce their loved one to their classmates and played “Do you know your faith better than a fourth grader” and other games. All the fourth graders and their loved ones came together in the Multi-Purpose room for a closing prayer service and hospitality. “I loved the blessing” one grandparent said. The students brought parents, grandparent, aunts, uncles and neighbors with them - it was an amazing love filled event!

All 8th graders!
Reminder!!! Next Sunday, February 24th in place of home groups you will come to the Parish Center at 6:30 p.m. for a special presentation.

There is one presentation for all Newly Confirmed 8th grade students. Parents are encouraged to attend too! This presentation replaces their home group meeting on February 24th, please mark your calendar for this important evening presentation on Sunday, February 24th 6:30 p.m. and plan on joining your child in the Parish Center for this engaging, interactive, informative & enlightening speaker, John Grossman!

No Classes this Sunday or Monday in observance of Presidents Weekend!

Join us
February 24th at 9:00 a.m. Mass
Watch throughout the year as YC celebrates the Year of Sunday Mass!

YC Schedule
Classes K-6 10:15-11:30 a.m. Sunday, Feb 24
6:15-7:30 p.m. Monday, Feb 25
FFC Noon to 1:30 p.m. Sunday, March 3
Home Groups and Special Needs Sunday, Feb 24*
*February 24th, 8th graders will all come for speaker at 6:30 p.m.
St. John of the Cross Parish School Students Reached Out During Catholic Schools Week

St. John of the Cross Parish School emphasizes academic excellence, faith development, and commitment to service each day. Students learn that service is the giving of one’s time and effort to help others, taught as an expression of faith and good citizenship. During Catholic Schools Week students demonstrated how they continuously commit to helping others less fortunate. This year’s national theme for Catholic Schools Week, was “Catholic Schools Raise the Standards.” During the week, schools were asked to focus on many areas, two being “Catholic Schools Raise Standards in our Community” and “Catholic Schools Raise Standards in our Nation.”

Students focused on community by asking school families to clean out their closets and donate their gently used jeans to the homeless. Each year, Aeropostale holds a drive to collect jeans for homeless teens. According to Aeropostale, there are 1.7 million homeless teens, and the number one item shelters request are jeans. SJC students heard that need and among the 360 school families, they collected over 750 pairs of jeans.

During this week, students also took time in their religion classes to focus on our nation. They combined community and our nation by making over 600 St. Valentine’s Day cards to share with the veterans at Hines Hospital. These cards brought joy to many patients at the hospital as they were thrilled with this simple donation.

Not only did the kids reach out to the community during the week, but frequently the students provide service to others. Twice a month the kids make meals for Port Ministries in Chicago, collect canned foods for the Food Pantry, baby items for Care Net, and can tabs for the Ronald McDonald Family Room. On occasion, the kids will pay a dollar for an out of uniform day and all proceeds will benefit different charitable organizations. The spirit of giving is contagious at St. John of the Cross Parish School.

This Week at SJC
February 18 President’s Day, No School,
February 19 School Advisory Board Meeting
Parish News & Notes

Fr. McDonnell Scholarships
Our parish Women’s Club has made the applications for the Rev. Joseph F. McDonnell Scholarship for Catholic high school students available for pick-up. Copies of the application are available in the Parish Center, School & YC offices. Applications are due back by Monday Feb. 18th.

Rediscover Catholicism Book Study
Session 4 which covers pages 223-278 will be held on Tuesday, Feb. 19 at 1:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m.
OR Friday, Feb. 22 at 7:00 p.m.
There are 3 different days-times to choose from for each session. Sessions are held every other week. All Sessions are held in the Parish Center. Come to Session 4 even if you were not able to keep up with the reading or missed the last Session. The Study Guide is also available electronically on the parish website or in the Parish Center.

Extra copies of the bestselling book by Matthew Kelly are 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 are welcome.

Welcome!
Do you remember when you first moved to town and joined St. John of the Cross? Remember how big the Parish felt to you? We are introducing Welcome! Wouldn’t you like to be a part of an “important piece of the puzzle” that of welcoming our new parishioners? The commitment would be to contact the new parishioner at least 3 times over 3 months.

For more information, contact Elizabeth Russell-Jones at elizabeth@russell-jones.us or 708.246.6282.

Grief Support at Loyola Medical Center
General Journey Toward Healing
For adults who are grieving the loss of a loved one.
Tuesdays, Feb. 19-March 26
6:30-8pm

Widow-Widower Group
For adults who are grieving the loss of a spouse.
Thursdays, March 7-April 11
3-4:30pm

Begin to heal, not to forget, but to heal through understanding grief and sharing your unique journey with others. There is no fee, but donations are accepted. Advance registration is necessary. Call Nancy Kiel, 708-216-1646.

Anatomy of Love
Sunday, February 24th
6:30-8:00 p.m.
in the Parish Center
For ALL 8th Grade Students & Parents
Speaker, John Donahue-Grossman, presents a holistic view of how healthy Christian love progresses, the difference between love and infatuation, how we fall in love, the importance of setting boundaries, and why waiting matters.

There is one presentation for all newly confirmed 8th grade students. Parents are encouraged to attend too! This presentation replaces their home group meeting on February 24. Please mark your calendar for this important evening presentation on Sunday, February 24th 6:30 p.m. and plan on joining your child in the Parish Center for this engaging, interactive, informative & enlightening speaker!

Over one million people later, John Donahue-Grossman continues to inspire his audiences with his highly energetic style. John brings 25 years of professional experience in education and ministry to his presentations.
Some years ago, I was at a religious conference where one of the speakers, widely known and respected for her work among the poor, made this comment: "I'm not a theologian, so I don't know how this plays out theologically; but here's the base from which I'm operating: I work with the poor. Partly I do this out of my humanity, out of natural compassion; but ultimately my motivation is Christ. I work with the poor because I'm a Christian. However I can go for two or three years on the streets and never mention Christ's name because I believe that God is mature enough that He doesn't demand to always be the center of our conscious attention."

God doesn't demand to always be the center of our conscious attention! Is that true? Clearly the statement needs some clarification and nuance. On the one hand, there's a certain freeing-up inside of us that comes from hearing this said, given that most of the time God is not in fact the center or our conscious attention and, this side of eternity, will most likely never be. But, on the other hand, the consolation we feel in hearing this flies strongly in face of the clear challenge that comes to us from scripture, our churches, and spiritual writers warning us against losing ourselves in the ambitions, projects, anxieties, pleasures, and distractions of this world, of letting our focus on this life eclipse the wider horizon, God and eternity. Countless spiritual writers warn us that it's dangerous to be so immersed in this world so as to lose sight of anything beyond. Jesus too warns us of this danger.

And yet all of us know a lot of people who seem so immersed in this life, in their marriages, their families, their jobs, in entertainment, in sports, and in their daily concerns that they don't seem at all to have God as center of their conscious attention for any significant portion of their daily lives. Indeed, sometimes these people do not even attend church and often have very little in terms of a formal or private prayer in their lives.

But, and this is the seeming-anomaly, they're good people, people whose lives radiate a basic (and sometimes very generous degree) of honesty, generosity, goodness, warmth, and healthy concern for others. Moreover they are often robust and witty, the ones you want to be next to at the dinner table, even as they seem to be living and dying merely as devoted children of this earth, not much given to abstraction or religion. A good family gathering, a win by the home team, a good meal or drink with a friend, and a healthy day spent working, are contemplation enough. Their default consciousness focuses on the things of this world, its joys and its sorrows. A shift in consciousness would need to occur for any explicit notion of God to enter their lives. For these people, good people for the most part, ordinary consciousness is mostly agnostic.

How bad is this? Does this dangerously shrink one's horizons? How badly does a one-sided focus on the things of this life choke out the word of God or render it shallow and extraneous? Are we going to hell in droves because we can't give God more of our conscious attention and because we can't be more explicitly religious?

By their fruits you will know them! Jesus said that and it must be our criterion here: If people are living inside an honesty, generosity, goodness, warmth, health, solicitousness, intelligence, and wit that is life-giving, can they be much out of harmony with God? Moreover, we need to ask ourselves: If we are born into this world with such a powerful, innate gravitation towards the things of this earth, if our natural (default) consciousness wants to fix itself more upon matter than spirit, and this seems to be the case for most people, how then do we read the mind of our Creator? What divine intelligence is manifest within the natural instinct to give ourselves over to this life, even as we carry a faith that gives us a vision beyond this world?

Perhaps God is mature enough to not ask for, or want, our conscious attention most of the time. Perhaps God wants us to enjoy our time here, to enjoy the experience of love and friendship, of family and friends, of eating and drinking, and of (at least occasionally) seeing our favorite teams win a championship. Perhaps God wants us, in the famed-words of Yogi Berra, to sometimes just to sit back and enjoy the game! Perhaps God is like a blessing old grandparent; perhaps we pray in an inchoate way when we healthily enjoy the gift of this life; and perhaps there are less-conscious ways in which we can be aware of God.

Like the woman whom I quote above, I also don't know how this all plays out theologically, but it needs to be said.

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.
Our Weekly Calendar and Intentions

Monday, February 18  No Adoration Today
9:30 a.m. Bridges, Faith Sharing Group
10:30 a.m. Step 11 Christian Meditation
1:00 p.m. Sacred Space Faith Sharing Group
6:30 p.m. Sacred Space Faith Sharing Group
2:30 p.m. Spiritual Journaling

Mass Intentions

Monday, February 18
6:30 Our Beloved Dead; Lawrence Hickey
7:45 Felix Delgado; Antionette Piszzcor

Tuesday, February 19
6:30 Mark Payne; Marita Sheehy
7:45 Edward Montgomery; Ramon Sanchez

Wednesday, February 20
6:30 William P. Burns; Ellen McGowan
7:45 Jack McDonell; Audrey Casey

Thursday, February 21 St. Peter Damian
7:45 William Hickey, Sr.; Raymond Matusik

Friday, February 22, The Chair of St. Peter
7:45 Susanne Walsh; John Pecis

Saturday, February 23
8:00 Susan McGuire; Lawrence Hickey
5:00 Frank Stolfa; Bob Feldmeier

Sunday, February 24, Second Sunday of Lent
7:30 SJC & Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parishioners
9:00 Catherine Boyle; John Goldrick
10:45 John Barron; Andrew Applegate
12:15 Gene Miley;
   SJC Parish School Family Deceased Members
5:00 Ben Spinato; Tom Pagels

Italics—Living

Pray for our Sick

Dale Alm        Gloria Spranza Meyers
Ashley Davis    James Ryan
Ruth Ilg        Barbara Ryan

Pray for our Beloved Dead

George Hoffman, husband of Lil
Edward Hussey, father of Dan and grandfather of Danny,
Erin, Colleen, Mary Kate and Megan
William L. White, Jr., son of June White

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

Fr. David P. Dowdle      Pastor         ddowdle@stjohnofthecross.org
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John Schopp             Deacon          john.schopp@newhemispheres.com
Bill Bright             Outreach         bbright@stjohnofthecross.org
Janet Caschetta         Director of Youth Catechisis
Jim Clauer             Worship          jclauer@stjohnofthecross.org
Kathleen Gorman School  Principal        gorman@sjc.pvt.k12.il.us
Katie Hayes             Crossroads High School
Jessica Koch            Music           khayes@stjohnofthecross.org
MJ Martin              Operations       jkoch@stjohnofthecross.org
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The SJC Teacher Recognition Trust shows appreciation and provides additional compensation for our quality teachers and staff and supports their professional development. These benefits help to attract and retain superior educators who believe in Catholic education despite the fact that they could be more highly compensated elsewhere.

This year we celebrate SJC Parish School's distinction as a 2012 National Blue Ribbon School, awarded for overall academic excellence in student achievement levels. Thank you, teachers, for providing such a high quality of education to our students!

Saturday, March 2, 2013
at
Butterfield Country Club

Live Music performed by Spoken Four
Dinner and Drinks • Live and Silent Auctions

“No Giveback” Raffle

Only 2,500 raffle tickets will be sold. Winning tickets will be drawn at the party. Winner need not be present.

Two grand cash prizes:
$15,000 and $5,000

Early Bird Raffles:
$1,000 each (final drawing: 2/14)

RAFFLE TICKET PRICE:
$50 each or Six for $200 (receive two free)

For raffle tickets, please contact Jackie McDonnell:
jmcdonnell51@hotmail.com or 708.784.9561.