ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS PARISH
FIFTH SUNDAY OF LENT
MARCH 17, 2013

Reflecting the Love of God

2013 Lenten Journey

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FIND US ON FACEBOOK AT WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/SJCWESTERNSPRINGS
You say you “believe” every Sunday as you recite the Creed. But do you know what you’re saying you “believe” in? Do the truths of the faith—listed in the Creed—really permeate your life? Learn how these ancient truths contain the promise of peace, joy and happiness for our lives.

The Catechism of the Catholic Church is organized around four Pillars: the Creed (what we believe), the Liturgy, specifically the Sacraments (how we celebrate the Christian mystery), Morality (how Christians live their lives based on the Ten Commandments), and Prayer.

Join us for a 12-week study on the first of the four Pillars of the Catechism: The Creed. During the twelve sessions we will study the twelve articles of the Apostle’s Creed through a video presentation, group discussion, and at-home preparation.

**Thursdays, beginning March 21**  
1:30pm or 7pm in the Parish Center

The cost of materials is $35 and includes all study materials, a binder and a paperback copy of the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Please register at the Parish Center or online. Study materials are available in the Parish Center now if you would like to view them. (If cost is holding you back, please email Fr. David at ddowdle@stjohnofthecross.org.)

This is an excellent program that will deepen your faith. You will never say the Creed again in a mechanical way.

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**God our Father,**  
**shepherd and guide,**  
look with love on Pope Francis,  
your servant,  
the pastor of your Church.  
May his word and example inspire and guide the Church,  
and may he and all those entrusted to his care,  
come to the joy of everlasting life.  
Amen.

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**New Adult Formation Program Begins**

**DO YOU REALLY “BELIEVE” ?**

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**Name:**

**Phone:**

**Email:**

Drop registration form and study materials fee at Parish Center or in the collection basket at Mass.

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**Argentine Cardinal Jorge Mario Bergoglio, 76 was elected the 266th pope and took the name Francis.**

The election March 13 came on the first full day of the conclave on the conclave’s fifth ballot. It was a surprisingly quick conclusion to a conclave that began with many plausible candidates and no clear favorite.

The Latin American pope, a Jesuit, was chosen by at least two-thirds of the 115 cardinals from 48 countries, who cast their ballots in secret in the Sistine Chapel.

His election was announced in Latin from the balcony of St. Peter's Basilica, to a massive crowd in the square below and millions watching around the world.

...Continue reading this article on our parish website...
**Living the Gospel**

The scribes and Pharisees bring an adulterous woman to Jesus and "made her stand in the middle." In their self-righteousness they wished to make an example of her as a grave sinner deserving of death. Ironically, Jesus makes an example of them as sinners: they turned away from him and "went away one by one." Once they were faced with their own sinfulness and the futility of their "test," they chose not to remain with the One who would grant them forgiveness and mercy, reconciliation and new life. The woman, however, remained with Jesus. And for this choice she received forgiveness, mercy, new life. Encountering Jesus always exposes the truth—both the woman and the crowd learn the truth about their own sinfulness. They and we are not all that different: we are all sinners who need to encounter Jesus, ask the truth about ourselves, and receive Jesus’ mercy. Encountering with Jesus is the occasion for changing both the condemners and the condemned. Our own work during Lent is like that of the adulterous woman: truthfully face our sinfulness and faithfully remain with Jesus. Though we sin, Jesus only wishes new life for us.

Repentance, turning from our sinfulness, includes both a dying and a rising. Changing our ways is the dying; a new relationship with Christ is the rising. The deepest truth about ourselves lies not so much in recognizing our sinfulness (as important as that is!) as it lies in deepening our relationship with Christ. Encountering Christ and desiring to be more like him is what calls forth from us a repentant attitude. The closer we become to Christ the more able we are to recognize our own sinfulness (that which weakens our relationship with him) and repent of our ways. Then we hear Christ say to us, “Neither do I condemn you.” Then we may be assured of receiving new life.

**Closing Prayers:**

May we witness to others what it means to remain with Jesus who is merciful, compassionate, and truthful. May we choose to grow in new life by acknowledging our sinfulness and need for God’s mercy. Our Father . . .

**For Reflection:**

Like the gospel scribes and Pharisees, I tend to be self-righteous when . . . I remain with Jesus when . . . The new life I receive from him is . . .

**Verse before the Gospel**

Even now, says the Lord, return to me with your whole heart; for I am gracious and merciful.

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**Readings for the Week**

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Experience Lent at SJC

Parish Reconciliation Service Tuesday, March 19

Our parish communal Lenten Reconciliation Service will begin at 7 p.m. Song, scripture, prayer, and an examination of conscience ready our hearts and minds for this sacrament. There will be ten priests available in church to hear individual confessions and offer absolution. The penitent then prays a healing penance prayer silently in the pew and may depart.

This service is a wonderful opportunity for adults and children alike to receive the sacrament.

SJC Needy Families

On Holy Thursday and again on Thanksgiving, our offertory collection will be put into our parish Caritas Needy Family Fund. Using the Latin word for “charity” as its name, this fund provides emergency financial support to parishioners, who through unplanned circumstances face difficulty meeting a critical financial obligation. Your donations are greatly needed by those in our own parish community. If you are unable to attend the Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday, but still wish to donate to this important collection, you may drop it at the Parish Center marked for the Caritas Needy Family Fund or go to our Giving Tab on the parish website.

The Good Friday collection supports the work of the Franciscan Missioners who pastor the people of the Holy Land. Their ministry includes Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Nazareth and maintaining the historic shrines in the surrounding areas. In addition, the Franciscans provide low cost housing options for the very poor in their area as well as academic scholarships. With the political uncertainty of the past several years, Christians in the Holy Land and the holy sites are particularly in need of your financial support.

Meditation by Richard Rohr

God as Servant
There is no real story of the Last Supper in the Gospel of John as found in the Synoptic Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. There is no passing of the bread or passing of the cup. Instead we come upon the story of Jesus on his knees washing the Apostles’ feet. This is really quite amazing, and even more amazing that this foot washing was never made into a Sacrament! It is much more explicit and clear in the Scriptures than many other actions we made into Sacraments. In fact, Jesus even appears to mandate it!

Perhaps John realized that seventy years after the Synoptic Gospels had been read, he wanted to give a theology of the Eucharist that revealed the meaning behind the breaking of the bread. He made it into an active ritual of servanthood and solidarity, instead of the priest-centered cult that it has largely become.

Peter symbolizes all of us as he protests, “You will never wash my feet!” But Jesus answers, “If I do not wash you, you can have nothing in common with me.” That is strong! Many of us find it hard to receive undeserved love from another. For some reason it is very humiliating to the ego. We want to think we have earned any love that we get by our worthiness or attractiveness. So Jesus has to insist on being the servant lover. Thank God Peter surrenders, but it probably takes him the rest of his life to understand what had happened.

Our SJC Lenten Experience at a Glance...

Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowls: Weekly interactive website and bulletin information help us to give alms and pray for the poor around the world. **Return Your Rice Bowl** to Mass Palm Sunday, March 24 at any Mass

Parish Lenten Reconciliation Service: Tuesday, March 19 at 7:00 pm

Stations of the Cross: Friday, March 22 at 6pm in church

Taize Prayer: After Stations on Friday, March 22 at 6:30 pm

Holy Hour & Benediction: Fr. Filbert will lead us in prayer on Monday of Holy Week, March 25 from 8-9pm in church.
Experience Lent at SJC

Join us for Stations of the Cross at 6 p.m. and for Taizé Prayer at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, March 22nd.

What is Taizé Prayer?
Taizé Prayer is a liturgy filled with song, scripture and silent meditation. The sanctuary is candlelit, making a space that is ready for meditative silence and song. The music of Taizé is repetitive and chant-like. The simple melodies wed to simple texts enable you to easily enter into the prayer and enter into a place of profound meditation. The service quickly grabs your intellect and promises to renew your spirit.

Come to Me
Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament is the easiest person in the world to be with. Even if you cannot pray very well, or even if you do not say anything at all, the mere fact that you come to HIM in the Blessed Sacrament is, in itself, a prayer of faith that will greatly benefit your soul. Adoration Chapel is open on Mondays from 2:30 - 9:00 p.m. The Rosary is prayed at 2:30 and 8:45 p.m. This Lent--come and spend some time with HIM.

Holy Hour & Benediction: Fr. Filbert will lead us in prayer on Monday of Holy Week, March 25 from 8-9pm in church

HOLY THURSDAY PILGRIMAGE
This year we will continue the old tradition of the Catholic Church—going on pilgrimage to pray at neighboring churches after our Holy Thursday Mass. A bus will be rented and we will travel to four of our nearby Catholic Churches (at about 8:45 p.m.) to pray before the Blessed Sacrament before returning to our own church (by 11 p.m.) for some final prayer. After about 15 minutes of prayer at our church, we will gather at the Parish Center for refreshments.

On the bus, we will pray our primary prayers so that when we arrive at each neighboring church we can silently pray and not disturb the quiet of the night and other visitors’ personal prayer. As you probably know, most Catholic Churches around here are open for prayer until midnight on Holy Thursday. This year, we would like to visit Divine Providence and Divine Infant in Westchester, St. Louise De Marillac in LaGrange Park and St. Francis Xavier in LaGrange.

If you are interested in this pilgrimage, reserve your space on the bus by filling out the form below, clipping it out and returning it to the Parish Center (or drop it in the Sunday Offertory Basket) before March 25th so we can make the necessary arrangements.

______________________________
Yes, I would like to be part of St. John of the Cross’s bus pilgrimage to neighboring Churches on Holy Thursday night, March 28th, from approximately 8:45 p.m. to 11 p.m.

Name: ____________________________

Phone: ____________________________

Number of people riding the bus: ____________________________

Please return this form to the Parish Center (or drop it in the Sunday Offertory Basket) by March 26th.
You are Cordially Invited to a Reception after the Easter Vigil

Parishioners are invited to a reception to welcome our RCIA candidates to our parish family after the Easter Vigil on Saturday, March 30th. Please stop by the Parish Center to meet and congratulate our newest SJC members: Chris, Krista, Linda, Brian and Kevin.

Bakers Needed!

Baked goods are needed for the reception. Please bring baked goods to the Parish Center on Friday during the day or Saturday morning following the Easter basket blessing until 2:00 p.m. (Easter basket blessing starts at 11 a.m.) Please put bakery in non-returnable containers, i.e. wrapped on paper plates, ziplocks. Questions, call Ginny Grecco @ 708-246-7371 or Fr. Filbert at the Parish Center.

Why do we dismiss our catechumens after the scrutinies?

When I first heard about RCIA and the scrutinies I was shocked to hear that the catechumens would be dismissed immediately after the scrutinies. I thought it to be very unwelcoming gesture for people who are in the process of joining the church. Probably most of us still do not understand why we do so. The presider dismisses catechumens with an invitation to go and reflect on the Word of God which they have heard as a preparation for joining the community fully for the celebration of the Eucharist at Easter Vigil.

We are not sending the catechumens away because they are somehow unworthy. We’re sending them out to do the work that is appropriate to their order in the Body. The job of the Order of Catechumens is to hear the Word of God and be inspired by it. During the dismissal session, they focus more intently on the Word, listening deeply to God’s call to them. This is an essential part of their training in the Christian life. The Rite of RCIA says, “After the dismissal formulary the group of catechumens goes out but does not disperse. With the help of some of the faithful, the catechumens remain together to share their joy and spiritual experiences.” Here are some of the things the catechumens do after they are dismissed.

- break open the Sunday readings
- do lectionary-based catechesis
- do dismissal catechesis
- be nourished by God’s word
- form community with one another as a small group

When the catechumens are dismissed, the community is called to offer their prayers and their joy as a sacrifice of praise that culminates in sharing in Eucharistic communion with the Body of Christ. But the catechumens cannot yet do that. Still, if the Word does what it is supposed to do, the catechumens will have a compelling urge to “share their joy” as well. So instead of requiring them to just sit on their hands while the rest of us are offering praises, they are “kindly dismissed before the liturgy of the Eucharist begins”.

The dismissal, then, and the sharing of joy that follows, is a profoundly liturgical act in the same way the gathering of the faithful around the altar of sacrifice and praise is liturgical. All of us—catechumens and faithful—are converted by God’s word. We are all compelled to respond in praise and thanksgiving. However, the way that we do that is determined by our differing roles in the worshiping assembly. What the catechumens learn from their dismissal is that a joyful response to God’s saving Word is required of us. What Catholics learn is that our sharing in the sacrifice of the Mass is both a privilege and a responsibility of baptism.

May all of us be inspired by the Word of God and be able to respond to it by our words and actions. Please continue praying for our catechumens as they get closer and closer to receiving the sacraments at Easter.

Fr. Fil Ngwila
Experience Lent at SJC

The story of the prodigal son, which we heard from last Sunday’s gospel, tells us about the unconditional love of God. Despite our weaknesses, God invites us to his house, not like one of the ‘slaves,’ but as his sons and daughters. We share this invitation of God with our brothers and sisters around the world by helping them in little ways in this Lenten season.

Last week, through CRS Rice Bowl program we learned and reflected about The Dominican Republic and how our little donations help the saving groups in that country. This week we learn about Pakistan and how our donations could change people’s lives by providing them with water for domestic and livelihood use.

PAKISTAN
FACTS TO CONSIDER
In Pakistan, CRS works with local partners to ensure that communities have access to clean, safe water sources for both domestic and livelihood use.

- **Domestic use** (water supply, sanitation and hygiene) — CRS helps communities access clean water through the installation and repair of hand pumps, water storage tanks and water ponds. The installation of latrines in the community also helps to raise awareness about the importance of good hygiene practices.

- **Productive use** (livelihoods, irrigation, home gardens, electricity) — CRS helps communities to rehabilitate and reconstruct flood-damaged irrigation systems, which help farmers to improve their crop yields and support their families.

- **Environmental use** (watershed management, water conservation) — CRS helps communities to improve water infrastructures and use water more efficiently in their agricultural and livestock practices, by introducing new irrigation methods and drought-resistant crops.

- **Emergency use** — Following the 2011 floods in Pakistan, CRS distributed hygiene kits and clean water provisions to families affected by the emergency.

By ensuring that their water consumption is as efficient as possible, farmers in Pakistan are protecting and preserving the environment for themselves and for future generations.

Catholic Relief Services is working in rural communities to build water pumps that provide clean water near homes and fields.

When a community gains access to clean water, people all benefit in many areas. Cleaner water reduces waterborne diseases. Healthy adults are more productive and healthy children spend more time in classrooms.

Parishioners are asked to bring your Rice Bowl donations to any Mass on Palm Sunday. There will be large baskets by the altar in which you may place your contributions. Parishioners may also drop off their donations to the Parish Center during holy week.

REFLECTION
In your prayer this week, reflect on the ways that God has invited you to bend low in humility to learn important truths about yourself and the world. How has God been waiting for you in places you did not want to explore?

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING FOCUS: Care for God’s Creation
We are called to be good stewards of what has been entrusted to us. Through protecting the environment in which we live, we respect the goodness of nature, a gift of God has given to us.
This photo was taken last August at Spring Rock Park here in Western Springs. It captures many beautiful faces of SJC parishioners! March 21, 2013 marks the 8th Anniversary of World Down Syndrome Day, a global awareness day (officially observed by the United Nations since 2012) dedicated to educating the world on what it means to have Down syndrome and what great impact these lives have in our world. Each year the voice of people with Down syndrome, and those who live and work with them, grows louder. We, as Catholics, must raise our voices on March 21st and every day for all children of God. In recognition of World Down Syndrome Day we pray for the purpose of this day as we celebrate life and raise awareness. Many people expect others to all be the same, and be just like them......... and therefore expect others to change to meet these expectations.....we pray that WE are the change, and that through our actions of love, acceptance and celebration of ALL LIFE.... we persuade all nations of the world to do the same...but it must begin with us.....We ask this through Jesus Christ our Lord Amen....

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! Would 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 erussell-jones@stjohnofthecross.org

Come Spirit of God, grant us
the power to be gentle,
the strength to be forgiving,
the patience to be understanding,
the endurance to accept the consequences
of holding on to what is right.
Come Spirit of God, help us to
put our trust in the power of good
to overcome evil,
the power of love to overcome hatred.
Come Spirit of God, enlighten us
with the vision to see
and the faith to believe in
a world free from violence,
a new world where fear will no longer lead us
to commit injustices,
nor selfishness cause us
to bring suffering to others.
Come Spirit of wisdom and love, source of all good,
teach us your truth and
guide our actions in Your way of peace.
Amen.
CALENDAR EVENTS:
March 14-17 Kairos 13 retreat
  Please pray for a spirit filled retreat!
April 14 Home Group Mtgs
April 28 Spring Mass 5pm
May 5 Home Group Meetings
May 19 Leaders Meeting

Please welcome home our Kairos 13 retreatants and encourage them in their energized Holy Spirit induced Kai-high.

Many thanks to all who have helped behind the scenes & sharing prayer with us!

Congrats to the K13 team for a fabulous retreat weekend:
Danny Caplice, Shea Dufficy, Maddie Egan, Kate Foody, Natalie Gacek, Joe Halpin, Rachel Lutz, Elise McGill, Lisa McGovern, Kaley Shannon, Fran Burns, Mark Staelgrave, Kristen Ras, Roger Smith, Cassie Wingert

Kudos to the 4th team for leading the third group of retreatants this year:
Sarah Beglen, Alex Kiessling, Mary Kate Maney, Cassie Morris, Kaitlyn Tedeschi, Michael Thomas, Georgann Grecco, Megan Mattucci

Your efforts to draw your peers closer to God have been tremendous!

God beneath you.
God in front of you.
God Behind you.
God above you.
God within you.
-a prayer by St. Patrick

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES
This school year’s needs have been met...please keep in mind joining our team for next year!
Adults & teens may always join in!

SUMMER IS CALLING:
We need adults to join our summer conferences & work tours so if you’ve ever thought of spending quality time in service, please contact Katie Hayes, 708-246-4404!
* Two adults for OLC local trip June 10-14
* A male adult for YLC conference June 28-30
* Two adults needed for OLPH trip Aug 8-13

CONFERENCE & WORK TOUR spots are available for teens!
pick-up in the Parish Center office or download from our website
www.stjohnofthecross.org/crossroads/service

REGISTER ASAP as final deadlines for conferences are at the end of this month!

Openings on trips:
Local trip June 10-14
ND Vision June 17-21
YLC June 28-30
Habitat July 7-13
OLPH Aug. 8-13

“I was changed by the genuine gratitude people gave us, appreciating us! A trip like this is so rewarding!” Al Narbutaitis
Fourth Graders Participate in Unique Hands On Learning Activities

Students in fourth grade are learning how simple machines are used to make tasks possible. Our students were provided instructions and materials to create a simple machine. Each group built or demonstrated a wedge, an inclined plane, levers, and a wheel and axle. In their next lab, the students will design a complex machine that includes at least two simple machines.

While they were busy building their simple machines, they also participated in a parade. For the students’ book reports, they designed and built their own floats to focus on their novels. At the conclusion of the assignment, the kids held a parade throughout the school for all the students to enjoy.

Alumna to Address Students

We invite all parishioners to join us at our all school liturgy on Monday, March 18 at 9:15 a.m. One of our alumni, Bridget Fitzgerald, will be addressing the students on the impact of Catholic Education in her life. Bridget is this year’s Saint Patrick’s Day Parade Queen.

Praise and Worship!

The YC students grades Kindergarten through 6th enjoy another session of Praise and Worship. Jim Clauer our Directory of Liturgy taught our youth two news songs this session. We learned *Above All* and *Lean on Me*. The children really enjoy lifting their voices in praise! Then they rounded out their time with Mr. Clauer with two favorite songs *Trading my Sorrows* and *Go Make a Difference*!

I am confident that the Lord enjoyed all the joyful noise of worship that rocked YC!

Remember there are no classes on Sunday March 24th and Monday, March 25th in honor of Palm Sunday and again on Sunday, March 31st and Monday, April 1st in honor of Easter! See you all at Mass!

YC Schedule

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<tr>
<td>Classes K-6</td>
<td>10:15-11:30am</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
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<tr>
<td>FFC</td>
<td>Noon to 1:30</td>
<td>Sunday</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Groups and Special Needs</td>
<td>Sunday, Mar 17*</td>
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*all 7th and 8th grade students will come to the school to buddy up with the younger students this Sunday and Monday.

There will be no classes on March 24th in honor of Palm Sunday or March 31st in honor of Easter—See you at Mass!

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-4pm
SJC Men’s Club
All men of the parish are invited to a Men’s Night Out on Friday, March 22 at 6:00 p.m. for pool, cards, foosball, NCAA Basketball, food and beverages. Come join your fellow parishioners for a night of fun and games.

Women's Club Open Board Positions
Do you look forward to Women's Club functions such as Cooking Night or the Flower Sale? Perhaps you have ideas for new events. Would you be interested in working with the charities we support or helping to get the word out about what's happening in the Women's Club? Maybe you enjoy meeting new people and helping out behind the scenes. No matter what your talents are the Women's Club welcomes you! Please contact Jeannie Francis at 708-246-4695 or Connie Madden at 417-2012 to learn more about open positions beginning next school year 2013. You can also learn more about the Women's Club at our page on the SJC website.

SJC Mom’s Club: Happy St. Patrick’s Day!
**March 22:** Physical Friday! Meet us at the Parish Center at 9:30 for a Spring Scavenger Hunt! Moms and their littles will take a walk around the parish campus, looking for signs of spring. We will return to the Parish Center for a snack and to draw pictures of our findings!

**March 29:** There will be no meeting as we will be celebrating Good Friday.

**April 5:** There will be no meeting as SJC will be on Spring Break. Enjoy this time off with your families!

**April 12:** A Mom's Only discussion will take place. Babysitting will be provided and more details will appear in the bulletin as the date nears.

Interfaith Career Network
Ask A Hiring Manager!

PLEASE NOTE THE LOCATION OF THIS MEETING: St. Cletus Education Building, 700 West 55th Street in La Grange. Please enter the building at the flag pole entrance.

Interfaith Career Network invites you to join us on Thursday, March 21, 7-9 pm for a dynamic panel of professional recruiters who know the ropes from the inside and want to help you boost your search strategy! Unlock the mysteries to…how can I help recruiters find me and make that initial connection…what is the secret to getting that call back and keeping them interested in me…and so much more. Learn the well-worn tips, proven techniques and industry insights from 3 seasoned corporate recruiters… Human Resources Director, SitterCity; Enterprise Talent Acquisition, Blue Cross Blue Shield; plus a Senior Search Executive from the executive search firm of Bloom, Gross and Associates. Join us for this highly interactive program. It is open to everyone and there is no fee to attend.

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

Thank you from Catholic Charities
Dear Parishioners,
Many thanks to you and your parishioners of St. John of the Cross Religious for continually donating food to benefit Catholic Charities West Regional Food Pantry. Each month we provide assistance to over 1,500 individuals. Your contribution makes a difference in the lives of those in need.

We could not provide the services that we do without help of community partners like St. John of the Cross.

Thank you for your continued support. May God bless you for all of your efforts.

Sincerely,
Esmeralda Zepeda
West Regional Services Director

Thank you for your generous contributions to the Collection for the Church in Central and Eastern Europe. Your generosity helps provide not only daily necessities for those in the region but also pastoral care and catechesis that restore the strength of the Church there. Please visit www.usccb.org/nationalcollections to learn more about what your donations have accomplished.
Gratitude is the ultimate virtue, undergirding everything we do. To understand fully what is implied in living out gratitude, we must first define it. Gratitude not only defines sanctity, it also defines maturity. We are mature to the degree that we are grateful. But what brings us there? What makes for a deeper human maturity? I would like to suggest ten major demands that reside inside both human and Christian maturity:

1. **Be willing to carry more and more of life's complexities with empathy:** Few things in life, including our own hearts and motives, are black or white, either-or, simply good or simply bad. Maturity invites us to see, understand, and accept this complexity with empathy so that, like Jesus, we cry tears of understanding over our own troubled cities and our own complex hearts.

2. **Transform jealousy, anger, bitterness, and hatred rather than give them back in kind:** Any pain or tension that we do not transform we will retransmit. In the face of jealousy, anger, bitterness, and hatred we must be like water purifiers, holding the poisons and toxins inside of us and giving back just the pure water, rather than being like electrical cords that simply pass on the energy that flows through them.

3. **Let suffering soften rather than harden our souls:** Suffering and humiliation find us all, in full measure, but how we respond to them, with forgiveness or bitterness, will determine the level of our maturity and the color of our person. This is perhaps our ultimate moral test: Will my humiliations soften or harden my soul?

4. **Forgive:** In the end there is only one condition for entering heaven (and living inside human community), namely, forgiveness. Perhaps the greatest struggle we have in the second-half of our lives is to forgive: forgive those who have hurt us, forgive ourselves for our own shortcomings, and forgive God for seemingly hanging us out unfairly to dry in this world. The greatest moral imperative of all is not to die with a bitter, unforgiving heart.

5. **Live in gratitude:** To be a saint is to be fueled by gratitude, nothing more and nothing less. Let no one deceive you with the notion that a passion for truth, for church, or even for God can trump or bracket the non-negotiable imperative to be gracious always. Holiness is gratitude. Outside of gratitude we find ourselves doing many of the right things for the wrong reasons.

6. **Bless more and curse less:** We are mature when we define ourselves by what we are for rather than by what we are against and especially when, like Jesus, we are looking out at others and seeing them as blessed (“Blessed are you!”) rather than as cursed (“Who do you think you are!”). The capacity to praise more than to criticize defines maturity.

7. **Live in an ever-greater transparency and honesty:** We are as sick as our sickest secret, but we are also as healthy as we are honest. We need, as Martin Luther once put it, “to sin bravely and honestly”. Maturity does not mean that we are perfect or faultless, but that we are honest.

8. **Pray both affectively and liturgically:** The fuel we need to resource ourselves for gratitude and forgiveness does not lie in the strength of our own willpower, but in grace and community. We access that through prayer. We are mature to the degree that we open our own helplessness and invite in God's strength and to the degree that we pray with others that the whole world will do the same thing.

9. **Become ever-wider in your embrace:** We grow in maturity to the degree that we define family (Who is my brother or sister?) in a way that is ever-more ecumenical, interfaith, post-ideological, and non-discriminatory. We are mature only when we are compassionate as God is compassionate, namely, when our sun too shines those we like and those we do not. There comes a time when it is time to turn in our cherished moral placards for a basin and a towel.

10. **Stand where you stand and let God protect you:** In the end, we are all vulnerable, contingent, and helpless both to protect our loved ones and ourselves. We cannot guarantee life, safety, salvation, or forgiveness for ourselves or for those we love. Maturity depends upon accepting this with trust rather than anxiety. We can only do our best, whatever our place in life, wherever we stand, whatever our limits, whatever our shortcoming, and trust that this is enough, that if we die at our post, honest, doing our duty, God will do the rest.

God is a prodigiously-loving, fully-understanding, completely-empathic parent. We are mature and free of false anxiety to the degree that we grasp that and trust that truth.

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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](http://www.ronrolheiser.com).
Our Weekly Calendar and Intentions

**Monday, March 18**
9:30 a.m. Bridges Lenten Faith Sharing Group  
10:30 a.m. Step 11 Christian Meditation  
1:00 p.m. Sacred Space Lenten Faith Sharing Group  
1:00 p.m. Little Rock Scripture Study  
2:30 p.m. Spiritual Journaling  
2:30 p.m. Adoration  
4:00 p.m. Springdale Civic Association  
6:30 p.m. Sacred Space Lenten Faith Sharing Group

**Tuesday, March 19**
9:30 a.m. Focus on Sunday Scriptures Group  
1:30 p.m. Sr. Josephine’s Bible Study  
3:00 p.m. Tuesdays with Mary Rosary  
7:00 p.m. Parish Reconciliation Service  
7:00 p.m. School Board Meeting  
7:30 p.m. Boy Scout Meeting

**Wednesday, March 20**
9:00 a.m. Women’s Club Flourish Lenten Faith Sharing  
9:30 a.m. Bible Study 3  
11:30 a.m. Ladies Bridge  
2:00 p.m. Christian Meditation  
7:00 p.m. Bridges Lenten Faith Sharing Group  
7:00 p.m. Protecting God’s Children  
7:30 p.m. Christian Meditation

**Thursday, March 21**
9:00 a.m. Women’s Club Meeting  
9:30 a.m. Sacred Space Lenten Faith Sharing Group  
12:00 p.m. Bridges Lenten Faith Sharing Group  
1:30 p.m. Creed Study  
6:30 p.m. Family Rosary  
7:00 p.m. Creed Study  
7:00 p.m. Bridges Lenten Faith Sharing Group (school chapel)

**Friday, March 22**
9:00 a.m. Mom’s Club  
6:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross—Taize Prayer  
6:00 p.m. Men’s Club

**Saturday, March 23**
7:00 a.m. Christian Meditation

Mass Intentions

**Monday, March 18, St. Cyril**
6:30 Joseph Nuzzo; George H. Burns  
7:45 Roy Cook; Lawrence Hickey; Andrew Swietek

**Tuesday, March 19, St. Joseph**
6:30 Ellen McGowan  
7:45 John & Mary Hester; John DiMonte

**Wednesday, March 20**
6:30 Fr. Ed Fealey; Bill King  
7:45 Our Beloved Dead; Jack Callahan

**Thursday, March 21**
7:45 Gloria Oechsel; Anne McAuliffe

**Friday, March 22**
7:45 Joseph Frank; Concetta Mazzulla

**Saturday, March 23, St. Turibius**
8:00 Don Winkel; Susan McGuire  
5:00 Julianne O’Connor; John Barron

**Sunday, March 24, Palm Sunday**
7:30 Anne Glackin Doherty; Jack Rooney  
9:00 George J. Polli; Robert Petkus  
10:45 Shawn Feeley; Rose Marks; Jean Cassidy  
12:30 Amelia Marchese; Deceased SJC Parish School Families  
5:00 SJC & St. Mark Parishioners

*Italics—Living*

Wedding Banns

Andrew Billups & Julie McMahon

Pray for our Sick

Marie Coyne  Shirley and Allison Kazragis  
Ashley Davis  Fr. William Mannion  
Mikel Dodd  Martha Matrisciano  
Eileen Hans  Gloria Spanza Meyers  
Karen Hult  Oliver Yuen

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

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

Palm Sunday, March 24 Masses
Saturday 5:00 p.m. Vigil
Sunday 7:30 a.m.
9:00 a.m.
10:45 a.m.
12:30 p.m. (Note this Mass starts 15 minutes later than usual.)
5:00 p.m.

Holy Thursday, March 28
Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper 7:30 p.m.
(Contemporary Ensemble, Flute & Cello)
Bus Pilgrimage to Neighboring Churches will leave after Mass and will return at approximately 11:00 p.m.

Good Friday, March 29
Stations of the Cross for Families 12:00 p.m.
Passion of the Lord 3:00 p.m.
(Parish Choir, Cello)

Holy Saturday, March 30
Blessing of Easter Baskets 11:00 a.m. in the Parish Center
Easter Vigil, 7:30 p.m.
(Parish Choir, Flute, Cello & Trumpet)

Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord, March 31
7:30 a.m.
(Cantor, Flute & Cello)
9:00 a.m.
(Combined Children’s Choirs, Flute & Cello)
9:15 a.m. First Floor Multi-Purpose Room in School
(Cantor, Flute, & Trumpet)
10:45 a.m.
(Parish Choir, Flute, Trumpet, & Cello)
11:00 a.m. First Floor Multi-Purpose Room in School
(Teen Choir, Flute, Trumpet, Bass Guitar, & Drums)
12:30 p.m. (Note this Mass starts 15 minutes later than usual.)
(Contemporary Ensemble, Flute, Trumpet, & Cello)

No 5:00 p.m. Mass on Easter Sunday

There will be no babysitting on Easter Sunday.