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Dear Parishioners,

The regular schedule of meetings has returned to my calendar. The School Advisory Board gathered already in August to review the role of the Board, its policies and to have members take responsibility for different committees. Led this year by Phil May, the School Board agenda begins in earnest the third Tuesday of the month from now through June 2014. In addition to all of the other details the Board pays attention throughout the year, this year they have the goal of installing a playground on 51st Street for the Kindergarten and Pre-K students. As of today, we have 650 students in the school.

The Youth Catechesis Advisory Council began last Tuesday, the first Tuesday of the month. Led by Michelle Snorewicz, this group of volunteers generously gives of their time as well to help in offering the best Religious Education program possible for all the students. The total number of students the past several years has hovered right around 1100 with over 180 catechists needed on Sunday mornings and Monday nights.

Next Tuesday, the second Tuesday of the month, the Parish Advisory Council will gather for a kick-off to the new year. The minutes from last May’s meeting are on the website under the ‘About Us’ tab, then select ‘Councils and Boards” from the drop down menu. Stewardship in all its aspects is a major focus for the coming year. As part of that, emphasizing the convenience of electronic giving and the help it gives our offices in record keeping will also be a focus for the coming year.

As important is what begins to return to Fr. Fil’s calendar. Yesterday he had a morning of reflection for the Ministers of Care who do such a tremendous job in bringing the Eucharist to the hospitalized and homebound. A week from Tuesday, on September 17th, all those interested in becoming a Catholic will meet in the church for an information session on the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA). Fr. Fil has gathered a wonderful group of parishioners around him who give extremely valuable witness and support in welcoming the candidates and catechumens.

Crossroads, our high school teen ministry program, has their kick-off next Sunday night. About 225 teens are engaged through our home groups who meet regularly in parishioners’ homes. And then there is the Women’s Club Board, the Parent Association, the Teachers Recognition Trust Board, Christian Mediation, the Seniors Club, Journaling, Scripture Study, Men’s Club, Baptism prep, Finance Committee, Choir practices, and on and on, all comprising this wonderful, busy, active and thriving parish. How blessed are we?!

Peace,
Fr. David

You have one precious life to give. How do you choose to offer it to God?
Are you willing to accept the challenges of discipleship?

If you have ever considered a vocation to the priesthood, contact Fr. Francis Bitterman, fbitterman@archchicago.org or at 312-534-8298, or go to www.ChicagoPriest.com. For information on religious life contact Sr. Elyse Ramirez, OP at 312-534-5240 or eramirez@archchicago.org and for the Permanent Diaconate program contact Deacon Bob Puhala at 847-837-4564 or bpuhala@usml.edu.
Adult Formation Opportunities

Like a mustard seed, the seed of faith will mature and flourish as we grow in our relationship with God.

Pillar Study II: The Sacraments

In Pillar II: Sacraments, the second study of the four-part Pillar program, Sean Inness continues to open up the treasures of the Catechesis of the Catholic Church. Not only will you learn about the power and purpose of the sacraments, you’ll also discover how these fonts of inestimable grace can transform your life, providing strength, healing, and hope.

In Pillar II: Sacraments you will …
- Discover the sacraments as the source of power and grace Jesus gave us to face life’s struggles, challenges, and temptations.
- Learn about the sacraments’ biblical origins.
- Understand how the Church forshadowed Christ’s second coming.
- See how the sacraments mystically transport you into the actual events of Christ's ministry.
- Discover how both holy orders and marriage are ordered “towards the salvation of others.”

A twelve week study of the power, purpose and origin of the Sacraments through reflective discussion, dvd learning, and home study. Class meets on Tuesdays beginning September 10th at 1pm or 7pm in the parish center. $25 covers the cost of study book. To register drop off an envelope at the parish office marked Sacrament Study with your contact info and book fee enclosed. You may pick up your book at the parish center or at the first class.

Little Rock: Lands of the Bible

Fr. Filbert will lead our Little Rock Bible Study this fall. Participants will take a visual and spiritual journey to the Holy Land via video lecture and discussion. Eight Mondays beginning September 16th from 1pm to 2:30. Cost of materials is $10 which can be brought to the first class.

Spirit Packed into Soul with Fr. Harry

Fr. Harry will offer a brief intro into the power of poems in all of life. Each session will include examples of the power and surprise of poems and reflection on the Sacred (Lectio Divina) in prose and poems. Participants are invited to bring a poem to memorize in whole or part and share what it means to you. Bring a note pad. Wednesdays from 9-11:30am. Join us!!

Meet Fr. Harry!
Retired just 4 years ago, Fr. Harry Bonin has been helping out at weekday Mass at our parish for the past year. Fr. Harry, who was ordained in 1965, holds a Master of Arts in Voice, a Master in Social Work and a STL. He has been a parish priest in the Chicago area and taught music and language at Quigley for many years. In fact, Fr. David was once a student of Fr. Harry!

Flourish Faith Sharing for Women

Grow in faith and friendship every other Thursday beginning September 12th from 9-10:30am in the parish center. The first eight sessions will focus on scripture study using a dvd by Jennie Allen. (Here is a link to the study called “Stuck” http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KMzh11pVQ2g.) Book order and registration to Sue Bidstrup at jsbidstrup@ameritech.net or Liz Williams at lisbethwill@sbcglobal.net
**Becoming Catholic (RCIA)**

The Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (RCIA) is a process designed for those who are considering joining the Catholic Church by celebrating the sacraments of initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist) at the Easter Vigil. The process welcomes adults who have never been baptized and those who have been baptized in another Christian tradition, as well as adult Catholics who wish to be confirmed.

Each year people are welcomed into the church at St. John of the Cross Parish through the RCIA process. The RCIA is an engaging, dynamic, respectful, challenging and – ENJOYABLE journey. Fr. Filbert Ngwila and his RCIA team graciously host the RCIA on Tuesday evenings during the school year. If you would like to learn more about how you can become Catholic please contact Fr. Filbert Ngwila at fngwila@stjohnofthecross.org.

**Come September 17th at 7pm in church to learn more.**

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**Divorce and Beyond** is a program designed to offer support, fellowship and respect to our brothers and sisters experiencing or having completed divorce. Come share and know that others have gone through the same things as you. Know that you are loved and welcomed as part of our parish family.

Three trained parishioners will help you through the journey of initial stress, anger and guilt to ultimate forgiveness, happiness and growth. The sessions will cover experiences and emotions that divorcing people go through and will discuss activities for making divorce a growing experience.

Everyone is very welcome to this eight week support group, no matter where you are in the divorce process. It is important to know you are not alone. Participants are encouraged to attend all eight sessions.

Friday evenings from 7-9pm in the parish center: Sept. 13, Sept. 27, Oct. 11, Oct. 25, Nov. 8, Nov. 22, Dec. 6th and Dec. 20.

Program book is $10. To register, drop off money and your contact info to the parish center office in an envelope marked Divorce & Beyond. Any questions, contact Ann Marie at 708-784-9311.

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**Grief Support in our Area**

Loyola University Medical Center in Maywood has 2 classes beginning the second week in September:

- **General Journey Toward Healing**
  - For adults grieving loss of a loved one
  - Tuesdays, Sept. 10—Oct. 15 6:30-8pm

- **Widow-Widower Group**
  - For adults grieving the loss of a spouse
  - Thursdays, Sept. 12—October 17 3-4:30pm

To register for either group call: Nancy Kiel at 708-216-1646

Adventist St. Thomas Hospice offers several grief support groups for kids, teens, and a support group for parents/caregivers.

Tommy’s Kids and Teens for Teens is a 6 week grief support group for children 4-17 who have experienced a significant loss due to death. They are grouped by age. A support group for parents/caregivers meets at the same time to understand a child’s grief, experience support and encouragement.

- **Thursdays, Sept. 12—Oct. 17 6-7:30pm in Hinsdale**

   Call Rosie Cohen at 630-856-6993 to register.
What is Beloved?
Welcoming ~ Peaceful ~ Nourishing ~ Renewing~ Beautiful

The Beloved Retreat began in 1999 and is still offered to the Old St Pat's Community in Chicago. The hope of the retreat is to rediscover what often eludes us, but what God wants us to know: that We Are Beloved. Over 1,000 participants have experienced the retreat since it began over ten years ago.

The Beloved Retreat will be offered the weekend of Oct. 11-13th by St. John of the Cross Parish at the Carmelite Center in Darien. It will be facilitated by Dr. Terry Nelson-Johnson. The retreat is for adult men and women of all ages, single or married. It is for those who have never experienced a retreat as well as for those who are seasoned retreat veterans. It is a retreat for all - Catholics and non-Catholics. The retreat has proven to be invigorating, healing, transformative, and provocative. It begins on Friday evening at 7pm and concludes Sunday afternoon at 2pm. After the retreat, there will be opportunities to get together as a community and to stay connected as a community of believers.

“I had never gone on a retreat before and it didn’t seem like the right time to go on a retreat with a 4th grader and 3 year old twins at home. I went on the Beloved Retreat this past April and came away from the retreat with an amazing sense of peace and an overwhelming feeling that ‘I am enough’ and ‘I am loved by God unconditionally’. The sense of community on the retreat was beautiful and something that I am looking forward to sharing at St. John of the Cross.”
-Tiffany White

“The retreat was an awakening in which I have rediscovered the loving presence of God in my life and truly came to know myself as a Beloved son of God.”
-Eddie Sandrick

Got Questions? Want answers?
See the team in the church Narthex this weekend after all Masses.
Suzanne Doonan, Mary Beth and Don Dvorak, Marianne Firlit, Sr. Pat Francis, Andrea and Rick Gagliani, Marie Gerken, Nancy Michalica, Amanda and Eddie Sandrick, Karen and Dean Teglia and Tiffany White

Please consider joining us and prepare to call yourself Beloved.
Please contact Andrea Gagliani, agagliani@sbcglobal.net, 246-1520, Tiffany White, tfoxwhite@gmail.com, 246-8896, or Marianne Firlit, mgfirlit@stjohnofthecross.org, 839-0377

Please pick up a pamphlet at the exits of the church for more information and registration or go to the parish website.
Background on the Gospel: Luke 14:25-33
In chapter 14 of Luke’s Gospel, Jesus is speaking to people gathered at the table about the difficulties of following him. This group of people is suspicious about Jesus, looking to catch him doing something wrong. Jesus speaks to them in parables, emphasizing that although there is a right way to be a disciple and enter into the kingdom of his Father, it is a difficult path to follow. Many, even some of the guests at the table, reject the invitation. So Jesus turns to the crowds and speaks to them of discipleship. Jesus explains that, when it comes to making a choice for the Kingdom of God, nothing can get in the way. When Jesus describes “hating” one’s father and mother, he is not talking about feelings. Rather, he is emphasizing very strongly that choosing to be a disciple means that everything else—family, money, your own life—must come second. In Matthew’s version of this story (Matthew 10:37), Jesus refers not to “hating” father or mother, but to loving them more than Jesus. Jesus makes it very clear that being a disciple is not easy. It means to bear one’s own cross. These difficult sayings of Jesus are followed by two brief parables (a person constructing a tower and a king marching into battle) that make an obvious point—don’t start what you cannot finish. Discipleship is difficult and is something we can commit to only if we are prepared to put the Kingdom of God before everything else.

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Theme: Commitment is required to follow Jesus.

Breaking Open the Word
Suggested text for faith sharing: Today’s Gospel
Step One: Listen to the Word
As you listen to the reading today, what image caught your imagination? What word or phrase struck you?
Step Two: Look into Your Life
Question for Children: Jesus says that in order to be one of his followers, we must be close to him. When do you feel closest to Jesus?
Question for Youth: Jesus tells his disciples that they must renounce their possessions in order to be His disciple. If you had to, could you leave everything behind to be with God? What would hold you back? How much of a struggle would it be?
Question for Adults: Today’s Gospel is demanding. How do you as a modern man or woman “denounce your possessions?” What does this mean for you?

Let us pray that we will have the courage to live up to the demands of the Gospel, truly renouncing all things that lead us away from God.

Open your hearts to the love God instills in them. God loves you tenderly. What he gives you is not to be kept under lock and key, but to be shared. The more you save the less you will be able to give. The less you have, the more you will know how to share. Let us ask God, when it comes to ask God for something, to help us to be generous.

Mother Teresa

Readings for the Week

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Thoughts on Prayer

A friend called as I was in the midst of a difficult day. When he asked, “How’s it going?” I launched into a litany of woes: malfunctioning alarm clock, spilled grape juice on a new white shirt, three empty buses flying by as I hurried toward my bus stop, and an important and urgent e-mail inexplicably bounced back, missing a deadline. Now I’d begun to take out my frustrations on my coworkers. I was about to continue my griping when my friend gently interrupted: “Well, it’s never too late to have a good day.”

At first I wanted to hang up. I was looking for sympathy, and he offered me a strong dose of wisdom instead. I wanted to wallow in victimhood, and he offered me the opportunity to put my faith into practice.

I knew what he was trying to tell me. He’d shared his beliefs with me before, both in word and in example. I’d seen him handle difficulties with grace and patience and even a touch of humor.

“How can I do that?” I asked. He said I needed to stop agonizing and take a few deep breaths. Then I could ask God sincerely for help with whatever would come my way that day.

Finally, I simply needed to stop looking backward and instead do the next thing right in front of me, for that's where God's help would meet me. I took his advice, and since then I've become a big believer in these three steps:

1. **Stop agonizing:** It was hard for me to admit it, but agonizing over my day as if life were all about me was not only self-centered but showed a certain lack of faith. As long as I stayed in the self-absorbed mode of griping, I was failing to look for God in these challenging moments. Scripture tells us that nothing can “separate us from the love of God” (Romans 8:38-39). And that certainly extends beyond minor irritations such as spilled grape juice and missed buses.

2. **Ask God for help:** This small change in attitude—from trying to handle everything on our own to inviting God's help into our lives—makes an enormous difference in how our days play out. It's not that God is withholding help unless we beg for it; God's help is always available. The point is that unless we seek it, we won't be open to recognizing that help when it's all around us. The act of asking for God's assistance predisposes our hearts, minds, imaginations, and wills to responding to it when it comes our way.

3. **Do the next thing right in front of you:** If you've been having "one of those days," you may be tempted to try to address all your challenges at once. This can leave you disoriented, scattered, and confused. Instead, trust that God's will for you can be found right here and right now in whatever situation you're in. It's in the present moment that we encounter God's grace.

Our lives will never be free from challenges, disappointments, and difficulties, but God promises to accompany us if we invite him along. And that can make all the difference. Have a good day!  

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Each one of us has a personal vocation.
God intends each one of us to play a unique role
in carrying out the divine plan.
The challenge is to understand our role, our vocation,
and to respond generously to this call from God.

The word vocation, from vocare, to call, is one’s calling,
the work that we are called to in this world, the thing
that we are summoned to spend our lives doing. We
can speak of someone choosing a vocation, but often a
vocation chooses the person.

The Christian vocation is essentially a call to be a
disciple of Jesus. Stewardship is part of that. Even
more to the point, however, Christians are called to be
good stewards of the personal vocations they receive.
Each of us must discern, accept, and live out joyfully
and generously the commitments, responsibilities, and
roles to which God calls him or her.

Jesus calls us each by name. He knows our personal
histories, strengths and weaknesses, our destinies; he
has a purpose in mind for each of us.

This purpose is individual vocation. Every human life,
every personal vocation, is unique. And yet the
vocations of all Christians do have elements in
common. One of these is the call to be a disciple. In
fact, we might say that to be disciples—to follow Christ
and to try to live his life as our own—is the common
vocation of Christians; discipleship in this sense is
Christian life.

Jesus not only calls people to him, but also forms them
and sends them out in his service (Mt 10:5; Mk 6:7; Lk
9:1). Being sent on a mission is a consequence of
being a disciple. Whoever wants to follow Christ will
have much work to do on his behalf—announcing the
Good News and serving others as Jesus did.

Oh Lord,
giver of life and
source of our freedom,
we are reminded that Yours
is “the earth in its fullness;
the world and those who dwell in it.”

We know that
it is from your hand
that we have received all we have
and are
and will be.

Gracious and loving God,
we understand that you call us
to be the stewards
of Your abundance,
the caretakers of all
you have entrusted to us.

Help us always
to use your gifts wisely and
teach us to share them generously.

May our faithful stewardship
bear witness to
the love of Christ
in our lives.

We pray this with grateful hearts
in Jesus’ name.
Amen.
**Birth of Mary**

Feast day September 8

We know that everyone has a birthday. The Bible doesn’t say anything about Mary’s birth, but we know that she was born. Like all parents, Mary’s parents—we call them Joachim and Ann—probably took one look at their newborn daughter and knew that she was special. Joachim and Ann loved God very much, and they were filled with gratitude to God for the gift of a child. They raised Mary as a child of God, teaching her to love and serve God. When the angel Gabriel told Mary that she had been chosen to be the Mother of Jesus, she already had great faith in God. Her strong faith and trust allowed her to say yes to God’s plan for her. We cannot be certain what the future holds for any newborn infant, but we do know that the life of each person has meaning and purpose. When Mary was born, the world did not know who she was. Sometimes others—and maybe even you—don’t see how special you are. Maybe you forget that God is calling you, too, right now, to do what Mary did—to bring Jesus into the world.

When we celebrate his mother’s birth, we honor Jesus too. Today thank God for the gift of life, and give honor to both Mary and Jesus by showing respect and concern for one another—remembering that God has created each person with love and with a call to something very special in life.

**Simple Ways to Celebrate Sacred Time as a Family**

Continued from last week...

Even with hectic schedules, it's easy for families to grow in faith together by celebrating the sacred in simple and routine activities.

3. Celebrate ethnic holidays and feasts—even if it’s not your ethnic group. My German mother-in-law always made shamrock pancakes for her children on St. Patrick’s Day. The growing number of Hispanics in the U.S. is enriching our culture with traditional feasts for Our Lady of Guadalupe, Our Lady of Charity, and Los Posadas. There are countless ways to spice up the calendar year with special celebrations. They convey without words that all the days are special. The whole year is bathed in holiness.

4. Make birthdays special. Celebrating a person’s birth is a central way to convey a sense of time’s sacredness. The point of celebrating is to convey how much you cherish this child, and straightforward and simple are usually better than elaborate, as expressed through “things.” Find a time ay to sit together with your child and share a special message just from you. It might be about the day he or she was born, about how much you were looking forward to having this child. Or mention traits of this child that bring you joy. If you do that early in the day, I’ll bet the rest of the day goes well, no matter how many kids show up for the party. 

Watch for more ideas next week.....

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**Family Connection**

Provide your children with a list of things that they are responsible for interspersed with things that they like to do—for example, make their beds, take out the garbage, go to the park, do homework, watch television, have a snack, feed the cat. The list should reflect their responsibilities and favorite recreations. Tell them to pretend that company is coming and ask which of the things listed should be done first. Explain that this is called setting priorities.

Paraphrase the Gospel story for the children. Ask them what Jesus says is the most important thing for them to do. Jesus tells us that the number-one priority is to follow him. But just as it is not always easy to do the things we are supposed to do before doing the fun things, it is not always easy to be a follower of Jesus. Yet when we put Jesus first, we will be truly happy.
CROSSROADS KICK OFF PARTY TODAY!!
Come out to the Crossroads Kick Off Party today, Sunday, Sept. 8th at 6-8pm. Join us as we welcome the new year of Crossroads with food, fun and games.

CROSSROADS REGISTRATION FOR FALL IS OPEN!
CHECK OUT THE WEBSITE TO REGISTER AT www.stjohnofthecross.org/crossroads

Don’t Forget:
Sept. 8 DOS mtg 10am
Sept 8 6pm Kick-off Party for ALL TEENS:
   Dodgeball games!
Sept. 14 Kickball game 3:30pm
Sep 15 Fresh-Soph retreat mtg 10am
   DOS mtg Noon

Weekly Kickball Game:
All Crossroad teens are invited to come out on Saturday afternoons at 3:30pm on the lawn north of the Church for pick up kickball games
It’s a great way to hangout with new and old friends and kickoff the new school year!!

Your enthusiasm can be infectious, stimulating and attractive to others. They will love you for it. They will go for you and with you.

Steve Foody: crossroads@stjohnofthecross.org
Katie Hayes: khayes@stjohnofthecross.org

Upcoming Virtus Training at SJC
   September 18, 6:30-9:30p.m.
   September 24, 9 a.m.—Noon
   September 24, 6:30-9:30 p.m.
Workshops will be held at St. John of the Cross Parish Center for all Parents, Coaches, Room Parents, any Volunteer who has regular contact with children.
To register, go on-line to the internet site for Virtus Training at www.virtus.org. Click on the “registration” on the left side, choose “begin the registration process” and then choose “Chicago, IL”

CLASSES BEGIN SOON!!
Emails will be send this week with room assignments. Please watch for this important email!

First Day of Classes:
Sunday, September 15th & Monday, September 16th
First Day of Classes!
Open House for Parents!
During class attend the classroom for part of the time, then come to a presentation on the year ahead.

Monday, September 16th
First Day of Classes!

YC Schedule
| Classes K-6 | 10:15-11:30am | Sunday, Sept 15, 22, 29 |
| FFC/Preschool | Noon-1:30 pm | Sunday, October 6 |
| Home Groups and Special Needs | 6:15-7:30pm | Monday, Sept 16, 23, 30 |

Youth Catechesis Office
yc@stjcross.org * 708-246-6760
www.stjohnofthecross.org/yc
Monday thru Thursday 8:30am- 4:00pm
Our computer lab saw some wonderful updates this summer! The students use technology extensively in their classrooms with iPads as well as laptops. Each student also takes classes in the computer lab throughout the week.

In the primary grades, the students concentrate on keyboarding and working with spreadsheets, while in the intermediate grades the students work with PowerPoint presentations, do research, and design brochures. The junior high works a great deal with cross curricular projects.

By the time our students graduate, they are well prepared with the technological skills they will need to be successful in high school.
Mass Schedule
The 12:15pm Mass returns this weekend until Memorial Day weekend.

Children’s Choir News—Start up Dates!!
Did you know that St. John of the Cross has 2 choirs available to all children in the parish? **Cherub Choir** serves children in grades 1-3 and practices on Wednesdays from 3:45 – 4:30 in the church. The start date is Sept. 11th with registration and a brief meeting at 4:20. **Youth Choir** serves students in grades 4-8, and practices on Thursdays from 3:45-4:30 pm in the church. The start date is Sept. 12th with registration and a brief meeting at 4:20. Questions? Contact Ann Bourjaily-Maney at bourjman@sbcglobal.net.

“5 Alive” Sunday Night Choir
Are you a high school/college aged person looking for a way to get involved in music at SJC? Our Sunday night 5:00 Mass is looking for you! The choir sings on the 1st and 3rd Sundays of the month with a rehearsal just before Mass at 4pm. No regular commitment is needed – you only come when it works for you! Start date is Sept. 15. Questions? Call or email Ann Bourjaily-Maney at (708)246-4171 or bourjman@sbcglobal.net or visit the 5 Alive Facebook page.

Mom’s Club
Attention mothers of young children (6 and under)!
We would love to have you join our group. Please email sjcmomsclub@gmail.com to get added to our weekly no-obligation email list so that you can receive the most up-to-date information about our meetings.
Our September meetings are:
- Friday, September 13 Parish Center 9:30-11:00am
- Friday, September 20 Parish Center 9:30-11:00am
Contacts: Ellen Twomey & Jennifer Van Wyck

Position Open
SJC has an opening for an adult babysitter at our Sunday morning babysitting service in the Garden Room of the Rectory. This is a paid position. Hours are 8:45am-noon. The children range in age from 1-5 years old. If you are interested, please call Rita Forster at 246-4519.

Volunteers Needed for Children’s Liturgy of the Word at 9:00 and 10:45am Sunday Mass. Preparation materials and training are provided. The commitment is once a month. Please call Megan O’Brien at 708-784-0732.

Volunteers Needed at Aging Care Connections
Aging Care in LaGrange needs front desk volunteers to answer the phone. Call Niki at 708-354-1323 x 226 for more information on how you can help.
Outreach

Operation Support Our Troops Annual Parishwide Collection:
Sept. 6th—16th
Donation Boxes in Church and Parish Center
The mission of Operation Support Our Troops IL is to supplement the basic provisions provided to American soldiers in Iraq and Afghanistan and overseas. The packages we send include packaged treats and toiletries that our troops cannot easily obtain. Top Ten Items Needed at This Time:
1. Individual cold drink mix packets (Gatorade, Propel)
2. Slim Jims/Jerky
3. Crackers (16 oz or less)
4. Nuts (20 oz or less)
5. Cereal/breakfast bars
6. Flyswatters/flu strips
7. Sunscreen (8 oz or less, no aerosol please)
8. Antibiotic or anti-itch cream
9. Toilet paper
10. Insect Repellent Wipes or Spray (8 oz or less, no aerosol)

Please do not donate glass items, larger sizes than listed or expired items. No prepacked boxes can be accepted. Thank you for helping us support our troops!! Questions: Contact Debbie Pusinelli (708) 246-6760 ext 251

Misericordia Family Fest is TODAY
All are invited to the 33rd annual Family Fest on Sunday, September 8th from 11-6 at Misericordia’s Campus at Ridge & Devon in Chicago. There will be live entertainment, children’s games, kiddie rides, free parking, auctions & raffles, and food & drinks. All proceeds support Misericordia’s programs for children and adults with developmental disabilities. For info and tickets, call 773-273-2768.

Pro-Life Weekend at Pumpkin Fest 2013
Illinois Right to Life announces a fun raising event for the entire family on Saturday and Sunday, September 28 & 29 at Siegel’s Farm, 17250 South Weber Rd., in Crest Hill. (Just 5 mi south of I-55). The farm is open from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. For ticket information and to purchase tickets, call 312-422-9300. Children 2 and under are admitted free.

Food Pantry Collection
During the month of September your nonperishable food donations will be delivered to Catholic Charities in Cicero.

Are you an unemployed or underemployed homeowner struggling to keep your home?
In the past 2 years over 9,000 families have been helped through the Illinois Hardest Hit Program, a foreclosure prevention resource funded by the US Department of the Treasury, which temporarily assists homeowners struggling to maintain their home while they work to regain employment and financial stability. Because federal funds are almost exhausted, the Illinois Housing Develop Authority will accept applications only through September 30, 2013. Go to www.keepyourhomeillinois.org for more information or 1-855-KEEP-411 toll free.

Interfaith Community Network
Your Brain, Your Interview
Please join us on Thursday, September 19 from 7-9 pm for an interesting program on how the brain works…replacing negative messages with positive ones so you can be at your best for your interview and life in general. Our speaker, Joan Zietlow, is a Holistic Health Coach, RN, Brain Management Consultant. We look forward to seeing you at St. Cletus Education Building, 700 West 55th Street in La Grange Enter the building at the flag pole entrance.

Job Support Group Workshop
A five week job support skills workshop begins on Tuesday evening September 17 from 7-9 pm. Join us at the First Presbyterian Church located at 150 South Ashland Avenue. Please enter on Catherine Ave. No charge.

Mark your calendar and plan to shop at Whole Foods in Hinsdale on Wednesday, Sept. 18th. 5% of your purchases will be donated to Beds Plus. Beds Plus helps homeless individuals obtain stable affordable housing and provides a continuum of professional supportive services including emergency overnight shelter. www.bedspluscare.org

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The Value of Atheists
In his monumental study of atheism, Michael Buckley suggests that atheism is invariably a parasite that feeds off bad religion. It feeds off bad religion, picks on bad religion, and picks apart bad religion.

If that's true, then ultimately atheists do us a huge favor. They pick apart bad religion, showing us our blind spots, rationalizations, inconsistencies, double-standards, hypocrisies, moral selectivity, propensity for power, unhealthy fears, and hidden arrogance. Atheism shows us the log in our own eye.

On our honest days, we admit that this is a needed challenge. Ideally, of course, we should be sufficiently self-aware and sufficiently self-critical to see all these things for ourselves or, barring that, be attentive enough to our own prophets to stay aware of where we’re falling short. But that's rarely the case and, as a result, there's invariably bad religion and this has always helped spawn negativity towards religion and atheism.

And we see this playing out at different levels: Philosophically, of course, its most powerful expression comes from the two most-famous atheists of the 19th century, Ludwig Feuerbach and Fredrick Nietzsche. Their real criticism of religion and of us, its practitioners, is not so much that belief in God is "the opium of the people" and that a focus on the next life helps keep us subjugated in this life, though they do affirm that. Rather their deeper criticism has to do with our religious actions, namely, that we use the idea of God and religion to rationalize our own desires. For Feuerbach and Nietzsche, God did not make us in his image and likeness; but rather we've made God in our image and likeness. For them, God is a projection of the mind and we have perennially used that projection to morally justify and bless our own immaturity, our own will, our own fears, and our own rationalizations. As individuals and as churches, we simply use the idea of God to do whatever we want, and then call it God's will. We are not, in the end, obedient to any power or a will beyond our own, except that religion makes it seem that we are.

In our ordinary church lives, where few, if any, ever read Feuerbach and Nietzsche, we simply meet this criticism in a different language; bad religion still gets picked apart. Inside the culture, we have people like Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins who keep the knives of atheism sharp and operative. More painful for us though is the fact that bad religion gets picked upon and picked part by many of those who are dear to us, not least our own children. More recently, a lot of that criticism has centered upon the sexual abuse crisis in the church; but, everywhere within our culture, religion and our churches are being picked apart because of our inconsistencies, blind spots, and moral selectivity.

Much as this criticism hurts and can seem unfair, at the end of the day, most of it is true. Moreover, our attempts to defend ourselves, our apologias, are often simply further rationalizations and further failures to admit our own shortcoming, giving our critics even more of a corpse to feed off. Defensiveness is not helpful here.

Our response to atheism and to other critics who feed off our religious faults must begin with an acknowledgement of where they are correct, even if those criticisms emanate from voices that are unfair and are, themselves, rationalizing. For example, an unfair media does not create any of our sins and shortcomings, we do.

Our response to atheism and criticism of our faith and religion should be threefold: First, we should be grateful for the challenge. We've never been fully faithful and we're better off openly hearing what's being thought of us and said of us than not hearing it. Denial is not a friend. Second, we need to acknowledge, without undue defensiveness, what's true and resist the temptation defend ourselves in ways that simply create more bad religion for our critics to feed upon. When we're over-defensive before our critics, we not only caste ourselves and our churches in a bad light; worst of all, we cast God in a bad light.

Finally, most important, the real response to bad religion is never secularism or atheism, but better religion! We need to be more consistent, both in private conscience and in church practice.

What is better religion? How do we recognize better religion? We recognize true religion in the same way as we recognize true beauty and goodness. They're self-evident when they appear. Beauty and goodness are received more than discerned. Nobody need tell us what's beautiful. Beauty is ultimately received. It declares itself. The same is true for good religion.

But the reverse is also true. Bad religion also declares itself, and no amount of sincerity will ultimately hide that.

Atheism is a parasite that feed offs bad religion. So, when, like today, atheism takes on a particularly nasty aggression, perhaps we need to examine more closely what this mirrors inside of religion.

Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI
This Week at SJC

Monday, September 09
9:30 AM Senior Club Planning Committee
10:30 AM Step 11 Christian Meditation
2:30 PM Adoration
2:30 PM Spiritual Journaling
Tuesday, September 10
9:05 AM Pray the Rosary in the Mary Garden
9:30 AM Focus on Sunday Scriptures
1:00 PM Creed Study
7:00 PM Adoration
7:00 PM Spiritual Journaling
Wednesday, September 11
9:00 AM Father Harry Bonin Reflection Group
9:30 AM Wednesday Morning Bible Study
9:30 AM Bridges Faith Sharing Group
7:30 PM Contemporary Choir
Thursday, September 12
9:00 AM Women's Club Flourish
3:30 PM Youth Choir Practice
7:00 PM Faith Sharing Group
7:30 PM Contemporary Choir
Friday, September 13
9:30 AM Mom's Club
7:00 PM Divorce and Beyond First Class
Saturday, September 14
7:00 AM Christian Meditation
Sunday, September 15
10:00 AM Crossroads DOS/FSR
4:00 PM YC BEDS

Mass Intentions

Monday, September 9, St. Peter Claver
7:45 Donald Parker; Dr. William Buckingham
Tuesday, September 10
7:45 Bill Broderick; Ellen McGowan
Wednesday, September 11
7:45 Mary DeVito; Richard Glisk
Thursday, September 12, The Most Holy Name of Mary
7:45 Rev. William J. Bennett; Marie O'Brien
Friday, September 13, St. John Chrysostom
7:45 Special Intention; Eleanor Lahart
Saturday, September 14, The Exaltation of the Holy Cross
8:00 Galloway & Hague Families; Jean Finn
5:00 John Barron; George Gallagher
Sunday, September 15, 24th Sunday in Ordinary Time
7:30 Raymond Matusik; Jean Finn
9:00 Jerry Lutzen; Jim Toner
10:45 SJC & Holy Cross Parishioners; Rose Hein
12:15 Gene Harris; Galvin & Grogan Families
5:00 James Bennett; Olga Matusik

Italics—Living

Pray for our Sick

Dale Alm
Eve Baron
Paul Cervony
John Casey
Terry Cullen
William Dwyer
Melissa Morrissey Eldredge
Bernadine Gordus
Karen Hult
Barbara Jacob
Allison Kazragis
Shirley Kazragis
Joe & Rosie King
Greg LaValle
Fr. William Mannion
Olga Theresa Matusik
Baby Maddie Mayer
Vickie McNally
Jay Meehan
Baby Meghan Hope Pacyna
Bob Pietras
Rick Reimer
Teresa Schaefer
Charles Sugrue
Guy Thomas
Baby Kameron Walters
Mary Catherine Warren
Pam Wilson
Elizabeth Witek

Eternal Rest Grant unto These, O Lord

Leo Sulak, father of Paul
and grandfather of Steven and Brian
Nancy Tisa, grandmother of Tom,
great grandmother of Madeline, Olivia,
Analeise and Grace
Frank Snow, brother of Ed Snow

Wedding Banns
Timothy Forster & Krista Rue

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

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Janet Caschetta
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Kathleen Gorman
Katie Hayes
Jessica Koch
MU Martin
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Pastor
Associate Pastor
Deacon
Outreach
Director of Youth Catechesis
Director of Worship
School Principal
Crossroads High School
Music Director
Director of Operations
Welcome
ddowdle@stjohnofthecross.org
fngwila@stjohnofthecross.org
john.schopp@newhemispheres.com
bbright@stjohnofthecross.org
jcascchetta@stjohnofthecross.org
jclauer@stjohnofthecross.org
jgorman@sjc.pvt.k12.il.us
khayes@stjohnofthecross.org
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October 11-13th