Called to be Holy through Prayer, Service & Sharing to Build Up the Kingdom of God.

December 29, 2013

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph
Greetings,

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

The Christmas Masses also would not have been possible without the ministers to staff them. Thank you to John Kravcik, Usher Coordinator, and Rich Bornhoff, Sacristan Coordinator, both of whom put in time beforehand to make sure the Masses ran smoothly. And of course, the Masses wouldn’t have been possible without the many communion ministers, lectors, ushers, altar servers, and sacristans. A big note of appreciation also goes to Jessica Koch, our Director of Music and her choirs, cantors, instrumentalists and accompanists, and to Ann Bourjaily-Maney, who works with the children’s choirs and teens to make such wonderful music. We thank each of you for sharing your time and gift of your ministry with our parish.

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

Thank you again to all who made the Christmas Masses a success, it wouldn't be possible without you.

Jim Clauer, Director of Worship

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Pope Francis is not seeking fame or accolades, but being named Time magazine's Person of the Year will make him happy if it helps attract people to the hope of the Gospel, said the Vatican spokesman. "It's a positive sign that one of the most prestigious recognitions in the international press" goes to a person who "proclaims to the world spiritual, religious and moral values and speaks effectively in favor of peace and greater justice," said the spokesman, Jesuit Father Federico Lombardi.

The choice of Pope Francis "is not surprising, given the wide appeal and huge attention" to his pontificate so far, Father Lombardi said in a written statement Dec. 11, shortly after Time announced it had named the pope for the annual feature. "Rarely has a new player on the world stage captured so much attention so quickly -- young and old, faithful and cynical -- as has Pope Francis," Time said on its website. "With a focus on compassion, the leader of the Catholic Church has become a new voice of conscience."

The pope "does not seek fame and success, because he serves to proclaim the Gospel and God's love for everyone," Father Lombardi said. But if the recognition "attracts women and men and gives them hope, the pope is happy." The spokesman added that Pope Francis would also be pleased if the magazine's decision "means that many have understood, at least implicitly, this message" of hope.
How holy can my family be?

It is probably fair to say that none of us feels that our family is just like the Holy Family. Jesus, Mary and Joseph can at first seem to be too unreachable, an ideal for our own family. Perhaps, especially at this time of the year, we are most intensely aware of the limitations of our family - of the various families we are a part of. Selfishness, stubbornness, and independence can appear to be so great that we can question the integrity of our family as a family, let alone see any real holiness there. How holy can my own family be? What help can a reflection upon the Holy Family have for me today?

The first thing to consider is to humbly acknowledge the humanity of our family - including my own humanity and that of everyone in the group. Human beings are capable of great things, but every human being is capable of great selfishness. This kind of acknowledgement isn't an acceptance of the behavior or dynamics of my family as good, or even that all of it should be tolerated. This first step is a step away from denial. We can't cope with what we don't even admit is there. The second step is to acknowledge that each person in the family is seeing things, and responding to them, from his or her own perspective. Nobody really wakes up in the morning and says, "How can I be selfish and difficult for everyone today?" We all are choosing something that seems to us to be good - perhaps good for me and not for you - but my choice is for something I see as good. This acknowledgement isn't very inspiring, but it can be helpful if it leads us to a growing understanding of what each of us in our family is looking for.

Real understanding can lead to real compassion. Maybe someone in the family is like a barking dog or a self-absorbed princess or is into self-protective control by not investing in conversation or self revelation or even simple help around the house. The more we see what is going on the easier it will be to try to see it with compassion. What fear is at work here? Dogs bark when they are afraid. Being self absorbed and passive-aggression are so often rooted in fearful self-protection. Once we can see the underlying needs or hurts that seem to be shaping our behaviors, we can more easily love those family members. Love is what will heal us. Love will make us stronger. Love will lead to greater gratitude. And grateful people can more easily notice the needs of others and love them.

Contemplating Jesus, Mary and Joseph at this time of the year can help us. Joseph had to be so afraid when he was told Mary would be with child. The one thing he knew for certain is that he was not the father. Just imagine the temptation to judge Mary! But, Joseph believed and trusted. He accepted the role of servant. He took Mary as his wife, accepting the shame and embarrassment that the people of their village must have placed on him. Mary couldn't have fully understood God's plan for her or for her son. But she believed and trusted. She accepted the role of servant. Their child, Jesus, became the Servant of God's mission in our world.

How can our family become more holy? Through compassionate love and growing trust in God, so much which leads to tension, ongoing stress and outright conflict can be healed.

St. Ignatius tells us that Love is a mutual exchange of gifts. The lover gives gifts to the loved one and the loved one becomes a lover in giving gifts to the beloved. Ignatius also says that Love is expressed in deeds rather than in words. So, in these days ahead, let us give gifts of understanding, compassion and healing love to each member of our family. Let's listen, pay attention, acknowledge gifts and affirm them. Some very holy things will be affirmed. Let us find gestures, acts of kindness, time and support to give each other. Let us model for our children how to think of each other's needs first.

Every step we make in this direction of greater healing and love will help our family grow in holiness. How holy can we become? The real answer is that we can become as holy as we free each other to become. In this environment of openness to God's grace, God can do more than we can ask or imagine. And, like the Holy Family, we can be living witnesses, that "nothing is impossible with God.”

A Ministry of the Collaborative Ministry Office at Creighton University

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Rock Solid Marriages

Pope Francis on Family Life:

The importance of forgiveness in families
Families “need Jesus’ help to walk beside one another in trust, to accept one another each day, and daily to forgive one another. It is important to know how to forgive one another in families because we all make mistakes, all of us! Sometimes we do things which are not good and which harm others. It is important to have the courage to ask for forgiveness when we are at fault in the family.”

The importance of "please", "thank you", and "sorry" in families
“Repeat these three words: please, thank you, sorry. Three essential words! We say please so as not to be forceful in family life: “May I please do this? Would you be happy if I did this?” We do this with a language that seeks agreement. We say thank you, thank you for love! But be honest with me, how many times do you say thank you to your wife, and to your husband? How many days go by without uttering this word, thanks! And the last word: sorry. We all make mistakes and on occasion someone gets offended in the marriage, in the family, and sometimes - I say - plates are smashed, harsh words are spoken but please listen to my advice: don’t ever let the sun set without reconciling. Peace is made each day in the family: ‘Please forgive me,’ and then you start over. Let us say these words in our families! To forgive one another each day!”

A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks, a new and glorious morn.

Three Things the Holy Family Can Teach Us About Saying Yes to God
Christmas is a season that invites us to celebrate and remember the story of the Holy Family—Mary, Joseph, and Jesus. We know this story by heart. This year we invite you to take a deeper look and to celebrate and remember the yeses of the Holy Family.

There are three things the Holy Family can teach us about our own yes to God.

1. The Holy Family actively participated in their response to God’s invitation.
In Luke’s Gospel, we see Mary responding with both a verbal response, “Let it be to me according to your word,” (1:38) and then living out her response through her actions of carrying and birthing her son. In Matthew’s Gospel, we do not get to hear Joseph’s response, but we read the line of Scripture that shows his response through action, “He did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him.” (1:24) Jesus’ yes we see happening throughout Scripture as he grew into his ministry. All three members of the Holy Family actively participated in God’s invitation to bring about God’s kingdom through their words and actions. We, too, are invited to actively participate in God’s invitation to us. Is God inviting us to a verbal response and/or a response of action right now?

2. The Holy Family’s yes to God was not just one time, but an ongoing yes.
As a parent, I know that raising a child requires an ongoing commitment to God’s invitation to be a co-creator in nurturing and parenting a child. Mary and Joseph did not just say yes once, but they continued their response to God’s invitation to raise and nurture Jesus. Their response to God’s invitation deepened in their lives. Jesus’ response to God’s invitation occurred over and over again as he fully entered into his public ministry and later his passion, death, and resurrection. Where is God inviting us this Advent season to deepen our own yes?

3. The Holy Family rooted their lives in God.
Mary, Joseph, and Jesus were able to say yes to God because they had a relationship with God. While we only get a short glimpse into Mary’s and Joseph’s relationship with God, I can only imagine that it must have been strong and continuously nurtured. How else did they say yes to both birthing and raising the Messiah? The Gospels offer us many examples of Jesus turning to God the Father in prayer to help him continue to say yes to his mission. Do we need to nurture our own relationship with God this season in order to say yes to an invitation?

This Christmas season pause and let the story of the Holy Family’s creation deepen within you and help you say yes to God.  
-Becky Eldredge
Blessings are called "sacramentals" because they prepare us to receive the grace of the sacraments and help us to grow to be more like Christ. They consist of prayer, Scripture, and sometimes a special ritual sign.

People are accustomed to seeing bishops, priests, and deacons blessing objects or persons in the name of the Church. However, there are other blessings, like the ones contained in Catholic Household Blessings and Prayers, that can be prayed by anyone who has been baptized, in virtue of the universal priesthood, a dignity they possess because of their baptism and confirmation. The blessings given by laypersons are exercised because of their special office, such as parents on behalf of their children.

Right after telling his disciples to "love your enemies, do good to those who hate you," Jesus instructs them to "bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you" (Lk 6:28). St. Paul echoes the Lord's command when he exhorts the Romans to "bless those who persecute [you], bless and do not curse them" (Rom 12:14). St. Peter urges that each time we are on the receiving end of evil, we should return "a blessing, because to this you were called, that you might inherit a blessing" (1 Pt 3:9).

This is why the Catechism of the Catholic Church tells us that "every baptized person is called to be a 'blessing' and to bless." Like the Lord into whom they have been baptized, parents should bless and pray for their children. Each one of us should remember the sick and those who suffer. Each time we gather around the family table, we should bless God and the food he has given us. On special occasions, we will observe the traditions of the season, sanctifying by prayer and blessing all the seasons of grace that God has given to us. Source: usccb

One year closes and another begins. It's time for New Year's resolutions. The media is filled with suggestions and tips to eat better, exercise more, and save more money. But here's something else to think about—something that could have a valuable and lasting impact for generations to come.

Set aside time to reflect prayerfully on your life as a parent. Ask yourself, "What one thing would I like to do to be a better parent?" What comes to mind? Don't force it; let the idea come. It might be "listen more," "enjoy my kids more," or "get more rest so I can be a kinder person." You'll know it when it comes. Then ask God for the grace to embrace this resolution and to remove the obstacles to achieve it, one day at a time. —Tom McGrath

In the midst of the Christmas season, it is quite appropriate that our liturgy asks us to pause to consider the Holy Family. In today's Gospel, we hear about how Joseph protected Jesus from danger by relocating the family to Egypt in obedience to God. Following the model of the Holy Family, we might use this feast to recall the responsibility that each family member has to contribute to the good of the family and recommit ourselves to one another.

Gather together as a family to work on a common project. You might prepare a meal together, prepare a special dessert, or perhaps do a craft together. When you finish, talk about how each family member contributed to the common project. Remind one another that each member of the family contributes to the good of the whole family. Recall that Jesus was also part of a family and that this Sunday we celebrate the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Read together today's Gospel, Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23. Pray together that your family will continue to protect and care for one another as Mary and Joseph protected and cared for Jesus. ©Loyola Press
Joseph clearly acts as the father of the family. To him is given the revelation that danger is at hand and they must flee to Egypt. To him is given the further revelation that it is safe to return to their homeland. Whether going or coming Joseph is attentive to both the needs of his family and the overtures of God’s Presence and guidance. He is head of the Holy Family: one in which the members discern God’s will, risk change for each other’s growth and good, and are united in fidelity to God and each other. This feast calls us to be this same kind of holy family.

Holiness is not a goody-goody, other-worldly mode of living. Rather, it is a realistic engagement in the difficulties, struggles, and tensions of human life and relating. Sometimes it is the very hardships which help us put our priorities straight and realize how dependent upon our loving God we really are. Our own modern families are like the Holy Family in that, as they did, we too all face challenges in responding to God faithfully and obediently. The holiness of a family is not dependent upon perfection or an easy road. As Mary and Joseph showed us, holiness is dependent upon faithfulness and obedience to God’s messages. Whether we are a traditional family or a single-parent family, whether we have biological or adopted or foster children or no children, whether we live in an expensive home or a subsidized rental unit makes no difference for living as a holy family. What does make a difference is discerning God’s messages and doing God’s will. Hearing God’s message and responding to God’s will made the Holy Family holy; it makes our families holy, too.

Closing Prayers:
May we grow in holiness through obedience to God’s will and care for one another.
May we all live together in peace and harmony as the holy family of God.

For Reflection:
· I grow in holiness by . . .
· I relate to those with whom I may live, work, and have leisure in these holy ways

Richard Rohr Meditation
What we’re doing in contemplation is learning, quite simply, how to be present. That is the only way to encounter any other presence, including God in prayer, Jesus in the Eucharist, and Jesus in others. The change is all and always on our side. God is present everywhere all the time. There really is not much point in arguing about if and how Jesus is present in the bread and wine; simply be present yourself and you will know all that you need to know. It is an exercise in surrender and presence from your side alone.

We know that God is always given from God’s side, but we have to learn how to receive such total givenness, which is a very vulnerable position for humans. So Jesus said “Eat it” and did not say “think about it,” which is our defensive control tower. The Christian strategy seems to be this: struggle with divine presence in one focused, determined, and assured place (bread and wine, which is just about as universal a symbol as you can get)—and from that moment of space and time move to all space and all time. That is the final and full goal.

A Family Prayer
Give us new eyes, Lord, to see our lives in the light of your love. Too often our fear, neediness, anger, or hurt fog our vision. Help us to see your providence in the glory of trees, lakes, and cloudless skies. Help us to see your generosity in the many gifts we enjoy each day. Help us to see your wisdom in the rhythm of the days, the weeks, the seasons, and the years. Help us to see your image in the faces of everyone we meet and to know your goodness in the joy and love we feel for one another. We ask you this because we know you love us.

Amen.

Oh night, divine, Oh night when Christ was born.

Readings for the Week

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<td>Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8</td>
<td>Ps 98:1, 2-3ab, 3cd-4</td>
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<td>Ps 98:1-7</td>
<td>Ps 72:1-3, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13 Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6Matt 2:1-12</td>
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Wednesday Morning Scripture Study Group to begin a study of Angels

The Wednesday morning Bible study group will begin a 25-week study entitled “A Scriptural Study of Angels” on Wednesday, January 8th. This study, produced by Catholic Scripture Studies International, offers extensive printed material by Mike Aquilina and Dr. Richard Bultacchelli, STD and DVD lectures by Jesuit Father Mitch Pacwa. In contrast to the sometimes overly sentimentalized popular understanding of angels, this course will draw on Scripture, the highly developed thought of St. Thomas Aquinas, Blessed John Paul II’s 1986 catechetical series on the angels, and the Catechism of the Catholic Church. In our investigation of these powerful spiritual creatures whose name conveys their vocation as messengers of God, we will come to understand a further aspect of our belief in God’s creation of “the visible and the invisible.” The program will involve weekly preparation of reading in both the Bible and a workbook, DVD lectures and group discussion. The group meets weekly on Wednesday mornings from 9:30 until 11:30. The cost of materials is $47. Please drop off an envelope with your contact information and check for materials to the parish center by January 1st.

Women's Club Cooking Night!

SAVE THE DATE…
Wednesday, January 22nd, 2014
7:00-9:00pm in the Parish Center.

Mary Gail Bennett of Deliciously Yours in Burr Ridge will return to share a new menu with us! Don’t miss out on this fun and delicious evening!

Details to Follow

Men’s Club Save the Date: Annual Trivia Night
Saturday January 25th. Mark your calendars to join us.

Oh night divine, Oh night, oh night divine.

“I invite all Christians, everywhere, at this very moment, to a renewed personal encounter with Jesus Christ, or at least an openness to letting him encounter them; I ask all of you to do this unfailingly each day. No one should think that this invitation is not meant for him or her, since “no one is excluded from the joy brought by the Lord.” The Lord does not disappoint those who take this risk; whenever we take a step towards Jesus, we come to realize that he is already there, waiting for us with open arms. Now is the time to say to Jesus: ‘Lord, I have let myself be deceived; in a thousand ways I have shunned your love, yet here I am once more, to renew my covenant with you. I need you. Save me once again, Lord, take me once more into your redeeming embrace.’” Pope Francis
Welcome to a New Year!

Congratulations to all our 2nd grade students who celebrated their 1st Reconciliation during Advent. The children met with Fr. Fil beforehand to talk about Reconciliation and the healing mercy of Jesus.

St. John of the Cross Parish School is now accepting applications for the 2014-15 school year. St. John of the Cross Parish School provides a dynamic Catholic environment where faith is nourished and knowledge grows. We offer unique educational experiences that foster, success, promote unity, and respect the individuality of each student. If you are interested in visiting the school, please call Jennifer Jermano Miller, Director of Advancement at 708-246-4454, to set up an appointment. Please scan the code for information and the application.

Parish School

Youth Catechesis

YC Schedule

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<td>10:15-11:30am</td>
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<td>6:15-7:30pm</td>
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<td>FFC</td>
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<td>Jr Hi Groups</td>
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<td>Special Needs</td>
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The YC Office will be CLOSED for Christmas Dec 23-Jan 5

Youth Catechesis Office
yc@sjcross.org * 708-246-6760
www.stjohnofthecross.org/yc
Monday thru Thursday 8:30am- 4:00pm

Oh holy night, the stars are brightly shining. It is the night of our dear Savior’s birth.

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Thank you from St. Barbara Parish

On behalf of St. Barbara Pastoral Care, please extend our heartfelt thanks to all the people who donated to your recent donation of $300 for rent assistance and remembering St. Barbara Food Pantry with your generous donation of turkeys.

Thanks to your generosity, we are able to care for our neighbors and respond to our less fortunate neighbors’ requests for assistance. We have been blessed to have generous people who choose to make a difference by helping feed the hungry in our midst. You are those wonderful people who make all of this possible.

We were just passing out the Thanksgiving food, and wondering how we could serve the 200 families who signed up for turkey dinners. Your donation helped immensely! Thank you again for your generosity. Wishing you all a lovely Holiday season.

Sister Margaret Halligan, CSJ
Director St. Barbara Pastoral Care

Thank you from Our Lady of Charity Parish

I’d like to share with St. John of the Cross the good news that I have been awarded a grant from the Clergy Renewal Program of the Lilly Foundation to take a six-month sabbatical. It will begin on January 1, 2014. I am looking forward to a retreat, some study and time off! While I am gone, we can stay connected through a blog that I have started: you can find it at www.ontheroadagain2014.blogspot.com. Please pray for the padre! And I will pray for you, and carry any petitions you care to share with me during this time that I am on pilgrimage. Pray for Our Lady of Charity and for Bishop John R. Manz, who has generously offered to serve as Administrator until I get back.

Fr. Mark Bartosic Pastor of OLC

Volunteer Tutors Needed

Volunteers are needed for the School on Wheels’ Adult Literacy/English as a Second Language program. Tutors are asked to teach one hour or more per week, during the hours of 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., or 3:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. at locations in Brookfield, Cicero, Downers Grove, Hodgkins, Woodridge, Villa Park, or Summit.

No prior second language skills are needed, however, it is necessary to attend a two-day tutor training session from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m., Saturdays, Jan. 11, and Jan. 25, 2014, at the Congregation of St. Joseph Center in La Grange Park. Volunteers must attend both training dates. Further information is available by calling (708) 482-5060 or (708) 482-5077.
Christmas - Its Checkered Origins and its Checkered Sequence

If someone who had never heard the story of Jesus were to ask any of us about his origins, we would, I suspect, begin with the story of his annunciation and birth and end with the story of his resurrection and ascension. While that does capture his life, that's not how the Gospels either begin or end his story. The story of Jesus and the meaning of Christmas can only really be understood by looking at where Jesus came from, his family tree, and by looking at how his story has continued in history. Indeed, that's how the Gospels tell his story.

The Gospel of John begins his story by pointing out his eternal origins inside of God before his birth. For John, Jesus' family tree has just three members, the Trinity: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. Mark's Gospel gives no family tree, begins his story with his public ministry, and then has no ending to his story. For Mark, Jesus' story is still ongoing. Matthew and Luke, however, include inside Jesus' story a long family tree, a genealogy, that shows his origins. Too often we tend to ignore these genealogies with their long list of difficult-to-pronounce names, most of which mean little to us. But, as the renowned biblical scholar, Raymond Brown, emphasizes again and again, we cannot really understand the story of Jesus without understanding why his family tree, this long list of names, is judged to be important.

What's to be learned from looking at Jesus' family tree, that curious list of ancient names? Abraham fathered Isaac, Isaac fathered Jacob, Jacob fathered Judah, Judah fathered Perez and Zerah, whose mother was Tamar, Perez fathered Hezon, Hezon fathered Ram, Ram fathered Amminabab ... and so on. Among other things, these genealogies trace out Jesus' origins in a way that tells us that his real story will not be grasped by anyone who wants to believe that Jesus' human origins were totally immaculate and pure, containing no sin or weakness. Jesus wasn't born of all saintly ancestors. Rather, as the genealogies show, his family tree contains as many sinners as saints. Among his ancestors were liars, adulterers, murderers, power-grabbing men, scheming women, wicked kings, corrupt church officials, and sinners of every sort. The same holds true for the religious institutions that figured in his birth. The religious history of Judaism out of which Jesus was born was too a mélange grace and sin, of religious institutions serving both God and their own human interests.

And what's the moral in all this? The lesson is this: Both the persons and the institutions that gave birth to Jesus were mixture of grace and sin, a mixture that mediated God's favor and also rationalized it for its own benefit. But, out of that mélange, Jesus was born. It can be a scandal to the piety within us to accept that not everything that gave birth to Christmas was immaculately conceived. The same holds true of what followed after Jesus' birth. His earthly ministry was also partially shaped and furthered by the self-interest of the religious authorities of his time, the resistance of secular powers of his time, and the fear and infidelity of his own disciples. And this has continued through the two thousand years of history since. Jesus has continued to have earthly incarnation throughout the centuries thanks not only to saintly individuals and virtuous churches. No, Jesus' family tree subsequent to his birth is also a long list of saints and sinners, of selfless martyrs and selfish schemers, of virtue and betrayal.

And recognizing and accepting this should not lead us to a cynicism where we begin to doubt the truth of Jesus or the legitimacy of the church because of the lies, sin, infidelity, and not-infrequent stupidity of those human persons and religious institutions who originally made up Jesus' family-tree and who have constituted his family since. Faith can accommodate the recognition of sin and infidelity. So can Christmas.

Christmas has a checkered origin and a checkered sequence: Jacob did steal his brother's birthright; Judah did sleep with his daughter-in-law; David did commit adultery and did commit murder to cover it up; the church did set up the Inquisition and kill more of its own than were martyred in the early church; the church did give us popes who sold ecclesial favors and were sexually licentious; the churches, despite their catholicity and holiness, have perennially been narrow and elitist and never been fully free of self-interest; and the sexual abuse scandal did happen.

But the pure mystery of Jesus, of Christ, and of the Church somehow shine through in spite of all of this and, ironically, because of all of this. Like a hidden seed, God's grace works, even through people like us and churches like ours, revealing divinity despite most everything. And the God who wrote the original Christmas with crooked lines also writes the sequence with crooked lines, and some of those lines are our own lives.

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.

Now on Facebook www.facebook.com/ ronrolheiser
Charitable Gifts Before Year’s End – A Terrific Opportunity
There are many creative ways you can help St. John of the Cross Parish before 2013 draws to a close.

**Gifts from IRA Accounts**

For those who are age 70½ or older, you may be able to take advantage of an important incentive for charitable giving.

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

This means that you can direct up to $100,000 a year from your IRA to St. John of the Cross Parish with no federal income tax liability. Even if you don’t itemize on your tax return, this opportunity offers some terrific benefits.

Here are the pertinent details:

- You must be 70½ or older when you make your gift, and the gift must be made from an IRA – no other retirement plans (such as 401k, 403b or SEP accounts) qualify;
- Your gift must come directly to us – do not take the distribution in your name;
- Although the distribution will be free from income tax, it will not generate an income tax charitable deduction.
- The distribution cannot be used to fund a charitable gift annuity or charitable remainder trust.

*But the year-end giving opportunities don’t stop there.*

**Gifts of Securities**

If you own long-term appreciated securities, you can transfer shares to help our parish through an account administered by the Archdiocese of Chicago. By such a gift, you will receive a charitable deduction for the full, fair market value of the gift without paying tax on the capital gain. You must be sure to transfer the shares directly from your account to the Archdiocesan account. To obtain the Archdiocesan account information, contact Patti Condon, the Archdiocese’s Planned Giving Coordinator, at pcondon@archchicago.org or 312-534-7911. If you own stock in the form of a certificate, please contact our St. John of the Cross business manager, Marguerite Chrusciel, at 708-246-4404 for more details.

**Charitable Gift Annuities**

For those who are looking to generate some extra income, a charitable gift annuity may be the perfect solution. Gift annuities pay one or two beneficiaries an income for life, at a fixed rate that is tied to their age (s). The payments are partially tax-free, and an income tax charitable deduction is also available. When the beneficiary passes away, the remainder in the gift annuity contract will benefit our parish. To receive a free proposal, you may once again contact Patti Condon, the Archdiocese’s Planned Giving Coordinator, at pcondon@archchicago.org or 312-534-7911.

*O God, who was pleased to give us the shining example of the Holy Family, graciously grant that we may imitate them in practicing the virtues of family life and in the bonds of charity, and so, in the joy of your house, delight one day in eternal rewards. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.*
How to Make a Stock Donation to St. John of the Cross Parish

3 Simple Steps

1. When processing your securities donations via ELECTRONIC TRANSFER

Provide your bank or broker the following transfer instructions:

William Blair & Company – DTC # 771
Account Number – 156-16135-1-2
Catholic Bishop of Chicago Account
For the Benefit of: St. John of the Cross Parish,
Western Springs, IL

Additional information your bank or broker may need:

Archdiocese of Chicago Tax ID No. – 36-2170826
William Blair & Company – 222 W. Adams St. –
Chicago, IL 60606
William Blair Representative, Suzanne Schiff,
Phone: 312-364-8898 Fax: 312-577-0774 or e-mail:
schiff@williamblair.com

2. STOCK DONATION - LETTER OF INTENTION For the Archdiocese of Chicago Parishes, Schools, and Agencies

Donor, Please complete this form for ALL STOCK/MUTUAL FUND Donations. For further assistance, please call the
Archdiocese of Chicago Stock transfer representative, Greg Salm, 312/534-5399.

I (we) plan to transfer the securities electronically:

Donation Date: ____________________
From: (Please Print)

Donor Name(s): ___________________
Address: ___________________________
City, State, Zip: _____________________
Telephone: _________________________
E-Mail Address: _____________________

Please accept our donation of _______ Shares of _____________________________
(# of shares) (Name of Security)

to be credited to the Catholic Bishop of Chicago for the benefit of:

Parish, School or Agency: St. John of the Cross Parish, 5005 S. Wolf Road, Western Springs, IL 60558
(If you are donating various stocks/securities and/or to various locations simply print VARIOUS above and attach
a separate page with a list detailing the various gifts and locations that are to receive the gift/s)

3. Send this form To: (send via one method listed below)

Regular U.S. Mail - Archdiocese of Chicago, Parish Operations – Stock Donations 835 N. Rush Street, Chicago, IL 60611 or
Send to Greg Salm, 312-534-5399 Fax Number: 312/534-5272 gdsalm@archchicago.org or
Send to St. John of the Cross: Marguerite Chrusciel, phone # 708-246-4404, fax # 708-246-4566 mchrusciel@stjohnofthecross.org

Fall on your knees. Oh hear the angels’ voices.

Joy to the world our Savior comes, not in power, not in might, but in the tenderness of love.
He comes as the promise of life hidden in a mother’s womb. This is the time we believe once more
that perfect love casts out fear, that generosity transforms scarcity into abundance, that
righteousness overcomes oppression with justice. This is the time we are assured that God’s light
has come into the world. And the darkness will never overcome it. Amen. — by Christine Sine
Thank You, Lord, for the courage and selfless service of our military troops. May our loved ones and all who serve around the world turn to You for rest and protection. Keep them safe from all hidden dangers. May they not fear the terrors of night or the disaster that strikes at midday. Order your angels to protect them wherever they go. Keep their feet from slipping, and hold them securely in Your strong right hand until they are safely home.

Oh night divine, Oh night, when Christ was born.

Michael Ryan Burke, grandson of Joseph & Laverne Kusper
Captain Brandy Caffy, friend of Julie and Katie Warren
A1c Matthew Callaghan, son of Judy Callaghan
Lt. Mark Callari, grandson of Jane Domagala
Captain Sean Christopherson, friend of Katie Warren
Matthew Curin, son of Donna Curin
2Lt. Ken Engberg, Army National Guard
Capt. Michael Federico, son of Rick & Jeanne
Pfc. Amy Harris, niece of Gary & Barbara Ainge
Private First Class Drew Hillebold, National Guard
Sgt. Joseph Johnson, son of Pete & Jan Van Merkestyn
Capt. Kevin Junius
Pfc. John T. King, cousin of Catherine Mini
Lt. Matthew Kopp, nephew of Larry & Mimi Powers
Msg. Carl Kroll, son of Mary Lou Kroll & brother of Judi Llapitan
Capt. James A. Maicke, grandson of Phil & Mike Maicke
Spc. Robert Marburger, son of Kathleen and David
Major Brendan D. Masini, M.D., grandson of Marilyn & Charles Scallon
Tim McMillan
Douglas Murphy, brother of Jeanne Fornari
Rief Murphy, nephew of Bill & Molly lovino
Sgt. Krista Nelson, USMC, niece of Mary and Len Novotny
Ross Rafferty, nephew of John Rafferty
Sgt. Daniel Roche, cousin of Jacqueline McDonnell
Cameron Saltus, cousin of Jack and Rory Gordon
1Lt. Joseph Salvey, nephew of Terese Kane
Lance Cpl. Nicholas Schultz, friend of the Chrusciel Family
Jarett Smith, grandson of Dan and Jo Rudakas
Pfc. Robert M. Sullivan, son of Michael & Helen
Spc. Alex Teckenbrock, 3rd Infantry Div. ARMY
Joshua Francis Tischler, son of Lea and Rick, grandson of Betty and Frank Madler and Mary Tischler
Alex Uribarri, son of Mari Uribarri
Pfc. Larry Waszak, grandson of Bruno and Barbara Gacek
Spc. James C. Woods, nephew of Mary Neel
2013 in Review

Catholic Schools Week, January

Matthew Kelly, February
This Week at SJC

Monday, December 30
10:30 a.m. Christian Meditation, Step 11
2:30 p.m. Eucharistic Adoration
2:30 p.m. Spiritual Journaling

Friday, January 3
5:00 p.m. Freshman Sophomore Retreat

Saturday, January 4
7:00 a.m. Christian Meditation

Sunday, January 5
12:00 p.m. Freshman Sophomore Retreat

Pray for our Sick

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Contact Information</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frank Accardi</td>
<td>Vickie McNally</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mitch Allen</td>
<td>Jay Meehan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul Cervony</td>
<td>John Munch</td>
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<td>Kathleen Conforti</td>
<td>Nancy Olin</td>
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<td>Madeleine Cronin</td>
<td>Susan Olson</td>
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<td>Terry Cullen</td>
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<td>William Dwyer</td>
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<td>Melissa Morrissey</td>
<td>James Reilly</td>
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<td>Mark Giangrande</td>
<td>Teresa Schaefer</td>
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<td>Karen Hult</td>
<td>John Shea</td>
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<td>Barbara Jacob</td>
<td>Charles Sugrue</td>
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<td>Dee Kennedy</td>
<td>Guy Thomas</td>
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<td>Kelly Kennedy</td>
<td>Baby Kameron Walters</td>
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<td>Rosie King</td>
<td>Mary Catherine Warren</td>
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<td>Kay Knowles</td>
<td>Pam Wilson</td>
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<td>Fr. William Mannion</td>
<td>Ron Ziemma</td>
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<td>Mary Ann Matysik</td>
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Eternal Rest Grant unto These, O Lord

Mary Chamberlain, wife of Bob, former parishioner
John Hogan, brother of Mary Lambesis
John Donnelly, brother of Thomas
Maria Turano, mother of Frank and Marita, grandmother of Lauren and Nicole

Marriage Banns

Cristin Ganey & Bryan Strand
Julie Gordon & Nathan Botkin

Mass Intentions

Monday, December 30
7:45 Kathleen Collins; John Harte

Tuesday, December 31
7:45 Our Beloved Dead; Louis Trapp
5:00 Paul Adducci; Patrick Kinnerk

Wednesday, January 1, Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God
10:00 Patricia Rankin; Larry Hansen

Thursday, January 2
7:45 Robert McNulty; Markey Ringwood

Friday, January 3, St. Basil the Great
7:45 John Harte; Markey Foley Ringwood

Saturday, January 4, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton
8:00 Robert Plechaty; Matthew Ryan
5:00 Sophie Ciszek; John Den Besten

Sunday, January 5, The Epiphany of Our Lord
7:30 Christopher Delia & Bernice Wisniewski;
    Ervin & Sophie Rozsypal
9:00 Christine & Charles Gasunas
    Catherine McGuire & Catherine Boyle
10:45 Irma Tinucci; Leonard Mancione
12:15 Virginia Keefe; Shirley Flanagan
    5:00 Frank Piszczor; Theresa Jeziorski

Italics—Living

Holiday Mass Schedule
Our regular daily Mass will be at 7:45 a.m. on weekdays (8:00 a.m. on Saturdays) on December 30 and 31 and January 2, 3, and 4.

Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God
New Year’s Eve and Day
Tuesday, December 31, 5:00 p.m.
Wednesday, January 1, 10:00 a.m.

There will be no babysitting in the Garden Room until Sunday, January 5th.

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