Called to be Holy through Prayer, Service & Sharing
to Build Up the Kingdom of God
December 8, 2013
Second Sunday of Advent
Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The annual collection for the Retirement Fund for Religious is an opportunity to honor and thank retired Catholic sisters, brothers and religious order priests for their generous service to our Church and our world.

Whether we realize it or not, we are all beneficiaries of the tremendous contributions these women and men have made. Through hard work, prayer and sacrifice, they established schools and hospitals, initiated programs to promote social justice and ministered to the neediest among us. I remain grateful for the ways they have given outstanding service to our archdiocese.

I realize there are numerous worthy causes in need of assistance and that many individuals and families continue to struggle financially. I ask you simply to offer what you can for the care of women and men who have made such enormous contributions to our Church.

Thank you for your support of this appeal. During the upcoming Advent season, you and those you love will be in my prayers in a special way; please keep me in yours.

Sincerely yours in Christ,
Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I.
Archbishop of Chicago

More reading on this collection:
Now in its 26th year, the Retirement Fund for Religious Collection benefits over 34,000 senior Catholic sisters, brothers and religious order priests. The U.S. bishops initiated the collection to address the significant lack of retirement funding among U.S. religious communities. Proceeds are distributed to eligible communities to help underwrite retirement and health-care expenses. Since the collection began, Catholics have contributed $698 million.

The 2012 appeal raised $27 million and enabled the NRRO to distribute $23 million to 440 religious communities across the country. Despite this generosity, numerous religious communities still struggle to provide adequate care. Thank you for supporting the Retired Religious.

Note, there is a separate collection every June that benefits our retired archdiocesan priests.
REFLECT
What expectations and demands of life can you let go of so that you can be more prepared for the coming of Jesus this Advent season?

As Christmas draws near, you are invited to a quiet Morning of Meditation

St. John of the Cross: Doctor of Divine Love

*Presentation by Joyce Hajdukovic, SFCC, PhD

*Periods of meditation
*Time for sharing
All are invited: Those who meditate,
Those who want to learn to meditate, and
Those who want to know more about meditation.

Saturday, December 21, 2013
Hospitality 8:30 AM, Program 9-11:30 AM
Parish Center

Sponsored by the Christian Meditation group (wccm.org)
Freewill offering accepted Reservations are requested, but not required. Contact:
Mary – 708-246-5108, or mary105105@gmail.com

Meditation by Richard Rohr: Staying Awake

It is usually over time and with patience that we come to see the wonderful patterns of grace, which is why it takes most of us a long time to be converted. Our focus slowly moves from an initial preoccupation with perfect actions (“first half of life” issues), to naked presence itself. The code word for that is simply “prayer,” but it became cheapened by misuse.

Jesus will often call prayer “vigilance,” “seeing,” or “being awake.” When you are aware and awakened, you will know for yourself that you need to know. In fact, “stay awake” is the last thing Jesus says to the apostles—three or perhaps four times—before he is taken away to be killed (Matthew 26:38-45). Finally, continuing to find them asleep, he kindly but sadly says, “Sleep now and take your rest,” which might have been his resigned, forgiving statement to the church itself.

It is not that we do not want to be awake, but very few teachers have actually told us how to do that in a very practical way. We call it the teaching of contemplation. Adapted from Things Hidden: Scripture as Spirituality

December 9th Gospel Reading Luke 1:26-38
The angel Gabriel appears to Mary to announce the birth of Jesus, and Mary responds, “Let it be done to me as you say.”

On Monday, December 9th we celebrate the feast of the Immaculate Conception of the Blessed Virgin Mary. This feast celebrates God’s choice of Mary to be the mother of Jesus. God preserved Mary from the stain of original sin from the moment of her conception. Thus, Mary was the first to receive the benefit of the redemption that her Son would merit for all.

To reflect upon this mystery, the Gospel reading for this day presents to us the story of the Annunciation. It is through her exchange with the angel Gabriel that Luke, the Evangelist, introduces the person of Mary. The Annunciation begins in the context of Luke’s account of the birth of John the Baptist. “In the sixth month,” referring to Elizabeth’s pregnancy, the angel Gabriel appears to a virgin of Nazareth—Mary. Indeed, there are many parallels in Luke’s accounts of the births of John the Baptist and Jesus.

In this passage, Luke tells us much about Mary and the child she is to bear. We learn that Mary is a virgin from Nazareth who is betrothed to a man named Joseph, who was of the house of David. The angel greets Mary in the most glowing of terms, acknowledging the favor she has found with God. The son Mary is to conceive is described in messianic terms. He will be called “Son of the Most High” and the “Son of God.”

Mary is bold in her exchange with the angel. She is troubled by his greeting and questions the message, asking “How am I to bear a son if I have no relations with a man?” Mary is told that she will conceive through the power of the Holy Spirit and is offered a sign in the miraculous pregnancy of her elder cousin Elizabeth.

Mary’s affirmative response to this seemingly impossible message gives evidence to the grace we know that she possesses from God. Only one who is “full of grace” can be so receptive to and cooperative with the will of God. Because of this, Mary is the model of discipleship for all Christians. Used with permission ©2013 Loyola Press, Chicago, USA www.LoyolaPress.com

Prayer

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Prayer
Lifelong Catechesis: Second Sunday of Advent

Living Liturgy

John the Baptist prepared “the way of the Lord” by calling the people to repentance so they would not be “thrown into the fire” of “the coming wrath.” John announced impending judgment and offered a baptism of repentance. John also announced One to come who would enact that judgment and bring a baptism in the Holy Spirit and fire. The fire of judgment will destroy those who are fruitless; the fire of the Spirit will help the faithful bear good fruit. Advent is, in the end, about jumping into the fire. Advent invites us to be on fire with the wonder of this season, prepare to celebrate Christ’s incarnated Presence among us, and open ourselves to the purifying and enkindling Presence of the Holy Spirit within and among us.

This is a time of the year when many opportunities to think of others arise. The red kettle and bell ringing remind us that others are less fortunate than we and need our help. At the same time, we cannot forget to be mindful of those with whom we live, work, and play, especially at a time when busyness might cause us to be tired and short tempered and when getting our own things taken care of might cause us to be so shortsighted that we do not see the need of those so close to us. This is a time when we may have plenty of opportunities to repent for being too distracted or too busy or too intent on getting something finished. It is also a time to be on fire with the love and care we have for family and friends. Advent is, in the end, about jumping into the fire.

Closing Prayers:

May we burn with the fire of the Holy Spirit, living justly and lovingly.

May we produce abundant good fruit, reaching out to others with care and compassion.

Our Father . . .

For Reflection:

* The fire burning me is . . . The fire burning in me is . . . The fire into which I must jump is . . .

* Some “good fruit” which is evidence of my repentance is . . .

Theme: We are getting ready to welcome Christ into our hearts.

Breaking Open the Word

Suggested text for faith sharing: Today’s Gospel

Step One: Listen to the Word

As you hear this reading, what words or phrases strike you? What in this reading touches your heart? What lingers in your memory?

Step Two: Look into Your Life

Question for Children: What things do you do to get ready for a big event or celebration?

Question for Youth: How do you share the Good News of Jesus with others?

Question for Adults: Name one thing you can do to help “prepare the way of the Lord?”

http://lifelongcatechesis.osv.com/questions_of_the_week/

Come Walk the Labyrinth

Friday, December 13 from 2 p.m. to 8 p.m. in the Mary Chapel

Walking the labyrinth is a physical meditation. It has only one path so there are no tricks or dead ends. There will be suggestions for meditation or you might consider a question in your life, a passage of scripture that you want to embrace or simply letting go of the business of the Christmas season. The Labyrinth is a small version of the Chartres Cathedral Labyrinth. Pamphlets and fliers at the exits of the church are available for more information. Allow about 10-15 minutes for the walk. Please wear socks.

Come and experience this peace filled prayer this Advent.

Readings for the Week

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
<th>3rd Sunday of Advent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Immaculate Conception</td>
<td>Ps 96:1-2, 3 and 10ac, 11-12, 13</td>
<td>Ps 103:1-2, 3, 4,8 and 10</td>
<td>Ps 11:28-30</td>
<td>Ps 1:1-2, 3, 4 and 6</td>
<td>Ps 17:9a, 10-13</td>
<td>Isa 35:1-6a, 10</td>
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Family Connection: We do many things to get ourselves ready for our celebration of Christmas: purchase gifts, prepare Christmas cards, decorate our homes. John’s call of repentance in preparation for Jesus reminds us that our repentance is another way in which we can prepare for the Lord’s coming and our celebration of Christmas. Parish communities often offer a communal celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation during the Advent season. Your family might choose to participate in the communal celebration of the sacrament, or you might seek out the sacrament on an individual basis.

Read together today’s Gospel. Talk about how John reminds the people that they prepare for the reign of God by reforming their lives. As a family, prepare a simple reconciliation service in preparation for Christmas such as the following: Gather in a prayerful space, perhaps around your family Advent wreath. Read again today’s Gospel: Matthew 3:1-3. Invite each family member to pray silently, asking God to forgive their sins. Pray together an Act of Contrition. Then celebrate God’s forgiveness by sharing a Sign of Peace with each other.

Don’t Forget the Advent Saints

Introduce kids to positive Catholic role models

During the season of Advent, most of our attention is focused, quite rightly, on the story of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. This wonderful liturgical season also offers other stories, ones that often go overlooked: the stories of the saints.

For many people, the lives of the saints seem, frankly, boring or irrelevant. That’s not surprising given the way they’re often depicted in churches: either as bland plaster statues that make them look dull or as figures in dramatic stained-glass windows that make them look superhuman. The saints were neither. A quick look at the lives of two “Advent saints” shows that they were truly human people who led fascinating lives.

Take St. Francis Xavier, whose feast we celebrate on December 3. When you’re writing your Christmas cards, you might think of all the letters that the great missionary sent back to his Jesuit brothers in the sixteenth century. These letters were widely circulated and they thrilled Europe with tales of wonderful new peoples in Africa, India, and Japan. Or remember the feast day of St. Ambrose on December 7 when you’re thinking about being forced to do so much Christmas shopping. He was forced to do something, too: In the fourth century he found himself in a church in Milan during a time of religious controversy. The crowd suddenly shouted, “Ambrose, bishop!” He was acclaimed and appointed as bishop even though he wasn’t even baptized!

Other wonderful Advent saints include St. Juan Diego (December 9), Our Lady of Guadalupe (December 12), St. Lucy (December 13), St. John of the Cross (December 14), and St. Peter Canisius (December 21).

So don’t forget to mail your Christmas cards early, and don’t forget about the lives of our amazing Advent saints, too!
Ever wonder how to pray more intimately with your husband? Wish you were spiritually closer to your wife? Couples can learn a great deal from the Mass about how to pray together as husband and wife and how to deepen their intimacy at the same time. This is because the Mass is the perfect prayer between Christ and His bride, the Church. Spouses who want to learn how to pray together can begin by following the same basic structure of the Mass. So let’s first look at how the People of God—the Church—pray during Mass and then we will explore four simple steps for praying with your spouse.

**Structure of the Mass**

The Mass consists of four parts, which include the Introductory Rite, the Liturgy of the Word, the Liturgy of the Eucharist, and the Concluding Rite. In the Introductory Rite the Church comes together, makes the Sign of the Cross, and asks God for forgiveness, which prepares our hearts for deeper union with God. Next is the Liturgy of the Word, which is when we actively listen to the readings from scripture. This time can be likened to a conversation between Christ and the Church. Christ speaks to us in the readings, and we sing psalms to God from our hearts. Then, in the Liturgy of the Eucharist, Christ and the Church exchange their love with each other. Through the changing of bread and wine into the Body and Blood of Christ, Jesus is made substantially present to us. He then gives Himself to us in the Eucharist. At the same time, we receive Him and give ourselves back to Him, deepening an intimate union. Finally, the Concluding Rite reminds us to go in peace, glorifying the Lord with our lives.

**Four simple steps:** Praying with one’s spouse by following the structure of the Mass can be simple and enriching. Here is a four-step process.

**Step One: Reconcile and Rejoice:** First, set time aside weekly for just the two of you. Come together in a comfortable place or hold hands on a walk. Make the Sign of the Cross and take a moment to focus on being present to each other and to God, as is done at the start of the Mass. As you begin, take time to reconcile. Talk about how you might have hurt each other during the week. Then apologize and offer forgiveness. This will allow you to approach God with open hearts and to be united as you pray. Once you have reconciled, rejoice by offering a short prayer of thanksgiving to God.

**Step Two: Discover God Together:** Step Two is modeled on the Liturgy of the Word. After reconciling and rejoicing, spend time discovering God together. There are a number of ways to do this. For example, you could read the Bible and talk about the passage. If you don’t know where to begin in the Bible then a good option is to read the Gospel passage that will be proclaimed at the next Sunday Mass. You can find Sunday readings at the USCCB’s Daily Readings or on our parish website. An additional option is to read the Psalms, which have been called the “book of prayer.” The Psalms express sorrow and joy, fear and hope, longing for God, and praise. By scanning the titles of each Psalm you and your spouse will easily find one that you can relate to. Pray it slowly aloud and then discuss how it stirs your emotions or what it leads you to think about. Another way to approach God together can simply involve talking about what is on your hearts and minds. What are you thankful for this week? What challenges are creeping up in your life? What do you need from each other and from God? Answer these questions honestly and then offer prayers of petition to God. Remember to give thanks as you see God faithfully answering your prayers.

**Step Three: Share Your Love:** Step Three relates to the Liturgy of the Eucharist. After discovering God together, you can deepen your prayer and intimacy by sharing your love with each other. Sharing your love in the context of prayer may include a kiss, resting in each other’s arms, caring for an ill spouse, giving words of affirmation, or any other meaningful way you communicate your love. Again, have a thankful heart as your intimacy is deepened in the presence of God.

**Step Four: Serve Each Other:** As your time together draws to a close, remember to go in peace and to serve the Lord in each other. Prayer and intimacy never ends! Let your service and intimacy live on throughout every day, as you go about cooking, cleaning, listening, working, and so on. The fruit that will come from your prayer routine will bless your marriage, deepen your love for God and each other, and allow you to reflect the love relationship between Christ and his beloved spouse, the Church. by Chris Stravitsch, MA, LPC, LMFT-A. Chris is a Fellow of HLI America, an educational initiative of Human Life International. Source: USCCB
**Holiday Mass Schedule**

Christmas Eve - Tuesday, December 24
4:00 p.m. Church
Children’s Choir Carol Prelude 3:30 p.m.
4:15 p.m. First Floor School Multi-Purpose Room
Cantor, Flute, Trumpet Carol Prelude 4:00 p.m.
4:30 p.m. Second Floor School Gym
Cantor, Flute, Trumpet Carol Prelude 4:15 p.m.
6:00 p.m. Church
Cantor, Flute, & Cello Carol Prelude 5:45 p.m.
10:30 p.m. Church
Choir, Brass Quartet Carol Prelude 10:00 p.m.

Christmas Day - Wednesday, December 25
7:30 a.m. Church
Cantor, Flute & Cello
9:00 a.m. Church
Ensemble, Guitar, Drums, Instruments
10:45 a.m. Church
Choir, Trumpet, Flute, Cello
12:30 p.m. Church
This Mass begins 15 minutes later than the usual start at 12:15pm
5 Alive! Teen Choir, Guitar, Drums, Instruments
There will be no 5 p.m. Mass on Christmas Day

Holiday Mass Schedule
We will have our regular weekend Mass schedule on Saturday and Sunday, December 28-29, the Feast of the Holy Family. Our regular daily Mass will be at 7:45 a.m. on weekdays and 8:00 a.m. on Saturdays on December 23, 24, 26, 27, 28, 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.

Sacrament of Reconciliation
Tuesday, December 17
Reconciliation Service
A Communal Service of Reconciliation with individual confession and absolution will take place in the church at 7:00 p.m.

Saturday, December 21
Individual Reconciliation - 8:30 a.m.
Extended individual confessions will be offered on Saturday, December 21, with the opportunity for private or face-to-face confession. St. John of the Cross offers the Sacrament of Reconciliation every Saturday throughout the year at 8:30 a.m.

After December 22nd, there will be no babysitting in the Garden Room until Sunday, January 5th.
This week, students spent time giving back to the community. After our Advent Prayer Service, representatives from the Helping Hand Center visited the school and spoke to many of our students about their organization. The Helping Hand Center serves the needs of individuals with disabilities and assists them to achieve their highest level of independence through quality programs and services. The students also made gifts for the clients of Beds Plus and the Helping Hand Center for the Christmas season. We are blessed to have such an amazing student body who embraces the true meaning of Christmas. Thank you to our parent volunteers who organized this event.

Service Opportunity
All Crossroads teens are invited to join us for our next service project on **Friday, December 13th, from 6:30-9:00 p.m.** We will be hosting a Holidays Around the World event at Helping Hand located in Countryside. This wonderful organization provides programs and services to children and adults with developmental disabilities. We will also need adult chaperones. For more information or to volunteer, please contact Lis Williams at lisbethwill@sbcglobal.net.

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

Dec 8  Home Group meetings
       Freshmen Experience PC
       6-7:30pm

Dec 10 Identity Retreat Forms are due

Dec 13 Helping Hand Service Opportunity
       Countryside location 630-9PM

For a complete calendar of Crossroad events for the year go to:
www.stjohnofthecross.org/crossroads/

The Church must go out into the streets

“I prefer a Church which is bruised, hurting and dirty because it has been out on the streets, rather than a Church which is unhealthy from being confined and from clinging to its own security.

Excerpt from Pope Francis’ “The Joy of the Gospel”

**This Week at SJC**
Monday, Dec. 9,  Advent Prayer Service 9:15am, Gym
       Athletic Board Meeting, 7pm

Thursday, Dec. 12, Breakfast with Baby Jesus 9am, Chapel
       Pictures with Santa, All Day, School

Friday, Dec. 13,  All School Liturgy, 9:15am, Church
YC News

YC Families
You are invited to join us, Sunday December 15th for a YC Family 9:00 AM Mass
All are welcome!

ADVENT FAMILY WORKSHOP
Families came together to create beautiful Advent wreaths and prayer chains in joyful anticipation of the coming Christmas Season.

YC Schedule

| Classes K-6 | 10:15-11:30am | Sunday, Dec 15, Jan 12, 26 |
| FFCC | 6:15-7:30pm | Monday, Dec 15, Jan 13, 27 |
| FFC | Noon-1:30 pm | Sunday, February 2 |
| Jr Hi Groups | On campus | Sunday, Dec 15, Jan 12, 26 |
| Special Needs | On campus | Sunday, Dec 15, Jan 12, 26 |

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

"People are always impatient, but God is never in a hurry!" Nikos Kazantzakis wrote those words and they highlight an important truth: We need to be patient, infinitely patient, with God. We need to let things unfold in their proper time, God's time.

Looking at religious history through the centuries, we cannot help but be struck by the fact that God seemingly takes his time in the face of our impatience. Our scriptures are often a record of frustrated desire, of non-fulfillment, and of human impatience. It's more the exception when God intervenes directly and decisively to resolve a particular human tension. We are always longing for a messiah to take away our pain and to avenge oppression, but mostly those prayers seem to fall on deaf ears.

And so we see in scripture the constant, painful cry: Come, Lord, come! Save us! How much longer must we wait? When, Lord, when? Why not now? We are forever impatient, but God refuses to be hurried. Why? Why is God, seemingly, so slow to act? Is God callous to our suffering? Why is God so patient, so plodding in his plan, when we're suffering so deeply? Why is God so excruciatingly slow to act in the face of human impatience?

There's a line in Jewish apocalyptic literature, which metaphorically, helps answer this question: Every tear brings the messiah closer! There is, it would seem, an intrinsic connection between frustration and the possibility of a messiah being born. It seems that messiahs can only be born after a long period of human yearning. Why?

Human birth already helps answer that question, gestation cannot be hurried and there is an organic connection between the pain a mother experiences in childbirth and the delivery of a new life. And that's also true of Jesus' birth. Advent is a gestation process that cannot be rushed. Tears, pain, and a long season of prayer are needed to create the conditions for the kind of pregnancy that brings forth a messiah into our world. Why? Because the real love and life can only be born when a long-suffering patience has created the correct space, the virginal womb, within which the sublime can be born. Perhaps a couple of metaphors can help us understand this.

John of the Cross, in trying to explicate how a person comes to be enflamed in altruistic love, uses the image of a log bursting into flame in a fireplace. When a green log is placed in a fire, it doesn't start to burn immediately. It first needs to be dried out. Thus, for a long time, it lies in the fire and sizzles, its greenness and dampness slowly drying out. Only when it reaches kindling temperature can it ignite and burst into flame. Speaking metaphorically, before a log can burst into flame, it needs to pass through a certain advent, a certain drying out, a period of frustration and yearning. So, too, the dynamics of how real love is born in our lives. We can ignite into love only when we, selfish, green, damp logs, have sizzled sufficiently. And the fire that makes us sizzle is unfulfilled desire.

Pierre Teilhard de Chardin offers a second metaphor here when he speaks of something he calls "the raising of our psychic temperature." In a chemistry laboratory it's possible to place two elements in the same test tube and not get fusion. The elements remain separate, refusing to unite. It is only after they are heated to a higher temperature that they unite. We're no different. Often it's only when our psychic temperature is raised sufficiently that there's fusion, that is, it's only when unrequited longing has raised our psychic temperature sufficiently that we can move towards reconciliation and union. Simply put, sometimes we have to be brought to a high fever through frustration and pain before we are willing to let go of our selfishness and let ourselves be drawn into community.

Thomas Halik once commented that an atheist is simply another term for someone who doesn't have enough patience with God. He's right. God is never in a hurry, and for good reason. Messiahs can only be born inside a particular kind of womb, namely, one within which there's enough patience and willingness to wait so as to let things happen on God's terms, not ours.

Hence, ideally, every tear should bring the messiah closer. This isn't an unfathomable mystery: Every frustration should, ideally, make us more ready to love. Every tear should, ideally, make us more ready to forgive. Every heartache should, ideally, make us more ready to let go of some of our separateness. Every unfulfilled longing should, ideally, lead us into a deeper and more sincere prayer. And all of our pained impatience for a consummation that seems to forever elude us should, ideally, makes us feverish enough to burst into love's flame.

To offer yet another image: It is with much groaning of the flesh that the life of the spirit is brought forth!

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.
Kolbe House Thanks SJC Parishioners

Dear Friends,
Thank you for the $1,200 Sharing check. There are not enough words to thank you for the sacrifice that so many make on our behalf. Without this help our work would be diminished.

Ministry as you know is not a job but rather a response to a call from God. All of us respond in different ways to that call. We the staff and volunteers at Kolbe House hear that call from God each time we enter into the jail. It is there that we come face to face with the Lord in our conversations with the women, men, and youth that we visit. The detainees say that we make a difference in their lives by showing up week after week. We feel that we have gained so much more by witnessing to the faith that we encounter in them.

Through you our ministry is enhanced not only by the dollars that support us but also by your willingness to share in our work by your prayer and encouragement. We have built a bond with one another. We have all heard the call of the Lord. Know that I am grateful for the many ways that your parish ministers to us.

Rev. Arturo Perez Rodriguez

Lord, Make Me Uncomfortable…

God, bless me with discomfort at easy answers, half-truths, and superficial relationships, so that You will live deep in my heart. God, bless me with anger at injustice, oppression, and exploitation of people and the earth so that I will work for justice, equity, and peace. God, bless me with tears to shed for those who suffer so that I will reach out my hand to comfort them and change their pain with joy. God, bless me with the foolishness to think that I can make a difference in the world, so that I will do the things which others say cannot be done. Amen. — Richard Rohr, OFM

Vocations

Are you called to be “A herald’s voice in the desert” preparing the way of the Lord in the hearts of His people? If you have ever considered a vocation to the priesthood or consecrated life, 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.

Vatican Survey: Pastoral Challenges to the Family in the Context of Evangelization

Pope Francis has called for an Extraordinary Synod to address the topic, Pastoral Challenges to the Family in the Context of Evangelization that will take place in Rome in October of 2014. The Holy See has asked bishops to share information about the topic as widely as possible and to provide a way for those Catholics who wish to contribute their comments and input to do so.

The instructions and the survey can be found on the Chicago Archdiocesan website, www.archchicago.org/vatican-survey/.

All responses received in the Archdiocese of Chicago will be sent to the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, DC, who will pass on all collected response from dioceses throughout the country to the Secretary General of the Synod of Bishops in Rome.
Parish News

Christmas Wafers (Oplatki)
The Christmas Wafers (Oplatki) have arrived. If you would like to purchase them, please come to the Parish Center. Each envelope (three per envelope) is $1.50.

Holy Hour for Life at Divine Infant Parish
On Friday December 13th at 7:30pm Divine Infant Parish in Westchester will hold a pro-life Holy Hour with solemn exposition of the Blessed Sacrament. The hour will contain scripture, the Litany of the Precious Blood of Jesus, and the Chaplet of Divine Mercy.

Surviving the Holidays
Every year most of us have a tendency to fantasize about the delights of the holidays, wanting this year to top all previous years. We spend more, decorate more, bake more and eat more. What a set up for disappointment! Divorce makes the holidays even more difficult: other families are having so much fun and you are not. The top ten tips for “Surviving the Holidays” can help you unload the dread, anxiety, or loneliness for a time of inner peace and hope. That is what the birth of Our Lord has always promised. Go to our parish website to read the article.

William Ferris Chorale - Annual Christmas Concert
Christmas Mystery Christmas Mirth
Music Director, Paul French
Sunday, December 8 at 3pm at St. Clement Church, Lincoln Park
Monday, December 14 at 7:30pm at Madonna Della Strada Chapel, Loyola University
Sunday, December 15 at 3pm at Emmanuel Episcopal Church, La Grange
Tickets are $20 and $25 for preferred seating / $5 discount for seniors and students. To purchase, visit www.williamferrischorale.org or call 773-508-2940. The concert will feature soaring Renaissance polyphony, the ethereal music of Morten Lauridsen including his timeless Ō Magnum Mysterium, and a sassy assortment of familiar carols. The Chicago Tribune has proclaimed our annual Christmas concerts as "a holiday tradition not to be tampered with."

Mom’s Club
Attention mothers of young children (6 and under)! Please consider joining us for a morning meeting. Meetings are fun for both moms and kids! 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. Our upcoming meetings are: Friday, December 13th and Friday, January 10th in the Parish Center from 9:30-11:00am
Contacts: Ellen Twomey and Jen Van Wyck

Christmas Wafers (Oplatki)
The Christmas Wafers (Oplatki) have arrived. If you would like to purchase them, please come to the Parish Center. Each envelope (three per envelope) is $1.50.
The SJC Men’s Club invites all parish men to our ‘smoker’ evening held on:

**Wednesday December 18th**

at the Casa de Montecristo

in Countryside (1332 West 55th Street)

The evening will start at 6:30 PM
with an educational overview about cigars.

Pizza and cold refreshments will be served.

You are welcome to BYOB, but beer will be available.

Please RSVP to Bill Bright at bbright@stjohnofthecross.org

Barrett Long at longbarrett@hotmail.com or Steve Graef at 708-420-2736

Light the way for family & friends this Christmas... Begin a holiday tradition your children will love!

**LUMINARIA KIT FUNDRAISER**

Each Luminaria Kit includes 5 white bags, 5 long-burning candles (10+ hours) and enough sand to assemble your luminaries. Free home delivery for seniors!

**Order Deadline**: Sunday, December 8th

**Pick-up Date**: Sunday, December 15th from 1:00 to 3:00

in the Parish Center

**Order online at www.stjohnofthecross.org**

To order with cash or check, complete the form below and return with payment to the SJC Parish Center by 12/8. Make Checks Payable to SJC Women’s Club.

Last Name: ___________________________ First Name: ___________________________

Email: ___________________________ Phone: ___________________________

_______ Luminary Kit(s) x $10 = Total Due ___________________

Each kit contains 5 bags, 5 candles and enough sand to assemble the luminaries

☐ Seniors check here for FREE Delivery!

Address For Delivery: ___________________________

Sponsored by the SJC Women’s Club in partnership with Village True Value Hardware

Please contact Katie Pruitt at illboilers@gmail.com or 708-822-9427 with questions.
Find us ready Lord...not standing still. Find us working and loving and doing your will. Find us ready Lord...faithful in love and building the kingdom that’s here and above! Find us ready Lord...not standing still. Find us working and loving and doing your will. Find us ready Lord...faithful in love and building the kingdom that’s here and above! Find us ready Lord...not standing still. Find us working and loving and doing your will.

The Share Christmas experience at St. John of the Cross Parish is a strong and beautiful tradition that will fill your heart with joy as you make someone else’s Christmas special!

Our gifts are delivered to the following grateful recipients in the Chicago area: Blessed Sacrament Church, Little Brothers/Friends of the Elderly, St. Thomas of Canterbury, Santa Maria Addolorata, St. Thaddeus, St. Mark, St. Agatha, as well as families in our own parish community.

This is the last weekend to sign up for Share Christmas after Mass. Currently there are still 85 families left, 40 gifts for older children ages 9-18 and a need for personal care items and backpacks for young males.

What can I buy?
- An unwrapped gift for a child (infant to 18 years old)
- A food gift card from Jewel or Wal-Mart for a Christmas meal
- Gift cards for families from Sears, Wal-Mart, Kohl’s, Target or JC Penny
- Food and gifts cards for a Christmas meal and presents for a family

Please note, providing gift cards for our recipient families allows them to select the sizes and colors that more closely meet their needs. Similarly, providing food cards lets them choose food based on their ethnicity, family preferences and health/allergy concerns. Whether you choose to provide a store bought individual gift, or a gift or food card, know that your generosity will make all the difference in Christmas for our grateful recipients.

For your convenience our parish Manna reps will be available in the church community room for you to purchase food and gift certificates.

Donations can also be made on our parish website at www.stjohnofthecross.org. Click on the Sharing Box and direct your donation to the Special Collections link to choose Share Christmas. Or you can donate by dropping a check at the Parish Center. Your gifts will be used to purchase food and gift certificates.

Drop off Days are December 9 & 10 between 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. at the Parish Center. The gifts will then be delivered to the parishes on Saturday, December 14th. If you have a van or small truck or if you are free to help load and deliver, please call the Parish Center.
This Week at SJC

Monday, December 9
10:30 a.m. Step 11 Christian Meditation
2:30 p.m. Eucharistic Adoration
2:30 p.m. Spiritual Journaling

Tuesday, December 10
9:05 a.m. Rosary
9:30 a.m. Focus on Sunday Scriptures Group
1:00 p.m. Sacraments Study
4:00 p.m. Confirmation Interviews
7:00 p.m. Sacraments Study
7:00 p.m. RCIA

Wednesday, December 11
9:30 a.m. Bridges Faith Sharing
1:00 p.m. Prayer Shawl
2:00 p.m. Christian Meditation
7:00 p.m. Boy Scout Meeting
7:30 p.m. Christian Meditation

Thursday, December 12
7:00 p.m. Men’s Club Spiritual Speaker
9:30 a.m. Flourish
7:00 p.m. Men’s Club
7:00 p.m. Faith Sharing Group

Friday, December 13
9:30 a.m. Mom’s Club
2:00 p.m. Labyrinth, Chapel
3:30 p.m. 3rd Grade Brownies
6:00 p.m. Kairos 16 Team Meetings

Saturday, December 14
7:00 a.m. Christian Meditation
10:00 a.m. Preschool Advent Session

Eternal Rest Grant unto These, O Lord
Mary Beedie, mother of David
grandmother of Christopher, Daniel and Emily
Rev. Patrick (Pat) Brennan
Angela Camardo, wife of Anthony
Bob Patrick, father of Karen Rogers
Dorothy Stefan, mother of Susan Campos and grandmother of Alex and Elliot

Wedding Banns
Georgann Grecco & Bob Mecozzi

Mass Intentions
Monday, December 9, The Immaculate Conception
7:45 Muriel Albertson; Frank Gorcowski

Tuesday, December 10
7:45 Sylvia Emily Smith; Anthony Madaio

Wednesday, December 11, St. Damasus I, Pope
7:45 Brian Donovan; Margaret Albertson

Thursday, December 12, Our Lady of Guadalupe
7:45 Joseph A. Piszczor; Our Beloved Dead

Friday, December 13, St. Lucy
7:45 Margaret Kirtley; Eugene Cisek

Saturday, December 14, St. John of the Cross
8:00 Dorothy Wichterman; Patricia Olmstead
5:00 William Sturgeon; Gene Harris

Sunday, December 15, Third Sunday of Advent
7:30 Mary Wojcik: OLPH and SJC Parishioners
9:00 Joseph Pieroth; Jim McNaughton
10:45 James Martorelli; Gene Miley
12:15 Rose King; Connie Blazek
5:00 Edward Hussey; Phyllis Yacom

Italics—Living

Pray for our Sick

Frank Accardi  Vickie McNally
Mitch Allen  Jay Meehan
Dale Alm  John Munch
Paul Cervony  Nancy Olin
Madeleine Cronin  Baby Meghan Hope Pacyna
Terry Cullen  Marion Pascale
William Dwyer  Bob Pietras
Melissa Morrissey Eldredge  James Reilly
Mark Giangrande  Rick Reimer
Karen Hult  Dan Santucci
Barbara Jacob  Teresa Schaefer
Dee Kennedy  John Shea
Kelly Kennedy  Charles Sugrue
Rosie King  Guy Thomas
Kay Knowles  Baby Kameron Walters
Fr. William Mannion  Mary Catherine Warren
Mary Ann Matysik  Pam Wilson
Maddie Mayer  Ron Ziema

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

Rev. David P. Dowdle  Pastor  ddowdle@stjohnofthecross.org
Rev. Joseph F. McDonnell  Pastor Emeritus  Contact Fr. Joe through the Parish Office
Rev. Filbert F. Ngwila  Associate Pastor  fngwila@stjohnofthecross.org
Deacon John Schopp  Deacon  john.schopp@newhemispheres.com
Bill Bright  Outreach  bbright@stjohnofthecross.org
Janet Caschetta  Youth Catechesis  jcaschetta@stjohnofthecross.org
Jim Clauer  Worship  jclauer@stjohnofthecross.org
Kathleen Gorman  School Principal  gorman@sjc.pvt.k12.il.us
Katie Hayes  Crossroads  khayes@stjohnofthecross.org
Jessica Koch  Music  jkoch@stjohnofthecross.org
MJ Martin  Operations  mjmartin@stjohnofthecross.org
Elizabeth Russell-Jones  Welcome  erussell-jones@stjohnofthecross.org
Advent... a little child shall lead them

Come and share a wonder-filled morning with scripture, singing, games and crafts with your child.
A family faith program designed for our Littlest Angels, Preschool children Ages 2-5.
Parents or grandparents come too!

Saturday, December 14
10-11:30am Parish Center
Dress comfortably—we’ll be sitting on the floor.
This is the first of four preschool sessions for the Year of Strong Catholic Parents.
Call YC office (708-246-6760) to register by December 11.
This helps us prepare craft bags.
Walk-ins also welcome.