Called to be Holy through Prayer, Service & Sharing
to Build Up the Kingdom of God.
December 22, 2013
Fourth Sunday of Advent
Christmas 2013

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Celebrating the 50th anniversary of my ordination to the priesthood this December fills my heart with gratitude to God and with countless memories of people I have met and places I have served throughout my priestly ministry. I was ordained by Bishop Raymond Hillinger just before Christmas at St. Pascal Church, the parish in which I grew up on Chicago’s northwest side. When I became the Archbishop of Portland, Oregon, Brother Claude Lane, OSB of the Benedictine Monastery Mount Angel Abbey, created an icon for me that brought together two titles of Our Lady that he knew were significant to me: Our Lady of the Snows, patroness of the northern missions served by Oblates, and Our Lady of Guadalupe, because in Yakima the vast majority of Catholics are of Mexican descent.

In this beautiful icon, the serene nativity scene is framed by storm and snow, and Brother Claude depicts Our Lady of Guadalupe gazing at the Christ Child on her lap. A black sash that indicated in Aztec culture that she was pregnant is now tied around her swaddled baby who has the face of his mother and yet something more. It’s always more: the sash signifies it is this baby that gives birth now to a new world. It’s a world where snow falls on the Esquiline Hill in Rome in August and where roses bloom on Tepeyac Hill in Mexico City in December. It’s a new world that looks like Jesus, son of God and son of Mary. It is a world in which God took on our human nature so that we could see the glory of God in an infant and so that our lives would be brightened by the truth about God and about ourselves.

Christ took our nature to his divine Person so everything we are and do is elevated; everything is graced except sin itself. If we give ourselves up to what Christ is doing to and for us, we begin to see with the eyes of Christ, to know others and ourselves at a different level, and to do entirely commonplace acts for God and with God. At our best, all of us want a world marked by truth and justice, by peace and love, for those desires are born of our redeemed nature itself. May the newborn Jesus fill your heart with joy! You are in my prayers; please keep me in yours. Merry Christmas!

Sincerely yours in Christ Jesus,

Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I.
Archbishop of Chicago
Dear Parishioners,

Just a few days left, the goal is in site, the excitement is building and children everywhere are counting Sunday night, Monday night, and finally-Tuesday night!

The Feast of the Nativity of Our Lord, Christmas, is so profound that the most intelligent theologian cannot adequately explain all that is contained in this mystery, and yet the smallest child can understand it completely. The phrases ‘God becomes flesh’ or ‘divinity cloaks itself in humanity’ or ‘unto us a child is born’ can come tripping off our tongues, perhaps too glibly, during this holy season. But is the meaning of those and other clichés of song lyrics (‘all is calm, all is bright’, ‘O Come let us adore him’, ‘the hopes and fears…’etc.) profound enough to change our hearts and minds?

If you are able to be aware of more than what is going on in your own family (and for some that might not legitimately be possible) you can hear other voices calling all of us into a greater consciousness of ‘God becomes flesh’, etc. It seems every week Pope Francis does or says something that seems so obvious and yet it is also very challenging. He continually is calling us to be aware of the poor. He continually reminds us that the Gospel is not for ‘sourpusses’ or ‘those who look like they are at a funeral’. Living the Gospel is supposed to be a life of joy, but only after you realize that your life is not your own, nor is it only about you.

The death of Nelson Mandela has been a great opportunity not only to celebrate his life, but to allow the witness of his life to speak to every person from every land. Personally, I think the greatest miracle of the 20th century is that South Africa did not blow up into racial genocide when apartheid was finally ended. Along with Episcopal Bishop Desmond Tutu, Mandela is rightly credited in leading his country into acknowledging the wrongs that had been committed on both sides of the racial divide. The Truth and Reconciliation commission of South Africa stands as the greatest example I can think of how government and politics can be influenced by Christian values and break the cycle of violence. You almost cannot help but be moved by Mandela’s own conversion as he forgave those who imprisoned him for 27 years. Upon his release he said he had to forgive them because if he didn’t, he would always be in their prison. Even if his body was outside the prison, failure to forgive would have meant that his mind and heart were still serving hard time. Here is one of his quotes: “For to be free is not merely to cast off one’s chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.”

Just a few days left, but there is still time. Still time for last minute shopping. Still time to spend some time in quiet and appreciate the miracles all around. There is still time to practice the daily Examen. Enough time to be grateful for those who are no longer with us except in the most tender of memories. There is still time to become a gift for someone who desperately needs you.

Just a few days left, the goal is in site, the excitement is building and children everywhere wait to sing “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth, peace to people of goodwill.”

Merry Christmas.

Fr. David
Reflecting on Living the Gospel

The state of affairs is not what it appears to be. Mary is not unfaithful, but faithful. Mary is with child, but a virgin. The infant is not only an earthly child, but also a heavenly One. Yet the infant is not heaven-bound, but an earth-bound Emmanuel. Joseph is not the father, but in a father’s role names the Child Jesus. When the Spirit of God is at work, and we cooperate as did Mary and Joseph, something altogether new happens: mystery abounds, “God is with us.”

Two names are given to the One incarnated in Mary’s womb: Jesus, meaning “God saves the people from their sins,” and Emmanuel, meaning “God is with us.” Simply put, the names reveal that the very Presence of God among us is a saving Presence. Further, if we are to be that incarnated Presence in our world today, then our lives must be characterized by the same holiness as is of the very essence of God, enabled by the “Spirit of holiness.” To be holy as God is holy requires of us a self-emptying not unlike that of Mary and Joseph. Without understanding everything about God’s saving plan, they cooperated fully and something altogether new happened. The Son of God took flesh in the womb of Mary because she cooperated with the grace of the Holy Spirit that overshadowed her. We, too, are called to cooperate with the grace of that same Spirit who overshadows us in our daily living. When we hold back an unfounded or unkind judgment, we are cooperating with the Holy Spirit. When we are obedient to God’s will, we are cooperating with the grace of the Holy Spirit. Through us, something altogether new can happen, too.

Closing Prayers:
May we cooperate more fully with God’s plan of salvation through imitating the faithfulness of Mary and Joseph.
May we open ourselves more faithfully to the work of the Spirit within and through us.
Our Father . . .

For Reflection:
· The birth of Jesus Christ came about in me when...
· My life witnesses Emmanuel (“God is with us”) to others whenever I...Living Liturgy™ Sunday Bulletin

Advent: Why Do We Wait?
What is the message of Advent? Why are we waiting?
Advent is a season of preparation: we shop for gifts, plan parties, and decorate our homes for the coming of Christmas. Sometimes it is easy to forget the real mission of Advent: preparing our hearts for the coming of Jesus Christ. We are bombarded by commercial messages in which the reason for Christmas—Emmanuel, “God with us”—is absent or overlooked. However, the rituals and practices of our Catholic liturgies during this season can join us together with the People of God. United, we can offer messages of challenge and hope and express our desire for God’s presence in our midst.

Advent blends penitence, preparedness, and joy. We are called to consider our lives and to repent—or turn around—from those things that keep us from God. In this way, we repent and prepare for the Second Coming of the Lord. This theme of preparedness permeates the liturgies of Advent. Lastly we are called to be joyful as we get ready to celebrate the incarnation of our Savior in Bethlehem.

We wait for the coming of Christ in human history at Bethlehem, in our hearts each day, and at the end of time. The readings of Advent direct us to be prepared as we “do not know the hour or the day” of Christ’s coming. But it is the present to which we should give our attention. Christ comes to us each day in word and sacrament, in prayer and grace, and through the people in his Church. Can we try to be aware of his presence and power within our lives? Can we be open to his call and let him work through us in the world?

What is the message of Advent? For what are we waiting? Maranatha! Come, Lord Jesus! Help us to know you, love you, and serve you. Increase our faith. Help us understand. Let us be your eyes, ears, and hands on earth. Let us show your love. Come!
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Readings for the Week

Monday
Mal 3:1-4, 23-24
Ps 25:4-5, 8-9, 10 and 14
Ps 89:2-3, 4-5, 7 and 29
Ps 95:1-7
Luke 1:57-66

Tuesday
2 Sam 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16
Ps 52:7-10
Ps 98:1, 2-3, 3-4, 5-6
Ps 107:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14

Wednesday
Ps 110:1-7
Heb 1:1-6
John 1:1-18 or 1:1-5, 9-14

Thursday
Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59
Ps 31:3cd-4, 6 and 8ab, 16bc
Ps 97:1-1, 5-6, 11-12
Matt 10:17-22

Friday
1 John 1:1-4
Ps 124:2-3, 4-5, 7cd-8
John 20:1a and 2-8

Saturday
1 John 1:5–2:2
Ps 128:1-2, 3-4, 5-6
Ps 132:1-2
Matt 2:13-18

Sunday
Sir 3:2-6, 12-14
Ps 128:1-2, 3-4, 5-6
Ps 132:1-2
Col 3:12-17 or 3-12-17
Matt 2:13-15, 19-23

If you believe the document is not correctly recognized, please provide a clear, legible version of the document for further analysis.
Richard Rohr's Daily Meditation

Prayer is largely just being silent: holding the tension instead of even talking it through, offering the moment instead of fixing it by words and ideas, loving reality as it is instead of understanding it fully. Prayer is commonly a willingness to say “I don’t know.” We must not push the river, we must just trust that we are already in the river, and God is the certain flow and current.

That may be impractical, but the way of faith is not the way of efficiency. So much of life is just a matter of listening and waiting, and enjoying the expansiveness that comes from such willingness to hold. It is like carrying and growing a baby: women wait and trust and hopefully eat good food, and the baby is born.

~ Adapted from unpublished recording

How to Enjoy Christmas

Christmas is coming, and I'll bet you're starting to get a little nervous.

1.) Try not to be a perfectionist.
You don't have to send every single friend or family member a card or buy them a gift. Resist the temptation to overburden yourself with a list of “shoulds.”

2.) Take time for yourself.
No one's life will be ruined if you miss a party or two, or even a family gathering, in order to have some downtime. Instead, stay home and do something relaxing like listening to a Christmas CD. Pray a little bit. Read a story that reminds you of why you enjoy Christmas, such as Dickens' “A Christmas Carol.” Or how about John Greenleaf Whittier’s lovely poem, “Snowbound”? Or, forget reading or thinking—just relax!

3.) Enjoy Advent.
Ever read the daily Advent readings? They're amazing, filled with beautiful imagery that will revive your drooping spirits. “The wilderness and the dry land shall be glad, the desert shall rejoice and blossom” reads one passage from the Book of Isaiah. You could spend all of Advent thinking about that! Where are the deserts in your life that have bloomed? Which ones need to be watered by prayer and worship?

So Christmas is coming. As the angels said to the shepherds, “Fear not!” by Jim Martin, SJ.
Prayer

It's The Love That We Are Made For, The Reason For Our Being ...

My soul sings in gratitude. I'm dancing in the mystery of God. The light of the Holy One is within me and I am blessed, so truly blessed.

This goes deeper than human thinking. I am filled with awe at Love whose only condition is to be received.

The gift is not for the proud, for they have no room for it. The strong and self-sufficient ones don't have this awareness.

But those who know their emptiness can rejoice in Love's fullness. It's the Love that we are made for, the reason for our being.

It fills our inmost heart space and brings to birth in us, the Holy One.

— Joy Cowley (poem title is “Modern Magnificat” from “Mirabile Dictu”)

Table Grace for the Christmas Season

Come, let us adore him!
Come, let us adore him!

May the feast shared at this table provide strength to follow your way as we celebrate your glorious birth, O Christ.
Come, let us adore him!

May this blessing of food be nourishment to proclaim the Gospel, as we hear the voice of the herald angels.
Come, let us adore him!

May this time of grace allow your love to show forth in the world as we behold your humble birth.
Come, let us adore him!

Let us adore him, Christ the Lord.
May every meal and every life be blessed during these joyful days.
Amen.
How is your prayer life coming along? Are you finding time to talk to God? Are you praying the Examen that we learned at Sunday Mass?

If you are looking for some help, go to our parish website and click on Praying. You will find a 6 session prayer series on the Examen that you can pray each day right at your computer. Try it. You might find it to be just what you need to refocus on God’s presence in your life.

The Lunchtime Examen invites you to pause at noontime (or whatever time fits your calendar) to review your day in the presence of God. This six-session series is led by Jim Manney, author of *A Simple, Life-Changing Prayer: Discovering the Power of St. Ignatius Loyola’s Examen.*

Knowing that not everyone prays at the same pace, you have control over the pace of the Lunchtime Examen. On each screen, a Continue button will appear. Click it when you are ready to move on. Please be patient if it takes a few moments to load the Flash presentations.

Some people find it helpful to journal about what’s happening in their prayer life. To help you do that and to extend the Lunchtime Examen experience beyond the time spent at the computer, a weekly journal page is also provided for you with each session.

Our mouths were filled with laughter; our tongues sang for joy. Then it was said among the nations, “The LORD has done great things for them.” (Psalm 126:2)

There is the story about the man who goes to see his doctor for an exam. After getting a thorough checkup, the doctor calls the man’s wife into his office without the husband and says that her husband is a very ill. He has a life-threatening condition and things do not look very good.

However, if she is willing to be at the husband’s beck and call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and is willing to cater to his every want and desire, making him special breakfasts in the morning, giving him wonderful meals in the evening, sending him off to work with wonderfully prepared lunches, making love to him whenever he’s desirous of her, and generally doing everything to make him completely happy, for the next several months, there is an excellent likelihood her husband will pull through it and be okay.

As they are driving home the husband turns to his wife and asks, “So what did the doctor tell you?” To which his wife replies, “He told me you’re going to die.”

Humor serves a couple by providing the space to lighten up the relationship so that neither takes what the other said or did, or the current situation, so personally. The man in the story seemingly needs compassion and sympathy, but what his wife gives instead helps her manage her own anxiety, thus allowing for an important challenge to her husband. Her playfulness makes it possible for him to take charge of his own life – both metaphorically and literally.

Love and good will are essential components of marriage, yet even with love we still become anxious. An anxious response can get confused as a loving and caring one. When we’re anxious we often end up doing what is good for us since it relieves our anxiety, but it’s not necessarily good for the one we supposedly took the action for.

**Lighten up**

Rather than work on the relationship, each spouse can focus on their own issues in order to become a mature, capable and responsible adult, and do so out of a sense of joy and delight. Work implies a seriousness, which is problematic and points to a lack of self-differentiation. When overly serious we operate from a highly anxious state that cuts us off from our higher levels of functioning – our capacity to reason and problem-solve. Seriousness keeps us operating out a reflex mode. We react rather than respond. There is a Mary Engelbreit poster that says: “Life is mysterious, don’t take it so seriously.” Humor helps move us outside a seemingly hopeless situation and to see with new eyes.

**Learn to go in the other direction**

Akin to humor is the paradoxical intervention when we go along with, or exaggerate, the situation. “It’s the worst thing that could have happened. I think I’ll stay in bed!” Or, “My car broke down; life is terrible.” We sometimes play a game of “Pet Peeves.” Each person must state a complaint and exaggerate it while everyone else exhorts, “That’s terrible!” or “I hate when that happens!” One can’t help have a hilarious time.

**Make play central to the relationship**

Couples can cultivate play, as well as joy and delight. Playfulness gives the space needed for intimacy as surely as repeating someone’s question gives time for an answer.

When couples first date they tell how they love having fun and even being silly. They do interesting things; they play. Once they start to court each other and move toward marriage they’ll say, “Now we’re in a serious relationship.” Somehow we link commitment to seriousness. The antidote to too much seriousness is play.

Children know how to play and sometimes have such a good time that other kids begin to watch and even take part in their play. Play is attractive and magnetic. We knew something then that is still extremely useful today. Individuals who know how to play make great partners. Playful couples are magical to observe. They have a twinkle in their eyes, a lightness without being flippant. Each partner is loose while remaining solid and grounded. They are grace in action. In short, they remind us that play is a virtue we need to take seriously. by Donald J. Paglia, usccb
During one of those all-family “we’ve got to get this house organized” clean-up days, I heard my daughters say, “We can’t get rid of these!” They were clutching old vinyl record albums of Christmas carols. They proclaimed, “We listened to these over and over when we were little!” Even though it was March, we found a turntable in the attic, put on the albums, and enjoyed them once more.

Back in the day, we not only listened to these hymns but sang them together throughout Advent, Christmas, and beyond. The hymns carried the essence of the Gospel and placed it forever in my daughters’ hearts. “Silent night, holy night, Son of God, love’s pure light.” So, no, we didn’t get rid of those albums. It would have been like tossing out the family Bible. —Tom McGrath

**Light the 4th Candle on the Advent Wreath**

Loving God,
Our hearts desire the warmth of your love
And our minds are searching for the light of your Word.
As we light the candles of this wreath
Increase our longing for Christ our Savior
And give us the strength to grow in faith.
At the day of his coming may we be found
Prepared and filled with joy.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Christmas Daily Prayer**

Always be on my lips,
Jesus Word of God: Gloria in excelsis!
Always guide my actions,
Jesus Prince of peace: Gloria in excelsis!
Always illuminate my way,
Jesus, Light from light: Gloria in excelsis!

**Strong Catholic Parent**

**Raising Faith-Filled Kids • One Word at a Time**

**Sing**

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Each year parishioners help our brothers and sisters at our Sharing Parish, Holy Cross, in Jinja, Uganda through the Livestock for Life Program. Your donation supplies a hen, goat or pig (and training) to a specially selected family. The animal provides income for the family and the church.

You may use our new on-line giving option with your credit card or drop off a check with the form below to the Parish Center. Each gift is $40.

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**VOLUNTEER TUTORS NEEDED**

Speaking with people of a different culture, making new contacts, and a feeling of self-satisfaction are some of the benefits one might reap from volunteering at School on Wheels, sponsored by the Congregation of St. Joseph of La Grange Park. Volunteers are needed for the school’s 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.

St. John of the Cross Parish has a Christmas gift book for each parish family on Christmas Eve and Christmas Day—The Four Signs of a Dynamic Catholic. It is our hope that Matthew Kelly’s simple and relatable words will inspire you on your spiritual journey. Whether you are seeking God’s love in your life or are ready for renewal, you will find practical advice in your reading. The gift of this book has been made possible by a generous donation from an anonymous parishioner. After reading, please pass it along to a family member or friend to explore the faith and find the path to joy and fulfillment.

The joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin, sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ joy is constantly born anew.

-Pope Francis
As we prepare these last few days for the celebration of Christ’s birth, we pause to thank all our volunteers and families for all you do for SJC Youth Catechesis! May God spread His grace and love throughout your home in the coming year.

**YC Schedule**

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

The YC Office will be CLOSED for Christmas Dec 23-Jan 5

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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 News

Baptisms

In December we welcomed the following children into the Christian community through the sacrament of Baptism.

Emma Rose, daughter of Anthony and Ami Sullivan (Adducci)
Kelly Grace, daughter of Charles and Lizbeth (Marin) Andel
Evan Patrick, son of David and Susan (Hansen) Sherlock
Connor Joseph, son of Nicholas and Kacie Rae (Shuba) Wroblewski
Michael Stephen, son of Andrew and Brooke (Standring) Ariens
Marcello, son of Philip and Kristina (Szepfalussy) Salamone
Colin James, son of Maura Boyle and John Duckworth

May we remember your light today when we see the radiant sun, a burning candle, or a shining lamp.
Jesus, our light, we praise and thank you.
Shine on us forever.
John 12:46

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

“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

SJC Parish Moms’ Club

Attention mothers of young children (6 and under)
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. Please consider joining us for our next meeting.
Friday, January 10th
Parish Center 9:30-11:00am
Contacts: Ellen Twomey and Jen Van Wyck

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

www.stjohnofthecross.org 12-22-13 page 12   praying ~ serving ~ sharing
swing into spring
Fashion Show

SAVE THE DATE
Thursday, March 6, 2014

AT DRURY LANE
100 Drury Lane
Oakbrook Terrace, IL 60181

AUCTION SPOILER:
Trip for two, including airfare and hotel, to Fashion Week in NYC!

FOR A NIGHT TO REMEMBER
Spring styles, boutique shopping, auction packages, cocktails, dinner and dessert.
Sponsored by SJC Women’s Club.
Staying Awake

In his autobiography, Report to Greco, Nikos Kazantzakis recounts a conversation he once had with an old monk. Kazantzakis, a young man at the time, was visiting a monastery and was very taken by a famed ascetic, Father Makarios, who lived there. But a series of visits with the old monk left him with some ambivalent feelings as well. The monk's austere lifestyle stirred a certain religious romanticism in Kazantzakis, but it repelled him too; he wanted the romanticism, but in a more-palatable way. Here's their conversation as Kazantzakis records it:

"Yours is a hard life, Father. I too want to be saved. Is there no other way?"

"More agreeable?" asked the ascetic, smiling compassionately.

"More human, Father."

"One, only one."

"What is that?"

"Ascent. To climb a series of steps. From the full stomach to hunger, from the slaked throat to thirst, from joy to suffering. God sits at the summit of hunger, thirst, and suffering; the devil sits at the summit of the comfortable life. Choose."

"I am still young. The world is nice. I have time to choose."

Reaching out, the old monk touched my knee and said:

"Wake up, my child. Wake up before death wakes you up."

I shuttered and said:

"I am still young."

"Death loves the young," the old man replied.

"The inferno loves the young. Life is like a lighted candle, easily extinguished. Take care - wake up!"

Wake up! Wake up before death wakes you up. In a less dramatic expression that's a virtual leitmotif in the Gospels. Jesus is always telling us to wake up, to stay awake, to be vigilant, to be more alert to a deeper reality. What's meant by that? How are we asleep to depth? How are we to wake up and stay awake?

How are we asleep? All of us know how difficult it is for us to be inside the present moment, to not be asleep to the real riches inside our own lives. The distractions and worries of daily life tend to so consume us that we habitually take for granted what's most precious to us, our health, the miracle of our senses, the love and friendships that surround us, and the gift of life itself. We go through our daily lives not only with a lack of reflectiveness and lack of gratitude but with a habitual touch of resentment as well, a chronic, grey depression, Robert Moore calls it. We are very much asleep, both to God and to our own lives.

How do we wake up? Today there's a rich literature that offers us all kinds of advice on how to get into the present moment so as to be awake to the deep riches inside our own lives. While much of this literature is good, little of it is very effective. It invites us to live each day of our lives as if it was our last day, but we simply can't do that. It's impossible to sustain that kind of intentionality and awareness over a long period of time. An awareness of our mortality does wake us up, as does a stroke, a heart attack, or cancer; but that heightened-awareness is easier to sustain for a short season of our lives than it is for twenty, thirty, forty, or fifty years. Nobody can sustain that kind of awareness all the time. None of us can live seventy or eighty years as if each day was his or her last day. Or can we?

Spiritual wisdom offers a nuanced answer here: We can and we can't! On the one hand, the distractions, cares, and pressures of everyday life will invariably have their way with us and we will, in effect, fall asleep to what's deeper and more important inside of life. But it's for this reason that every major spiritual tradition has daily rituals designed precisely to wake us from spiritual sleep, akin an alarm clock waking us from physical sleep.

It's for this reason we need to begin each day with prayer. What happens if we don't pray on a given morning is not that we incur God's wrath, but rather that we tend to miss the morning, spending the hours until noon trapped inside a certain dullness of heart. The same can be said about praying before meals. We don't displease God by not first centering ourselves in gratitude before eating, but we miss out on the richness of what we're doing. Liturgical prayer and the Eucharist have the same intent, among their other intentions. They're meant to, regularly, call us out of a certain sleep.

None of us lives each day of our lives as if it was his or her last day. Our heartaches, headaches, distractions, and busyness invariably lull us to sleep. That's forgivable; it's what it means to be human. So we should ensure that we have regular spiritual rituals, spiritual alarm clocks, to jolt us back awake - so that it doesn't take a heart attack, a stroke, cancer, or death to wake us up.

Rev. Ron Rolheiser, OMI
This Week at SJC

Monday, December 23
10:30 a.m. Step 11 Christian Meditation
2:30 p.m. Eucharistic Adoration

Saturday, December 28
7:00 a.m. Christian Meditation

Sunday, December 29
4:00 p.m. BEDS

Pray for our Sick

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

Wedding Banms

Georgann Grecco & Bob Mecozzi
Cristin Ganey & Bryan Strand

Pray for our Beloved Dead

John Hogan, brother of Mary Lambisis

May the joy of this holy season fill our every word and action.
Blessed are we, God’s holy ones.

Mass Intentions

Monday, December 23, St. John of Kanty
7:45 Stephen Siedlaczek; Ellen McGowan;

Tuesday, December 24
7:45 George A. Zurowski; Margaret Cochran
4:00 Matthew Flood; Jorge Paez
4:15 Dr. Norbert and Barbara Mann; John DenBesten
4:30 James Purcell; Elizabeth G. Purcell
6:00 Fr. Kieran Kemner; Alice & Al Sobey
10:30 Deceased Members Dowdle/McCarthy Families

Wednesday, December 25 The Nativity of the Lord
7:30 Lawrence Hickey; Bruno Shukis
9:00 John Barron; Maureen Terese O’Malley
10:45 Lisa Witnyski; Aniela Poslaiko
12:30 Walter & Patrick Cebula; Chester Cebula

Thursday, December 26. St. Stephen
7:45 Our Beloved Dead; Genevieve Ziembba

Friday, December 27, St. John
7:45 Lawrence Hickey; Tom Baer

Saturday, December 28, The Holy Innocents
8:00 Suzette Pertile; Susan McGuire
5:00 Matthew Flood; Jorge Paez

Sunday, December 29, The Holy Family
7:30 Barbara Mann; Jack O’Brien;
John and Elizabeth Treacy
9:00 Thanks to God for prayers answered; Patrick J. Haller
10:45 St. Thaddeus & SJC Parishioners
12:15 Nate Harris; Dorothy Wichterman
5:00 Lawrence Hickey; Jack Shellar

Italics—Living

Parish Center Holiday Office Hours
Dec. 24 9-Noon
Dec. 25 Closed
Dec. 26 9-Noon
Dec. 31 9-Noon
Jan. 1 Closed

In an emergency please call our main number
708-246-4404 and follow the prompts to leave a message for one of our priests.

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 Cauer  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
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.