Called to be Holy through Prayer, Service & Sharing
to Build Up the Kingdom of God.
Second Sunday of Ordinary Time
January 19, 2014
From the Desk of Fr. David

Dear Parishioners,

Pope Francis continues to generate some of the most positive energy the Catholic Church has been credited with for many years. I think most people know that the ‘talk on the street’ is that he came in second when Benedict XVI was elected in April of 2005, almost nine years ago now. I would like to think that he spent that time thinking seriously about what he would do if he were elected pope one day. It might explain why he seemed to ‘hit the ground running’ once he was elected and chose the name Francis.

I don’t think the labels of conservative or liberal are adequate in describing his approach and the tone of his teaching, but he is clearly saying things in a way that feels like what many people have been waiting to hear for a long time. There are many quotes worthy of reflections in his exhortation, Evangelii Gaudium, (in English, The Joy of the Gospel). I will focus on just one in this column. It can be found at No. 47 in the document.

“The Eucharist, although it is the fullness of sacramental life, is not a prize for the perfect but a powerful medicine and nourishment for the weak.”

This approach is so very different from bishops trying to prevent politicians (or pick your own favorite group to pick on) from going to communion. In Pope Francis’s approach, shouldn’t it be preferred for politicians to receive the Eucharist frequently, certainly every Sunday, if not every day? In some way the question is whether you really believe that the Eucharist has the power to move hearts and change minds. If you believe that it does, why would you want to withhold it from anyone? Do you know what the ‘proscribed penance’ is for someone who has had an abortion? 6 months of attending Sunday Mass and receiving communion. But wait; isn’t that we are all supposed to be doing anyway? Can you catch how that approach (which predates Pope Francis by generations) is so much more compassionate and pastoral than an approach that emphasizes (and misuses) power and control?

The only thing that should separate people from receiving communion, it seems to me, is belief in the Real Presence of Christ. And if you believe in the Real Presence, then you should do whatever is possible to become Catholic (or alternately Orthodox, who believe the same as we do). You need to be ‘in union’ (belief as one) in order to receive ‘com-union’ (union with One). The Pope is clearly not trying to dismiss hundreds of years of implications of the Protestant Reformation. He is trying to stop using the Eucharist as a weapon that separates and divides, judges and condemns. Did you ever think when you receive communion that you are taking powerful medicine that will cure what ails you? Or that in receiving communion, you were being transformed from weakness into strength?

Remember to pray for the men and women who are journeying to the Easter Vigil to be baptized, confirmed and receive first Eucharist. Their hunger to join us at the table grows.

Peace,
Fr. David

PS Simultaneously, the release this week of the records of 30 Chicago priests who have credible allegations of child abuse against them brings up the great shame which continually hangs over the Church. A copy of the Cardinal’s letter, Accountability and Transparency, can be found on the parish website. Pray for healing for victims, for perpetrators and for the whole Church. May the Eucharist be a powerful medicine for our sins and nourishment for our faith in the Real Presence of Christ Jesus.

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**Holy Hour for Life on Monday Night**

As a gift from God, every human life is sacred from conception to natural death. The life and dignity of every person must be respected and protected at every stage and in every condition. The right to life is the first and most fundamental principle of human rights that leads Catholics to actively work for a world of greater respect for human life and greater commitment to justice and peace.

Prayer is the foundation of all that we do in defense of human life. Say a short prayer or blessing. Meditate or ask God’s intercession. Devote some time to pray a Holy Hour for Life on **Monday, January 20th from 8-9pm** in the main church. Adoration begins at 2:30pm in the Mary Chapel and will conclude with the Holy Hour led by Deacon Tom McGorey. All ages are welcome.
Come and share a morning of discovery through scripture, singing, games and crafts with your child. Baptism marks the beginning of our lives as Christians. We celebrate this moment with water, oil, candles, and a special white garment. Our families celebrate with us. Let’s learn about Baptism together!

**Saturday, January 25th**
**10-11:30am**
**Parish Center**

Parents or grandparents should accompany the child for the activities. Wear comfortable clothing—we will be sitting on the floor.

Call the YC office at (708) 246-6760 to register by January 22nd. Registration helps us prepare craft bags. Walk-ins welcome too. This is the second of four preschool sessions for the year of Strong Catholic Parents.
Strong Catholic Parents

**Why do Catholics Make the Sign of the Cross**

The first prayer that most parents teach their children is the Sign of the Cross. This ancient gestural prayer customarily begins and ends our formal prayer, from grace before meals to the Church’s principal prayer, the Mass. According to the 1911 edition of the Catholic Encyclopedia, the ancient origin of the Sign of the Cross is unclear, but its form has evolved over time: it’s now a large gesture rather than a small one; uses three fingers instead of two, and goes from left-to-right instead of right-to-left.

What has remained largely unchanged is the meaning of the gesture. As followers of Jesus Christ, we are united to his passion death and resurrection. We take the sign of his cross on to our own bodies. This central symbol of our faith becomes the beginning point of our prayer, and its conclusion. It’s how we place boundaries in time and space that say, “Now I’m praying; this time belongs to God.” Our actual words, “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,” reflect this delineation of sacred time and space, and recognize that all we are and all we do is connected to the mystery of the Trinity.

In addition to beginning and ending prayer, the Sign of the Cross is used at other times as well, for example, when receiving a formal blessing, receiving absolution, and entering a church and blessing oneself with holy water. Generally speaking, it’s appropriate to make the Sign of the Cross any time you hear the words, “In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.”

By Rev. Larry Rice, CSP

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**Saint Anthony: Feast day January 17**

*Introduce Your Kids to Strong Catholic Role Models*

Anthony was born in Egypt in 250. At age 20, when his parents died, Anthony made sure his younger sister’s education could be completed in a community of holy women. He then sold all his possessions and left for a life of solitude in the desert. There an elderly hermit taught him about prayer and penance. For 20 years, he lived in isolation. Anthony wanted to know God deeply. He did penance by taking only bread and water once a day at sunset. The devil appeared to him in terrible shapes to tempt him. But Anthony had great confidence in God. Anthony’s unusual life did not make him harsh but radiant with God’s love and compassion.

Stories of Anthony’s holiness spread, and people came to learn from him how to become holy. Some admirers wanted to stay, so Anthony—at age 54—founded a type of monastery consisting of hermitages near one another. Anthony wrote a rule that guided the monks. Later when Anthony heard of the persecutions of the Christians, he wanted to die a martyr. At 60, he left the desert to minister to the Christians in prisons, fearlessly exposing himself to danger. He came to realize that a person can die daily for Christ by serving him in ordinary ways with great love. So he returned to the desert to his life of prayer and penance. His life of solitude was again interrupted, however, when at age 88 he had a vision in which he saw the harm Arian followers were doing to the Church by denying the divinity of Christ. Anthony left for Alexandria to preach against this heresy. At age 90, another vision sent Anthony searching the desert for Saint Paul, the first hermit. These two holy men met and spoke of the wonders of God. Anthony is said to have died peacefully in a cave at age 105.

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

**Fairness**

Two brothers live on my block—Gerald, my next-door neighbor, and Mike, who lives down the block. I like to say they run a school for fairness. As winter approaches each year, the brothers build an ice rink in Gerald’s yard. When the first cold wave arrives, they get to work, and soon the rink is ready for hockey. The two brothers teach not only the rules of the game, but also rules important in life, such as it’s more fun when the teams are evenly matched; everyone who wants to play gets to play; and if you hog the puck too often, you sit in the penalty box. Children need to learn fairness, and there’s no place like home to begin those lessons—especially if that home has an ice rink in the backyard. —Tom McGrath

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**Are your kids back at school?**

If our offspring go to college with our heavy expectations on their back, they will probably not come home. If they go to college with our confidence, not only will they come home; they will come home and change what home means.
As part of collaborative efforts across the parish that are focused on strengthening and supporting the vocation of all Catholic parents, we have developed new resources for parents bringing their infant for baptism.

**What do I need to do to have my baby baptized?**

Pre-baptism sessions are now offered for all parents whether it is your first child being baptized or a subsequent child. The sessions are offered on the fourth Sunday of each month at 1:30pm (noon during the summer). It is our expectation that both parents will attend this session. Feel free to bring your new baby and invite the godparents too. The session which runs 2 hours is designed with input from parents like you who are eager to provide an environment that will foster faith in Jesus Christ. Parents are asked to register to attend a pre-baptism session.

Simply call the parish center front office during regular business hours (9am-4pm). One of our full-time staff members will take all the necessary information and answer any questions you may have.

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**Our parish community prayerfully supports and congratulates the following family who had their child baptized last Sunday!**

**Samantha Alexis,**
daughter of
Michael and
Jamie (Ocwieja) Rossi

**Godparents:**
Christopher Ocwieja
Carlo Rossi
Elizabeth Cassaro

God of all creation, we are made in your image and are signs of your love. Bless these children who were given new life as your adopted sons and daughters through the waters of Baptism. May they grow up to know your name and give you praise. Bless the mothers and fathers of these children. Fill them with your strength so that they will be models of faith for their children, nurturing and teaching by word and example to know you and walk in your love. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.
Reflection on Prayer

“Slow me down, Lord. Slow me down.” These words stopped me in my tracks. They were exactly the prayer I needed as a busy mother of four young children. As I read the prayer, which our archbishop had included in his weekly diocesan newspaper column, I knew I needed to make it my own.

The prayer spoke to the reality of my life: “Oh, God, I know that I am going to be very busy today.” It also had a calming effect: “Help me not to be so busy that I miss the most important things.” The prayer also asked God to grant me time to see the beauty in the world, to listen to those in need, to chat with a friend, to read a few lines from a good book, to be patient and kind.

I sat and stared at the words. I knew that if I could find time in my busy life to read this prayer every day, it would make a difference. Yet the prayer itself was not a short piece that I could stick on my mirror or the refrigerator and read quickly; it wrapped around two columns. I cut it out and taped it to a sheet of pretty green paper. Then I carried it around the house, trying to find the perfect spot to hang it, a place where I would remember to pray these words on a regular basis.

Then I realized that I had only 30 minutes before I needed to wake my two little ones from their naps to go pick up my two older ones from school. I needed to use this quiet time to finish the laundry. I carried the prayer downstairs and laid it on top of my washing machine. As I folded towels, I read the words that had touched me so deeply. And in doing so, I found my answer! I quickly found some tacks and hung the prayer over my washing machine. And thus began a ritual, which I would follow for years, of praying this prayer every time I did the laundry. Eventually a collage of prayers spread out over my washer as I added other prayers I felt I needed to say.

Years later, when I took a job to help pay for high school tuitions, my husband offered to take over the laundry chores. But I refused his offer, protecting my private prayer time. I told him he could clean the bathrooms. I could hardly tape my prayers to the side of the bathtub!

After many years, the needs of our growing family demanded that we expand into a larger home. I carefully removed all my prayers from above the washing machine and packed them in a file folder. They were faded, marked with water spots and splashes of blue laundry detergent. The tape was yellowed. Holes in the corners marked where they had been tacked to the wall. Yet to me they were sacred. I was taking them to our new home. Unfortunately, my new laundry area had no convenient place to tack the prayers that had sustained me for so many years. With regret I decided a better place for the prayers would be in a binder beside the rocking chair in my bedroom. I vowed I would read them every night. But life just got busier, and more nights than not I forgot.

Many years later, while cleaning out closets, I found the prayers. As I read through them, it dawned on me that throughout my life I had kept the prayers much closer to me than I had thought. And God had answered them, too. More often than not, I had lived my life slowly, thoughtfully and joyfully. The prayers had guided me in my transition from being a stay-at-home mom to a career woman. They had reminded me of what was important.

I found time to cultivate friendships, read great books and to sit and watch many beautiful sunsets. I watched my children grow up and become blessedly happy and content in their adult lives. Without my even being aware of it, God had given me—at exactly the times I had needed it most in my life—the patience, the courage, the wisdom and the other virtues and blessings I had once prayed for while standing over my washing machine. I had stopped reading the prayers, but, by the grace of God, I never stopped trying to live them.  

Susan M. Erschen is a freelance writer in St. Louis

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Rohr Daily
Meditation

We grow spiritually much more by doing it wrong than by doing it right. That might just be the central message of how spiritual growth happens, yet nothing in us wants to believe it.

If there is such a thing as human perfection, it seems to emerge precisely from how we handle the imperfection that is everywhere, especially our own. What a clever place for God to hide holiness, so that only the humble and earnest will find it! A “perfect” person ends up being one who can consciously forgive and include imperfection rather than one who thinks he or she is totally above and beyond imperfection.

It becomes sort of obvious once you say it out loud. In fact, I would say that the demand for the perfect is the greatest enemy of the good. Perfection is a mathematical or divine concept; goodness is a beautiful human concept that includes us all. People whom we call “good people” are always people who have learned how to include contradictions and others, even at risk to their own proper self-image or their social standing. This is quite obvious in Jesus.

Let us pray that, like John, we will be able to see and recognize Christ when he makes himself present in our world and our daily lives.
Gospel Reading  *John 1:29-34*

John testifies that Jesus is the Lamb of God, God's own Son.

**Background on the Gospel Reading**

This Sunday we break from our reading of Matthew's Gospel (the primary Gospel for our current liturgical cycle, Cycle A) to read from John's Gospel. We heard Matthew’s account of Jesus’ baptism last Sunday, on the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Today, we hear John the Baptist’s testimony about Jesus as found in John's Gospel. John's Gospel differs from the other Gospels because John does not describe Jesus’ baptism by John the Baptist. Instead, John the Baptist announces that he knows that Jesus is the Son of God.

In today's reading, John the Baptist sees Jesus approaching and cries out, giving witness about who Jesus is. In John’s testimony he says that he saw the Spirit descend upon Jesus. By this sign, John the Baptist knew that Jesus was the one who is to come after him.

John the Baptist uses two titles for Jesus that are familiar to us. John calls Jesus the “Lamb of God” and the “Son of God.” By using these titles, John the Baptist identifies Jesus’ ultimate purpose: to redeem sinful humanity.

John the Baptist's testimony about Jesus clearly distinguishes John's baptism from the Baptism that Jesus will inaugurate. John baptizes with water; Jesus will baptize with the Holy Spirit. John also puts his practice of baptism in the context of Jesus' ministry. The purpose of John’s baptism was to make Jesus known to Israel.

John the Baptist's sense of purpose is clearly identified in this reading: he baptized in order to prepare for and make known the ministry of the One who was to follow. John's witness is an excellent example of what it means to be a disciple. By our Baptism, we are called to make Jesus known to all the world by our words and by the witness of our lives.

**Here am I, Lord; I come to do your will.**

**Family Connection**

The ministry of John the Baptist prepared for and pointed to the ministry of Jesus. In a similar way, our lives are to offer testimony to who we know Jesus to be for us and for the world. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world. How does the witness of our lives give testimony to the reconciling presence of Christ?

As a family, identify as many titles for Jesus as possible, such as Lamb of God, Son of God, and Prince of Peace. Talk together about what these different titles mean and what they tell you about Jesus.

Consider how John the Baptist gives testimony to who Jesus is. Talk about what people might come to know about Jesus by observing your family life. Pray together that your family life will show others that Jesus is the Son of God, the lamb who takes away the sins of the world. Pray the Lord's Prayer.

**Readings for the Week**

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<th>Monday</th>
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<tr>
<td>1 Sam 15:16-23</td>
<td>1 Sam 16:1-13</td>
<td>1 Sam 17:32-33, 37, 40-51</td>
<td>1 Sam 18:6-9; 19:1-7</td>
<td>Sam 24:3-21</td>
<td>Acts 22:3-16 or Acts 9:1-22</td>
<td>Isa 8:23–9:3</td>
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<td>Ps 50:8-9, 16bc-17, 21 and 23</td>
<td>Ps 89:20, 21-22, 27-28</td>
<td>Ps 144:1b, 2, 9-10</td>
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<td>Ps 57-2, 3-4, 6 and 11</td>
<td>Ps 117:1bc, 2</td>
<td>Ps 27:1, 4, 13-14</td>
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What can you do for your marriage in 2014?
Try making a New Year’s resolution to improve your relationship. Here are some ideas to get started:

- Schedule several “Date Nights” for the first few months of the year.
- Discuss how to improve your communication skills.
- Draw up your 2014 household budget together. Discuss spending priorities, including charitable donations.
- Take turns selecting a favorite Scripture passage to pray about each week. Share your reflections with each other.
- Resolve to read at least one book on how to strengthen your relationship.
- While it’s important to strengthen the marriage relationship, marriage is also a sacrament of service. It’s true that marriage benefits the couple, but it’s also good for their family, community, and the Church. Resolve to do at least one service activity this year, as a family or a couple. Perhaps it’s bringing canned goods to the local food pantry on a regular basis or helping out with a parish fundraising project.

We tend to relegate play to the realms of childhood or those with too much time on their hands. Nothing could be further from the truth. To play is to explore, tease and challenge our perceived limits. To play is to access energy and take intentional risks. To play is to remember that participation trumps production. To play is to remember that laughter is healing and courageous and liberating. To play is to remember that laughter is healing and courageous and liberating. To play is to enter into Holy Communion with Jesus – Player Par Excellence. So with respect to your marriage; your health, body, sexuality; your job, vocation or lack of employment; with respect to your divorce; your retirement, your parents, siblings, children; your soul, your church, your world, your God…

OH COME ON! – COME OUT AND PLAY! (The Spirituality of Fun)
Saturday, February 8: 9:00 am – 12:00 pm
Facilitator: Terry Nelson Johnson at The Well in LaGrange Park

Dr. Terry Nelson-Johnson Street Theologian, Educator, Storyteller
Author and leader of the acclaimed Beloved retreat, Dr. Nelson-Johnson works with parents, teachers, pastoral staff and members of faith communities across the country to design and conduct formation programs that encourage, affirm, and inspire. A prolific writer, his reflections and essays have been widely published in local and national publications. Dr. Nelson-Johnson served on the faculty of the Loyola Academy Jesuit High School for eighteen years and is Founder and Executive Director of Soul-Play, LLC, an experiential, theological, educational enterprise serving congregations, families, schools, and adult retreats. He is Resident Theologian and Animator of Faith at Old St. Patrick’s Church, holds a master’s degree from the Institute of Pastoral Studies, Loyola University; and a Doctorate of Ministry from the University of St. Mary of the Lake. He and his wife Holly are the parents of two children, Ian and Clare.

The $30 fee is waived for parishioners of St. John of the Cross Parish as we are co-sponsoring this program. Please call the parish center to register.

Studying the Psalms: Psalms I on Mondays at 1 pm beginning February 3rd
To study Psalms is to study prayer, ultimately to enter into prayer. Through video and discussion our study will challenge participants to reflect on their own prayer and life experiences. Psalms I focuses on a selection of twenty-eight psalms divided into three categories: psalms of descriptive praise, psalms of trust or confidence, and wisdom psalms. Psalms of descriptive praise, also known as hymns, praise God for his ongoing, regular care of the world and humanity. Psalms of trust or confidence reinforce the belief that the God who made and loves us will protect us in difficult situations. Wisdom psalms are an acknowledgment of God’s justice in the right ordering of human affairs.

To register for this study please drop off an envelope to the parish center with your contact information on the front, including email and phone, and a check for $15 to cover study materials by January 28th. Contact Roberta Gilbert at bertageorge@gmail.com with any questions.

The Well Spirituality Center is a sponsored ministry of the Congregation of St. Joseph
1515 West Ogden Avenue • La Grange Park, IL 60526-1721 • Phone: 708-482-5048
E-Mail Address: thewell@csjoseph.org
LATIN AMERICA SPECIAL COLLECTION TODAY  

January 19, 2014

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Catholics throughout Latin America and the Caribbean are challenged daily when it comes to nurturing and sharing their faith. Violence, gang activity, and isolation are some of the obstacles which have to be overcome in order for the ministries of the Gospel to succeed in sharing the faith.

In the Diocese of Loja, Ecuador, a three-day formation program was conducted for catechists, many of whom work in remote areas. More than 2500 catechists participated in training sessions for rural ministry, youth enrichment, and bible instruction. Many of the participants felt that the experience was informative, enriching, and fortified their spirit as they returned to their parishes.

In twenty-two countries of South America and the Caribbean, funds from the *Collection for the Church in Latin America* provide the assistance that individual parishes need to sustain and enrich the faith of their parishioners. Additionally, your generous support will assist in the formation of seminarians, deacons, religious sisters and brothers, and lay ministers of the Gospel.

I am grateful for your support of your local parish, the Archdiocese of Chicago, and the Universal Church. May God continue to bless you and your loved ones in this New Year. You are in my prayers; please keep me in yours.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Francis Cardinal George, O.M.I.

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**Parish News**

**SJC Trivia Night III**

Saturday, January 25th, School Gym

Doors open at 6:00 p.m. Games begin at 6:45 p.m.

All are invited to come to Trivia Night! It’s fun and it’s a great way to meet fellow parishioners. For instructions, see the first page of our website and follow the link. Return the form below with your check(s) to SJC Parish Center attention Men’s Club. $200 per table.

Table Captain:

Team Name:

Team Member Names:

1. 
2. 
3. 
4. 
5. 
6. 
7. 
8. 
9.

**SJC Needs Your Help!** We are looking for 2 couples to lead freshmen home groups on Sunday evenings. Please consider this important volunteer opportunity now. Our program cannot begin until we find leaders. Call Katie for more details.

Who is the best type of adult to be a home group leader for our freshmen? Someone who cares about their own faith, likes teenagers, and is willing to listen.

A lot of people may think, why aren’t the parents of our freshmen stepping up to do this? Because we don’t want them! We want adults who are not connected to the freshmen class who can be additional faith mentors for our teens. Many times a couple with younger children joins our ministry and gains the fabulous benefits of learning about the wonderful world of teenagers while providing teen mentors to their own children. Many times empty-nesters / seniors who have survived raising kids, enjoyed the teen years, and believe in the gift of building relationships and being a part of a community of believers. We have also paired two singles to create a partnership in service to and with our teens.

This ministry makes a difference by connecting our teens to prayer, our larger Church, service, learning how to make their faith their own and building relationships with faith mentors.
Our Parish Year in Review in Pictures can be found in Dec. 29 and Jan. 5 and 12 bulletins and will continue each week! Go to our parish website to see all the pictures.
When you rise in the morning, give thanks for the light, for your life, for your strength. Give thanks for your food and for the joy of living. If you see no reason to give thanks, the fault lies in yourself. - Tecumseh

School News
January 20, No School, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
January 21, School Advisory Board Meeting, 7:00 p.m.

We Need Your Help to Build a Playground

“Buy A Brick Program”
If you are interested in having your family’s name or a message represented on the new SJC playground, please consider our “Buy A Brick Program.” Each brick costs $250.00. Other commemoration ideas could include bricks in honor of family members, teachers, mentors, administrators, staff members, coaches, scout troops or friends.
Your brick will become a permanent part of the playground that will be enjoyed by many children for years to come.

Brick Order Form
Please fill out this form and return it with your check payable to: St John of the Cross Parish School 708 51st Street, Western Springs, IL 60558
You may also purchase your brick online at: www.stjohnofthecross.org/school
Name___________________________________________________
Address: ________________________________________________
City, State, Zip: ___________________________________________
Email: __________________________________________________

Each brick paver allows up to three lines of engraving and 13 characters/spaces per line. Please include your message in the grid below. You will receive a confirmation receipt once we have processed your payment.

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Mom’s Club
Attention mother’s 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 in the parish center. Contacts: Ellen Twomey and Jen Van Wyck
Friday, Jan. 24, 9:30-11:00 a.m.
Thursday, Jan. 30, 9:30-11 a.m.

Exploring Priesthood Weekend: January 24-26
Exploring Priesthood Weekend is a retreat designed to help men who, college age and older, to discern God’s call to priesthood through prayer, discussion and group interaction. For more information contact: Rev. Francis Bitterman at 312-534-8298 or fbitterman@archchicago.org

The Power of Prayer
Have you ever asked your friends to “Pray for me…..”
We’ve come up with a simple way to pray for each other. Go to our parish website. Click on Praying. Add your Prayer Intention. For privacy, do not include names. All intentions are reviewed before they are posted. When you have a free moment to pray, go to the site and pray for fellow parishioners.
Souper Bowl of Caring

More than 22 years ago, a Super Bowl Sunday prayer inspired a group of young people to do something more than celebrate a football game. They created Souper Bowl of Caring, and have rallied youth across the US to raise over $90 million for people in need. On Sunday February 2nd, millions of Americans will tune in to the Super Bowl football game. There will be parties with abundant food, friendship and fellowship. At the same time, there will be people worrying about staying warm, finding shelter and a warm meal.

Please join the young people of our Youth Catechesis Program as they demonstrate God’s love by caring for their neighbors through the Souper Bowl of Caring. It is a simple, yet significant act. Drop off a can of soup, non-perishable food items or a monetary donation at the signs: "SOUPER BOWL OF CARING" at YC classes and

Our youth are developing hearts for giving that can last a lifetime. Please support their efforts. Everything collected will be donated to area food pantries chosen by YC Council, Please give generously.

Crossroads Family News

Crossroads Leaders Needed

You can make a difference in the life of a teenager. Our Crossroads Youth Ministry is in need of two couples to be Home Group leaders for Freshman. Learn more on our website or contact Katie Hayes at 246-4404 or by email at khayes@stjohnofthecross.org today!

On Jan. 21, 6:30pm, in the Parish Center Teen Space there will be an informational meeting about the Peacebuilders Initiative. This foundation was the vision of Cardinal Bernardin and fosters the values of leadership and understanding. Interested current Sophomore are encourage to join us to find out about this great year long leadership and service opportunity. For more information visit them online at www.peacebuildersinicative.org

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Jan 21 Peacebuilders info meeting
Jan 26 Home Group meetings

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

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

A simple prayer: "Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those who are without a bowl of soup to eat" is inspiring a youth-led movement to help hungry and hurting people around the world.

Join YC students during Super Bowl by placing an “0” in Super for Souper Bowl Sunday
The 13th Annual d’Vine Affair is an elegant wine tasting which will be held on Sunday, January 26, 2014 at the Union League Club of Chicago. More than 250 wines will be available to taste from over 90 vintners from around the world, along with gourmet hors d’oeuvres and desserts as guests mingle throughout the 5th and 6th floors of the exclusive Union League Club. Reservations begin at $125 for the wine tasting and $80 per person for the three course dinner at the Union League Club. Sponsorship opportunities are also available. Proceeds from the d’Vine Affair benefit Catholic Charities’ Self-Sufficiency Programs in Cook and Lake Counties. For further information or to purchase tickets, please contact Dave Gardner, Event Manager, at 312-655-7907 or dgardner@catholiccharities.net or visit www.catholiccharities.net/dvine

Poverty Awareness Month

Does poverty really exist in the United States? Yes, in fact, 14.5% of American households were food insecure in 2012, meaning they had trouble providing enough food for their family due to a lack of resources. Help empower low-income persons during Poverty Awareness Month by taking part in the Catholic Campaign for Human Development (CCHD). CCHD funds organizations like Interfaith Leadership Project who call communities of faith to work together in order to create positive change in Berwyn and Cicero by forming a united voice through organizing people, promoting civic engagement and developing leadership for social justice. To contribute, meet our grantees and hear their stories, participate in the Youth Art Contest and more, visit chicagopeaceandjustice.org/poverty. Luke 3:11 – “Whoever has two cloaks should share with the person who has none. And whoever has food should do likewise.”

Save the date – Sunday, February 23rd: Plan, now, to celebrate a Black History Liturgy on Sunday, February 23, at the parish with which we first established a sharing relationship, St. Thaddeus. In addition to mass, the celebration will include a tribute to a special person in the African American Community, the Praise dancers, as well as, a wonderful meal and fellowship.
In his deeply insightful book, Violence Unveiled, Gil Bailie takes us through a remarkable section of the diaries of Captain James Cook, the famed British scientist and explorer. Visiting the Island of Tahiti in 1777, Cook was taken one day by a local tribal Chief to witness a ritual where a man was sacrificed as an offering to the god, Eatooa. The man was being sacrificed in hope that this particular god would give the tribe some assistance in an upcoming war. Cook, though friendly to the local peoples, could not conceal his detestation for what he considered both a barbaric and superstitious act. In a conversation with the tribal Chief afterwards, Cook told the Chief, through an interpreter, that in England they would hang a man for doing that.

Cook found the idea of killing someone to appease God to be abhorrent. Yet, as the great irony inside this story makes clear, we have never stopped killing people in God's name, we have only changed the nomenclature. They called it human sacrifice; we call it capital punishment. In either case, someone dies because we feel that God needs and wants this death for some divine reason.

All peoples, right up to this day, have always done violence in God's name, believing that the violence is not only justified but is in fact necessitated by God. God, it is argued, needs us to do this violence in his name. For this reason, ancient cultures often offered human sacrifice. During the medieval ages, as a Christian church, we had the Inquisition believing that God wanted us to kill people who were in doctrinal error. Today we see a new form of this in a number of extremist Islamic groups who believe that God wants infidels of all kinds put to death for the sake of religious purity.

We have forever justified killing and other forms of violence in God's name, often pointing to texts in scripture, which seemingly, show God as ordering violence in his name. But, in this, we have been wrong. Despite a number of texts which, on the surface, seem to indicate that God is ordering violence (but which are really archetypal and anthropomorphic in nature and do not justify that interpretation) we see, if we read the bible from beginning to end, a progressive revelation (or at least a progressive realization on our part) of the non-violence of God, a revelation that ends in Jesus who reveals a God of radical non-violence. Our faulty idea of the God of the Old Testament who seemingly orders the extermination of whole peoples is indeed primitive and superstitious when placed beside the concept of the Father of Jesus who sends his son into the world as a helpless infant and then lets him die helpless before a mocking crowd. The God whom Jesus reveals is devoid of all violence and asks that we no longer do violence in God's name.

To offer just one example: In John's Gospel (8, 2-11), we see the story of the woman who has been caught in adultery. As John tells the story: A crowd of pious persons bring her to Jesus and tell him that they have caught her in the very act of committing adultery and that Moses (their primary interpreter of God's will) has ordered that, for this offense, she needs to be put to death. Jesus, for his part, says nothing, instead he bends down and begins to write on the ground with his finger. Then, looking up, he tells them: "Let the person among you without sin cast the first stone!" Then he bends down and writes for a second time with his finger. Unbelievably they get the message and lay down their stones and go away.

What has happened here? The key for interpretation is Jesus' gesture of writing on the ground with his finger. Who writes with his finger? Who writes twice? God does. And what God writes with his finger and writes twice are the Ten Commandments, and he had to write them twice because Moses "broke" them the first time. Coming down the mountain, carrying the tablets of the commandments, Moses caught the people in the very act of committing idolatry and he, gripped in a fever of religious and moral fervor, broke the tables of stone on the golden calf and on peoples' heads. Moses was the first person to break the commandments and he broke them physically, thinking violence needed to be done for God's cause. Then, having broken them, he needed to go up the mountain a second time and have them rewritten by God; but before rewriting them, God gave Moses a stern message: Don't stone people with the Commandments! Don't do violence in my name! The people who wanted to stone the woman caught in adultery understood Jesus' gesture. Their divine interpreter, Moses, had it wrong.

Too often, though, we are still, in a variety of forms, stoning people with the Commandments, falsely believing that God wants this violence.

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
This Week at SJC
Monday, January 20
10:30 a.m. Step 11 Christian Meditation
2:30 p.m. Eucharistic Adoration
2:30 p.m. Spiritual Journaling
Tuesday, January 21
9:05 a.m. Rosary
9:30 a.m. Focus on Sunday Scriptures Group
7:00 p.m. School Board
7:00 p.m. RCIA
Wednesday, January 22
9:30 a.m. Bible Study
2:00 p.m. Christian Meditation
7:00 p.m. Women’s Club Cooking Night
7:00 p.m. Crossroads Leader’s Meeting
7:30 p.m. Christian Meditation
Thursday, January 23
9:00 a.m. Flourish
6:30 p.m. YC Catechist Meeting
Friday, January 24
9:30 a.m. Mom’s Club
Saturday, January 25
7:00 a.m. Christian Meditation
10:00 a.m. Family Faith Program for 2-5 yrs. old
11:00 a.m. Promise Marriage Prep
5:00 p.m. Trivia Night
Sunday, January 26
Catholic Schools Week Hospitality after the 9am Masses
1:30 p.m. Baptism Prep Session

Pray for our Sick

Frank Accardi    Mitch Allen    Paul Cervony    William Dwyer    Melissa Morrissey    Eldredge    Mark Giangrande    Karen Hult    Barbara Jacob    Dee Kennedy    Rosie King    Lee Lepinske
Fr. William    Mannion    Mary Ann    Matsyik    Vickie McNally    Jay Meehan    John Munch    Nancy Olin    Susan Olson    Marion Pascale    Bob Pietras    James Reilly

Eternal Rest Grant unto These, O Lord

Charles Sugrue, husband of Mary, father of Mary, Patrick, Michael, Frances, Suzanne Al-Zyoud, Kerry LaScala
Genevieve Janis, mother of Claudine Snow, grandmother of Dale and Letitia
Brian Konrad, brother of Karen Gordon
Geraldine Harrington, mother of Felicia Graef, grandmother of Kirstin, Christopher & Timothy
Eileen Carlson, wife of Edward, mother of Mary & Peggy
Kelly Kennedy, mother of Amie
Jack Creagan, nephew of Roe Lawinger
Norbert Zimmer, grandfather of Yvonne Murphy
Nancy Leslie, mother of Brian, Susan and Debbie
James Ryan, father of Mary Dumas, grandfather of Adrian & Rachel

Mass Intentions
Monday, January 20, St. Fabian
7:45 George Zurowski; Matthew Flood & Jorge Paez
Tuesday, January 21, St. Agnes
7:45 Jerry Albertson; Joseph Maleszka
Wednesday, January 22, Day of Prayer for the Legal Protection of Unborn Children
7:45 Our Beloved Dead; John Koczwara
Thursday, January 23, St. Vincent
7:45 Margaret Albertson; Bob Cosgrove
Friday, January 24, St. Francis de Sales
7:45 Frances Grady; Don Spiering
Saturday, January 25, The Conversion of St. Paul the Apostle
8:00 Meghan Hope Pacyna; Melissa Morrissey Eldredge
5:00 Liz Wojtwicz; Lukowsky/Den Besten Family
Sunday, January 26, Third Sunday in Ordinary Time
7:30 Maria Terdich; Christian Bylund
9:00 Kevin Ryan; Adele Vizgirda
10:45 Willis McKinney; Joseph Pieroth
12:15 Dwyer and Millette Families; Thomas Stack, Sr.
5:00 Joseph Munch; Bob McNulty

Trying to get in touch with us? More info is on our website: www.stjohnofthecross.org
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Rev. Joseph F. McDonnell    Associate Pastor  fngwila@stjohnofthecross.org
Rev.  Filbert F. Nwrigala    Deacon  jclauer@stjohnofthecross.org
Deacon John Schopp    Deacon  john.schopp@newhemispheres.com
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Elizabeth Russell-Jones    Welcome  erussell-jones@stjohnofthecross.org
Saint John of the Cross Teacher Recognition Trust

Winter Gala

Saturday, February 1, 2014
at Butterfield Country Club

Live music performed by Spoken Four
Dinner and drinks • Live and Silent auctions

“No Giveback” Raffle

Two grand cash prizes:
$15,000 and $5,000

Raffle ticket price:
$50 each - or - Six for $200 (receive two free)

Only 2,500 Raffle tickets will be sold.
(Winning tickets will be drawn at the party. Winner need not be present)

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Register for the Winter Gala online at:
www.clickbidonline.com/winter/tickets

For raffle tickets, contact Jackie McDonnell:
JMcDonnell51@hotmail.com or 708.784.9561.