Called to be Holy through Prayer, Service & Sharing to Build Up the Kingdom of God. Second Sunday of Lent March 16, 2014
OUTLINE FOR CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS

PERIOD OF EVANGELIZATION AND PRECATECHUMENATE
This is a time for inquiry and introduction of the Gospel values, an opportunity for the beginnings of faith.

FIRST STEP: ACCEPTANCE INTO THE ORDER OF CATECHUMENS
This liturgical rite marks the beginning of the catechumenate as the candidates express and the Church accepts their intention to respond to God’s call to follow the way of Christ.

PERIOD OF CATECHUMENATE
This is the time for the nurturing and growth of the catechumens’ faith and conversion to God.

SECOND STEP: ELECTION OR ENROLLMENT OF NAMES
March 16th 10:45 Rite of Sending/Election
At the 10:45 Mass today following the homily, both our catechumens and candidates will reaffirm their intention to take part in the sacraments at the Easter Vigil by signing the Book of the Elect. It is an opportunity for our parish community to express its approval of their readiness and to send them forth to the celebration of election at the cathedral, assured of our prayers and support. Later in the day they will travel to Holy Name Cathedral with their families, sponsors, and the parish RCIA team where they will be presented to the bishop and celebrate their recognition as elect. We pray for them and for ourselves that we may be renewed by one another’s efforts and together come to share the joys of Easter.

PERIOD OF PURIFICATION AND ENLIGHTENMENT
This is the time immediately preceding the elects’ initiation, usually during Lent; it is a time of reflection, intensely centered on conversion, marked by celebration of the scrutinies and presentations of the preparation rites on Holy Saturday.
Saturday, March 22nd 5:00 PM 1st Scrutiny
Sunday, March 30th 9:00 AM 2nd Scrutiny
Sunday, April 6, 10:45 AM 3rd Scrutiny

THIRD STEP: CELEBRATION OF THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION
This is the liturgical rite, integrated into the Easter Vigil, by which the elect are initiated through baptism, confirmation and the Eucharist.
Saturday, April 19 7:30pm

PERIOD OF POSTBAPTISMAL CATECHESIS OR MYSTAGOGY
This is the time, usually the Easter season, following the celebration of initiation, during which the newly initiated experience being fully a part of the Christian community by means of pertinent catechesis and by participation with all the faithful in the Sunday Eucharistic celebration.

Your ways, O Lord, are love and truth to those who keep your covenant.

We ask you to take a prayer card with the name of one of our elect from the baskets at the exits of church and pray for them as they journey to the glory of Easter.

FATHER OF LOVE AND POWER, GUIDE OUR ELECT:
STRENGTHEN THEM IN THEIR VOCATION,
BUILD THEM INTO THE KINGDOM OF YOUR SON, AND
SEAL THEM WITH THE SPIRIT OF YOUR PROMISE.
AMEN.

Christie Kenny
Christopher Ing

Bob Peterson
Brett Padgett
Keith Knight

Christopher Walters
Katie Broderick

www.stjohnofthecross.org 3-16-14 page 2 praying ~ serving ~ sharing
Reflecting on Living the Gospel

What high mountain must we climb for us to witness Jesus’ transfiguration? We must climb the high mountain of listening to Jesus, the high mountain of being pleasing to him, the high mountain of opening ourselves to the touch of his Presence. When we climb this mountain, we forsake our own agenda of pitching the tent of satisfaction with our own works to enter into the glory of the Life Jesus offers us. The mountain is steep; the climb is ours to choose; the vision at the top is divine—“white as light,” shining “like the sun.” Can we see him?

Temptation can be disheartening and Lent can be a dauntingly long time. It is the touch of Christ that allays our fears and encourages us to pursue the promised blessings. It is the touch of Christ that assures us we can live the blessing given to us. Here is the human condition: the pervasiveness of temptation contrasts with the vision of glory. Here is the divine invitation: listen to Jesus and have our fears and temptations dispelled so we, too, can share in Jesus’ glory. Temptation and Christ’s glory are both part of our everyday living. The issue with living the Gospel is always to take the “theory” and put it into practice. Peter responded “practically” to Jesus’ transfiguration by wanting to “make three tents,” make the experience of glory permanent.

Gospel living is about being “touched” by Jesus so that the fleeting moments of glory are made permanent in bettering the lives of others. We don’t build tents; we feed the hungry, clothe the naked, touch the downhearted, visit the lonely, encourage the discouraged, etc. In this way Christ touches others through us. This kind of living is eminently practical and requires a real and constant listening to Jesus, pleasing him, and basking in his abiding Presence.

Closing Prayers:

May we listen intently to Jesus and come to share in his glory. May we be touched by God’s Presence and be changed by the light of his glory. Our Father.

For Reflection:

• I listen to Jesus best when I . . . I please him most when I . . .
• I experience his Presence when . . .
• What inspires and strengthens me to climb higher mountains seeking a share in Jesus’ glory is . . .

People receive food rations at a community soup kitchen in a Buenos Aires, Argentina, Feb. 13. Pope Francis says the best way of fasting is caring for the needy. (CNS photo|Enrique Marcarian, Reuters)
How Liturgy Can Transform Us

In this Sunday’s Gospel the story is recounted of Jesus undergoing a glorious transfiguring change in his physical appearance. During this Lenten time, Jesus demands nothing less of us, in fact he is demanding even more, for Jesus desires that we undergo a spiritual transfiguration. That is a pretty big demand for people who are still wiping the ashes from their foreheads. The liturgy is a powerful source for personal transfiguration, with many interconnected vignettes used by God to change us into people who are more Christlike.

- The collect (opening prayer) for this weekend clearly expresses God’s intent for us: “…grant that we, beholding his (Jesus’) majesty, may be strengthened to follow him and be changed into his likeness…”
- Liturgy transforms us by bringing us together. We may come to liturgy alone, but within the celebration we become the one body of Christ. Liturgy is not an individualistic “me and Jesus” event. That is why much of our liturgical ritual and prayer is “standardized” by the Roman Missal. The liturgy is universal, for all people in all times. If one is at Sunday Mass at the cathedral in Chicago or the tiniest Catholic church in the foothills of Appalachia, we pray as one and the attitude and disposition of the assembly should be such that releases all racial, cultural, social and indeed all human differences to God’s saving grace.
- Liturgy transforms us through music. Music with integrity can inspire wonder and create space where our soul can encounter goodness, truth and beauty. The music of the liturgy can quiet us, humble us, emotionally move us and immerse us in the divine love of God.
- Liturgy transforms us through the Scriptures. In the Liturgy of the Word, the Holy Spirit “recalls” to the assembly all that Christ has done for us. The word desires to transform us so that which we hear, we can also proclaim and live out.
- Liturgy transforms us through the Eucharist. As we consume Christ and allow our very lives to be consumed in him, grace is fostered and we are challenged to become the mystery we have received. In Communion, we encounter God and we encounter one another as the body of Christ joined to the communion of saints.

Liturgy transforms us but only with our consent. God with great mercy and generosity pours grace upon us, but unless we are open in mind, body and soul to receive that grace, transfiguration cannot occur. Throughout the liturgy, God asks us again and again, “Are you sure? Do you really want to be transformed?” and we respond “Yes I do” with our “Amen.”

Lent time is on the move. We must not let the days slip past us. May we come to liturgy this weekend desiring the radical transfiguration we are being invited to share with Jesus. Like the apostles, may we know in our heart, “Lord it is good for us to be here.”

By Linda Zahorik, pastoral associate at Most Blessed Sacrament Parish, Oshkosh.

Richard Rohr
Meditation

You need a very strong container in the first half of life to hold the contents and contradictions that arrive later in life. You ironically need a very strong ego structure to let go of your ego. You need to struggle with the rules more than a bit before you throw them out. You only internalize values by butting up against other values for a while. All of this builds the strong self that can positively obey Jesus—and healthily “die to itself.” In fact, far too many have lived very warped and defeated lives because they tried to give up a self that was not yet there.

The first-half-of-life container is constructed through impulse controls, traditions, group symbols, family loyalties, basic respect for authority; civil and church laws, and a sense of the goodness, value, and special importance of your country, ethnicity, and religion (as for example, the Jews’ sense of their “chosenness” by Yahweh).

To quote Archimedes, you must have both “a lever and a place to stand” before you can move the world. The educated and sophisticated Western person today has many levers, but almost no solid place on which to stand; most of our people have very weak identities, and then terribly overstated identities. I am not sure which is worse. This tells me we are not doing the first-half-of-life task very well. How can we possibly get to the second?

Gateway to Silence:
Receive and reflect
This Lent, we are invited not so much to think of what we will “give up,” but more, to think about how we will enhance, renew and develop our relationship with Jesus. As a parish community, we will participate in CRS Rice Bowl as a way to encounter Jesus through others, especially the most vulnerable around the world. Expressing love for those in need expands our hearts in hope.

Along with 13,000 faith communities across the U.S., our parish will participate in Catholic Relief Services’ Lenten Rice Bowl. This program invites us to pray with our families and fast in solidarity with those who are hungry, and at the same time learn about the people who will receive help from our sacrificial contributions.

At Masses last weekend families received a cardboard Rice Bowl to fill with spare change and a Lenten Calendar with prayers, recipes and reflections. If you did not receive your Rice Bowl, we will have more this weekend at the exits of church.

Then each week in Lent we will learn about hunger and poverty in a different country. In addition, children in our parish school and YC program will receive Rice Bowls in their classrooms and will participate in special activities to help them deepen their awareness of needs throughout the world.

Your Rice Bowl can be brought to Mass on Palm Sunday, April 13th or dropped off at the Parish Center during Holy Week.

“Where do I find hope? In the flesh of Jesus who suffers and in true poverty. There is a connection between the two.”
～ Pope Francis

This week, CRS Rice Bowl invites us to enter into solidarity with the people of Guatemala. We are encouraged to reflect on the Catholic social teaching principle, Rights and Responsibilities, and are reminded that as Christians we are called to uphold and protect the basic rights of others. Let us pray this week for our brothers and sisters in Guatemala and all around the world, that we may come to know and protect the rights of all people.

Thirteen-year-old Yuvi wants to become a nurse or psychologist one day. Thanks to CRS’ “My Rights Matter” program, she is able to pursue her goals and focus on her studies first, and work second.

**CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING FOCUS:** Rights and Responsibilities

Every person has basic rights and responsibilities that flow directly from our human dignity. These rights are numerous and include the right to life, food, shelter, education and employment, as well as political and cultural rights. Along with these rights are duties and responsibilities to respect the rights of others and to work for the common good of all.

**YUVI’S STORY**

For many children in Guatemala, working to earn money is considered more important than homework, sports and time with friends. Many parents are forced to choose between sending their children to school and giving them enough food to eat. Some children must even work dangerous jobs to help their families earn enough money.

Thirteen-year-old Yuvilis “Yuvi” Pu found herself working in a clothing making business to help her parents feed their family of seven. Each day after school, she came home to a long list of chores and often spent hours delivering t-shirts throughout her village. So many chores meant Yuvi had no time or energy to study or do homework, activities she knew she needed to do to reach her dream of one day becoming a doctor.

Catholic Relief Services is working to keep kids like Yuvi in school through the My Rights Matter program. CRS’ goal is to teach families the importance of education and the dangers of sending children to work. CRS visits families at home, coordinates community events and even shares information through commercials on the radio.

www.stjohnofthecross.org
Our SJC Lenten Experience at a Glance…

**Word on Fire’s New Evangelization:** Sessions meet on Tuesdays at 1pm and 7pm and Saturdays at 9am in the parish center. Sessions last 90 minutes and include prayer, a dvd presentation and small group discussion. Call the parish center for registration information.

**Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowls:** Weekly interactive website and bulletin information help us to give alms and pray for the poor around the world.

**Return Your Rice Bowl** on Palm Sunday, April 13 at any Mass or to the parish center.

**Stations of the Cross:** Each Friday at 6pm in church. Families welcome!

**Pray the Rosary:** Before and after daily Mass and on Tuesdays at 9:05am in the Mary Chapel

**Lenten Evening of Meditation:** Friday, March 28th at 7pm, Hospitality at 6:45pm

**Program at The Well:** Saturday, March 29 9-3pm. See page 7 of today’s bulletin for details.

**Eucharistic Adoration:** Mondays 2:30-9pm in the Mary Chapel

**RCIA Rite of Sending/Election:** Today at the 10:45 a.m. Mass Sunday, March 16
- 1st Scrutiny: 5:00 p.m. Mass, Saturday, March 22
- 2nd Scrutiny: 9:00 a.m. Mass, Sunday, March 30
- 3rd Scrutiny: 10:45 a.m. Mass, Sunday April 6

**Parish Lenten Reconciliation Service:** Tuesday, April 8 at 7:00 pm (Perfect for families!)

**Saturday Morning Confessions** after the 8am Mass

Giving up something for Lent, eating fish on Fridays and fasting from meat, almsgiving and penance throughout the forty days of Lent—these are some of the practices for which Catholics are known. But why do we as Catholics do this? Because through these commitments—known as Lenten practices or disciplines, the Catholic Church calls us each year to renew our discipleship in Christ: to pray, give alms, and fast.

**Pray**

We know the importance of prayer in our lives—as individuals, as families, and as a community. Prayer is especially important during Lent. The Lenten season is a time for reflection, evaluation, and repentance. Lent asks us: What needs changing? Lent calls us to a personal conversion and renewal—to a recommitted life in Christ so that we might not just celebrate Easter forty days later, but also feel the risen Christ alive in us and in the world. This means prayer. During Lent we set aside time for prayer that is reflective in nature and reveals places where we have failed to open ourselves to God.

**Give**

Every day we witness situations of injustice, violence, and hatred. Television and the Internet bring these into our living rooms, but we also observe and live them in our own cities and homes. The Church calls us during Lent to be especially conscious of the needs of others and to act accordingly. Giving materially to another is an act of Christian charity known as “almsgiving.” During Lent, the Church also calls us to first convert ourselves and then to transform the world for justice, so that we might serve the Kingdom which Jesus lived and preached.

**Sacrifice**

Fasting and abstinence are not sacrifices for the sake of pain or vain discomfort. Sacrifice for the sake of sacrifice is not a Christian virtue. We are asked by the Catholic Church to fast on (Ash Wednesday and) Good Friday and not to eat meat on the Fridays of Lent. Feeling an empty stomach, or fighting the urge to have that juicy steak or candy bar does more than just remind us that for some people an empty stomach is their daily bread. Fasting and abstinence help us to ask ourselves the question: What sustains me and gives me life? What nourishes me on my journey of life? We will find the answer, not in the steak or the candy bar, but at the end of these forty days of Lent—in the Resurrection of Jesus. We fast and abstain because, when we do, we are reminded of who we are—followers of the Risen Christ.

As Catholics, we joyfully engage in Lenten disciplines because we are disciples (and yes, both words have the same root). We pray, give (almsgiving), and sacrifice (fast) because we follow Christ who loved us so much that gave his own life so that we might share in Eternal Life.

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Living Gospel Nonviolence in a World of Violence

Saturday, March 29: 9:00 am - 3:00 pm
Facilitator: John Dear

In our world of war, poverty, nuclear weapons, and catastrophic climate change, we are overwhelmed by violence on all sides. It’s like a disease that has afflicted each one of us, and now threatens the whole human race and the earth itself. What do we do?

Longtime activist, author, and Nobel Peace Prize nominee, John Dear, proposes that we endeavor to become people of nonviolence who pursue the Gospel vision of nonviolence and work for a new world of nonviolence.

John will explore the nonviolent Jesus, how we can be more nonviolent to ourselves and to all those we meet, and how we can join the growing global grassroots movement of nonviolence. Together we will share our peacemaking journeys, pray, reflect, build community, and explore the life of Gospel nonviolence.

COST: FREE to St. John of the Cross Parishioners

This program is co-sponsored with two neighboring parishes: St. John of the Cross and St. Francis Xavier.
Family Connection

As a family, talk about some of your times of highs and lows. How have you been able to use the good times and experiences to sustain you in the difficult ones? Jesus’ Transfiguration may have been an event from which Peter, James, and John drew courage when they faced the difficult events of Jesus’ Passion. Read together today’s Gospel, Matthew 17:1-9. Pray a prayer of thanksgiving for the good times and experiences that your family has had together. Pray that your family will use these experiences to sustain you during times of difficulty. Pray today’s psalm, Psalm 33.

Second Sunday of Lent

Theme: Lent calls us to transform our lives.

Breaking Open the Word

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: Question for Kids: Jesus invites you to be close to him, to see him with clear eyes. What is Jesus like as a friend?

Question for Youth: What do you most want God to help you with?

Question for Adults

Sometimes we can see Christ with clear eyes, as the disciples did on that mountain. Share about such a time in your own life.

Lent provides us with an opportunity to change our hearts. Encourage family members to spend quiet time listening to God this week. Reflect on the question: Are we living as God intended, or do we need to change some things in our life? Take time later in the week to discuss the changes family members need to make in their lives.

Stations of the Cross for Children

Read and pray the stations very slowly with your kids. Help them to imagine the scene in Jerusalem as Jesus walked his Way of the Cross.

Make a visit to church and pray at each station. You can also bring your family to our parish stations on Fridays at 6pm.

Here are some resources for you as you pray the stations with your family:


Marriage is a journey of faith

"Those who celebrate the sacrament say, “I promise to be true to you, in joy and in sadness, in sickness and in health; I will love you and honour you all the days of my life”. At that moment, the couple does not know what will happen, nor what joys and pains await them. They are setting out, like Abraham, on a journey together. And that is what marriage is! Setting out and walking together, hand in hand, putting yourselves in the Lord’s powerful hands. Hand in hand, always and for the rest of your lives. And do not pay attention to this makeshift culture, which can shatter our lives.”

~ Pope Francis

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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 commemorative 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 on the line below.

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You will receive a confirmation receipt once we have processed your payment.

1st Reconciliation for our Special Needs Youth

Father Dowdle celebrated 1st Reconciliation with three of our Special Needs students last week. What a wonderful celebration with their families!

YC Schedule

Classes K-6 10:15-11:30am Sunday, March 16
6:15-7:30pm Monday, March 17
7th & 8th Grade: at School Sun, March 16 or 17
on campus with K, 1, 2 students

NO CLASSES March 23/24 and 30/31 for Spring Break! Enjoy!

Youth Catechesis Office
yc@sjcross.org * 708-246-6760
www.stjohnofthecross.org/yc
Monday thru Thursday 8:30am-4:00pm
(Sun & Mon eve during class)
CALENDAR OF EVENTS
March 14-17 Kairos 16 Retreat
April 6 Trip to Vicariate Youth Rally, depart 1:30pm
Home Groups
April 13 Easter Basket Service Project 3-4:30pm
For a complete calendar of Crossroad events: www.stjohnofthecross.org/crossroads/events

Please pray for our 17 team members and 48 retreatants while they lead & encounter our Kairos 16 retreat this weekend. Our return will be Monday night 5pm in the Parish Center!

Contact us at khayes@stjohnofthecross.org or crossroads@stjohnofthecross.org

Sunday April 6th High School Teens from across our vicariate will gather at St. Celestine Parish to hear speaker Stephanie Clouatre Davis during our annual youth rally.
A few of our home groups are attending together & we will have extra space on the bus. We meet at 1:30pm and return by 6:45pm. If you or your high school teen wants to join us please contact Katie Hayes at khayes@stjohnofthecross.org to sign up.

THE FRANCIS REVOLUTION:
Taking Stock of the New Pope at Year One
Thursday, March 20, 2014 from 2:00-3:15 p.m.
St. Charles Borromeo Center Chapel, Lewis University Main Campus, Romeoville. Veteran Vatican correspondent, John L. Allen Jr., who also serves as the senior Vatican analyst for CNN, will step through the most important twists in the evolving saga of Pope Francis and his impact on both the Church and the world of his times, arguing that it adds up to a revolution in Catholic life. For more information or for group reservations: (815) 836-5786 or cms@lewisu.edu

Changing Careers After 50
Interfaith Career Network invites job seekers over 50 on Thursday, March 20, 7-9 pm for an inspiring journey. Speaker, Shaun Gorman, will share her personal experience and tell us how she successfully changed her career after 50. She will share her strategy and the goals she set to achieve this successful career transition. W. 55th Street, La Grange. Look for the ICN sign outside.

Volunteer at Misericordia Candy Days Friday & Saturday, April 25-26
Two or more hours of your time will make a difference for more than 600 children and adults with developmental and physical disabilities. To volunteer call Tessa, 773-273-2768, email: candydays@misericordia.com, or go to www.misericordia.org. Thank you! Make a $5 donation now by texting “MIS” to 25383. Your gift will be double-matched this year! Misericordia Home 6300 N Ridge Chicago 773-973-6300

Spring Clean to Build Esteem!
Women’s Club Outreach Spring Clothing Drive
March 6—16
We are teaming up with The House of the Good Shepherd to help women in need return to the workforce and rebuild their lives. All items must be clean, in good condition and suitable for the business casual environment. Clothing donations can include blouses, skirts, slacks, suits, blazers, sweaters, shoes, dresses, and accessories. Spring and Summer women’s items only please. This is your last weekend to donate! Donations accepted at Drop Boxes located at: Church Narthex, Parish Center & School. Questions? Please contact Amanda Collins at amandacollins4@gmail.com or Colleen Pabst at mahoney5674@yahoo.com

Many thanks to the Men’s Club and our parishioners who supported our fish fry!
SJC Saintly Seniors
Holy Hill Basilica Bus Trip
Wednesday, April 2

All adult parishioners and friends are invited to join the Saintly Seniors Wednesday, April 2 for a bus trip to Holy Hill, in Hubertus, WI 8am—5pm

We will arrive at Holy Hill in time to celebrate Mass and, immediately following, will watch a presentation. There will be time to walk the grounds and visit the many spiritual and interesting areas. There is also a gift shop. A delicious lunch will be at the Holy Hill Cafe. The cost of the trip is $45 which includes the cost of the motor coach, luncheon, all gratuities and a donation to Holy Hill.

Reservations with your check payable to SJC Saintly Seniors need to be sent to the Parish Center by March 19. Space is limited. If you have questions, contact Carolyn Koehler at 708-246-2978.

Name______________________
Phone, Home_______________ Cell__________________
Number of People__________ Total Enclosed____________
Thank you from Kolbe House

Dear Parishioners,

Thank you for continuing with our ministry through your donation of $1,200 to Kolbe House. There is no doubt that our work would be limited if we did not continue to receive the active support of St. John of the Cross Parish. We rely on your concern in order to fulfill our mission of visiting the incarcerated, being a source of encouragement to their families, and ministering to the needs of the victims.

As you know, Kolbe House is anchored in Assumption Parish which provides not only the physical church building where men/women who have been recently released can come to but also and more importantly serves as the Church community to which they can belong. Every Sunday I recognize the faces of persons who spent time in prison or jail and are now members of our parish. I also see the faces of those families who have suffered acts of violence to their loved ones. We are one Church as we grow on our dependence upon one another.

Your gift strengthens our resolve and commitment to be present to all who knock on our doors of Kolbe House or come to worship at Mass with us at Assumption Parish. During these grace filled days of Lent may you be blessed for your continued charity towards us. Please pray for us as we pray for you.

I remain
Your brother in the Lord,
Rev. Arturo Perez Rodriguez

Last month the Parish Advisory Council visited St. Mark Parish, Kolbe House at Assumption Parish and Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation in Chicago. Our morning made us more aware of the role and work of our parish Outreach Advisory Group and opened our eyes to the ministry and challenges and successes of each sharing parish.

For more information visit our parish website under Parish Leadership. You can read our meeting minutes, our winter update, and watch a video of our morning.
Parish Advisory Council Winter Meeting

More on the Sanuario—pictures of gangs, drugs, crime, the Sacred Heart pierced by a bullet, families left behind, looking for jobs after jail...

Precious Blood Center

Fr. Kelly and a participant tell us about the Precious Blood Ministry, its goals, challenges and the neighborhood.

Artwork from a juvenile inmate

Fr. Kelly shows us a crucifix made in prison with paper bags and string.
The church has always struggled with sex, but so have everyone else. There aren’t any cultures, religious or secular, pre-modern or modern, post-modern or post-religious, that exhibit a truly healthy sexual ethos. Every church and every culture struggles with integrating sexual energy, if not in its creed about sex, at least in the living out of that creed. Secular culture looks at the church and accuses it of being uptight and anti-erotic. Partly this true, but the church might well protest that much of its sexual reticence is rooted in the fact that it is one of the few voices still remaining who are challenging anyone towards sexual responsibility. As well, the church might also challenge any culture that claims to have found the key to healthy sexuality to step forward and show the evidence. No culture will take up that claim. Everyone is struggling.

Part of that struggle is the seeming innate incompatibility between what Charles Taylor calls "sexual fulfillment and piety", between "squaring our highest aspirations with an integral respect for the full range of human fulfillments."

Commenting on this in his book, A Secular Age, Taylor suggests that there is a real tension in trying to combine sexual fulfillment with piety and that this reflects a more general tension between human flourishing in general and dedication to God. He adds: "That this tension should be particularly evident in the sexual domain is readily understandable. Intense and profound sexual fulfillment focuses us powerfully on the exchange within the couple; it strongly attaches us possessively to what is privately shared. ... It is not for nothing that the early monks and hermits saw sexual renunciation as opening the way to the wider love of God. ... Now that there is a tension between fulfillment and piety should not surprise us in a world distorted by sin ... but we have to avoid turning this into a constitutive incompatibility."

How can we avoid doing that? How can we avoid somehow pitting sexual fulfillment against holiness? How can we be robustly sexual and fully spiritual at one and the same time?

In a soon-to-be-released book, The Road is How, A Prairie Pilgrimage through Nature, Desire and Soul, Trevor Herriot, suggests that human fulfillment and dedication to God, sex and holiness, can be brought together in a way that properly respects both of them. How? Without using the word that is at once so-honored and so-maligned, he presents us with an image of what chastity means at its true root. Much like Annie Dillard in her book, Holy the Firm, Herriot draws a certain concept of chastity out of the rhythms of nature and then presents those rhythms as the paradigm of how we should be relating to nature and to each other. And, for Herriot, those rhythms cast a particularly enlightening beam on how we should be relating sexually. His words:

"These days, we watch truckloads of grain pass by and sense that something in us and in the earth is harmed when food is grown and consumed with little intimacy, care, and respect. The local and slow food movements are showing us that the way we grow, distribute, prepare, and eat food is important for the health of our body-to-earth exchanges. The next step may be to realize that the energy that brings pollen to ovary and grows the grain, once it enters our bodies, also needs to be husbanded. The way we respond to our desire to merge, connect, and be fruitful - stirrings felt so deeply, but often so shallowly expressed - determines the quality of our body-to-body exchanges. ...

In a world bathed in industrial and impersonal sex, where real connection and tenderness are rare, will we sense also that something in us and in the earth is being harmed from the same absence of intimacy, care, and respect? Will we learn that any given expression of our erotic energies either connects us to or divides us from the world around us and our souls? We are discovering that we must steward the energies captured by nature in the hydrocarbons or in living plants and animals, and thereby improve the ways we receive the fruits of the earth, but we struggle to see the primary responsibility we bear for the small but cumulatively significant explosions of energy we access and transmit as we respond to our own longings to connect, merge, and be fruitful. Learning how to steward the way we bear fruit ourselves as spiritual/sexual beings with a full set of animal desires and angelic ambitions may be more important to the human journey than we fully understand."

Chastity, as imagined by Charles Taylor, Annie Dillard, and Trevor Herriot, has always been the one thing that properly protects sex, the white dress adorning the bride, the means of squaring our highest aspirations with an integral respect for the full range of human fulfillments, and, not least, the trusted guideline for how we can access and transmit our sexual energy with intimacy, care, and respect.

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.

This Week at SJC

Monday, March 17
10:30 a.m. Step 11 Christian Meditation
1:00 p.m. Little Rock Scripture Study
2:00 p.m. Spiritual Journaling
2:30 p.m. Eucharistic Adoration

Tuesday, March 18
9:05 a.m. Rosary
9:30 a.m. Focus on Sunday Scriptures Group
1:00 p.m. New Evangelization Session
7:00 p.m. School Board
7:00 p.m. New Evangelization Session
7:00 p.m. RCIA

Wednesday, March 19
9:30 a.m. Bible Study 3
11:30 a.m. Ladies Bridge
2:00 p.m. Christian Meditation
6:30 p.m. Athletic Dept. Parent Meeting
7:00 p.m. Boy Scouts
7:00 p.m. Washington Trip Parent Meeting
7:30 p.m. Christian Meditation

Thursday, March 20
9:00 a.m. Flourish
9:30 a.m. Mom’s Club
7:00 p.m. Faith Sharing Group
7:00 p.m. Women’s Club
7:30 p.m. Men’s Club

Friday, March 21
9:00 p.m. 8th Grade Retreat
6:00 p.m. Stations of the Cross
6:00 p.m. Men’s Club NCAA Basketball Night

Saturday, March 22
7:00 a.m. Christian Meditation
9:00 a.m. New Evangelization Session
9:00 a.m. Men’s Club NBA Basketball Night

Sunday, March 23
1:30 p.m. Baptism Prep Class

Contact Information: 5005 S Wolf Road Western Springs 60558
708-246-4404 ~ 708-246-4454 School ~ 708-246-6760 YC
www.stjohnofthecross.org
Rev. David P. Dowdle ddowdle@stjohnofthecross.org (x135)
Rev. Joe McDonnell Contact Fr. Joe through the Parish Center
Bill Bright bbright@stjohnofthecross.org (x132)
Janet Caschetta jcaschetta@stjohnofthecross.org
Marguerite Chrusciel mchrusciel@stjohnofthecross.org (x161)
Jim Clauer jclauer@stjohnofthecross.org (x137)
Frank DiPompeo fdipompeo@stjohnofthecross.org (x139)
Laura Dragich Idragich@stjohnofthecross.org (x618)
Kathleen Gorman Gorman@sjc.pvt.k12.il.us
Katie Hayes khayes@stjohnofthecross.org (x140)
Jessica Koch jkoch@stjohnofthecross.org (x136)
MJ Martin mjmartin@stjohnofthecross.org (x123)
Elizabeth Russell-Jones erussell-jones@stjohnofthecross.org (x155)
John Schopp john.schopp@newhemispheres.com

Mass Intentions

Monday, March 17, St. Patrick
7:45 Norma Sumpay; Special Intention

Tuesday, March 18, St. Cyril of Jerusalem
7:45 Roy Cook, Joseph Nuzzo

Wednesday, March 19, St. Joseph
7:45 Joseph Scelsi; John Hill

Thursday, March 20
7:45 John Koczwara; Jack Callahan, III

Friday, March 21, Day of Abstinence
7:45 Gloria Oechsel; Ted & Tom Baer

Saturday, March 22
8:00 Raymond Russell; Jerry & Monica Szweda
5:00 Nate Harris; Barbara Rovtar

Sunday, March 23, Third Sunday of Lent
7:30 Don Winkel; Bruno Shukis
9:00 Dutchie Adamenas; Anne Marchese
10:45 Dolores Grimaldi; Thomas Curran, Sr.
12:15 Mary Sue Donohue; Robert Maliszewski
5:00 Greg Mortenson; Declan Ignatius Ague

Remember Our Sick

Italics—Living

Frank Accardi Pat Martin
Mitch Allen Mary Ann Matysik
Paul Cervony Vickie McNally
Jack Doyle Jay Meehan
William Dwyer John Munch
Melissa Morrissey Eldredge Nancy Olin
Audra Frolik Marion Pascale
Mark Giangrande Bob Pietras
Maria Hanson James Reilly
Karen Hult Rick Reimer
Barbara Jacob Teresa Schaefer
Dee Kennedy John Shea
Rosie King Guy Thomas
Frank Kranz Mary Catherine Warren
Lee Lepinske Eleanor Zarnowiecki
Josephine McNamara
Fr. William Mannion

Our Beloved Dead

Alice Marzalik, mother of Kevin and Celeste George
Mat O’Toole, wife of Gerald and mother of Scott and Lisa
Consuelo Pinto, grandmother of Blanca Burns
Maxima Wongkee, mother of James
Luz Maria Perez, mother of Mari Uribarri

Spiritual conversion, the intensity of love of God and neighbor, zeal for justice and peace, the Gospel meaning of the poor and of poverty, are required of everyone.

~ Pope Francis
St. John of the Cross Parish is home to a special prayer garden called the Garden of Mary, Mother of Jesus. Dedicated in 2007 on the Feast of the Annunciation (March 25), the focal point of our garden is a beautiful statue of a young Mary at the Annunciation.

Created from pure Carrara marble in Pietrasanta, a small town located on a mountainside near Carrara, Italy, the statue depicts Mary, who confronted with life-changing news, finds it in herself to accept, without necessarily understanding, the will of God. Mary has one hand over her heart and the other over her womb, physically symbolizing where she had to accept the will of God—in her heart and womb.

Last summer, working with DaPrato Rigali and a team of parishioners, our parish commissioned sculptor, Noel Winn, to create a replica of our Mother of Jesus statue. Handmade by Noel in his studio, each cold cast statue is made from Carrara marble and other materials. Mary stands 18 inches tall can be placed inside or outside your home.

A limited number of statues will be available for sale for $150. To order, drop off an envelope with your contact info at the parish center with a check for $150 to SJC or go to our parish website. Each statue will come in a box with a prayer card.

To read more about our garden and statue, the original prayer book from the garden dedication can be found our parish website. Also posted are photos of Noel in his studio making our Mary statue and some of his other projects.

It was Mary's complete surrender to God's will throughout her entire life that encourages our devotion to her as our role model. She alone among creatures united herself most perfectly, body and soul, to the Son of God and her Son. It is when we are faced with challenges or perhaps shaken by what God has asked us to do, to accept or to suffer in our lives that we turn in prayer for inspiration to our heavenly Mother. Mary Mother of God pray for us.