St. John of the Cross Parish

First Sunday of Advent
November 30, 2014

“...our mission is to love as Christ loved
and to proclaim the Good News...”
from our Parish Mission Statement
Dear Parishioners,

It is a busy time of year. Harvest Saturday saw wonderful teens and adults gathering unbelievable quantities of food for the poor and the hungry. The Women’s Club Coat Drive generated another amazing amount of perfectly good coats to be shared with others who can more than enjoy them by staying warm. The installation of our new archbishop has taken place (even though I am writing this before it and other things happened). The liturgical year was brought to an end last weekend. Families have gathered for their Thanksgiving Day rituals, hopefully with joy and peace.

The day after Thanksgiving Troop 216 celebrated four of their members achieving the highest rank in scouting, Eagle Scout. Thomas Korenchan, Andrew Lichtenauer, Mark O’Connor and Daniel Salerno join the ranks of so many other parishioners who are also Eagles. SJC has more Eagle Scouts than any other parish I have been associated with. In fact, they probably have more than all those other parishes combined. Congratulations to these four, to their parents and Scout leaders for attaining such a significant accomplishment.

And now Share Christmas has kicked-off. Jim Peterik from the Ides of March will be with us next weekend, December 7th, at the Sunday 5pm Mass to sing his song about Share Christmas. If you are new to the parish and not sure how Share Christmas works please stop at one of the tables in the narthex and a volunteer will gladly explain it.

The first Sunday of Advent is here and our catechumens and candidates for the Easter sacraments will begin another phase in their journey of faith. This year there are two candidates to be baptized and two to be received into full communion. They complete the ‘Inquiry’ phase and begin the ‘Catechumenate’ proper, taking another step toward becoming the Elect at the beginning of Lent.

With all this busyness the danger is to miss the season. There is so much to do that the reason why we are doing it might get lost in all the activities. As the world gets darker and colder at this time of year it is part of the genius of the church to gather us to celebrate the light and warmth of new born love in Christ. When we are tempted to isolate and stay in our own homes, the liturgy draws us together to ritualize our greatest hope and to dispel our greatest fear: the meaning of life is found in giving it away to others and no matter what the challenges we are more than conquerors in Christ Jesus.

Give God the praise!

Fr. David

PS

For nearly 26 years as a paid employee and longer than that as a volunteer in the office, the school, the liturgy and so many other places, Shirley Rozsypal has cheerfully given of herself and been at the service of the people of SJC. She has come to that point in life where grandchildren, spending time with her spouse and travel rise to the top of the priority list. (You put them in whatever order you want.) This Thursday, December 4th, will be Shirley’s last day as an employee. She has given from her heart and done so cheerfully all these years. It was always more than a job for her: it was a ministry of helping others wherever and however she could. Whether you dealt with her on the phone, or in the office or at a parish activity, she was at your service. We are so grateful for all the years of loyal service she provided. We wish her well in this next phase of life. She more than deserves it! Thank you, Shirley, for everything.

Come Lord Jesus!
As we prepare our hearts for your coming during these holy days of Advent, open our eyes to recognize that you are already in our midst, in your Word, in the sacraments, and in all our brothers and sisters. Amen.

Come let us worship the Lord, the King who is to come.
Advent Reflection from Fr. Bill Vollmer

Advent
I live my Advent in the womb of Mary.
And on one night when a great star swings free
from its high mooring and walks down the sky
to be the dot above the Christus i,
I shall be born of her blessed grace.
I wait in Mary-darkness, faith’s walled place,
with hope’s expectation of nativity.

I knew for long she carried me and fed me,
guarded and loved me, though I could not see.
But only now, with inward jubilee,
I come upon earth’s most amazing knowledge:
someone is hidden in this dark with me.

The above poem by Jessica Powers is one of my favorite poems about the meaning of the Advent—Christmas mystery, as it reminds us that we are loved by God, that we are that someone hidden in the dark with Christ.

This weekend marks the beginning of the Advent - Christmas Season and a new liturgical year in the life of the Church. This season is a perennial reminder of the incarnation of Jesus Christ, God-with-us. Advent is a time of joyful expectation - to see, feel and experience God’s love in our lives. The Advent - Christmas season extends to us an invitation to know, believe and feel that we are love by God for who we are.

The Advent - Christmas season has always been my favorite in the liturgical year. It is a season filled with many rich images, sounds, figures and a spirit of generosity felt at no other time of the year. The great saintly figures of Mary and Joseph so prominent in this season inspire us to open ourselves to God’s love despite our fears. Through their own example they help us to know God’s unconditional love and that God delights in us as we are.

As a young boy I would spend many hours sitting gazing at the family Christmas tree, rocking in my chair listening to the music of the season. To this day, I take time daily to sit in wonder and awe in my room filled by the sounds of the season. The awe-inspiring sounds of “O Come, O Come Emmanuel”, “O Holy Night” and “Noel Novelette” take me away from the troubles and busyness of daily life to a place deep in my heart and soul. In the depth of those encounters I know that I am loved and that I am embraced and held by God.

The beautiful night sky of December is another powerful image for me of this season. I enjoy walking in freshly fallen snow staring into the dark abyss of the star filled sky. I hear those words of that great Advent song echoing through all of creation, “Creator of the star at night, Your people’s everlasting light, O Christ, Redeemer of us all, We pray you hear us when we call”. In those moments I am caught up in something greater than myself - that I am part of the great promise God made to Abraham that his descendants would be greater than the stars of the sky. That connection reminds me of the love I experience in and through my family, friends, those I minister to and am ministered to.

I ponder about the vastness of the stars and wonder are they the same ones the shepherds saw the night of our Savior’s birth, when Christ’s light crashed into the darkness of the world. I gaze into that beautiful nighttime sky picturing that most wonderful star – the one that led the Magi to the simple stable where Christ was born in poverty and in the cold of night.

The great star of Bethlehem which led so many to the birth of Christ suggests that God’s Light - Jesus Christ shines through our parish in our spirit of generosity that reaches out to so many in need in some many ways (Share Christmas, Harvest Saturday, Food Pantry Mission, Kolbe House, Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation and our Sharing Parishes to name a few). The star that announced Christ’s birth - is the same star that reflects our giving birth to Christ in our selfless giving to others and in that giving letting them know that they are loved. Behind the great star lies the sun - the Son of Justice who comes into our lives so that we may know that we are loved.

Unfortunately all of this can be lost in the busyness, worries and distractions of the season. I encourage all us to take time each day - to sit in the beauty of the season and the presence of God and know that we are loved and that God takes delight in us.

Fr. Bill
This Sunday at the 5:00pm Mass, four men and women who are processing in the journey of the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) will celebrate the Rite of Acceptance. Ellin Wheelihan and Eric Wong will be accepted into the Order of Catechumens – those who are preparing to be baptized. Michael “Mick” McCaskey and Nicole Poletti will be welcomed as Candidates—those previously baptized in another Christian faith tradition and are now preparing to be received into full communion of the Catholic Church.

Fr. Paul Turner, writes, “The Rite of Acceptance into the Order of Catechumens establishes a relationship between unbaptized persons and the Church. Candidates express their intention to become members, and the Church accepts them as Catechumens.” Joined to the Church now in this public moment, the Catechumens are now part of the household of Christ.

With great joy, the St. John of the Cross Parish Faith Community will welcome Ellin, Eric, Mick and Nicole into the next process of the RCIA, the Catechumenate. During this time they enter an extended period of time during which they are given pastoral formation and guidance, aimed at training them in the Christian life and the faith of the Catholic Church.

During this rite, the priest will greet the Catechumens and Candidates at the door of the church. As they and their parish sponsors come forward, the celebrant will ask their names and each candidate will respond to what they are seeking and why. They will be asked to accept the Gospel that fulfills the longing in their and our hearts. The sponsors and the entire assembly express their willingness to help the Catechumens and Candidates find and follow Christ more deeply. At this time the priest will trace the sign of the cross on the forehead of the Catechumens and Candidates. The RCIA team and sponsors will assist in the signing of other parts of the body such as the ears, eyes, lips, shoulders, hands, and feet. They are now invited to enter the church building to hear the Word of God with the community.

After the Liturgy of the Word and the Homily, they will be presented with a Bible. Our parish community will then pray for our Catechumens and Candidates after which they will be dismissed.

Let us pray for these sisters and brothers of ours and look forward to the day they will share fully with us at the Lord’s Table.
Our look at the meaning of the Funeral Liturgy concludes this week with the Rite of Final Commendation and the Rite of Committal.

The rite of Final Commendation takes place after communion. Rich in symbolism and in its text, this rite, too, offers hope for both the living and the dead. Incense is used to show reverence for the body, a temple of the Holy Spirit. As the body is being incensed the Song of Farewell is sung, “May the angels take him/her to heaven.” This gesture and text reveal hope and the comfort and compassion of God as our loved one is received into the tender hands of God in eternal life. The prayer of commendation acknowledges the grief and sorrow of the family and the community but it also directs our hearts and minds to hope and consolation, that one day we shall see our God and our deceased loved one again.

Into your hands, Father of mercies,  
we commend our brother / sister  
in the sure and certain hope  
that, together with all who have died in Christ,  
he / she will rise with him on the last day.  
We give you thanks for the blessings  
which you have bestowed upon N. in this life:  
they are signs to us of your goodness  
and of our fellowship in the saints of Christ.  
Merciful Lord,  
turn toward us and listen to our prayers:  
open the gates of paradise to your servant  
and help us who remain  
to comfort one another with the assurances of faith,  
until we all meet in Christ  
and are with you and our brother / sister for ever.  
(Order of Christian Funerals)

The hope expressed throughout the Funeral Liturgy shapes us as a people of hope in that for us death is not the end and that beyond death is eternal life. It is this hope in eternal life that allows us to see death in a new way without denying the sorrow and grief that it brings.

The final part of the Funeral Liturgy – the last concrete act we can do for our loved ones in this world – is the Committal, the burial or entombment of the remains of the deceased. “The Rite of Committal is an expression of the communion of Saints that exists between the Church on earth and the Church in heaven: the deceased passes with the farewell prayers of the community of believers into the welcoming company of those who need faith no longer, but see God face-to-face” (USCCB- An Overview of Catholic Funeral Rites).

The relationships, bonds, and "communion" we build with one another in faith are not broken by death. Resting in a holy place with our brothers and sisters is a profound statement of that belief. It is here, as a people of faith, that in the midst of grief and sadness, “we say our goodbye to our deceased loved one in this life, but it does not speak of a final farewell. Our faith and belief in Jesus Christ assures us that one day we will be reunited with our beloved dead in the joy of eternity” (Cardinal George). This promise is proclaimed to us in the Gospel, “In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be” (John: 14:2-3).

Fr. Bill

With gratitude to the Department of Catholic Cemeteries for the permission for use of some text throughout this series.
Today we begin the season of **Advent**, which marks the start of a new liturgical year for the Church. The readings for Sunday Mass are arranged on a three-year cycle. Each year features a different Gospel—Matthew, Mark, or Luke. Readings from the Gospel of John are interspersed throughout all three years. With this year's first Sunday of Advent, we begin Cycle B of the Lectionary, which focuses the Lord's return at the end of time and John the Baptist's preparation for Jesus.

Today's Gospel is taken from the end of Mark's Gospel, the chapter that immediately precedes Mark's account of Jesus' Passion. Having been questioned repeatedly by the scribes and the Pharisees, Jesus is now questioned by his disciples—Peter, James, John, and Andrew—who want details about his prediction of the destruction of the Temple. Jesus answers with many warnings about the difficulties that the disciples will face.

Today's passage comes at the conclusion of Jesus' warnings to his disciples. Jesus emphasizes the need for watchfulness. The Son of Man will come without warning; only the Father knows the exact hour. The disciples must not be caught unprepared when this time comes. Scholars believe that Mark's Gospel was written around the time of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans in A.D. 70. Mark's audience consisted of Christians who were living in difficult social and political times, times of conflict. They were likely beginning to face persecution as followers of Jesus. In this difficult time, it helped to recall that Jesus had foretold of such difficulties. Early Christian communities took courage from Jesus' warning to remain alert and watchful, and they found in his words a way to persevere through suffering.

Today's Gospel reminds us that Advent is about more than our preparation for the Church's celebration of Christ's birth at Christmas. Advent is also about preparing ourselves for Christ's return in glory at the end of time. Like the disciples and the faithful in Mark's community, we must also stay alert and watchful. Our faithfulness to God, through the good times as well as the difficult times, shows us to be ready for the coming of the Son of Man.  

May we watch with eagerness and diligence for the many comings of Christ into our lives.
May we receive the salvation that Christ’s Second Coming promises by renewing the quality of our Gospel living.

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©Living Liturgy
In family life, we try to prepare ourselves for many future things: our next vacation, our children's education, our retirement. We are careful not to allow ourselves to be caught by surprise so that we can handle any challenges our family may face. Today's Gospel reminds us that we are called to be just as attentive and alert to the coming of the Son of Man so that it will not catch us unprepared. This means attending to our family’s spiritual life as carefully as we attend to other important family matters.

As you gather as a family, talk about a time when you received surprise visitors at your house, perhaps a neighbor who stopped by or a relative who arrived unannounced. Was your household prepared to receive this unannounced guest? What might your family have done differently if you knew ahead of time that this visitor was going to arrive? Jesus told his disciples that no one knows when the Son of Man will return, except the Father. Read with your family what Jesus told his disciples in today's Gospel, Mark 13:33-37.

During Advent, we not only prepare ourselves to celebrate the birth of Jesus, we also check to see if we are doing all the things that will keep us ready to receive Jesus when he comes again. Talk about how your family can recommit to daily prayer, reading Scripture, and staying faithful to God's commandments. Pray together that through this Advent season your family will be more prepared to receive Jesus when he comes again. Read as a concluding prayer Paul's words to the Corinthians found in today's second reading, 1 Corinthians 1:3-9, or pray the Lord's Prayer.

Make an Advent wreath and place it in the middle of the dining room table. An Advent wreath consists of a frame holding four candles placed inside a circle of evergreens. The greenery in the wreath symbolizes the promised new life in Jesus. The four candles denote the four Sundays of Advent. There are three purple candles and one rose candle. Purple is a sign of penance, and rose is the color denoting the anticipation of joy. Light a candle on each Sunday evening of Advent, saying a short prayer or singing a verse of “O Come, O Come Emmanuel.” The light of the candles represents the light coming into the world as we prepare to celebrate Jesus' birth.

Advent Wreath Prayer for First Week

All-powerful God, increase our strength of will for doing good that Christ may find an eager welcome at his coming and call us to his side in the kingdom of heaven, where he lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit one God, forever and ever. ~Amen.

Blessing Your Advent Wreath

Before your family has gathered for the blessing, select one of the following Scripture passages to be read during the blessing: Isaiah 11:1-4, 61:1-2; Mark 1:1-8; James 5:7-10; or Philippians 4:4-7. Have someone volunteer to read the passage. Place the Advent wreath on a table and have your family gather around it. Lower the light level in the room to create an appropriate atmosphere for the blessing.

Leader: This week we begin the season of Advent, when the days grow short and darkness closes in. We are preparing to celebrate at Christmas the birth of Jesus, who is the light of the world. Let's spend some quiet time being aware of the darkness and longing for the light. (Pause a few moments and then pray the Sign of the Cross.)

Leader: Lord God, bless this wreath and bless us as well. May this wreath remind us of the hope and joy that Jesus brings into the world. We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Leader: Advent means “arrival.” In the season of Advent, the church prepares to celebrate the coming of Jesus. We recall the past, celebrate the present, and look to the future with hope. We prepare to celebrate not only the birth of Jesus but also his presence in our family. We wait for the return of the Lord at the end of time when all hopes will be fulfilled. We await the coming of the light that will shine in the darkness, shining light on our path to peace.

Reader: A reading from [name of book in Bible]. (Reader reads selected passage.)

Leader: The Word of the Lord. All: Thanks be to God.

All: Amen. (Pray the Lord's Prayer.)
**Prayers Needed**

Please pray for all the students that will be receiving Christ’s healing mercy in their Sacrament of First Reconciliation on Saturday, December 6th at our parish. The YC and School children and a parent will attend a beautiful retreat before the prayer service and individual confessions. Please join us in praying for all our students.

**Family Advent Day**

1st grade YC students are encouraged to bring their parents to their

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<th>Sunday, December 7th</th>
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<td>Monday, December 8th</td>
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**YC Schedule**

- Classes K-6: 10:15-11:30am, 6:15-7:30pm
- FFC: Noon-1:30 pm
- Jr Hi Sm Groups 7th grade
- 8th grade
- 7 & 8 grades
- Special Needs
  - Sunday, Dec 7, 14
  - Monday, Dec 8, 15
  - Special Guest, Dec 7 at 6:30 pm
  - In homes Dec 7
  - Dec 14 in homes
  - Sunday, Dec 7, 14

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**Win a Penthouse Suite for 20 at The United Center**

Support our Early Childhood Playground

- Chicago Bulls vs. Phoenix Suns
- February 21, 2015
- $100 per ticket
- Buy your ticket early!
- Only 300 sold!

Winner will be notified on January 9, 2015

**Sponsored by The School Advisory Board**

Questions or to Purchase Contact:
Jennifer Miller 708-246-4454 or miller@sjc.pvt.k12.il.us
Send check payable to SJC 708 51 Street
Western Springs, IL 60558

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**Youth Catechesis Office**

yc@sjcross.org * 708-246-6760
www.stjohnofthecross.org/yc

Monday thru Thursday 8:30am-4:00pm
In the midst of the busy Christmas season, slow down to enjoy Advent waiting with a simple daily prayer practice:

Answer two simple yet profound questions: Where have you found God today? and Where do you need to find God today? During this Advent, focus on finding God in different ways, such as in holiday traditions, seasonal surprises, or encounters with others.

Richard Rohr Meditation
ADVENT: LEARNING HOW TO RECEIVE
If Jesus is the archetype of what the gift is and how a gift is given, Mary is the archetype of how a gift is received.

The amazing thing is that the Scripture says nothing especially positive about Mary. No credit rating is stated; it doesn’t say she prayed a lot or regularly went to the temple. No heroic anything. Mary seems to know she is nothing according to her own Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55). She clearly knows and fully accepts she stands under the total mercy of God. Mary knows she did not earn this. It was all mercy, mercy, mercy. Divine choice says something about the chooser much more than the one who is chosen. In the spiritual world, all worthiness is given. Our only job is to fully and freely receive. Mary was a supreme receiver station.

Prayer:
Teach me to be receptive.

A Daily Devotion for Advent
Your light will come, O Jerusalem. The Lord will dawn on you in radiant beauty. We shall see the glory of the Lord, the splendor of our God. The sign of the cross shall appear in the heavens, when our Lord shall come to judge the world.

Advent Program at The Well
“Welcoming the Adventing Christ” with facilitator, Sr. Pat Bergen, CSJ, on Thursday 7-8:30 pm on Dec. 4 and again Friday 9:30-11 am on Dec. 5. Advent is more than the preparation to celebrate the birthday of Jesus whose presence changed the world. Advent is the season of preparation for the new birth of Christ in our lives. Join us as we reflect on the Christ who has been coming into the world since the beginning of time, who is path and the goal of all creation. Join us in becoming more aware of how Christ is “adventing” in our lives and our world right now. This program will be offered in the evening and repeated the next morning. Cost: $15. The Well is located at 1515 West Ogden Avenue in LaGrange Park. To register 708.482.5048 / e-mail: thewell@csjoseph.org.

Mayslake Ministries:
Women’s Advent Tea
In the Gospel of John we hear Jesus saying, “Make your home in me, as I make mine in you.” This Advent let’s make a nesting place for Jesus in our hearts and home. Join us in an afternoon of Advent Reflection, making a nest for the Christ child, born in our hearts again through scripture, prayer and reflections from Fresh Bread by Joyce Rupp. Tuesday, Dec. 9 from 1-3pm at the Marriott Suites in Downers Grove Cost: $40 Facilitator: Dr. Jill Bates. Tea includes scones, pastries, assorted tea sandwiches and dessert. Call 630-852-9000 to register.

Mayslake Ministries:
Reflecting on Epistles of Advent
Saturday, Dec. 6 from 9am-Noon at Mayslake (718 Ogden Suite 200 in Downers Grove). Facilitator Christine Grano invites you to ponder the letters of Ss. Peter and Paul and reflect on ways in which the Holy Spirit is speaking to you. Time together will include reflection, prayer, song and sharing. Cost $25.Call 630-852-9000 to register.

Mayslake Ministries:
Light Shining in the Darkness
Thursday, Dec. 11 from 7-9pm at Mayslake (718 Ogden Suite 200 in Downers Grove). Facilitator Gail Krema will lead a reflection on light and darkness in the season of Advent and Visio Divina, praying with art. Cost $20. Call 630-852-9000 to register.
An Advent Gift
Through the wonderful generosity of a parishioner, St. John of the Cross Parish is able to give parish families a special gift this Advent season. The Glory of the Incarnation is a cd of homilies by Fr. Bob Barron that celebrates the great feasts of the Christmas season, plus a final sermon on the Catholic view of other world religions. Meditations include: A Christmas Surprise: Luke’s familiar story explained as a subversive, surprising text, Gospel Family Values: Supporting the mission of each family member is the Biblical view of family, Journey of the Magi: A Metaphor for the Spiritual Life, Baptism of the Lord: An Icon of the Trinity, Christ and the World Religions: We share many truths with other religions, yet all paths do not lead to God. After you are done listening, we encourage you to pass it on to another family member or friend. Look for your cd after Masses the first weekend of December.

Mary Mother of Jesus Statue
Our parish is home to a special prayer garden called the Garden of Mary, Mother of Jesus. The focal point of the garden is a beautiful statue of a young Mary at the Annunciation. Mary has one hand over her heart and the other over her womb, physically symbolizing where she accepted the will of God.

Last summer our parish commissioned a replica of our Mother of Jesus statue to be made. Handmade, each cold cast statue is made from Carrara marble and other materials. The statue stands 18 inches tall. It is recommended that it be placed indoors to preserve its coloring and natural beauty.

A limited number of statues are available for sale for $150. To purchase, drop off an envelope with your contact information at the parish center with a check to SJC or order on our parish website. Mary will make a perfect gift for anyone on your list.

Calendar of Events
Nov. 30 Basketball kick-off meeting 6pm in school.
Dec. 7 Home Group meetings (McGee group meets on the 14th)
Dec. 14 Update Meeting at noon
Dec. 22 Kairos Christmas Party 6pm at SFX

Catholic Parent Revival
Saturday, December 6, 11:00 am–5:00 pm
Parents, grandparents and guardians from across the country are invited to join together online to revive their faith, discover a deeper motivation, and find support for the daily effort of growing deeper in faith as a family. You will be treated to a day of inspiring speakers and moving musicians. Register for the live stream and enjoy the conference from the comfort of your home! Visit our website www.stjohnofthecross.org/crossroads for details and to register.

Summer Work Tours & Conferences
Registration for our summer work tours and leadership training conferences will be opening soon. Work tour opportunities include Our Lady of Charity in Cicero, Habitat for Humanity in West Virginia, Our Lady of Perpetual Help in Kentucky, and a new work tour to one of the homes of Nuestros Pequenos Hermanos (NPH) in Guatemala. Our leadership training opportunities will include the Notre Dame Vision Conference, the Youth Leadership Conference, Peer Ministry Conference and the National Catholic Youth Conference (NCYC).

Thank you to our Parent Coordinators, Beth Korenchan, Eileen Thomas, and Lis Williams, for hosting the speaker night last Sunday. It was a great night for parents to build community and learn more about the most important job they have.
Grief Support at The Well
“Honoring the Grieving Heart” on Saturday, Dec. 13 from 9am-Noon with facilitator: Joy Davy. Grief and loss come to us in many forms. There is no need to compare one person’s loss with another’s as each of us is on his or her own way working to integrate personal sorrows and joys into the people we are becoming. Join Joy Davy, MS, LCPC, NCC, for a morning dedicated to sending healing energy to our grieving hearts. Explore without judgment all the emotions of grief and loss and come to understand how you have been “broken open” and changed by your grief. Cost: $35 The Well is located at 1515 W Ogden in LaGrange Park. Call 708.482.5048 to register.

Grief & the Holidays
Grief & the Holidays is a program for people who are anticipating the holiday season after the death of a loved one. The program will explore ways of remembering the loved one and coping with the loss during this special time of year. December 11 from 6-7pm at Frisbie Senior Center, 52 E. Northwest Hwy in DesPlaines. Sponsored by Rainbow Hospice. Call 847-692-8884 to register.

Grief Support Group
A six session grief support group for men and women who lost someone close to them in the past two years. Come to share your memories, learn about the grief process and support others while receiving support. Tuesdays, Dec. 2-Jan. 6 from 6:30-8pm at Presence St. Elizabeth Hospital in Chicago. Fee $90 for all six sessions. Free if a loved one was a patient of Rainbow. Call 847-692-8884 to register. Class size limited.

Loss of a Child Worldwide Candle Lighting
Candle lighting to honor and remember children who have died from any cause at any age. Sunday, December 14 at 7pm at Queen of All Saints Basilica to coincide with candles lit around the world symbolizing that “their lights shine on...” Arrive 10 minutes early at 6280 N Sauganash Ave. Chicago. Rainbow Hospice and Palliative Care Bereavement 847-692-8884.

Grief Blog
Do You Feel Lost? In order to find your way you must tell your loved one’s story over and over again. For most bereaved, telling their story is not difficult. In fact, many bereaved are obsessed with talking about their deceased loved one. The difficulty is not in the telling but in the finding of a nonjudgmental listener. You will be encouraged by friends and family to “get over it” and “move on.” Telling the story of your loved one allows you to heal and move through the grieving process. Share your story on this blog! http://www.iamsolost.com/
Outreach

Food Pantry Donations
Your nonperishable food donations brought to our church narthex during the month of December will be donated to Catholic Charities in Cicero. Please remember to bring food for the poor when you come to Mass.

Volunteers Needed to Bake
Each year St. John of the Cross Parish volunteers bake cookies for the Nurses Association to distribute at the LaGrange Christmas Walk and also for Helping Hand’s Craft Fair Fundraiser and the Helping Hand client party.

Please deliver your cookie donations to the Parish Center between December 3rd through December 5th. You may place them on the tables labeled Cookie Donations in the foyer. Thanks!!

More information on each organization:

The Community Nurse Health Association provides primary healthcare and supportive services to low income families in the western suburbs.
More than 3,000 west suburban residents turn to Community Nurse every year. Our patients are our neighbors, local small business owners and families in temporary crisis. Our patients are employed but their employers do not offer medical insurance. Our patients have jobs, sometimes two, and still have to choose between rent, food and medical care. We are here to help keep our community healthy.

For over fifty years, Helping Hand has been committed to the mission of assisting people with disabilities to become more independent.

Blankets for B.E.D.S.
BEDS would like to replace up to 280 blankets in their area shelters that are worn and old. New or gently used washable warm twin size blankets can be donated to BEDS Plus at 150 S. Ashland in LaGrange 60525 or dropped off at the parish center. While any blanket donations are welcomed, BEDS has found that English Wool Hospital Blankets from armynavysales.com (SKU#ME166) for $29.99 work well.

Donate Stamps
Shoppers at Jewel Osco receive Saver Stamps that can be redeemed for Cuisinart cookware. Donate your Saver Stamps to help us earn cookware for new refugee families served by the Catholic Charities Refugee Resettlement Program in Chicago. Stamps may be dropped off at the parish center or the YC office.

LIVESTOCK FOR LIFE
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 purchase a gift card on our parish website with your credit card or drop off a check with the form below to the Parish Center. Each gift is $40. You will receive your gift card in the mail.

Call for volunteers

Your Name________________________________
Phone ___________________________________
Address__________________________________
Email: ___________________________________
Number of Gift Cards ____ Amount Enclosed ____
Each Luminaria Kit includes
5 white bags,
5 long-burning candles (10+ hours)
and enough sand to assemble your luminaries.
Free home delivery for Seniors!
Order Deadline: Sunday, December 7th
Pick Up: Sunday, December 14 from 10-Noon
in the parish center
Complete form below and return with payment
to the parish center or order online at
www.stjohnofthecross.org
Please contact Lee Rosenberg at
fletchrosen@gmail.com or
call 708-269-6046 with questions.
To order with cash or check, complete form and
return to the parish center. Make checks payable to
SJC Women’s Club.
Last Name: ___________________________________________
First Name: ___________________________________________
Email: _______________________________________________
Phone: _______________________________________________
___________Luminaria Kit(s) x $10 = Total Due _____________
Seniors check here for free delivery!
Address for Delivery:__________________________________
Sponsored by the SJC Women’s Club
in partnership with
Village True Value Hardware.

Welcome!
Please help us welcome our new members to the St. John
of the Cross faith community:
Ashley and Brian Condron and Family
Bridget and Any Hobbs and Family
Don and Barbara Delaney
Melissa and Joshua Meeks and Family
Jacquelyn and Devin Grimes and Family
Tara and Mark Reynolds and Family
Lynda and Alex Garza and Family
Blanche Duquette
Collene and William Mear and Family
If you would like to register to become a new member,
please contact Elizabeth Russell-Jones in the Welcome
Center. For more information call 708.246.4404x155 or
erussell-jones@stjohnofthecross.org.

SJC FEST June 25-28, 2015
We’re starting the discussions for the 2015 SJC FEST and we
need your help to make 2015 a success! The SJC FEST
Advisory Committee is looking for organized, energized
parishioners to help with the 2015 SJC FEST Committees! We
are looking for the following areas in particular Publicity,
Food, Environment. Please call Dan Madden @ (708) 417-1999 for more information.

Tower Chorale Christmas Concert on Dec. 5 at
7:30pm and Dec. 7 at 3pm at Holy Trinity Church in
Westmont. Tickets available at door or from SJC members:
Kathy Daley, Tom Licar, and Betsy Spiering. Adults $20,
Seniors/Students $17, Under 10 Free.

The St. John of the Cross Spirituality Group
invites everyone to attend the showing of a creative
presentation on the Life of John of the Cross on his feast
day, December 14, after the 9 a.m. Mass in the Parish
Center. Those who drop children off for YC are also free to
join us for this bit of Adult Education and hospitality.

Pope Francis @Pontifex · Nov 15
A Christian brings peace to others. Not only peace, but
also love, kindness, faithfulness and joy.
The Share Christmas experience at St. John of the Cross Parish is a strong and beautiful tradition that will fill your heart with joy as you make someone else’s Christmas special!

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

Join in on the fun! Sign up for Share Christmas continues through the December 6-7 weekend. For your convenience our parish Manna reps will be available in the church community room for you to purchase food and gift certificates.

What can I buy?

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

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

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

Drop off Days are December 8 & 9 between 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. at the Parish Center. The gifts will then be delivered to the parishes on Saturday, December 13th. If you have a van or small truck or if you are free to help load and deliver, please call us. Questions can be directed to Lolly Maloney at 630-261-5675 or lollymaloney@gmail.com.

Parish Rock Star
One of our parishioners, Jim Peterik, will join our high school and young adult choir, 5 Alive!, and all of our parish choir members at the Sunday 5pm Mass on December 7th to sing his song “Share Christmas.” Jim, a longtime parishioner, is a musician, songwriter, and producer. He is best known as a member of the band, Survivor, and as vocalist and songwriter of the hit song “Vehicle” by The Ides of March. He also co-wrote the anthem, "Eye of the Tiger," the theme from the motion picture Rocky III. Jim wrote his “Share Christmas” song in honor of our annual Christmas gift drive at St. John of the Cross Parish.
The Week Ahead:

Monday, December 01, 2014
9:30am Spiritual Journaling
10:30am Christian Meditation Group Step 11
2:30pm Adoration church
5:30pm Finance Council Meeting
7:00pm Women's Club Advent by Candlelight

Tuesday, December 02, 2014
9:05am Tuesdays with Mary Rosary Mary Chapel
9:00am Parent Association Meeting
7:00pm RCIA
7:00pm YC Council Meeting 4

Wednesday, December 03, 2014
9:00am Secret Santa
2:00pm Christian Meditation
3:00pm Spirituality of St. John of the Cross
6:00pm SPRED
7:00pm Chicago Catholic Scripture School Year One

Thursday, December 04, 2014
9:00am Women's Club Flourish
9:15am Tuesdays with Mary Rosary Mary Chapel
9:00am Parent Association Meeting
7:00pm RCIA
7:00pm YC Council Meeting 4
2:00pm Christian Meditation
3:00pm Spirituality of St. John of the Cross
6:00pm SPRED
7:00pm Chicago Catholic Scripture School Year One

Friday, December 05, 2014
9:30am Mom's Club

Saturday, December 06, 2014
7:00am Christian Meditation
First Reconciliation

Sunday, December 07, 2014
10:00am YC Classes
1:00pm Family Faith Connection
1:30pm Baptism
6:00pm Freshman Experience
6:30pm YC 7th Grade Presentation

Monday, December 08, 2014
Feast of the Immaculate Conception
Holy Day of Obligation
6:30am, 7:45am, 6:30pm Masses

Pray for our Sick
Cecilia Kirschbaum
Larry Klinger
John Kravcik

Ministry of Care
If you or a family member are homebound, hospitalized or living in a care center and would like to receive Eucharist, call the parish center. Trained ministers of care will pray, bring holy communion, and visit.

Pope Francis @Pontifex · Nov 18
There is so much noise in the world! May we learn to be silent in our hearts and before God.
Join us as we kick off the holiday season with a festive luncheon held at the William Tell Terrace Room, 6201 Joliet Rd. in Countryside. Convenient parking is available in the west corner of the lot. Please rsvp by Monday, Dec. 1. No refunds after this date. Tickets are $25 per person for lunch, a glass of wine and an entertaining program. Entrée Choice: Butt Steak, Chicken Marsala or Tilapia. Please indicate entrée choice and name of guest below.

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<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Circle Entrée Choice</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Butt Steak</td>
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<td>Tilapia</td>
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Phone:_______________________________

Any questions can be directed to Trudy Schmitt at 246-1077.