Go and teach all nations; I am with you always, until the end of the world.

The Ascension of the Lord
May 17, 2015
April, 2015

Dear Fr. Dowdle,

This letter comes with my thanks and hearty congratulations to you, your parish staff, and the entire St. John of the Cross community for exceeding your 2015 Annual Catholic Appeal parish goal of $137,328.30. You have my deep appreciation and respect.

The people of St. John of the Cross under your dedicated leadership have responded generously to the Annual Appeal, clearly demonstrating that they have a firm grasp of what it means to live as those who are Entrusted with Responsibility.

Please convey to your community my admiration for their willingness to sacrifice in a way that benefits others and transforms the world through Christ’s loving presence. I am inspired by their sense of responsibility for others, a sentiment that is shared by all the many beneficiaries of their generosity.

Please let the people of St. John of the Cross know of my pledge to remember them in my prayer and at the Lord’s Table as I thank God for many gifts. Their prayers for me are much appreciated, and I am heartened by their remembrance of me.

Fraternally yours in Christ,

+ Blase J. Cupich
Archbishop of Chicago

Archbishop Blase J. Cupich
Archbishop of Chicago

Help Us Welcome New Parishioners to SJC!
Join us on Sunday, May 31st after the 9am Mass for coffee and donuts as we welcome our newest parishioners. Extend a handshake. Share a cup of coffee and get acquainted with some new fellow parishioners.

May we proclaim the Gospel in both word and action, continuing Jesus’ saving mission in our world today. May we remain faithful to the Lord Jesus and his saving mission that he has entrusted to us.

St. John of the Cross Parish
May 17, 2015

Summer Mass Schedule
From Memorial Day weekend to Labor Day (inclusive) there will be no 12:15pm Mass. This year there will be no 12:15pm Mass beginning next Sunday May 24, 2015. Please mark your calendar.

Memorial Day Weekend
Sunday Babysitting
There will be no babysitting on Sunday, May 24th at the 9am and 10:45am Masses since it is a holiday weekend.

Memorial Day Mass
Our morning Mass on Memorial Day, May 25 will be at 9am. This is the only Mass that day. There will be no Adoration on Memorial Day.

Parish Center Office
The Parish Center will be closed on the Memorial Day holiday.

Please help us welcome our new members to the St. John of the Cross faith community:

Diane and Francis Cottone
Jennifer and Brian Sexton & Family
Nicholas and Andrea Dalgety & Family
Danielle and Steven Otwinowski & 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 708.246.4404 x155 or erussell-jones@stjohnofthecross.org.
LAST CHANCE To Have Your Picture Taken
We are coming up to the last few opportunities to have your picture taken for our 2015 Parish Directory. The dates we still have available are:
May 17 – Today
May 18
May 19
May 20
May 21
May 22
May 31 (filled)
June 2
Please visit the website www.stjohnofthecross.org or call the Parish Center to schedule your appointment.
If you already had your photo taken and you received a complimentary 8 x 10, the pictures are now available in the Parish Center for pick-up.

NEW Ignite Small Groups for High School and College Students!
Are you looking to spark or re-spark your faith life? Maybe you want to be closer to God but have a hard time staying connected to people who share your values in this busy world. Maybe you’ve been going through the motions or praying halfheartedly – high school or college has taken its toll on you. Or perhaps your faith is already on fire from something like Kairos or Crossroads and you don’t want the flame to die down over the summer! Whatever your story may be, Ignite is for you! Ignite is a weekly small group faith-sharing program for high school and college students. We will get together and talk about the struggles and successes we’ve had following Jesus. Discussions will be Scripture-based where each week we will look at a gospel passage and talk about how it applies to our daily lives. Ignite has changed my life and I hope you will let me share it with you!
Please contact me, Ashley Klesken, at aklesken33@aol.com or 708-299-1737 if you have questions or are interested in being a small group leader. Otherwise, just show up to our first small group night on Wednesday, June 10 at 7:30pm at the St. John of the Cross Parish Center. We will meet every Wednesday over the summer starting June 10, so feel free to come every week or just stop by any week that works with your schedule. I hope you’re ready to make new friends and set your faith on fire!

MEGA RIDE BRACELETS ON SALE NOW!
Pre-sale Price: $50
Good for unlimited rides during entire SJC FEST!
Mega Pass Vouchers are now available for $50 on a pre-sale basis only. Vouchers can be redeemed at the carnival voucher redemption booth for an unlimited ride wristband during the entire SJC Fest from June 25th-28th.

PURCHASE AT THESE LOCATIONS:
Parish Center Office
School Office (see Val Nelson)
Order Online
After Masses

Only a limited number of vouchers will be sold at the reduced price!

MEGA PASSES are non-transferrable, non-replaceable and non-refundable.

Parish Center Office will accept checks only, payable to SJC FEST.

Don’t forget to purchase your SJC FEST RAFFLE TICKETS!

For additional information, please call Diane Schick at (708) 292-1100
Let us seek the grace of a cheerful heart, an even temper, sweetness, gentleness, and brightness of mind, as walking in His light, and by His grace. Let us pray Him to give us the spirit of ever-abundant, ever-springing love, which overpowers and sweeps away the vexations of life by its own richness and strength, and which above all things unites us to Him Who is the fountain and the center of all mercy, loving-kindness and joy.

~John Henry Newman
Three significant truths rooted in the Resurrection highlight the reasons for our joy.

First, the Resurrection is a proclamation that Jesus is alive and present with us. In the Resurrection appearances, the disciples experienced Jesus in their midst. The same Jesus who had walked with them now again touched their lives, and spoke and ate with them. But Jesus was radically changed. Clearly, Jesus had not simply come back to life like Lazarus did. Jesus now lived the glorious life beyond death, but he was again with them. The Resurrection proclaims that Jesus is with us as well. Luke’s story of the Ascension is not a declaration of Jesus’ absence. Luke is announcing that Jesus is now present in every space and time. We encounter Jesus in the Scripture, in the sacraments, and in our brothers and sisters. As we recall the stories of the Resurrection appearances, Christ is once again with us, forgiving, feeding, and consoling.

Second, death has been conquered. Death opens the way to eternal life. Jesus gives witness to God’s faithfulness even in death. We need not be afraid of death since it is not the end, but the beginning of eternal life. Jesus’ Resurrection gives meaning to suffering and death as a way to salvation.

Third, Jesus’ Resurrection affirms the value of the human person and the world in which we live. Jesus was raised as a whole person—body and soul. Jesus did not take on human flesh and then discard it. Jesus retained his whole humanity. Along with the doctrines of the Incarnation and the Eucharist, the Resurrection assures us that God has identified with matter. God has embraced the human condition. A profound unity forever exists between God and the world, between spirit and matter. As Christians, we do not believe simply in the immortality of the soul. We believe in the immortality of the human person. Jesus’ Resurrection and ours speak of continuity between this life and the next. Jesus’ Resurrection also acknowledges the value of creation.

For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God; for the creation was subjected to futility, not of its own creation. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in labor pains until now; and not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly while we wait for adoption, the redemption of our bodies. (Romans 8:19-22)

This world is a gift of an all-loving God. Our faith in the Resurrection assures us that everything of beauty and love and creativity lasts forever. The Resurrection is the foundation of a holistic view of the human person and an incarnational and sacramental view of life.

Living the Gospel

As the Jesus of history takes his leave of this world, it is clear that he intends his saving mission to continue. Seemingly without question, fear, or hesitation, the disciples “went forth.” But they did not go forth alone: “the Lord worked with them.” The mission, the work, and the signs are of the Lord Jesus. The disciples “who went forth and preached everywhere” were of the Lord Jesus. This relationship is the guarantee of Jesus’ continued mission. So the gospel raises this question for disciples today: Are we of the Lord Jesus?

Before we even celebrate Pentecost we are already hearing about our taking up the mission of Christ. This mission describes our Christian living—preaching the Gospel. The ascension is a call to all the baptized, reminding us that baptism is far more than having original sin taken away; it is a receiving of the Spirit by which we are grafted onto the Body of Christ. Baptism is our Pentecost and it includes a mission. It initiates us into a way of life whereby we are of the Lord Jesus. The gospel reminds us that the bearers of the Good News—those who continue Jesus’ saving mission today—are ordinary people. This would seem to be an overwhelming and impossible task. How can we fill Jesus’ shoes and continue the divine saving work? We can’t, on our own. But Jesus assured us that he would work with us. Always, the mission is Christ’s and we accomplish it by the strength and life of the Spirit who dwells in us who are baptized. It is the Spirit who works in us. This is why ordinary people can with enthusiasm, commitment, and love—and without question, fear, or hesitation—take up Jesus’ saving mission.

Excerpt from Putting on the Heart of Christ: How the Spiritual Exercises Invite Us to a Virtuous Life by Gerald M. Fagin, SJ.
On Monday, our students gathered in the church for the annual May Crowning and Ribbon Ceremony. Our second graders wore their First Communion clothes and lined the pews to welcome our eighth graders into church. It was a beautiful prayer service honoring Mary.

After the May Crowning, our eighth graders were all given ribbons by their first grade buddies to commemorate their time at St. John of the Cross Parish School. After the ribbon ceremony, faculty and staff gave all the eighth graders special wishes for their futures.

This year’s ceremony was extra special as this eighth grade class was our very first preschool class. Many of these children have been with us for eleven years.

This Week at SJC
May 19  School Advisory Board  7:00pm
May 21  8th Grade Great America Trip  All Day
May 22  1st Grade Author’s Day  2:00pm

Family Connection

It can be very important whom we sit next to. Any family that has tried to sit down to a family dinner or packed the car for a trip has heard children argue at least once about who should sit where. To sit next to someone, especially if that person is important, is to have a place of honor. Jesus has this place of honor seated at God’s right hand, but there’s more to this metaphor than where Jesus sits in relation to God. To be in the place of honor is also to be in a place of power. Knowing people in powerful places can be helpful. Our children remind us of this each time we are called upon to referee a conflict. Jesus, honored at God’s right hand, is a powerful ally for us.

As you gather as a family, recall a time when there was a discussion, or perhaps even an argument, about where people were going to sit. Talk about why it might be important to a person to sit in a particular place. Observe that in today’s Gospel we will learn about Jesus’ place in heaven. Read together today's Gospel, Mark 16:15-20. Talk about what we might learn about the relationship between God and Jesus from today’s Gospel and what we learn about Jesus’ relationship to us. Observe that one of the things we learn is that Jesus continues to help us from this place of honor in heaven. Pray together the Apostles’ Creed.

NCYC Registration Deadline Today!
The National Catholic Youth Conference will be held in Indianapolis, November 19-21. Registration forms can be found on our website, www.stjohnofthecross.org/crossroads.

End of Year Event Today!
Brush up on your trivia and join us for our year-end social tonight, Sunday, May 17 at 6:00 p.m. in the Parish Center.

Softball Registration Closes Today!
Co-ed Summer softball teams are now forming. We’ll play at Springdale Park on Sunday evenings beginning June 7. Register on our website.

Work Tour Update
- We have room for 6 more teens and 2 adults to join us at Habitat for Humanity in WV July 12-18. Teens must be at least 16 years of age, but do not have to be Crossroads members to attend a Work Tour.
- Two more adults are needed for our trip to OLPH in KY, August 1-8. Registration forms are on our website, www.stjohnofthecross.org/crossroads/work-tours/ Contact Joe Gazdacka at 708-246-3965 with questions.

Kairos 20 registration is open! Register on our website, www.stjohnofthecross.org/crossroads/retreats/ by June 30.
Outreach

This is a good article that describes one of the many not-for-profit agencies we at SJC support.

We Are Not Trying to Change the World

The first thing that I discover as a new member of the St. Vincent de Paul Society is that if I want to help the poor and expect to be thanked for it, then I am working for the wrong charity.

Everyone in the group is a volunteer. We have no executive director, no volunteer coordinator, and no recognition dinner at the end of the year. We do have an elected president, a vice-president, and a secretary, each of whom carry the responsibility of filling out and archiving the mountain of paperwork involved in running a nonprofit. These additional burdens are considerable, and no one expects the officers to stand at the door at closing time to shake our hands in gratitude as we leave for the day.

What’s more, the people we help are not usually having the best day of their lives when we meet them. They walk through our door seeking assistance with an eviction notice, a utility shut-off, or a prescription medicine they can’t afford, and they are more likely to be angry at the situation they find themselves in rather than bursting with gratitude.

Saint Vincent de Paul himself understood well the loss of dignity that needy people suffer, and he admonished his followers like this:

“Don’t make the poor ask for what God, their Father, wants them to have. We should apologize if they have to ask for what they need.”

The gentleman is blue collar, anxious, obviously unused to asking for help. He questions me quietly so that no one else in the store will overhear.

“Do you give clothes to people who need them? It’s not for me, it’s for my cousin.”

“Young cousin has to come down and ask for himself,” I tell him.

“He works five in the morning until seven. He just got the job and can’t miss, but he only has one pair of pants.” I must look a little skeptical at this claim.

He hesitates but then explains. “He just got out of prison. It was his second time.” A shrug. “Anyway, I told his parole officer that he could live with me until he got on his feet. He’s family; if I don’t give him a chance, who will? They taught him to hang drywall in there. This is the first decent job he’s ever had, but he doesn’t get paid until next Friday. I gave him some of my pants but he’s six foot three and skinny as a rail. No way he can fit in my stuff. You know anything about drywall? The dust? His pants stand up by themselves when he takes them off. There’s no time to wash and dry them.”

On the clothes racks we find sweatpants, shirts, socks, and a winter coat. As I bag the clothes, he asks, “Can I rake your leaves? I’d like to do something to help you folks out. I’ll make sure my cousin comes in to thank you when he gets a day off, and I’ll bring them off. There’s no time to wash and dry them.”

The man rakes every leaf into a tidy pile. When he comes back inside, he is no longer anxious or uneasy. He shakes our hands, gathers up his small bag of clothing and walks out.

This man raking the leaves at the St. Vinnie’s thrift shop is confirmation of a nagging suspicion I have about the place. Gradually, over the first few months that I work there, it starts to become uneasily clear to me that we are not trying to change the world. We aren’t trying to change poor people either. The only thing it seems we are trying to change is ourselves.

Excerpted from Thrift Store Saints: Meeting Jesus 25¢ at a Time, written by Jane Knuth Loyola Press

Gym Shoe Collection
7th Grade Confirmation Candidate, Evan Gardner, thinks BIG!! Evan put together a flyer asking his neighbors to contribute new or gently used shoes for our parish summer gym shoe drive. Evan collected and dropped off lots of shoes last Saturday!! The gym shoes will be donated to those in need through Sharing Connections in Downers Grove as well as at Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation and Kolbe House Prison Ministry in Chicago. Drop off your donation today at the Parish Center. Thank you Evan for taking the initiative to help those who are poor.

During the month of May our donations to the food pantry collection in the church narthex will be delivered to Mary Queen of Heaven Church in Chicago. Please help us feed the hungry by bringing healthy nonperishable food when you come to Mass. Thank you for your continued support.
Outreach

Women’s Club Donates Flowers to PBMR
Mary Beth Drafz and Theresa Reyes help Bill Bright load flowers donated by our parish Women’s Club that were delivered to Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation (PBMR). Stop in to say hi to Mary Beth and Theresa in the Parish Center front office.

In addition to the flowers, PBMR will plant vegetables, fruits and herbs donated by our parish in their gardens this weekend. At the end of summer, PBMR will invite their neighbors to come and share in their harvest so many can enjoy the fruits of their labors.

Thank You Corner

Kolbe House received SJC’s $1500 sharing check. I am very grateful for your care and consideration in connection with our ministry to the incarcerated. These spring days are fast becoming summer days. During these good months, families are able to refresh themselves by taking vacations or just enjoying the outdoors with friends. I enjoy the simple pleasure of going outside without a coat. I also admire our Kolbe House volunteers who give their time by faithfully fulfilling their commitment of visiting the incarcerated at Cook and Lake County Jails and with Fr. Kelly in the Juvenile Detention Center. Their examples encourage all of us.

The volunteer work of parishioners from SJC underscores our mutual commitment. They provide the back up support that we need in order to make our visits happen and to provide for the needs of ex-offenders and their families. I know that there are parishioners who have also committed themselves to praying for us. In whatever season we find ourselves, we form one Body of Christ, one Church at the service of God’s people.

Rev. Arturo Perez Rodriguez

I just wanted to send a thank you for the generous donation of $500 for the support of the youth and families we serve. Your gift means that we will be able to provide greater support and guidance to youth and care for their families.

PBMR works to provide the kind of care and support that enables them to become successful. So many youth have the talent and ability, but need the guidance and support of mentors and support programs. When they have a caring adult in their lives, it is amazing how well they can do. One of the sad realities is that many of the youth don’t have what I grew up expecting—a caring adult and the necessary support. With your help, we are able to be there for these young people and their families. Your generosity and kindness is sincerely appreciated. We are blessed to have all of you.

Rev. Dave Kelly

A happy and blessed Easter to all of you. Jesus is risen. Alleluia! In the name of all of the parishioners of St. Thaddeus, I want to say thank you for all that you do for our parish. There are so many ways that you touch our lives. Your monthly sharing gift helps us remain financially solid. Thank you also for your donations of Thanksgiving turkeys and Easter hams to our St. Vincent de Paul Society and for the Halloween candy that always puts a big smile on the students’ faces. The Share Christmas program allows us, in your name, to make Christmas special for so many families and also supports the teen mothers’ program that we are affiliated with on the south side.

Thank you from all of us for your generosity over the years. Know you are in our prayers.

Rev. Frank Sasso and the Parishioners of St. Thaddeus

Outreach is not a task for a few, but a challenge for the entire parish community.
Parish News

Job Search Help
LinkedIn for Beginners
Learn why your LinkedIn profile is the second most important job hunting tool, next to your resume. Speaker, Kevin Loughney, will focus on different ways to use this free tool to improve your job search. He will present ways to set up and utilize LinkedIn for job searches. St. John of the Cross Parish Center on Tuesday, May 19, 7-9pm.

Using the Internet for Your Job Search: Tools, Tips and Techniques Your Competition Isn’t Using
Learn the secrets of effectively getting your resume noticed by recruiters and hiring managers. Understand the “WHY” behind doing certain tricks and techniques to get noticed in today’s job market. Learn search engine tips so that you can effectively find and network with potential recruiters. St. John of the Cross Parish Center Thursday, May 21, from 7-9pm. For more information www.interfaithcareernetwork.org

Men’s Club Golf Outing
The SJC Men’s Club invites all men to a golf outing on Friday June 5 at Flagg Creek.
Cost: $27 includes golf, cart, 2 beverage tickets and entry into contests.
Contests: Low score, long drive, closest to the pin.
Tee Times: 1:00 to 2:17pm
Sign-up: Forms can be found on the Parish Men's Club Web Site. Please drop off the form or a note with your name and/or name of the foursome, contact information, and a check(s) made payable to the SJC Men’s Club to the Parish Center.
Questions: Contact Dan Montgomery (312.952.1435) or John Cisek (708-784-1998).

May is Mental Health Month
According to the National Institute of Health, in a given year about one in four people have a diagnosable mental disorder, such as depression, bipolar disease, schizophrenia, among others. One in 17 people has a severe mental illness. These mental health challenges encompass biological, psychological, social, and spiritual dimensions of the individuals affected. These challenges also impact the lives of the person’s family. This situation is compounded by the stigma attached to mental illness by others in society. Unfortunately, negative attitudes and beliefs toward people who have a mental health condition are common. Others’ judgments almost always stem from a lack of understanding rather than information based on the facts. Due to the stigma associated with mental illness, people with mental illness and their families often feel isolated from their faith community and thus isolated from God. As a faith community, we are called to support individuals and their families through their time of crisis when the illness first occurs and in the ensuing life with and ongoing recovery from it. The spiritual dimension is critical to the recovery process. We can offer spiritual comfort and practical support of their physical needs. In justice, our advocacy is needed to address the stigma and resulting discrimination that can occur. For more information, visit the National Catholic Partnership on Disability at http://www.ncpd.org/ministries-programs/specific/mentalillness

Get Involved!
The Parish Men’s Club is seeking a candidate to fill the office of President. If you are interested please contact Bill Bright at bbright@stjohnofthecross.org or Barrett Long at longbarrett@hotmail.com.

Next Week is Senior Week
Stop in the Parish Center to pick up your guide to special activities planned for Seniors in our community beginning tomorrow, May 18th. Also included are resources in our area that may be of interest Seniors.

We pray that the Holy Spirit will inspire Christians everywhere to open their hearts and arms to welcome those who face mental illness.
Congratulations to Irene and Sean Rooney on the baptism of their son, Sean Brendan Jr. last Sunday. If you would like information about getting your child baptized at our parish, just give our front office staff a call on weekdays between 9am and 4pm.

Jack Shea Program at The Well

A perhaps too facile evaluation is that we spend most of our lives getting through to Friday and, hopefully, resting on the weekend, only to begin the process again. However, “things happen.” We find ourselves in experiences that shift our awareness, support the best in us, and suggest new behaviors. Spiritual traditions greatly prize the consciousness that these experiences initiate. Much to our surprise, we become accidental mystics. We will spend time describing these types of “spiritually significant” experiences and charting their impact on our development.

Saturday, May 30, 2015 9 - Noon

Facilitator, Jack Shea, is a theologian and storyteller who lectures nationally and internationally on storytelling in world religions, faith-based health care and contemporary spirituality.

Free to St. John of the Cross parishioners. Call the Parish Center office to register. The Well Spirituality Center is located at 1515 W. Ogden Ave. in LaGrange Park.

In the next 48 hours, overdo the gratitude — both in prayer and in person — express your appreciation as though you’re only allowed to keep those blessings that you show that you are clearly and genuinely thankful for possessing.

What are you most grateful for today?

Ignatian Spirituality.

Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults

RCIA or the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is the way that those interested in the Catholic Church learn about the faith and join our community. The process traces its roots back to the earliest days of Christian communities.

The process is for . . .

- Those never baptized who would like to become a Catholic,
- Those baptized in another Christian Church who would like to become Catholic, or
- Those already baptized as a Catholic but who have not received the Sacraments of Eucharist or Confirmation.

The RCIA gives people on a faith journey an opportunity to discover not only what the Catholic Church and a life of faith in it is all about, but also an opportunity to explore how Jesus Christ may be calling them into his life in a deeper way. If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about becoming Catholic invite them to contact Fr. Bill at 708-246-4404.

My Lord and my God,
You have formed my inmost being, and you have made plans to give me a future full of hope. Grant me the grace to desire you with a whole heart, so that in desiring you I may seek and find you; and so finding you, may love you. Form and guide me to trust you and be your witness to all the world. Amen.
Eucharist: Body of Christ, Broken for the World

The Eucharist is “the source and summit of the Christian life” (Lumen Gentium [Dogmatic Constitution on the Church], no. 11). In the Eucharistic Liturgy and our prayer before the Blessed Sacrament, we encounter God’s presence in personal and profound ways. But the Eucharist is also social, as Pope Benedict XVI reminds us in Deus Caritas Est (God Is Love): “A Eucharist which does not pass over into the concrete practice of love is intrinsically fragmented” (no. 14). The Eucharist, celebrated as a community, teaches us about human dignity, calls us to right relationship with God, ourselves, and others. As the Body of Christ, it sends us on mission to help transform our communities, neighborhoods, and world. Church teaching, rooted in both Scripture and Tradition, emphasizes both the personal and social natures of the Eucharist. This guide highlights Popes Paul VI, John Paul II, and Benedict XVI’s writings about the social nature of the Eucharist. Their words challenge and move us to encounter Christ in the Eucharist in ways both personal and social.

The Eucharist unifies and heals divisions. St. Paul taught that the celebration of the Eucharist is insincere if there are divisions within the community based on class (1 Cor 11), status, or privilege (Rom 12), or if there are factions within the community (1 Cor 1). Partaking in the Sacrament as equals in the Body of Christ challenges us to unity as one family.

The Eucharist sensitizes us to those who suffer. As we meditate on the Eucharist, we experience Christ’s love for us—and for others. In the depth of prayer, we become so moved and sensitized to his love for those who suffer that the words of St. Augustine become a reality for us: “The pain of one, even the smallest member, is the pain of all” (Sermo Denis).

The Eucharist moves us and inspires us to respond. In the Eucharist, the boundlessness of the Father’s love “springs up within us a lively response” that causes us to “begin to love” (Dominicae Cenae, no. 5). Contemplating Christ’s sacrifice for the world in need, we are compelled to follow his example. Drawn “into the very dynamic of his self-giving” we are moved to self-giving action in solidarity with the members of our human family who face injustice (Deus Caritas Est, no. 13). St. John Chrysostom’s words in the fourth century become real for us as we reflect on Matthew 25:31-46: Do you wish to honor the Body of Christ? Do not ignore him when he is naked.

We experience the Eucharist as a community. The Eucharist draws each of us closer to Christ as individuals, but also as a community. As Catholics, we never really worship alone. At the Eucharistic Liturgy, we gather with the young and old, the rich and poor, as well as millions around the world and the saints in heaven, to celebrate Christ’s sacrifice. This powerful reality reminds us, in the words of Pope John Paul II: “A truly Eucharistic community cannot be closed in upon itself.” (Ecclesia de Eucharistia [On the Eucharist], no. 39); rather the Eucharist challenges us to recognize our place within a community and the human family.

The Eucharist awakens us to our own dignity and to that of others. The Eucharist is a sign of our incomparable dignity as human persons. This dignity, given to all equally, regardless of our social or economic status or where we come from (Jas 2:1-9), causes us to recognize “what value each person, our brother or sister, has in God’s eyes, if Christ offers Himself equally to each one. . . . If our Eucharistic worship is authentic, it must make us grow in awareness of the dignity of each person,” Pope John Paul II writes (Dominicae Cenae [On the Mystery and Worship of the Eucharist], no. 6).

Eucharist-inspired love allows us to live out our Christian vocation. Pope John Paul II writes that our ability to go and do likewise in imitation of Jesus’ washing of the disciples’ feet is the “criterion by which the authenticity of our Eucharistic celebrations is judged” (Mane Nobiscum Domine [Stay with us, Lord], no. 28). “Eucharistic worship,” he says, is the expression of “the love that springs up within us from the Eucharist”—that love which is “the authentic and deepest characteristic of the Christian vocation” (Dominicae Cenae, no. 5).

The Eucharist challenges us to recognize and confront structures of sin. The Risen Christ in the Eucharist acts as “a compelling force for inner renewal, an inspiration to change the structures of sin in which individuals, communities and at times entire peoples are entangled” (Pope John Paul II, Dies Domini [On Keeping the Lord’s Day Holy], no. 73). These structures include racism, violence, injustice, poverty, exploitation, and all other systemic degradation of human life or dignity. As Pope Benedict XVI reminds us, our “fraternal communion” in the Eucharist leads to “a determination to transform unjust structures and to restore respect for the dignity of all men and women, created in God’s image and likeness” (Pope Benedict XVI, Sacramentum Caritatis [Sacrament of Charity], no. 89).

The Eucharist prepares us for mission. In the face of the sin and injustice we see present in our communities and in our world, the Eucharist “plants a seed of living hope in our daily commitment to the work before us,” challenging us to live “Eucharistic” lives. It affirms our role as citizens and as men and women in various professions at different levels of society in “contributing with the light of the Gospel to the building of a more human world, a world fully in harmony with God’s plan” (Ecclesia de Eucharistia, no. 20).

The Eucharist propels us forth to transform the world. The Eucharist “increases, rather than lessens, our sense of responsibility for the world today.” Christ in the Eucharist calls us to build “a more human world, a world fully in harmony with God’s plan” (Ecclesia de Eucharistia, no. 20). Filled with awe for all we have received in Christ’s self-gift, we respond with service and works of charity. We act to transform unjust structures, policies, and laws that degrade human life and dignity.
God Bless Our First Communicants
What's the use of an old-fashioned, hand-held lantern? Well, its light can be quite useful when it's pitch-dark, but it becomes superfluous and unnoticeable in the noonday sun. Still, this doesn't mean its light is bad, only that it's weak.

If we hold that image in our minds, we will see both a huge irony and a profound lesson in the Gospels when they describe the arrest of Jesus. The Gospel of John, for example, describes his arrest this way: "Judas brought the cohort to this place together with guards sent by the chief priests and Pharisees, all carrying lanterns and torches." John wants us to see the irony in this, that is, the forces of this world have come to arrest and put on trial, Jesus, the Light of the world, carrying weak, artificial light, a lantern in the face of the Light of the world, puny light in the full face of the noonday sun. As well, in naming this irony, the Gospels are offering a second lesson: when we no longer walk in the light of Christ, we will invariably turn to artificial light.

This image, I believe, can serve as a penetrating metaphor for how the criticism that the Enlightenment has made of our Christian belief in God stands before what it is criticizing. That criticism has two prongs.

The first prong is this: The Enlightenment (Modernist Thought) submits that the God that is generally presented by our Christian churches has no credibility because that God is simply a projection of human desire, a god made in our own image and likeness, and a god that we can forever manipulate to serve self-interest. Belief in such a god, they say, is adolescent in that it is predicated on a certain naiveté, on an intellectual blindness that can be flushed out and remedied by a hard look at reality. An enlightened mind, it is asserted, sees belief in God as self-interest and as intellectual blindness.

There is much to be said, positively, for this criticism, given that much, much of atheism is a parasite off of bad theism. Atheism feeds off bad religion and, no doubt, many of the things we do in the name of religion are done out of self-interest and intellectual blindness. How many times, for instance, has politics used religion for its own ends? The first prong of the criticism that the Enlightenment makes of Christian belief is a healthy challenge to us as believers.

But it's the second prong of this criticism that, I believe, stands like a lantern, a weak light, dwarfed in the noonday sun. Central to the Enlightenment's criticism of belief in God is their assertion (perhaps better called prejudice) that faith is a naiveté, something like belief in Santa and the Easter Bunny, that we outgrow as we mature and open our minds more and more to knowledge and what's empirically evident in the world. What we see through science and honest observation, they believe, eventually puts to death our belief in God, exposing it as a naiveté. In essence, the assertion is that if you face up to the hard empirical facts of reality without blinking, with honesty and courage, you will cease to believe in God. Indeed, the very phrase "the Enlightenment" implies this. It's only the unenlightened, pre-modernist mind that still can believe in God. Moving beyond belief in God is enlightenment.

Sadly, Christianity has often internalized this prejudice and expressed it (and continues to express it) in the many forms of fear and anti-intellectualism within our churches. Too often we unwittingly agree with our critics that faith is a naiveté. We do it by believing the very thing our critics assert, namely, that if we studied and looked at things hard enough we would eventually lose our faith. We betray this in our fear of the intellectual academy, in our paranoia about secular wisdom, in some of our fears about scientific knowledge, and by forever warning people to protect themselves against certain inconvenient truths within scientific and secular knowledge. In doing this, we, in fact, concede that the criticism made against us is true and, worse still, we betray that fact that we do not think that the truth of Christ will stand up to the world.

But, given the penetrating metaphor highlighted in Jesus’ arrest, there’s another way of seeing this: After we have conceded the truth of the legitimate findings of science and secular wisdom and affirmed that they need to be embraced and not defended against, then, in the light of John's metaphor (worldly forces, carrying lanterns and torches, as they to arrest the Light of world to put it on trial), we should also see how dim are the lights of our world, not least, the criticism of the Enlightenment.

Lanterns and torches are helpful when the sun is down, but they're utterly eclipsed by the light of the sun. Worldly knowledge too is helpful in its own way, but it is more-than dwarfed by the light of the Son.

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser, theologian, teacher, and award-winning author, is President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, TX.
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Mass Intentions</th>
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<tr>
<td>Monday, May 18</td>
<td>St. John I, Pope and Martyr</td>
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<td></td>
<td>7:45am Alice Sobey; John F. Rooney, Sr.</td>
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<td>Tuesday, May 19</td>
<td>Easter Weekday</td>
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<td>7:45am Deceased members of the O’Malley &amp; Madigan families; Our Beloved Dead</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday, May 20</td>
<td>St. Bernardine of Siena, Priest</td>
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<td>7:45am William Kuhn; Tom Gowgiel</td>
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<td>Thursday, May 21</td>
<td>St. Christopher Magallanes, Priest, and Companions, Martyrs</td>
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<td>7:45am Chuck McGregor; JoAnn Stoeder</td>
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<td>Friday, May 22</td>
<td>St. Rita of Cascia, Religious</td>
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<td>7:45am Martin J. Kelly; Herb Nilles</td>
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<td>Saturday, May 23</td>
<td>Easter Weekday</td>
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<td>8:00am Suzanne Eley; Ted Kauss</td>
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<td>5:00pm Pat O’Connor; Philip Hecker</td>
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<td>Sunday, May 24</td>
<td>Solemnity of Pentecost</td>
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<td>7:30am Pat Cavalieri; Teri Cullen</td>
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<td>9:00am James J. Reilly; Anne Kajutis</td>
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<td>10:45am Mitch Allen; Jack Doyle</td>
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<td>No 12:15 Mass—Summer Schedule</td>
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<td>5:00pm John Higgins; Wayne Healy</td>
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<td>Monday, May 25</td>
<td>St. Bede the Venerable, Priest and Doctor of the Church, St. Gregory VII, Pope, St. Mary Magdalene de’ Pazzi, Virgin</td>
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<td></td>
<td>9:00am Suzanne Eley; Richard Baruth</td>
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**Pray for our Sick**

Lori Cook

Marie Coyne

Thomas Jenders

Don King

Norb Koziol

Patricia Shannon

**Pray for our Beloved Dead**

Joseph James Kowalski, father of Joel, grandfather of Billy, Grace and Ari

Craig Harris, brother of Scott and Dee Harris, uncle of Amanda, Melissa and Matthew

Mary Zupancic, sister of Ron Lipinski

**Wedding Banns**

Elizabeth Hussey & Alexander Garreau

Anne Munaretto & Adam Hite

Hannah Rose Fisher & Liam Rhatigan

Let us learn to live with kindness, to love everyone, even when they do not love us.

Pope Francis @Pontifex · May 9
Vacation Bible School for Girls & Boys!!

It’s time to start thinking about **SUMMER**!

Come to our parish Vacation Bible School where you will **LEARN** what’s so great about God, **EXPLORE** the nature of God, and **SERVE** God in practical ways through interactive games, skits, songs, and crafts.

**July 29-July 2 from 9am to Noon**

VBS is for kids entering kindergarten through 5th grade in the fall. The cost is $35 which covers the program, t shirt, crafts and snacks. You can register at the YC Office or website. Space is limited. High school and adult crew leaders needed and appreciated. Register by June 1.
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