“Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.”

18th Sunday of Ordinary Time    August 2, 2015
Dear Parishioners,

I recently came across an article that reminded me of my experience when I was able to visit Greece several years ago. Written by a priest, he recalled his trip to Delphi. All that is there today are ruins. The author put it this way: “For more than 800 years, people flocked to consult the famed oracle, bathe in the springs and worship in temples of Apollo and Athena. Today, nobody comes to worship. It is a ruin, an archeological museum. Looking at the shrine, I wondered out loud to my classmate: “Could this happen to us? Could what happened in Delphi happen in Rome?”

He goes on to cite a host of statistics that come from a recent PEW Research Center report. Some of them are:

- In the Chicago archdiocese, Catholics declined from 43 percent of the population in 1980 to 35 percent in 2015. Chicago had 1,000 fewer priests in 2014 than it had in 1980. There were also 10,000 fewer baptisms, half as many weddings, and 33 percent fewer funerals annually.
- Nationwide, Catholic priests are an endangered species. Today, there are 3,496 U.S. parishes that have no resident pastor. There are nearly 20,000 fewer priests in the United States than there were 25 years ago, dropping from 52,124 to 38,275.
- Half the diocesan priests in the United States will retire in the next five years. Religious orders of brothers and sisters are disappearing even faster than diocesan priests. There are only about 50,000 U.S. nuns today, down from almost 180,000 in 1965. The only really bright spot in the vocations picture is the permanent deaconate. We have more than 17,000 permanent deacons, up from about 900 in 1975. Maybe marriage helps.
- Sacramental participation is way down. In 2014, there were less than half as many Catholic weddings as in 1980; more than 200,000 fewer infant baptisms than in 1980; and 50,000 fewer funerals than in 1990.

The statistic that I have come across repeatedly since this report was published is the one about half of the current diocesan priests who will retire in 5 years. In 1980 a priest had to be ordained nearly 25 years before he became a pastor (exactly what happened to Fr. Joe when he came here). I was ordained twelve years when I first became pastor of St. Gall. It is not fair for the priest and even more so for the people when today a priest ordained less than five years becomes pastor.

In spite of how the statistics can lead us to being depressed about the dying of the church of our youth, the author remains hopeful. “So it’s not a foolish question. Are we going out of business (like the oracle of Delphi)? I think the answer is both “yes” and “no.” ”Yes” if you think of the church as an institution in the 1950s model. ”No” if you think of the church as a movement of the followers of Jesus Christ. Despite all, I’m looking forward in hope. Something will rise in the ruins of the old church. People will still need religion. We will always look for ways to make life holy, happy and sacred. We still have souls. People need ritual to grieve and celebrate. We always will seek meaning, desire forgiveness and wonder about death. The church is relevant so long as the teaching of Jesus is relevant. As the Letter to the Hebrews says, ”Christ is the same yesterday, today and forever” (Hebrews 13:8). Institutions come and go, but the Gospel goes on, speaking to the human heart. So can Delphi happen in Rome? Yes. Perhaps it already has.”

St. John of the Cross put it this way: “Well and good if all things change as long as we remain rooted in you.”

Peace,

Fr. David
A Prayer for our Earth

All powerful God,
you are present in the universe
and in the smallest of your creatures.
You embrace with your tenderness
all that exists.

Pour out upon us
the power of your love,
that we may protect life and beauty.

Fill us with your peace,
that we may live
as brothers and sisters,
harming no one.

O God of the poor,
help us to rescue the abandoned
and forgotten of this earth,
so precious in your eyes.
Bring healing to our lives,
that we may protect the world
and not prey on it,
that we may sow beauty,
not pollution and destruction.

Touch the hearts
of those who look only for gain
at the expense of the poor and the earth.

Teach us to discover
the worth of each thing,
to be filled with awe and contemplation,
to recognize that we
are profoundly united
with every creature
as we journey towards
your infinite light.

We thank you for being with us each day.
Encourage us, we pray,
in our struggle,
for justice, love and peace.

‘A prayer for our earth’ was published in Pope
Francis’ encyclical, Laudato Si’.

We must protect creation for it is a gift which
the Lord has given us, it is God’s present to
us; we are the guardians of creation. When we
exploit creation, we destroy that sign of God’s
love. Pope Francis, General Audience, 21 May 2014

- Think about a precious gift you’ve been given.
- Why is it important to you?
- Where do you personally see the sign of God’s love
  present in creation today?
- What do you think it means to be “guardians of
  creation?”
- How can we treat the earth as God wishes us to
  treat it?
- Pope Benedict XVI expressed a need for us to
  rediscover the covenant between humans and the
  environment. How do you think we can rediscover
  this covenant and build closer relationships with
  God, with each other and with creation?

Creator God,
open our eyes to see your love
throughout creation.
Inspire us to treat creation
and each other as you would,
with respect and compassion.
We ask this through Jesus
Christ, your Son, our Lord,
Amen.
Prayer

Teach me to listen, O God, to those nearest me, my family, my friends, my co-workers. Help me to be aware that no matter what words I hear, the message is, “Accept the person I am. Listen to me.” Teach me to listen, my caring God, to those far from me—the whisper of the hopeless, the plea of the forgotten, the cry of the anguished. Teach me to listen, O God my Mother, to myself. Help me to be less afraid to trust the voice inside—in the deepest part of me. Teach me to listen, Holy Spirit, for your voice—in busyness and in boredom, in certainty and doubt, in noise and in silence. Teach me, Lord, to listen. Amen.  

John Veltri, S.J

Richard Rohr Meditation

Eucharist as Touchstone

Jesus says, “If you eat this bread you will live forever” (John 6:51). You’re indestructible, as it were. You see, if I live by the momentary identity that others give me, that’s what dies when I die, and I’m left with nothing. Your relative identity is what passes away. When Jesus says He’s giving Himself to you as the “bread of life” and “If you eat this bread you will live forever,” he’s saying, “Find yourself in Me, and this will not pass or change or die. Eat this food as your primary nutrition, and you are indestructible.”

You learn to live in what Thomas Merton would call the True Self—who you are, and always have been, in God. Who you are in God is who you forever are. In fact, that’s all you are, and it is more than enough. Everything else is passing away. Reputations, titles, and roles do not determine our identity. As Paul puts it, “I live no longer; not I, but God lives in me” (Galatians 2:20). When I hand out the bread I love to say to the assembly, “You become what you eat. Come and eat who you are!”

Prayer:

Eucharisteo. I give thanks.

May we come to a deeper understanding of Jesus’ gift of himself to us as the Bread of Life.
May we seek Jesus with all our hearts and make known to others his gift of Presence and nourishment.

You don’t have to have a PhD in meditation in order to learn to meditate or to teach meditation. You only have to be learning, to be a disciple. I think it is for this reason that we could say that prayer, deep prayer—the full picture of prayer, the full meaning of prayer—is our hope for today, globally. (Laurence Freeman, Meditating as a Christian)

Download the free WCCM app for your phone or tablet. You can read articles, daily meditations, opening and closing prayers and use a great timer for your meditation.

Continuous prayer means that we open our hearts to this eternal stream of love flowing in the heart of God, and we enter into that and our lives are flooded by it. Remember, St. Paul speaks about the love of God that “floods the inmost heart through the Holy Spirit he has given us.” This is the essential Christian experience: to know that our inmost heart has been flooded. It is not just filled, but actually overflowing, with this love of God through the Holy Spirit. This is the theology of all Christian prayer, and it is the same theology for each of those spokes of the wheel, each of those different forms of prayer.

( Laurence Freeman, Meditating as a Christian)

When everything falls apart, only one thing sustains our hope: God loves us, he loves everyone! Pope Francis @Pontifex Jul 17
**Living the Gospel**

The bread the crowd seeks is perishable. They eat this bread but become hungry again—they must keep procuring this bread. The bread Jesus offers is eternal. Those who eat this bread will never hunger again. They cannot procure this bread because it is the Father's gift: the “true bread from heaven” that is Jesus himself. There is a tension—a grave misunderstanding—between what the crowd seeks and what Jesus offers. What do we seek? Do we seek only nourishment? Or do we seek the Bread only God can give—Bread that is abundant and Life-giving? God's abundance is a sign of messianic times, of God's reign being established, of eternal Life. Our sharing in this abundance is already a sharing in the fullness of Life to come. The "bread of God . . . which comes down from heaven . . . gives life to the world." We consume the bread from heaven so that the mystery of Life may consume us, drawing us to eternal Life.

The very person of Jesus is everything for which we long. Jesus is the deep well of what's beyond our immediate satisfaction, the deep well that brings us face to face with our longing and dissatisfaction. Just as the crowd followed Jesus across the lake, looking for him to satisfy them, so must we follow Jesus as faithful disciples. We look for him in our everyday lives—in the people and circumstances around us. Looking for him, we can faithfully bring that divine Presence to others. The bread God offers us is the abiding Presence of Jesus among us, always reaching out to satisfy us with what is imperishable, what endures forever: eternal Life. ©Living Liturgy

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**Background on the Gospel**

This Sunday we continue to read from the sixth chapter of John’s Gospel, but not continuously. Our Lectionary omits John’s report of Jesus’ walking on water. This event is reported much less dramatically in John’s Gospel than in the Synoptic Gospels. After the feeding of the multitudes, the disciples leave in a boat and Jesus follows them. The disciples are said to be terrified by what they see. Jesus reassures them and rejoins them.

In today's Gospel, we learn that the crowd has noticed the departure of Jesus and his disciples and so seeks them out in Capernaum. In the dialogue that follows between Jesus and the crowds, Jesus unfolds for us the gift of himself that he gives in the Eucharist.

In today’s Gospel, there are four exchanges between Jesus and the crowd. In the first, the crowd, having followed Jesus to Capernaum, asks a very matter of fact question: “Rabbi, when did you get here?” Jesus replies by naming their motivation in pursuing him. They have been fed. Jesus acknowledges this, yet challenges them to see beyond the fulfillment of their material needs. The crowds have followed Jesus because they have been fed. They ought to be seeking out Jesus because he can give them eternal life.

As the second dialogue begins, it seems that the crowd might be on their way to accepting Jesus and his mission. They ask: “What can we do to accomplish the works of God?” Jesus replies that they must have faith in the one sent from God. But in the third dialogue, the crowd reveals their inability to see Jesus’ true identity. They ask Jesus for a sign so that they might know that Jesus is from God. How strange this sounds since Jesus has just fed more than 5000 people. What more is expected?

But the crowd cannot see beyond the surface of the sign. They show this in their interpretation of the sign that came from Moses. In their description, they identify Jesus with Moses, as if to say, as Moses gave the people manna in the desert, give us a sign so that we will know that you are from God. They are looking to identify a prophet without realizing that God is standing before them. Jesus corrects their misinterpretation, saying that the manna received by their ancestors came from God. As God fulfilled their ancestors' needs in the desert, so God has provided them with food for eternal life. In the bread that they have received from Jesus, they have received physical nourishment and also spiritual nourishment. Jesus wants the crowd to see beyond the surface to the One who provides true nourishment.

The conclusion of the dialogue reveals the crowd’s blindness. They ask for what Jesus has just told them they have found: “Sir, give us this bread always.” Jesus answers plainly that he himself is the Bread of Life they seek. Jesus himself is the Bread of Life who will satisfy every hunger and thirst. This is the first of several such statements found in John’s Gospel. We understand these better when we remember that God revealed his name to the people of Israel as “I am,” as Yahweh. Jesus is now claiming this name for himself. In the weeks ahead, we will see the offense that this gives to the people.

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Helping Yourself through Grief

- Don’t take on new responsibilities right away.
- Don’t over-extend yourself. Keep decision-making to a minimum.
- Accept help and support when offered.
- Ask for help. No one minds.
- It is very important to find someone who cares, understands, and with who you may talk freely.
- It’s okay to need comforting.
- Seek the support of others.
- Invite a relative/friend for dinner or overnight.
- Consider meeting new people.
- Be patient with yourself. Healing takes time.
- Lean into the pain. It cannot be outrun. Let the grief/healing process run its full course.
- Through this emotional period, it is okay to feel depressed.
- Crying does make you feel better.
- If Sundays, holidays, etc. are especially difficult times, schedule activities that you find particularly comforting for these times.
- Seek the help of a counselor or clergy if grief is unresolved.
- Try to get adequate rest. Go to bed earlier. Avoid caffeine.
- Good nutrition is important. Decrease junk food. Eat a balanced meal.
- Keep a journal. It is a good way to understand what you are feeling/thinking and, when reread later, you see you are getting better.
- Read. There are many helpful books on grief. If grief is understood, it is a little easier to handle.
- Exercise. It offers an opportunity to work off frustration, aids sleep.
- Try to socialize with family and friends. Don’t feel guilty if you have a good time. Your loved one would want you to be happy.
- It’s okay to be angry. You may be angry at yourself, God, your loved one, others, or just angry in general. Don’t push it down. Let it out.
- Do not have unrealistic expectations of yourself. Grief takes time. It comes and goes.
- Do things a little differently, yet try not to make a lot of changes. This sounds like a contradiction, but it is not.
- Plan new interests. Join a class (exercise, tennis, self-awareness, craft, adult education).
- Read, learn something new. Rediscover old interests, activities, friends.
- Plan things to which you can look forward - a trip, visit, lunch with a friend. Start now to build memories today for tomorrow.
- Find quotes/posters/poems that are helpful to you and post them where you can see them.
- Pray, read the Bible, trust.
- Be good to yourself.
- Do something for someone else.
- Join a volunteer or support group.
- Helping others does much to ease the pain. Reach out and touch someone.
- Be determined to work through your grief.

Remember, you will be better. Hold on to hope. Some days you just seem to exist, but better days will be back. Simply stated - put balance back in your life: PRAY, REST, WORK AND PLAY. From Safe Place by Anita Savage, Stanford CT Creighton Online Ministries
Cultivating Joy: Take better care of your health

You can be happy even when you’re suffering from illness or bad health, but that doesn’t mean you should ignore the aspects of your health that are in your control. Exercise and sleep are particularly important when it comes to happiness.

Make exercise a regular habit

Exercise isn’t just good for the body. It also has a powerful effect on mental well-being. People who exercise regularly are happier across the board. Plus, they’re also less stressed, angry, anxious, and depressed. It doesn’t really matter what kind of exercise you do, so long as you do it regularly. For best results, aim for an hour of exercise at least five days a week. If you find something you enjoy, you’ll be more likely to stick to it. So don’t think you’re limited to going to the gym or strapping on jogging shoes. Find something that suits your lifestyle and preferences. It could be taking a dance class, shooting hoops, walking in nature, joining a community sports league, playing tennis, running with your dog, swimming laps at the pool, hiking, biking, or doing yoga in the park. If you’re having trouble thinking of activities you enjoy, think back to when you were a kid. What sports or games did you like to play?

Get the sleep you need

Getting quality sleep every night directly affects your happiness, vitality, and emotional stability during the day. When you’re sleep deprived, you’re much more susceptible to stress. It’s harder to be productive, think creatively, and make wise decisions. How much sleep do you need? According to sleep scientists, the average person needs at least 7.5-9 hours each night.

The 8 Things The Happiest People Do Every Day

1. They devote a great amount of time to their family and friends, nurturing and enjoying those relationships.
2. They are comfortable expressing gratitude for all they have.
3. They are often the first to offer helping hands to coworkers and passersby.
4. They practice optimism when imagining their futures.
5. They savor life’s pleasures and try to live in the present moment.
6. They make physical exercise a weekly and even daily habit.
7. They are deeply committed to lifelong goals and ambitions (e.g., fighting fraud, building cabinets, or teaching their children their deeply held values).
8. Last but not least, the happiest people do have their share of stresses, crises, and even tragedies. They may become just as distressed and emotional in such circumstances as you or I, but their secret weapon is the poise and strength they show in coping in the face of challenge.

Here’s an interesting fact about happiness: frequency beats intensity.

What’s that mean? Lots of little good things make you happier than a handful of big things. Research shows that going to church and exercising both bring people a disproportionate amount of happiness. Why? They give us frequent, regular boosts.
St. John of the Cross Parish congratulates Travis and Susan Alexander on the baptism of their daughter, Claire Elizabeth. Pictured from left to right are Deacon John Schopp, Travis and Susan with big sister and their newborn and the godparents, Paul and Amy Buser.

St. John of the Cross Parish also congratulates Katie and Rob Hayes on the baptism of their daughter. Pictured to the left are Rob and Katie with big brother, Robbie, and infant, Hailey Josephine Hanore. Katie is our parish Director of Crossroads Teen Ministry.

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

Pre-baptism sessions are offered for parents whether it is your first child being baptized or a subsequent child. The sessions are offered on the fourth Sunday of each month at 1:30pm (noon during the summer). It is our expectation that both parents attend this session. Feel free to bring your new baby and invite the godparents too. To learn more simply call the Parish Center front office during regular business hours (9am-4pm). One of our full-time staff members will take all the necessary information and answer any questions you may have.
Haven’t been to Ignite yet?
Let God’s Spirit set your faith on fire!

Just as the Holy Spirit re-ignited the disciples’ faith at Pentecost, perhaps Ignite can spark or re-spark your faith life. Maybe you want to be closer to God but have a hard time staying connected to God 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 and you don’t want the flame to die down! Whatever your story may be, Ignite is for you. Ignite is a weekly small group Scripture-based faith-sharing program. We will split into groups of high school or college students so you can talk to others who know what you are going through. 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!

There is only one week of the summer Ignite left (August 5), but we are moving right along into continuing Ignite through the school year! That means that if you haven’t been to one of our Wednesday groups yet, you can still jump right in and join us! We break into small groups on Wednesday from 7:30-8:30pm in the Parish Center.

We are looking for small group leaders who can lead Ignite groups over the school year. The Ignite leader commitment is less than 4 hours/week. Please contact me, Ashley Klesken, at aklesken33@aol.com or 708-299-1737 if you are interested in hearing more details!

College Student Panel Discussion
Attention Recent High School Graduates!
Monday, August 10th 7-8pm

Do you ever wonder how you can practice your Catholic faith and enjoy college at the same time? Do you want to learn more about what to expect as a new college student? Do you know how to find other Catholic students on campus? For answers to these and other questions, you are invited to a lively and fun all-student panel discussion on Monday, August 10 from 7-8 pm in the Parish Center. You’ll learn helpful tips on how to make the most of your college experience from Catholic college students themselves! There will be snacks and drinks provided, so be sure to put this event on your "To Do" list! Bring a friend, and we hope to see you there!

All are welcome to attend our weekly Christian Meditation sessions in the Parish Center on Wednesdays at 2pm and Saturdays at 7am. Step 11 Meditation meets on Mondays at 10:30am.

Join us for a special Morning of Meditation:

Christian Meditation: How Does it Help us Grow?
Saturday, August 22
9 -11:30 am
Hospitality at 8:30am
Parish Center
The school year is almost here!
Want to get gently used uniform items at a great price?
Come to the annual Used Uniform Sale!
August 10 from 10am-2pm in the Parish Center
Cash and check sales only.

Upcoming Protecting God's Children Workshops at SJC
Parents, coaches or volunteers in the parish who have regular contact with children must attend a PGC workshop. SJC is offering several convenient workshops in the Parish Center on:

Tuesday, August 11 9am-Noon
Tuesday, August 11 6:30-9:30pm
Wednesday, September 9 9am-Noon
Wednesday, September 9 6:30-9:30pm
Wednesday, September 30 6:30-9:30pm

Register online at www.virtus.org. Click on “registration” on the left side, choose “begin registration process” and then choose “Chicago IL,” follow steps to register. Direct questions to Mary Beth Drafz in the Parish Center. Find other sessions at virtus.org. Bring your completed certificate from other locations to SJC.

Volunteers Needed for YC and Crossroads
Please consider sharing your faith with our parish grade school and high school teens. YC Catechists and classroom Aides as well as Crossroads Home Group Leaders are needed for the coming school year. (Crossroads Home Group Leaders work with incoming freshmen and follow them through their high school years.)

Please contact Janet Caschetta for more information about volunteering for YC (jcaschetta@stjohnofthecross.org).
Contact Terry & Mary Stadler for information about Crossroads (tjs47@att.net).

Children’s Choir Start Up dates!!

Did you know that SJC has two choirs available to all children in the parish? Mark your calendars as you schedule your kids for fall activities! Questions? Contact Ann Bourjaily-Maney at (708)246-4171 or bourjman@sbcglobal.net

Cherub Choir serves children in grades 1-3 and practices on Wednesdays from 3:45 – 4:30pm in the church. The start date is Sept. 9th with registration and a brief parent meeting at 4:20pm in church.

NEW THIS YEAR: 1st Graders will practice on Wednesdays in church, but separately from the 2nd and 3rd graders. Their practice time will be 3:45 – 4:30pm.

Youth Choir serves students in grades 4-8 and practices on Thursdays from 3:45 – 4:30pm in the church. The start date is Sept. 10th with registration and a brief parent meeting at 4:20pm.
Study on the Gospel of St. John
The Wednesday Morning Scripture Study Group will begin a new 28-week study on the Gospel of John on September 9 from 9:30-11:30am in the Parish Center. This study will involve at-home reading and preparation, a video presentation and group discussion. The study commentary is written by Scott Hahn and Mark Shea, and the lecturer for the video presentations is Fr. Patrick Winslow. The cost of materials is $47. All parishioners and friends are welcome to join us for an in-depth look into this beloved and theologically rich account of the life and times of our Lord as written by the Apostle whom Jesus loved so well. To register and order materials, please contact the Parish Center Office today!!

Interfaith Career Network will meet on Thursday, August 6 from 7-9 pm in the Parish Center to discuss career transitions. Speaker, Lauren Milligan, will cover real life examples of people who have successfully transitioned from one industry to another: how they identified and capitalized on transferrable skills and how they presented these skills on paper and in the interview. Lauren is CEO of ResuMAYDAY, a company that helps create resumes filled with impact and creativity to express the best from each job seeker.

On Saturday, August 15 from 9-11am at St. Cletus, job searchers are invited to come in for a 20-minute one-on-one conversation with a HR or other search related professional for some ideas and suggestions that may enhance or refresh your resume, provide helpful job search strategies and coaching on your elevator speech. www.interfaithcareernetwork.org

Becoming Catholic
Learn about the Catholic faith. Join our community. Discover what a life of faith is all about. Explore how Jesus may be calling you into his life in a deeper way. RCIA or the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults is open to those never baptized or baptized in another Christian faith or those baptized Catholic, but who have not received First Eucharist or Confirmation. Now is the time to give Fr. Bill Vollmer a call to learn if RCIA is for you. Call 708-246-4404 x120.

Volunteers Needed!
General volunteers, nurses, nursing assistants, interpreters, optometrists, ophthalmologists, dentists, dental hygienists, and dental assistants are needed to help at a two day clinic on September 18-19 in LaGrange. Register to volunteer at www.curenetwork.org. Call CURE Executive Director, Karen Carroll at 877-278-7631 with questions.

Our parishioner, Dr. Ken Nelson, is founder and chairman of CURE Network. The CURE (Collaborative Underserved Relief and Education) Network was created to meet the vital and ever growing need to bring free specialty medical services to the underinsured and those without insurance in the greater Chicagoland area. Since its inception in 2010, CURE Network has proudly provided over $2,700,000 of free medical, dental, and vision care to over 4,000 patients.
Getting Ready for School: Catholic Charities West Regional School Supply Drive

The Catholic Charities West Region is collecting school supplies for children of low-income families living in the western suburbs to help them succeed in school. Last year over 300 children received backpack and school supplies that empowered them to begin their school year with success.

Please drop school supplies off at the parish center lobby before August 15th. Our donations will be given to children attending the annual Health Fair at St. Frances of Rome on August 29. If you would like to volunteer at the health fair either the day before or the day of, contact Bill Bright.

Summer Collection
SJC is collecting new or gently used sheets and towels that will be donated to those in need through Sharing Connection of Downers Grove. Twin size sheets are specifically needed for the Beds Plus Care program. Donations will be collected at the Parish Center or YC Office. Thank you for your generosity!!

Food Collection in Church Narthex
During the month of August our nonperishable food donations will be delivered to the food pantry at St. Cletus Parish. Please help us feed those who are hungry.

We welcome St. Gall Parish located at 55th and Kedzie in Chicago as our newest Sharing Parish!!

Recently four members of SJC’s Outreach Committee visited St. Gall. Fr. Gary Graf, a passionate and compassionate pastor, shepherds this vibrant, primarily immigrant, faith community. It is evident that the lives of the people of St. Gall revolve around their faith. For example, on a recent July weekend, in addition to the regular liturgies, St. Gall also celebrated; 27 Baptisms, 6 Presentations, 4 Quinceaneras, 2 weddings and 2 memorial liturgies.

The investment of the parishioners of St. Gall is also evident in the recent beautification of the main entrance where Our Lady of Guadalupe is enshrined in a hand-built stone grotto with surrounding gardens.

Fr. Graf led us on an energetic tour of St. Gall’s campus buildings, beginning with the rectory which holds the staff office spaces. Next was the large and beautiful church where doors were wide open, beckoning people to prayer, rest and reflection. The expansive interior holds much of the original décor, complimented with paintings by a local artist as well as an “Immigrant’s Cross” created by Fr. Graf. Niches around the church nave honor St. Gall and Santo Toribio Romo.

245 students will enter the school program in the fall. Most of them will be in need of financial assistance. Over 900 children will be a part of the Youth Catechesis program. The school building, like the others, is in good condition overall. But there are ongoing concerns, particularly the replacement of old floor tiles in several classrooms. The former convent building is used by Catholic Charities for Outreach programs and is also the meeting place for several of the Parish groups.

On our tour Fr. Graf kept a running commentary while still managing to speak with parishioners and neighbors, gathering stray trash, giving a pep talk to new school principal, Ted Morgan, spot-checking the work of the maintenance staff and greeting the families who had come for Catholic Charities’ summer lunch program.

Repeatedly, Fr. Graf spoke of honest dialogue as the means to understanding particularly in the vein of immigration reform. He commended St. John of the Cross Parish for continuing to reach out to others in a variety of ways, to seek solutions and to do “what we are supposed to do” to build the Kingdom of God here on earth.

This is the beginning stages of St. John of the Cross Parish and St. Gall Parish developing a relationship that will enrich both communities. We invite you to commit to our new sharing parish in prayer and through outreach opportunities as they arise.

On the next page and back cover of our bulletin see pictures from our visit to St. Gall Parish. We look forward to sharing more in the weeks and months ahead.

Cathy Pesch, SJC-St. Gall Sharing Parish Representative
Rose Horvath, Outreach Advisory Committee Chairperson
Laurie Smillie, YC Jr. High Coordinator
Bill Bright, Director of Parish Outreach
A recent book, by Robyn Cadwallander, *The Anchoress*, tells the story of young woman, Sarah, who chooses to shut herself off from the world and lives as an Anchoress (like Julian of Norwich). It’s not an easy life and she soon finds herself struggling with her choice. Her confessor is a young, inexperienced, monk named Father Ranaulf. Their relationship isn’t easy. Ranaulf is a shy man, of few words, and so Sarah is often frustrated with him, wanting him to say more, to be more empathic, and simply to be more present to her. They often argue, or, at least, Sarah tries to coax more words and sympathy out of Ranaulf. But whenever she does this he cuts short the visit and leaves.

One day, after a particularly frustrating meeting that leaves Ranaulf tongue-tied and Sarah in hot anger, Ranaulf is just about to close the shutter-window between them and leave, his normal response to tension, when something inside him stops him from leaving. He knows that he must offer Sarah something, but he has no words. And so, having nothing to say but feeling obliged to not leave, he simply sits there in silence. Paradoxically his mute helplessness achieves something that his words don’t, a breakthrough. Sarah, for the first time, feels his concern and sympathy and he, for his part, finally feels present to her.

Here’s how Cadwallander describes the scene: “He took a deep breath and let it out slowly. There was no more he could say, but he would not leave her alone with such bitterness. And so he remained on his stool, feeling the emptiness of the room around him, the failure of his learning, the words he had stacked up in his mind, page upon page, shelf upon shelf. He could not speak, but he could stay; he would do that. He began to silently pray, but did not know how to go on, what to ask for. He gave up, his breath slowed.

The silence began as a small and frightened thing, perched on the ledge of his window, but as Ranaulf sat in stillness, it grew, very slowly, and filled up the parlor, wrapped itself around his neck and warmed his back, curled under his knees and around his feet, floated along the walls, tucked into the corners, nestled in the crevices of stone. … The silence slipped through the gaps under the curtain and into the cell beyond. A velvet thing, it seemed. It swelled and settled, gathering every space into itself. He did not stir; he lost all sense of time. All he knew was the woman but an arm’s length away in the dark, breathing. That was enough.

When the candle in the parlor guttered, he stirred, looked into the darkness. ‘God be with you, Sarah,’ ‘And with you, Father.’ Her voice was lighter, more familiar.”

There’s a language beyond words. Silence creates the space for it. Sometimes when we feel powerless to speak words that are meaningful, when we have to back off into unknowing and helplessness, but remain in the situation, silence creates the space that’s needed for a deeper happening to occur. But often, initially, that silence is uneasy. It begins “as a small frightened thing” and only slowly grows into the kind of warmth that dissolves tension.

There are many times when we have no helpful words to speak. We’ve all had the experience of standing by the bedside of someone who is dying, of being at a funeral or wake, of sitting across from someone who is dealing with a broken heart, or of reaching a stalemate in trying to talk through a tension in a relationship, and finding ourselves tongue-tied, with no words to offer, finally reduced to silence, knowing that anything we say might aggravate the pain. In that helplessness, muted by circumstance, we learn something: We don’t need to say anything; we only need to be there. Our silent, helpless presence is what’s needed.

And I must admit that this is not something I’ve learned easily, have a natural aptitude for, or in fact do most times when I should. No matter the situation, I invariably feel the need to try to say something useful, something helpful that will resolve the tension. But I’m learning, both to let helplessness speak and how powerfully it can speak.

I remember once, as a young priest, full of seminary learning and anxious to share that learning, sitting across from someone whose heart had just been broken, searching through answers and insights in my head, coming up empty, and finally confessing, by way of apology, my helplessness to the person across from me. Her response surprised me and taught me something I’d didn’t know before. She said simply: *Your helplessness is the most precious gift you could share with me right now. Thanks for that. Nobody expects you to have a magic wand to cure their troubles.*

Sometimes silence does become a velvet thing that swells and settles, gathering every space into itself.

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser, theologian, teacher, and award-winning author, is President of the Oblate School of Theology in San Antonio, TX.
Mass Intentions

Monday, August 3
7:45am Pauline Felicini; Edward Demski

Tuesday, August 4 St. John Vianney, Priest
7:45am Lawrence W. Clark; Danny McGovern

Wednesday, August 5 Dedication of the Basilica of St. Mary Major
7:45am Lorraine Janda; Our Beloved Dead

Thursday, August 6 Feast of the Transfiguration of the Lord
7:45am Francis Geoghegan; Bill Broderick

Friday, August 7 St. Sixtus II, Pope & Companions, Martyrs; St. Cajetan, Priest
7:45am David Myers; Sophie Grandys

Saturday, August 8 St. Dominic, Priest
8:00am Suzanne Eley; Samuel & Rose Canino
5:00pm Josephine Bachleda; Mary Jo McAuliffe

Sunday, August 9 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time
7:30am Bruno Shukis; deceased members of the Sennett Family
9:00am Tom Marshall; John Esposito
10:45am Charles Brody; Shirley Griffith
No 12:15 Mass—Summer Schedule
5:00pm Suzanne Eley; Rose Saccaro

Italics: Living Intention

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Pray for Our Sick

Dale Snow
Terry Cosgrove
Leona Hubatch
Don King
Jim Perona
Marie Daly
Bill Fanning

God of love, ever caring, ever strong, stand by us in our time of need. Watch over N., who is sick, look after him/her in every danger, and grant him/her your healing peace. O Lord, hear my prayer. Let my cry come to you, and in your great love, answer me. Amen.

Pray for Our Beloved Dead

Ramon Cruz, brother of Aurelia

Wedding Banns

Kaitlen Mayszak & Patrick Poronsky
Katie Babuskow & Michael Fry

The Village of Western Springs is looking for a crossing guard at Wolf and Hillgrove on a part-time basis during the school year. Contact Ingrid at the Village Hall for more information.
Rev. Gary Graf, Pastor of St. Gall Parish is pictured in front of the church entrance. Pictured to the left are Laurie Smillie, Rose Horvath, Cathy Pesch and Bill Bright in front of the stone grotto at St. Gall.