God’s great love for us has been revealed through Jesus. We are filled with joy.

March 6, 2016
Fourth Sunday of Lent
Dear Parishioners,

Lent is a particularly good time to reflect on where we need to be healed from the brokenness that comes with sin. Sometimes it appears like the only emphasis is on the sins we commit. It certainly includes that. That does not negate the effect of sins committed against us, whether by individuals, circumstances or the world. It also includes the sins of omission, the good we should do but omit doing by our own choosing.

When many adults were children they learned to use the Ten Commandments to examine their conscience. The Commandments are a good starting point and helpful especially for children. Adults need more, though. One way to ‘examine your conscience’ is to ask where there is pain in your life. Where do you need the touch of God to heal you so that you can live fully and freely? What is the obstacle or what weighs down your heart and spirit?

It may be the challenge of caring for an aging parent. Sexuality is an area that is the source of a number of issues for people. Teenagers and young adults make mistakes in judgement and are often as wounded as they may wound. Seniors grieve the loss of so many things as part of the aging process that anger and depression are often major issues.

Our parish communal reconciliation service is Tuesday, March 15 at 7:00pm. A number of other priests come to help. After praying together you’re invited to approach one of the nine priests in different parts of the church and to name your need for forgiveness and mercy. This is not the time for prolonged discussion. This is not counselling. This is not the appropriate time to try and solve complicated interpersonal problems. You will receive individual absolution and return to your pew for a brief communal penance. When you are ready to leave you can do so while others finish their confession. You’re usually on your way in a half hour or 45 minutes. It might be the best time you spend all Lent.

This coming Friday is the last of the luncheons that the Saintly Seniors have hosted for many years. Every thing has a life cycle and it seems we have come to the end of this parish activity. I want to thank the current leadership for working so hard for so long: Trudy Schmidt, Gerri Mazzone, (the late Marie Daly), Kay Jakicic, Ada Novi, Anna Maria Brotto, Bob Joyce, and Carolyn Kohler. We’ll see what ideas emerge that interest the seniors in the future. I’m sure new leadership will emerge at some point, and then we will try to meet the expressed needs of the seniors at that time.

Just a reminder: at 8:15 on Palm Sunday morning you are invited to gather at the Tower with other Christians from the village. We will have a common prayer and blessing of palm that will then be brought back to the individual churches and used in their worship service. We’ll be on our way home by 8:30am, and if it works like it did last year we won’t be interrupted by morning trains.

The staff and I met with Bishop Manz last Monday to give our annual ‘state of the parish’ report. I think it is very important for the bishop to meet our very dedicated and generous staff so that he knows who provides the leadership and is responsible for so many of the wonderful things that SJC offers its parishioners. I could not be more proud of the people who comprise our parish staff. With the numerous parishioner volunteers in every aspect of parish life, the staff is truly dedicated servants of the community. How blessed are we?!

The fourth week of the Lenten series, ‘12 Step Spirituality for Everyone,’ continues this week on Tuesday evening and repeated on Thursday afternoon. Attendance at prior weeks is not necessary to attend this weeks opportunity. Please come.

Until the Breaking of the Bread,

Fr. David

Central and Eastern Europe Collection
For many in the Church in Central and Eastern Europe, as well as parts of Asia, the aftermath of 70 years of Soviet rule is still felt in the form of poverty, infrequent pastoral care, and lack of buildings where the faithful can worship and cultivate their faith. Your support is needed to strengthen the Church in this region through grants that fund projects that promote ministries for children and families, create affordable housing, and provide a cultural and spiritual education. Your gift will continue to restore the Church and build the future in Central and Eastern Europe. Please place your special envelope in our regular offertory collection basket.
Lent at a Glance

12 Steps for Everyone:  
Tuesdays at 7pm and Thursdays at 1:30pm  
The Lenten Journey of Discovery is for anyone: Does your faith and prayer life need a jump start? Do you experience increased levels of stress and fatigue? Do you feel weighed down by worry, anxiety or fear? Are you looking for a way to manage unhealthy patterns of behavior?  
Adapted from talks by Fr. Anthony Ciorra, Fr. Richard Rohr and others, 12-Steps for Everyone utilizes the spiritual principles of AA so that anyone with a willingness to ‘Let Go and Let God’ can begin to experience lasting peace and serenity.  
Each session is offered twice weekly. Our sessions continue on March 8/10, and 15/17. Join any week. Materials may be downloaded from our parish website at http://www.stjohnofthecross.org/12-step-spirituality/.

Stations of the Cross  
on Fridays in Lent in church at 6pm

“Milestones” Video Series  
The Role of Meditation in Life-Our Spiritual Journey by Laurence Freeman on Saturdays at 8:30am in the Parish Center

CRS Rice Bowl  
In this Lenten Year of Mercy we are invited to practice the corporal and spiritual works of mercy through the Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowl Program. Fill your cardboard Rice Bowl with your sacrificial offerings, pray and learn about hunger and poverty in a new country each week, fast in solidarity with the poor and vulnerable. Return your Rice Bowl on Palm Sunday.

Communal Reconciliation Service  
Tuesday, March 15 at 7pm  
Hear God’s Word proclaimed, then take part in an examination of conscience. 9 priests, from our parish and elsewhere, will assist with individual confession and absolution as you are ready. Perfect for all ages.

Extended Confessions  
Saturday, March 19 after the morning Mass

The Christian Churches of Western Springs invite you to begin Holy Week together on Palm Sunday with a Blessing of the Palms.  
Sunday, March 20 8:15-8:30am at the Tower Green of Western Springs  
Rain Location: Grand Avenue Community Center, 4211 Grand Avenue
Mayra’s story

Two years ago, Mayra was not a star student. She was very shy in the classroom and struggled with simple math and reading lessons. She often missed homework assignments and, some days, did not go to school.

Her teacher noticed and enrolled Mayra in the school’s tutoring program. In the months that followed, Mayra and Fabricio, her tutor and classmate, spent many afternoons practicing reading and writing stories together. They made up games to practice math. And when they were done, they jumped rope and played in their neighborhood. In the process, the two became good friends.

“Fabricio never looked down on me because I had trouble learning,” says Mayra. “He always treated me well.”

The extra attention was what Mayra really needed. She lives with her grandmother, Lucia, who works hard to take care of Mayra. She picks coffee on a nearby farm and does laundry to earn money to put food on the table. But this means she doesn’t always have time to help Mayra with her school work. In fact, like many people her age, Lucia cannot read.

That’s why Fabricio’s help was so important. Today, Mayra is proud of her reading and math skills. She does her homework and goes to class on time. She is more confident and has a new group of friends.

Mayra wants to be a teacher one day. But first, she will become a tutor so she can help her classmates—just as Fabricio helped her.

Bean Soup Recipe from CRS staff in Honduras

- 1 onion, diced
- 1 red bell pepper, diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 T fair trade olive oil
- 3 15-oz cans red beans, drained
- 2 c water
- 1 vegetable bouillon cube
- 1 yellow chili, seeded and minced
- 1 jalapeño, seeded and minced
- 1 15-oz can diced tomatoes with liquid
- Juice of 1 lime
- 2 chayote squash, peeled, seeded and cut into cubes (may substitute yellow squash or zucchini)
- Fresh cilantro
- 4 c cooked white rice

Sauté onion, bell pepper and garlic in oil until translucent. Add beans, water and bouillon, and heat thoroughly. Add yellow chili, jalapeño, tomatoes, lime juice and chayote, and simmer on low for about an hour. Add cilantro and serve over rice. Serves 4–6
Richard Rohr Meditation

Three Steps Forward, Two Steps Backward

Life itself is always three steps forward and two steps backward. We get the point and then we lose or doubt it. In that, the biblical text mirrors our own human consciousness and journey. Our job is to see where the three steps forward texts are heading (invariably toward mercy, simplicity, inclusion, nonviolence, and trust) and to spot the two steps backward texts (which are usually about vengeance, exclusion, a rather petty and insecure god, law over grace, incidents over substance, and technique over actual relationship).

The Bible is an anthology of many books. It is a record of people’s experience of God’s self-revelation. It is an account of our very human experience of the divine intrusion into history. The book did not fall from heaven in a pretty package. It was written by people trying to listen for and to God. I believe that the Spirit was guiding the listening and writing process. We must also know that humans always see “through a glass darkly . . . and all knowledge is imperfect” (1 Corinthians 13:12). Prayer and patience surrounding such human words will keep us humble and searching for the true Living Word, which is exactly how the Spirit always teaches (1 Corinthians 2:10,13). This is what it means to know something “contemplatively.”

We must trust that there is a development of the human capacity for divine wisdom and human response inside the Bible. We must be honest and recognize that things like polygamy, slavery, genocide, torture, racism, sexism, stoning, and mutilation of sinners—things that are often fully accepted in the ancient text—become more intolerable as the text matures. God does not change, so much as we do. If believers cannot begin to be honest about this, we are going to lose most future generations to any sincere or faith-filled reading of the Bible. Far too many have already thrown the Bible out when they really did not need to. But they had no good teachers to guide them.

Woven throughout these developing ideas are what I call “the Great Themes of Scripture.” (This was the title of my very first recordings in 1973.) I try to mine these timeless, essential themes from the text. My approach is almost so simple, it is hard to teach. It is what I call the “Jesus hermeneutic.” (Hermeneutic is a method of interpretation.) My approach is, quite simply, to interpret and use the Bible the way that Jesus did.

When we get to the Risen Jesus, there is nothing to be afraid of in God. Jesus’ very breath is identified with forgiveness and the Divine Shalom (see John 20:20-23). If the Risen Jesus is the full and trustworthy unveiling of the nature of God, then we live in a safe and love-filled universe. It is not that God has changed, or that the Hebrew God is a different God than the God of Jesus; it is that we are growing up as we move through the texts and deepen our experience. Stay with the text and with your inner life with God, and your capacity for God will increase and deepen.

Just as the Bible takes us through many stages of consciousness and history, it takes us individually a long time to move beyond our need to be dualistic, judgmental, accusatory, fearful, blaming, egocentric, and earning—and to see as Jesus sees. The Bible itself is a “text in travail,” according to Rene Girard’s fine insight. It mirrors and charts our own human travail. It will offer both the mature and the immature responses to almost everything. In time, you will almost naturally recognize the difference between the text moving forward toward the mercy, humility, and inclusivity of Jesus and when the text is regressing into arrogance, exclusion, and legalism. Even a child can see the difference, but an angry or power-hungry person will not. They will favor the regressive and violent passage every time.

Gateway to Silence: Astonish me with your love.

Prayer

May we always open ourselves to the love and mercy of God. May we be ambassadors of reconciliation in our families, among our friends, and in our places of work.

Come, come as you are, just come. Jesus is your friend; he is here for you. He is waiting for you.

The words echoed in my head for days. I didn’t have to be perfect—perfectly prepared, perfectly dressed, perfectly anything—to go to Mass or to pray. I just had to go into the presence of the Lord. How freeing! Jesus doesn’t demand perfection. We don’t need to be perfect or wait for the perfect time or spot to approach Jesus. We don’t need to wait for Sunday Mass to talk with him. Throughout the day, each day, there are countless opportunities to check in with Jesus wherever we find ourselves. This Lent, remember these words: “Come, come as you are, just come. Jesus is your friend; he is here for you. He is waiting for you.” Don’t keep him waiting. The time to respond is now.

Jesus, the night before your death, you asked your friends to remain with you. This Lent, in the midst of all the busyness, remind me to be present with you, And stay with you, To remain with you. Here. Now. Amen.

Ignatian Spirituality
**Background on the Gospel**

The parable Jesus tells in today's Gospel is unique to the Gospel of Luke. Jesus has been teaching the crowds as he journeys to Jerusalem. As he teaches, the Pharisees and scribes complain and challenge Jesus because he is welcoming sinners at his table. Today we hear the third of three parables that Jesus tells in response to his critics. These three familiar parables—the lost sheep, the lost coin, and today's parable of the prodigal son—invite us to consider the depth of God's mercy and love.

The Pharisees taught a scrupulous observance of Jewish Law. In their interpretation and practice, observant Jews who shared table fellowship with sinners would be made unclean. Like Jesus, the Pharisees hoped to lead sinners back to God. The Pharisees, however, required that sinners first become ritually clean—observant of the Pharisees' interpretation of Jewish Law—before sharing table fellowship. This appears to be one of the major differences between the Pharisees and Jesus. Jesus reaches out to sinners while they are still sinners, inviting them to conversion through fellowship with him. Jesus is God acting among us; by befriending us, he is inviting us to return to friendship with God. Through friendship with Jesus, our sins are forgiven and we, in turn, bear fruit for God. Recall last Sunday's Gospel and the barren fig tree.

Our familiarity with today's parable risks dulling us to its tremendously powerful message. We call this the parable of the lost son or the prodigal son. Any focus on the younger son, however, must also be balanced by an examination of the unusual behavior of the father.

First we must imagine our first response to the audacity of a son who asks for his inheritance before his father has died. Indignation would certainly be a justifiable response to such a request. Yet the father in this parable agrees to honor the son's request and divides his property among his two sons. How justifiable a response to such a request? Foolish comes to mind, but so does trusting. Without property of his own, the father must rely upon his sons to provide for his well-being.

The younger son takes his inheritance and leaves home. The older son remains, continuing to provide for the father and the household. Having been disgraced by the younger son, the father spends some time watching the road for the return of the lost son. When he eventually sees his wayward son returning, the father not only welcomes him but also runs out to greet him and then honors him with a party. We say that this father is loving and forgiving. Yet these adjectives only begin to describe the depth of love and mercy that characterize the father.

We find no surprise in the anger of the older son. Yet the father appears sad and even confused by the older son's indignation. He says in reply that they should celebrate because the lost son had returned. The father is filled with gratitude and love for the older son's faithfulness. This love is in no way diminished by the father's rejoicing at the return of the younger son. Yet the older son's jealousy reveals his limited understanding of the depth of his father's love.

The Fourth Sunday of Lent is traditionally called Laetare Sunday. Laetare is a Latin word that means “rejoice.” Today's Gospel describes the reason for our joy: God's great love for us has been revealed in Jesus. Through his Passion, Death, and Resurrection, Christ has reconciled us with God and one another.

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### Living the Gospel

According to “the Pharisees and scribes” in this gospel, Jesus entertained all the wrong people! In the parable, the prodigal son entertained all the wrong desires! The elder son entertained anger and jealousy, pettiness and closed-heartedness! On the other hand, the father tendered reconciliation leading to feasting. In our lives, God tenders mercy and forgiveness leading to new Life. What do we entertain in our hearts? What do we tender in our relationships? Sometimes, like the two sons in the parable, we entertain all the wrong things. Repentance helps us entertain the right things. Our human tendency is to think we can muddle through life reasonably well. This parable reminds us that God offers us so much more. It is the father in the parable who models for us the mercy of our heavenly Father—mercy that not only forgives and reconciles, but offers a feast. If we choose to die to self (“coming to [our] senses”) and return to God, we are greeted with forgiveness and feasting. Even more, at our Heavenly Father’s feast we aren’t simply welcomed back as the sons and daughters we were, but are transformed into more perfect sons and daughters sharing in divine Life. We feast on much more than a fattened calf; the feast to which we are invited is nothing less than the Body and Blood of the Son. Receiving God’s forgiveness and mercy, and offering the same to one another, is how we pass from Wednesday ashes to Easter feasting.

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### Monday

- Isa 65:17-21
- Ps 30:2 and 4, 5-6, 11-12a and 13b
- John 4:43-54

### Tuesday

- Ezek 47:1-9, 12
- Ps 46:2-3, 5-6, 8-9
- John 5:1-16

### Wednesday

- Isa 49:8-15
- Ps 145:8-9, 13cd-14, 17-18
- John 5:17-30

### Thursday

- Exod 32:7-14
- Ps 106:19-20, 21-22, 23
- John 5:31-47

### Friday

- Wis 2:1a, 12-22
- Ps 34:17-18, 19-20, 21 and 23
- John 7:1-2, 10, 25-30

### Saturday

- Jer 11:18-20
- Ps 7:2-3, 9bc-10, 11-12
- John 7:40-53

### 5th Sunday of Lent

- Isa 43:16-21
- Ps 126:1-2, 2-3, 4-5, 6
- Phil 3:8-14
- John 8:1-11
St. John of the Cross Parish School’s Parent Association gave the students a real treat to conclude the second trimester. They arranged for Sky Squad, the official dunk team for the WNBA Chicago Sky, to perform for our entire student body. Not only did they perform great acrobatic flips and twists, they engaged the students as well. “They were really talented and interacted with the audience,” said 7th grader, Ellie Kosanovich.

Students and faculty members had these gentlemen somersaulting over them, shooting hoops with them, and simply giggling with them. Pure excitement is the best way to describe the assembly. Sixth grader, Ellie Griswold, summed it up perfectly, “Oh my gosh! It was so cool!”

7th Grade Guest Speaker
Representatives from BEDS Plus Care, Tina Rounds and Isabel Martinez Noth, PhD, spoke to YC 7th graders about the importance of giving others a hand. BEDS Plus Care’s mission is to help homeless individuals obtain housing and shelter. The students enjoyed the engaging, active presentation which connected God’s love as they continue their service towards Confirmation next year.

Parish Dad & Daughter Sock Hop
Sunday, March 6th
5pm-7pm
Parish Center
$35 per family includes:
Pizza, Snacks, Drinks, Music-Dancing
& a Memorable Photo!

This Week at SJC
Tuesday, March 8 School Advisory Board 7:00pm LRC
Friday, March 11 Out of Uniform Day
Fortnightly 7:30 pm Gym

Parish School
Youth Catechesis

St. John of the Cross Parish
Fourth Sunday of Lent
March 6, 2016
Page 7
Help the Vulnerable: Urge Elected Leaders to Pass a State Budget

Every 30 seconds someone counts on Catholic Charities for help. We are now asking for your help. Please lend your voice to advocate for the State of Illinois to end its budget stalemate and pass a budget that cares for the poor and most vulnerable in our communities. Catholic Charities is currently owed more than $25 million by the State of Illinois a number that grows by at least $2 million per month.

Please take time today to call your state elected officials with this simple message, I am a voter in your district. I am contacting you on behalf of the poor and vulnerable people who depend on our state’s safety net of human services, especially the more than 1 million people served by Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Chicago. Call the Governor’s office in Chicago directly at 312-814-2121. Look for more information at www.CatholicCharities.net.

Sr. Josephine and other daily Mass goers help pack up our food donations in the church narthex that were delivered to St. Francis Xavier’s Food Pantry last week.

During the month of March nonperishable food donations will be brought to the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry at our newest sharing parish, St. Gall.

Lord God, hear the prayers we offer to you. May they be the beginning of our re-creation in your love and forgiveness. With faith in your ever present guidance, with constant hope in the possibilities of reconciliation, may we make all things new in the peace and compassion of Christ Jesus in whose name we offer these prayers. Amen.
Last weekend our RCIA elect celebrated the first of three rites called the Scrutinies. These very special rites are celebrated on the middle three Sundays of Lent, at liturgies where the elect are present. The elect are those in our midst who are preparing for Baptism. Part of their journey to the font is that they have been received among us, the Rite of Acceptance, and they have been enrolled in the Book of the Elect in the Rite of Election.

These are ancient rites and may, at first, seem strange to us. But they are profoundly rooted in our human experience. We need to examine (scrutinize) who we are, the areas of our lives where we are tempted, or seriously sin - in what we do and what we fail to do. We really need healing and the strength that can come from the support of our sisters and brothers.

Contained in these rites is an ancient ritual of laying on of hands by the priest. This ritual symbolizes and confers the imparting of the grace and power of the Holy Spirit. The celebration of this rite can be a wonderful opportunity for all the baptized including our RCIA candidates – those already baptized but seeking to enter into full communion with the Catholic Faith to reflect upon the journey Shler and Randy are making during Lent, as an inspiration and source of renewal for us in our journey. (Source: Creighton University)

Shler Yule and Randy White are celebrating the Scrutinies here at St. John of the Cross while Rob Valdez (away at school) is celebrating the Scrutinies with the parish community of St. Dominic Parish in San Francisco. Rob will rejoin us at the Easter Vigil for the celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation – Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist.

It has been tradition that when the elect (those in the process of becoming Catholic at the Easter Vigil.) are present at Mass during the 3rd, 4th and 5th Sundays of Lent that the readings from the A Cycle be used. The dates and times of the next Masses are:
- Sunday, March 6 – 10:45 a.m. (Readings can be found in the Word and Song Hymnal on pages 132-135.
- Sunday, March 13 – 9:00 a.m. (Readings can be found in the Word and Song Hymnal on pages 138-140.

Pictured are our elect at Mass last weekend during the First Scrutiny as Fr. David lays hands on each one of the elect and prays over all the elect that their hearts be touched by the power of the Holy Spirit to know the Father in true faith and love. After the elect were dismissed they gathered with their catechists to reflect on the Gospel and were presented with the Creed.
The River of Mercy
by Jack Shea

“... the great river of mercy wells up and overflows unceasingly.”
Pope Francis

Although we often want the clarity of a single definition, it may be better to imagine mercy as a river “welling up” and “overflowing” in many ways.

At times, to have mercy is to call to a potential for good in a person that is present even if at the moment it is in danger of being eclipsed.

At times, to have mercy entails pointing out the harm to individuals that policies and structures are doing and calling everyone to create better structures and behaviors.

At times, to have mercy means to be patient with yourself as you create the words and deeds that will show love and be willing to reevaluate those words and deeds to find better ways.

At times, to have mercy is to reach out to those who are suffering, be present with them, and help to alleviate their suffering.

At times, mercy entails seeking out the sacrament of confession to find forgiveness and new life.

At times, mercy is shown when you cultivate non-judgmental awareness toward yourselves and others, seeking to fully understand before you rush to judgment.

At times, practicing mercy means asking people about their experiences of mercy - when have they received or given or witnessed mercy?

At times, to cultivate mercy is to study what people have discovered and written about mercy and allow it to interact with your experience.

At times, it is beneficial to remember our efforts at mercy are what our lives are most deeply about.

At times, mercy means to enter into compassionate exchanges where you disclose your world and enter into the world of another.

How has mercy welled up and overflown in your life?

But God, who is rich in mercy, because of the great love he had for us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, brought us to life with Christ. Ephesians 2:4-5a

In what ways did the richness of God’s mercy lift us out of darkness and sinfulness? Who shows us the mercy of God?
CALLING ALL MEN!!

Do you want a better understanding of Reconciliation?
Do you want to discuss the Nature of God?
Do you want a strong finish to Lent?
Is sharing in community important to you?
Do you like bagels and coffee in the morning?
If you answered YES to any of these calls, please join us for the next Men’s Club SAM Meeting, Saturday, March 12 in the Parish Center from 8:45am to 10:30am. Light morning refreshments will be served.

SJC Mom’s Club
Monday, March 14 in our Parish Center at 7pm.
Save the date for an evening of yoga with some faith and spirituality added in. Good for the body and soul. Moms only. Line up your sitters. More details to come!

Follow up to our January cocktail party: The toys we collected that evening were donated to a toy drive at Brook Park School in LaGrange Park in honor of a 5yr old boy fighting cancer. All toys were donated to University of Chicago Comer's Children's hospital. Thank you!!

"When we think of faith and trying to relay our beliefs to our curious children, it can be a challenge to try and find the right words to explain what we believe and why. We are asking them to believe something that isn't concrete - they can't see or feel it or even understand it many times in the younger years; sometimes it's hard for adults. It's a lot like magic. Kids are delighted when Frankie Ace pulls a glowing red ball out of their arm pit. It's such a mystery to them how he did it, but it brings them so much joy. It's like that with faith - we often struggle to explain and maybe even to understand it at times, but we receive such joy through God's grace. We believe in the magic of Christ's love for us. Especially during Lent, we celebrate the journey he took over these forty days to make the ultimate sacrifice so that we may live and delight in God's love. And that's what we hoped to do with this family event - to bring together a community of families who share that same passion and hopefully foster some spiritual fellowship and friendship. Thanks so much for joining us and being a part of the SJC Moms’ Group community."

Marriage Encounter
The Gospel today is the story of the prodigal son, which is really all of our stories, because we have all fallen short of the mark at times. God always waits for us with open, loving arms. Sign up today to attend one of the upcoming Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekends on April 8-10, 2016 or June 10-12, 2016 or August 12-14, 2016, all in Elk Grove Village. Early registration is highly recommended. For reservations/information, call Jim & Kris at 630-577-0778 or contact us through http://wwme-chicagoland.org

Upcoming Programs at The Well
To register and read more about each program visit csjthewell.org OR call 708.482.5048
The Well Spirituality Center – 1515 West Ogden
Nurturing Your Child’s Spirituality Tuesday, March 8--10:30-noon Cost: $15
Active Hope: How to Face the Mess we are in Without Going Crazy Saturday, March 12 from 9am-4pm Cost: $75 includes lunch
Radical Grace—film screening Tuesday, March 15—7:00 pm Cost: $10

Get Answers to Your Most Perplexing Job Search Questions! Thursday, March 17 from 7-8:30pm in our Parish Center. Learn new tactics to build confidence and help accelerate your job search success. Network with experienced hiring managers, job coaches and fellow job seekers. We'll share ideas on how to target the companies and contacts that can move your job search forward. Bring 10 copies of your resume and/or handbill to share with the group.

Divorce and Beyond Support Meeting
Friday, April 15 from 7-8:30pm SJC Parish Center
The Divorce and Beyond Ministry of St. John of the Cross Parish provides pastoral support, healing and guidance to those recently divorced or going through a divorce. It is a Christian faith-based support group open to persons of any denomination. Topics include: dealing with stress, anger, loneliness, forgiveness, and healing. Please visit the parish webpage for more information or to register.

Grief Support
The Joyful Again Widowed Ministry invites widows and widowers who want to find joy in living again to a grief support daytime workshop on April 9 & 10 at Presence/Resurrection Holy Family Healthcare Center in DesPlaines. Call 708-354-7211 to register or joyfulagain7211@gmail.com.
February, 2016

Dear Parishioners,

Our Parish Advisory Council recently met for our winter meeting on Saturday, February 20. In an effort to keep you informed, the pre-meeting updates from each consultative body, each ministry advisory group, and the meeting minutes are posted on our parish website under the first “About Us” tab at stjohnofthecross.org/leadership/parish-advisory-council/. In addition this letter will provide you with a summary.

Over the past six months, Archbishop Cupich has focused meetings and communications to all parishes on the need for a multi-year archdiocesan strategic plan. This need is a result, in part, of dramatically shifting demographic trends, the fact that many parish buildings in the archdiocese are in disrepair, and because there will be fewer priests available to pastor communities in the future.

As he plans for generations of Catholics to come, the archbishop has a renewal process which urges parishes to be vital by continually adopting and pursuing seven priorities. These seven dimensions include: evangelizing; providing a lifelong process of formation; a culture and tradition of prayer, devotion and well prepared liturgy; representing a Catholic community that is inclusive, harmonious, respecting, and diverse; being missionary disciples to advocate for justice, peace and to those in need; having mature adult spirituality; and fostering good stewardship through collaborative leadership and a spirit of gratitude.

In striving to strengthen St. John of the Cross Parish, the PAC discussed our parish strengths and weaknesses in light of the seven priorities, how we can continue to build community and possible new ways to focus our efforts to ensure our vitality. In addition, by collaborating more with our two neighbor parishes, St. Francis Xavier and St Cletus, SJC may be able to strengthen ministries such as our grief support and divorce ministry and perhaps add new ministries for seniors and for young adults, and combine parish efforts to train lay ministers and leaders. How exciting it is to see that many SJC efforts and energies already revolve around the seven priorities of a vital parish, and that we may serve as an example for others to follow!

I look forward to updating you after our spring May meeting at which the PAC will continue to expand the discussion on ways to strengthen our mission as a vital parish. If you are interested in being a part of our future parish strategic plans and serving on the Parish Advisory Council as an At-Large Parish Member, please contact me to learn more.

Ann Marie Calistro
Chairperson
ann.calistro@gmail.com
What most moves your heart? I was asked this question recently at a workshop. We were asked to respond to this question: When do you most naturally feel compassion in your heart? For me, the answer came easily. I am most moved when I see helplessness, when I see someone or something helpless to tend to its own needs and to protect its own dignity. It might be baby, hungry and crying, too little to feed itself and to safeguard its own dignity. It might a woman in a hospital, sick, in pain, dying, helpless to get better, also unable to attend to her own dignity. It might be an unemployed man, down on his luck, unable to find work, the odd man out when everyone else seems to be doing great. It might be a little girl on the playground, helpless as she is teased and bullied, suffering indignity. Or it might just be a baby kitten, hungry, helpless, pleading with its eyes, unable to speak or attend to its own need. Helplessness tugs at the heart. I am always touched in the softest place inside me by helplessness, by the pleading of finitude. I suspect we all are.

We’re in good company. This is what moved Mary, Jesus’ mother, at the Wedding Feast of Cana to go over to Jesus and say: “They have no wine!” Her request here has different layers of meaning. At one level, it is a very particular request at a particular occasion in history; she is trying to save her hosts at a wedding from embarrassment, from suffering an indignity. No doubt the shortage of wine was due to some poverty on their part, either a shortage of money or a shortage of good planning, but, either way, they stood to be embarrassed before their guests. But, as with most things in the Gospels, this incident has a deeper meaning. Mary isn’t just speaking for a particular host on a particular occasion; she is speaking universally, as the mother of humanity, Eve, voicing for all of us what John Shea so aptly calls, “the cries of finitude”.

What is finitude? The finite, as we can see from the word itself, contrasts itself to the infinite, to what is not limited, to God. God, alone, is not finite. God, alone, is self-sufficient. God, alone, is never helpless, and God, alone, never needs help from anyone else. Only God is never subject to sickness, hunger, tiredness, irritation, fatigue, bodily and mental diminishment, and death. God, alone, never has to suffer the indignity of need, of getting caught short, of inadequate self-expression, of not measuring up, of being embarrassed, of being bullied, of being unable to help Himself, and of having to beg silently with His eyes for someone to come and help.

Everything else is finite. Thus, as humans, we are subject to helplessness, illness, lameness, blindness, hunger, tiredness, irritation, diminishment, and death. Moreover, within all these, we are also subject to indignity. So many of our words and actions are, in the end, cries of finitude, cries for assistance, the cries of a baby for food, for warmth, for protection, and for a safeguard from indignity. Although we are infinitely more sophisticated in our humanity, we are all still, at one level, the baby kitten, pleading with our eyes for someone to feed us, and all the assertions of self-sufficiency of the rich, the strong, the healthy, the arrogant, and of those who seemingly need no help are in the end nothing other than attempts to keep helplessness at bay. Not matter how strong and self-sufficient we might believe ourselves to be, finitude and mortality admit of no exemptions. Tiredness, illness, diminishment, death, and painful hunger will eventually find us all. Our wine too will eventually run out. Hopefully someone like the Mother of Jesus will speak for us: They have no wine!

What’s the lesson in this? A number of things:

First, recognizing our finitude can lead to a healthier self-understanding. Knowing and accepting our finitude can help quell a lot of frustration, restlessness, and false guilt in our lives. I once had a spiritual director, an elderly nun, who challenged me to live by this axiom: Fear not, you are inadequate. We need to forgive ourselves for our own limits, for the fact that we are human, finite, and are unable to provide ourselves for our own limits, for the fact that we are human, finite, and are unable to provide ourselves and those around us all that we need. But inadequacy is a forgivable condition, not a moral fault.

Beyond forgiving ourselves for our helplessness, recognizing and accepting our finitude should challenge us too to hear more clearly the cries of finitude around us. And so whether it’s the cry of a baby, the humiliation in the eyes of someone looking for work, the ravaged eyes of the terminally ill patient, or simply the pleading eyes of a young kitten, we need, like Mary, to take up their cause and ensure that someone spares them from indignity by changing their water into wine, by calling out: They have no wine!

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser, theologian, teacher, and award-winning author, is President of the Oblate School of Theology www.ronrolheiser.com.
Holy Week Schedule
Palm Sunday of the Passion of Our Lord, March 20 Masses
Saturday 5:00pm  Vigil
Sunday 7:30am
8:15am Ecumenical Palm Blessing on the Village Green
9:00am
10:45am
12:30pm  (Note this Mass starts 15 minutes later than usual.)
5:00pm

Holy Thursday, March 24
Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper 7:00pm
   Contemporary Ensemble

Good Friday, March 25
Stations of the Cross 12:00pm
Passion of the Lord 3:00pm
   Traditional Choir

Holy Saturday, March 26
Blessing of Easter Baskets 11:00am in the Parish Center
Easter Vigil, 7:30pm
   Traditional Choir
Reception to follow the Vigil in the Parish Center. All are invited.

Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord, March 27
7:30am
9:00am
   Children’s Choirs
9:15am  First Floor Multi-Purpose Room in School
10:45am
   Traditional Choir
11:00am First Floor Multi-Purpose Room in School
   5 Alive Teen Choir
12:30pm  (Note this Mass starts 15 minutes later than usual.)
   Contemporary Ensemble

At each Mass music will be led by a cantor, organ, and/or piano, and various instruments in addition to the choirs noted above.

No 5:00pm  Mass on Easter Sunday. No parish babysitting this weekend.

Our Offertory Collections on Holy Thursday & Good Friday
On Holy Thursday (as on Thanksgiving) the offertory collection will support our parish Caritas Needy Family Fund. Using the Latin word for “charity” as its name, this fund provides financial support to our parishioners, who through unplanned circumstances face difficulty meeting a critical financial obligation. If you are unable to attend the Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday, but still wish to donate to this important collection, you may drop it at the parish center marked for the Caritas SJC Needy Family Fund or go to Sharing Tab (Picture) on our parish website and click on the Caritas link on the left side.

Once a year on Good Friday, we are called to support Christians in the Holy Land as requested by Pope Francis. Our Good Friday donations support the work of the Franciscans in the Holy Land, housing and feeding the poor, providing religious formation and education, maintaining shrines and parishes, and conducting pastoral ministry. For more information, visit www.MyFranciscan.org.
Monday, March 07
9:30am Spiritual Journaling
10:30am Step 11 Christian Meditation
1:00pm Little Rock Scripture Study
2:30pm Adoration
7:00pm Boy Scouts
7:00pm Consolation Minister Training
Tuesday, March 08
9:05am Tuesdays with Mary Rosary
7:00pm 12-Steps for Everyone
7:00pm Cub Scouts Parent Meeting
7:00pm RCIA
7:00pm School Board Meeting LRC
7:30pm Christian Meditation
Wednesday, March 09
9:30am Gospel of John Bible Study
1:00pm Prayer Shawl Ministry
2:30pm Christian Meditation
3:30pm John of the Cross Study Group
3:45pm Cherub Choir Practice
7:00pm Chicago Catholic Scripture School
7:30pm Traditional Choir Practice
Thursday, March 10
9:00am Flourish
9:30am Bridges Spiritual Group
1:30pm 12-Steps for Everyone
3:45pm Youth Choir Practice
5:30pm Crossroads Kairos 22 Departure
7:00pm Grecco Faith Sharing Group
7:00pm Women’s Club Board Meeting
7:30pm Contemporary Choir Practice
7:30pm Crossroads Parent Book Club
7:30pm SAM Meeting
Friday, March 11
11:30am Senior Club Luncheon
6:00pm Stations of the Cross
7:00pm Kairos 22 Parent Prayer Service
7:30pm Fortnightly
Saturday, March 12
7:00am Christian Meditation
8:30am Christian Meditation Film Series
8:45am SAM
1:00pm Baptisms
6:00pm Scout Blue/Gold Awards Dinner
Sunday, March 13
10:15am YC Faith Formation
4:00pm YC BEDS
6:00pm Crossroads Easter Basket Project

Bakers Needed
As has been our tradition, parishioners are asked to bake homemade desserts for the Easter Vigil Reception. Bring your favorite baked goods to the Parish Center on Good Friday or Holy Saturday until noon. Put your desserts in non-returnable containers, i.e., wrapped on paper plates or in ziplock bags. Please label anything with nuts or items that are gluten free. Any questions can be directed to Ginny Grecco at 708-246-7371.

Mass Intentions

Italics: Living Intention

Monday, March 7  Sts. Perpetua & Felicity
7:45am Bridget Dowdle; Beverly McCarthy

Tuesday, March 8  St. John of God
7:45am Bob Moore; Our Beloved Dead

Wednesday, March 9  St. Frances of Rome
7:45am Frank Reilly; Bill Schlacks

Thursday, March 10  Lenten Weekday
7:45am Martin Daley; Patricia Krepps

Friday, March 11  Lenten Weekday
7:45am Bridget Dowdle; Bernie Casella

Saturday, March 12  Lenten Weekday
8:00am Bob Santucci; Richard Voller
5:00pm Amedeo & Adina Misantoni; Elizabeth Wojtowicz

Sunday, March 13  Fifth Sunday of Lent
7:30am Shirley Kazragis; Mike Marshall
9:00am Henry Watson; Michael Francis, Jr.
10:45am Sarah Ryan; Joe Delaney
12:15pm John Sullivan; William Stalzle
5:00pm John Keeley; Anne Voller

Pray for Our Sick
Lynn Freking
Christopher Gallagher
Robert & Lucille Hartnett
Karen Hult
Ann Kalaska
Curtis Kerzich
George Kojima
Bobbie Misiora

Pray for Our Beloved Dead
Ann McGuire
Frank Mraz
Steve Pechous
Frank & Marge Pipal
Anthony Placek, Jr.
Kay Reidy
Monica Westell

Jennifer Rauen, niece of James & Debbie Skowron, cousin of Scott & Sharon Bunnell
Virginia Prendergast, mother of Michael, Gail & Catherine Vesecky, grandmother of Olivia, Evan, Daniel & Sarah

For a staff directory go to our parish website at About Us stjohnofthecross.org/leadership/parish-staff/

Daylight-saving time is right around the corner. It will be time to set the clocks forward one hour — or spring forward — next Sunday, March 13 at 2 a.m.
Come one and all to our Saintly Senior
St. Patrick-St. Joseph
Luncheon
Friday, March 11
11:30am
Parish Center
Tickets are $15 for members and $20 for guests
RSVP to the Parish Center by March 7.
Enjoy a delicious lunch,
glass of wine, and terrific Irish music!
Guess the correct location in the picture to enter a
drawing to win 2 free tickets to the luncheon!
Drop off your Guess at the Parish Center Office.