My God, my God, why have you abandoned me?

Palm Sunday
of the Passion of the Lord
March 20, 2016
Dear Parishioners,

Today the liturgy goes from the triumphant to the defeated, from exultation to death. We enter into Passion Week with palms to be blessed and then we disperse in silence to contemplate what has happened because of self-emptying love. It is an amazing week. And nothing is what it seems.

The life, death and resurrection of Jesus have to be taken as a whole. To emphasize one to the neglect or exclusion of the others is to distort the truth of revelation. What we know of the adult life of Jesus is condensed into a very brief time period, around three years. Maybe it is not obvious but in order to understand Easter you have to go back, again and again, to understand Christmas. A large percentage of us have grown up or spent most of our lives assuming faith in Jesus as the Incarnation of God. The ‘made flesh-ness’ of God, revealed in a single individual at a particular moment in history, is central to belief in the Resurrected One. No matter how used to the idea of the Incarnation we may become we should never fail to be amazed by it. (Or ‘gobsmacked’ as one parishioner taught me).

One of the challenges in growing in the spiritual life is a fear of reviewing and questioning the basics, of examining more closely what we take for granted or assume. The fear or reluctance to question what we believe is very much tied to our need for certainty and security which was (hopefully) given to us in our childhood. The problem is that if we do not incorporate new understandings and beliefs as we mature and change there comes a day when suddenly the bottom falls out because childhood faith cannot sustain adult life.

Fr. Richard Rohr is very helpful to me in characterizing life as being divided into two halves. The first half of life is the way of ascendency as you mature physically, emotionally, intellectually and spiritually. You need to spend hours looking at yourself in the mirror. You need to push back against the authority of adults on your way to becoming one yourself. You need to find a container that will hold you well on the journey of self discovery. You need to set goals and accomplish them, to establish a career, to gain independence from your family of origin and to make life choices that will transition you from living out others’ expectations to choosing your own values and morals. Accumulating material possessions (a home) and establishing economic and psychic independence is a huge, all consuming effort that can take many years.

And then something happens. A parent dies. An illness is diagnosed. A marriage fails. You age. A child is born broken. You become enrolled in the school of suffering against your will. You are now on the path of descendency. The success of the first half of life no longer has anything to teach you. Now your teacher is limit, loss, suffering and failure. How you respond to them, the resources you bring to the challenges, your maturity (in the fullest sense of the word) is what determines a well lived and ‘successful’ life. And it determines if you will have a ‘happy’ death.

Holy Week can teach us many things, but perhaps the most important is that we believe in a God who knows human suffering. He has gone that way before us. His death is a real death, his suffering is heart breaking, and he does it alone, as will we.

But it is not the end of the story.

Until the breaking of the Bread,
Fr. David
Holy Thursday

Many Catholics throughout United States and the world continue a popular Holy Week tradition by visiting seven nearby churches on Holy Thursday. The tradition is an ancient practice, probably originating in Rome, where early pilgrims visited the seven major basilicas as penance. The seven areas may also be related to the historical seven deacons of Rome whose responsibility was to minister to the poor in their region of the city. The first seven deacons in the church were the seven assistants ordained by the apostles to minister to the poor. Listed below are three routes that are offered to you to join in this long standing tradition. Each route, west, north/east and south lists five churches that you may wish to visit and spend time in prayer at. These routes are just suggested, you may want to choose parishes on your own to visit. Whichever you choose, take time Holy Thursday evening to sit or kneel in silent prayer – giving thanks to God who shares with us God’s life. Our church will remain open for prayer until 11:45pm on Holy Thursday.

West Route
Notre Dame – 64 Norfolk Ave. Clarendon Hills,
Holy Trinity – 111 S. Cass Ave. Westmont
Our Lady of Mount Carmel – 8404 Cass Ave. Darien
Our Lady of Peace – 701 Plainfield Rd. Darien
Divine Savior – 6700 Main St. Downers Grove

North / East Route
Divine Providence – 2550 Mayfair Ave. Westchester
Divine Infant – 1601 Newcastle Ave. Westchester
St. Louise De Marillac – 1144 Harrison Ave. La Grange Park
St. Barbara – 4008 Prairie Ave. Brookfield
St. Francis Xavier – 124 N. Spring Ave. La Grange

South Route
St. Alphonsus – 210 E. Logan St. Lemont
St. Patrick – 200 E. Illinois St. Lemont
Sts. Cyril and Methodius - 608 Sobieski St. Lemont
St. James at Sag Bridge – 10600 South Archer Ave. Lemont
Our Lady Mother of the Church – 116 Hilton St Willow Springs

Saturday evening, March 26 at 7:30pm is the celebration of the Easter Vigil at St. John of the Cross Parish. St. Augustine called it the Mother of all Liturgies. This liturgy is very sensual, touching on all of our senses. It begins outside with the Service of Light where the fire is blessed and the Paschal Easter Candle is lit and brought into a darkened church. Once inside, the great Exsultet of Easter is proclaimed. This is followed by the Liturgy of the Word, the Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation, Renewal of Baptismal Promises, and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. At this celebration, Rob Valdez, Randy White and Shler Yule will be baptized, confirmed and celebrate Eucharist. Marla Rafferty, Sarah Simmons and Amy Tyrrell will be Received into Full Communion and Marti Thullen will complete her Sacraments of Initiation. Please joy us for this great celebration and please keep our Elect and Candidate in your prayers.

After the Vigil, all are invited to come to the Parish Center for a wonderful celebration-reception. As has been our parish tradition, bakers in the parish are invited to bring desserts for the reception. Bring your favorite to the Parish Center on Good Friday or Holy Saturday mornings. Use disposal containers. Label your dessert. Include if it contains nuts and if gluten free.
Living the Gospel

Jesus suffers, dies, and is buried. All because neither the Jewish leadership, the Roman leadership, nor the apostles understand. Throughout Luke’s passion account, Jesus is trying to turn his accusers and hearers away from their understanding of kingdom to embracing “the kingdom of God.” He is trying to show them that what they really want is upon them, just in a way different from what they expect. Even on the cross, he continues to show how different his kingdom is, for he forgives the very ones who cause him suffering and death. The “kingdom of God” that Jesus proclaims is so different. What reigns in his kingdom is not power, wealth, or fame; not freedom from misunderstanding and suffering or even death; not betrayal, denial, and abandonment. What reigns in “the kingdom of God” is patience and caring, forgiveness and reconciliation, promise full of life and dying full of promise.

Palm Sunday begins an extraordinary week—a week that concentrates in a few days the ultimate meaning of our whole Christian life. We must slow ourselves down and make choices so that this week doesn’t go by without our taking the time to enter into its meaning. We celebrate in the liturgies what we live every day—all the dying to self that characterizes truly faithful disciples of Jesus, all the dying to self that proclaims our choice to live in God’s kingdom. This choice is our way of continuing Jesus’ saving mission, our way of making visible our ultimate desire: to live forever with God, united with this Jesus who suffered, died, and was buried. This Jesus who was raised. Living in this kingdom is possible when we, too, commend ourselves into God’s hands. ©Living Liturgy

May we faithfully choose the self-giving required to live in the kingdom of God.
May we enter fervently into the mystery of salvation we celebrate this week and grow in faithfully following Jesus.

For Reflection:
♦ When I seek the kingdom of God, I . . . When I live in the kingdom of God, my life looks like . . .
♦ The cost to me of choosing to live in the kingdom of God is . . .

God’s love is un-conditional. It is not conditioned on my being better, or my overcoming anything, or even my being good at all. God just loves me. I am always precious in the eyes of the One who made me and desires to embrace me with the gift of complete freedom, in everlasting life. God knows everything, including what I’m struggling with or suffering under. The God of all compassion, understands me and loves me. It may be that the place where I need the greatest sorrow and desire for forgiveness and healing is my lack of trust in God’s complete and unconditional love for me. Creighton

Monday
Isa 42:1-7
Ps 27:1, 2, 3, 13-14
John 12:1-11

Tuesday
Isa 49:1-6
Ps 71:1-2, 3-4a, 5ab-6ab, 15 and 17
John 13:21-33, 36-38

Wednesday
Isa 50:4-9a
Ps 69:8-10, 21-22, 31 and 33-34
Matt 26:14-25

Holy Thursday
Exod 12:1-8, 11-14
Ps 116:12-13, 15-16bc, 17-18
1 Cor 11:23-26
John 13:1-15

Good Friday
Isa 52:13-53:12
Ps 31:2, 6, 12-13, 15-16, 17, 25
Heb 4:14-16; 5:7-9
John 18:1-19:42

Holy Saturday/Easter Vigil
Gen 1:1-2:2
Exod 14:15-15:1
(plus other readings)
Rom 6:3-11
Luke 24:1-12

Easter Sunday
Acts 10:34a, 37-43
Ps 118:1-2, 16-17, 22-23
Col 3:1-4 or 1 Cor 5:6b-8
John 20:1-9

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**Background on the Gospel**

This Sunday, called Palm or Passion Sunday, is the first day of Holy Week. Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and the Easter Vigil on Holy Saturday are called the Triduum, three days that are the highlight of the Church year. There are two Gospels proclaimed at today’s Mass. The first Gospel, proclaimed before the procession with palms, tells of Jesus’ triumphant entrance into Jerusalem. Riding on a borrowed colt, Jesus was hailed by the crowds as they shouted blessings and praise to God. This event is reported in each of the four Gospels.

Luke’s Gospel is the only one to report the exchange between Jesus and the Pharisees as Jesus enters Jerusalem. Jesus’ response shows that this event, and those yet to come, are part of a divine plan. We hear this echoed again in Luke’s description of the Last Supper when Jesus speaks of Judas’ betrayal, saying that the Son of Man “goes as has been determined.”

Throughout Luke’s Gospel we see that Jesus’ words and actions proclaim the Kingdom of God. Jesus appears to be in total command of events at the Passover meal as he hands over the kingdom to his disciples. He welcomes them to the Passover meal announcing that this will be his last until the Kingdom of God is fulfilled.

As throughout Luke’s Gospel, however, the disciples show little understanding of this kingdom that Jesus often announces. Following the meal, the disciples argue about who is the greatest. Jesus takes the opportunity to distinguish the meaning of leadership in the Kingdom of God from the forms of leadership seen in the world.

Jesus initiates a conversation with Simon and predicts his denial. Jesus then instructs his disciples to prepare themselves for the events that will follow. His words reveal an awareness of the challenges that all of them will face in the days ahead. As the disciples and Jesus enter the Mount of Olives, Jesus indicates the importance of the disciples’ time in prayer, telling them that through prayer they will be able to face the challenges ahead.

As he prays, Jesus is tested. In the garden, an angel is sent to strengthen him and to prepare him for the events ahead. After this moment, Jesus is again in charge of the events and circumstances.

In Luke’s Gospel, Jesus is portrayed as active and vocal throughout his passion. When one of the disciples strikes the high priest’s servant, Jesus heals the man, an event reported only in the Gospel of Luke. Jesus stops the disciples’ protest against his arrest by noting that this is the “time for the power of darkness.” Jesus engages and responds when brought before the Sanhedrin; his words speak about the “power of God” that will bring about the reign of the Son of Man. When questioned by Pilate, Jesus responds with just one phrase; yet before Herod, Jesus refuses to speak.

Throughout Holy Week, we will continue to reflect on the events of Jesus’ passion and death. As we meditate on the cross, we ask again and anew what it means to make the statement of faith that Jesus, in his obedient suffering and dying, revealed himself to us as God’s Son and brought to fulfillment the Kingdom of God.

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**Richard Rohr Meditation**

**Loving the Presence in the Present**

Love people even in their sin, for that is the semblance of Divine Love and is the highest love on earth. Love all of God’s creation, the whole and every grain of sand of it. Love every leaf, every ray of God’s light. Love the animals, love the plants, love everything. If you love everything, you will perceive the divine mystery in things. Once you perceive it, you will begin to comprehend it better every day. And you will come at last to love the whole world with an all-embracing love.

We cannot attain the presence of God because we’re already in the presence of God. What’s absent is awareness. Little do we realize that God’s love is maintaining us in existence with every breath we take. As we take another, it means that God is choosing us now and now and now. We have nothing to attain or even learn. We do, however, need to unlearn some things.

To become aware of God’s loving presence in our lives, we have to accept that human culture is in a mass hypnotic trance. We’re sleep-walkers. We do not naturally see; we have to be taught how to see. Religion is meant to teach us how to see and be present to reality. That’s why the Buddha and Jesus say with one voice, “Be awake.” Jesus talks about “staying watchful” (Matthew 25:13, Luke 12:37, Mark 13:33-37), and "Buddha" means "I am awake" in Sanskrit.

Prayer is not primarily saying words or thinking thoughts. It is, rather, a stance. It’s a way of living in the Presence, living in awareness of the Presence, and even of enjoying the Presence. The contemplative is not just aware of God’s Loving Presence, but trusts, allows, and delights in it.

All spiritual disciplines have one purpose: to get rid of illusions so we can be present. These disciplines exist so that we can see what is, see who we are, and see what is happening. What is is love. It is God, who is love, giving away God every moment as the reality of our life. Who we are is love, because we are created in God’s image. What is happening is God living in us, with us, and through us as love.

**Gateway to Silence**

God’s life is living itself in me.
The directive Jesus gives in Scripture is affirmed each time we celebrate the Eucharist. “Do this in remembrance of me,” Jesus says. Christ himself models the “this” we’re supposed to do when we eat and drink. We live as He lived, and we love as He loved.

In a world where lives and love are overcast by arrogance, pride, selfishness, fear, anger, and incivility, we have a model of light who renounced all of these so that all whom he encountered may have full life and may know true love. May we recall Jesus’ bold model and do the same. Rev. S. Bell

“I have given you a model to follow, so that as I have done for you, you should also do.” John 13:15

In this Scripture we are given a clear directive. Follow the model of Jesus’ life. We can serve as Jesus served. We can forgive as Jesus forgave. We can pray as Jesus prayed. We can heal as Jesus healed. We can embrace and bless and love as Jesus did. We can look to the Father as Jesus did. In other words, we can “put on Christ.”

As we enter these sacred days of Triduum, how might you live this Gospel passage? How has this Lenten season helped you to model your life on Jesus’ life?

Loving God, grace me with what I need to be like Jesus in the world. Amen.

Meditation on Good Friday

What is proper to pray on the Passion [is] to ask for grief with Christ in grief, to be broken with Christ broken, for tears and interior suffering on account of the great suffering that Christ endured for me.” (SE 203)

Tilt your chin to the heavens and, with eyes open or closed, look back at the One who gazes at you with great affection. Ask for compassion.

Hear the priests and the soldiers, the Pharisees and the disciples press against one another. Smell the night air and the sweat. Feel the grip of the guards as they take hold of Jesus.

This is no staged drama. These men do not wait for one another to finish their speeches before the trumpet is blown or the torches are lit. The ropes and the swords are there to be used.

And in the midst of this we have asked for compassion, which means we have asked to suffer with the One. Such petitions are signs of either sanctity or insanity.

Do you want to be drawn out of yourself? Is there a desire within you to accompany Jesus even in this? Can you ask the Father for what you want? If not—and that is okay—ask instead for the desire to want to be with him. Can you do so?

The gift of compassion within the Passion is the gift of escaping our narrow selves and of dying to them. When any part of us—even the selfish part of ourselves that repels us—is threatened, we resist. Even the death of these darkest parts of ourselves we resist. This is the heart of our lost-ness. And Jesus bears even this. See his face in the chaos.

What is he thinking beneath his bowed back? What is he feeling? Can you ask? Can you await his reply in word, gesture, or glance? How do you feel as he is bound?

Jesus is Love incarnate. He is Love become a human being. This is what we have asked to feel compassion for—for Love made flesh. And this is what happens to the living Love in our world. It is held in little esteem.

What is it like to have compassion on such a man? How do you react? Do you turn your back on love, like Judas, when it is crushed? Do you rise up, like Peter, in fear and fury, to crush that which crushes love? Or are you filled with sadness? Do you mourn?

Speak with Jesus about what happens to your compassion as he is carried away. Tell him what you are afraid of and what it is like to suffer with him. Speak with him as one friend speaks to another. Ignatian Spirituality
Prayer during Holy Week

We pursue our daily relationship with the Lord through various forms of private prayer. The liturgy of the Church unites us in corporate prayer. The liturgical celebrations of Holy Week, perhaps more than any others, can remind us of the richness available to us when we gather to pray and worship in communion with one another.

When we gather for Mass we believe that our souls and voices are raised together in prayer with those of the whole Communion of Saints and the angels in heaven. The Second Vatican Council’s Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy declares that the assembled people of God are one aspect of the four-fold manifestation of Christ’s presence (#7). Together with the priest, the Word of God, and the Eucharist, we incarnate Christ in the Mass. Our presence in the worshipping community becomes the vessel through which God pours sacramental grace.

The sacramental aspects of the Church’s liturgical prayer can awaken our minds and our senses to the reality of the mysteries we celebrate. The Catechism affirms: “As a being at once body and spirit, man expresses and perceives spiritual realities through physical signs and symbols. As a social being, man needs signs and symbols to communicate with others, through language, gestures, and actions. The same holds true for his relationship with God” (#1146). For us Catholic Christians, the passion, death, and Resurrection of the Lord are not events that happened in the distant past; they are real in this moment, active in our own lives. We experience this mystery as we relate to one another and to God and as we engage our own physicality.

Think of the many ways we use our bodies and the gifts of creation in the liturgies of Holy Week: We wave palm branches. We kneel at the proclamation of the death of the Lord. We use water to wash one another’s feet. We touch or kiss the wood of the cross. The Easter Vigil alone offers us a symphony for our bodily senses—fire, incense, bells, water, oil, and of course, bread and wine.

The central mystery of our faith is the Incarnation of God. Never is the humanity of Jesus more clearly revealed than on the cross. As we enter into the mysteries from Palm/Passion Sunday through the Resurrection joy of Easter, we can pray with the fullness of our own bodies, as sisters and brothers united spiritually in the Body of Christ, with knowledge of the grace of God infusing all of creation.

- What signs and symbols in this sacred season are most meaningful to you?
- How might you use the physicality of your body and God’s creation in your private prayer?
- What additional opportunities might you take advantage of to pray with others as a member of the Body of Christ? Loyola Press

Loving God,
I am just beginning to realize how much you love me.
Your son, Jesus was humble and obedient.
He fulfilled your will for him by becoming human and suffering with us.
I ask you for the desire to become more humble so that my own life might also bear witness to you.
I want to use the small sufferings I have in this world to give you glory.
Please, Lord, guide my mind with your truth.
Strengthen my life by the example of Jesus.
Help me to be with Jesus in this week as he demonstrates again his total love for me.
He died so that I would no longer be separated from you.
Help me to feel how close you are and to live in union with you. Amen.

Loving Provider,
you gather me in this upper room with your son, to be fed by your love.
At that supper, Jesus told us to "love one another" and I know that is the heart of his gift, his sacrifice for me.
I ask that I might find the source of my own heart, the meaning for my own life, in that Eucharist.
Guide me to the fullness of your love and life. Amen.

God of such unwavering love,
how do I "celebrate" the passion and death of Jesus?
I often want to look the other way and not watch, not stay with Jesus in his suffering.
Give me the strength to see his love with honesty and compassion and to feel deeply your own forgiveness and mercy for me.
Help me to understand how to "celebrate" this week. I want be able to bring my weaknesses and imperfections with me as I journey with Jesus this week, so aware of his love. Amen.
Bring your Rice Bowl filled with spare change to Mass this weekend on Palm Sunday, March 20. Or bring your Rice Bowl to the Parish Center Office during the week. Watch the bulletin for the total donation our parish will send to Catholic Relief Services to empower and transform the lives of our brothers and sisters in need.

The Story of Centro Latino
Centro Latino, a Catholic Charities-supported non-profit, works alongside the Latino population in the Archdiocese of Louisville, Kentucky. That work includes what you may expect: distributing food and clothing, and providing opportunities for education. But Centro Latino also recognizes the importance of community-and stability.

“We need each other,” says Ursuline Sister Lee Kirchner. Sr. Lee volunteers at the monthly Women’s Meetings, offering reflections for the more than 100 women that gather. “That’s what we’re trying to do: build a community among ourselves.”

For women like Katalina, a three-year attendee of these meetings, the community has given her more than the support she needed to learn English; it serves as an inspiration to give back. Women from the group volunteer at Centro Latino’s food distribution center, assist in their local parishes and, of course, work with their peers in the Women’s Meetings. As Sr. Lee notes, Shelby County is better for the work done by these women.

“When I first started leading these reflections, many women hardly said anything,” Sr. Lee recalls. “Now, so many have opened up with the most beautiful observations, with their desires to improve—not just themselves, but their community, where they are.”

For Centro Latino, this is the kind of work that has the most lasting impact.

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING
Global Solidarity
Catholic social teaching inspires and guides how we are to live and work in the world. In this principle, Global Solidarity, Jesus tells us to love our neighbors, even though they may be different than us. That means the neighbors who live next door and also those who live on the other side of the planet. Jesus reminds us that we are all part of God’s great family.

Loving God, You call us to be good stewards of creation and of all the gifts you have blessed us with. As we end our Lenten journey, walking with our brothers and sisters around the world who are hungry and in need, we pray that these, our Lenten sacrifices, may be an offering of solidarity and a promise of continued work on behalf of all poor and vulnerable people. As good stewards of your many gifts, may we always remember to love our neighbors as ourselves. And wherever we feed the hungry, give drink to the thirsty or clothe the naked, may we remember that we are encountering the risen Christ. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.
The Year of Mercy: Remembering Mercy

“In short, we are called to show mercy because mercy has first been shown to us.” Pope Francis

“You ruthless servant! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?” (Mt. 18: 32)

This is the situation. The king, who says these words, had forgiven the servant a huge amount. But this servant did not forgive a fellow servant who owed him a small amount. Instead he sent him to debtor’s prison.

The other servants heard about this miscarriage of mercy and reported the forgiven-but-not-forgiving servant to the king. This sets up the king’s question: “Should not you have had mercy on your fellow servant, as I had mercy on you?”

Everyone seems to “get it” but the forgiven servant. The king and the other servants know that the burden of being shown mercy is to be merciful to others.

Why didn’t the forgiven servant get it? The parable doesn’t tell us, but we can guess.

The forgiven servant took his forgiveness lightly, probably as getting lucky. Then he promptly forgot the whole thing and went about his business with the usual knee-jerk reaction of “pay me back or I will punish you.”

The lesson for us is simple but difficult. Remember the times we were shown mercy. Perhaps it was a parent, or a teacher, or a friend who responded with graciousness when we most needed it but least deserved it. Host these times in our minds and hearts. Ponder how significant they were. Be grateful to the people who were involved.

The more reflective time we give to our experiences of receiving mercy, the more willing and creative we will be in showing mercy. © John Shea

True healing happens when we allow Jesus’ mercy to enter into the deepest layers of brokenness within us. Jesus desires to go to the very depth of our pain. He sees beneath the surface to the source of our hurts, uncovering our deepest needs, even those masked by surface level scars. During this Lenten season, can I bring my own brokenness and sinfulness before God? Can I allow Jesus to enter into my woundedness and heal me from the inside? When someone else hurts me, can I see that person as someone who is needy and broken? Can I look through the eyes of compassion and mercy, as Jesus does? Beth Knobbe. Ignatian Spirituality.

For me, it looks like setting aside 10 minutes a day to sit on my couch, close my eyes, and rest. It means shutting off my mind, settling my heart, and resting deeply in the knowledge knowing that the God of all the universe is holding me in his soft but firm, gentle but strong, mighty, magnificent hands.

This is what Lent looks like for me this year, and this is what receiving the mercy of God means to me. It means having the courage to stop running around trying to do everything and save the world. It means giving myself permission to slow down, to pause, to rest. It means trusting that God is faithful to his word and will give me the rest for which I yearn, the rest for which I was made. Ignatian Spirituality

JUBILEE OF MERCY

FOR THE LIVING AND THE DEAD

We extend the mercy of God to our brothers and sisters, living and deceased, when we intercede for them and place them in God’s hands. In these prayers, we are connected with our brothers and sisters and with the merciful Lord himself. I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers. I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him. (Ephesians 1:16–17)

© John Shea
Students received a visit last week from Mary Todd and Abraham Lincoln. Our fourth through eighth graders had the opportunity to learn what the Lincoln’s life was like before and during his presidency. A question and answer period followed the presentation and many students had thoughtful questions about their lives. This in-house field trip was a great experience for the students and teachers.

We are heading to a state competition in spelling again this year. Ethan Ayersman and Madeline Pace competed in the regional Knights of Columbus Spelling Bee. Ethan placed first and Madeline came in 2nd. They now advance to the state level in early April.

As preparation for Holy Week our YC students attended our annual Lenten Faith Fair. Through active learning in the gym and multi-purpose rooms they learned about the Stations of the Cross and Holy Week. Last Sunday our 6th grade students performed the Stations of the Cross for Kindergarten through 5th grade students. They did a terrific job reenacting the Passion of the Lord.

This Week At SJC
Monday, March 21 Easter Pre School Prayer Service  11am
Track and Field Tryouts   3:45-4:45pm
Tuesday, March 22 Easter Pre School Prayer Service  11am
4th grade Regional Fair   6:30-7:30pm
Wednesday, March 23 Pre School Easter Parties 10:15-11:15am
Track and Field Tryouts   3:45-4:45pm
Thursday, March 24 Pre School Easter Parties 10:15-11:15am
Holy Thursday Prayer Service  2:15-3:15pm
Friday, March 25  No School Easter Break begins

YC Schedule
NO CLASSES March 20, 21, 27, 28, Please complete home lesson.
Classes K-6  10:15-11:30am   Sun, April 3, 10, 17, 24
6:15-7:30pm   Mon, April 4, 11, 18, 25
FFC All work due April 15
Jr Hi Sm Groups  April 3, 17 in home settings
Adapted Catechesis 9:00-10:00am  April 10

YC Registration Fair!
Sunday, April 3rd & Monday April 4th
Register for the YC 2016-2017 year early to choose the
time/session which works best for your family.
Stations of the Cross
Crossroads teens will present a powerful dramatization of the Stations of the Cross at noon on Good Friday in church.

Girl’s Basketball
See the Crossroads website, www.stjohnofthecross.org/crossroads/sports/ to register for girl’s basketball. In order for this year’s league to happen, we need a coach. Please contact Jim Messina at 708-466-9131 if you can help.

Youth Rally
Save the date for the Vicariate IV Youth Rally, April 17 from 2:00-6:00pm.

Summer Work Tours
Put your faith into action! Attend a Summer Work Tour. Go to our website, www.stjohnofthecross.org/crossroads/work-tours/to watch a video invitation and get registration forms.

Interfaith Community Partners - Older Adults
Brighten someone’s Day! Join us on April 9th from 9-11am in the Parish Center Basement. Create 4 or 5 floral arrangements with donated flowers, decorate a card and then help deliver them to older adults in our community. All supplies will be provided. ICP Executive Director, Aileen Pendelton, will also speak on ICP. Please sign up by March 31st contact Marnie Dowd marniedowd@comcast.net or Marilyn Vorsanger insure7900@hotmail.com

Food Pantry Collection
During the month of March nonperishable food brought to our church narthex will be delivered to the St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry located at St. Gall Parish. Thank you for helping to feed the poor in our area.

Outreach Opportunities at Our New Sharing Parish, St. Gall in Chicago
St. Gall is looking for volunteers with a background in preparing income taxes for individuals. Volunteers will meet with parishioners at the Catholic Charities office at St. Gall. Translators will be provided if needed. Preferred times are Monday-Friday during the day, but evening times can be arranged. For further information please call Marilu Gonzales at 773-349-8835.

Raffles prizes are needed for a Father/Daughter-Mother/Son Dance and Raffle on April 15th. Tickets to sporting events, gift cards (restaurants, stores, movie theatres) toys, small electronics, gift baskets or items to include in themed gift baskets (e.g. pampering basket for women, wine and cheese, family game night) would be greatly appreciated. Call Cathy Pesch our Sharing Parish Rep at 708-246-0432 for further information.

Have a fun night out and support St. Gall School. St. Gall Auxiliary Board is hosting its first ever Brew Fest benefiting St. Gall’s School Scholarship Fund at Lagunitas Brewing Company in Chicago on Tuesday, April 12 from 5:30-8:30pm. The night will include food, cash bar, and a super raffle of Chicago event packages and cash bar. 80% of St. Gall students rely on scholarships to attend school. Tuition for one student is $4,200 much less than the real cost to educate a student ($5,537). All proceeds from this event will go towards scholarships for students. Tickets are $25.00, but prices will go up to $30.00 on April 4th. Must be 21 years or older to attend. Hope to see you at Lagunitas for a fun-filled evening with a beer tasting and food for a great cause!!! Contact St. Gall School 773-737-3454 for information on how to purchase tickets.

Cathy Pesch, St. Gall Sharing Rep 708-246-0432

Merciful like the Father is the motto of the Jubilee of Mercy Year. In mercy we find proof of how God loves us. He gives his entire self, always, freely, asking nothing in return. He comes to our aid whenever we call upon him.

Pope Francis Misericordiae Vultus

Crossroads Calendar of Events
March 25 Stations of the Cross - Noon
April 10 Update Meeting - 10am
Home Groups Meet
Dear Jesus, help me to spread your fragrance everywhere I go. Flood my soul with your spirit and life. Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly that all my life may only be a radiance of yours. Shine through me and be so in me that every soul I come in contact with may feel your presence in my soul. Let them look up and see no longer me but only Jesus! Stay with me and then I shall begin to shine as you shine, so to shine as to be a light to others. The light, O Jesus, will be all from you; none of it will be mine. It will be you shining on others through me. Let me thus praise you in the way you love best: by shining on those around me. Let me preach you without preaching, not by words, but by my example, by the catching force, the sympathetic influence of what I do, the evident fullness of the love my heart bears to you. Amen.

Blessed and soon-to-be Saint Teresa of Calcutta

Spring New Liturgical Minister Training

New Communion Minister training will take place on Sunday, April 10 from 2:30-4pm in church. New ministers should be at least 16 years of age. Call Theresa in the Parish Center to register.

New Lector Training will take place on Sunday, May 15 from 2:30-4pm in church. New lectors should be at least freshmen in high school. Call Theresa in the Parish Center to register.

Through the wonderful generosity of one of our parishioners, we will be giving each family praying with us on Easter Sunday a special gift book—Rediscover Jesus by Matthew Kelly. If you would like to help us greet visitors and parishioners and distribute this book, call the Parish Center.

The best time to rediscover Jesus is right now. There are some questions that we all ask ourselves in different ways: Who am I? Who is God? What am I here for? What matters most? What matters least? What are my unique talents and abilities? What will my contribution be? We discover the answers to these questions most completely by encountering Jesus. He longs to help us discover deeply personal answers to our deeply personal questions.

Join us as we read and reflect on the book Rediscover Jesus on six Thursdays beginning April 14-May 19 at 2pm and 7pm in the Parish Center. This series will be led by Deacon John Schopp and Steve Weigand, Pastoral Associate.

Substitute Usher Pool

If you have ever considered Ushering as a way you would like to serve our parish without making a lifelong commitment, consider adding your name to the pool of substitute Ushers forming now! Training consists of a brief meeting with one of the head ushers and shadowing at Mass to see how it’s done at St. John of the Cross Parish. Substitute ushers will serve no more than once per month as your schedule permits.

Please call the Steve Weigand to submit your name or for more information: 708-246-4404.
Divorce Support Group
The Divorce and Beyond Ministry provides healing and pastoral support to those recently divorced or going through the divorce process. Divorce and Beyond is a faith-based program that includes education, discussion, reflection and prayer. Each session focuses on a different aspect of the divorce-healing process. Topics include: grief, stress, anger, blame, guilt, loneliness, forgiveness, and happiness. Former Divorce and Beyond participants lead each meeting and are committed to providing a safe and welcoming environment. ($10.00 manual fee can be paid at first session) **Introduction & First Session Friday, April 15 in the Parish Center from 7:00—8:30pm. Call Steve Weigand @ (708) 246-4404 or visit: www.stjohnofthecross.org/divorceandbeyond to register online.**

Remembering the Past-Remembering the Future Divorced & Widowed Conference
Sr. Jane Schlosser, RSM will lead a day of reflection for the divorced and widowed and those who care for them on April 9 from 9am-3:30pm at Blanchette Catholic Center in Crest Hill. Register by April 1. Suggested donation of $35 includes lunch. Call 815-838-5334 or go to familyministry@dioceseofjoliet.org.

Easter Mass for the Homebound
Archbishop Cupich will preside at the Easter Mass at Mercy Home to be televised on WGN Channel 9 at 9:30am on Sunday, March 27.

Worldwide Marriage Encounter
Are we also like Peter and deny Christ over and over? Christ calls us to be all we can in our Marriage Sacrament. The next Worldwide Marriage Encounter Weekends are April 8-10, 2016 or June 10-12, 2016 or August 12-14, 2015, 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.

Seasons of Hope is our parish grief support ministry grounded in the healing wisdom, tradition, and practice of the Catholic faith. It is for anyone mourning the loss of a loved one or struggling with the grieving process. With the support of our faith community, Seasons of Hope sessions help us explore our unique journeys of grief and find healing and spiritual growth through scripture, prayer, reflection activities and faith sharing. Sessions are held three times per year; spring, summer and fall. The 6 week spring session will begin Monday, April 11 at 7pm. To register call Steve Weigand at 708-246-4404.

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 the Giving tab on our parish website.

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.

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

Lindsey and Patrick Ryan Cox and Family
Urszula Krutul and George Azevedo and Family
Denise and Richard Berdelle

If you would like to register to become a member, please contact Elizabeth Russell-Jones in the Welcome Center. For more information call or email 708.246.4404x155 or erussell-jones@stjohnofthecross.org.
Parish Sponsored Program at The Well Spirituality Center  
Saturday, April 9 from 8:30am-12:30pm  
Many people have understood their responsibility toward the natural world as one of domination and exploitation. The environmental crises within which we find ourselves force us to look at this relationship in an entirely different way. What insights might the Bible provide as we look anew at our attitudes towards creation? In an attempt to answer this question, several Old Testament traditions will be examined.

Dianne Bergant, CSA is a Carroll Stuhlmueller, CP Distinguished Professor Emerita of Biblical Studies at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. She was President of the Catholic Biblical Association of America and has been an active member of the Chicago Catholic/Jewish Scholars Dialogue for the past 30 years. She is currently working in the areas of biblical interpretation and biblical theology, particularly issues of peace, ecology and feminism.

This program is sponsored by our parish allowing our parishioners to attend free. To attend rsvp to the Parish Center front office.

Gardening Angels  
Consider joining the parish Gardening Angels this season. There are many ways and different times you can help watering, weeding and working on special projects. Confirmation candidates and Crossroads teens are welcome too. Call or email Jan Grabacki at beaconjan@aol.com or 331-903-3135.

Women’s Club Upcoming Events  
Save the date for “Voicebox” with Maureen Muldoon and Cathy Richardson on Thursday, April 14 from 7-10pm. It will be a great get-together for all women of the parish. Watch for more details to come.

Annual Women’s Club Spring Drive: A Baby Shower to benefit Teen Parent Connection. Donate any of the following items between April 2 –17 to the drop boxes in the Parish Center, church or school.

- Onesies, diapers sizes newborn, 4, 5 and 6, child and adult fever reducer, safety items such as outlet covers and gates, formula, nonperishable finger food, laundry detergent, deodorant, toothpaste, personal products, shampoo, lotion, soap, books for moms and baby- on-board car signs.

Annual Flower Sale: Spring is (almost) here...and so is the Women’s Club Annual Flower Sale! We have a huge list of gorgeous flowers that will make your yard the best on the block! Grab a form at the parish center or order online. Orders due April 23 and pick up is on May 4- just in time for Mother’s Day! Look for pictures and order forms online and in next Sunday’s bulletin.

THANK YOU!!  
Many thanks to the SJC Men’s Club members & Crossroads teens who worked together for another fabulous FISH FRY! The support and esprit de corps that exists among our groups is a gift and true example of serving others.

THANK YOU!!  
It was a great pleasure to be with all of you at our Women’s Club GraceReflected: The Seeds of Joy Retreat Day. As the blanket of snow melted and the sun peaked through the clouds, what a beautiful day it was at the Morton Arboretum! Whether you were inspired to plant a new seed or were reminded of a loving seed planted long ago, we hope your garden blooms. Whether you came alone or with someone, we hope you were nourished by community. Whether you danced or sat in stillness, laughed or cried, participated or reflected, we hope you were filled with the spirit of JOY. As we carry on with our lives and responsibilities, may we continue to be reminded by one of the prayer cards, spiritual exercises, or Dear Pope Francis book to sow the seeds of joy. We know that a beautiful garden was planted on Saturday! We hope you have a wonderful Easter and spring! With Grace, Marie Gerken and Tiffany White, Women’s Club ps-The free meditation app that we practiced with at our December event and which was mentioned on Saturday is called Insight Timer. The name of the book by Barbara Fiand is Awe and Wonder.
**Mass Intentions**

**Monday, March 21**  
Monday of Holy Week  
7:45am Jeremiah & Mary Albertson; Deceased members of the Klein & O’Sullivan families

**Tuesday, March 22**  
Tuesday of Holy Week  
7:45am William Caplice; Greg Oleary

**Wednesday, March 23**  
Wednesday of Holy Week  
7:45am Margo Hermes; Catherine Pazzali

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

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

**Saturday, March 26**  
Holy Saturday  
7:30pm Easter Vigil

**Sunday, March 27**  
Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord  
7:30am Deceased members of the Galvin & Grogan families; Shirley Kazragis

*Note this Mass begins 15 minutes later than usual.*

No 5pm Mass

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**Pray for Our Sick**
- Rita Barnes
- Anna Marie Berland
- Robert Bright
- Adam & Logan Bialas
- Judy Burke
- Margaret Cochran
- Mildred Fitzgerald
- Lynn Freking
- Christopher Gallagher
- Robert & Lucille Hartnett
- Karen Hult
- Ann Kalaska
- Curtis Kerzich
- George Kojima
- Bobbie Misiora
- Ann McGuire
- Frank Mraz
- Steve Pechous
- Don Palaschak
- Frank & Marge Pipal
- Anthony Placek, Jr.
- Kay Reidy
- Monica Westell

**Pray for Our Loved Ones Serving Our Country**
- Sgt. Steven Foody, son of Tom & Sandra Foody
- Specialist Sebastian Grabacki, son of David & Jan Grabacki
- A1C Joshua Tischler USAF Pararescue, grandson of Betty & Frank Madler & Mary Tischler
- A Navy Seal, a relative of our parishioner
- PFC Daniel Pett, nephew of Kathryn Stitemetz
- Capt. James Maicke, grandson of Phil & Mike Maicke
- Sgt. Robert Marburger, son of David and Kathleen Marburger
- Sgt. Larry Waszak, grandson of Bruno and Barbara Gacek

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**Jesus Christ, with his closeness and tenderness, leads sinners into the place of grace and pardon.**

This is the mercy of God.

Pope Francis @Pontifex  Mar 4

May the Lord free us from all temptation that separates us from what is essential in our mission and help rediscover the beauty of faith.

Pope Francis @Pontifex  Mar 5
Holy Week Schedule

**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.

Abstinence from meat is to be observed by all Catholics 14 years old and older on Ash Wednesday and on all the Fridays of Lent. Fasting is to be observed on Ash Wednesday by all Catholics who are 18 years of age but not yet 59. Those who are bound by this may take only one full meal. Two smaller meals are permitted if necessary to maintain strength according to one’s needs, but eating solid foods between meals is not permitted. The special Paschal fast, as well as abstinence, are prescribed for Good Friday and encouraged for Holy Saturday.