Dear Parishioners,

This is Thanksgiving week, and we have so very much to be grateful for here at SJC. The most recent example was last weekend with Harvest Saturday. There were between 150 and 200 volunteer adults, teens and younger brothers and sisters as well. Some teens from St. Gall came to help too. Some families who have been volunteering for years came again to keep their family tradition alive by beginning the holiday season focused on the needs of others. Everyone who put out a grocery bag to be picked up is the real hero of the day. Untold people will benefit from your generosity and will be less hungry because of you. Thank you for helping to make SJC a wonderful and generous place to call home.

You are invited to pray with our Western Springs Protestant brothers and sisters this Wednesday, the night before Thanksgiving. Our host this year is the First Congregational Church, 1106 Chestnut. A non-perishable food donation is requested. I’ve heard that a pie reception is also being planned immediately following the prayer service.

This week also brings the Year of Mercy to a close with the Feast of Christ the King. Pope Francis wanted to highlight that we are all on a path of salvation, and the Year of Mercy is an opportunity to reflect on how mercy is at work in our lives. The symbol of the ‘holy doors’ is to remind us that we are always in transition from the known to the unknown and it is the mercy of God that guides our way. I hope all the ‘words of mercy’ that have been displayed throughout the year in the narthex have been helpful to you. (Especially for those who may have had to walk some antsy toddlers during Mass.)

You may have noticed the enclosure for the handicap entrance on Caroline Avenue. I hope this addition will cut down on the cold air in the winter blasting in on the people sitting in the pews closest to that door. There are a couple of tweaks that need to be made and we will all learn about wind patterns and snow drifting in that corner of the building. All in all, I hope it is an improvement rather than just another obstacle for those who need to use the handicapped entrance, their care givers and for everyone else who uses that entrance.

Until the Breaking of the Bread,
Fr. David

From the Desk of Fr. David

On Thanksgiving Day our morning Mass will begin at 9:30am. There will not be a Mass at 7:45am that day. As has been our custom, the offertory collection on Thanksgiving Day will support our Caritas SJC Needy Family Fund which provides emergency support to parishioners facing difficulty meeting an unplanned critical financial obligation. Thank you for your generosity.

In a rather simple prayer service November 19, Pope Francis will create 17 new cardinals and symbolically bind them to ancient church traditions.

In the months following the consistory -- as any gathering of cardinals is called -- the new cardinals under the age of 80 will be named members of various Vatican congregations, councils, dicasteries and offices. For most of the cardinals, the memberships, while not involving a permanent move to Rome, will be the most regular exercise of their new ministry as advisers to the pope.

The most serious responsibility that cardinals have is the solemn obligation to gather in a conclave to elect a new pope. That right is reserved to cardinals under the age of 80.

Three U.S. citizens are among the new cardinals. They are: Archbishop Blase J. Cupich of Chicago; Bishop Kevin J. Farrell, prefect of the new Vatican office for laity, family and life; and Archbishop Joseph W. Tobin, who recently was transferred from Indianapolis to Newark, New Jersey.

At the consistory for creating new cardinals, Pope Francis will give each of the 17 a scroll with the "title" to a church or parish in Rome. As the "titular cardinal" of the church, a cardinal from anywhere in the world becomes a special member of the clergy of Rome. The practice echoes the ancient tradition of the Rome clergy electing their bishop, the pope.

They will arrive at St. Peter's Basilica already dressed in their new red robes; the crimson hue is a reminder the cardinals wear that they must be faithful to Christ, his church and the pope to the point of shedding blood, if necessary.

Together, the new cardinals will solemnly profess their faith by reciting the Creed and formally swear fidelity and obedience to the pope and his successors. Then, one by one, they will approach Pope Francis to receive a biretta -- a three-cornered red hat -- their cardinal's ring and the assignment of their titular church. (Catholic News Service)

Cupich has led the Chicago Archdiocese, the third largest in the United States, since September, 2014. He will be the 7th Cardinal from Chicago.
WE WILL MAKE THE MISSION OF CHRIST OUR OWN—FOR OUR TIME.
Archbishop Cupich is calling every Chicagoland Catholic to join him in a multi-year initiative to revitalize our Church in the Archdiocese and ensure its growth for generations to come. Together through Renew My Church, we will create vital, vibrant, life-giving, Catholic communities across the Archdiocese. We will inspire disciples to accompany all members of our family of faith to seize this moment. archchicago.org/renew

RENEWAL HAS ALWAYS BEEN OUR CALL.
Please go to the home page of our parish website to read more from the Archbishop on Renew My Church.

WE ARE CALLED TO MAKE ALL THINGS NEW IN CHRIST.

Christ called St. Francis of Assisi to “Rebuild My Church.” As we are reminded by the image of the San Damiano Cross, Christ called Francis to, “Go, rebuild my church.” Francis came to understand that Christ was calling him to renew the Church, and not just rebuild a structure. That is the task before us.

Pope Francis has called us to dream big for the Church. “I dream of a ‘missionary option’, that is, a missionary impulse capable of transforming everything so that the Church’s customs, ways of doing things, times and schedules, language and structures can be suitably channeled for the evangelization of today’s world rather than for her self-preservation.”

Archbishop Cupich is calling us to renew the Church in Chicago. “Just as our ancestors responded in faith to their dreams and built the church we have today, it is our time to dream big and to take up this work.”

The Archdiocese has changed in significant ways over the past several decades. Demographics have shifted dramatically, some buildings are in disrepair, and we have fewer priests to pastor. Yet, at the same time, there is new life as immigrants continue to make Chicagoland their home, as we ordain enthusiastic and energetic new priests and as we live in the historic time when Pope Francis is leading us to live in the joy of the Gospel. Thus, we should not be afraid to face our challenges, but embrace them, seeing this moment as a graced opportunity to chart new ways to live out our mission more fully.
Background on the Gospel

Today as a Church, we conclude our liturgical year and celebrate the Feast of Christ the King. The Gospel we proclaim shows the great mystery of our faith: In the moment of his crucifixion, Jesus is shown to be King and Savior of all.

Luke’s Gospel has been loaded with surprises: the poor are rich, sinners find salvation, the Kingdom of God is found in our midst. Here we see the greatest surprise of all. We are confronted with the crucified Jesus, whom faith tells us is King and Savior of all. The irony is that the inscription placed on the cross, perhaps in mockery, contains the profoundest of truth. As the leaders jeer, the thief crucified by his side recognizes Jesus as Messiah and King, and finds salvation.

Jesus is King, but not the kind of king we might have imagined or expected. His kingship was hidden from many of his contemporaries, but those who had the eyes of faith were able to see. As modern disciples of Jesus, we, too, struggle at times to recognize Jesus as King. Today’s Gospel invites us to make our own judgment. With eyes of faith, we, too, recognize that Jesus, the crucified One, is indeed King and Savior of all.

Living the Gospel

Three hang on crosses, suffering and dying. One reviles, one begs for salvation, One promises Paradise. Indeed, only One can promise Paradise. Who but “the Christ of God” could make such a promise? Who but a divine King could reach beyond his own suffering and dying to bestow Life on another? Who but One totally innocent of evil could draw goodness out of one who is “condemned justly”? Three hang on crosses. One remains condemned. One is redeemed. One will rise from the dead, King of the universe.

The cross is where we least expect a king to be. Yet this is where we find Jesus. The cross is where we ourselves least want to be. Yet this is how God’s kingdom is established and where our discipleship begins: allowing ourselves to be crucified on the cross of self-giving. Jesus demonstrates his kingship not by saving himself but by saving others. Not by turning in on himself but by turning out toward others. Jesus demonstrates his kingship not by power but by loving reassurance that Paradise awaits faithful disciples. Only by beginning here, on the cross, can our discipleship end like the Good Thief’s, hearing Jesus say to us, “Amen, I say to you, / today you will be with me in Paradise.”

This means that each day we must live in a self-giving way because only through goodness expressed in reaching out to others is God’s reign at hand. Living the Gospel means living the daily dying the cross demands. Just as the cross was the means to Jesus’ exaltation, so is the cross our only way into Paradise.

Blessed be the name of the Lord!

May we faithfully follow Christ the King by reaching out to those in need.
May we remember what we have learned during this liturgical year and resolve to enter more deeply into Gospel living during the coming year.

The Lord is our King! The desire of Christ’s heart is eternal life for all people. That desire has been fulfilled through his Death and Resurrection. All he asks as he holds open the door of his eternal kingdom is that we put our lives in his hands and live according to his kingdom’s law of love, so that all time may come to its completion in him.
Gratitude

Gratitude is not a fad, not the latest trend on the World Wide Web. Gratitude is foundational to the life that so many people desire: a life that is well-lived, joyful, and connected to others and to God in good, healthy ways.

Gratitude is not really an attitude. It’s more like an interior posture. Gratitude is about the way I position myself toward my own life, other people, creation, the world, and the Divine.

Gratitude opens the heart. When I am grateful, even about some small thing, that response opens me up. Because, with gratitude, I recognize something worth loving and enjoying. This can lead to hope: I believe that something else might happen that provides love and joy. Gratitude helps me take the risk and open my life to what wonders might come along.

Gratitude shifts the mind into a positive perspective. Although some days are truly difficult, even horrific, most of us need only one minor detail to go wrong to become cranky and negative. Gratitude can correct that. If I begin to identify what is going right, what helps me, what is doing some good in the world, then my perception shifts away from negativity.

Gratitude is not always easy, but it’s simple to practice. All I have to do is ask myself this question, or one like it: *What am I grateful for today, right now?* At the end of the day, I can make a list of anything in the day that felt good or worked well or gave me cause to say “thank you.” These practices are simple enough for children to do. They don’t require deep thinking or advanced theology.

Gratitude is greater than one person. Gratitude can set the tone in a meeting, at an event, in a home, among many people. One person who expresses gratitude can change the way a conversation is going. If a meeting begins with a prayer of thanksgiving, a song of joy, or—if it’s not a religious meeting—an acknowledgment of good work done and reasons to celebrate, then it’s likely that the outcome of the gathering will be much more positive than if it had begun with a scolding lecture or a listing of all the group’s problems.

Gratitude helps us build a history with hope and intention. When we practice remembering the gifts we receive day to day and year to year, we build, with intention, a personal history. I don’t deny that I was in a serious auto accident that year, but I also remember the care I received while I was recovering. I remember details of that care, and I remember specific people. I don’t try to erase the history of my depression, but in that history I include the conversation that comforted me, the day beside the lake that helped me breathe and a hope a little more, the physician who found the medication that worked, and the holiday gathering I *didn’t* have to skip because being around people would be so difficult.

Gratitude is more than a prayer or an attitude or a helpful strategy. It’s a way of seeing, a way of remembering, a way of proceeding.

May each of us practice gratitude a little more as the days and years go by. Ignatian Spirituality

Father of love, Lord of creation, we give you thanks for your many blessings to us: for the gifts of the earth which sustain and nurture our lives, for the gifts of your Spirit which make our lives complete and whole in your love. May we give you thanks for your many gifts by sharing them with one another. May we be worthy of your great love for us by working constantly to make these prayers for peace and compassion a reality. We offer these prayers to you, O Father, in the name of your Son, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.
The Year of Mercy:
Mercy is King

“The Jubilee year will close with the liturgical Solemnity of Christ the King on 20 November 2016. … God’s mercy, rather than a sign of weakness, is the mark of his omnipotence.” Pope Francis

Kings (or their contemporary counterparts) are about privilege and power. When we think of them, our fantasies about omnipotence – unbridled willfulness - kick in.

Whatever kings want to do, they do. Whatever gets in their way is quickly overcome. Even if they want to do good, there would certainly be opposition that must be crushed. This type of dominance seems to be salve for our real situations of not having all the power we want.

Of course, we project this type of power on God who is the ultimate King. Then we ask why God, who can do anything, allows suffering. We concoct answers. Some are more convincing than others, but none fully satisfy us – either intellectually or emotionally.

How far these mental games of power are from the Christian revelation!

Christ the King is Jesus dying on the cross. God’s son is accompanying and entering into human dying so that no one who dies will ever be alone. The mercy of God – real power – is a non-abandoning love that brings life out of death.

In order to understand this real power of mercy, we have to starve our ego fantasies and start the mental and behavioral processes of being presence to one another. In this way the year of mercy will become a seed in our relationships and a catalyst in the ongoing evolution of the society.

As Pope Francis says, “Throughout the history of humanity, God will always be the One who is present, close, provident, holy, and merciful.” And so will those who open to this revelation of Christ the King.

Mercy is King.

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Lord Jesus Christ, you have taught us to be merciful like the heavenly Father, and have told us that whoever sees you sees Him. Show us your face and we will be saved. Your loving gaze freed Zacchaeus and Matthew from being enslaved by money; the adulteress and Magdalene from seeking happiness only in created things; made Peter weep after his betrayal, and assured Paradise to the repentant thief. Let us hear, as if addressed to each one of us, the words that you spoke to the Samaritan woman: “If you knew the gift of God!”

You are the visible face of the invisible Father, of the God who manifests his power above all by forgiveness and mercy: let the Church be your visible face in the world, its Lord risen and glorified. You willed that your ministers would also be clothed in weakness in order that they may feel compassion for those in ignorance and error; let everyone who approaches them feel sought after, loved, and forgiven by God.

Send your Spirit and consecrate every one of us with His anointing, so that the Jubilee of Mercy may be a year of grace from the Lord, and your Church, with renewed enthusiasm, may bring good news to the poor, proclaim liberty to captives and the oppressed, and restore sight to the blind.

We ask this of you, Lord Jesus, through the intercession of Mary, Mother of Mercy; you who live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit for ever and ever. Amen.
In the fourth century, St. Augustine (354-430), an official Doctor of the Church (meaning his teaching is considered reliable), said, “the church consists in the state of communion of the whole world.” Wherever we are connected, in right relationship—you might say “in love”—there is the Christ, there is the authentic “body of God” revealed. This body is more a living organism than any formal organization.

Non-human creation is invariably obedient to its destiny. Animals and plants seem to excitedly take their small place in the “circle of life,” in the balance of nature, in the dance of complete interdependence. It is only we humans who have resisted our place in “the one great act of giving birth” (see Romans 8:22), even though we had the most powerful role! Humans, in fact, have frequently chosen death for themselves and for so many other creatures besides. We are, by far, the most destructive of all species. As St. Hildegard of Bingen (also a Doctor of the Church) writes:

Human beings alone are capable of disobeying God’s laws, because they try to be wiser than God. . . . Other creatures fulfill the commandments of God; they honor [God’s] laws. . . . But human beings rebel against those laws, defying them in word and action. And in doing so they inflict terrible cruelty on the rest of God’s creation.

Jesus clearly taught that if we seek first God’s kingdom and the universal law of love (“love God and love one another,” Matthew 22:37-40), all the rest would take care of itself (see Matthew 6:33). We would no longer blatantly defy the laws of nature but seek to live in harmony and sustainability with Earth and all her creatures. This radical lifestyle demands a sense of inherent dignity that is granted by God and not an off-and-on dignity determined by egocentric humans.

As Homo sapiens (“Wise Humans”), we should have taken our place as what Teilhard de Chardin called “the pinnacle of evolution” or “the rocks come to consciousness.” Then we could join with the rest of creation in obedience to our unique and full destiny. In poet Gerard Manley Hopkins’ words:

Each mortal thing does one thing and the same:
. . . myself it speaks and spells,
Crying What I do is me: for that I came.

When we get the “who” right and realize that who I am is love, then we will do what we came to do: Love God and love all that this God has created. I firmly believe that grace is inherent to creation and not an occasional additive, and that God and goodness—not Armageddon—have both the first and final word, which we call divine creation and final resurrection.

Gateway to Silence:
Brother Sun, Sister Moon, help me see God in all things.

Lord Jesus Christ, you reign for ever. Rule over all the world in peace and fill our hearts and households with the power of your love. In Jesus’ name we pray. Amen.
Merry Moms Bring Holiday Cheer!
A group of moms in our parish would like to help you get your home ready for the holidays. If you or someone you know is elderly or sick or alone, this spirit-filled group of moms will put up your inside Christmas decorations and then come back after the holidays to pack them back up. The Merry Moms welcome anyone who would like to join their efforts too! Call JoAnn McGarry today to schedule the Merry Moms to visit your home or to help the Moms. 847-562-6095.

St. John of the Cross
The SJC study group invites anyone interested to celebrate the feast day of St. John of the Cross on Wednesday, December 14 by watching a movie about the life of St John of the Cross from 3:30pm-4:30pm in the Parish Center. Please come!

Advent Procession at Mass
Families, neighbors, or parish groups are invited to be a part of the opening procession of Sunday Mass during Advent by carrying the Advent candle. Sign up online today!

FUN Christmas Gift Idea:
2017 SJC Fest Mega Passes!
Surprise your family members this Christmas with Mega Passes for the upcoming SJC Fest on June 22, 23, 24 & 25, 2017. Special holiday gift Mega Passes will be available in the Parish Center office during the month of December on weekdays 9am-4pm. Each Mega Pass is $50 and is good for unlimited rides for all four days of the Fest. (Mega Passes are $65 at the door.) Get ready for FUN!

Advent Taizé Prayer
Tuesday, December 6
7:00 - 8:00pm
In Church

LIVESTOCK for LIFE
The Livestock for Life Program gives others hope by supplying them with a hen, pig, or goat. Raising livestock provides a source of income and livelihood for many in Jinja, Uganda. The donation made in your honor will continue to strengthen this vulnerable community for years to come.

You may purchase on-line with your credit card or drop off a check with the form below to the Parish Center. Each gift is $40.

While Holy Cross Parish in Jinja, Uganda is no longer a SJC Sharing Parish, we continue to encourage participation in the Livestock for Life Program.

Your Name: __________________________________________
Address: __________________________________________
Phone: __________________________________________
Email: __________________________________________
Number of Cards: _____________
Amount Enclosed: _____________
Outreach

Ways You Can Help Others

Bake or Buy Christmas Cookies
Christmas cookies are needed for the LaGrange Community Nurses Association Holiday Open House on December 3. Drop off cookies at the Parish Center lobby on December 1 & 2 before 4pm.

Buy Stamps for Inmates
Donate postage stamps for Kolbe House to enable those in prison to send Christmas Cards to their families. Bring stamps to the Parish Center or put them in the Sunday Offertory Collection basket at Mass.

Food Pantry Drive
Nonperishable food brought to the church narthex during November and December will be delivered to Mary Queen of Heaven. Family favorites include canned vegetables (corn, peas, green beans), cereal, tuna, boxed mashed potatoes, stuffing, pasta, pasta sauce, rice, and baby food.

Donate Christmas Mugs
Fill a Christmas mug with candy as a gift for special needs young adults at the Ray Graham Association Center in Chicago. Wrap in clear wrap and drop off at the Parish Center lobby by December 7.

Wrap Gifts for Charity
Help the Companions Journeying Together Aunt Mary’s Storybook Project by wrapping gifts at Chicago Ridge Mall on various days in December. Email Jenny for days and times at jxacosta@gmail.com. Proceeds from the wrapping fees go to the Storybook Project.

Companions Journeying Together, a non-profit organization, provides a forum to personally impact the emotional, spiritual, and social lives of the incarcerated and their families at 12 different area jails. Companions Journeying Together staff and trained volunteers bring a selection of brand new books, along with audio recorders into the jail or prison. They assist participating parent inmates in choosing an age-appropriate book for each one of their children. Each participant is given an opportunity to record him or herself reading the book for their child. If the participant wishes, they may end with a message of love to the child and thanks to the caregiver. On behalf of the parent, the books and CD are then sent to the caregiver for the children.

Thank you, Father, for having created us and given us to each other in the human family. Thank you for being with us in all our joys and sorrows, for your comfort in our sadness, your companionship in our loneliness. Thank you for yesterday, today, tomorrow and for the whole of our lives. Thank you for friends, for health and for grace. May we live this and every day conscious of all that has been given to us. From The Catholic Prayer Book, compiled by Msgr. Michael Buckle.
Be a Part of the Choir on Thanksgiving

All singers in the parish are invited to join voices with all of our parish choirs at our Thanksgiving Day Mass at 9:30am. Please come for warm-ups and rehearsal at 8:30am on Thanksgiving morning. There will not be a 7:45am Mass that day.

Little Blue Books for Advent Prayer

The Little Blue Book can be your constant companion for Advent. The right hand side of each page will cite a part of the Gospel for the Mass each day followed by a reflection. The left hand side has timely thoughts, quotes and information. You might want to share some of it at dinner with your family. It should not take more than 6 minutes each day—an easy commitment. Let the Little Blue Book slow you down and let you be with Christ in a special way each day this Christmas season. Give them to your family members as a personal invitation to pray this Advent. Reflections begin on the First Sunday of Advent, November 27 and end on the Baptism of the Lord. The Little Blue Books will be available at the exits of church after all Masses this weekend. Any extra copies will be available in the church or Parish Center Office during the week. Suggested donation $1.

Parish Babysitting for Ages 1-5 Years Old

Did you know our parish offers free babysitting in the Garden Room of the rectory during the Sunday 9am and 10:45am Masses? No fees, no registration, just ring the bell and drop off your child so you can attend Mass. The Garden Room is in the basement of the rectory, the building just south of church by the Mary Garden. The front glass doors face north. Please note there is no sitting on holiday weekends such as Thanksgiving weekend, November 27.

Parish Center Office

Our Parish Center office will be closed on Thanksgiving Day. Office hours will resume on Friday, November 25 from 9am-noon. As always, you may reach a priest in an emergency by calling the main number and following the voice prompts. 708-246-4404.

Men’s Club December Event

All men of the parish are invited to the annual Men’s Club Smoker at nearby Casa De Montecristo in Countryside on Thursday, December 15 at 6:30pm. You are welcome to BYOB. Please RSVP to Dan Montomery at tdm30550@gmail.com or 312-952-1435.

Thanksgiving Table Prayer

O Gracious God, we give you thanks for your overflowing generosity to us. Thank you for the blessings of the food we eat and especially for this feast today. Thank you for our home and family and friends, especially for the presence of those gathered here. Thank you for our health, our work and our play. Please send help to those who are hungry, alone, sick and suffering war and violence. Open our hearts to your love. We ask your blessing through Christ your Son. Amen. From Celebrating Faith: Year-round Activities For Catholic Families, by Mary Cronk Farrell
Last week with the general election, the students at SJC spent time learning about our electoral process. Days prior to the election, students learned about the electoral vote as compared to the popular vote. On election day each student had the opportunity to vote and actually voted in a “voting booth.” This was a great way to expose our children and prepare them for the process that they will someday be a part.

This Week at SJC
November 22  All School Mass  9:15am
November 23-27
No School  Thanksgiving Break

The Importance of Reconciliation

Our Lord Jesus is a loving and merciful God. He calls us to be united with him in prayer and service. He also embraces us when we falter and sin. Please keep in prayer our youth who are preparing to receive their First Reconciliation on December 3rd.

They were so happy when Fr. Bill Vollmer came to answer their questions. Fr. Bill talked to them about how Jesus is truly present in the Sacrament; the difference between mistake and sin; the complete trust in the priest to listen and not judge them; and the warm embrace they will feel when their sins are absolved and forgiven. The children were wonderfully attentive and posed great questions about the Sacrament.

Thank you Fr. Bill!

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Advent Programs at The Well

The Well Spirituality Center, 1515 Ogden Avenue, LaGrange Park, IL.
To register: 708-482-5048/thewell@csjoseph.org /www.csjthewell.org

Advent: Come, O Christ, Do Not Delay!
Facilitator:  Pat Bergen, CSJ
In the midst of the seeming chaos in our world, something new is coming to be! Can you sense it? Can you see it? Can you give yourself to it so that hope can be enkindled, love can be ignited and Christ can be born among us in a whole new way? The world is dying from lack of love. There is no time to waste. Come join us as we give ourselves with great intention to the season of Advent that a new birth of Christ (Love) among us will echo throughout the land!
Monday, Nov. 28, 9:30-11am OR 7-8:30pm
SJC Sponsored Program—No Cost: for St. John of the Cross Parishioners.
Call the Parish Center to register for this program.

Advent Labyrinth Ritual
Facilitator:  Janet Bolger, CSJ
You are invited to come to The Well and take a break from pre-holiday busyness to explore the labyrinth as a way of prayer and reflection. Walking the labyrinth is an ancient practice being re-discovered in our time. People often find that this walking meditation gives them a sense of peace and quiet and a feeling of closeness to the Sacred. The labyrinth is a metaphor for life’s journey, a journey to our center and out again. No matter how you feel at this moment—joyful, burdened, hopeful, grieving—you are welcome to the labyrinth. So move your feet and follow your heart!
Monday, Dec. 5, 9-11:30am     Cost: $15

Born in Darkness: Invitations and Blessings
Facilitator: Kathy Sherman, CSJ
“What I tell you in the dark, speak in the day light; what is whispered in your ear, proclaim from the rooftops.” Matt. 10:27
In our hemisphere we celebrate the invitation of Advent and the blessing of Christmas during the darkest time of the year. Might this be a metaphor for life’s journey? We will listen through story and song for the invitations and blessings that we come to understand and experience in the darkness.
Monday, Dec. 12, 7-8:30pm     Cost: $15

Destress
Facilitator:  Kate Wester, textile artist, yoga teacher, Registered Somatic Movement Therapist
Research has shown that there are great benefits to regular deep relaxation, not just for mental health and well-being, but for our physical health as well. In this class we will practice some gentle movement and stretching (suitable for all fitness levels), some breathing techniques that help engage and strengthen our relaxation response, and a guided visualization intended to let the nervous system become very calm. Participants should bring a yoga mat, blanket, or cushion as well as any other items that would help make their relaxation more comfortable.
Thursdays:  Dec. 8 and 22, 6:30-7:30pm     Cost: $12/session

Embracing Wisdom
Facilitator:  Bridget Sperduto
We are bearers of Wisdom; created through wisdom to become wisdom for others. Often others who are ahead on the journey awaken our inner wisdom. In the safety of this circle we will listen to wisdom of those “masters” and share our own lived wisdom with one another. The circle doesn’t end here. Empowered by our time together, we will each be sent forth to be a presence of wisdom for our family, friends and all whose lives we touch.
Thursday: Dec. 15, 9:30-11am     Cost: $15/session
advent by candlelight
Tuesday, November 29
7-10pm
Join us for a truly special, memorable evening filled with Joy & Hope as we prepare for Christmas.

Be a Table Coordinator for 8 or 12. Coordinators decorate their table with special holiday touches using their linens, candles, and centerpiece decorations. Dishes, flatware and stemware provided in addition to coffee, soda and dessert.

For questions or to reserve your place contact Lee Rosenberg at 708-269-6046 or fletchrosen@gmail.com. $10 per person.

RSVP by Wednesday, November 23 to the Parish Center, or mail to Lee Rosenberg at 4540 Woodland Avenue, Western Springs, or sign up on the parish website.

Name:
Phone:
Email:
_____ Yes, I am coordinating a table.
If you have a table / seating preference, list here:

Thank you to our numerous volunteers and donors for making our 2016 Coat Drive a success! With your generosity we were able to prepare those in need for the upcoming cold Chicago winter. In total, we collected 530 coats which were donated to St. Vincent De Paul, Sharing Connections, Ella Flagg Young School, Sarah’s Circle, Precious Blood and other local charities.

A special thank you goes out to Kelly Eikum (pictured below delivering to Sharing Connections) and Pam Kenny for coordinating a successful drive. Thank you also to the children volunteers who helped sort, count, and bag the coats.

Each year we count on generous donors and volunteers to make this event possible and help serve so many people in need. We couldn’t have done it without you!

Light the way for family & friends this Christmas...begin a holiday tradition your children will love!

Each Luminaria Kit is $10 and includes 5 white bags, 5 long burning candles and enough sand to assemble your luminaries. Free home delivery for seniors! Order by December 5. Pick up at the Parish Center on Sunday, December 11 from 8am-1pm. Drop off your order at the Parish Center or order online on the parish website. If you are a senior, be sure to include your address for delivery. ??Call Julie Misarti 773-294-9099.
Next Sunday, November 27 at the 5:00pm Mass, one woman and one man who are on the RICA (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults) journey will celebrate the Rite of Acceptance. Gil Clarke will be accepted into the Order of Catechumens as he prepares for Baptism, and Kaitlyn Acosta will be welcomed as a Candidate as she prepares for First Eucharist and Confirmation. A third parishioner, Manny Juarez will remain part of the catechetical process and complete formal preparation for Confirmation in collaboration with St. Francis Xavier Parish.

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

During this rite, the priest will greet the Gil and Kaitlyn at the door of the church. As they and their parish sponsors come forward, the celebrant will ask their names and each candidate will verbalize what they are seeking and why. They will be asked to accept the Good News of the Gospel into their hearts, after which their sponsors and the entire assembly will express their willingness to help them follow Christ more closely. At this time the priest will trace the sign of the cross on their foreheads. The RCIA team and sponsors will assist in the signing of other parts of the body such as the ears, eyes, lips, shoulders, hands, and feet. They are then invited to enter the church building to hear the word of God with the community.

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

With great joy the St. John of the Cross Faith Community will welcome Gil, Kaitlyn and Manny into the next process of the RCIA, the Catechumenate. During this time they receive formation and guidance aimed at training them in the Christian life and the faith of the Catholic Church. We pray for and look forward to the day they will share fully with us at the Lord’s Table.

Volunteer Opportunities

- We are in need of Home Group Leaders for our Crossroads Freshmen.
- Adults who love teenagers are always welcome to connect with short-term ministry opportunities!
- Want to try something new to give of your time and energy this holiday season? Consider helping us thank our adult and teen leaders! Contact Katie Hayes at 708-246-4404 for details.

May we make God’s merciful love ever more evident in our world through dialogue, mutual acceptance and fraternal cooperation.

Pope Francis @Pontifex Nov 9

If you want to find God, seek him where he is hidden: in the neediest, the sick, the hungry, the imprisoned.

Pope Francis @Pontifex Nov 13
Monday, November 21
9:30am Spiritual Journeying
10:30am Christian Meditation
1:00pm Little Rock
2:30pm Adoration
7:00pm Boy Scouts
7:00pm SJC Fest Planning
7:00pm Seasons of Hope
Tuesday, November 22
9:15am School Mass
3:45pm Combined Children’s Choir
7:00pm RCIA
7:30pm Christian Meditation
Wednesday, November 23
No School
9:15am Wednesday Bible Study
2:30pm Christian Meditation
3:30pm St. John of the Cross Study
7:00pm Chicago Catholic Scripture
7:30pm Traditional Choir Practice
Thursday, November 24
9:30am Thanksgiving Day Mass
Friday, November 25
No School
Parish Office Open 9am-Noon
Saturday, November 26
7:00am Christian Meditation
8:00am St. John of the Cross Group
Sunday, November 27
1:30pm Baptism Prep
6:00pm Boys Church League Kick-off

Mass Schedule & Intentions

Monday, November 21  Presentation of the Blessed Virgin Mary
7:45am  William Albertson Sr., William Meyering

Tuesday, November 22  St. Cecilia
7:45am Marian Quinlan; Ann Delorey

Wednesday, November 23  St. Clement I; St. Columban; Bl. Miguel Agustin Pro
7:45am Franklin Smith; Gene Gallagher

Thursday, November 24  Thanksgiving
No 7:45am Today
9:30am Joseph Piszczor; Bridget Dowdle

Friday, November 25  St. Catherine of Alexandria
7:45am Joseph Gowgiel; Our Beloved Dead

Saturday, November 26  Blessed Virgin Mary
8:00am Pasquali Cavalieri; James Houston
~ Reconciliation following the 8am Mass ~
5:00pm Elizabeth Wojtowicz; Robert Plechaty

Sunday, November 27  First Sunday of Advent
7:30am Joanna Misantoni Vesper; Mary Elizabeth Sullivan
9:00am Kevin Gunnin & Patrick Grogan; Charles Ward
10:45am Mike Marshall; Don McAuliffe
12:15pm Marie Coyne; George Forster
5:00pm Bruno Shukis; Robert Olds

Pray for Our Beloved Dead
Cooper Mann, son of James & Kristee Mann, grandson of Antonino & Kathleen Genna
Raul Esquivel, father of Lara Delheimer, grandfather of 2

Pray for Our Sick
Robert Arbuckle Mildred Fitzgerald Jennifer Misiora
Gary Berger Lynn Freking Jennifer Ochino
Katie Berger Bedelia Fries Patrick O’Donnell
Glori Ann Bird Kathy Gros Mary Ann Piwowar
Christina Carinato Karen Hult Gail Schmidt
Patrick Carmody Curtis Kerzich Deloris Simonek
Paul Cervony George Kojima Ray Simonek
Nancy Cottone Athie Lanahan Don Vollmer
Alexander DeLosReyes Erin Lively Eric Wilson

Pray for Our Loved Ones Serving Our Country
Sgt. Steven Foody, son of Sandra Foody
Sergeant Sebastian Grabacki, son of David & Jan Grabacki
Sr A Joshua Tischler USAF Pararescue, grandson of Betty & Frank Madler
A Navy Seal, a relative of our parishioner & Mary Tischler
Lance Corporal Daniel Pett, nephew of Kathyn 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
Petty Officer 3rd Class Mathew Strafaci, grandson of Sandra & Jim Strafaci
Lance Corporal David Strafaci, grandson of Sandra & Jim Strafaci
Sgt. Michael Grabarek, relative of the LeFevour and Schillaci families

Marriage Banns
Caitlin Dentamaro & Timothy Anderson

Rev. David P. Dowdle, Pastor
ddowdle@stjohnofthecross.org
Rev. William J. Vollmer, Assoc. Pastor
bvollmer@stjohnofthecross.org
Steven Weigand, Pastoral Associate
sweigand@stjohnofthecross.org
For a full listing of staff see our website.

Tommy’s Kids & Camp Erin
Holiday Party & Reunion
Sunday, December 4 from 1-3pm at Katherine Legge Park, Hinsdale. An afternoon filled with cheer, Santa, and a craft. RSVP to 630-856-6385 or laura.cotrell@amitahealth.org

Carmelite Center in Darien
Register at 800-431-8720
Join Sr. Jane & Julie and the Mother McAuley Choir for dinner & concert on Dec. 4 at 4pm $45
Sr. Jane Reflection & Brunch on Dec. 5 at 9am $40

The Share Christmas experience at St. John of the Cross Parish is a strong and beautiful tradition that will fill your heart with joy as you make someone else’s Christmas special!

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

Join in on the fun! Sign Up for Share Christmas begins today after all Masses and continues through the December 3-4 weekend. Sign up will also take place on Thanksgiving Day after the 9:30am Mass.

For your convenience our parish Scrip reps will be available in the church community room for you to purchase food and gift certificates. Cash, checks or credit cards (Visa, MasterCard, Discover) will be accepted. A 3% convenience fee will be applied to credit card purchases.

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

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

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

Drop off days are Monday and Tuesday, December 5 and 6 between 9am-7pm and Wednesday, December 7 from 9am-4pm at the Parish Center. The gifts will then be delivered to the parishes on Saturday, December 19. If you have a van or small truck or if you are free to help load and deliver, please call us. Questions can be directed to Lolly Maloney at 630-261-5675 or lollymaloney@gmail.com or the Parish Center.

Find us ready Lord...not standing still.
Find us working and loving and doing your will.
Find us ready Lord...faithful in love and building the kingdom that’s here and above!
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