Finding Meaning in Suffering
with
Fr. Robin Ryan, CP

Second Sunday in Lent
March 12, 2017
### Overview of Lenten Opportunities for Prayer, Fasting, & Almsgiving

Fr. Robin Ryan will speak on Suffering at all Masses this weekend and on three Monday evenings, tomorrow March 13, and March 20 and 27 all at 7pm in the Parish Center.

Catholic Relief Services Rice Bowls: Through CRS’s Lenten faith-in-action program we will learn about and pray for people in need in communities around the world, eat simple meatless meals from these countries, and collect our spare change in our Rice Bowls to donate to CRS. The program will be highlighted each week on our parish website and in the bulletin. You can also download the CRS Rice Bowl app to receive daily reflections and inspiration directly to your phone. Extra rice Bowls are available in the Parish Center or church.

**MONDAY**

13 *Send your Spirit into our lives as we seek conversion during Lent.*
Pause from action. Carve out 10—15 minutes at Eucharistic Adoration in the Mary Chapel. Think of someone who has hurt you. Take that hurt and let it go.

**TUESDAY**

14 *Let us ease the burdens of those in need.*
Clean out your closet and donate clothes you no longer wear or items you no longer need to charity.

**WEDNESDAY**

15 *Let God’s will guide your words and actions.*
Fast from criticizing and feast on giving someone praise. Show kindness to all you meet today. Hold a door. Share a smile.

**THURSDAY**

16 *Place your trust in God.*
Say a prayer for peace. Look up and read the Catholic Social Teachings. Think about how your daily actions reflect these values.

**FRIDAY**

17 *Use your gifts to serve others.*
Pray for our teens on Kairos retreat this weekend. Reflect on how you can mentor or encourage young people in their faith.

**SATURDAY**

18 *Teach us to forgive all who trespass against us.*
Pray for the staff and prisoners at Cook County Jail. Bring a few stamps to the parish center for the inmates so they can write to their families.

**SUNDAY**

19 *Third Sunday of Lent*
RCIA First Scrutiny at 10:45am Mass

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Jesus is the faithful friend who never abandons us. Even when we sin, he patiently awaits our return.

Pope Francis @Pontifex March 5

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See the whole Lenten Calendar on our parish website.
Our second reading for today is quite appropriate given our upcoming Lenten reflection with Fr. Ryan, CP on finding meaning in suffering. The reading comes from St. Paul’s second letter to his friend Timothy, who was one of his closest companions during his missionary journey, and at its heart is about finding God in the midst of suffering. Like St. Paul, Timothy was a Jew who converted to Christianity. He traveled extensively with Paul and is often cited as someone who helped to write many of the letters that St. Paul wrote the communities that he founded. Like St. Paul he suffered for the faith and we know that he was imprisoned at least once for spreading the faith and persecuted on many other occasions for preaching the Gospel. In today’s reading, St. Paul is writing his friend from prison in Rome where he is getting ready for his own death. This is perhaps one of the most personal of St. Paul’s letters in which he looks back on his life and the many hardships he willingly faced to spread the Gospel. Yet even here he’s concerned about others; he tells Timothy to be strong, to stand up for the faith, and to bear whatever he must for the sake of the Gospel.

St. Paul writes to Timothy, “bear your share of hardship for the Gospel with the strength that comes from God.” As St. Paul writes in another place, the only thing lacking in Christ’s suffering is our participation in it: what is your share of suffering? What are willing to bear for Christ and for one another? Suffering on our own is impossible; the pain of the world and our own personal pain can seem too much to bear alone. Yet our faith teaches us that we never suffer alone, we suffer in communion with one another through the Church and ultimately we suffer in union with Christ because Christ has entered into the very depths of human experience, he is able to bring meaning and even joy to our pain. We also bear in mind the words of St. Paul that God will strengthen us for the suffering that is ahead.

He goes on to write, “He saved us and called us to a holy life, not according to our works but according to his own design and by the grace bestowed on us in Christ Jesus before time began,” thus linking our sufferings with the call that we have received from Christ. In other words, suffering in this world is often directly a result of our identity as Christians. This suffering is ours because of our call to follow Christ and it is a call that does not come from us, it comes from God. This call to follow Christ is not earned by anything we say or do, rather it is freely given by God through Christ. It is a call in Christ, given by his grace, to follow after him in every way. Finally, St. Paul wraps up the reading by telling us that this call gives meaning to our suffering because God’s plan for our suffering is “now made manifest through the appearance of our savior Christ Jesus, who destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel.” The suffering that is our share, that is part of our call, should not scare us because Christ has triumphed over all suffering. His death destroys our death and opens for us the possibility of eternal life. This, ultimately, is the Gospel, the good news that Christ brings, he shows us our true glory, even in suffering and makes manifest us the joy that we are to have in Him through suffering: the joy of eternal glory with Him.

Deepen Your Love
Pope Francis tells us that the real meaning of love can never be selfish or superficial and that love, by its very nature, is something concrete: intentions, attitudes and behaviors that are shown in daily living. Every morning during Lent remind yourself that you are called to love God and to love your neighbor. Every evening examine your conscience in light of how loving you were throughout the day.
Living the Gospel

It is far easier to embrace glory than take upon ourselves the yoke of discipleship, the demands of faithfully following Jesus, the responsibility of listening and proclaiming the Good News Jesus came to reveal. The call of God to us is the same as that to Peter, James, and John: we must be willing to leave everything to go where God wills, to accept the self-emptying as a necessary part of being given a share in Jesus’ glory, to open ourselves to Jesus’ touch of word and care that transforms us into faithful disciples. We must be willing to listen to Jesus, learn of his ways, and embrace his paschal journey. Our journey as disciples leads us to eternal glory—foreshadowed by Jesus’ transfiguration.

The journey of discipleship has its dangers (temptations), but we still venture forth on the journey to eternal glory. We trust in God’s guidance (given through law, prophets, teachings of Jesus, Gospel living modeled by others) and surrender ourselves into God’s hands. All we need to do is exclaim with Peter, “Lord, it is good that we are here.” We are with Jesus through our own practice of taking some time every day to read God’s word in Scripture, through the good modeling of discipleship by another, through the guidance we seek in spiritual direction, through the disciplines we choose for Lent. There are many ways we share in Jesus’ glorified Presence. Being here with Jesus means that we keep our eyes focused on the vision of Jesus transfigured and know that God, in great love and divine mercy, intends that we share in that same glory. We cannot lose sight of Jesus himself. “Lord, it is good that we are here.”

Background on the Gospel

For the second Sunday of Lent, we move from Jesus’ retreat to the desert to his Transfiguration. Each year on the first Sunday of Lent, our Gospel tells the story of Jesus’ temptation in the desert. On the second Sunday of Lent each year, we hear the story of Jesus’ Transfiguration.

The story of Jesus’ Transfiguration is told in the three Synoptic Gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke. In each of those Gospels, the Transfiguration follows Jesus’ first prediction of his death and his teaching about the costs of discipleship. Jesus’ Transfiguration is a promise of Jesus’ glory, his Resurrection.

On a mountain in today’s reading, a voice affirms that Jesus is God’s Son in words reminiscent of the voice at Jesus’ baptism. In addition, the appearance of Moses and Elijah on the mountain connects this story with God’s relationship to the people of Israel. Moses and Elijah represent the Law and the Prophets, respectively. Together with Jesus, they represent God’s complete Word.

The Transfiguration occurs in the presence of just three of Jesus’ disciples: Peter, James, and John. In Matthew’s Gospel, those disciples are among the first whom Jesus calls. The three men are identified as an “inner circle” among Jesus’ disciples when Jesus asks them to accompany him to the Garden of Gethsemane just before his arrest.

Prayer of St. Patrick

May the strength of God pilot us,
May the power of God preserve us,
May the wisdom of God instruct us,
May the hand of God protect us,
May the way of God direct us,
May the shield of God defend us,
May the host of God guard us,
Against the snare of evil and the temptations of the world.
We are called to reach out to those who find themselves living at the margins of our societies and to show particular solidarity with the most vulnerable of our brothers and sisters: the poor, the disabled, the unborn and the sick, migrants and refugees, the elderly and the young who lack employment. Pope Francis

CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING
Sacredness and Dignity of the Human Person
Catholic social teaching inspires and guides how we are to live and work in the world. In this principle, Sacredness and Dignity of the Human Person, we remember that, when God created us, he made us in his image and likeness. That means that every human being has a special value and purpose. We need to care for each other so that we can be the people God calls us to be.

PRAY FAST GIVE

Our Catholic community in the United States does something amazing each Lent. We come together to practice prayer, fasting and almsgiving—and by doing so we help lift families and communities out of poverty and put them on a path toward resilience, prosperity and stability. Through CRS Rice Bowl we help families around the world and in our own backyard by raising our voices and our prayers, and by making sacrificial gifts. Thank you for filling your Rice Bowl. Please return it on Palm Sunday at Mass or to the Parish Center during Holy Week.

Encounter Zambia
Evelina Banda, like generations of Zambians before her, used to survive on meals made from corn flour, usually a porridge called “nshima.” “Growing up, I’d eat porridge in the morning, at lunchtime and again in the evening,” she says. After all, it was cheap and easy to make. Unfortunately, nshima has very little nutritional value—and relying too heavily on it has led to high rates of malnutrition. Many in Zambia have full bellies, but little nourishment. And this is particularly dangerous for children under the age of two, who need high levels of vitamins and minerals to grow up healthy and strong. That means mothers who are nursing—as well as their children—need nutritious meals.

So, CRS is teaching women like Evelina how to prepare healthier meals and grow new, vitamin-rich crops like peanuts, pumpkins and sugar cane. In many cases, these crops were already being grown in the village. Now, Evelina and others are adding more nutritious food to their children’s nshima: ground peanuts or eggs, for example. And, what the women learn, they share with their community—especially expectant mothers.

“We sing and dance during the cooking lessons because we are happy to learn how to cook different types of food,” says Evelina. Evelina is healthier, and so is her son, Steven. “I know I am taking good care of him, because he’s full of energy, he’s strong and never sick,” she says, with a smile.

To learn more go to our Parish Website.

How do I cultivate my personal prayer life? How does my prayer lead me closer to Jesus? How might my relationship with Jesus inspire me to share God’s love with my neighbors?
Prayer

Lectio Divina is a form of meditation rooted in liturgical celebration that dates back to early monastic communities. It involves focused reading of Scripture (lectio), meditation on the Word of God (meditatio), contemplation of the Word and its meaning in one’s life (contemplatio) and ends with prayer (oratio).

We begin our prayer:
In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Keep your family, O Lord, schooled always in good works, and so comfort them with your protection here as to lead them graciously to gifts in high. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. (Collect, Wednesday of the Second Week of Lent)

Reading (Lectio) Read the following Scripture two or three times.
Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. And he was transfigured before them; his face shone like the sun and his clothes became white as light. And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, conversing with him. Then Peter said to Jesus in reply, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud cast a shadow over them, then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” When the disciples heard this, they fell prostrate and were very much afraid. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and do not be afraid.” And when the disciples raised their eyes, they saw no one else but Jesus alone. As they were coming down from the mountain, Jesus charged them, “Do not tell the vision to anyone until the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.” Matthew 17:1-9

Meditation (Meditatio) After the reading, take some time to reflect in silence on one or more of the following questions:
- What word or words in this passage caught your attention?
- What in this passage comforted you?
- What in this passage challenged you?

Contemplation (Contemplatio) Read the scripture passage again, followed by this reflection:
How does this passage connect with the experience of your daily life?

Lord, it is good that we are here. Where do I feel closest to the Lord? Where is the Lord calling me to be?
This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him. In what ways/places/things do I hear the voice of the Lord? What prevents me from listening and responding positively to the Lord’s voice?
Rise, and do not be afraid. How do my fears keep me from embracing the Lord’s call wholeheartedly? How can I work to strengthen my faith in God so that I will no longer be afraid?

Prayer (Oratio) Read the scripture passage one more time. Bring to the Lord the praise, petition, or thanksgiving that the Word inspires in you. Recite the Lord’s Prayer and the following:

Closing Prayer: Hear me, O islands, listen, O distant peoples. The Lord called me from birth, from my mother’s womb he gave me my name. He made of me a sharp-edged sword and concealed me in the shadow of his arm. He made me a polished arrow, in his quiver he hid me. You are my servant, he said to me, Israel, through whom I show my glory. Though I thought I had toiled in vain, and for nothing, uselessly, spent my strength, Yet my reward is with the Lord, my recompense is with my God. (Isaiah 49:1-4) USCCB

Here I am, Lord, before You just as I am at this moment. I sit in Your presence, Lord, in peace and tranquility. I am in Your presence and allow myself to be directed by You. I open myself to You who are near. You are the font of life, the force of life which permeates my very being. You are my breath which maintains me in existence. Let peace dwell within me. Give me the grace to let myself be cleansed by You, to be a shell filled only with You, my God. Let all my thoughts and feelings, my will and liberty, be totally directed to Your honor and service. Amen.

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Why is it so hard to understand that we are fully loved by God?

The idea of God’s freely given, unearned gift of love for us is one of the most counter-cultural beliefs that our faith teaches us. At least in American culture. Here we earn our worth and value, and we tie it to what we own or what we do. Thankfully, though, God doesn’t operate by American cultural standards or the ridiculously unreachable standards I try to set for myself at times. God simply loves me. That’s it. God loves me and each of you just as we are.

**Jesus entered our humanity:**

God could have taken on any human form – perhaps as a teenager or an adult or a wise elder, but instead God came in the form of an innocent child. Why? So Jesus could grow in wisdom and understanding, so he could experience the beauty and messiness of our human lives, and so he could reveal to us the depth of God’s love for us.

Jesus entered humanity so we can understand the way to live fully loved. He spells it out clear as can be at the last supper when he says, “Where I am going you know the way.” (Jn 14:4)

Many of us, though, are always doubting the way laid out before us putting to God the same question Thomas asked Jesus, “Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?” (Jn 14:5)

What Jesus told Thomas he tells us also, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (Jn 14:6) Jesus is both telling us he knows the way to knowing, accepting, receiving, and sharing God’s love, as well as reminding us that we, too, know the way – through him.

**What can we do to live fully loved?**

Let your prayer this week be the three powerful words Pope Francis offered us in his homily a few weeks ago, “God loves me. God loves me. God loves me.” Ignatian Spirituality. Becky Eldridge.

“It is easy to say: God loves us. We all say it. But think about it: can each one of us say: I am sure that God loves me? It is not so easy to say. But it is true. This is a good exercise, to say to ourselves: God loves me. This is the root of our certainly, the root of hope. And the Lord has abundantly poured the Spirit — which is God’s love — into our hearts like an architect ... so that he can nourish faith within us and keep this hope alive. This certainty: God loves me. ‘But right now, when things are difficult?’ — God loves me. “Me, who has done this bad and evil thing?’ — God loves me. That certainty that no one can take away from us. And we should repeat it like a prayer: God loves me. I am sure that God loves me. I am sure that God loves me.”

May we be instruments of hope, Pope Francis concluded, so that our greatest boast will be of a Father who excludes no one, but opens his home to all. And may we be a people who sustain one another with this message of Christian hope. 02.15.17 audience

To live is to change and to be perfect is to have changed often.

- John Henry Newman
Richard Rohr Meditation

Lent has begun: our journey with Christ in suffering, death and resurrection. This old weathered statue looks over a corner of Calvary Cemetery in St. Louis and reminds us of the gift of his heart. It shows Christ with arms outstretched, fingers broken and heart exposed to the world.

This is no Mona Lisa expression of mystery. It is an unmistakable invitation to put on the mind of Christ, to let his be the prayer of our very own heart: open, given to the world. We are called to extend our hands and heart space, in total giving. “If today you hear his voice, harden not your heart.”

Richard Rohr says we can. “Love lives and thrives in the heart space...it is almost impossible to comment, judge, create story lines, or remain antagonistic. You are in a place that...is the natural organ of life, embodiment and love. Now the Sacred Heart has been transferred to you.” We are invited to a whole-hearted transformation, to be open to everyone.

How do we do this? How do we put on the mind of Christ, and imitate Jesus upon whom we gaze in his extreme moment of giving? Easily. God is the very life of our heart already. Here. Now. Is that not what divine in-dwelling really means? Heart of my heart. The familiar gaze invites us to God’s own heart space. It is in fact our very own. Reflection and photo by Julie Siderfin, Associate of the Society of the Sacred Heart. Sculpture in marble by Pietro Canonica.

Father,
I place my life in your hands.
Mold me,
shape me,
gra ce me,
that I might be
a person for others.
Amen.
For Gil and Kaitlyn, Lent is a final period of preparation of Purification and Enlightenment marked by prayer, study and spiritual direction and prayers for them by our parish community. The Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation takes place during the Easter Vigil Liturgy on Holy Saturday when the elect receive the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Holy Eucharist.

On the middle three Sundays of Lent the elect celebrate scrutinies, or rites of self-searching and repentance. The first scrutiny will be celebrated next weekend. These ancient rites may, at first, seem strange to us, but they are profoundly rooted in our human experience. We need to examine (scrutinize) how we are, the areas of our lives where we are tempted, or seriously sin - in what we do and what we fail to do. Even if these rites are not celebrated at the liturgy we attend, it can be wonderful to reflect upon the journey the elect are making during Lent, as an inspiration and source of renewal for us on our Lenten journey.

Scrutinies originated in the early church to mark the spiritual progress of the catechumens. The moral preparation of catechumens included prayers of exorcism to drive out the spirit of evil which kept them from embracing Christ as their light. In the scrutinies the church discerned if those exorcisms had achieve the effect. Catechumens entered the church, stood barefoot on goatskin and renounced evil influences all night.

Today’s scrutinies are less intense. Although they still include an exorcism in which the priest prays that the spirit of evil may be replaced by the spirit of good, their purpose is to examine the spiritual readiness of the elect and offer the support they need to approach the Sacraments of Initiation. For our parish community the scrutinies invite us to embrace the same spirit of self-searching and repentance and inspire us to turn from evil to pursue good, allowing us to renew our baptismal promises and commitment to Christ at Easter. (Sources: USCCB, Creighton Univ, Paul Turner)

First Scrutiny Sunday, March 19 at 10:45am Mass
Second Scrutiny Saturday, March 25 at the 5pm Mass
Third Scrutiny Sunday, April 2 at the 9am Mass

All are encouraged to pick up a prayer card in the church narthex and to pray for Gil and Kaitlyn as they journey to Easter.

Father of Love and Power,
Guide our elect: Strengthen them in their vocation,
Build them into the kingdom of your Son, and
Seal them with the Spirit of your promise. Amen.

Are you interested in becoming Catholic?
Please contact Steve Weigand, Pastoral Associate, or Fr. Bill Vollmer in the Parish Center Office.
YC Registration Fair for 2017-2018 Year

All youth Kindergarten through 8th grade!!
Please stop at the Multi-Purpose Room on

Sunday, March 19 ~ 9:00am until Noon
Monday, March 20 ~ 6:00pm until 8:00pm

to register your child in YC for the fall.

New families: Youth Catechesis is SJC’s religious education program for children. Our volunteer Catechist and Catechist Aides are engaging and inspiring as they lead your children to a closer relationship with Our Lord, Jesus. Please bring a copy of each child’s baptismal certificate if not baptized at SJC.

“Catechists discover with their witness of life, the joy of helping others meet and fall in love with Christ.”
Pope Francis
Parish News: Outreach ~ Parish School ~ Crossroads Teen Ministry

Food Pantry Collection
During the month of March our nonperishable food donations put in the church narthex will be delivered to neighbor parish, St. Francis Xavier in LaGrange and Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation in Chicago. Items the young people at PBMR love include cereal, oatmeal, breakfast bars, pasta, jar red sauce, mac and cheese, and snack items. SFX Pantry’s needs include more basic family foods and toilet paper.

Be An Angel
Parishioners are needed to help our Gardening Angel group. You can volunteer to water and weed with a garden buddy once or twice a month or work on special one time projects. All ages are welcome to help. If you would like to learn more contact our chief angel, Jan Grabacki at beaconjan@aol.com or 331-903-3135.

Learning about Homelessness
Recently April Hill, Community Relations Manager of BEDS Plus Care, spoke to our YC 7th graders about the various support services BEDS provides for the homeless. She also discussed the various circumstances that lead to being homeless and how best to support the homeless. Our 7th grade class gave a generous donation of twin sheet sets for the agency to use in their shelters.

Living Stations of the Cross
All parish teens are invited to participate in a Living Stations of the Cross performance on Good Friday. Teens can volunteer to serve as lectors or actors during the service. Rehearsals will take place 6-7:30pm on March 23 and April 6, and on April 14 at 10am until the Noon performance. Contact one of our Mass Coordinators and join us for this prayerful and fun experience! Katie Pruitt ilboilers@gmail.com; Sue Stroka suestroka@gmail.com, Liam Mear mailraem@gmail.com

Kairos 25
Join us in praying for the teens and leaders from SJC, St. Francis and St. Cletus who will be attending the Kairos retreat next weekend.

The Western Springs Roundup sponsored by the School Advisory Board (SAB) and the Teacher Recognition Trust (TRT) was held last Saturday. Historically, the TRT planned this party every spring to raise dollars to hold onto quality teachers by supplementing their salary, a practice which began many years ago. Last year, the SAB requested that the party be combined with the Board so that a percentage of the dollars raised would go toward revenue for the following school year’s budget to offset tuition increases. The entire school community had a wonderful time and wishes to thank all the members involved in the planning for a great evening.

No School: Friday, March 17
Planning Ahead for St. Patrick’s Day

St. Patrick’s Day, March 17, falls on a Friday this year. Cardinal Cupich has given a general dispensation to Catholics from abstaining from meat on this day. Instead, Catholics in the Archdiocese of Chicago who choose to make use of this general dispensation are asked to substitute another form of penance for the Lenten Friday abstinence.

Job Hunting? Here’s Help!

SJC is part of Interfaith Career Network, an interdenominational network of area churches committed to helping men and women find employment. All programs are open to all and are free. The next two programs are at SJC.

First 100 Days of Your Job Search
Looking to change jobs? Find yourself in transition? On Thursday, March 16 from 7-9pm in our Parish Center Speaker, Michelle Nacker, a former ICN job seeker and current Product Management professional, will detail key actions you can take from day 1 to day 100 and beyond. Michelle will share tips on how to build your network in the community and on social media; what days are better to reach out to potential employers and some basic steps to help organize your search.

Free Resume Review
Come in for one-on-one coaching with a pro on your search strategies, resume and elevator speech. Saturday, March 25 from 9:30-11:30am in the Parish Center.

Welcome to SJC

Please help us welcome our new members to the St. John of the Cross faith community. If you recognize the name of a friend or neighbor be sure to extend a welcome and encourage them to become involved at SJC.

Amylee and John Simonovich and Family
Mary and William Bosway and Family
Dorothy and Gregory Voss and Family
Holly and Steven Kongmuang and Family
Jessica and Andrew Hamari and Family
Angelica Tolentino and Paul Signorino and Family
Laura and Scott Simek and Family
Anne and Andrew Wilson and Family
Jennifer and Thomas Rocco and Family
Amanda and Michael Barbush and Family
Jeanne and Thomas Christensen
Lisa and Ken Wesolowski and Family
Heather and James Follstad and Family
Kara and Nicholas Ozog and Family
Nancy Locke

If you would like to register to become a member, please contact Elizabeth Russell-Jones in the Parish Center Welcome Center. For more information and to learn all about SJC, call 708.246.4404x155 or email Elizabeth at erussell-jones@stjohnofthecross.org.

Next Sunday new parishioners are welcome to come to a parish orientation in the Parish Center following the 9am Mass. We look forward to seeing you there!!

Parish News

Stay up to date with the most current SJC news. Email Mary Beth Drafz in the Parish Center office at mbdrafz@stjohnofthecross.org to receive our weekly eblast on Thursdays.

Annual Catholic Appeal

It’s not too late to make your donation to the Annual Catholic Appeal. Drop your gift in the Sunday basket or bring it to the Parish Center office. Thank you for your continued generosity and support.

Community Events

Stay up to date on all the events happening in and around our community. From concerts to fundraisers, these submissions to our website reflect activities and causes important to fellow parishioners. http://www.stjohnofthecross.org/community-events/.

HOW TO GIVE AT SJC

IN PERSON: Give when you come to worship at Sunday Mass.

BY MAIL: Send your gift directly to 5005 Wolf Road, Western Springs, IL 60558.

ONLINE: Visit our parish website at stjohnofthecross.org and click Giving to set up your recurring gift or a one time gift.

IN KIND: Gifts of stock or other investments can be transferred directly to the church to avoid paying commissions and/or capital gains taxes.

QUESTIONS? Call the Parish Center office.
All things considered, I believe that I grew up with a relatively healthy concept of God. The God of my youth, the God that I was catechized into, was not unduly punishing, arbitrary, or judgmental. He was omnipresent, so that all of our sins were noticed and noted, but, at the end of the day, he was fair, loving, personally concerned for each of us, and wonderfully protective, to the point of providing each of us with a personal guardian angel. That God gave me permission to live without too much fear and without any particularly crippling religious neuroses.

But that only gets you so far in life. Not having an unhealthy notion of God doesn't necessarily mean that you have a particularly healthy one. The God whom I was raised on was not overly stern and judgmental, but neither was he very joyous, playful, witty, or humorous. Especially, he wasn't sexual, and had a particularly vigilant and uncompromising eye in that area. Essentially he was grey, a bit dour, and not very joyous to be around. Around him, you had to be solemn and reverent. I remember the Assistant Director at our Oblate novitiate telling us that there is no recorded incident, ever, of Jesus having laughed.

Under such a God you had permission to be essentially healthy, but, to the extent that you took him seriously, you still walked through life less than fully robust and your relationship with him could only be solemn and reverent.

Then, already a generation ago, there was a strong reaction in many churches and in the culture at large to this concept of God. Popular theology and spirituality set out to correct this, sometimes with an undue vigor. What they presented instead was a laughing Jesus and a dancing God and while this was not without its value it still left us begging for a deeper literature about the nature of God and what that might mean for us in terms of a health and relationships.

That literature won’t be easy to write, not just because God is ineffable, but because God’s energy is also ineffable. What, indeed, is energy? We rarely ask this question because we take energy as something so primal that it cannot be defined but only taken as a given, as self-evident. We see energy as the primal force that lies at the heart of everything that exists, animate and inanimate. Moreover, we feel energy, powerfully, within ourselves. We know energy, we feel energy, but what we rarely recognize its origins, its prodigiosity, its joy, its goodness, its effervescence, and its exuberance. We rarely recognize what it tells us about God. What does it tell us?

The first quality of energy is its prodigiousness. It is prodigal beyond our imagination and this speaks something about God. What kind of creator makes billions of throwaway universes? What kind of creator makes trillions upon trillions of species of life, millions of them never to be seen by the human eye? What kind of father or mother has billions of children?

And what does the exuberance in the energy of young children say about our creator? What does their playfulness suggest about what must also lie inside of sacred energy? What does the energy of a young puppy tell us about what’s sacred? What do laughter, wit, and irony tell us about the God?

No doubt the energy we see around us and feel irrepressibly within us tells us that, underneath, before and below everything else, there flows a sacred force, both physical and spiritual, which is at its root, joyous, happy, playful, exuberant, effervescent, and deeply personal and loving. That energy is God. That energy speaks of God and that energy tells us why God made us and what kind of permissions God is giving us for living out our lives.

When we try to imagine the heart of reality, we might picture things this way: At the very center of everything there sit two thrones, on one sits a King and on the other sits a Queen, and from these two thrones issues forth all energy, all creativity, all power, all love, all nourishment, all joy, all playfulness, all humor, and all beauty. All images of God are inadequate, but this image hopefully can help us understand that God is perfect masculinity and perfect femininity making perfect love all the time and that from this union issues forth all energy and all creation. Moreover that energy, at its sacred root, is not just creative, intelligent, personal, and loving, it’s also joyous, colorful, witty, playful, humorous, erotic, and exuberant at it very core. To feel it is an invitation to gratitude.

The challenge of our lives is to live inside that energy in a way that honors it and its origins. That means keeping our shoes off before the burning bush as we respect its sacredness, even as we take from it permission to be more robust, free, joyous, humorous, and playful - and especially more grateful.

Oblate Father Ron Rolheiser

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The Week Ahead
Monday, March 13
9:30am Spiritual Journeying
10:30am Step 11 Chr Meditation
1:00pm Little Rock Scripture Study
2:30pm Adoration
3:30pm Grade 3 Girl Scouts
3:30pm Math Club Pizza Party
YC Classes
7:00pm Boy Scouts
7:00pm Fr. Robin Ryan: The Meaning of Suffering
7:00pm Seasons of Hope
Tuesday, March 14, 2017
9:05am Tuesdays with Mary
2:30pm Welcome Committee
3:30pm Cub Scouts
3:30pm School Play Practice
7:00pm RCIA
7:30pm Christian Meditation
Wednesday, March 15
9:15am Wed Morning Bible Study
11:00am Ladies Bridge
2:30pm Christian Meditation
3:00pm Cub Scouts
3:45pm Cherub Choir Practice
7:00pm Chgo Catholic Scripture
7:00pm Schl Nurse's Presentation
7:30pm School Track Parents
7:30pm Traditional Choir Practice
Thursday, March 16
8:30am YC CARE Meeting
3:45pm Youth Choir Practice
6:00pm Kairos Parent Prayer Svc
6:00pm School Play Practice
7:00pm Divorce & Beyond
7:00pm Career Networking Group
7:00pm Women's Club Board
7:30pm Contemporary Ensemble
7:30pm Men's Club Board
Friday, March 17
No School
6pm Stations of the Cross
Saturday, March 18
7:00am Christian Meditation
8:30am YC Cluster Retreat
9:00am Marriage Workshop
Sunday, March 19
New Parishioner Welcome
YC Classes
2:00pm School Play Practice
6:00pm YC 8th Grade Presentation

Infant Baptism
St. John of the Cross Parish congratulates the following families who had their babies baptized last Sunday by Deacon Rich Voytas and assisted by Baptism Team Members, Meg & Frank Munaretto. Pictured from the left are: Andrew and Sarah Suma with Aidan John, James and Lauren Furey with Caroline Lois, and Dustin and Jaclyn Dessell with Dex Dominic.

Call the Parish Center office between 9am and 4pm to learn more about infant baptism at our parish.

Moms’ Club
Our next play date at the Parish Center is Friday, March 24. Stop in from 9:30-10:30am with your little one for play and mom-to-mom conversation time.

Domestic Violence Ministry Benefit
In honor of Fr. Chuck Dahm’s 80th birthday, all are welcome to attend a dinner dance on Friday, March 31 at the Diplomat West in Elmhurst. Fr. Dahm has preached at SJC and is the Director of the archdiocesan Domestic Violence Ministry. Proceeds will support domestic violence education, training, and prevention initiatives. For tickets go to https://domestic-violence-outreach-benefit-gala.everbrite.com.

LOSS Mass
On Saturday, March 18 at 11am St. Gertrude Catholic Church will host a Mass in partnership with the Archdiocese of Chicago Catholic Charities Loving Outreach to Survivors of Suicide (LOSS) Ministry. Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the US, claiming the lives of more than 44,000 Americans each year. The effect of suicide reaches beyond family and friends, often leaving individuals with questions and nowhere to turn. LOSS offers hope and healing for those who mourn a loss to suicide. They provide counseling for individuals and families, a network of survivors, and education about the grieving process. This LOSS Mass is a unique opportunity for the community to come together and pray for those mourning a loss, for those who have lost their life, and for a greater understanding of respect life. Father Charles Rubey will preside at the Mass and speak about the LOSS ministry.

Lord, let your mercy be on us as we place our trust in you.
Psalm 33
Mass & Reconciliation Schedule & Intentions  Italics: Living Intention

Monday, March 13 Lenten Weekday
7:45am  Robert Iovino; Felisa Cotera

Tuesday, March 14 Lenten Weekday
7:45am Edward Wolak; Rev. Joseph McDonnell

Wednesday, March 15 Lenten Weekday
7:45am Walter Piszczor; Lucille Santagata

Thursday, March 16 Lenten Weekday
7:45am Sylvester Ptak, Virginia Minella

Friday, March 17 Lenten Weekday, St. Patrick
7:45am Judith Clark; Thomas & Marguerite McGuire

Saturday, March 18 Lenten Weekday, St. Cyril of Jerusalem
8:00am  Sharon Sweeney; Our Beloved Dead
      ~  Reconciliation Follows Mass  ~
5:00pm Edward Hoffman; Gene Krupa; Lorraine & Robert Brandt

Sunday, March 19 Third Sunday in Lent
7:30am Irene Budden; William & Kevin Hansen
9:00am Guy Accettura; Joseph Bartucci
10:45am Genevieve Durr; Jeanne Caplice
12:15pm Senan Cunningham; Nunzio & Tina Ferraro
5:00pm Rose Ann Stech-Ellis; Marie Walsh

Pray for Our Sick
Kathy Antczak
Rosemary Balazs
Jerry Benesh
Joseph Borenzi
Tim Crain
Fr. David Dowdle
Mildred Fitzgerald
Colleen Franke
Jack Gibbons
Erin Gibbons
Randall Hemauer
Kathy Holden
Karen Hult
Bob Karpia
Lucine Kassis
Curtis Kerzich
George Kojima
Carrie Kowalski
Melody Maly
Bobbie Misiora
Michael O’Brien
Jeanne Pinner
Frank Pipal
Sharon Portillo
Helen Ragu
Leona Shell
Frances Skemp
Deloris Simonk
Ray Simonk
Peter Smykowski
Brendan Steward
Brooks Tonn
Don Vollmer
Monica Westell

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 & Mary Tischler
Lance Corporal Daniel Pett, nephew of Kathryn Stitemet
Capt. James Maiche, grandson of Phil & Mike Maiche
Sgt. Robert Marburger, son of David and Kathleen Marburger
Staff 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
PFC Michael Frazee, grandson of Kay and John Johnson
Spc. Douglas Junius, grandson of Ann Junius and son of Sue Junius

Pray for Our Beloved Dead
David Hynes, brother of Msgr Richard Hynes
John Garvey, husband of Adrienne, father of Mary
Mary Bilotta, mother of Mary Ellen Schopp, grandmother of 2
Mary Lou Merritt, sister of Frank

A Prayer After Communion
Lord Jesus, I give you my will that you may penetrate it with your energies. I give you my mind that you may fill it with your thoughts. Take my talents, Jesus, and my gifts and help me to develop them for your honor and glory. I give you my weaknesses that you might strengthen me. How much I need you Lord! I give you my heart. Please fill it with your love. I give you all my sinfulness, my selfishness. Have mercy on me Lord. I cast all my cares, my worries, my concerns on you. I know that you care about me and that you will help me always. Lord Jesus, I give you all of me. Take me and do with me as it pleases you. Make me more like you, more pleasing to the Father, more open to the work of the Holy Spirit. Thank you for giving me yourself in this Eucharist. Maryknoll

Fasting is not only about abstaining from food. It also means sharing food with those who are hungry.
Pope Francis @Pontifex March 3
If God is omnipotent and good, why is there suffering in the world?

The experience of suffering – one’s own or that of a loved one – often presents the greatest challenge to belief in a God of goodness. People of faith struggle with how best to speak to God and about God in the midst of suffering. In these three sessions, we will explore the ways in which the experience of suffering has been addressed in the Bible, the tradition of the Church, and in the thought of some modern theologians. We will enter into this exploration with a view to enriching our own lives of faith and prayer as Christians.

Robin Ryan, CP is a Passionist priest who serves as Associate Professor of Systematic Theology at Catholic Theological Union in Chicago. In addition to teaching theology and working in formation for lay ministers and seminarians, he has engaged in retreat ministry. He is the author of God and the Mystery of Human Suffering: A Theological Conversation Across the Ages (Paulist Press, 2011).
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