Background on the Gospel

Today we begin Holy Week, the days during which we journey with Jesus on his way of the cross and anticipate his Resurrection on Easter. Today’s liturgy begins with the procession with palms to remind us of Jesus’ triumphant entrance into Jerusalem.

The events of Jesus’ Passion are proclaimed in their entirety in today’s Liturgy of the Word. Those events will be proclaimed again when we celebrate the liturgies of the Triduum—Holy Thursday’s Mass of the Lord’s Supper, the Good Friday of the Lord’s Passion, and the Easter Vigil. In communities that celebrate the Sacraments of Initiation with catechumens, these liturgies take on special importance because they invite the catechumens and the community to enter together into the central mysteries of our faith. These days are indeed profound and holy.

Today the Passion of Jesus is read from the Gospel of Matthew on Palm Sunday. (On Good Friday, we will read the Passion of Jesus from the Gospel of John). The story of Jesus’ Passion and death in Matthew’s Gospel focuses particularly on the obedience of Jesus to the will of his Father. As Jesus sends his disciples to prepare for Passover, he indicates that the events to come are the will of the Father (Matthew 26:18). In Jesus’ prayer in the garden, he prays three times to the Father to take away the cup of suffering, but each time, Jesus concludes by affirming his obedience to the Father’s will (Matthew 26:39-44). Even Matthew’s description of Jesus’ death shows Jesus’ obedience to the Father. Jesus acts in obedience to the Father even in death, so that sins may be forgiven. Matthew makes this clear in the story of the Lord’s Supper. As Jesus blesses the chalice, he says: “. . . for this is my blood of the covenant, which will be shed on behalf of many for the forgiveness of sins.” (Matthew 26:28)

There are many vantage points from which to engage in Jesus’ Passion. In the characters of Matthew’s Gospel, we find reflections of ourselves and the many ways in which we sometimes respond to Jesus. Sometimes we are like Judas, who betrays Jesus and comes to regret it. We are sometimes like Peter, who denies him, or like the disciples, who fell asleep during Jesus’ darkest hour but then act rashly and violently at his arrest. Sometimes we are like Simon, who is pressed into service to help Jesus carry his cross. Sometimes we are like the leaders who fear Jesus or like Pontius Pilate, who washed his hands of the whole affair. Jesus dies so that our sins will be forgiven.

The events of Jesus’ Passion, death, and Resurrection are called the Paschal Mystery. No amount of study will exhaust or explain the depth of love that Jesus showed in offering this sacrifice for us. After we have examined and studied the stories we have received about these events, we are left with one final task—to meditate on these events and on the forgiveness that Jesus’ obedience won for us.

Living the Gospel

On Palm Sunday we sing our hosannas and bow our heads in sorrow, we hear the passion account for the first time this year, and we begin the holiest week of our Christian year. It is no ordinary week, for we celebrate Jesus’ unreserved self-giving. Holy Week brings before us the demands of self-giving. All of our daily living throughout the year reminds us that, ultimately, like Jesus we must give ourselves over to God so that God might give us divine Life.

Jesus is the one who models for us the mystery of life: die to self so that we might be exalted, raised to new life. This week we celebrate in pointed liturgies the meaning of our whole Christian living: dying to self so that God can raise us up, too. This dying can be as simple as setting aside the time to participate in all the Triduum (meaning “three days”) liturgies or as demanding as entering into the depths of the paschal mystery by our own self-giving. Perhaps this week we need to stop thinking of ourselves and our own needs first, ahead of others. Perhaps we must make Jesus the center of our lives instead of making ourselves the center of attention. Perhaps we need to calm down the frenetic pace of our own lives and cut some things out so we can concentrate on our loved ones more, or help out those in need more. In these examples what we give up leads to a new lease on life. Most important, it leads to new and deeper relationships and richer experiences. This is all new Life for us. This is what this week and the three days of the Triduum are all about.

May we embrace the mystery of Jesus’ life, death, and resurrection as our own mystery.
May we journey from embracing the cross to celebrating Easter joy.

©Living Liturgy

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, 5b-6ab, 15 and 17
John 13:21-23, 36-38

Wednesday
Isa 50:4-9a
Ps 69:6-10, 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
Exod 14:15-15:1 (plus other readings)
Rom 6:3-11
Matt 28:1-10

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 or
Matt 28:1-10 or
Saturday evening, April 15 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 tactile, engaging all of our senses. It begins outside with the Service of Light where the Easter fire is blessed and the Paschal Easter Candle is lit and brought into a darkened church. Once all are inside and the worship space is aglow with the light of hand held tapers, the great Exsultet of Easter is proclaimed. This is followed by the Liturgy of the Word which chronicles salvation history with readings from the Old and New Testament. For many, the highlight of the Vigil is the Celebration of the Sacraments of Initiation. This year Gil Clark will celebrate Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist, and Kaitlyn Acosta will complete her Initiation with the reception of Confirmation and Eucharist. Please join us for this great celebration and 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. Bring your favorite dessert to the Parish Center on Holy Saturday morning. Use disposal containers. Label your dessert. Include if it contains nuts and if gluten free.

Father, God of mercy,
through the waters of baptism
you fill us with new life
as your very own children.
From all who are baptized in water
and the Holy Spirit,
you form one people,
with hearts filled with the Spirit of your love,
so that we may live in your peace.
You call us to announce
the Good News of Jesus Christ,
the Joy of the Gospel to people everywhere.
We pray for Gil and Kaitlyn.
Lead them to a new and spiritual rebirth
through the Sacraments of Initiation.
The summit and high point of the liturgical year is the Easter Triduum which marks the end of the Lenten season. The word Triduum comes from the Latin roots meaning ‘three days’: ‘tri’ meaning three and ‘dies’ meaning days. Counting from sunset on Holy Thursday to sunset on Easter Sunday we celebrate the unity of Christ’s Paschal Mystery, the three holiest days of the year. The celebration of the Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday, the Good Friday Passion of the Lord, and the Easter Resurrection of the Lord are actually one continuous, single celebration.

If one looks at the liturgy of Holy Thursday, you will notice that there is no ‘ending’ to this Mass – there is no final blessing or dismissal. Instead, we are invited to remain and “watch and wait with Jesus” before the Blessed Sacrament. Good Friday’s Service has no ‘opening’ or ‘closing’ but contains the Liturgy of the Word, the Veneration of the Cross and the receiving of Holy Communion, consecrated at the Holy Thursday Mass. Then we move into the holiest celebration of all: the Easter Vigil. We are invited, through the Triduum, to enter into quietness and prayer throughout the suffering, death and resurrection of Jesus.

There are only two Masses which may be offered on Holy Thursday: the Chrism Mass and the Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper. In Chicago the Chrism Mass is celebrated at Holy Name Cathedral with Cardinal Cupich on Tuesday of Holy Week. During the Chrism Mass the Cardinal consecrates the Oil of Catechumens, the Oil of the Sick, and the Oil of Chrism. The Sacred Oils are then brought back to each parish where they will be processed into the church as part of the Holy Thursday liturgy. These oils are used throughout the year for baptisms, confirmation, and anointing the sick and those who are dying.

As part of the Holy Thursday Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper liturgy we experience the powerful symbolism of the Washing of the Feet. This act emphasizes the love and commitment that Jesus has for us, his children. That he would do such a menial service for his disciples reminds us that we too must strive to serve the people of God. The liturgy also stresses the “institution of the Eucharist,” the precious Gift that Jesus gave to us of his Body and Blood which has defined us as Catholic people, and the “institution of the priesthood” where Jesus called those who would receive the mandate to shepherd His flock, including bringing the Eucharist to His people. At this liturgy we are also called to watch and pray with Jesus in the Adoration of the Blessed Eucharist, just as the disciples were charged by Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

The Good Friday Liturgy helps us to focus on the great sacrifice that Jesus made for us – his dying for the redemption of His people past, present and future. We are invited to remain in quiet prayer, watching and waiting for His Resurrection.

Continued on the next page.
Adapted from an article by Roisin Spitzig and USCCB

Good Friday is one of only two days of mandatory fasting and abstinence in our liturgical year, the other being Ash Wednesday. Many people try to also observe abstinence from meat on the Fridays during Lent.

During the Good Friday service, we are invited to venerate the Cross, to make a conscious effort to focus ourselves on the meaning of Jesus’ death in our lives. It is a humbling and sacred moment as it is hard to overlook Jesus’ sacrifice as you face the Cross and acknowledge his gift. In this liturgy we also pray especially for our world and its many needs, becoming united with the Church around the world who is doing the same.

The Easter Vigil, the highest point of our liturgical year, is held on the evening of Holy Saturday. Again, we celebrate this liturgy once, as one people united in God’s love. This is meant to be a celebration which takes place at night, when it is dark, to emphasize that we are keeping vigil for the coming Resurrection. The darkness also emphasizes the beautiful symbolism in the lighting of the new fire and the passing of the flame from person to person, signaling the Light of Christ moving among us and lighting our lives. In this we are called to take the Light of Christ to the world. There is a rhythm to the Vigil Liturgy which is both comforting and exhilarating. The readings and psalms walk us through our history, each building on the last until the Gospel which proclaims that Jesus has truly risen. The welcoming of our brothers and sisters into the Catholic faith is a beautiful symbol of the endurance of our faith and the hope for our future. The Liturgy of the Eucharist is triumphant on this night for Jesus has truly risen and given us the gifts of His love and joy, his very self.

As you can see, there are many elements of the Triduum which call us and remind us of who we are as Catholics and Christians. The Triduum is the telling of our story, a reminder of what Jesus has done for us and given to us. We are called to enter into the Triduum whole-heartedly. Can we make time in our busy schedules to spend with Jesus this Easter, to watch, wait and pray?

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 Pk
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 Sag Bridge –10600 South Archer Ave Lemont
Our Lady Mother of the Church – 116 Hilton St Willow Sp

Good Friday Fast & Abstinence Reminder
Ash Wednesday and Good Friday are obligatory days of fasting and abstinence for Catholics. Those between 18 until age 59 are obliged to fast on Good Friday. When fasting, a person is permitted to eat one full meal. Two smaller meals may also be taken, but not to equal a full meal. Those 14 and older should abstain from meat. If possible, the fast on Good Friday is continued until the Easter Vigil (on Holy Saturday night) as the “paschal fast” to honor the suffering and death of the Lord Jesus, and to prepare ourselves to share more fully and to celebrate more readily his Resurrection. Source: USCCB
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.

Encounter Our Neighbors

You are born with breadfruit, you grow up with breadfruit and you die with breadfruit. This popular saying from the Micronesian island of Chuuk, thousands of miles off the coast of Hawaii, captures the importance of this starchy fruit. It’s a staple both for the Chuukese living in Micronesia, and for people like Micaela, who were forced to migrate to Hawaii due to a changing climate and rising seas.

Though Micaela moved to Hawaii seeking a better life, she instead found a community of Chuukese struggling with hunger. Through the One ‘Ohana: Food and Housing for All program, Micaela organizes groups of women to learn farming techniques. Together, they gain the knowledge to plant breadfruit trees and feed their communities.

For Micaela, the project is a way to look to the future while remembering the past. “It’s been many years since I dug my hands in the ground. We are reconnecting back to our home, even though it’s not the soil from where we came from,” she says.

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.

Bring your Rice Bowl filled with spare change to Mass today. 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. Thank you for your generosity.

PRAY   FAST   GIVE
Meditation
“Silence is the greatest of teachers. Speaking or thinking about silence can be counterproductive and even lead to arguments about different ways into silence. This is because—obviously—silence does not need to be spoken....Yet it is necessary to think about what silence means because otherwise we may never even become conscious that silence exists. This is increasingly true in our highly distracted culture....If our natural environment lacks silence, how will we ever understand what it is? We will know we have lost something, but will have no word for what it is. Silence will just mean that the audio doesn’t work. So we must speak about silence....Meditation restores us to the experience of silence. It illustrates how conscious, faithful repetition (of the sacred word/mantra) leads us toward and into silence by the stilling of the mind and desire....It heals, refreshes, energizes, inspires, sharpens, clarifies. It simplifies. It is the medium of truth.”

Excerpted from Laurence Freeman, OSB’s book Sensing God: Learning to Meditate During Lent

Weekly
Christian Meditation in the Parish Center:

Mondays, 10:30am
Christian Meditation as an 11th Step Practice
Tuesdays, 7:30pm
Wednesdays, 2:30pm
Saturdays, 7am

Each 45 minute session includes a recorded teaching on Christian Meditation and 25 minutes of silence. All are welcome in the Parish Center in room 7, the first room on the right.

A small prayer
for kindness
for love

A soft longing
for affability
for friendship

A discrete desire
for compassion
for empathy

A simple want
for tenderness
for care

A minute search
for a smile
for a wink

Soul was praying,
longing, wanting
searching

A little softness
A little silence
A small key

A small key
to open the heart
A bit of silence

A gush of love
of kindness, of friendship
of big compassion

A huge stream
never ending
an open heart

An ocean of bliss
flooding the world
engulfing my soul

Silently gushing
quietly flooding
softly engulfing

A little prayer
A little longing
A little search

The key is never far away.
Lectio Divina for Palm Sunday

We begin our prayer: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Grant, we pray, almighty God, that, though in our weakness we fail, we may be revived through the Passion of your Only Begotten Son. Who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. (Collect, Monday of Holy Week)

Reading (Lectio) Read the following Scripture two or three times. (Note: Due to the length of today’s Gospel, only a portion is reproduced.)

From noon onward, darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon. And about three o’clock Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” Some of the bystanders who heard it said, “This one is calling for Elijah.” Immediately one of them ran to get a sponge; he soaked it in wine, and putting it on a reed, gave it to him to drink. But the rest said, “Wait, let us see if Elijah comes to save him.” But Jesus cried out again in a loud voice, and gave up his spirit. And behold, the veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. The earth quaked, rocks were split, tombs were opened, and the bodies of many saints who had fallen asleep were raised. And coming forth from their tombs after his resurrection, they entered the holy city and appeared to many. The centurion and the men with him who were keeping watch over Jesus feared greatly when they saw the earthquake and all that was happening, and they said, “Truly, this was the Son of God!” Matthew 27:45-54

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? If practicing lectio divina as a family or in a group, after the reflection time, invite the participants to share their responses.

Contemplation (Contemplatio) Read the scripture passage again, followed by this reflection: How does this passage connect with the experience of your daily life? “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” In what circumstances have I felt abandoned, even by God? How might I become more aware of God’s abiding presence in my life? But Jesus cried out again in a loud voice, and gave up his spirit. In what ways do I hear the voice of Jesus crying out to me? How does Jesus’ Spirit inspire me to share the Gospel with those I meet? Am I able to hear the voice of Jesus in the cries of my sisters and brothers who clamor for peace, justice, basic necessities, and treatment with the dignity God gave them? And behold, the veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. What things of this world divide me from God? From my brothers and sisters? What actions can I take to help remove barriers between people?

Prayer (Oratio) Read the scripture passage one more time. Bring to the Lord the praise, petition, or thanksgiving that the Word inspires in you. After all have had a chance to make their prayer, all recite the Lord’s Prayer and the following:

Closing Prayer: Yet it was our pain that he bore, our sufferings he endured. We thought of him as stricken, struck down by God and afflicted, But he was pierced for our sins, crushed for our iniquity. He bore the punishment that makes us whole, by his wounds we were healed. (Isaiah 53:4-5)

Palm Sunday Meditation: For a closer union with Jesus in his humility, in his suffering.

This Sunday we hold palm branches in our hands, and wave them to greet our Lord's entry into the city of our salvation. Last year's palms were burned to form the ashes that marked our foreheads to begin this Lenten journey. We can place these palm branches - perhaps from each member of the family - in a special place in our home (maybe cutting a small piece and putting it some place where I work). Each day this week they can represent our celebration of his love for me. That symbol can say so many words- all that I am about to celebrate and accept as love for me, and all the entry into Jerusalem experiences in my life.

Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of Hosts, Heaven and earth are full of your glory! Hosanna in the highest! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest!
The Fast Life

Fast from judging others;
    Feast on Christ dwelling in them.
Fast from fear of illness;
    Feast on the healing power of God.
Fast from words that pollute;
    Feast on speech that purifies.
Fast from discontent;
    Feast on gratitude.
Fast from anger;
    Feast on patience.
Fast from pessimism;
    Feast on hope.
Fast from negatives;
    Feast on encouragement.
Fast from bitterness;
    Feast on forgiveness.
Fast from self-concern;
    Feast on compassion.
Fast from suspicion;
    Feast on truth.
Fast from gossip;
    Feast on purposeful silence.
Fast from problems that overwhelm;
    Feast on prayer that sustains.
Fast from anxiety;
    Feast on faith.

Author Unknown

Compassionate God, you bless us
with the abundance of your love
and grace us with
the gift of your eternal presence.
In this Lenten time give us the wisdom
to recognize our poverty and
the compassion to share its treasure
with our brothers and sisters.
We ask this through your Son Jesus Christ,
who gave his life for us. Amen.

In the joy of your heart,
Your light remains.

In the gift of your caring,
Your light remains

Where you reached out to help,
Your light remains.

Where you sat in silent peace,
Your light remains.

In the place where you worked,
Your light remains.

In the stillness of the starry night,
Your light remains.

In the light of each day
fully embraced,
Your light remains.

Like the touch of an Angel,
Your light remains.

When you live as a light,
Your heart is joined
in the Infinite Light of Love.

Father of endless love and compassion,
hear the prayers of your family
gathered around your altar.
May we imitate your Son
by taking up our crosses
with joyful obedience,
seeking your justice in all things;
may we embrace his example
of loving humility,
loving and praising you
in the compassion and care
we extend to one another.
We ask these things in the name of your Son,
Jesus Christ, our Lord and Redeemer.
Amen.
St. John of the Cross Parish School will be hosting Sergeant Albrecht from the Western Springs Police Department for a presentation on internet safety for children. He will speak to parents about online monitoring, tips for keeping kids safe, and specific dangers in our area. All school families and parishioners are invited.

This Week at SJC
April 13 Holy Thursday Prayer Service
2:30pm Gym
April 14 Good Friday – No School

Kairos Retreat
Recently 50 teens from SJC, SFX, and St. Cletus attended a Kairos Retreat. Read about how a Kairos retreat can make a difference:

This retreat is real and authentic. Our teens are able to replicate what the early disciples did following Jesus's death. They gathered. They were in one place and they focused on each other. Our teen leaders prepared for months to make this retreat exactly what it was meant to be—time to be present—with the power of the Holy Spirit, God and Jesus leading us all. The teens were present to their retreatants and they were present to each other and that's why it works. Our teen leaders shared their stories. They talked about friendships, family relationships, self-doubt, and challenges that they have faced and have overcome because of their faith. They promoted the lives of faith that they have experienced with this retreat, with their church youth ministry, with their school community, their families and their everyday lives. These retreat leaders are an amazing group of teenagers who are loved by God and who decided to share that love with others. I am blessed to serve them and to help other young people grow in their faith. People wonder why this retreat works and I say because God wants it to. God wants us to serve our high school teenagers and help them see faith in their lives and see all the little things that add up to the great great great love that God has for each of them. Our teens need it in practical, realistic, relational ways and the Kairos Retreat gives it to them. Please continue to pray that our retreatants grow in the faith that they've either re-found or established for the first time. Pray that they know that God is with them always and that the leaders will always support and encourage them. If you've ever experienced this type of retreat you know the value and the goodness it is. Please reach out to me and let me know ways that you've been touched by a Kairos retreat.

My email is khayes@stjohnofthecross.com.
Thank you, Katie Hayes, Director of Youth Ministry
The biblical accounts of Jesus’ passion and death focus very much on his trial, describing it in length and in detail.

And there is a huge irony in how it is described. Jesus is on trial, but the story is written in such a way that, in effect, everyone is on trial, except Jesus. The Jewish authorities who orchestrated his arrest are on trial for their jealousy and dishonesty. The Roman authorities who wield the final power on the matter are on trial for their religious blindness. Jesus’ friends and contemporaries are on trial for their weakness and betrayal. Those who challenge Jesus to invoke divine power and come off the cross are on trial for their superficial faith. And, not least, each of us is on trial for our own weaknesses, jealousies, religious blindness, and superficial faith. The transcript of the trial of Jesus reads like a record of our own betrayals.

Recently the church has tried to help us grasp this by the manner in which it has the Passion proclaimed on Palm Sunday and Good Friday. In many churches today when the Passion is read the narrative is broken up in such a way that one narrator proclaims the overall text, another person takes the part of Jesus, several others take the parts of the various people who spoke during his arrest and trial, and the congregation as a whole is asked to proclaim aloud the parts that were spoken by the crowds. This could not be more appropriate because a congregation in any Christian church today, and we, as individual members of those congregations, in our actions and in our words, in countless ways, mimic perfectly the actions and words of Jesus’ contemporaries in their weaknesses, betrayals, jealousies, religious blindness, and false faith. We too indict Jesus countless times by how we live.

For example, here is how we do it in our words: In Matthew’s account of the trial of Jesus, at a certain moment in the trial, Pontus Pilate comes out to the people, the same people who just five days before had chanted for Jesus to be their king, and tells them that according to custom, at Passover time, he is willing to release one Jewish criminal being held in custody. At the time, he had in custody a particularly infamous murderer named, Barabbas. So Pilate asks the crowd: “Whom should I release for you, Jesus of Nazareth or Barabbas?” The crowd roars back: “Barabbas!” Pilate then asks: “Then what should I do with Jesus of Nazareth?” The crowd’s reply: “Away with him.

Have him crucified!” We can make this, very obvious, extrapolation: In every moral choice we make, big or small, ultimately the question we are standing in front of is the same question Pilate asked the crowd: Whom should I release for you, Jesus or Barabbas? Graciousness or violence? Selflessness or self-centeredness?

It is the same when the crowds say to Pilate: “We have no king, except Caesars!” In saying this, they were abandoning their own messianic hopes in favor of a momentary security. We say the same thing every time when, for our own well-being, we sell-out our higher ideals and settle for second best.

As well, all too frequently, we mimic the words of the crowds who challenged Jesus as he was hanging on the cross with these words: “If you are the Son of God, come off the cross, save us, and save yourself.” We do this every time we let our prayers become a test of God’s existence and goodness; if we get a positive answer, God loves us, if not, we begin to doubt.

It is the same, of course, with our actions: Like Jesus’ disciples, we tend to stay with Jesus more when things are going well, when temptation is not too strong, and when we are not facing real, personal threat. But, like Jesus’ original followers, we tend to abandon and betray when things get hard and threatening. Moreover, like the authorities who come to arrest Jesus carrying lanterns and torches, we also often prefer artificial light to the Light of Lights; just as, like those who arrested Jesus, we tend to approach the Prince of Peace carrying clubs and swords, ready for a fight.

Generally, on reading the account of Jesus’ Passion and Death, our spontaneous inclination is to judge very harshly those who surrounded Jesus at his arrest, trial, and sentencing: How could they not see what they were doing? How could they be so blind and jealous? How could they choose false security over God’s ultimate shelter? A murderer over the Messiah? How could his followers so easily abandon him?

Not much has changed in 2000 years. The choices that those around Jesus were making during his trial and sentencing are identical to the choices we are still making today. And most days we are not doing any better than they did because, still, far too often, given blindness and self-interest, we are saying: Away with him! Crucify him!
**Annual Flower Sale**

In its 22nd year, the Women’s Club Flower Sale brings beautiful locally grown landscape quality flowers for your garden. Orders will be taken through Thursday, April 27. Pick-up will be on Wednesday, May 3 from 2 to 6:30pm in the lot north of church — Just in time for First Holy Communions and Mother’s Day! See colored photos of flowers and order online or pick up your order form and view photos at the Parish Center office.

**Spring Collection Drive**

Beginning Saturday, April 22 through May 11 the Women’s Club will be collecting items for Sharing Connections in Downers Grove and The Pajama Program. Drop boxes will be located in the church narthex, Parish Center lobby, and the school.

The Pajama Program’s goal is for every child to feel the love and security that ensures peaceful sleep — and to awaken with the energy and spirit to make every day positive, happy and hopeful. Giving children new pajamas and books will help transform their bedtimes into comforting rituals of love, support and fun, changing their lives for the future.

Pajama Program Collection:
- New Pajamas for infants up to 18 years
- New Books for infants up to 18 years

**Sharing Connections**

Sharing Connections in Downers Grove provides furniture and household items to families coping with a crisis like domestic violence, returning or homeless veterans, job loss, or financial hardship. Items being collection for Sharing Connections:
- Bar Soap
- Shampoo & Conditioner
- Toothpaste & Toothbrushes
- Deodorant
- Shaving Cream / Razors
- Toilet Paper
- Diapers (all sizes)
- All Purpose Cleaner
- Liquid Dish Soap
- Laundry Soap
- Paper Towels
- Dusting Spray

**SAVE THE DATE!**

**SHOP, SIP & SHARE**

**Boutique Night**

**SATURDAY, MAY 11TH**

**7PM TO 10PM**

**VILLAGE CLUB**

4221 Lawn Avenue, Western Springs

$10 per person, sips and snacks served

**SHARING CONNECTIONS**

**44th Annual Garage Sale**

Get ready! Mark your calendar to donate and to volunteer! Our sale date is Saturday, June 17 from 9am to 2pm and Half Priced Bag Sale is Monday, June 19 from 9am to 1pm. Donation drop off will begin June 10. Call Mary Beth White with sale or volunteer questions. 708-246-6339.

**www.stjohnofthecross.org/womensclub**

**St. John of the Cross Parish**

**Palm Sunday**

**April 9, 2017**
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.

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, April 16.

Serve on the Parish Advisory Council (PAC)

Please consider serving our parish through this important consultative body. The PAC is comprised of representatives from each consultative body and advisory group as well as the pastoral staff. Each year we elect 2 At Large Parish Representatives to serve a two year term. No experience necessary. Meetings are held 3 times per year.

The primary purpose of our PAC is to be a ready advisory group to the pastor whenever necessary. In addition, the PAC is focused on building community in our parish and communicating and collaborating to ensure the parish is living out its mission statement. Elections will be held the second Sunday of May. Contact MJ in the Parish Center if you would like to learn more. This is a great opportunity to become connected to SJC, voice your opinions, and meet other parishioners.

Science of a Happy Marriage Workshop

Strengthen your marriage or committed relationship using the principles gleaned from 40 years of research by Dr. John Gottman. There is no cost to attend this workshop but registration is required. Call the Parish Center office or register online on our website.

Little White Books can be your prayer companion for every day during the Easter Season (Monday, April 17 through Pentecost Sunday, June 4) with timely thoughts, quotes, scripture passages and reflections. Look for your Little Book at all exits of church this weekend or in the Parish Center office. A free will offering of $1 is suggested.
St. John of the Cross Parish congratulates the following families who had their children baptized at our parish on Sunday, March 26 by Deacon John Schopp assisted by Baptism Team Leaders, Andy and Elizabeth Turcich. Pictured from the left are: Kelly and Brian Ellefson with Avery Anne, Fabiana and Gustavo Petrzu with Olivia Theresa, Marina and Jason Stroup with Liliana Rose, and Laura and Robert Sullivan with Emily Rae.

**SJC’s Food Collection**

Every month our parish partners with an area food pantry by providing much needed nonperishable food. During the month of March the food collected in our church narthex will be delivered to St. Francis Xavier’s food pantry. Please remember to check code dates on food you donate. Nonperishable food items needed include: no sugar cereal, pasta, mac ‘n cheese, rice, potatoes, tomato sauce, tuna, peanut butter, jelly, low sugar canned fruits and low sodium canned vegetables, soup, and beans.

**Volunteer Opportunities**

Create Artwork

Gather your family to work on creating a colorful spring collage to brighten a patient’s room at area care centers. Size should be 11 x 17 or 8.5 x 11. Drop off at the Parish Center or YC office.

Wellness House Walk

Many volunteer opportunities are available for the annual walk on May 7 from 7am-11am. Work in the t-shirt tent, as a course marshal, at the water station or food tent. See sign up for details. Go to walk@wellnesshouse.org to sign up.

Pray for Kolbe House Jail Ministry

Pray a 9 day novena to St. Maximilian Kolbe. Go to our parish YC website for a guide to the novena.

Gardening Angels

Parish gardeners are needed in spring, summer and fall to weed, mulch, plant and water. Please volunteer to help keep our gardens and planters looking beautiful. Contact Jan Grabacki to help at beaconjan@aol.com or 331-903-3135.

**Holy Week**

**Monday, April 10**

- No Adoration Today
- 9:30am Spiritual Journeying
- 10:30am Step 11 Christian Meditation
- 3:30pm Grade 3 Girl Scouts
- 7:00pm Boy Scouts

**Tuesday, April 11**

- 3:30pm 2nd Grade Brownies
- 7:00pm RCIA
- 7:30pm Christian Meditation

**Wednesday, April 12**

- 9:15am Wed Bible Study
- 9:30am Bridges Study
- 1:00pm Prayer Shawl Ministry
- 2:30pm Christian Meditation
- 3:30pm School Band
- 3:45pm Combined Children’s Choir Practice
- 7:00pm Chgo Catholic Scripture School
- 7:00pm Grecco Faith Sharing
- 7:00pm Adult Formation Ministry Team
- 7:00pm Traditional Choir Practice

**Thursday, April 13**

- Holy Thursday
- Parish Center Hours 9am-6pm
- 7:30pm Mass of the Lord’s Supper

**Friday, April 14**

- Good Friday
- Parish Center Office Closed
- 12:00pm Living Stations of the Cross
- 3:00pm Passion of the Lord

**Saturday, April 15**

- Holy Saturday
- Parish Center Hours 9am-2pm
- 7:00am Christian Meditation
- 11:00am Blessing of Easter Baskets
- 7:30pm Easter Vigil

**Sunday, April 16**

- Easter Sunday
- 7:30am Mass
- 9:00am Mass
- 9:15am Mass
- 10:45am Mass
- 11:00am Mass
- 12:30pm Mass
- Parish Center Closed
- No Parish Babysitting

Reacon Rich Voytas celebrates the sacrament of baptism at our parish each month. Deacon Rich invites you to join his trip to Italy on April 5 – 16, 2018. The 12 day trip will include visits Venice, Pisa, Tuscany, Florence, Lucca, Siena, Assisi, Sorrento, Isle of Capri, Pompeii and Rome. For complete details call Deacon Rich at 773.537.8834 or attend a planning meeting on Wednesday, April 26 at 7:00pm at St. Daniel the Prophet.
Mass Intentions
Monday, April 10  Monday of Holy Week
7:45am Muriel Albertson; Loretta Babka
Tuesday, April 11  Tuesday of Holy Week
7:45am Amedeo & Adina Misantoni; Dan Infelise
Wednesday, April 12  Wednesday of Holy Week
7:45am Bernard Lahart; Our Beloved Dead
Thursday, April 13  Holy Thursday
7:00pm Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper
Friday, April 14  Good Friday
12:00pm Stations of the Cross
3:00pm Passion of the Lord
Saturday, April 15  Holy Saturday
7:30pm Easter Vigil
Sunday, April 16  Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord
7:30am  Patrick Grogan & Dave Kaiser; Mariann Gibbs
9:00am Guy Accettura; Paul Adducci
9:15am (School) Frank Damba; Mary Jane Vollmer & Joann Heinzmann
10:45am James Piszczor; Joseph Frank & Family
12:30pm** Walter & Patricia Cebula; Chester Cebula
** Note this Mass begins 15 minutes later than usual.
No 5pm Mass

A Prayer for Those with a Terminal Illness
Bless, O God, all who struggle with terminal illness.
Empower them with hope each and every day.
Provide them with loving and tender care, laughter, and the support of love.
Grant them courage when they are afraid, comfort when they are in pain,
and Your blessing when all else seems hopeless,
that in their fight with illness they may glorify Your name;
In Christ's name we pray. Amen.
- Vienna Cobb Anderson

Pray for Our Sick
Rosemary Balazs
Cheryl Bartz
Jerry Benesh
Joseph Bovenzi
Paul Cervony
Tim Crain
Fr. David Dowdle
Mildred Fitzgerald
Colleen Franke
Lynn Freking
John Gannon
Jack Gibbons
Erin Gibbons
Dan Haske
Kathy Holden
Karen Hult
Bob Karpik
Lucine Kassis
Curtis Kerzich
George Kojima
Carrie Kowalski
Melody Maløy
Bobbie Misiora
Michael O'Brien
Jeanene Pinner
Frank Pipal
Helen Ragus
Leona Shell
Frances Skemp
Deloris Simonek
Ray Simonek
Peter Smykowski
Brendan Stewart
Brooks Tonn
Don Vollmer
Monica Westell

Pray for Our Beloved Dead
Margaret Fletcher, mother of Jim, grandmother of Lee Rosenberg, great grandmother of 3
Donnie Kruse, brother of Pam Conlon
Beatrice Culhane, sister of Gene O’ Sullivan

Pray for Our Loved Ones Serving Our Country
Staff Sgt. Steven Foody, son of Sandra Foody
Sgt 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 Stimetz
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 Grabeare, 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

Rev. David P. Dowdle, Pastor
ddowdle@stjohnofthecross.org
Rev. William J. Vollmer, Assoc Pastor
bvollmer@stjohnofthecross.org
Rev. Elliott R. Dees, Assoc Pastor
dees@stjohnofthecross.org
Deacon John Schopp, Deacon
john.schopp@newhemispheres.com
Bill Bright, Director of Outreach
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Janet Cascetta, Director of YC
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Kathleen Gorman, Principal
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Katie Hayes, Dir of Crossroads
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Jessica Koch, Director of Music
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MJ Martin, Director of Operations
mjmartin@stjohnofthecross.org
Katie Nicholson, Crossroads Coord
knicholson@stjohnofthecross.org
Steven Weigand, Pastoral Assoc
sweigand@stjohnofthecross.org
Holy Thursday April 13
Evening Mass of the Lord’s Supper 7:00pm
(Contemporary Ensemble, Flute & Cello)

Good Friday April 14
Living Stations of the Cross 12:00pm
Passion of the Lord 3:00pm
(Traditional Choir, Cello)

Holy Saturday April 15
Blessing of Easter Baskets in the Parish Center at 11am
Easter Vigil 7:30pm
(Traditional Choir, Flute, Cello & Trumpet)

Easter Sunday of the Resurrection of the Lord April 16
7:30am (Cantor, Violin & Cello)
9:00am (Combined Children’s Choirs, Flute & Cello)
9:15am First Floor Multi-Purpose Room in School (Cantor, Violin & Trumpet)
10:45am (Traditional Choir, Flute, Trumpet, & Cello)
11:00am First Floor Multi-Purpose Room in School
(Teen Choir, Flute, Trumpet, Bass Guitar, & Drums)
12:30pm (Note this Mass starts 15 minutes later than usual.)
(Contemporary Ensemble, Flute, Trumpet, Guitar, Drums & Cello)

No 5:00 p.m. Mass on Easter Sunday
No Parish Babysitting

St. John of the Cross Parish
5005 Wolf Road, Western Springs
www.stjohnofthecross.org
708-246-4404