It’s the First Week of Spring & Preparations for the SJC Fest are in Full Swing!!

SJC Fest 2017 is right around the corner. Get ready for several days of rides, great entertainment, great food and drinks.

Let’s start the fun now with a Pre-Party … All are invited!

Wednesday, April 5th
7:00pm
Hillgrove Tap
800 Hillgrove Avenue
Western Springs

Please consider bringing something to donate to our SJC Fest Auction. We are looking for gift cards, sporting event tickets, rounds of golf, etc. Hillgrove Tap is generously donating a portion of your food and drink purchases that night to the SJC Fest. No reservations necessary, just come!

For further info on the Pre-Party or how to donate to the Fest Auction, please contact Mike Francis at 312.953.2187.
Living the Gospel

Both Martha and Mary say to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, / my brother would not have died.” How disappointed they must have been with Jesus! Only good friends can chide one another in such a way! They had high expectations of their Friend: he could heal others, he certainly would heal Lazarus whom he loved so much that when he went to the tomb where Lazarus had been laid, Jesus wept. However, Martha and Mary’s expectation, hope, desire that their brother would be healed by their Friend was actually too shortsighted. Jesus intended something way beyond their experience, their imagination, their limited understanding of him and his power. Jesus intended a new revelation about himself. Encounters with him that come from belief offer new Life.

Mary and Martha’s long relationship with Jesus had brought them to believe in him. It must be comforting for us to know that their belief was still less than perfect. So is ours. And, like Mary and Martha, our belief is strengthened by encounters with Jesus. One obvious way we encounter Jesus is at Mass when we expressively take time out of our busy schedules to be present. Other prayer times during the day and week are also times when we consciously strive to encounter Jesus. Perhaps less evident as encounters with Jesus would be all those times when we meet him through faith-strengthening and hope-giving encounters with other people. When our discouragement is lessened by a kind remark or when our sinfulness is forgiven by a smile and welcome, we encounter Jesus in the other and are brought to new Life.

Jesus loves each of us as deeply as he loved Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, and gives each of us new Life, too.

Background on the Gospel

Our Gospel on this day, the fifth Sunday of Lent, is again taken from the Gospel according to John. The reading from John continues the break from Cycle A's focus on the Gospel of Matthew. Today’s Gospel reading recounts another sign, or miracle, found in John’s Gospel, the raising of Lazarus. As our catechumens move closer to the celebration of their Baptisms at the Triduum, today’s reading invites us to reflect upon what it means to call Jesus the Resurrection and the life.

The context for the story of the raising of Lazarus is the Jewish leaders' growing animosity toward Jesus. Jesus has been in Jerusalem, taking part in the feast of the Dedication, which we have come to know as Hanukkah. The people have been pressing him to declare plainly whether he is the Messiah. Jesus tells them to look to his works, which testify to his coming from God. Many do not believe Jesus, however, and some try to stone him for blasphemy.

Into this scene of confrontation, Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, send word to Jesus that his friend is ill. Jesus is said to love Mary, Martha, and Lazarus, but he delays his journey for two days. The delay heightens the drama and shows Jesus’ obedience to God, who is to be glorified through Lazarus’s resurrection. When Jesus finally declares that he will journey to Bethany, his disciples fear for his life. Thomas declares that he and the other disciples should prepare to die with Jesus.

The scene described at Bethany is a sad one. Martha meets Jesus weeping and saying that if Jesus had been there, Lazarus would not have died. Yet she remains confident that God will do whatever Jesus asks. Martha affirms her belief that there will be a resurrection of the dead in the last days. Then Martha’s sister, Mary, comes to Jesus with words of hope, saying that Jesus could have healed Lazarus. Jesus asks to be brought to Lazarus's tomb where he prays and calls Lazarus out from the tomb. At this sign, many come to believe in Jesus, but others take word of the miracle to the Jewish authorities, who begin their plans for Jesus’ death.

Set against the backdrop of Jesus’ impending death, many elements of the raising of Lazarus foreshadow the good news of Jesus’ own Resurrection. Jesus, facing the conflict with the Jewish authorities, acts in complete obedience to God. In raising Lazarus, Jesus shows his power over death so that when Jesus dies, those who believe in him might remember that and take hope. Just as Jesus calls for the stone to be rolled away from Lazarus’s tomb, so too will the disciples find the stone rolled away from Jesus’ tomb.

With our catechumens preparing for their Baptism at Easter, the Gospel today calls us to reflect on Baptism as a dying and rising with Jesus. In Baptism we die to sin’s power over us, rising as children of God. In Baptism we join ourselves with Christ, who conquered death once and for all so that we who believe in him may have eternal life. With Martha and Mary, we are called to profess our belief that Jesus is indeed the Resurrection and the life.
May we receive hope and strength from Jesus’ promise of resurrection and new Life.  
May we come to a deeper belief in Jesus as “the resurrection and the life.”

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

The words echoed in my head for days. I didn’t have to be perfect—perfectly prepared, perfectly dressed, perfectly anything—to go to Mass or to pray. I just had to go into the presence of the Lord. How freeing! Jesus doesn’t demand perfection. We don’t need to be perfect or wait for the perfect time or spot to approach Jesus. We don’t need to wait for Sunday Mass to talk with him. Throughout the day, each day, there are countless opportunities to check in with Jesus wherever we find ourselves.

This Lent, remember these words: “Come, come as you are, just come. Jesus is your friend; he is here for you. He is waiting for you.” Don’t keep him waiting. The time to respond is now.

Ignatian Spirituality

Christ our Redeemer, 
you cried for your friend, Lazarus:  
cry for us and with us in our confusion and despair.  
Risen Lord, you raised your friend from the tomb:  
raise us up from the tombs of sin and death  
to your life of understanding and hope.  
Hear the prayers we offer to you,  
who lives and reigns with  
the Father and the Holy Spirit  
as the one God, for ever, and ever. Amen.

Father, it’s so hard to love the world sometimes  
and to love it the way Jesus did seems impossible.  
Help me to be inspired by his love and guided by his example.  
Most of all, I want to accept that I can’t do it alone,  
and that trying is an arrogance of self-centeredness.  
I need you, dear God, to give me support in this journey.  
Show me how to unlock my heart so that I am less selfish.  
Let me be less fearful of the pain and darkness  
that will be transformed by you into Easter joy. Creighton

St. John of the Cross Parish
Fifth Sunday of Lent
April 2, 2017
The Examen is a method of prayer that you complete at the end of your day—it takes about ten to fifteen minutes—that involves praying about the past twenty-four hours of your life. You look with God at the pieces of your life, one by one.

With the Holy Spirit’s help, you review the day and see where you can give thanks and name God’s presence. At the same time, with the Holy Spirit’s help, you can see where you struggled to name God or did not act as you wanted. Together, you are asking, “Does this belong? Does this help me grow closer in my relationship with God?”

Then, after you look at the pieces of your day, look to the next twenty-four hours and ask for God’s help with it.

Over the past two weeks we have been looking more closely at each step of this prayer. Today we reflect on Steps 4 and 5.

These are the five steps of the Examen:
1. Pray for God’s help.
2. Give thanks for the gifts of this day.
3. Pray over significant feelings.
4. Rejoice and seek forgiveness.
5. Look to tomorrow.

Rejoice and Seek Forgiveness
The fourth step of the Examen is reflecting on what you can do better.

The Grace I Seek
I pray for the following graces: wonder at God’s ongoing creation; gratitude for the gift of God creating me and creating the world.

Closeness to God
Rejoice in those times that you were brought closer to God, and ask forgiveness for those times today when you resisted God’s presence in your life. Praise God for the grace of awareness given to you during this time of prayer, even if you became aware of things you are not proud of. This awareness is the beginning of healing and conversion.

Look to Tomorrow
The Examen ends with a look at the day to come. Just as God is with you today, God will be with you as you sleep and when you wake up tomorrow. Invite God to be a part of your future. What do you need God’s help with? Be very practical and specific. If it’s helpful, look at your schedule for tomorrow. God wants to be there with you, in the most dramatic and mundane moments of your life. Ask God to give you the grace you need—for example, courage, confidence, wisdom, patience, determination, or peace. Or perhaps there is someone you would like to pray for by name.

The Grace I Seek
I pray for the following graces: wonder at God’s ongoing creation; gratitude for the gift of God creating me and creating the world.

Closeness to God
Invite God to be a part of your future. What do you need God’s help with? Pray for hope.

St. Ignatius encouraged people to talk to Jesus like a friend. End the Daily Examen with a conversation with Jesus. Ask forgiveness for your sins. Ask for his protection and help. Ask for his wisdom about the questions you have and the problems you face. Do all this in the spirit of gratitude. Your life is a gift, and it is adorned with gifts from God. End the Daily Examen with the Our Father.
We begin our prayer: In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. Enlighten, O God of compassion, the hearts of your children, sanctified by penance, and in your kindness grant those you stir to a sense of devotion a gracious hearing when they cry out to you. 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 Fifth Week of Lent)

Reading (Lectio) Read the following Scripture two or three times. John 11:3-7, 17, 20-27, 33b-45

The sisters of Lazarus sent word to Jesus, saying, “Master, the one you love is ill.” When Jesus heard this he said, “This illness is not to end in death, but is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. So when he heard that he was ill, he remained for two days in the place where he was. Then after this he said to his disciples, “Let us go back to Judea.” When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him; but Mary sat at home. Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you.” Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise.” Martha said, “I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day.” Jesus told her, “I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?” She said to him, “Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world.” He became perturbed and deeply troubled, and said, “Where have you laid him?” They said to him, “Sir, come and see.” And Jesus wept. So the Jews said, “See how he loved him.” But some of them said, “Could not the one who opened the eyes of the blind man have done something so that this man would not have died?” So Jesus, perturbed again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay across it. Jesus said, “Take away the stone.” Martha, the dead man’s sister, said to him, “Lord, by now there will be a stench; he has been dead for four days.” Jesus said to her, “Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?” So they took away the stone. And Jesus raised his eyes and said, “Father, I thank you for hearing me. I know that you always hear me; but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe that you sent me.” And when he had said this, he cried out in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, tied hand and foot with burial bands, and his face was wrapped in a cloth. So Jesus said to them, “Untie him and let him go.” Now many of the Jews who had come to Mary and seen what he had done began to believe in him.

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? “This illness is not to end in death, but is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it.” How do I experience the glory of God in my life? How does my daily living help to glorify God? “I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die.” How does my hope in the Resurrection influence the way I live my daily life? To what actions and attitudes does my faith in the Resurrection compel me? So Jesus said to them, “Untie him and let him go.” What sins and failures tie me down and keep me from acting as God wills? What steps can I take to live more fully in freedom as a child of God?

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: See, my servant shall prosper, he shall be raised high and greatly exalted. Even as many were amazed at him— so marred were his features, beyond that of mortals his appearance, beyond that of human beings— So shall he startle many nations, kings shall stand speechless; For those who have not been told shall see, those who have not heard shall ponder it. (Isaiah 52:13-15)
Suffering

The cross is a deeply disturbing image of a naked bleeding man, with arms nailed open, dying on a crossbeam—a most unlikely logo for anything. The cross might be the most significant image in Western civilization. The very fact that we keep repainting and sculpting this now ubiquitous image tells us that the soul must need to see it.

Jung says, “The whole world is God’s suffering.” Jung saw every act of human suffering as a participation in what Christians would call the eternal crucifixion of the One Christ. There is only one suffering, as it were, and we are all participants in it.

Does God suffer? With us and in us? Did you ever think of it that way? I believe we are invited to gaze upon the image of the crucified to soften our hearts toward God, and to know that God’s heart has always been softened toward us, even and most especially in our suffering.

Christian saints are often pictured gazing empathetically at the cross. Why? Because it is a soul-shattering image of the willing suffering of God in solidarity with every single “shedding of blood since the foundation of the world” (Luke 11:50).

After true gazing, the cross becomes a two-way mirror. We see our own suffering, the suffering of the world, and God’s suffering as all one and the same. The entire human journey, including resurrection, is revealed in Jesus’ course of life, which Jung says is “an almost perfect map” of human transformation.

Gateway to Silence:
“The privilege of a lifetime is to become who you truly are.”
—Carl Jung

Tune Our Hearts

Being part of the cosmic dance can only be known experientially. That’s why I teach centering prayer and contemplation and try to use meaningful religious rituals and practices: to lead you to a place of nakedness and vulnerability where your ego identity falls away, where your explanations don’t mean anything, where your superiority doesn’t matter.

You have to sit there in your naked-who-ness. If God wants to get to you, and the Trinity experience wants to come alive within you, these liminal moments are when God has the very best chance.

As we “tune our hearts” [1] to greater perception, we’ll begin to experience God almost like a force field, to borrow a metaphor from physics. We’re all already inside this force field, whether we know it or not, alongside Hindus and Buddhists and Muslims and every race and nationality. God doesn’t stop or begin at the Mexico/U.S. border, the Israel/Palestine border, the border between North and South Korea, or any such line in the sand. The divine force field is all-encompassing.

When you see people protecting their small tribes and self-constructed identities as if they were lasting or inherently meaningful, you know that they’ve not yet experienced substantial reality. When you allow the flow of substantial reality through your life, you are a catholic person in the truest sense of the word, a universal person living beyond these tiny boundaries that human beings love to create. As Paul puts it, “Our citizenship is in heaven” (Philippians 3:20).

As I grow older, faith for me has become a daily readiness to allow and to trust the force field, knowing that it is good, that it’s totally on my side, and that I’m already inside of it. How else can I really be at peace?

Let this prayer resonate in you:
God for us, we call you Father.
God alongside us, we call you Jesus.
God within us, we call you Holy Spirit.
You are the eternal mystery that enables, enfolds, and enlivens all things,
Even us and even me.
Every name falls short of your goodness and greatness.
We can only see you in what is.
We ask for such perfect seeing—
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be.
Amen. (So be it.)

Gateway to Silence:
In the love of God,
the peace of Christ,
and the power of the Holy Spirit
Encounter Ethiopia

Dita, her husband and their seven children depend on the money they earn selling crops from their small farm in Ethiopia. But frequent droughts often mean that families like Dita's who depend on home-grown crops go hungry. And amidst the current, historic drought, more than 10 million people are struggling with hunger.

But thanks to a CRS program that helps families prepare for crises like droughts, Dita was able to build a new house and open a small store. Instead of relying solely on what she can grow on her farm, she is able to sell items like pasta, shampoo and bananas. She earns a steady $400 a month.

"Before, I had to get eggs from my neighbors. Now I have 15 hens," she proclaims. Saving money and being able to borrow not only allowed her to buy hens but also a metal roof for her new house, a rarity for families in this part of Ethiopia.

"Now we have no problems with food," she says. Unlike families across Ethiopia that struggle to find enough to eat, Dita says her children eat three times a day, thanks to her newfound business knowledge.

And what's more, all her children are attending school. “When I was a child, there were no education opportunities,” she says. Then, with a shy but proud smile, she adds, “That’s a big difference.”

We pray for Dita, her country of Ethiopia and all those affected by drought or lack of clean water, that life-giving rain may revitalize their fields and their spirits. God of all people, You walk with us on our life’s journey. You know our joys and struggles. You know us better than we know ourselves. This Lenten season, may we too learn to walk with others. Through prayer, fasting and almsgiving, may we encounter you in our neighbors in need and live your call to serve our human family. Amen
Reception Following the Easter Vigil ~ All are Welcome

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

This weekend at the 9:00am Mass our RCIA elect will celebrate the last of three rites called the Scrutinies. These very special rites are celebrated on the middle three Sundays of Lent at liturgies where the elect are present. The elect are those in our midst who are preparing for Baptism. These ancient rites are rooted in our human experience. We need to examine or scrutinize who we are, the areas of our lives where we are tempted, or seriously sin – in what we do and what we fail to do. We really need healing and the strength that can come from the support of our brothers and sisters in our faith community. This week as they are dismissed from Mass to further reflect on the Gospel, they will be presented with the Lord’s Prayer.

Over the past several weeks the RCIA elect and candidate have been meeting in a period known as Enlightenment. During this time of preparation for the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist at the Easter Vigil, they have participated in forming and examining their hearts in preparation for these sacraments. Each Tuesday evening for the past four weeks they have been led in meditation and reflection based on the themes of the Gospels of the Woman at the Well, the Man Born Blind and the Raising of Lazarus. The themes of Christian life that have emerged are: water which is refreshing, renewing yet powerful and terrifying; sight/light which allows us to see others, God, the world and ourselves as God sees us; and death/rising, hope, trust and being unbound which can keep us from experiencing the grace, mercy and power of God’s love at work in our lives.

Their journey serves as an inspiration and source of renewal for us, the baptized, on our journeys. The questions they have been invited to reflect and ponder on are food for our own reflection. These questions have included: Where are the life giving waters in my life? What am I thirsting for in life? Do I have any dried-up wells in my life? What did you see as the man born blind, neighbors, Jesus or the man’s parents? How did you feel? Have you ever been in a situation where you felt all hope was lost? What freedom is God offering to me if I let God take over my life and undo my bindings? Next Saturday, April 8 our elect will be on retreat. Please continue to pray for Gil Clark and Kaitlyn Acosta as they journey to the Easter Vigil and beyond.
The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a Sacrament of healing. When I go to confession, it is in order to be healed, to heal my soul, to heal my heart and to be healed of some wrongdoing. The biblical icon which best expresses them in their deep bond is the episode of the forgiving and healing of the paralytic, where the Lord Jesus is revealed at the same time as the physician of souls and of bodies.

The Sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation flows directly from the Paschal Mystery. In fact, on the evening of Easter the Lord appeared to the disciples, who were locked in the Upper Room, and after addressing them with the greeting, “Peace be with you!”, he breathed on them and said: “Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven” (Jn 20:21-23). This passage reveals to us the most profound dynamic contained in this Sacrament.

First, the fact that the forgiveness of our sins is not something we can give ourselves. I cannot say: I forgive my sins. Forgiveness is asked for, is asked of another, and in Confession we ask for forgiveness from Jesus. Forgiveness is not the fruit of our own efforts but rather a gift, it is a gift of the Holy Spirit who fills us with the wellspring of mercy and of grace that flows unceasingly from the open heart of the Crucified and Risen Christ. Secondly, it reminds us that we can truly be at peace only if we allow ourselves to be reconciled, in the Lord Jesus, with the Father and with the brethren. And we have all felt this in our hearts, when we have gone to confession with a soul weighed down and with a little sadness; and when we receive Jesus’ forgiveness we feel at peace, with that peace of soul which is so beautiful, and which only Jesus can give, only Him.

It is not enough to ask the Lord for forgiveness in one’s own mind and heart, but it is necessary humbly and trustingly to confess one’s sins to a minister of the Church. In the celebration of this Sacrament, the priest represents not only God but also the whole community, who sees itself in the weakness of each of its members, who listens and is moved by his repentance, and who is reconciled with him, which cheers him up and accompanies him on the path of conversion and human and Christian growth. One might say: I confess only to God. Yes, you can say to God “forgive me” and say your sins, but our sins are also committed against the brethren, and against the Church. That is why it is necessary to ask pardon of the Church, and of the brethren in the person of the priest. “But Father, I am ashamed ...”.

Do not be afraid of Confession! When one is in line to go to Confession, one feels all these things, even shame, but then when one finishes Confession one leaves free, grand, beautiful, forgiven, candid, happy. This is the beauty of Confession! I would like to ask you — but don’t say it aloud, everyone respond in his heart: when was the last time you made your confession? Everyone think about it ... Two days, two weeks, two years, forty years? Everyone count, everyone say ‘when was the last time I went to confession?’. And if much time has passed, do not lose another day. Go, the priest will be good. Jesus is there, and Jesus is more benevolent than priests, Jesus receives you, he receives you with so much love. Be courageous and go to Confession!

Dear friends, celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation means being enfolded in a warm embrace: it is the embrace of the Father’s infinite mercy. Let us recall that beautiful, beautiful parable of the son who left his home, with the money of his inheritance. He wasted all the money and then, when he had nothing left, he decided to return home, not as a son but as a servant. His heart was filled with so much guilt and shame. The surprise came when he began to speak, to ask for forgiveness, his father did not let him speak, he embraced him, he kissed him, and he began to make merry. But I am telling you: each time we go to confession, God embraces us. God rejoices!

Secondly, it reminds us that we can truly be at peace only if we allow ourselves to be reconciled, in the Lord Jesus, with the Church, with his brother.

It is not enough to ask the Lord for forgiveness in one’s own mind and heart, but it is necessary humbly and trustingly to confess one’s sins to a minister of the Church. In the celebration of this Sacrament, the priest represents not only God but also the whole community, who sees itself in the weakness of each of its members, who listens and is moved by his repentance, and who is reconciled with him, which cheers him up and accompanies him on the path of conversion and human and Christian growth. One might say: I confess only to God. Yes, you can say to God “forgive me” and say your sins, but our sins are also committed against the brethren, and against the Church. That is why it is necessary to ask pardon of the Church, and of the brethren in the person of the priest. “But Father, I am ashamed ...”.

Do not be afraid of Confession! When one is in line to go to Confession, one feels all these things, even shame, but then when one finishes Confession one leaves free, grand, beautiful, forgiven, candid, happy. This is the beauty of Confession! I would like to ask you — but don’t say it aloud, everyone respond in his heart: when was the last time you made your confession? Everyone think about it ... Two days, two weeks, two years, forty years? Everyone count, everyone say ‘when was the last time I went to confession?’. And if much time has passed, do not lose another day. Go, the priest will be good. Jesus is there, and Jesus is more benevolent than priests, Jesus receives you, he receives you with so much love. Be courageous and go to Confession!

Dear friends, celebrating the Sacrament of Reconciliation means being enfolded in a warm embrace: it is the embrace of the Father’s infinite mercy. Let us recall that beautiful, beautiful parable of the son who left his home, with the money of his inheritance. He wasted all the money and then, when he had nothing left, he decided to return home, not as a son but as a servant. His heart was filled with so much guilt and shame. The surprise came when he began to speak, to ask for forgiveness, his father did not let him speak, he embraced him, he kissed him, and he began to make merry. But I am telling you: each time we go to confession, God embraces us. God rejoices! Let us go forward on this road. May God bless you! Pope Francis General Audience 2.19.14

Special Lenten Opportunities for Reconciliation at SJC
Parish Reconciliation Service: Tuesday, April 4 at 7pm in church
Hear God’s word proclaimed, then take part in an examination of conscience. 8 priests from our parish and elsewhere will assist with individual confession and absolution as you are ready. Perfect for all ages.

Private Confessions: Saturday, April 8 after the 8am Mass
Additional priests will be available to hear confessions. (The sacrament of reconciliation is available every Saturday after the morning Mass, except Holy Saturday.)
The Women’s Club Board will soon be filling open positions. Board members work together to plan and coordinate spiritual, social, and service events for the women of St. John of the Cross. Current board members invite you to set aside just a few minutes of your day to pray this short prayer as it looks to fill open positions and for the continued good works of the club. Have you ever thought of becoming a board member? Please email the Women's Club Co-President, Margaret Hynes, hynesmath@yahoo.com, with your interest.

Infinite Spirit,
be with me
as I make the effort to pause
all the labors of my body;
all the thoughts of my mind;
all the worries, doubts,
and fears of my heart.
Help me to willingly be present
with the gentle quietness
of Your presence,
in these moments of prayer
that I offer up to You
for the women of
St. John of the Cross.
As the Women’s Club
prepares for the transition
of its board members,
unite your Divine Spirit
with the Divine Spirit
of each woman of the parish.
Guide her to recognize
she is a member of the Women’s Club.
Foster these women
to be loving sisters to one another;
to pray and work together
to grow in spiritual
and social well-being;
and to continue
to provide charitable service
filled with Your grace.
As each woman eternally grows
in relationship with You,
I ask you to make
the Women’s Club a dwelling place
for your treasured daughters
of St. John of the Cross. Amen
Written by Marie Gerken, inspired by the Holy Spirit.
Parents of all youth Kindergarten through 8th Grade are invited to register for the 17-18 school year at our YC Office. Monday-Thursday 8:30am-4pm or by appointment by emailing Janet Caschetta, Director of YC, jcaschetta@stjohnofthecross.org

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.

Parents: Please consider being a catechist or class aide. All are encouraged to share your time and talents.

YC Schedule

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Dates</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classes K-6</td>
<td>10:15-11:30am</td>
<td>Sun, Apr 23, 30 May 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6:15-7:30pm</td>
<td>Mon, Apr 24, May 1, 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFC</td>
<td>All work due April 15th</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jr Hi Sm Groups</td>
<td>home settings</td>
<td>Sun, Apr 23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adapted Catechesis</td>
<td>9:00-10:00am</td>
<td>Sun, Apr 23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Volunteer for Crossroads
Volunteers are needed to support our parish high school freshmen involved in our Crossroads program. We are especially in need of 1 adult male and a home where the group can meet. Contact Katie Hayes if you are interested in volunteering or know of someone who might be interested in serving our teens.

Living Stations of the Cross
The next rehearsal for our Good Friday presentation of the Stations of the Cross will be held on April 6 from 6:00-7:30pm.

Easter Basket Service Project
Parish 3rd and 4th graders are invited to help Crossroad teens make Easter baskets for underprivileged children. Join us in the Parish Center on Sunday, April 9 from 6-7:00pm. We provide the baskets but ask that everyone bring small toys and candy to fill them.

Parish School News
This year’s school play is Aladdin. Over 75 students have been preparing for three months for their performances this weekend. Each year, the fifth through eighth grade students are able to participate in many ways in the annual play. Children not only sing, dance, and act, but they also have the opportunity to work the sound, lights, and be a part of the running crew.

Tickets are available at the door for the performances this weekend, Saturday, April 1 at 7:00 p.m. and Sunday, April 2 at 2:30pm

This Week at SJC
April 3 All School Liturgy 9:15am
April 4 Parent Association Meeting 9am
April 7 No School

Plan to Attend a Program on Internet Safety for Children
Sgt. Albrecht of Western Springs will discuss keeping your kids safe on the internet on Tuesday, April 25 from 7-8:30pm in the Parish Center. No registration. All are welcome.
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.

Welcome!
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.

Patrick Thornton
Victoria Bezpalko
Sarah and Christopher Hewitt & Family

If you would like to register to become a member, please contact Elizabeth Russell-Jones in the Welcome Center or visit our website at: www.stjohnofthecross.org/welcome. For more information call 708.246.4404x155 or erussell-jones@stjohnofthecross.org or stop in the Parish Center.

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. Families welcome.

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.
Treasuring the Gift 
of the Lenten Journey

MONDAY

3 Renew us in our baptismal convictions.
Read the 10 commandments. Which are the hardest to keep? How can you turn away from sin? In what ways can you be more loving?

TUESDAY

4 Give us new life in you Lord.
Attend the Parish Reconciliation Service tonight at 7pm in church. What keeps you from being more loving? Beyond the penance you receive, undertake one act of generous love to another.

WEDNESDAY

5 With the Lord there is mercy and fullness of redemption.
Put your spare change in your Rice Bowl for the poor. Go to our website or bulletin and read about the countries that are supported by Catholic Relief Services.

THURSDAY

6 You have created each of us in your image, in beauty and love.
Make a list of all the excesses in your life. Think about which ones you could do without. Be more aware of small sacrifices you can make.

FRIDAY

7 He has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.
Say the Lenten Prayer on the Bowl. Return your Rice Bowl to Mass this weekend. At your family evening meal share the ways you have grown closer to the Lord in Lent.

SATURDAY

8 May we have the courage to dwell with God sharing our days and nights with him.
Pray for those receiving the Sacraments of Initiation as they participate in a retreat today.

SUNDAY

9 Palm Sunday of the Passion of Our Lord

The Week Ahead
Monday, April 3
9:15am School Mass
9:30am Spiritual Journeying
10:30am Step 11 Meditation
1:00pm Little Rock Scripture Study
2:30pm Adoration
7:00pm Boy Scout Meeting
7:00pm Fest Planning

Tuesday, April 4
9:00am Parent Association
9:05am Tuesdays with Mary Rosary
7:00pm Lenten Reconciliation Service
7:00pm YC Council Meeting
7:30pm Christian Meditation

Wednesday, April 5
9:15am Wed Morning Bible Study
2:30pm Christian Meditation
3:45pm Cherub Choir Practice
6:30pm SPRED
6:30pm Women's Club Mtg.
7:00pm Chgo Catholic Scripture School
7:30pm Traditional Choir Practice

Thursday, April 6
8th Grade Washington Trip
9:00am Flourish Meeting
3:45pm Youth Choir Practice
6:00pm Crossroads Stations Rehearsal
6:30pm Protecting Gods Children
7:00pm Divorce & Beyond
7:00pm Women's Club Board Meeting
7:30pm Contemporary Ensemble
7:30pm SAM Core Group Meeting

Friday, April 7
No School
6:00pm Stations of the Cross

Saturday, April 8
7:00am Christian Meditation
1:00pm Crossroads Kairos Meeting

Sunday, April 9 Palm Sunday
See Mass times back of bulletin
10:00am New Parishioner Welcome
4:00pm YC BEDS Meal Prep
6:00pm Easter Basket Project

Note:
No Parish Babysitting on Easter Sunday.

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

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.

The annual archdiocesan Prevent Child Abuse Prayer Service will be held on Friday, April 7 at 11:30am in the Healing Garden of Holy Family Church in Chicago. Year after year, we hear of children and young people who are abused and neglected. More than ever, we are also hearing of children and young people who are victims of violence, intolerance and indifference. Every child should experience a warm, loving and safe childhood where they can thrive and grow. Together we will raise awareness of this issue by raising our voices in prayer and song on behalf of those who are in need of our protection.
Mass & Reconciliation Schedule & Intentions

**Monday, April 3 Lenten Weekday**
7:45am Mary Inendino; Joan Mullins

**Tuesday, April 4 St. Isidore**
7:45am Guy Pertile; Lucille Santagata; Deceased members of Moore family
7:00pm Parish Reconciliation Service

**Wednesday, April 5 St. Vincent Ferrer**
7:45am Betty Lehane; Our Beloved Dead

**Thursday, April 6 Lenten Weekday**
7:45am Libby Chapman; Peg Dohe

**Friday, April 7 St. John Baptist de la Salle**
7:45am John Broderick Jr; Evrikila Karegianes

**Saturday, April 8 Lenten Weekday**
8:00am Lawrence Hickey; John Gazdacka
~ Reconciliation Follows Mass ~
5:00pm Edward Peters; Deceased members of Lukowsky & DenBesten families

**Sunday, April 9 Palm Sunday of the Passion of Our Lord**
7:30am Christopher Delia; Lynda Kruk
9:00am Josephine Barbara; Bernard Bock
10:45am Walter Dzubla; Ramon & Gloria Sanchez
12:30pm Maggie Gibbs; Todd Behme Family
(Note, this Mass begins 15 minutes later than usual.)
5:00pm Elizabeth Napleton; James Canny

Italics: Living Intention

**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
Kathy Holden
Karen Hult
Bob Karpiak
Lucine Kassis
Curtis Kerzich
George Kojima
Carrie Kowalski
Melody Maly
Bobbie Misiora
Michael O’Brien
Jeannie Pinner
Frank Pipal
Helen Ragus
Leona Shell
Frances Skemp
Deloris Simonek
Ray Simonek
Peter Smykowski
Brendan Steward
Brooks Tonn
Don Vollmer
Monica Westell

**Pray for Our Beloved Dead**
James Brennan, father of Agnes Dufficy, grandfather of 3 & Fr. Brendan Lupton
Donald Dame, father of Carol Merkle, grandfather of 2
William Berg, father of Jeannie Muldowney

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. A free will offering of $1 is suggested.

**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 Maicke, grandson of Phil & Mike Maicke
Sgt. Robert Marburger, son of David and Kathleen Marburger
Staff Sgt. Larry Waszak, grandson of Bruno and Barbara Gacek
Petty Officer 3rd Class Matthew 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

Caring for the sacred gift of all human life, from conception to death, is the best way of preventing every type of violence. Pope Francis@Pontifex Mar 27

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@newhemspheres.com
Bill Bright, Director of Outreach
bbright@stjohnofthecross.org
Janet Caschetta, Director of YC
jcascetta@stjohnofthecross.org
Kathleen Gorman, Principal
gorman@sjc.pvt.k12.il.us
Katie Hayes, Dir of Crossroads
khayes@stjohnofthecross.org
Jessica Koch, Director of Music
jkoch@stjohnofthecross.org
MJ Martin, Director of Operations
mmartin@stjohnofthecross.org
Katie Nicholson, Crossroads Coord
knicholson@stjohnofthecross.org
Steven Weigand, Pastoral Assoc
sweigand@stjohnofthecross.org
Parish Reconciliation Service
Tuesday, April 4 at 7:00pm

Individual Reconciliation
Saturday, April 8 after the 8am Mass, additional priests will be available to hear confessions.

Palm Sunday Ecumenical Service
Western Springs Village Green
Sunday, April 9
8:15-8:30am

Palm Sunday of the Passion of Our Lord, April 9
Masses
Saturday 5:00pm Vigil
Sunday 7:30am
9:00am
10:45am
12:30pm
(Note this Mass starts 15 minutes later than usual.)
5:00pm

Return Your Rice Bowl to Mass today.

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

Come.
Experience
His love,
life
and hope
with us.