

ANNOUNCEMENTS

December 13, 2009

There is now a bulletin board in the entrance of the Parish Center for Youth Ministry. Check it for announcements, schedule, pictures, etc.

January 10th is our next gathering and we will be playing Underground Church. I need at least 8 adult volunteers to help chaperone or we will have to cancel this activity.

January 10th the 7/8th graders will be having a bake sale for snack time. Money they raise will go to a local charity such as St. Vincent De Paul.

Confirmation I Retreat previously scheduled for January 10th will be rescheduled. I have registered to attend a Ministry Conference that weekend that I feel is very important for our Programs. The Retreat has been rescheduled to February 7th. This is Superbowl Sunday but our retreat will be from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. and shouldn't interfere.

Confirmation Youth are reminded that attending Mass on a regular basis is vital to their Confirmation Preparation. Mass sign in sheets are in the back of Church on the ledge. Please sign each weekend before or after Mass. If you attend Mass at a different Church please bring a bulletin to your next class with you.

Confirmation I parents!!!! We will have a planning meeting for the Confirmation Retreat on January 13th at 7:30 p.m. in the Youth Room area.

Confirmation II youth were sent home their make up assignments. All assignments must be turned in on January 17th.

Tonight and for the rest of our calendar year our Youth Leadership Team will be planning and presenting Prayer, Witness talks, and activities. Ask your youth what they did or what they learned.

All Youth were sent home with a registration packet for our Annual Ski Trip to Perfect North last week. If you lose the information it can be found in the Youth Ministry section of our Parish Website. We will not take late registrations this year. All money, registration and liability waivers need turned in no later than December 20th!

Youth that have completed 9th Grade are invited to consider going on the Youth Ministry Summer Mission Trip. There will be an Informational Meeting on January 20th at 7:30 p.m. in the Youth Room Upstairs in the Parish Center. We will discuss information such as Who Where What When and HOW. We will share information on fundraising ideas, choosing a company, choosing a location, and of course choosing our fun outing afterwards!

My Contact information:

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Saint of the Week
3rd Sunday in Advent - December 13, 2009

John of the Cross, Priest and Doctor — 1542 – 1591

Juan Yepes was the youngest of three sons born to Gonzalo and Catalina Yepes. Gonzalo had come from a wealthy Spanish family, while Catalina, an orphan, had been taken into the home of a widow. The Yepes family objected to the marriage of these two and warned Gonzalo that he would be disinherited if he went through with it. The two young lovers ignored the warning and were married in about 1529.

As threatened, Gonzalo was cut off from his family and the family business which he had been a part of. This made the young family largely dependent on Catalina's embroidery and those odd jobs which Gonzalo could perform, all of which provided meager support.

The situation for the family worsened when Juan was about two. The strain of trying to support his family and the sorrow at the loss of contact with the relatives he had known in his youth caused Gonzalo to become ill, a condition which worsened until his death about two years later. While the brothers tried to help, Juan, at his young age, was capable of only the simplest chores.

When Juan was about nine years old, his family moved to Medina del Campo where the young boy worked at a hospital and began his studies at a Jesuit school. The hospital administrator, Don Alvarez, noting the boy's sincerity and eagerness to help, offered Juan the opportunity to become a nurse at the hospital. Juan quickly jumped at the chance, believing it would allow him to provide more help to his mother and family.

The hospital handled many incurable patients and those with contagious diseases. Where other workers tended to shy away from these cases, Juan did his best to provide them with the care that they needed. Juan had a special affinity for those patients who had no close family to comfort them. He would tell stories and sing songs to the patients to bring some cheer into their lives.

All of this, while giving Juan a taste of how harsh life can become, also brought him quickly to maturity. But, as might be expected, he treasured the times when he could retreat to a loft of a barn on the hospital grounds where he could study. Don Alvarez, having observed Juan's intensity and eagerness to learn over several years, offered to put him into a new Jesuit school where he found a new mentor.

Fr. Juan Bonifacio, a young Jesuit, introduced Juan to Latin and Spanish classics and planted the seeds of a vocation during Juan's four years of study which began in 1559. Upon graduating from the Jesuit school, Juan decided to join the Carmelite order.

Ordained in 1567, Juan elected to join the Carthusians, a very strict order that emphasized solitary and silent contemplation, but before he could do this, he returned to Medina del Campo where a companion introduced him to Saint Teresa of Avila. This future saint told Fr. Juan of her efforts to introduce reforms into the Carmelite order which had become very lax over time and persuaded him to delay his move to the Carthusians.

Fascinated by the saint's plan for reform, something he had tried unsuccessfully to do within his own community, Juan remained in the Carmelite order and worked at introducing similar change. Over the next ten years, Juan traveled around Spain founding monasteries and establishing the rules under which they would be governed. Those Carmelites who followed the revisions brought about by these two saints became known as Discalced (barefoot) Carmelites. It was during this period that Juan became known as Juan de la Cruz (John of the Cross).

While many Carmelites joined Fr. Juan with the discalced group, there remained much dissension. In 1577, his superiors ordered him to return to his original posting, but, having been assigned to his mission by the Apostolic Nuncio, Fr. Juan refused. The superiors then had him abducted and carried to Toledo where he was imprisoned. During his nine month imprisonment, he received public whippings at least weekly. This humiliation inspired some of the poetry which he wrote later in his life.

Escaping from his small cell in August 1578, Fr. Juan went on with his mission and continued to establish new monasteries for the Discalced Carmelites, but the controversy persisted. He became ill and as this illness worsened, he was moved to the monastery at Ubeda. Even there, he was treated cruelly which was the answer to his prayer, "to suffer and be despised." In the waning days of his life, even his adversaries recognized the holiness of their founder and, upon his death, the order celebrated his life of saintliness.

Saint John of the Cross was canonized in 1726 by Pope Benedict XIII. He was named a Doctor of the Church by Pope Pius XI in 1926. This saint is the patron of contemplatives, mystics and mystical theology, and Spanish poets. He is honored by a memorial on December 14.

John's Message Today: Early in his life, John of the Cross learned to deny himself in order to bring himself closer to God. Few of us have had the experience of poverty and hardship experienced by John, but all of us can bring ourselves closer to God by prayer and self-denial.