



St. John the Baptist

CATHOLIC COMMUNITY

12319 New Hampshire Ave., Silver Spring, MD 20904

Schedule of Masses (November 14/15, 2020)

Saturday
5:00 - Fr. Kozubek

Sunday
7:30 - Fr. Rodriguez
9:30 - Fr. Brault
Dcn. McCormack
11:30 - Fr. Willis
Dcn. McCormack

Daily Mass

Monday-Friday 7:30 & 9:00 a.m.
Saturday - 9:00 a.m.

Baptism

Parishioners are asked to call the Parish Office for the times of the monthly liturgical celebrations and to arrange for classes.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Please call the Parish Office to arrange a confession.

Marriage

Parishioners requesting a marriage date must have been registered in the parish for six months.

Phone Numbers

Parish Office & Rectory:
301-622-1122
Fax: 301-625-9266
School: 301-622-3076

sjbssparish.org
[@SJB_Catholic](https://www.facebook.com/sjbcc)

Sunday, November 8, 2020

Ordinary Time: Thirty-second Sunday

This week's readings: Wisdom 6:12-16 Psalm 63 1 Thessalonians 4:13-16 Matthew 25:1-13



The meaning(s) of Jesus' parables depend on the perspective of the readers. In fact, that's what is unique about them. We glean a message important for us today, but that message may be different each time we hear it because of where we are in our lives. Today's gospel, for instance.

The story of the wise and foolish virgins and their preparation for the coming of the bridegroom is usually thought of in terms of the final times. There is the coming of Jesus at the end of time, but that's not a part of our everyday life. There is the end of our days on earth, the "you do not know the hour or the day" part, and that's closer to our consciousness. We know the importance of being in the state of grace.

This year being prepared has become the focus of our lives. Following the Center for Disease Control guidelines to be safe from the Coronavirus takes effort. Our ordinary lives are not ordinary any more. Keeping oil for lamps, as the wise virgins did, seems like a simple task to us compared to the inconveniences we endure. So what do we take from today's gospel?

Next week's readings - Ordinary Time: 33rd Sunday

Proverbs 31:19-13, 19-20, 30-31 Psalm 128 1 Thessalonians 4:1-6 Matthew 25:14-30

Excerpts from Pope Francis' Letter *Laudato Si* (On Care for Our Creation)

CHAPTER SIX – Ecological Education and Spirituality

I. Towards a New Lifestyle

It's easy today to get caught up in a whirlwind of needless buying and spending, and to lose a sense of the common good. The issue of environmental degradation challenges us to examine our lifestyle. Disinterested concern for others, and the rejection of every form of self-centeredness and self-absorption, are essential if we truly wish to care for our brothers and sisters and for the natural environment.

II. Educating for the Covenant Between Humanity and the Environment

Even though young people have a new ecological sensitivity and a generous spirit, and some of them are making admirable efforts to protect the environment, we are faced with an educational challenge.

Education in environmental responsibility can encourage ways of acting which directly and significantly affect the world around us – such as avoiding the use of plastic and paper, reducing water consumption, separating refuse, cooking only what can reasonably be eaten, showing care for other living beings, using public transport or car-pooling, planting trees, and turning off unnecessary lights. Reusing something instead of immediately discarding it, when done for the right reasons, can be an act of love which expresses our own dignity.

Our efforts at education will be inadequate and ineffectual unless we strive to promote a new way of thinking about human beings, life, society and our relationship with nature.

Next week: III. Ecological Conversion



SJB Mass is being Live Streamed

Mass celebrations have resumed in the Church. If you cannot attend, you can view the 9:30 a.m. Sunday Mass in the Church which will be live streamed on Facebook at www.facebook.com/sjbcc. The Daily 9:00 a.m. Mass will also be live streamed on Facebook.



We continue to address streaming issues as they occur. Sometimes we have difficulties streaming Sunday Mass at the time we have indicated, especially when the Dell laptop performs unscheduled updates to the system. If this happens at the 9:30 a.m. Sunday Mass, we will try to stream the 11:30 a.m. Mass., so please visit the website again at 11:30 a.m. I sympathize with any frustration this has or may cause you. You should see my reaction in the sacristy when this happens. Thank you for your understanding and patience. - Father David

SJB Exposition Live Streamed

The Exposition of the Blessed Sacrament will be live streamed on Facebook, Fridays from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m. when our priests are available and the schedule permits.

Reconciliation/Confession

Saturdays, 4:00-4:45 p.m. in the Church before Mass, or a Confession can be arranged with one of our priests by calling the Parish Office, 301-622-1122.

Parish Office Hours

For Church related matters like requesting a Mass Intention, please come to the front doors of the Parish Office which will be open Monday through Thursday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. **The Parish Office is closed on Fridays.** The side doors of the Parish Office are open only to access the elevator.

SJB Men's Group

Attention men over 18 years old. Join us Saturday mornings to connect with the Word and your brothers in Christ. Deacon Ed McCormack facilitates as we unpack scripture in an atmosphere of fellowship and community. The ZOOM room opens at 7:15 a.m. and we get under way at 7:30 a.m. Guys say it's the most fruitful one hour they experience all day. To join us with video & audio just go to:



<https://us04web.zoom.us/j/873867511>.

Meeting ID: 873 867 511

For audio only by phone, dial: 301-715-8592

Meeting ID: 873 867 511.

For more information, please contact Dave Michaels at invitedtolife@gmail.com.

Mass Intentions (November 9 – November 15)

Monday 7:30 - Faithful Departed
9:00 - Regina Stelzer -L- (J. MacLeod)

Tuesday 7:30 - Dr. Jonathan White -L- (G. & J. Petruzzelli)
9:00 - Faithful Departed

Wednesday 7:30 - Faithful Departed
9:00 - All Souls in Purgatory (Parishioner)

Thursday 7:30 - Faithful Departed
9:00 - McDermott Family -L- (N. & J. Peters)

Friday 7:30 - Faithful Departed
9:00 - Grandma Doa (Granddaughter)

Saturday 9:00 - Faithful Departed
5:00 - Joseph Formica (S. & M. Dulski)

Sunday 7:30 - Parishioners
9:30 - Joseph Durkin (Kuzemka Family)
11:30 - Mila Perez (J. Marsich)
No evening Mass

Parish Clergy

Rev. Y. David Brault Pastor
Rev. Cezary Kozubek Associate Pastor
Rev. Glen Willis Weekend Associate
Rev. Nicolás Rodriguez Weekend Associate
Deacon James Gorman Permanent Deacon
Deacon Ed McCormack Permanent Deacon

Parish Directory

Father Brault pastor@sjbssparish.org
Father Kozubek assocpastor@sjbssparish.org
Parish Office secretary@sjbssparish.org
Finance Office kkuzemka@sjbssparish.org
Faith Formation adultdre@sjbssparish.org
Youth Ministry youth@sjbssparish.org
Liturgy & Music secretary@sjbssparish.org
Social Concerns socialconcerns@sjbssparish.org
Athletic Ministry www.sjbathletics.org
Parochial School brian.blomquist@sjbsilverspring.org
Bulletin sjbbulletin@sjbssparish.org
Parish Website www.sjbssparish.org
School Website www.sjbsilverspring.org

New Bulletin Deadline

November 22, Bulletin & Website deadline
Thursday, November 12, at 9:00 a.m

Send Bulletin announcements to
sjbbulletin@sjbssparish.org
Send Website announcements to
kbrown@sjbssparish.org

Remember in Prayer

Rev. Msgr. Francis Kazista, Pastor Emeritus, who recently died. Monsignor served us well for 29 years from September 12, 1987 to July 5, 2011.

Book of Remembrance in November

Because of Covid-19, we will not have a Book of Remembrance available in the Church in November to include the names of those who have died. Instead, please visit our SJB website, at www.sjbssparish.org, click on Book of Remembrance, and enter the names of deceased individuals to be remembered this month.



Second Collection - Retired Priests Collection this weekend November 7/8

The Retired Priests of the Archdiocese of Washington Collection is this weekend November 7 and 8. Our priests impact our lives in many ways: they baptize our children, comfort us through Reconciliation, witness our marriage vows and hold our loved ones hands as the Lord calls them home. Let us come together to help provide care and housing for our retired priests so they can live their retirement in dignity. There are four ways you can support the Retired Priests Collection this year:



- 1) Envelope. Please use the envelope mailed to you earlier this month.
- 2) Online: Please visit adw.org/rpc to support the collection online.
- 3) Text: Please text "Priest" to 301-231-1816. A text with a link to a secure form will be sent back to you to complete your generous gift for this important collection.
- 4) QR Code: Please scan the QR code above with your mobile phone to make a gift online.

SJB Food Drive - Courtesy of the SJB Knights

The SJB Parish Food Drive will be on the first and third Saturday morning of each month from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. The next drop off will be Saturday, November 21. Please drive to the table in front of the Lyon Center and as you stay safe in your car, just pop your trunk or tailgate and your donation will be unloaded. Dry goods are preferred. Food donations will be distributed to the St. Camillus Food Bank. Thank you for your generosity. If you have a question or need more information, please email Brian Murphy at oliverb1960@gmail.com.



Sign up for Weekend Mass

on our website,

www.sjbssparish.org



Please sign up all members of your family **individually**.

If you don't have internet access, please call the Parish Office, 301-622-1122.

Personal Health Evaluation

1. In the last two weeks, did you care for or have close contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19?
2. Do you have any of the following: fever or chills, cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, body aches, headache, new loss of taste or smell, sore throat?

If you or someone in your family can answer yes to either of these two questions, please refrain from signing up for Mass. Thank you for keeping everyone safe and healthy.

How to Keep Informed of SJB Parish News

Flocknotes: Visit our SJB website, www.sjbssparish.org, and on the first page enter an email address to receive Flocknotes through email.

Bulletin: Visit our website bulletin page at <https://www.sjbssparish.org/bulletins> to access the latest SJB bulletin. To have a link to the latest SJB bulletin sent directly to your email from our bulletin printer (FATA), visit <https://www.fataonline.com/bulletins/StJohntheBaptistSilverSpring> and enter your email address.

Previous Bulletins: Previous bulletins can be viewed by visiting <https://www.sjbssparish.org/bulletins> and selecting a bulletin date.

Group Meetings Suspended

The Pandemic is currently making it impossible for us to hold any meetings. The guidance from the CDC, the State of Maryland and the Archdiocese of Washington is making the safety of each one of us the primary emphasis. For the time being all organizations should plan to use the electronic world for meetings. Thank you for your cooperation.

Weekly Stewardship Report

Offertory Sunday, November 8, 2020 \$5,862.00

Please note monies given via Faith Direct are not included in the Offertory above.

Sign-up Weekly for Weekend Masses

Due to COVID-19, there are many precautions we must take for the health and safety of all as we have public celebrations of the Mass. To insure proper social distancing between people we need to limit the number of seats available at each of the four Weekend Masses:

Saturday 5 p.m.

**Sunday 7:30 a.m., 9:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.
(no evening Mass)**

Weekly sign-up is needed for every individual member of your family who wants to attend one of the Weekend Masses. Sign-up will open each week starting on Mondays at 12 noon and ending on Thursdays at 12 noon immediately preceding the upcoming Weekend Masses.

To sign-up to attend a Weekend Mass, please visit our website at www.sjbssparish.org. If you do not have internet access, please call the Parish Office, 301-622-1122. Sign up is not required for Daily Mass. Please arrive early for all Masses.

Please know that when you come to attend Mass:

- A mask or facial covering must be worn.
- Entry will be through the main, front, wrought iron doors – only.
- Ushers will direct you to a seat.

Signing up for Mass on your Smart Phone

If you are trying to sign up for Mass during the sign up period using your Smart Phone and you keep getting the “not available message,” try clearing your phone data for previous sites/apps visited and reestablishing a new connection to the SJB website in order to be able to sign up.

Make Me an Instrument of Your Peace: A Prayer for Civility

- Lord, make me an instrument of your peace.
- Where uncivil words prevail, show me how to model love.
- Help me remember the God-given dignity of all and invite others to do the same.
- Show me how to build bridges and not walls and see first what unites us rather than how we diverge.
- Let me seek to understand before asking to be understood.
- Give me a listening heart filled with empathy and compassion.
- May I be clear in sharing my own position and respectful and civil in describing those of others.
- Let me never tolerate hateful ideas.
- May I invite all to charity and love.
- Lord, help me to imitate your compassion and mercy.
- Make me an instrument of your peace. Amen.

Inspired by Nine Rules for Civility from the Catholic Tradition, Bishop Zubik.

Bereavement Ministry

Due to Covid 19, our Bereavement Ministry is still unable to safely hold monthly meetings at St. John the Baptist Church. We know that so many are grieving and may not have any other outlet for expressing the grief that you feel. If you need to speak with someone in the Ministry, please leave a message for Ruth Anne McCormick, 301-622-0664, or Maryanne Dulski, 301-384-1743. You may also email Ruth Anne at drdam612@gmail.com.

*** Around Town ***

New Young Adult Small Groups

- hosted by the Dominican Student Brothers, begin this fall for men and women ages 20-35. Groups will meet virtually and in person at parishes in Silver Spring. In addition to our continuing faith study in English, we hope to offer a similar program in Spanish, as well as a men’s fellowship for growth in the Christian life. If interested, please contact us at sscatholicfellowship@gmail.com or [Facebook.com/SilverSpringCatholic](https://www.facebook.com/SilverSpringCatholic).

Need Help?

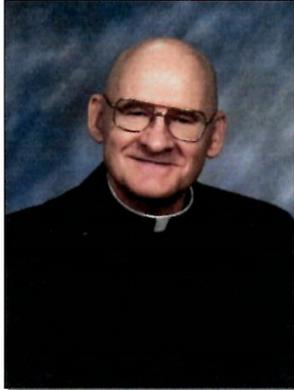
Know Someone Hurting, Physically, Emotionally, Spiritually or in their Relationships? Church of the Resurrection Catholic Church has teams trained in helping people experience God's healing love through virtual sessions of in-depth prayer. For more details, contact Linda DeRoze, 301-384-5568 or Lderoze@verizon.net

Holy Child Christmas Bazaar

Mayfield Market: Holy Child’s 17th annual Mayfield Market Christmas Bazaar, now in a virtual format, is a shopping extravaganza you will not want to miss! Start your holiday shopping early in a festive online atmosphere with dozens of vendors selling their jewelry, clothing, home décor, hostess and children’s gifts, personalized items, holiday decorations, and much more to make your shopping the easiest and best ever. Mayfield Market’s virtual marketplace has something for everyone!

- o WHEN: November 1 – November 30th
- o WHERE: www.holychild.org/mayfieldmarket

Father Eliot Nitz SDS



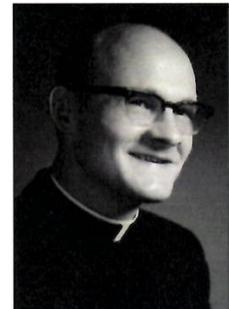
"Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord, and let your perpetual light shine upon him. Amen."

Birth: December 8, 1941
Profession: September 8, 1962
Ordination: September 6, 1968
Death: October 26, 2020

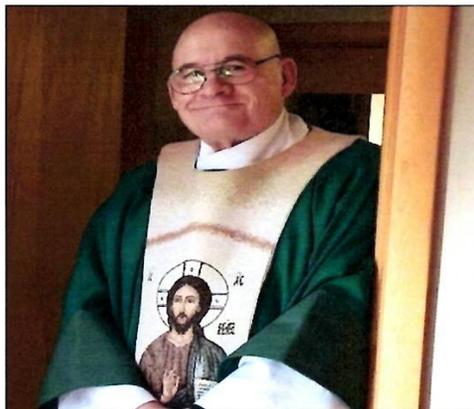
On December 8, 1941, the day after the bombing of Pearl Harbor, the day the members of the Society of the Divine Savior (Salvatorians) were celebrating the 60th Anniversary of their Founding, and that same day were dedicating Divine Savior Seminary in Lanham, Maryland, Fr. Eliot Nitz (birth name Ronald Richard) was born in Hammond, Indiana, to Paul and Helen (Thompson) Nitz. He was one of three boys in the family who would soon make their home in McHenry, Illinois. Those three entities that were marking major events on the day of his birth – the US Military, the Salvatorians, and Divine Savior Seminary – would each play a major role in his life later on.

Fr. Eliot attended St. Hyacinth (Chicago) and St. Mary's (McHenry) Parish grade schools. In 1955, he began his high school studies at Salvatorian Seminary in St. Nazianz, Wisconsin, where he became acquainted with the Salvatorians, and when he finished his second year of college there, he entered the Salvatorian Novitiate in Colfax, Iowa, where he made his profession of vows on September 8, 1962. He completed his studies for the priesthood at Divine Savior Seminary in Lanham, Maryland, and Catholic University in Washington, DC. During the 1964-1965 school year, he had taught at Francis Jordan High School in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Fr. Eliot was ordained a priest in St. Mary's Parish in Landover Hills, Maryland, on September 6, 1968. After a period of training at Fort Hamilton in Brookland, New Jersey, he was missioned as a Chaplain for the US Army Reserve for the years 1969 to 1972.

Over the years, Fr. Eliot has served in numerous places and in various ministries. He was associate pastor at both Mother Mary Mission in Phenix City, Alabama, and St. Benedict the Moor Parish across the river in Columbus, Georgia; and at Holy Cross Parish in West Sacramento, California. He trained for retreat work and spiritual direction at the Jesuit School of Theology in Berkeley, California, and he ministered as a retreat leader at St. Pius X Retreat Center in Blackwood, New Jersey, and the Christian Life Center in LaGrange Park, Illinois. Fr. Eliot served as assistant Novice Director and then Novice Director for the Society in the DC area; and following certification in clinical pastoral education, as hospital chaplain in Walter Reed Hospital in DC, and at Holy Cross Hospital in Silver Spring, Maryland. In addition to ministering as a chaplain in these hospitals, he worked as a voluntary Emergency Medical Technician for the West Lanham Hills Volunteer Fire Department at the same time! Fr. Eliot retired from full-time ministry in 2008, but he continued to assist at St. John the Baptist Parish in Silver Spring and at the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception in DC.



Although a deeply spiritual person and a gifted minister, Fr. Eliot has always stayed connected to the down-to-earth realities confronting the people he serves. While he was working as an EMT in West Lanham Hills, one community member once commented, “Eliot never met an ambulance he didn’t like ... nor did he mind sharing his experiences at the dinner table, many of which weren’t meant for the faint-of-heart!” His medical skills came in handy during the summers he served as the infirmarian at the Society’s Camp St. Charles in Rock Point, Maryland. In addition to his ministries, Fr. Eliot delighted in giving time to his HAM radio hobby and in reading anything having to do with military history. His ever-present smile and hearty laugh would light up the room. He enjoyed spending time with people, sharing stories, and even getting into deep discussions with anyone who wished to do so. Fr. Eliot was a “people person” through and through! It’s why others were so drawn to him wherever he ministered.



Fr. Eliot was preceded in death by his father, Paul Nitz; his mother Helen and late stepfather, Walter Streske. He is survived by his brothers Paul Nitz of Woodstock, IL, and Michael Nitz of McHenry, IL, as well as his brothers and sisters in the Salvatorian Family.

*“Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord,
and let your perpetual light shine upon him.
May he rest in your peace. Amen.”*

Saint Frances Xavier Cabrini’s Story

Frances Xavier Cabrini was the first United States citizen to be canonized. Her deep trust in the loving care of her God gave her the strength to be a valiant woman doing the work of Christ.

Refused admission to the religious order which had educated her to be a teacher, she began charitable work at the House of Providence Orphanage in Cadogno, Italy. In September 1877, she made her vows there and took the religious habit.

When the bishop closed the orphanage in 1880, he named Frances prioress of the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart. Seven young women from the orphanage joined her.

Since her early childhood in Italy, Frances had wanted to be a missionary in China but, at the urging of Pope Leo XIII, Frances went west instead of east. She traveled with six sisters to New York City to work with the thousands of Italian immigrants living there.

She found disappointment and difficulties with every step. When she arrived in New York, the house intended to be her first orphanage in the United States was not available. The archbishop advised her to return to Italy. But Frances, truly a valiant woman, departed from the archbishop’s residence all the more determined to establish that orphanage. And she did.

In 35 years, Frances Xavier Cabrini founded 67 institutions dedicated to caring for the poor, the abandoned, the uneducated and the sick. Seeing great need among Italian immigrants who were losing their faith, she organized schools and adult education classes.

As a child, she was always frightened of water, unable to overcome her fear of drowning. Yet, despite this fear, she traveled across the Atlantic Ocean more than 30 times. She died of malaria in her own Columbus Hospital in Chicago. Source: <https://www.franciscanmedia.org/saint-of-the-day/saint-frances-xavier-cabrini>



Social Concerns

Cynthia Norris, 301-622-1122, socialconcerns@sjbssparish.org

C4 is Now Open



The Colesville Council of Community Congregations, commonly referred to as C-4, is a charitable organization that has been operating for 52 years. It is located at the Colesville Center 14015 New Hampshire Ave. We serve families who are experiencing financial hardship in our Clothes Closet and the Baby Closet year-round; the School Supply Program in late summer; and the Toy Closet Christmas holiday program. In a typical year, C-4 serves over 1500 families.

C-4 is funded by monetary donations, and operates thanks to the donation of clothes, baby supplies, household items, toys, and food. The monetary donations make the purchase of diapers, new school supplies and toys possible. It is staffed by volunteers from local congregations as well as other members of our community.

C-4 reopened its doors on Tuesday, October 6, after getting County approval of the submitted plan, and

operating in full compliance with CDC and County guidelines for Covid-19. We are operating on a "first come, first served" basis. Our shopping days are Tuesdays and Fridays from 9-11 a.m. Each client is given 20 minutes shopping time. In addition to clothing, clients receive a bag of school supplies for each child in grades K-12, and a bag of fresh and non-perishable food.

We are a "one stop shop" for those in need. We are thrilled to be open, looking for volunteers to help with all four projects. We will be hosting our annual Toy Closet a bit differently this year due to the pandemic and need all of the support our community can provide. This support includes monetary, new toys as well as volunteers. Last year we distributed toys, stockings and books to over 1200 children.

To find out how you can help C-4, please call Alyssa at 301-599-2108 ext. 313. Visit us on the web at www.c4clothescloset.com.

Still Waiting For Your Stimulus Check?



Catholic Charities
ARCHDIOCESE OF WASHINGTON

of people in your household and your income.

DC/MD/VA residents: If you did not file a tax return in 2018 or 2019 and/or do not receive social security, YOU NEED TO TAKE ACTION in order to get the money you are owed. And there's an easy way! In partnership with the IRS, Catholic Charities offers a free program to help you quickly get paid the money you are owed. Typical payments range from \$1200 to \$3900 depending on the number

To qualify, you must:

- Have a Social Security Number (ITIN holders are excluded). Not be a tax dependent of someone else.
- Contact us today at fsn@cc-dc.org to get the payment you deserve!

For assistance, please contact Catholic Charities at fsn@cc-dc.org.

Urgent Virtual Drive for the Gabriel Project

The Gabriel Project Cluster of Montgomery County is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization that assists low-income pregnant women and their children. During the pandemic and economic crisis, the need for the Gabriel Project's services has grown tremendously while typical sources of support are greatly reduced. Please see this flyer, https://e76b4f48-d447-47af-8706-36b7303b6511.usrfiles.com/ugd/e76b4f_25f6e7c9b1a545be9d80b2ad3d214140.pdf, for more information about our virtual drive to support the Gabriel Project. You can help provide critically needed material resources by purchasing essential items like baby gear, diapers, and clothing through the Gabriel Project's Amazon Charity List: GP Amazon List, https://smile.amazon.com/gp/chpf/homepage/ref=smi_se_cl_rd_ge?orig=%2Fhz%2Fcharitylist%2FIs%2F384MSEZYW4WVQ%2Fref%3Dsmi_ext_lnk_lcl_cl%3FpldnSite%3D1. For more information about the Gabriel Project, please visit the website at www.gpmoco.org. Thank you for your generous support!

Music in Church

At the Sunday 9:30 a.m. Mass we are experimenting with having a Cantor sing. According to the Archdiocese, parishioners are still not allowed to sing, but we are trying at least to bring music back little-by-little into our Sunday Mass celebrations.



Mystical Word

written by L.J. Milone, Director of Faith Formation, ljmilone@sjbssparish.org

In 1563, St. John of the Cross entered the Carmelites, but soon felt a pull towards a more contemplative way of life. He considered joining the Carthusians. Fortunately, in one of those rare historical occurrences, he met St. Teresa of Avila. She convinced him to join her reform of the Carmelite Order.

Why did John want to enter the Carthusians? Why did John join Teresa's reform? Briefly put, she promised him what he was looking for by joining the Carthusians: solitude, silence, and a focus on contemplation. In 1568, on the way to making a foundation of nuns in Valladolid, Teresa formed John in her fresh approach to Carmelite life. So, John learned from Teresa! This is remarkable because sixteenth century Spain is not known for its progressive views on women. That a man was willing to learn from a woman means John had let go of a major hurdle: his culture's views on women. He manifested humility.

We cannot overestimate the influence Teresa had on John, nor the influence he had on her. They are both considered the founders of the Discalced Carmelites, yet it is Teresa who began the reform movement. John followed in her wake even as he was recognized in his own right. Teresa and John respected and learned from each other. He breaks the norms of patriarchy as it existed sixteenth century Spain, and, indeed, even sexist norms prevalent today.

John was not a big, powerful force. He was rather anonymous among even the Discalced. He seems to have been at peace with that. It seems he did not need recognition. He was content with God and nothing appeared to bother him. This is significant for his doctrine of happy nothingness. It tells us he lived this teaching himself. He was happy to remain anonymous, a particular experience of nothingness. He only wanted God.

Teresa says that John "is considered a saint by everyone, men and women alike, and I don't think they exaggerate" (Letter 226). In fact, Teresa often referred to John as a saint, as "a heavenly and divine man," and "the father of my soul" (Letter 277). John seems to have been regarded as a spirituality mature person even while young.

For nine months, from December 1577 to mid-August 1578, John was kept in a prison cell little bigger



than a closet. The Observant Carmelites had imprisoned John because they were angry with the reforms both John and Teresa were introducing into the Carmelite Order. His jailer regularly took him to the dining room where all the friars took turns whipping him while he knelt on the hard floor. His food was scarce, and he suffered all the extremes of weather in his poorly lit and excruciatingly small prison cell. When he realized he would probably die soon, he decided to escape. John climbed out of a window and down a makeshift rope. He found his way to the Discalced Carmelite nuns and they hid him until he could be moved.

His experience in the cramped prison cell, formerly a guest bathroom, in Toledo indelibly shaped his spiritual life. During this awful time, John suffered physically and spiritually. Still, he allowed God to use the experience for his transformation.

Internally, he reported, God was transforming him. He suffered a dark night, that is, a period of his spiritual life in which it felt like God had abandoned him, though that was not actually the case. He later called the experience a grace. John's time in his monastic prison cell reduced him to nothing through his own consent to the work of God.

Amidst and through the tortures and agonies of his jail time, St. John of the Cross became a truly free and joyful person. How did this happen? Why am I upset over traffic or politics when St. John of the Cross found a deeper joy even as his body was infested with vermin? He says, "Well and good if all things change, Lord, provided we are rooted in you." To be rooted in the Holy Mystery of God is to know the freedom and happiness that no change in the circumstances of our lives can affect. St. John of the Cross portrays this tectonic change and teaches us how it happens in our lives. The change St. John refers to is our "transformation in God." How do we change? It happens through spiritual poverty, emptiness, and nothingness. This is St. John of the Cross' secret to peace, freedom, and joy right here and right now.

This was John's most extreme experience of nothingness, and yet, even here, John discovered divine bliss. Even through torture, starvation, sickness, exposure to the elements, brainwashing, and imprisonment, John awakened to the subtle nothingness of the bliss of God.

PAIN CONTROL
Acupuncture, Acu Massage, Herbs
11120 New Hampshire Ave. #409
Call Dr. Lee **301-592-1234**
www.acupuncture-drs.com

Alex W. Kuzemka
Tax Preparation
13321 New Hampshire Ave. #200
(O) **301-384-3153**
(H) **301-384-3817**

WILLIAM JOHN ARMSTRONG III
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Specializing In Wills, Trusts, Estates And Real Estate Transactions
301-384-9233 • armstrongtheman@aol.com
1804 Briggs Chaney Rd. • Silver Spring, MD 20905

WE NEED YOU!
Become a Foster Parent
• Treatment Foster Care
• Mother/Infant Foster Care
• Medically Fragile Foster Care
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