

Dear Parishioners and Friends of the Cathedral,

On December 14th, the Church will celebrate a great reformer, spiritual master, doctor of the Church, and mystic of the 16th century – Saint John of the Cross. He was born in AD 1542, in the small village of Fontiveros (Spain), to Gonzalo de Yepes and Catalina Alvarez. Despite the fact that his father was of noble birth, the family was very poor because his father was disowned for choosing to marry beneath his social class, and subsequently died when John was very young. His mother struggled greatly to provide for the family.

Early on, John excelled academically, and later took a job as a nurse, working for several years in a hospital for the poor. Eventually, he was admitted into the newly founded Jesuit college at Medina del Campo. His studies included classical languages, rhetoric, and humanities, but it was also here that he gained a clearer understanding of his vocation to Carmelite religious life.

John entered the Carmelite Order in AD 1563, but even before entering the order, he had already been drawn to practice a life of prayer and asceticism. As a member of the order, he received permission to live according to the Carmelite's original rule of life – which stressed solitude, silence, poverty, work, and contemplative prayer. In AD 1567, he was ordained a priest and began to long for an even more austere way of life, even seriously considering leaving the Carmelites to join the Carthusians. Before he could take this step, however, Saint Theresa of Avila, who was working to reform the Carmelites back to a stricter observance of their original rule of life, convinced him to remain and help her with this work.

In AD 1568, the first house of Discalced Carmelites was established, following the strict observance of the rule, and John took the name – 'John of the Cross'. As their reform movement grew, it faced greater and greater opposition, and in AD 1577, John was kidnapped by fellow Carmelites and locked in a small cell, where he was beaten several times a week. During his imprisonment, he had nothing except God in that cell, but God was all he needed to find joy. And it was during this time that he composed spiritual poetry that would become the basis for the later spiritual treatises that he would write. He was able to escape in August of 1578 by unscrewing the lock on his cell and climbing out a window with a rope made from blankets.

Over the next ten years, he would continue to found more Discalced Carmelite houses, while at the same time being charged with greater areas of responsibility within the order, as well as composing numerous spiritual writings that remain great treasures of the Church to this day – 'The Dark Night of the Soul', 'The Ascent of Mt. Carmel', 'The Spiritual Canticle', and 'The Living Flame of Love'.

Due to machinations within the order, Saint John of the Cross lost his leadership offices within the now autonomous Discalced Carmelites, and was assigned to the newly established Province of Mexico. However, while preparing for the long journey, he became seriously ill and died before setting out in AD 1591.

Saint John of the Cross once drew a picture on which he had three paths that were directed to heaven. The first path had earthly goods like science, liberty, rest, and honor. The second path included spiritual goods like knowledge, joy, consolation, security, and glory. Both of these paths were wide and both stopped short of reaching heaven. It was only the third narrow path which he labeled 'nada' (nothing) that ultimately reached heaven. It reminds us that we must let go of anything that is not God. All those earthly and spiritual things, good as they may be, are not God. So we must be willing to let go of everything, even good feelings and peace in prayer. Anything that is not God can become an idol for us, becoming the focus of our attention, instead of God. Being stripped of these things so as to attach ourselves only to God is what Saint John called the 'Dark Night'.



Father Sean Ralph



The Cathedral of St. John the Evangelist
1007 Superior Ave. E • Cleveland OH 44114-2582
<http://SaintJohnCathedral.com> • 216-771-6666

Decorating Help Needed



Volunteers are needed on **Saturday, December 16**, to help get the Cathedral ready for Christmas. Jobs with which we need help include:

- Bringing items up from storage,
- Assembling, fluffing, & lighting trees,
- Hanging decorations, inside & out,
- And much more!

Most of the setup will take place from 8:00-11:30 am; we are in need of the most people at that time. Decorating will continue following Mass from 1:00-3:00 pm. Please sign up using the sheets available just outside the Sacristy, at the back of the church, or by calling the Rectory Office at 216-771-6666 x4700.

Fr. Guillermo Rubillos



Having completed his two year term as Chaplain for the Philippine American Community in Cleveland, and as parochial vicar at the Cathedral, Fr. Rubillos

will soon be returning home to take up his duties in the Prelature of Basilan.

You are invited to join Fr. Rubillos here at Saint John Cathedral for a Mass of Thanksgiving **this Sunday, 10 December 2017, at 10:30 am.** A coffee and doughnut social will take place in the vestibule following the liturgy.

**This Weekend: PIC Collection
Dec. 11/12, is the Personal Items
Collection (PIC) for the Homeless**

**Next Weekend: Giving Tree Gifts
Gifts MUST be returned**

**NO LATER
than the 5:30 pm Mass
Next Sunday, December 17th!**

**Gifts will be sorted following Mass;
and will be delivered early the
following morning.**