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## 2015 LENTEN SPEAKER SERIES, FEBRUARY 20—MARCH 27

Our Lenten speaker series this year will explore Pope Francis' understanding and vision for the Church, as documented in his apostolic exhortation, *The Joy of the Gospel*. This document asks many important questions about the way the Church should serve in the world and the way Christians can live their faith. Several themes predominate:

(1) that the joy of the gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus such that evangelization begins by sharing the basic message of the Gospel, that Jesus loves you, he gave his life to save you, and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen, and free you;

(2) it calls churches to be missionary disciples focused on the evangelization of today's world rather than for self-preservation, never losing contact with the real lives and difficulties of people;

(3) each individual Christian and every faith community is called to be an instrument of God for the liberation and promotion of the poor and for enabling them to be fully a part of society.

These and other themes have significant ramifications for how St. John of God does outreach, not only to build up the number of parishioners, but how we do ministry as a parish. The ways we can be more effective in both these goals is the subtext behind every presentation:

**Session 1 (February 20):** An overview of the Model of Church proposed by Francis and how it fits into previous models of church (a la Avery Dulles), but also challenges them. **Dr. Mark Miller**, Professor of Systematic Theology at USF and former occasional parishioner at SJOG in his graduate student days, will address this topic.

**Session 2 (February 27):** Focus on the key chapter 1 of the *Joy of the Gospel*, noting what Francis has to say about the new evangelization and becoming intentional disciples. We will examine the implications about our future growth and development as a parish community, envisioning SJOG as a house of formation for lay people which enables and empowers us to share our personal and communal encounters with Christ. **Patricia Hoffman**, MA, Pastoral Ministries, Santa Clara University, Educator and chair of the Friday night Scripture Study Group here at SJOG, will guide us in this process.

**Session 3 (March 6):** Focus on why ministering to the poor and marginalized is an essential component of Francis' vision of church and how SJOG can actualize this ministry, perhaps using the life of St. John of God as our blueprint. **Rev. Glenda Hope**, retired CEO of Tenderloin Network Ministries and Safe House, will be our likely speaker.

**Session 4 (March 13):** Recognizing SJOG's charism for the increased presence of women in today's church, how does Francis' model of church speak to this issue, urging that the legitimate rights of women be respected and how might SJOG begin to pave the way for the rest of our diocese to allow women more prominent roles in church governance and policies. **Julia Dowd**, former executive head of the Ralph and Joan Lane Center for Social Concerns at USF and current head of USF Campus Ministries, will talk on this issue.

*The two remaining sessions (March 20 and March 27) will be announced shortly.*