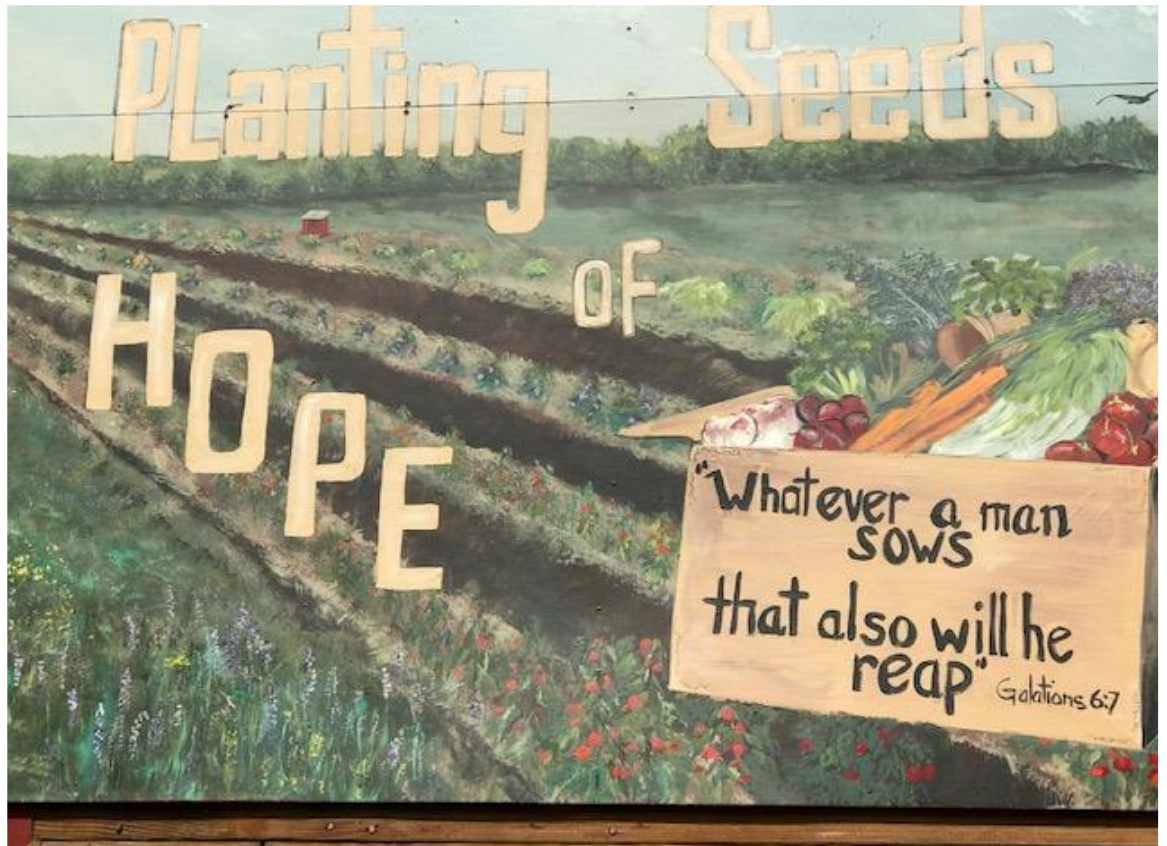




The Parish of Saints Philip and James
1 Carow Place, St. James, NY 11780

631-584-5454

July 31st, 2022
The Eighteenth Sunday
In Ordinary Time



"Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one's life does not consist of possessions."

Luke 12: 15

*"With Philip & James we pray to live lives worthy of the call to be
Apostles of Hope"*

Daily Mass: 7:30am and 9:15 am
Saturday 5pm Sunday: 8am 10 am 12noon

STS. PHILIP & JAMES PASTORAL STAFF

Parish Center Phone: 631-584-5454 Parish Fax: 631-862-9675

Website—www.sspj.org

PARISH CENTER OFFICE HOURS

Open Monday, Tuesday Wednesday 9am-6pm

Open Thursday 9am-6pm

Closed Friday, Saturday and Sunday

CLERGY

Father Tom Haggerty, Pastor
Father Joe Lobo-Associate Pastor
Deacon Ronald Blasius
Deacon John Keenan

PASTORAL ASSOCIATE

Sister Theresita Donach, CSFN

BUSINESS MANAGER

Virginia Portanova

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: 631-584-3204

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR Grades 1-3

Charlotte Czujko~cczujko@sspj.org

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR Grades 4-6

Barbara Luna~bluna@sspj.org

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR Grades 7-8

Dominick Avento~davento@sspj.org

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Margaret Adams

COORDINATOR OF PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRY

Lynn Sisti

DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRY

Dominick Avento

DIRECTOR OF FACILITIES

John Cordes

SSPJ SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Diane M. Anderson

School Phone-631-584-7896 School Fax: 631-584-3258

TRUSTEES

Brendan McGovern ~ Tina Cafaro

PASTORAL COUNCIL

Michael Sharkey, Lou Guerra, Cynthia Lombardi, Paul Damato
Martin Marut, Maureen Burke, Erin Nicastro

**Collections: ~Thanking you for your generosity
Financial Support Needed weekly to meet Parish budget:**

\$17,890

Weekly Collection: Sunday, July 24th, 2022:

Collections from Weekend masses: \$ 6,823.

Collections from Mail: \$2,430.

Faith Direct : (125Participants) 3,203.

Total Collections: \$12,456.

Collection for Communications:

FAITH DIRECT: VISIT SSPJ.ORG CLICK ON FAITH DIRECT

ICON:

USING SSPJ PARISH CODE: NY232

**** Collections for 7-17-22: \$13,445.**

Sacraments

Baptism— Celebrated twice per month. Parents are asked to register at the Pastoral Center for Pre-Baptism Program.

Marriage—Couples are asked to contact the Pastoral Center before visiting the reception hall. The Marriage Preparation process is nine months before your proposed wedding date.

Confirmation—Seventh and Eighth grade students are prepared to celebrate through Religious Ed or SSPJ School. Adults prepare through RCIA.

Reconciliation— Available Saturdays from 4:00pm-5:00pm in the Church or by contacting the Parish Center for an appointment.

Anointing of the Sick— In case of serious, unexpected illness, please contact the Parish Center office to arrange for a Priest to pray with the person who is ill. Anointing of the Sick is held on the first Sunday of the month following the 8:00am mass please see the Sacristan before mass.

R.C.I.A.— Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (non-Catholic adults desiring to become Catholic) are asked to contact the Parish Center Office.

Eucharistic Adoration In The Church— Monday 1:30pm -7pm

PLEASE REMEMBER THOSE WHO SERVE FOR US IN YOUR PRAYERS



LCDR. MEGAN M. SHUTKA-VIK, USN

CAPT. WILSON MARKS- USN

CAPTAIN MICHAEL DOLAN- JR.

LT. COL. JOHN KAIRE

SPC. NICOLE A. CANNON

SGM. MICHAEL P. BORRELLI-US ARMY

CAPT. JOHN TULLY- USN

LT. COL. JAMES TULLY-US ARMY

JOSEPH SAGGIO- USNC

CAPTAIN PAUL WILLMS

STAFF SGT. MICHAEL LONGHENRY

LT. COL. PAUL T. JACKSON-

STAFF SGT ALEXANDER PARRELLA-USAF

RICHARD SOTOMAYER- USAF

SGT. CONNOR F. SCOTT- USMC

SGT. CORY O'HARA -USMC

CDR. ROBERT J. MARSH-USN

PFC. CHARLES CHRISTOPHER HOWELL

STEVEN CAVA-USN

ERIC SEELIN- USMC

CW2 CHRIS MUNZ

CW2 NATASHA WORTMAN

CORPORAL JAMES T. CASEY-USMC

SGT. JOSHUA MAHONEY- US ARMY

KEVIN JONES-USCG

PRIVATE JOSHUA OLSEN-USARNG

GLEN CRIMA-US ARMY

STAFF SGT. ANTHONY SCIAMETTA— US ARMY

MARIO CATANIA-USMC

RYAN ANTHONY NASCIMENTO-USMC

KYLE ANTHONY NASCIMENTO-US ARMY

ENS. RYAN M. SHOWS -USN

STAFF SGT. RYAN REXRODE-USMC

DR. KARA VANDEKIEFT, COL.-USAF

SGT. STEPHEN D. OUTCAULT-USMC

PAUL MUMOLO-USN

VICTORIA ZEMAN, USCG

KYLE J. GRUNER—US ARMY

MARK GIORDANO—US COASTGUARD

KELLI MCLAUGHLIN— LT. US ARMY NATL.GUARD

1 LT MICHAEL J BANG—MILITARY INTELLIGENCE US ARMY

MATTHEW PATRICK GALLAGHER US ARMY

MIDN ERIN NICASTRO, USN.

**LIVE-STREAMING THE
8:00AM SUNDAY MASS**

We have begun live-streaming of the 8am Sunday mass which is available to view on our the SSPJ Church Facebook page, while it is live at the 8am mass, it can be recalled at any time.

A Letter From Father Tom

Dear Friends,

*If we own every shirt in the mall but we don't clothe the naked...
If we have the best wines but don't give up a cup of cold water...
If we take time to rake in money but do not spread love...
then how rich are we?
Christ, please give us wealth in what matters to you.*

This poem by Anne Osdieck gives very concrete examples relating to Jesus' message in today's gospel parable. Sometimes we need the "concrete" to wake us up to the realities of life.

The gospel passage seems to begin with a family squabble over sharing and moves into describing a person's efforts in building security for the future – efforts so successful that bigger and better storage was needed. Then - surprise! A wake-up call! Something could happen which upsets these careful and fruitful plans! God says, *perhaps it's time to re-evaluate what really constitutes "riches" in your life.*

I think most of us can relate to this kind of experience. Something happens which causes us to stop and reflect. Perhaps a sudden crisis - an illness, a loss - or a witnessing of joyful simplicity - a child's delight in just spending time with you. There are times when we just recognize – *it's time to re-evaluate; time to put things in perspective.*

Taking stock, prioritizing, downsizing, simplifying. These are all buzz words these days. How might we connect them with our commitment to the values of Jesus? Fr. Jude Siciliano, OP, suggests:

*In light of today's parable, being "rich in what matters to God" could mean: seeing possessions in the light of other's needs; not deciding important matters on my own; discerning what God might want before I act; reflecting on the cost to others of my decisions; not putting my trust in what won't last; counting as true riches my relationships with others and how they are affected by my life choices. So, we ask ourselves: **What do I think matters to God, and what am I doing about it?***

Many thanks again to all who have brought us so close to reaching our Catholic Ministries Appeal goal. As the thermometer indicates, we are really, really close to making it happen. May I ask, if your means allow and you have not yet joined in the effort, please help us go over the top!

I learned recently from Mary Monte, the first lay principal of SSPJ School, that at one time pictures of all the graduating classes of the school were displayed in the school hallway. Mary assures me that she searched high and low, called on St. Anthony nonstop and yet has never found the portraits after they were taken down as the halls were repainted way back when. As we prepare to celebrate the school's hundredth anniversary this year, we're looking for pictures, stories, memories of the many blessings shared over the hundred years. If you have any items to share, please let us know!

This week as I head off for vacation, we welcome back Father Joe from his time away in India. Here's hoping he's brought back some new recipes and is ready to fire up the grill! (after dusting it off!) He cooks, he sings, and I, well,

I mean well.....  **Welcome back Joe!**

And, the last of my one liners (thankfully!),

*I saw a sign the other day which said, "watch for children". I wondered, is that a fair trade?
Whiteboards are remarkable.
I put my grandmother on speed dial. I call it "insta-gram".
My teachers told me I'd never amount to anything since I procrastinate so much. I told them,
"Just you wait!"
Will glass coffins be a success? Remains to be seen.*

See you in September!

Peace,

Father Tom

Mass Intentions, For the week of July 31st, 2022

Eucharistic Adoration

**Monday's
1:30-7:00pm
In the Church**



Remember in our hearts and prayers

Andy
 Alfred Fox
 Antonette Sabatino
 Angie Mingione
 Angela Amoroso
 Anna & Harold Clayton
 Arthur Gureck
 Austin Rocky
 Baby Ben
 Baby Penny Grace
 Candela
 Barbara Bombace
 Barbara Ruland
 Mattia Rose Lubrano
 Barbara Sammarco
 Belinda Groneman
 Brendan McAlvin
 Camille Staats
 Carol
 Carolyn Nehl
 Catherine & Jimmy
 Charles Figliosi
 Charlie Stangarone
 Claudia Chandler
 David Beleck
 David McCue
 Deacon Ron Blasius
 Deirdre W.
 Donna Patrissi
 Dorothy Mitchell
 Eleanor Bayley
 Elizabeth
 Elizabeth Martin
 Ellie Walsh
 Emily Schiaratta
 Esther Styles
 Flo Donohue
 Gerald Maas
 Gloria Montesano
 Grace Bertolone
 Ginny & John Rief
 Gladys Blake
 Gregory Parker
 Helen
 Heidi Ray
 Ida Jean D'angelis
 Jack Donohue
 Jakob King
 Jamie Geiman
 Jamie Accardi
 Jennifer Clark
 Jenny Bonanno
 Jessica Venditto
 John Cronin
 John DeStefano
 John Scmillio

Joseph B
 Joseph
 Joseph H
 Judy Rampola
 Gerry F.
 Joe Dorrian
 Joseph Costa
 Kenneth Cook
 Kathleen Draper
 Kathleen N.
 Kerry
 Kitty Cronin
 Lee Krauer
 Lexi Dorman
 Leon Donach
 Lola Santangelo
 Lori Cearney
 Lynn McDonnell
 Mark Geld
 Margaret Remhild
 Mark Wagner
 Mary Ann Cesarski
 Mary Monte
 Mary Fresi
 Maria Clark
 Maria Collaro
 Marie del Cielo
 Marilyn Suli
 Matthew Parrella
 Melissa C.
 Michael Fisher
 Michael Viviano
 Michele Williams
 Mike Lofaro
 Nancy & Paul Bertran
 Nancy Cuccinotta
 Patricia Trippree
 Pasquale Savarese
 Pat LeDoux
 Pat McCumber
 Peter Donach
 P.I.
 Ricardo Buffit
 Riordan Cavooris
 Robert Koop
 Ronnie Paciella
 Sara Jean Andersen
 Stanley Stura
 Sofia McCormick
 Stephen Dolce
 Susanne Smith
 Tara Cesarski
 Tina Cafaro
 Vivien Cordes
 Veronica Broderick
 Wayne Hendricks
 William Capurso
 William Martin

Saturday July 30th	Presider: Father Joe Lector: Mantia/Schor EM:Byrne/Duffy/Toto/ Mantia/Taurassi	9:15am 5:00pm	Francis J. Mooney Jim Erb
Sunday July 31st	Presider: Father Joe Lector:Kanuika/Sehne EM:Sica/M&P Tully/ Portanova/Koke	8am	For the People of SSPJ
	Presider: Father Ciya Lector:Lombardi/Smith EM: Luna/McKie/Orlando/ Reichert/Sotomayer	10:00am	Eleanor Mattia
	<u>Collective Mass</u> Presider: Father Ciya Lector:Latino/Geier EM:Napolitano/ Parish Consenz	12:00pm	Nicholas Materdomini Edna Aguinaldo Neil Louison Michael Narciso
Monday August 1st	St. Alphonsos Liguori	7:30am 9:15am	Carmine Bracco Carol Kirdahy
Tuesday August 2nd	St. Eusebius	7:30am 9:15am	Sister Marie Gerard Rudy Valentino
Wednesday August 3rd		7:30am 9:15am	Anna Mazzella Living~Thomas & Nancy Ficht
Thursday August 4th	St. John Vianney	7:30am 9:15am	Gertrude Christy <u>Collective Mass</u> William Olsen
Friday August 5th		7:30am 9:15am	Living~Christopher Regina Marie Melo
Saturday August 6th	Presider: Father Ciya Lector:Thompson/Dreschler EM: Lombardi/Sist/Anderson/ Drechsler/Toto	9:15am 5:00pm	Arthur Byrns Alexander Salerno
Sunday August 7th	Presider: Father Ciya Lector: Willman/Fitzpatrick EM:Czujko/Kanuika/Martin/ Sehne/M. Tully	8:00am	For the People of SSPJ Parish
	Presider: Father Joe Lector:Tobin/Just EM:Amen/Latino/Mulhall/ Sotomayer/Keane	10:00am	Gerard & Madelyn McNulty
	<u>Collective Mass</u> Presider: Father Joe Lector: Wos/Cashman EM: Sampson/Consenze/ Napolitano	12:00pm	Robert C. Alig Theresa Orlik Carol Kirdahy Joseph P. D'Anna Margaret Falkowski Jerry Linder

IT IS THAT MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR AGAIN...PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRY'S "BACK TO SCHOOL" SUPPLY COLLECTION!

It is hard to believe that we are already talking school supplies, but the days are going by so quickly. It will be September in the blink of an eye!

There are local children in our community in need of teacher mandated school items.

If you are able to help, kindly take a "school supply card" from the baskets in the back of the church.

The color of the card determines the grade level. You may return unwrapped supplies with the color-coded card attached, to the parish office during the week. Or these items can be placed in the St. Anthony's Bread Closet in the back of the Church.

There will be marked containers to hold your gifts.
As always, thank you for your help.

Music Ministry

This weekend is the 18th Sunday in ordinary time.

Our focus-Seeing beyond this world. Focusing on what we have and not on what we don't have.

Find love in what you have and what you do. In the God of all Grace, our Gathering hymn we lift our voices and hearts to the Glory of God. These Alone Are Enough, is The Presentation Hymn. God's love and grace are enough for us. And as always, we seek peace on this earth



God of Creation,
you have given us life on an earth full of signs of your goodness, power, and mystery. May we always see you in all things, while resisting the temptation to make false gods of the things themselves.
Amen.

PRAYER FROM THE CANADIAN CONFERENCE OF CATHOLIC BISHOPS

*Let us welcome the blessed abundance and give...
For the Lord will always provide to those who trust in his ways....*

SAVE THE DATE!

SSPJ SECOND ANNUAL OKTOBERFEST

SUNDAY – OCTOBER 9TH

4 – 8 PM.

SSPJ TOWNE SQUARE

(AUDITORIUM)



Live Band, Dancing,
entertainment,
games for the
kids...and of course
Food glorious
FOOD!!!!

Follow our bulletins for Sponsor Opportunities to help defray the cost!

Donations of German Beers, Beverages!

Volunteer opportunities to help set up, serve and so much more....

LET THE FUN BEGIN! lass den Spaß beginnen



**SSPJ
SECOND
ANNUAL
OKTOBERFEST**

SUNDAY – OCTOBER 9TH

4 – 8 PM. SSPJ TOWNE SQUARE (AUDITORIUM)

Sponsor Opportunities to help defray the cost!

Donations of German Beers, Beverages!

I / We would love to SPONSOR OKTOBERFEST 2022

lass den Spaß beginnen

<u>Genutlichkeit Sponsor</u>	<u>Prost Sponsor</u>	<u>Bierhallen Sponsor</u>	<u>Wurst Sponsor</u>
\$500.	\$250.	\$100.	\$50.

Name: _____ (for program and advertising)

Address: _____

Phone / e-mail _____

I / We would love to volunteer our help for this event!

Please contact me at: _____ e-mail

_____ phone

_____ NAME

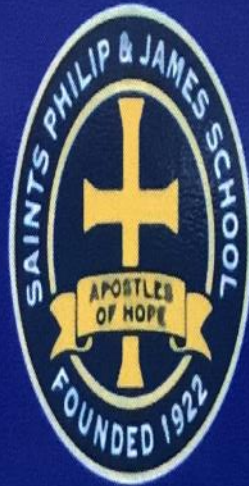
Forms / sponsorship may be dropped into the collection baskets at Mass, mailed to 1 Carow Pl, St. James
Or dropped off at the rectory office.

Celebrate SSPJ School

SAVE THE DATES

9/25/22

Mass & BBQ



11/25/22

Comedy Night

Celebrating 100 Years of Catholic Education

5/3/23

Gala

<https://www.facebook.com/SSPJ-Alumni-Friends-101521398508292>



Today we are at 95% OF GOAL!! **THANK YOU!
OUR PLEDGES ARE ONLY \$5,370 AWAY FROM OUR GOAL!!!
OUR PAYMENTS ARE NOW \$18,705 AWAY FROM OUR GOAL!!
Every little sacrifice touches so many lives...**

MIGHT WE BE ABLE TO OFFER JUST A SMALL PIECE OF OUR TREASURE TO LIFT OUR BROTHERS AND SISTERS?



"ONLY BY LOVING, SERVING OTHERS, CAN PEOPLE COME TO KNOW GOD."
 - Pope Francis

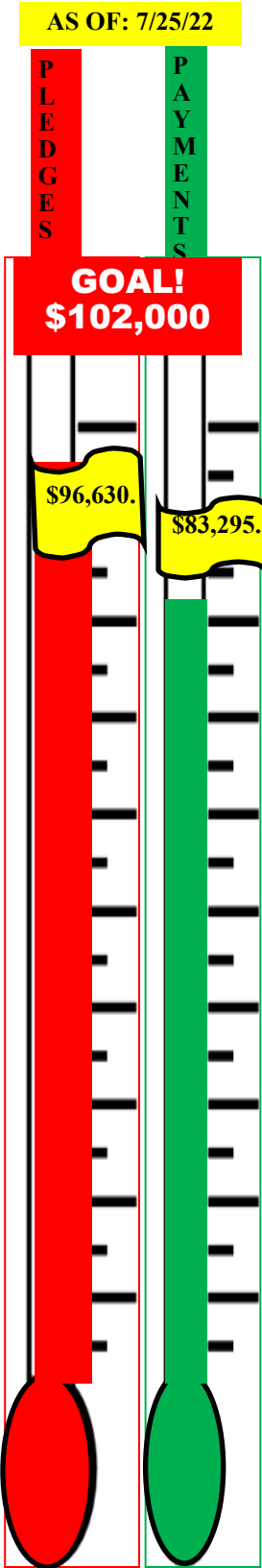


Your support of the Catholic Ministries Appeal helps our Parish Outreach and Catholic Charities Programs serve people in our community by providing food, clothing, shelter, counseling, and care. And most importantly, it lets those we serve know that God loves them and is with them during the difficult times in their lives.

PLEASE CONSIDER MAKING A GIFT TO THE 2022 Catholic Ministries Appeal! Every Gift Makes a Difference in the Lives of Others.

Parish: _____
 Name: _____
 Address: _____
 City, State, Zip: _____
 Phone: _____
 EMAIL: _____

Pledge	\$ _____
Down Payment	\$ _____
Balance	\$ _____



A Reflection from Sister T

July 27, 2022

Dear Friends,

Recently the Pope wrote these telling words: **“Every day god passes by and sows a seed in the soil of our lives. Making that seed grow depends on us, on our prayer, on the open heart with which we approach the Scriptures so that it might become for us the living Word of God.”** (Pope Francis)

Interesting enough the apostles asked Jesus how to pray this past weekend. Perhaps they wanted to cultivate that seed that was placed in the soil of their hearts. Prayer is an interesting concept as for some it can only mean ‘getting what they want’! While truly prayer is developing that relationship with God, and it starts by having right relationships with those around us. It is true, how can we love a God we cannot see while we don’t love those we do?



Prayer is also known not to change a situation but to change the heart and mind of the one praying. It is there that the miracle takes place. I was recently speaking with a friend, and they shared what a difficult summer it has been. The aging process has slowed them down and having moved from familiar places was bring them down. My only suggest was the accept the present and feel blessed by what is instead of what was. Not an easy thing to do but this is where prayer enters in, God is calling us to color outside the lines. We know how hard that can be for a perfectionist, but with God all things are possible.

During the week reflect on your prayer life and see where and how you are deepening your relationship with God and neighbor. Where are you in solidarity with those whom you pray for? Where is God calling you to color outside the lines, be creative and add color to the situation. Amazing things can happen when we turn to what God wants for our lives as opposed to what we want. Learn from your prayer, share it and rejoice what you catch yourself developing your relationships and coloring outside the lines.

Till next week,

Sister Theresita

PS Folks ask, ‘how do you come up with the stuff you write’? Well, this week I need to confess that I was inspired by 3 different homilies. They were given by Fathers Ciya Thomas, Tom Haggerty, and Bill Konicki. They left me with lots to think about. Thank you.

“By cultivating kindness, we will learn to live with kindness. Let’s strive together for a kinder world!”



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION REGISTRATION FOR: 2022-2023 SCHOOL YEAR

WILL CLOSE ON OCTOBER 1ST, 2022

REGISTRATION FORMS CAN BE ACCESSED ON THE WEBSITE: SSPJ.ORG

SELECT: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION-REGISTRATION INFORMATION

ALL FAMILIES MUST BE REGISTERED IN THE PARISH IN ORDER TO REGISTER FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES

ANY QUESTIONS, KINDLY CONTACT THE RELIGIOUS ED OFFICE AT 631-584-3204

*It's never too soon to prepare
for the Catholic High School Entrance Exam.*



DYNAMIC CHSEE PREP COURSE
taught by experienced teachers from
St. Anthony's High School

CALL DAC TEST PREP
for an application **631-663-3303**

FOR NEW
SAT COURSES
SEE OUR WEBSITE!

SPACE IS LIMITED!
CALL TODAY!

TO DOWNLOAD AN APPLICATION

VISIT US AT: www.dactestprep.com

DAC TEST PREP, P.O. Box 134, Kings Park, NY 11754

FIRST HOLY COMMUNION BLESSINGS!



Congratulations to
Daniel Havranek

Daniel received his
First Holy Communion on
Saturday, July 16th, 2022

God's blessings upon Daniel and his beautiful family and many thanks to Miss Charlotte for sharing her love of faith and God with all of her Communion Students!

Parish Social Ministry



We Remember...

William F. Connors, Jr
Safely home in the arms of Jesus...

Our Lady's Rosary Makers

Members of Our Lady's Rosary Makers at Sts. Philip & James Parish have been very busy. They create and send Rosaries to the missions throughout the year. Since their inception, more than 75,000 have been shipped all over the world and throughout the United States.

Their mission ensures that our Blessed Mother Mary continues to be revered around the globe. To continue this work they need additional members.

All are welcome to join in this special endeavor. If interested please call Parish Social Ministry and leave your name and phone number and you will be contacted.



Our Food Pantry Needs:

Dinty Moore Stew
Hormel Chili with beans
Paper Towels

Thank you for your generosity and support

Opportunities for Apostles of Hope

~Telephone Ministry~ Checking in and spreading cheer through a simple call of love and compassion

~Occasional Transportation~ to Church, Stores, and Medical appointments

~Eucharistic Ministers~ Sharing Holy Communion with those who are homebound.

Please contact Parish Social Ministry at 584-5454.

Helpful Phone Numbers~ YOU ARE NEVER ALONE

Dept. of Social Services: 631-854-2300
Alcoholics Anonymous 24-Hour Hotline: 631-669-1124
Al-Anon Suffolk County: 631-669-2827
Alzheimer's Disease: 631-954-2323
American Red Cross L.I.: 516-747-3500
Birthright (Pregnancy Support): 631-821-9727 or 1-800-550-4900
Brighter Tomorrow (Domestic Violence): 631-395-1800
Brookhaven Youth Counseling: 631-451-8011
Catholic Charities (Food Stamp Info): 631-789-9546
Child Advocacy Center (CAC) (Child Abuse): 631-439-0480
Children's Community: 631-585-2020, 631-476-9698
www.childrenscommunityhs.org
Domestic Violence Hotline (Vibes): 631-360-3607
Elder Abuse: 631-761-7470
Fidelis Insurance (Family Health Plus): 1-888-343-3547
Gamblers Anonymous Hotline: 1-855-222-5542
Good Shepherd Hospice: 631-376-3758
Hope House Ministries: 631-473-6030
In Home Care- Home Instead: 631-724-2273
LI Against Domestic Violence: 631-666-8833
LI Head Start: 631-732-7100
L.I. Women's Coalition (Domestic Violence): 631-666-8833
Memory Care in NY: www.memorycare.com
Mental Health Emergency: 631-952-3333
Narcotics Anonymous: 631-689-6262
Nassau/Suffolk Law: 631-232-2400
National Aging in place-L.I. Chapter: 631-383-4341
National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-784-2433
Office for the Aging: 631-853-8200
Rachel's Hope (Post Abortion): 888-456-4673
Response Crisis Center: (Suicide Hotline): 631-751-7500
The Retreat (Domestic Violence Hotline): 631-329-2200

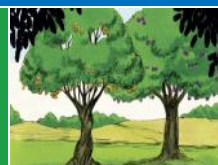


Prayer Shawls and Blankets are blessed on the first Sunday of the month at the 8 AM Mass. Parishioners are encouraged to take to comfort a family member or friend who is sick. Let them know the parish is praying for them. You can also stop by the parish office during the week to get one when needed.

When we learn to
respect all life we
learn to love all life.

Please consider praying with us for the unborn on Wednesday and Saturday mornings. We gather in front of the clinic between 8 AM and 12 Noon at 80 Maple Avenue, Smithtown.

Whether alone or with family or friends, take some time for a leisurely walk in a park or along a waterfront and appreciate the great beauty God has given us in all aspects of creation



Good News

INSPIRATION FOR DAILY LIFE

19th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Wisdom 18:6-9
Ps 33:1,12,18-22
Hebrews 11:1-2,8-19
Luke 12:32-48

Monday August 8

St. Dominic
Ezekiel 1:2-5,24-28c
Ps 148:1-2,11-14
Matthew 17:22-27

Tuesday August 9

Ezekiel 2:8 3:4
Ps 119:14,24,72,103,111,131
Matthew 18:1-5,10,12-14

Wednesday August 10

St. Lawrence
2 Corinthians 9:6-10
Ps 112:1-2,5-6,7-8,9
John 12:24-26

Thursday August 11

St. Clare
Ezekiel 12:1-12
Ps 78:56-59,61-62
Matthew 18:21-19:1

Friday August 12

Ezekiel 16:1-15,60,63
Isaiah 12:2-6
Matthew 19:3-12

Saturday August 13

Ezekiel 18:1-10,13b,30-32
Ps 51:12-15,18-19
Matthew 19:13-15

We're told in Luke 12:32-48 that God is "pleased" to give us his kingdom, which includes eternal life in heaven as well as all the benefits of his love and goodness here on earth.

God does not withhold anything good from us. But do we avail ourselves of all he offers?

Jesus explains: If you value earthly treasures more than you treasure opportunities to share God's love and blessings with others, your hands are full of nothing that will last. If your "money bags" are filled with worldly goals that push God out, or selfish plans that push others out, or ungodly relationships that push holiness out from your life, there isn't much room for the wondrous and eternal gifts of God. "For where your treasure is, there also will your heart be."

Anything not of God is detrimental to us and, in the end, pointless, because it does not unite us to God and we cannot take it to heaven. We need to trade it in for the inexhaustible treasures that come from God.

Jesus isn't saying that we have to literally sell all of our worldly possessions in order to make room for divine treasures. What matters is our motive for having these things. Are they used for serving the kingdom of God or are they serving only earthly, temporary, selfish purposes?



Whatever enhances our union with God – and only this – is a treasure that we'll enjoy for all of eternity.

Jesus warns us not to waste time being lazy about purging our lives of earthly treasures. We don't know when the Master will come to take us to the heavenly banquet of eternal union with God. Will we be ready? Not if we're more interested in feeding our worldly desires.

This is why God, in his great mercy, provides Purgatory. Separation from earthly treasures (the purging) is painful when we prefer them over heavenly goods; Jesus describes this as the "beatings" that the Master's servants get. Why wait for that? Now is the time to prefer only the kingdom of God and build up our cache of gifts that no thief can reach nor moth destroy.

Reflect & Discuss:

1. If you knew you were going to die tomorrow, what would you do today to prepare?
2. What attitudes, what goals, and what plans do you have that don't assist the kingdom of God? What habits or addictions? Unloving behaviors? Unforgiveness and unresolved conflicts?
3. Describe an earthly attachment you used to have and explain how God helped you let go of it. What divine treasure did you gain?

W H Y I S T H E R E S O M E T H I N G I N S T E A D O F N O T H I N G ?

The Belgian theologian Jan Walgrave, who directed my doctoral thesis, was a true intellectual and a rare one. True, in that his thought naturally, instinctually gravitated towards the huge philosophical questions of essence and existence. Why are we here? Who are we really? Moreover, he was also a rare intellectual in that he was an uncommon mixture of hard intellectual scrutiny and childlike piety. He could be equally disarming both in his intellectual sophistication and in his childlikeness.

In one of our meetings, he asked me this, "Do you ever sit on a park bench and ask yourself, why is there something instead of nothing?" I answered honestly, "In truth, I can't ever remember doing that very explicitly. Like everyone else, I often wonder where we came from and how there is a God behind all of this, but I have never very explicitly contemplated your question." "Well," he replied, "then you are not a philosopher! He went on, "I think about this question all the time; it is the most important of all questions." (He consoled me for the fact that I could never be a true philosopher by telling me that I had a "fertile mind", which he told me is its own gift.)

Why is there something instead of nothing? Surely, that is the ultimate question. How did it all begin? Who or what was there at the beginning and started it all? Moreover, where did this who or what come from, who gave it a beginning?

Contemporary science cannot answer that question. It can tell us what happened at the origins of our universe, the *Big Bang*, but that doesn't get us any nearer answering the bigger question, namely, who or what gave origin to that initial explosion nearly fifteen million years ago that lies at the origins of our universe and gave birth to billions of galaxies? How was this force itself in existence?

As people of faith, we believe it was God and believe that God had no beginning. However, that can neither be conceptualized nor imagined. What gave birth to God? No matter whether we believe in God or not, we are all still left with the question, Walgrave's question, "why is there something instead of nothing?" Moreover, that question is complicated further by the fact that creation, at least vast segments of it, have a clear intelligent design. Given that fact, the most credible postulate vis-à-vis who or what lies at the origins of everything, demands that this something or someone (from which everything takes its origins) is not some blind, brute force but one that is highly intelligent and personal.

Thomas Aquinas, who did have a true philosophical mind, once proposed a number of logical arguments to try to "prove" that God exists. Among his arguments, we find this one: Imagine walking down a road and finding stone on the ground and asking yourself, 'who put that stone there?' You could simply conclude that it has always been there and think no further about it. However, imagine walking down a road and finding a clock that is still keeping time, and asking yourself, 'who put that clock there?' In this case, you could not simply say it has always been there and leave it at that. Why? Because the clock has a clear intelligent design that demands that some intelligence designed it. As well, it is still keeping time, which means that it could not always have been there. Someone put it there, and at some clear point in time. Thus, Aquinas concluded that since many things in the universe have an intelligent design, there must be an intelligent designer at its origins.

Today most people might consider that logic a bit naïve, but perhaps the naiveté is on their part. Someone no less than Albert Einstein affirmed this: *The harmony of natural law reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is utterly insignificant reflection.*

He is right, and the harmony he speaks of is not just the unfathomable ecological harmony that the various elements of the physical world appear to have with each other and how nature continues to regenerate itself despite everything we do to destroy its ecology. Further still, that harmony of natural law (as Einstein calls it) also includes an undeniable oneness between the laws of nature and the moral order. The law of karma and the law of nature are one and same thing, all of one piece, as is the law of gravity and the Holy Spirit. The physical and the moral are part of a single symphony. The air we breathe out into the universe is the air we are going to inhale – physically and morally. Rarely do I sit on a park bench and ask myself, "why is there something instead of nothing?" But then as Jan Walgrave said, I'm not a philosopher. My hope is that this little excursion into philosophy isn't proof of that!