



The Parish of Saints Philip and James
1 Carow Place, St. James, NY 11780
631-584-5454

April 14th, 2024

Third Sunday of Easter



*“Why are you troubled?
And why do questions arise in your hearts?”
Luke 24:38*

*“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 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
Lisa Keane, Maureen Burke, Nancy Sanders, Peter Suski, Sheila Cavooris

Collections: ~

Thanking you for your generosity

Financial Support Needed weekly to meet Parish budget:

\$16,700

Weekly Collection: Sunday, April 7th, 2024:

Collections from Weekend masses: \$10,563.00

Mail Collections: \$426.50.

Faith Direct(126Participants) WEEKLY \$3,374.04.

Total Collection: \$14,363.54

Catholic Relief Services sent to DRVC

**FAITH DIRECT: VISIT SSPJ.ORG CLICK ON FAITH DIRECT ICON:USING
SSPJ PARISH CODE: NY232**

EASTER COLLECTIONS :

Will be published in 4/21 bulletin

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
CAPT. MICHAEL T. DOLAN- JR. -D.O, US ARMY
LT. COL. JOHN KAIREZ
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
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
LT. COMMANDER CHRISTOPHER SHANK MD
MIDN ERIN NICASTRO, USN.
MAJ. BRENDAN JOHNSTON-USAF
CHRISTOPHER A. HIONIDIS-USAF
EMMETT MOLONEY—USN
HANK MOLONEY—USAF
CARL JOSEPHSON-USAF
DANIEL JOSEPHSON-USAF
SAMANTHA JOSEPHSON-USAF

LIVE-STREAMING THE 8:00AM SUNDAY MASS

The Sunday mass at 8:am is available to view on our SSPJ Church Facebook page, while it is live at the 8am mass, it can be recalled at any time.

Father Tom's Letter

Dear Friends,

Today's gospel is the end of the story of the two disciples on the road to Emmaus who come to recognize Jesus in the Breaking of the Bread. Think about all the "roads" we travel in our lifetime. How readily do we recognize Jesus along the way? Fr. Jude Siciliano, OP, reminds us:

Life is never static for us. It is always in flux, we are "on the road." Along the way the risen Christ appears to us and like his disciples: we don't immediately recognize him. But he would be more readily recognizable to us if we followed the guidance of these resurrection stories: continue to gather in community, especially in hard times; break open the Word for one another; share the bread and wine of the Eucharist and then, well prepared, witness to the risen Christ through our words and actions to help others come to believe that, "He is risen!"

During this Easter season we hear much from the Acts of the Apostles – and one of the aspects of the early church is their gathering as community. Members of our SSPJ community will gather this Tuesday, April 16th, as Bishop Luis Miguel Romero will confirm our young people who have been preparing to celebrate the sacrament of Confirmation over the past years. Many thanks to Dominick Avento, Confirmation coordinator, and those catechists who have ministered with him in readying our young ones for this day. As part of our witness to community, please be sure to keep them in your prayers.

Our commitment to community is also evidenced through our support of the Catholic Ministries Appeal. Monies raised through CMA touch the lives of many in need in our diocese through direct services, through counseling, through healthcare, through education and more. Many thanks to all who have pledged and contributed to CMA. We are still hoping to reach our parish goal by the end of the Easter season - Pentecost - which this year falls on May 19th. I ask you to pray for all assisted by CMA, and also to prayerfully consider making a pledge or one time donation if you have not already done so.

And finally,

Brain cells, hair cells, skin cells all die constantly. But fat cells seem to have eternal life.

I am starting to think I'll never be old enough to know better.

I made a huge "to do" list today. I just haven't figured out who's going to do it.

I gathered 19 of my friends to go to the movies. The ticket seller commented on how many of us were present. I explained the movie was for 18 and over.

My neighbor knocked on my door at 2:30am! Can you believe that? 2:30 in the morning! Lucky for him I was still up playing my bagpipes!

Peace,

Father Tom

Mass Intentions, For the week of April 14th, 2024

EUCHARISTIC ADORATION MONDAY 1:30PM-7PM IN THE CHURCH



We Pray for those who are ill...

Alan Piscak
Andy
Anna Capizzio
Anna Maria
Alfred Fox
Antonette Sabatino
Angie Mingione
Angela Amoroso
Arthur Gureck
Austin Rocky
Baby Ben
Baby Penny Grace
Candela
Barbara Bombace
Brian
Mattia Rose Lubrano
Barbara Sammarco
Belinda Groneman
Benito Fernandez
Betty DiSimone
Brian Carr
Bob DelCiello
Rob Remhild
Carol
Carolyn Nehl
Cathleen Henchey
Chase Addonisio
Christella Stewart
David Beleck
David McCue
Deirdre W.
Diane LaPorte
Donna Patrissi
Dorothy Mitchell
Ed Ceraso
Eleanor Bayley
Elizabeth Martin
Elizabeth Smith
Eileen
Emily Schiaratta
Emily Souders
Flo Donohue
Gail Lumley
George Fitzpatrick
Gloria Montesano
Ginny & John Rief
Gregory Parker
Helen
Harold Scott
Jack Donohue
Jakob King
Jamie Accardi
Jean Saladino
Jenny Bonanno
Jerry
Jessie Lokai
Joelle Nicholas
Joni Deleo
John Capizzio
John Cronin
John DeStefano
John Maynes
John Mattia
Joseph
Joe Benaburger

Joseph Domizzio
Judy Rampola
Joe Dorrian
Joseph Costa
Joseph Domizzio
Kaitlyn Remhild
Kathleen Draper
Kathleen N.
Kerry
Karl Walz
Kitty Cronin
Kristin Galetta
Lauretta Prague
Laura Bode
Leon Donach
Lola Santangelo
Lori Cearney
Marjorie Fox
Mary Monte
Margaret Remhild
Mark Hildreth
Mark Wagner
Mary Ryan
Marie Feicco
Maria Clark
Maria Collaro
Marie del Ciello
Maureen Litten
Mary Ann Cesarski
Mary Beth McGovern
Matthew Parrella
Michael Fisher
Mike Lofaro
Michael
Nick Lella
Patricia Acker
Patricia Trippree
Pasquale Savarese
Pat McCumber
Peter Donach
Peter Portanova
Ricardo Buffit
Rob Remhild & Family
Riordan Cavooris
Rogelio Martinez
Ronnie Paciella
Rose
Ryan Duffy
Sara Jean Andersen
Stanley Stura
Stephen Dolce
Susanne Smith
Tonia Perdue
Tara Cesarski
Teresa Mattera
Tina Cafaro
Tiffany Lochan
Thomas Lifrieri
Tom Ryan
Tom Focone
Vivien & John
Cordes
Wayne Smith Sr.

Saturday April 13th Cantor: McCulloh	Presider: Father Joe Lector: Schor/Student EM: Toto/Mantia/Taurassi/ Urce/Drechsler	9:15am 5:00pm	Stephanie Lifrieri Krepplein Joseph Caltabiano
Sunday April 14th Cantor: . Lohman	Presider: Father Joe Lector: Dervan/Cullen EM: Koke/Portanova/Ramos/ Sehne/P. Tully	8:00am	For the People of SSPJ Parish
Cantor: Hill	Presider: Father Tom Lector: Contrino/Dobres EM: Licari/Luna/McKie/ Mulhall/Orlando/Kaleita	10:00am	Al & Jennie Muscara
Cantor: Lupinacci	Collective Mass Presider: Father Tom Lector: Piliero/Rubano EM: Napolitano/Blggi/ Rubano/Conti	12:00pm	Nicholas Gargiulo Salvatore Tusa Living~Joseph Claude Bertrand Living~Claude Bertrand Living~Dou Dou
Monday April 15th		7:30am 9:15am	Joan Fracealvieri James Reid
Tuesday April 16th		7:30am 9:15am	Christopher Freidel Irwin Eireman
Wednesday April 17th		7:30am 9:15am	Frances Sexton & Vera & Vincent Mulvehill Gregory, Eleanor & Arthur Mattia
Thursday April 18th		7:30am 9:15am	Yvonne Miro Collective Mass: Vincent Pulio
Friday April 19th		7:30am 9:15am	Sue Letsch Deacon Ron Blasius
Saturday April 20th Cantor: Feeney	Presider: Father Tom Lector: Merlino/Student EM: Rizzo/Byrne/Drechsler/ Taurassi/Toto	9:15am 5:00pm	Ralph Maciante Bill Manise
Sunday April 21st Cantor: Meringolo	Presider: Father Tom Lector: Marino/Baker EM: Dervan/Koke/Sehne/ Sica/P. Tully	8:00am	For the People of SSPJ Parish
Cantor: Meringolo	Presider: Father Joe Lector: Cafaro/Lombardi EM: McKie/Orlando/ Clarke/Keane/Parish/ Licari	10:00am	Thomas Devaney
Cantor: Lohmann	Collective Mass Presider: Father Joe Lector: Kenton/Franco EM: Consenz/Margaret/ Settineri/Rubano	12:00pm	Claudia Chandler Ralph Marciante Al DiGiovanni Anna Capizzio

A REFLECTION FROM SISTER T...

Dear Friends,

Happy Easter Season! Let all the Alleluias ring out! As we journey through this beautiful time in the church year, I was fortunate enough to obtain a new perspective on the word EASTER. Our Deacon John Keenan shared with us in the homily that during this season we need to continue to encounter and develop our relationship with the Risen Lord and let Christ 'EASTER in us'.

Although that expression may not sound familiar to us that is because we treat Easter as a noun, a moment in history. Easter is not just a noun but first and foremost a verb. Easter is something we think, something we feel, something we graciously accept and most of all something we do. Easter has become a way of loving, living, seeing, hearing, and speaking. We are called to do Easter every day.

I share with you the prayer that our Deacon John shared with us, and I think you will find many ideas that can be reflected on.

“Lord Jesus, Easter in us, that we may live our lives in the light of your compassion and peace, your justice and forgiveness. Easter in us that we may become a humble servant like you, a healer like you, a teacher like you, a foot washer like you. Easter in us that we may bear our crosses for one another as you have borne your cross for us. Easter in us so that we may live the true joy of resurrection rather than the tears of the tomb. Lord Jesus Easter in us today and every day so that at the end of our life’s voyage, we may EASTER in you. Amen”

This alone is powerful but God has great timing and as I was putting this together a great quote from Pope Francis came across my desk, I think it concretizes Easter as a verb. Here you go:

“Rivers do not drink their own water; trees do not eat their own fruit; the sun does not shine on itself, and flowers do not spread their fragrance for themselves. Living for others is a rule of nature. We are born to help each other. No matter how difficult it is...Life is good when you are happy; but much better when others are happy because of you.”
Pope Francis

May your week be filled with Resurrection joy and many opportunities to use **EASTER** as a verb!!!

Till next week,

Sister Theresita

Religious Education Ministry



Please remember in your prayers, Our Confirmation II Students, their Sponsors their Families and their Teachers as they prepare to receive the Sacrament of Confirmation on Tuesday, April 16th, 2024

We are so proud of our Students and continue to pray that they follow the Lord's voice and heart on their journeys forward.



HIS WORDS.
YOUR JOURNEY.
TOGETHER.



Dear sister, dear brother, do you want proof that God has touched your life? See if you can stoop to bind the wounds of others. Today is the day to ask, "Am I, who so often have received God's peace, his mercy, merciful to others? Do I, who have so often been fed by the Body of Jesus, make any effort to relieve the hunger of the poor?" Let us not remain indifferent. Let us not live a one-way faith, a faith that receives but does not give, a faith that accepts the gift but does not give it in return. Having received mercy, let us now become merciful."

Pope Francis ~ April 10th, 2024

A PRAYER FOR DISCERNMENT

Grant me, O Lord, to see everything now with new eyes;
to discern and test the spirits that help me read the signs of the times;
to relish the things that are yours and communicate them to others.
Give me the clarity of understanding that you gave Ignatius.

Amen.

- Pedro Arrupe, S.J.

Music Notes...

Gift of peace, Gift of the Spirit. Jesus appears to his apostles giving them peace and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

What better song to sing for peace "Prayer of St. Francis". We will be singing Water of Life throughout the Easter Season as we renew our baptism promises.

SSPJ YOUTH GROUP MEETING

Calling all Seventh and Eighth Graders at SSPJ Parish!

For our Easter Youth Group Meeting, we are focusing on new life! We will be planting bulbs and flowers around the grounds of Sts. Philip and James Church and School. Please wear clothes and closed toed sneakers that you don't mind getting a little messy!

Details: When: Saturday, April 20th
 Where: SSPJ Cafeteria
 Time: 3:30-4:45pm followed by 5pm Mass

Please contact Sandy Rago with any questions at srago@sspj.org.

----- CUT ALONG THIS LINE -----

Please detach this page and return to SSPJ Parish or School by Friday, April 19th

My child _____
will be attending Youth Group on Saturday,
April 20th.

My child is in:

- 7th Grade
 8th Grade

Please check all that apply. My child will be staying for:

- Youth Group Meeting (3:30-4:45pm)
 Mass (5:00pm-6:00pm)

Primary Contact

Name: _____

Mobile: _____

Home number: _____

Relation to child: _____

My child will be picked up by:

Name: _____

Phone #: _____

Allergies or medical concerns: _____

CMA 2024 TOGETHER WE CAN REACH IT!!

TOTALS RECEIVED AS OF

April 7th, 2024

GOAL: \$102,000

PLEDGES: \$48,245. PAYMENTS: \$30,220.50



"By being with Jesus, we discover that his pastoral heart always beats for the person who is confused, lost, far away,"

- Pope Francis

Your donation to the Catholic Ministries Appeal helps Catholic Charities and Parish Outreach provide love, care, and spiritual nourishment to those in need.

When Amanda's mom passed away in 2019, her mom's ex-husband left, leaving her three stepsisters alone with the threat that they would be put in foster care. Without any hesitation she took the children in to care for them. *"It's been a hard battle. We were homeless and in bad situations, but I know that God will not give you something you can't handle. You must keep the faith and push forward. With the help of the Parish Social Ministry program at St. John the Evangelist, Center Moriches, I was able to get through this hardship. In addition to food, the PSM has helped me to renew my lapsed insurance license and assisted in paying bills. If I need to talk to anyone, I can call or email to make an appointment. They have been there for me through everything. I really appreciate all they do for me and for everyone else. It is a blessing. They are angels on earth."*

- Amanda, Client of St. John the Evangelist's Parish Outreach



The Director of the Parish Outreach, Katie Spellman, shared how her work allows her to grow in her faith. *"Working in Parish Social Ministry has taken my faith outside of the Church. It's an opportunity for me to dig deeper into faith and think of the humble servant. It's a gift for me to work here - it feeds my soul."*

Please make check payable to the **Catholic Ministries Appeal**

Name: _____ Parish: _____

Address: _____

City, State and Zip Code: _____

Telephone number: Home _____ Cell: _____

Signature: _____

To make a donation, you can also visit <https://www.drvc.org/CMA/> or call us at 516-678-5800 ext. 296.

THANK YOU

Parish Social Ministry

Our Food Pantry Needs:

Parmalat Milk
Canned Corn Niblets
Canned String Beans

Thank you so very much!



We remember the family and friends of,
Geraldine M. Szymanski
Frances A. Francica
John R. Steele
Safely Home in the arms of our Lord

SENIOR GROUP GATHERING

The SSPJ Senior Group will be meeting on
Monday April 22nd
In the Sts. Philip & James Room
From 1:30-3:30pm
All are invited for an afternoon of faith,
friendship and fun.



Let us gain a deeper appreciation of
the beauty and diversity of all
creation and of
how we are interconnected with
each other and with the natural
world

EVERY LIFE
IS WORTH LIVING



www.naccc.org/aspacritm
RESPECT LIFE

*We pray for the respect of life in
all its stages from conception to
death.*

*Please join us for the Rosary
each morning at 8AM in the
prayer room of the church
as we seek to build a culture
that cherishes and protects
every human life.*

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
Overeaters Anonymous 631-260-6615 www.SuffolkOA.org
Rachel's Hope (Post Abortion): 888-456-4673
Response Crisis Center: (Suicide Hotline): 631-751-7500
The Retreat (Domestic Violence Hotline): 631-329-2200



Katie's Way

Collecting new and gently used baby items and delivering them to the Life Center of Long Island. These items benefit mothers, children, and expectant mothers in need. Your donations build a community that supports mothers who choose life for their unborn children under difficult circumstances. **Suggested donation items:** Diapers, wipes, bottles. Gently used baby and toddler items such as car seats, high chairs, strollers, clothing, toys, etc. New baby and toddler items, including diapers, wipes, formula, baby food, clothing, etc. **PLEASE DROP OFF AT: 56 TILLOTSON AVENUE, ST. JAMES, NY**

PLEASE SUPPORT THE CATHOLIC DAUGHTERS
A FUN WAY TO CELEBRATE GRATITUDE! A SIGN MAKING EVENT!

CDA celebrates Mother's Day



A



B



C



D



E



F

St. Phillip & St. James Roman Catholic Church

1 Carow Place Saint James, NY

Saturday, May 11th 7:00pm

\$45.00 per person

Includes all art materials to create one of the beautiful wood signs above.

.....
Choose 1 Design: A B C D E F

Choose 1 Background Color: *White *Off White (Sheep Skin) *Light Gray

Choose 2 Letter Colors: *White *Medium Gray * Light Blue *Black *Tuscan Red

Please RSVP by Saturday, 4/27 with your name, 1 design choice,
1 background color and 2 letter colors. Please make checks payable to
CDA Court Anna Theresa #1074 and drop off at SSPJ rectory/school.

Please contact Jeanine Cullen at 631-871-9973
or jenninecullen@me.com with any questions.



*SSPJ STUDENTS ENJOYED
THE GREAT AMERICAN SOLAR ECLIPSE!!!*

SSPJ Students participated in a special assembly to prepare for the Great North American Solar Eclipse of 2024!

A great big THANK YOU to Ms. Skoblicki for teaching us about the eclipse and how to view it safely.



Thank you to **Gregory A. Shemitz** for capturing these amazing photos!

PLEASE SUPPORT SSPJ TROOP 7
ON MAY 4TH OR IF IT RAINS, MAY 5TH!

TROOP 7 SCOUT CAR WASH AND PLANT SALE



WHERE: St James Firehouse (25A / Lake Ave)

Date: Saturday 5/4/2024 10:00 am - 4:00 pm

RainDate: Sunday 5/5/2024 10:00 am - 4:00 pm)



CARWASH



*Reflecting and Preparing for Next Sunday, April 21st, 2024
The Fourth Sunday of Easter*

Good News
INSPIRATION FOR DAILY LIFE

4th Sunday of Easter



Sunday, April 21

Acts 4:8-12
Ps 118:1,8-9,21-23,26,28-29
1 Jn 3:1-2
Jn 10:11-18

As a child, I always loved hearing about Jesus the Good Shepherd and seeing pictures of our Lord holding His staff in one hand, surrounded by a herd of fluffy sheep, and with one wayward sheep always curled around His shoulders. I was comforted by this image of Jesus, who loved all His sheep, even those who lost their way and took off in the wrong direction.

Trusting in the wise voice and directions of the Good Shepherd, we

must never be afraid to speak God's truth and wisdom with love and grace to correct those who are astray and having trouble finding their way. As worthy shepherds, we must pray for courage to stay loyal to Christ, the Good Shepherd, in our everyday thoughts, words, and actions, whether alone, with family, at work, at church, in politics, in science, or interacting with media.

Monday, April 22

Acts 11:1-18
Ps 42:2-3; 43:3-4
Jn 10:1-10

This parable offers a much deeper meaning to me now as an adult. Jesus is the Good Shepherd who laid down His life to help me – a sinner who is so prone to going astray. He suffered, died on the cross, and rose from the dead to lead me and all of God's children (His sheep) on the right path to heaven.

Remember that Jesus and the Church have been associated with controversy from the beginning, but He promises victory in the end. We must hold on tightly in faith, help others know and love Christ, and shepherd them into the loving gate of our Savior.

Tuesday, April 23

Acts 11:19-26
Ps 87:1b-7
Jn 10:22-30

Wednesday, April 24

Acts 12:24 – 13:5a
Ps 67:2-3,5-6,8
Jn 12:44-50

Thursday, April 25

St. Mark, Evangelist
1 Pt 5:5b-14
Ps 89:2-3,6-7,16-17
Mk 16:15-20

He knows me by name and restores my soul with grace from the Sacraments. He safeguards my steps from the snares of the Evil One through the guidance and wisdom of the Holy Spirit alive in the one, holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church. He sometimes allows me to make wrong turns, but because I know and love Him, I can trust that

Reflect & Discuss:

- † In which areas of your life do you most need shepherding to stay on the right path to heaven?
- † How are you being a good shepherd to the poor, downcast, and lost?
- † What are some ways we can hear the voice of the Good Shepherd? How can we protect ourselves from being snatched by Satan?
- † How do we lay down our lives for others when we are a good shepherd?

Friday, April 26

Acts 13:26-33
Ps 2:8-11b
Jn 14:1-6

Saturday, April 27

Acts 13:44-52
Ps 98:1-4
Jn 14:7-14

He is always right there, ready to bring me back into the fold.

Through the living waters of Baptism and the gift of the Holy Spirit, Christians are called and empowered to become like Jesus and be good shepherds, too. In His image, we must forgive those who are lost and do our part to bring them back into God's embrace. We must live our lives in joy and compassion for others – especially the poor, the downcast, and the lost – who most need God's mercy.

GO CRAZY OR TURN HOLY

In a poem *Serenade*, Brazilian poet Adelia Pradospeaks of a painful ache we feel inside us as we forever wait for something or someone to come and make us whole. What are we waiting for? Love? A soulmate? God? No matter, the frustration eventually pushes us towards a choice, go crazy or turn holy:

I am beginning to despair

And can see only two choices:

Either go crazy or turn holy.

And when that someone or something finally does come:

How will I open the window, unless I'm crazy?

How will I close it, unless I'm holy?

Either go crazy or turn holy. The older we get the more we realize how true that is, how eventually that's the choice forced on all of us, both by the way we are built and the limitations inherent in life itself. Why? Is there something wrong with life and with us? Why can't we find a peaceful space somewhere between crazy and holy?

Well, the biblical preacher in the Book of Ecclesiastes offers a reason. After penning that beautiful, oft-quoted text about how there is a time for everything – *a time to be born and to a time to die; a time to plant and a time to harvest; a time to break down and a time to heal; a time to weep and a time to laugh; a time to mourn and a time to dance; a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing; a time to keep silent and a time to speak; a time for love and a time for hate; and a time for war and a time for peace* – he offers us this. God has laid out a beautiful rhythm for life and has made everything beautiful in its own time, but God has put *timelessness* into the human heart so that we are out of sync with the seasons from beginning to end. God has established a beautiful rhythm to nature; but we, unlike the physical elements and the plants and the animals who don't have timelessness in their souls, never quite fit into that rhythm. We are overcharged for life on this planet. (Ecclesiastes 3, 1-11)

You find expressions of this in literature everywhere in both religious and secular circles. For example, the renowned German theologian Karl Rahner used to affirm that *in the torment of the insufficiency of everything attainable we learn that here in this life there is no finished symphony*. In that, he echoes Saint Augustine's famous line that is as true and apropos today as it was seventeen hundred years ago when he wrote it: *You have made us for yourself, Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you*. That single line expresses both a non-negotiable understanding of the human person and a non-negotiable path he or she must walk. We don't have a final home here and that's why at the end of the day there is no option other than going crazy or turning holy. It's no surprise that Ruth Burrows, the renowned spiritual writer, begins her autobiography with these words: *I was born into this world with a tortured sensitivity and my path has not been an easy one*.

While this motif is everywhere present in religious literature, it is also present in the thought of many secular poets, novelists, and philosophers. For instance, after he won the Nobel Prize for Literature, Albert Camus, a professed atheist, was asked by a journalist if he believed in God. He answered: No, I don't believe in God, but that doesn't mean I am not obsessed with the question of God. Why that obsession? Because in his thought he could not make sense of the world, nor find a fully sensible place in it for humans, unless there was a God. Without a God, human existence cannot make peace with itself. He likened the condition of someone in this world to that of a prisoner in certain medieval prisons, where they would put a prisoner in a cell that was so small that he or she could never stand fully upright or ever fully stretch out. The perpetual feeling of being cramped, it was believed, would eventually break the prisoner's spirit. For Camus, that's our situation in life. We can never really stand up fully or ever stretch out fully. Eventually, this breaks our spirit – and we either go crazy or get holy. That's also the basic view of other atheistic existentialists like Martin Heidegger and Jean-Paul Sartre.

Go crazy or get holy! Richard Rohr offers us a third option, get bitter. He submits that once we get to a certain age, we have only three options left open to us: We can become *a pathetic old fool*; or we can become *a bitter old fool*; or we can become *a holy old fool*. Notice what's non-negotiable. We will all eventually become old fools. We have the choice only as to what kind of old fool we will be – crazy, bitter, or holy.