



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

631-584-5454

January 9th, 2022  
The Baptism of the Lord



*"You are my beloved Son;  
With you I am well pleased." Luke 3: 22*

*"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

*Thank you for your support:*

Financial Support Needed weekly to meet Parish budget: \$17,890

Weekly Collection: January 2nd, 2021: \$ 9,081.

Faith Direct : (131Participants) 3,622

**Total Collections: \$12,703.**

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

### 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.

As you probably know, the Diocese of Rockville Centre has declared Bankruptcy under Chapter 11 of the Federal Bankruptcy Law.

In order to be as helpful as possible to the parties that may be affected by this bankruptcy, we will be publishing the following note regarding “proof of claim forms” for the next few months:

Information regarding the deadlines for filing proofs of claim in the Diocese’s chapter 11 case and the forms to use can be found by clicking on the following link to the Diocese’s bankruptcy website and scrolling down the page <https://dm.epiq11.com/drvc>

# A Letter From Father Tom

Dear Friends,

Today we celebrate the baptism of the Lord, bringing the Christmas season to its conclusion. Just a short time ago we celebrated the birth of the Christ Child. Now we celebrate his entry into what we call his “public life”. Here, as an adult, Jesus is baptized by John, and his journey continues.

But wait! Wasn't John's a baptism of repentance? Why would Jesus who was sinless present himself to be baptized? Here are some thoughts from Fr. John Kavanagh, SJ:

*(Jesus') baptism, then, is at the heart of his mission to heal us. He enters even the wounds of our self-rejection, without having made the rejection himself. He accepts full solidarity with us even if it means being seen as sinner. Jesus' baptism is one of his earliest great transformations of our human condition. The first was that the Word itself could take human flesh. All the further implications would follow that he would be tempted to reject this mission of transformation; that he would undertake all manner of healing and disarming of devils; that he would announce a kingdom to transmute all blindness, poverty, imprisonment, and darkness; that he would, at last, suffer the very fate of sin in death.*

*Just as we now baptize our children to announce a new fate for the human body, the baptism of Jesus is the inauguration of that fate. Announced as sinner, wholly one with our condition, Jesus, hovered over by the very spirit of God, is gazed upon by the Father who sent him and who now says to him and all of us who share his flesh—“This is my beloved, in whom I am well pleased.”*

Jesus' baptism marked a new phase in his ministry. Our baptism - as children or as adults - does the same for us. We, beloved and pleasing daughters and sons of God, are called, and strengthened to follow the way of Jesus. We're called to love, to serve, to pray, to forgive, to reach out as Jesus did. When we commit ourselves to this journey, it can be totally amazing. The journey brings both joys and sorrows, hopes, and challenges, questions and responses. We journey with Jesus and with one another, remembering God's words to Jesus and to us, *this is my beloved in whom I am well pleased.*

One more thought - how many of you are godparents? What an honor to be asked to journey with someone in this way! This special relationship calls for prayer and nurturing. Let's say a prayer for our godparents and our godchildren today!

As the covid pandemic continues, let us pray for all who are ill, for caregivers, and for all working to bring an end to these trying times. Let us each do our part to protect ourselves, our families and friends and our entire community.

And,

*Q: What do you call ten rabbits hopping backwards through the snow together?*

*A: A receding hare line.*

*Q: What type of diet did the snowman go on? A: The Meltdown Diet*

*Q: Why did the boy keep his trumpet out in the snow? A: Because he liked cool music.*

*Q: What did the snowman have for breakfast? A: Frosted Snowflakes*

*Q: What often falls in the winter but never gets hurt? A: Snow*

Peace,

Father Tom

# Mass Intentions, For the week of January 9th, 2022

## Collection Summary:

**Sunday, December 26th, 2021:**

\$13,537.

## Christmas Collection:

\$50,069.

**Solemnity~January 1st, 2022**

\$3,096.

As always, thank you for your generosity and support.



*Eucharistic Adoration*

*Monday*

*1:30pm-7pm*

*In the Church*

*Remember in our hearts and prayers*

Anthony J. Novellino, Sr.  
Antonette Sabatino  
Angie Mingione  
Angela Amoroso  
Anne Pell  
Anna & Harold Clayton  
Arthur Gureck  
Baby Ben  
Baby Penny Grace Candela  
Barbara Bombace  
Barbara Ruland  
Mattia Rose Lubrano  
Belinda Groneman  
Brendan McAlvin  
Cathy McCulloch  
Carol  
Carolyn Nehl  
Charles Figliosi  
Charlie Stangarone  
Claudia Chandler  
Deacon Ron Blasius  
Deirdre W.  
Donna Patrissi  
Dorothy Mitchell  
Elizabeth Martin  
Elizabeth Thorton  
Ellie Walsh  
Esther Styles  
Flo Donohue  
Gerald Maass  
Gloria Montesano  
Grace Bertolone  
Ginny & John Rief  
Gladys Blake  
Gregory Parker  
Helen  
Heidi Ray  
Jack Donohue  
Jamie Geiman  
Jennifer Clark  
Jessica Venditto  
John Cronin  
John DeStefano  
John Scmillio  
Joseph H

Joseph  
Judy Rampola  
Joseph Mazelis  
Joseph Costa  
Kenneth Cook  
Kathleen N.  
Kitty Cronin  
Kim Olofson  
Leon Donach  
Lynn McDonnell  
Mark Geld  
Marty Caltabiano  
Mary Ann Cesarski  
Mary Monte  
Mary Fresi  
Maryann Kevlin  
Maria Clark  
Marie del Cielo  
Marilyn Suli  
Matthew Parrella  
Marie & Frank Fiecco  
Melissa C.  
Michael Fisher  
Michael Viviano  
Michele Williams  
Mike Lofaro  
Monsignor Iocavacci  
Nancy & Paul Bertran  
Nancy Cuccinotta  
Pasquale Savarese  
Pat LeDoux  
Peter Donach  
Peter Rooney  
P.I.  
Ricardo Buffit  
Riordan Cavooris  
Richard Chiorando  
Robert Koop  
Sara Jean Andersen  
Stephen Dolce  
Suzanne Orlando  
Tara Cesarski  
Tina Cafaro  
Vivien Cordes  
Veronica Broderick  
Wayne Hendricks  
William Capurso

<i>Saturday January 8th</i>	<i>Presider: Tom Lectors: Schor/Student EM: Consenz/Anderson/ Damato/Drechsler/Duffy</i>	<i>9:15am  5:00pm</i>	<i>Frank Giannone  Giacomo Conzenz</i>
<i>Sunday January 9th</i>	<i>Presider: Father Tom Lectors:Dobres/Willman EM:Koke/Martin/ Portanova/Tully/Tully</i>	<i>8am</i>	<i>For the People of SSPJ</i>
<i>Baptism of the Lord</i>	<i>Presider: Father Ciya Lector: Cafaro/Nicastro EM:Amen/Latino/Mulhall/ Orlando/Reichert</i>	<i>10:00am</i>	<i>Lawrence M. Kenney</i>
	<i>Presider: Father Ciya Lector:Kenton/Geier EM: Samson/Keane/ Margaret</i>	<i>12:00pm</i>	<i>Collective Mass Conrad Philip Metzgar John J. Kerrane</i>
<i>Monday January 10th</i>		<i>7:30am  9:15am</i>	<i>Living~Father Tom Haggerty  Luciano Ventrone</i>
<i>Tuesday January 11th</i>		<i>7:30am  9:15am</i>	<i>Alan Evans  John Murphy</i>
<i>Wednesday January 12th</i>		<i>7:30am  9:15am</i>	<i>Living~The Burns Family  Anna Damore</i>
<i>Thursday January 13th</i>		<i>7:30am  9:15am</i>	<i>Alan Evans Collective Mass: Living~The Evans Family Alan Evans</i>
<i>Friday January 14th</i>		<i>7:30am  9:15am</i>	<i>Living~Mireya Sequenza  John Purcell</i>
<i>Saturday January 15th</i>	<i>Presider: Father Ciya Lector:Thompson/Student EM:Mantia/Rapp/Damato/ Duffy/Toto/</i>	<i>9:15am  5:00pm</i>	<i>Jessica Connors  Robert M. Keenan</i>
<i>Sunday January 16th</i>	<i>Presider: Father Ciya Lectors:Fitzpatrick/ Cavooris EM:Czujko/Kanuika/ Ramos/Sehne/Sica</i>	<i>8:00am</i>	<i>For the People of SSPJ Parish</i>
	<i>Presider: Father Joe Lectors:Tobin/Luna EM:Luna/McKie/Parish/ Reichert/Sotomayer</i>	<i>10:00am</i>	<i>Living~Karl Walz and Carol Walz</i>
	<i>Collective Mass Presider: Father Joe Lector:Rubano/Latino EM:Consenz/Samson/ Keane/Napolitano/ Margaret</i>	<i>12:00pm</i>	<i>Collective Mass Emma Zaccariah Genevieve Laboni</i>

# A Reflection from Sister T~

Dear Family and Friends,

*"And suddenly you know: It's time to start something new and trust the magic of beginnings." Meister Eckhart*

Happy New Year 2022! I find it exciting to have the opportunity to start again and see where the new road will lead me. Although I have come to realize that one should not hold on to the past, looking at it to help us move into the present and future can prove valuable. This whole Christmas season has been about light coming into the world, a star bringing the Magi to worship and gift Jesus. We have gifts that we can bring to the 'Light' if just reflect on it. So here are a few reflections questions that might prove helpful. Be sure to read to the end for a challenge.

As you look back on the year just completed:

1. What name would you give to your journey of the past year? How would you describe it to one of your friends?
2. What were some of your "epiphanies" of the past year? How did you grow because of them?
3. Who were your wise persons? What did they reveal to you? How did this influence your life?
4. What was most satisfying about the year? What was least satisfying?
5. How did your experience of the past year affect the world in which you live?

As you look to the year before you:

1. What name would you like your New Year journey to have? What gifts do you bring to it?
2. Do you find any resistance within you? Of what are you most afraid as you enter this New Year?
3. What is your greatest need for the coming year?
4. What do you bring with you for your support and strength as you begin to journey through the year?
5. What is at the heart of your New Year's prayer? What do you hope to contribute to society in this coming year?

*My prayer is that this reflection will bring you to a place of peace, joy and adventure in the year 2022.*

Till next week,

Sister Theresita

PS So here is the challenge should you want to accept. After reflecting on the questions if you would like to share an insight with me so I can share in my next reflection please feel free to do so. I'll see what I can do. Have a great week!

1. RCIA MINISTRY		
1/9	Baptism of Lord	Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism & Confirm.
1/16	2nd Sunday	The Sacrament of Marriage



We Remember...

Giacinto Rizzuto  
Ann Harte

Safely home in the arms of Jesus

Our Food Pantry Needs:

Paper Towels  
Dinty Moore Stew

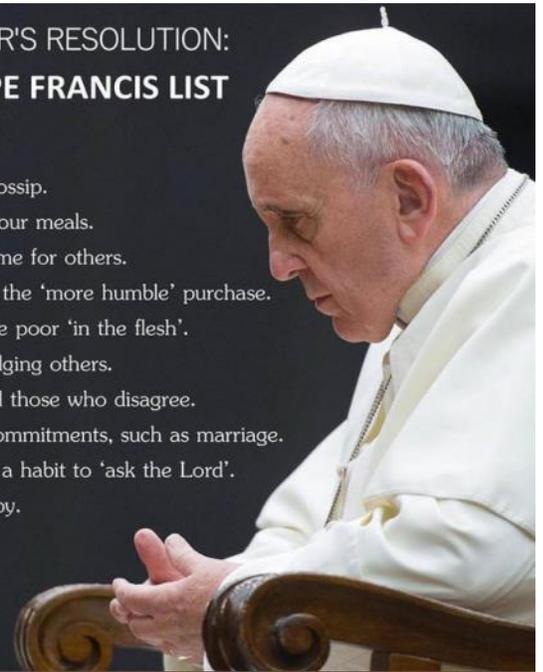


NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION:  
THE POPE FRANCIS LIST

1. Don't gossip.
2. Finish your meals.
3. Make time for others.
4. Choose the 'more humble' purchase.
5. Meet the poor 'in the flesh'.
6. Stop judging others.
7. Befriend those who disagree.
8. Make commitments, such as marriage.
9. Make it a habit to 'ask the Lord'.
10. Be happy.

Paradiso

Credit: rappler/thetravelbook.com



## THE MEN'S FORUM

AT THE CHURCH OF SAINTS PHILIP & JAMES

A brotherhood of men dedicated to growing in their faith & discipleship in the Lord Jesus Christ.

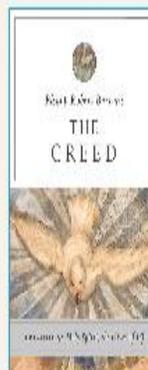
MONDAY, JANUARY 10, 2022

Video Presentation & Discussion: Bishop Robert Barron

**NEXT EPISODE:** "The Creed" Episode 5: "Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life"

Following a Trinitarian structure, the Creed moves from the Father, to the Son, to the Holy Spirit – the Spiritus Sanctus or "holy breath." The Spirit is not a "what" but a "who," the same God of Israel that we adore and glorify. Also, he is Zoopoeion – giver of life – who has spoken through the prophets. From the very beginning of Jesus' earthly life, this life-giving power filled him with fire and wisdom. Jesus now gives this same Spirit generously to his people.

Join us as we watch the next of episode Bishop Robert Barron's video series "The Creed," a combination of documentary footage and dynamic talks. With Bishop Barron as our guide, we will explore a deeper meaning of the Creed—our profound statement of faith—recited at every Sunday mass.



"Holy Spirit, the Giver of Life"

6:00 to 7:00pm: Adoration: Main Church

7:00 to 8:30pm: Video Presentation & Discussion: Bethany Center (Old Church) • Optional Coffee Social (Off Site)

Come for all, or part of our evening's schedule. No membership required. Open to all men!

\*Please Note: Due to the threat of COVID face masks must be worn and social distancing maintained in the Bethany Center. Masks are optional in the main Church.



Website: [www.sspjmensforum.org](http://www.sspjmensforum.org)

Church of Saints Philip & James • 359 Clinton Avenue • St. James, NY 11790 • 631-584-5454



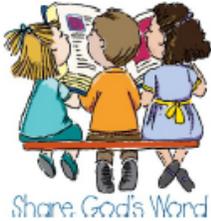
## My Weekly Sunday Gospel Reflection For Grades 1-3

The Baptism of the Lord~ Sunday, January 9th 2022

My Name Is: \_\_\_\_\_ My Grade IS: \_\_\_\_\_ SSPJ SCHOOL

Please share this time with Jesus, Complete your reflection from your heart, and bring it to mass with you next weekend Saturday January 15th or Sunday, January 16th, 2022

### The Gospel Message:



Today we celebrate the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. In today's Gospel, as in the other Gospel accounts of Jesus' baptism, we hear John the Baptist address the people who were confused, thinking John was the Messiah.

John the Baptist says that he has baptized with water, but that someone will come and baptize with the Holy Spirit. The type of baptism that John performed was not yet a Christian Baptism; it was a preparation for Christian Baptism through which sins are forgiven and the gift of the Holy Spirit is received.

What day were you baptized? Who was there to welcome you?

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Dear Jesus,

Thank you for the gift of my baptism. Thank you for all who love me and all who take care of me.

Please help me to remember the special day of my baptism. For it is just like another very special birthday for me.

Amen



Please color

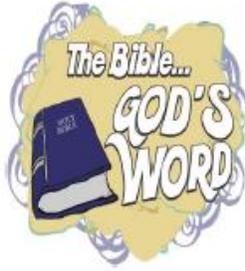
## Weekly Sunday Gospel Reflection For Grades 4-6

The Baptism of the Lord~ Sunday, January 9th, 2022

My Full Name: \_\_\_\_\_ My Grade IS: \_\_\_\_\_ SSPJ SCHOOL

Please share this time with Jesus, Complete your reflection from your heart, **and bring it to mass with you next weekend Saturday, January 15th or Sunday January 16th, 2022**

### The Gospel Message:



Today we celebrate the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. In today's Gospel, as in the other Gospel accounts of Jesus' baptism, we hear John the Baptist address the people who were confused, thinking John was the Messiah.

John the Baptist says that he has baptized with water, but that someone will come and baptize with the Holy Spirit. The type of baptism that John performed was not yet a Christian Baptism; it was a preparation for Christian Baptism through which sins are forgiven and the gift of the Holy Spirit is received.

What day were you baptized?  
Who was there to welcome you?

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Dear Jesus,

Thank you for welcoming me into your heart, for loving me so much that you will never leave me and will remain at my side. Please remind me of that gift each and every day. Please remind me to always say thank you.

Amen

### Jesus, the One and Only

And a voice came from heaven: "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well pleased." Luke 3:22b (NIV)

Based on Luke 3:15-17, 21-22



U A P Q Y B U M L J H F Z G J  
 J O H N N V A M V Z I D I P T  
 Q J R F J F K P D L T K O R W  
 P E O P L E H E T I J G Q V E  
 C H R I S T N B R I A U V K E  
 P N S Y N E D I X M Z X L V G  
 C K M X P R P L L F M E Z D L  
 C J J O W S T M X D U T D M V  
 M H M Y X A Z C A E Z W V U M  
 H E T F Q Z T K P R A Y I N G  
 O A C T T A T E J E S U S P P  
 L V G W Z R U H R V O I C E T  
 Y E O U M D W Q X G R E W R K  
 Z N P N F W H N C V X P R A Q  
 L P O W E R F U L B F F P B E

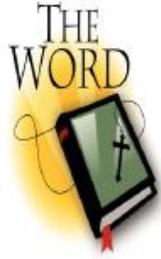
PEOPLE	BAPTIZE	DOVE	PRAYING	FIRE
POWERFUL	JOHN	OPENED	SPIRIT	VOICE
CHRIST	WATER	HOLY	HEAVEN	JESUS

## Weekly Sunday Gospel Reflection For Grades 7-8

The Epiphany of the Lord~ January 9th, 2022

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ SSPJ SCHOOL

Please share this time with Jesus, Complete your reflection from your heart, **and bring it to mass with you next weekend Saturday, January 15th or Sunday, January 16th.**



### The Gospel Message:

Today we celebrate the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. In today's Gospel, as in the other Gospel accounts of Jesus' baptism, we hear John the Baptist address the people who were confused, thinking John was the Messiah.

John the Baptist says that he has baptized with water, but that someone will come and baptize with the Holy Spirit. The type of baptism that John performed was not yet a Christian Baptism; it was a preparation for Christian Baptism through which sins are forgiven and the gift of the Holy Spirit is received.

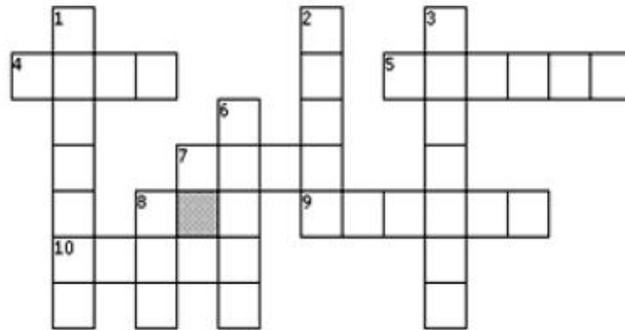
Dear Jesus,

Thank you for the gift of welcome that you extended to me and my family in baptism.

Please help me to be mindful of just how treasured a gift this is.

Please guide my steps as only would in a faith filled with hope, peace and grace.

Amen



#### ACROSS

- Name of the man who baptized Jesus.
- The river where Jesus was baptized.
- The Spirit came down from heaven like a \_\_\_\_\_.
- To turn away from sin.
- What was heard when Jesus was baptized.

#### DOWN

- To pardon for sins.
- The liquid used to baptize someone.
- To admit that you have done wrong.
- A sticky, sweet fluid made by bees.
- To break one of God's commandments.

sin  
voice  
repent  
honey  
John

confess  
dove  
water  
forgive  
Jordan



# Good News

INSPIRATION FOR DAILY LIFE

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday in Ordinary Time

Isaiah 62:1-5  
Ps 96:1-3, 7-10  
1 Corinthians 12:4-11  
John 2:1-11

**Monday January 17**  
**St. Anthony, Abbot**  
1 Samuel 15:16-23  
Ps 50:8-9, 16bc-17, 21, 23  
Mark 2:18-22

**Tuesday January 18**  
1 Samuel 16:1-13  
Ps 89:20-22, 27-28  
Mark 2:23-28

**Wednesday January 19**  
1 Sam 17:32-33, 37, 40-51  
Ps 144:1b, 2, 9-10  
Mark 3:1-6

**Thursday January 20**  
1 Samuel 18:6-9; 19:1-7  
Ps 56:2-3, 9-13  
Mark 3:7-12

**Friday January 21**  
**St. Agnes**  
1 Samuel 24:3-21  
Ps 57:2, 3-4, 6, 11  
Mark 3:13-19

**Saturday January 22**  
**Day of Prayer for Legal  
Protection of the Unborn**  
2 Samuel 1:1-4,  
11-12, 19, 23-27  
Ps 80:2-3, 5-7  
Mark 3:20-21

Today's Gospel story gives us a good example of how to handle conflicts without sinning.

Mary sees a need and wants Jesus to do something about it. She knows full well that only a miraculous intervention will solve the problem. She wants the divine in him to respond to her request, but the human nature of Jesus responds first: He doesn't want to reveal his divinity with this kind of miracle. He's eager to heal souls, not empty wine jars.

"Woman, how does your concern affect me?" he says. "My hour has not yet come." This is like saying, "I respect your request, holy Daughter of Eve, but think about how a miracle in this situation would affect the ministry I'm about to start! People will come to me for party favors and other earthly pleasures, but I want to give them eternal salvation."

We Catholics like to use this scripture as faith-building evidence of the Blessed Mother's ability to help us. We see her in this story as a mother who can get for us whatever we want from Jesus, because she can make him change his mind. Jesus told her no, but the conflict was resolved her way. Mary won, Jesus lost.

Isn't this how we view conflicts? It's not resolved until someone's a winner and someone else is a loser.

Therefore, when we make requests of God and he doesn't give us what we want, we feel like we're the loser, so we pray harder, trying to make God become the loser. And when that doesn't work, we ask the Blessed Mother to side with us and influence her Son against his will.

Therefore, when we make requests of God and he doesn't give us what we want, we feel like we're the loser,

so we pray harder, trying to make God become the loser. And when that doesn't work, we ask the Blessed Mother to side with us and influence her Son against his will.



But God wants us to be the winner from the start! He always wants what's best for us. Mary knew this when she told the wine stewards, "Do whatever my Son tells you."

Conflicts are not inherently bad. Conflicts become sacred opportunities for wonderful solutions when we entrust them to God. Mary trusted that Jesus cared about the people at the party. Jesus trusted that the Father cared about both the people and his ministry. It was a win-win situation.

### Reflect & Discuss:

1. How do you feel when you lose an argument? How hard do you work at making the other person lose?
2. Will you trust God to take good care of you – even if you feel like a loser?
3. Describe a conflict (a hypothetical one or a real one from your past or present) and suggest an ideal solution. Is anyone a loser in this scenario?
4. If you were to truly trust God, what might he do to resolve the conflict so that everyone benefits?

## *Spiritual Reflection by Ron Rolheiser, OMI*

### AT THE ORIGINS OF OUR UNIVERSE - JESUS AND THE BIG BANG

Recently NASA launched the *James Webb Space Telescope* into space, the biggest and most expensive telescope ever built. It will take six months for it to travel a million miles from the earth, find its permanent place in space, and then start transmitting pictures back to earth. Those pictures will be such as have never seen before. The hope is that it will enable us to see much further into space than we've ever seen before, ideally to the very ends of our still expanding universe, right to the first particles that issued forth from the original explosion, *the Big Bang*, that began time and our universe.

Scientists estimate that our universe began 13.7 billion years ago. As far as we know, prior to that there was nothing in existence, as we understand that today (except for God). Then, out of this seeming nothingness, there was an explosion (*the Big Bang*) out of which everything in the universe including our planet earth formed. As with any explosion, the parts that were the most intimately intertwined with the expelling force are those driven furthest away. Thus, when investigators try to determine the cause of an explosion they are particularly interested in finding and examining those pieces that were most closely tied to the original force of the explosion, and generally those pieces have been blown furthest away.

The force of *the Big Bang* is still going on and those parts of our universe that were most intimately intertwined with its beginnings are still being driven further and further into space. Scientists are investigators, probing that original explosion. What the *James Webb Space Telescope* hopes to see is some of the original parts from that unimaginable explosion that gave birth to our universe because these parts were there at the very beginning, at the origins of everything that exists. By seeing and examining them, science hopes to better understand the origins of our universe.

Looking at the excitement scientists feel around this new telescope and their hopes that it will show us pictures of particles from the beginning of time, can help us understand why the Evangelist, John, has trouble restraining his enthusiasm when he talks about Jesus in his first Epistle. He is excited about Jesus because, among other things, Jesus was there at the beginnings of the universe and indeed at the beginnings of everything. For John, Jesus is a mystical telescope through which we might view that primordial explosion that created the universe, since he was there when it happened.

Let me risk paraphrasing the beginning of the First Epistle of John (1, 1-4) as he might have written it for our generation vis-a-vis our curiosity about the origins of our universe:

*You need to understand of whom and what I am speaking:*

*Jesus wasn't just some extraordinary person who performed a few miracles*

*or even who rose from the dead.*

*We are speaking of someone who was there at the very origins of creation,  
who himself is the foundation for that creation,  
who was with God when "the Big Bang" occurred,  
and even before that.*

*Incredibly, we actually got to see him in the flesh, with human eyes,  
the God who created "the Big Bang", walking among us!*

*We actually touched him bodily.*

*We actually spoke with him and listened to him speak,  
he who was there at the origins of our universe,  
there when "the Big Bang" took place!*

*Indeed, he is the One who pulled the switch to set it off,  
with a plan in mind as to where it should go,  
a plan that includes us.*

*Do you want to probe more deeply into what happened at our origins?*

*Well, Jesus is a mystical telescope to look through.*

*After all, he was there at the beginning  
and unbelievably we got to see, hear, and touch him bodily!*

*Excuse my exuberance, but  
we got to walk and talk with someone who was there at the beginning of time.*

There are different kinds of knowledge and different kinds of wisdom, along with different avenues for accessing each of them. Science is one of those avenues, an important one. For far too long theology and religion did not consider it a friend. That was (and remains) a tragic mistake since science has the same founder and same intent as theology and religion. Theology and religion have been wrong whenever they have sought to undercut science's importance or its claims to truth. Sadly, science has often returned the favor and viewed theology and religion as a foe rather than as a colleague. The two need each other, not least in understanding the origins and intent of our universe.

How do we understand the origins and intent of our universe? Science and Jesus. Science is probing those origins in the interest of telling us how it happened and how it is unfolding, while Jesus (who was there when it happened) is more interested in telling us why it happened and what it means.