



The Parish of Saints Philip and James

1 Carow Place, St. James, NY 11780

631-584-5454

January 31st, 2021
Fourth Sunday
In Ordinary Time



“Jesus rebuked him and said,
“Quiet! Come out of him!”

Mark 1:24

“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

(With Sympathy) Deacon Ken Maher

PASTORAL ASSOCIATE

Sister Theresita Donach, CSFN

BUSINESS MANAGER

Virginia Portanova

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR Grades 1-3

Charlotte Czujko

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR Grades 4-6

Barbara Luna

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR Grades 7-8

Dominick Avento

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

Jerry Linder ~ Tina Cafaro

PASTORAL COUNCIL

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



**FAITH DIRECT:
GO TO SSPJ.ORG
CLICK ON THE FAITH DIRECT ICON**

Parish of Saints Philip and James
account code NY232 when signing up

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 KAIRES
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
STAFF SGT MICHAEL J BANG SPECIAL FORCES US ARMY
MATTHEW PATRICK GALLAGHER US ARMY

Financial Support Needed weekly to meet Parish budget:

\$17,890.

Weekly Collection: Sunday January 24th, 2020

\$ 10,616.

Snow Removal:

355.

Faith Direct : (126Participants)

3,253.

Total Collections:

\$14,224.

Parish Social Ministry

1,200.

Thank you for your generosity

Father Tom's Letter

Dear Friends,

In today's gospel reading, Jesus heals a man by driving out the unclean spirit within him. Fr. Larry Gillick, SJ, reflects "There is a spirit that moves us to hold tightly to what we think without any depending on authority, interchange, or on much self-reflection. Little children learn the power of the word, "mine!" quite early in their young lives. That is not an unclean spirit unless it is allowed to grow and control ones relationships and life. It is when opinions become the center of one's approach to life that Jesus invites that spirit to be silent and to come out of us.

In this Gospel, as with many other healings, Jesus gives the person back him-or herself with the dignity of being known by God. The "authority" with which Jesus speaks and which the crowds find new and amazing, is the creative love of God, who wishes us to know our dignity and not to be dominated by the unclean spirit of self-rejection. He is the new Prophet, telling us not to be afraid or worried.

This Sunday begins Catholic Schools Week. SSPJ School is an outstanding example of faith formation combined with academic excellence. Kudos to our students, parents, teachers, support staff and principal, and many thanks to all our parishioners whose generosity enables us to provide such a unique treasure. Due to covid restrictions, we cannot offer a general Open House this year, but please visit the SSPJ School website (sspjschool.net) or call the school office for more information.

Due to covid restrictions this year's annual March for Life was held virtually on January 29th. Please continue to pray that all may respect the sacredness of life at all stages.

Lent begins two weeks from Wednesday!! As we continue to collect last year's palm to be burned to ashes, let's anticipate how we can further develop and live out our call to be Apostles of Hope.

Kudos to the students and families in SSPJ's Religious education program! Their participation in the January Acts of service project yielded over 200 warm hats, gloves, and socks for distribution to local emergency shelters. Thank you for shining your light into the darkness...

And,

A bookseller conducting a market survey asked a woman, "Which book has helped you most in your life?" The woman replied, "My husband's checkbook!"

Peace,

Father Tom

Mass Intentions, For the week of January 31st, 2021



Eucharistic Adoration

Monday's

From 1:30-7:00pm

In the Church

God Our Father, Giver of Life, we entrust the United States of America to Your loving care. You are the rock on which this nation was founded. You alone are the true source of our cherished rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Reclaim this land for Your glory and dwell among Your people. Send Your Spirit to touch the hearts of our nation's leaders. Open their minds to the great worth of human life and the responsibilities that accompany human freedoms. Remind Your people that true happiness is rooted in seeking and doing Your will. Through the intercession of Mary Immaculate, Patroness of our land grant us the courage to reject the culture of death. Lead us into a new millennium of life. We ask this through Christ Our Lord Amen!

Remembering in Our Prayers~

Angie Mingione Angela Amoroso Anna Ormsby Arthur Gureck Baby Ben Barbara Bombace Barbara Ruland Mattia Rose Lubrano Belinda Groneman Belinda Vega Brianna Florio Bob Keenan Carol Claudia Chandler Daniel Radice Deirdre W. Dolores North Donna Patrissi Dorothy Mitchell Dylan Beach Ella Ellie Walsh Gary McLean Ginny & John Rief Gladys Blake Gregory Parker Helen Ida Wehman Joanna Jack Donohue John Cronin John DeStefano	J.C. Joseph S. Luis Anthony Antonette Sabatino Judy Rampola Kathleen N. Kitty Cronin Leon Donach Lisa McLean Mark Hildreth Mary Fresi Maryann Kevlin Maria Clark Marie del Ciello Matthew Parrella Michael Fisher Mike Lofaro Monsignor Iocavacci Pasquale Savarese Peter Donach P.I. Ricardo Buffit Riordan Cavooris Sara Jean Andersen Sheila Ginty Stephen Dolce Steven Iglio Theresa Kassay Tara Cesarski Vivien Cordes Victoria Zubrycky Vicki Archdeacon
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	<i>Saturday</i>	January 30th, 2021 <i>Presider: Father Tom</i> <i>Lector: P. Suski</i> <i>EM: D. Anderson</i>	9:15am 5:00pm	Allison Criswell Steve Rannazzisi
	<i>Sunday</i>	January 31st, 2021 <i>Presider: Father Tom</i> <i>Lector: E. Dobres</i> <i>EM: V. Portanova</i>	8am	<i>For the People of SSPJ</i>
		<i>Presider: Father Joe</i> <i>Lector: A. Kaiser</i> <i>EM: M. Latina</i>	10:00am	Steve Rannazzisi
		Collective Mass <i>Presider: Father Joe</i> <i>Lector: M. Hoonhout</i> <i>EM: B. Luna</i>	12:00pm	Elizabeth Hazlitt John Long Denise DelCore Joseph Contrino
	<i>Monday</i>	<i>February 1st, 2021</i>	7:30am 9:15am	Karen Balezos Living~Pasquale Savarese
	<i>Tuesday</i>	February 2nd, 2021 The Presentation of the Lord	7:30am 9:15am	Patricia Livingston Joseph Winters
	<i>Wednesday</i>	February 3rd, 2021 Saint Blaise	7:30am 9:15am	Jeff Posé Peter Spaniol
	<i>Thursday</i>	<i>February 4th, 2021</i>	7:30am 9:15am	Collective Mass: Deacon Ken Maher
	<i>Friday</i>	February 5th, 2021 Saint Agatha	7:30am 9:15am	Donald Hehir, Sr.
	<i>Saturday</i>	February 6th, 2021 <i>Presider: Father Joe</i> <i>Lector: M. Dreschler</i> <i>EM: L. Sisti</i>	9:15am 5:00pm	Deacon Ken Maher James Peter Klouda
<i>Sunday</i>	February 7th, 2021 <i>Presider: Father Joe</i> <i>Lector: A. Mantia</i> <i>EM: M. Sehne</i>	8:00am	<i>For the People of SSPJ</i>	
	<i>Presider: Father Tom</i> <i>Lector: B. Tobin</i> <i>EM: E. Sotomayer</i>	10:00am	Lawrence M. Kenney	
	Collective Mass <i>Presider: Father Tom</i> <i>Lector: L. Just</i> <i>EM: B. Luna</i>	12:00pm	Marilyn McCutcheon Muiykhaylo Panchishak Marie Csorny Joseph Winters Edda Nieves	

As we prepare to enter the season of Lent, we must still assume restrictions on the number of faithful at Mass, social distancing, wearing masks and other protocols which have been in place over these many months.

We will keep you informed of any process that will be in place for Ash Wednesday as well as other Lenten journey opportunities here at Sts. Philip and James.

On Wednesday, February 3rd, we celebrate the Feast of St. Blaise. A communal blessing of the throats will be offered at the 9:15am mass

PRAYER TO ST. BLAISE

Dear bishop and lover of souls,
you willingly bore heavy crosses
in faithful imitation of Jesus.
Similarly, with childlike compassion,
you cured many sufferers.
Then after undergoing horrible torture,
you died as a martyr for Christ.
Obtain a cure for these ails
(name your sickness)
if this is agreeable to God. Amen.



Embrace a deeper, more spiritually rewarding life, and lose yourself in God this Lent.

Visit BestLentEver.com to take the first step toward unlocking your God-given potential.



This Lent, join Matthew Kelly and the Dynamic Catholic team for BEST LENT EVER - a free series of emails and video reflections that will help you to discover or rediscover God through prayer.

Preparing for Our 2021 Lenten Journey ~ 2021 Some suggestions....



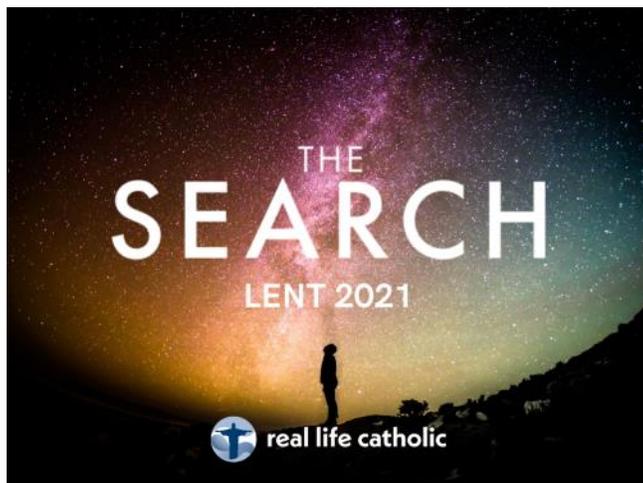
FROM ASHES TO GLORY: A Lenten Reflection with DAN SCHUTTE

The prayer we begin on Ash Wednesday continues throughout the Lenten season. We ask God to prepare us to follow the way of his Son, through his Passion and Death, into the glory of the Resurrection. As we prepare for the holiest of seasons, Dan will engage you in music, gospel stories and reflections that invite them to enter the journey of Lent. This mission is designed to help us renew our faith and deepen our commitment to Christ by immersing ourselves in faith, bringing light to a world steeped in darkness.

More Information to follow: Dan Schutte Lenten Reflection

The Search is a beautifully produced journey through the big questions we all share. This Lent, we are inviting YOU to *The Search with your own small group. And if you don't have a small group yet...we encourage you to start one! It's easy, and The Search is a great resource to start with. In fact, each week Chris Stefanick from Real Life Catholic will be guiding us throughout Lent on how to use The Search in your own small group during his weekly show The Life You Were Made For.*

To sign up for this seven-week series, visit reallifecatholic.com/thesearch and get ready to experience your most meaningful Lent, ever.



A Heartfelt Reflection from Sister T~

Dear Friends,

“Jesus seems to have taken every opportunity of getting away to a quiet and lonely place for prayer and reflection,” says Albert Nolan in his book, *Jesus Today*. Following Jesus’ good example, I am in the middle of my annual retreat. I have taken with me Joyce Rupp’s book, *Boundless Compassion*. My spiritual director recommended that it was a natural fit for me at this time in my life, so here I sit with it in prayer.

When my director said it would be a good book for me, I wondered why, as I thought I was a pretty compassionate person. Then came the surprise: we did not start with the first chapter, but rather with chapter two (Week Two), dealing with being compassionate with yourself. “Having self-compassion does not mean self-absorption... Self-compassion implies giving ourselves a worthy share of attentive care,” says Joyce.

And so I began doing my praying and reflecting, and as I did, my director gave me the ‘Feather Prayer’, a prayer that contemplates how birds instinctively know how to take care of themselves. It is a thought-provoking prayer that asks questions like, “Do I desire to pull out old feathers of negative self-judgement, to remove tattered remnants of past thoughts about self that generate discouragement and lessen positive energy?” It asks you to sort out old attitudes that need to be discarded so that your relationship with God and those around you can grow. There is much more, and it can be found in Joyce’s *Prayers of Boundless Compassion*, a companion to *Boundless Compassion*. It all goes back to what Jesus said: “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

Besides my retreat and taking a good look at my own self compassion, it started me thinking of some of the people that I have been encountering lately. So many people are angry and sad, just waiting for the other shoe to drop. I don’t know all of them personally, but from my little bit of reflection so far, I bet they could use some self-compassion. These past ten months of upheaval have challenged us and put us in very unfamiliar situations: parents trying to work from home while home-schooling their children, parents losing their jobs, holidays that were not what we are used to... I could go on and on. I am willing to bet that there are a lot of good folks out there who have been engaging in a lot of negative self-talk. Not good if you want to be a compassionate person, especially now!

Like Jesus, we need to walk away and take a breath. But how? Necessity is the mother of invention, and there is a true need here. Perhaps you can ask for a time out for yourself, even if it is just fifteen minutes. Or maybe Mom can take a break and let Dad take the helm, or an older sibling can help out around the house? I don’t have all the answers, but I know we need some help in our world, and we can find a way to do something about it if we just take the time. Do one good thing for yourself each day and I bet you can become more tolerant others. Compassion will reign!

Till next week, be gentle with yourself,

Sister Theresita



Look for the Feather Prayer in next weeks bulletin...

Compassion begins with you....

Parish Social Ministry



We Remember In Our Hearts the families holding precious memories in their hearts from the loss of,

*Joseph Vuocolo
Otto Schindlar
Georgia Priebe
David G. O'Connor
Antoinette P. Fisher*

Safely home in the loving arms of Jesus.

FOOD PANTRY HELP

TOILET PAPER

SIZE 6 DIAPERS

BABY WIPES



Many thanks for your kindness and generosity

Think globally, act in your kitchen. You may want to look for ways in the coming year to reduce the use of single-use plastics and packaging waste. Many are also looking to shrink their carbon footprint by changing how they eat, mostly by reducing the amount of red meat in their diet, since animal agriculture produces methane a greenhouse gas more potent than carbon dioxide; as a bonus, it will help reduce cardiovascular disease.



~All life is a gift of God to creation ~

The Beautiful Gift of Music

*Each month as I go through the list of music to choose for Mass I try to reflect on the theme of the weekend. Each weekend Mass has a theme. Music, readings, and homily ties it all together. The songs have meaning and purpose. We can sing and participate in the congregational hymns. (**softer in church** louder home during this time of pandemic) and reflect and listen to the special hymns that are beautiful, often inspirational and offer comfort.*

*What a wonderful art music is.
And praising God through music, What a gift!!*

As we enter Catholic Schools Week I, being an SSPJ graduate, reflect on my years at SSPJ. It was here that I started my music journey which led me to a master's degree in music education, NYS certification to teach music in NY and the position at SSPJ church as the Music Director.

*I have the privilege of teaching music to our
choirs and the parish. Sing your praise to God!!
I thank the parish and school for
or their support of me
and the music ministry for over 47 years, 23 of those years
as Music Director.*

Let us continue to praise God through music!!

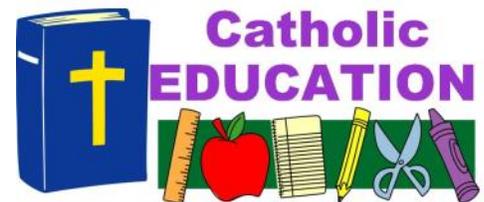


Registration Beginning at SSPJ School!



Registration for the 2021-2022 School Year begins on
January 31, 2021

To schedule a tour and for more information contact
Diane Anderson, Principal
danderson@sspjschool.net



A Letter Regarding Catholic Schools Week From Bishop Barres



DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

January 31, 2021

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Beginning Sunday, January 31, 2021 and continuing through February 6, 2021, the 35 Catholic elementary schools in the Diocese of Rockville Centre will participate in the annual national celebration of Catholic education: Catholic Schools Week.

The theme for National Catholic Schools Week 2021 is “Catholic Schools: Faith. Excellence. Service.” Schools typically observe the week with Masses, open houses and other activities for students, families, parishioners, and community members. Through these events, schools focus on the value Catholic education provides young people and its contributions to our church, our communities, and our nation.

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, Catholic Schools Week will look a bit different. In lieu of the traditional open houses our schools have held in the past to meet with prospective families, the schools will be offering virtual open houses and one-to-one meetings with principals that will allow prospective families to ‘visit’ the Catholic school(s) of their choice from the safety and comfort of their homes.

This year, in spite of the pandemic, we have made significant progress transforming our schools through the Morning Star Initiative (MSI). Many elements of the Morning Star Initiative are already in place, like key academic improvements in mathematics, reading, and religious studies, which are helping students reach new potential. I am so grateful for the tireless dedication of the MSI team.

Working with the MSI team, Long Island’s Catholic elementary school faculty and staff continue to put the needs of the 11,626 students (nursery-8th grade) and their families first. From maintaining the continuity of instruction during remote learning when the Covid-19 pandemic hit back in March, to taking all of the necessary precautions to welcome students back into a safe school environment this fall, I am extremely grateful for the grit and determination demonstrated by our school community to address the academic, spiritual and social needs of our students.

Earlier this month, on January 4, 2021, we celebrated the 200th anniversary of the death of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton (1774-1821), one of the great native-born American Evangelizers and champions of Catholic Education. Please join me in praying that Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton and Mary, Star of Evangelization continue to intercede for each of us, for our Morning Star and Department of Education teams, and for our principals, teachers, and staff. With prayers and gratitude for your efforts, I am

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Most Reverend John O. Barres
Bishop of Rockville Centre

SSPJ SCHOOL FUNDRAISER!



Our Fundraiser is Here!

We're raising money for Sts. Philip & James School (ID 69482), and we need your help. It's easy! No order forms, no checks to collect, no handing out items. Just send, share, and shop. 40% of purchases go directly to our cause. Fundraiser ends 02/10/2021.



1
SEND

Give Us a Boost

Go to boonsupply.com/69482 and click the 🛒. **Enter at least 10 emails** of friends and family, then register as a seller. Win a Golden Ninja Warrior Coop and lanyard!



2
SHARE

Spread the News

From your seller dashboard or our fundraiser page, click the icons to share through **text, Facebook, Twitter, and email**. The more you sell, the more prizes you'll earn!



3
SHOP

Shop Online

Go to boonsupply.com/69482 and shop our awesome collection. Orders are shipped directly to the shopper, and **40% goes straight to our school**. It's that easy!



boonsupply.com/69482

Scan the code or enter the URL to go straight to our online store.

Help our school and win awesome prizes

It's easy to win prizes! Start by registering as a seller after finishing step 1 to win the Golden Ninja Warrior Coop. You can also register at boonsupply.com/step1 with your fundraiser ID: **69482**. Then you can keep track of your sales. Keep going to win more Coops and prizes like the **Lego Creative Boost Toolbox** and the **Xbox Series X**. Check your prize flyer or go to boonsupply.com/prizes for more information.



Religious Education News

Receiving the Sacrament of Reconciliation~

Please remember in your prayers all of our students who are preparing to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, most especially the second graders in Miss Charlottes Communion II class and the seventh and eighth grade students in Dominick Avento' s Confirmation I and II program. May God touch their hearts with his tender mercy and forgiveness.

Communion II Reconciliation:

February 6th at 11:30am and 1:30pm

February 13th at 11:30am and 1:30pm
Emails have been sent to families regarding dates



Confirmation I Class:

February 1st and February 2nd at 5:00pm and 7:00pm

Confirmation II Class:

February 8th and 9th at 5:00pm and 7:00pm
Emails have been sent to families regarding dates



My God,

I am sorry for my sins with all my heart.
In choosing to do wrong and failing to do good,
I have sinned against you
whom I should love above all things.
I firmly intend, with your help,
to do penance, to sin no more,
and to avoid whatever leads me to sin.
Our Savior Jesus Christ suffered
and died for us.
In His name, my God, have mercy.
Amen.



Pictured is 8th grade Confirmation II student, Dylan O'Reilly who put his heart into action performing "acts of service" in the months of December and January!

Dylan volunteers at the Stony Brook Fire House and lived the mission to perform small acts of service with great love, during a recent snow fall. He graciously shoveled an elderly neighbors driveway. Way to Go Dylan! We are so grateful for your outstanding example!



FEBRUARY ACTS OF SERVICE PROJECT:

FEBRUARY~ WARMING HEARTS....HOW DO YOU DO THAT? YOU SHARE YOUR TREASURE-YOUR PRAYERS, YOUR KINDNESS...

CRAFT 3 VALENTINE HEARTS....

Put two of them into a plastic bag with your name upon it. Bring that bag to the Parish center office drop box by February 7th .

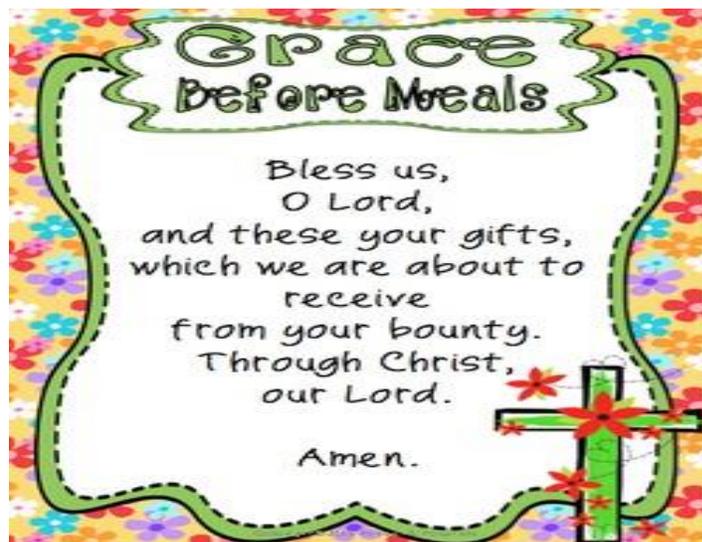
Now,

GIVE THE THIRD HEART TO SOMEONE YOU LOVE!

YOUR HOMEMADE HEARTS WILL BE SHARED WITH Patients and families at Stony Brook Children's Hospital and with Patients and families at Morgan Stanley Children's Hospital.

COMING UP: OUR LENTEN CHALLENGE...

February Prayer for the Month





Many Gifts, One Nation

A Day of Giving to Catholic Schools

Tuesday, February 2, 2021 at noon and continue through noon on
Wednesday, February 3.

SSPJ is raising money for the advancement of technology infrastructure and the purchase of iPads to further support student learning.

Our appeal is to raise \$10,000

Now more than ever it is so important to have technology to connect us.

We are asking for your support to upgrade our technology hardware and connectivity infrastructure so we can further support student learning.



Thank you for your generous support of our students!

Donations can be made on line using the link below

<https://factsmgtadmin.com/give/appeal/QMbdazRRR>

or sent directly to SSPJ School.

*You call us to leave all things, you who had nothing.
You call us to be servants, you who came to serve.
You call us to share the load, you who carried our sin.
You call us to speak your word, you who lived it daily.
You call us to be followers, and in your strength, we will.*



2021 CATHOLIC MINISTRIES APPEAL

DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE

One Family in Mission
Creating Pathways to Faith



Please consider making a gift to the 2021 Catholic Ministries Appeal.

For more information, to watch our video or to make a donation, visit www.drvc.org/CMA or call us at 516-678-5800 ext. 296



Good News

INSPIRATION FOR DAILY LIFE

5th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Job 7:1-4, 6-7
Ps 147:1-6
1 Cor 9:16-19, 22-23
Mark 1:29-39

Monday February 8

Genesis 1:1-19
Ps 104:1-2a,5-6,10,12,24,35c
Mark 6:53-56

Tuesday February 9

Genesis 1:20 – 2:4a
Ps 8:4-9
Mark 7:1-13

Wednesday February 10 St. Scholastica

Genesis 2:4b-9,15-17
Ps 104:1-2a,27-30
Mark 7:14-23

Thursday February 11 Our Lady of Lourdes

Genesis 2:18-25
Ps 128:1-5
Mark 7:24-30

Friday February 12

Genesis 3:1-8
Ps 32:1-2,5-7
Mark 7:31-37

Saturday February 13

Genesis 3:9-24
Ps 90:2-6,12-13
Mark 8:1-10

Today's reading from St. Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians describes my own ministry of writing this and other bulletin articles:

If I preach the Good News, this is no reason for me to boast, because I have an obligation to do this, and woe to me if I do not do it! If I do so willingly, I'm rewarded for it, but if unwillingly, I'm merely fulfilling my responsibility of stewardship. What then is my reward? That, when I share the Good News, I am able to offer it free of charge so that all may benefit.

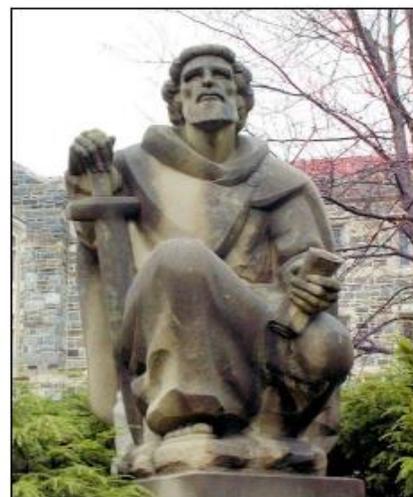
Saint Paul was not saying it's wrong to charge a fee. In fact, Jesus said that the worker deserves his wages (Luke 10:7). But Paul knew that what matters most is being a good steward of the gifts that God has given us.

What are the gifts that God has given you? We have all been entrusted with an obligation to continue the ministry of Christ on earth in our contemporary world. A Christian

who does not follow Christ in ministry has a lazy faith, or a self-focused faith, an unlively faith.

Using your gifts, talents, wisdom, knowledge, compassion, etc., generously for the benefit of the faith of others is an alive faith. The immediate reward is a joyful awareness of being in partnership with Christ.

The Gospel reading shows us the generosity of Peter's mother-in-law in sharing her talent of hospitality. And it



shows us the determination of Jesus to preach the gospel widely and tirelessly.

Both are examples of good stewardship. All gifts and talents and financial earnings are blessings from God that are meant to be shared. This is how to feel fully alive in the faith!

Reflect & Discuss:

1. What have you received from God?
2. How much of it is being shared with others?
3. What seems too inadequate to give away?
4. How can you become a better steward of God's gifts?
5. Name any service that you provide: How important is it to you that you keep doing it no matter what?
6. How important to Jesus do you think it is? Why?

G O D C A N N O T T E L L A L I E

Lying is the most pernicious of evils, the most dangerous of sins, the worst of blasphemes, and the one sin that can be unforgivable. Perhaps we need to be reminded of that today, given our present culture where we are in danger of losing the very idea of reality and truth. Nothing is more dangerous.

There's a line buried deep in scripture that is too seldom quoted. The *Letter to the Hebrews* states simply: *It is impossible for God to lie.* (Hebrews 6, 18) It could not be otherwise. God is Truth, so how could God lie? For God to lie would be a denial of God's very nature. Consequently, for us to lie is to go directly against God. Lying is the definition of irreverence and blasphemy. It is an affront to the nature of God.

If we are aware of that, we haven't taken it seriously lately. Everywhere, from countless social media tweets, texts, and blogs to the highest offices of government, business, and even the church, we are seeing an ever-deteriorating relationship with reality and truth. Lying and creating one's own truth have become socially acceptable (to a frightening degree). What's changed? Haven't we always lied? Who among us can say that he or she has never told a lie or falsified information in one way or another? What's different today?

What's different today is that, until our generation, you could be caught in a lie, shamed for telling it, forced to accept your own dishonesty. No longer. Today our relationship with truth is fracturing to a degree that we no longer distinguish, morally or practically, between a lie and the truth. A lie, now, is simply another modality of truth.

What's the net effect of this? We are living it. Its effects are everywhere. First, it has broken down a shared sense of reality where, as a community, we no longer have a common epistemology and a shared sense of right and wrong. People no longer relate to reality in the same way. One person's truth is the other person's lie. It is becoming impossible to define what constitutes a lie.

This doesn't just destroy trust among us; worse, it plays with our sanity and with some of the deeper moral and religious chromosomes inside us. As I wrote in this column several months ago, we believe that there are four transcendental properties to God. We teach that God is *One, True, Good, and Beautiful*. Because God is *One*, whole and consistent, there can never be any internal contradictions within God. This might sound abstract and academic, *but this is what anchors our sanity*. We are sane and remain sane only because we can always trust that two plus two equals four, ever and always. God's *Oneness* is what anchors that. If that should ever change, then the peg that moors our sanity would be removed. Once two plus two can equal something other than four, then nothing can be securely known or trusted ever again. That's the ultimate danger in what's happening today. We are unmooring our psyche.

The next danger in lying is what it does to those of us who lie. Fyodor Dostoevsky *sums it up succinctly*: "People who lie to themselves and listen to their own lie come to such a pass that they cannot distinguish the truth within them, or around them, and so lose all respect for themselves and for others. And having no respect, they cease to love." Jordan Peterson would add this: If we lie long enough "after that comes the arrogance and sense of superiority that inevitably accompanies the production of successful lies (hypothetically successful lies – and that is one of the greatest dangers: apparently everyone is fooled, so everyone is stupid, except me. Everyone is stupid, and fooled, by me – so I can get away with whatever I want). Finally, there is the proposition: '*Being itself is susceptible to my manipulation*. Thus, it deserves no respect.'"

Jesus' warning in John's Gospel is the strongest of all. He tells us that if we lie long enough we will eventually believe our own lies and confuse falsehood for the truth and truth for falsehood, and that becomes an unforgivable sin (a "blaspheme against the Holy Spirit) because the person who's lying no longer wants to be forgiven.

Finally, lying breaks down trust among us. Trust is predicated on the belief that we all accept that two plus two equals four, that we all accept there is such a thing as reality, that we all accept that reality can be falsified by a lie, and that we all accept that a lie is falsehood and not just another modality of truth. Lying destroys that trust.

Living in a world that plays fast and easy with reality and truth also plays on our loneliness. George Eliot once asked: "*What loneliness is more lonely than distrust?*" So true. *The loneliest loneliness of all is the loneliness of distrust*. Welcome to our not-so-brave new world.