



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

631-584-5454

January 16th, 2022
The Second Sunday
In Ordinary Time



"Fill the jars with water"

John 2:7

"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 9th, 2021: \$ 11,651

Faith Direct : (131Participants) 3,622

Total Collections: \$15,273.

**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 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

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's gospel is probably pretty familiar to us – Jesus changes water into wine. Fr. John Foley, SJ, connects this passage with today's first reading, where Isaiah says God will be giving us a new name, "my delight".

We are at a wedding feast in Cana, Galilee. The wine has run out. We witness that Jesus is able to transform water into the very best wine, just as the Father can change a forsaken people into ones that are his delight. It is an image for a people who are fresh out of hope, but who can delight in the promise. Only God in Jesus can supply the refreshment. The Gospel story has more symbolic depth than just a simple story of an amazing miracle would.

Mary says modestly to Jesus, "They have no wine" [symbolically, the human race has no real life left in it]. Jesus replies, strangely, "woman, how does your concern affect me? My hour has not yet come." Explicitly, his public life has not yet come. In that life he will preach, heal, suffer, die and rise again, as we will see in the coming weeks.

But Mary knew him too well. She did not take seriously all the reasons God's promise could not be fulfilled. She knew that the people needed the full, rich wine of life, which is love. She trusted her son. She says to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." And, of course, water becomes wine. On this Sunday we begin to watch Jesus make us into "his delight."

What a wonderful image - and what timing! As we continue to live through the covid pandemic and its effects, through natural disasters, through political unrest, through so much tragedy and anxiety, may we continue to deepen our love of Jesus and to follow his ways. In truly caring for one another, we will find that Jesus not only has our back but fills us with his love. And we delight!

This week we remember the birthday of Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr., a powerful advocate for racial justice and non-violence. Unfortunately, racism and violence are still powerful forces of evil in our world. We each have the responsibility to pray for and to work for an end to racism and violence. We ask our loving Savior, brother to all and guide to non-violence, to open minds and hearts - including our own - to live as He taught and teaches us.

And, some memorable - or forgettable - one liners:

My wife told me to stop impersonating a flamingo. I had to put my foot down.

I failed math so many times at school I can't even count.

I was wondering why the frisbee kept getting bigger and bigger. Then it hit me.

Don't you hate it when someone answers their own questions? I do.

Peace,

Father Tom

Mass Intentions, For the week of January 15th, 2022

Our Altar Candles For the week of January 15th, 2021

Are illuminating the Love of
Carol Walz

Happy Birthday to our Wife
and Mom
On your 76th Birthday in
Heaven.

With Our Love,

Karl Sr., Karl Jr. and Tim
Walz



Eucharistic Adoration

Monday

1:30pm-7pm

In the Church

Remember in our hearts and prayers

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 B
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 Ciello
Marilyn Suli
MaryAnn Kelvin
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 Cavoris
Richard Chiorando
Robert Koop
Sara Jean Andersen
Stephen Dolce
Suzanne Orlando
Tara Cesarski
Tina Cafaro
Tim Walz
Vivien Cordes
Veronica Broderick
Wayne Hendricks
William Capurso

Saturday January 15th	Presider: Ciya Lectors: Thompson/ Student EM: Mantia/Rapp/Damato/ Duffy/Toto/	9:15am 5:00pm	Jessica Connors Robert M. Keenan
Sunday January 16th	Presider: Father Ciya Lectors: Fitzpatrick/ Cavoris EM: Czujko/Kanuika/ Ramos/Sehne/Sica	8am	For the People of SSPJ
	Presider: Father Joe Lector: Tobin/Luna EM: Luna/McKie/Parish/ Reichert/Sotomayer	10:00am	Karl Walz~Living And Carol Walz
	Presider: Father Joe Lector: Ruban/Latino EM: Consenz/Samson/ Keane/Napolitano/ Margaret	12:00pm	<u>Collective Mass</u> Genevieve Iaboni Emma Zaccarini
Monday January 17th	Martin Luther King Day St. Anthony Abbot	7:30am 9:15am	Living~Jeanette De Rosa Mario Mignone
Tuesday January 18th		7:30am 9:15am	James J. Corcoran Lucia Morando
Wednesday January 19th		7:30am 9:15am	Vera & Vincent Mulvehill Margaret Olsen
Thursday January 20th	Saint Fabian Saint Sebastian	7:30am 9:15am	Andrew Dunn <u>Collective Mass:</u>
Friday January 21st	Saint Agnes	7:30am 9:15am	Living~Lynn Egito John Dattoma
Saturday January 22nd Day of Prayer for Unborn	Presider: Father Joe Lector: Grimaldi/Student EM: Rapp/Lombardi/ Damato/Drechsler/Duffy	9:15am 5:00pm	Living~Juan Madariaga Mary Aiello Scarcella
Sunday January 23rd	Presider: Father Joe Lectors: O'Leary/Auletta EM: Czujko/Kanuika/ Kenney/Koke/P. Tully	8:00am	For the People of SSPJ Parish
	Presider: Father Ciya Lectors: Koke/Luna EM: Amen/Latino/Luna/ Parish/Reichert	10:00am	Lawrence M. Kenney
	<u>Collective Mass</u> Presider: Father Ciya Lector: Donegan/Just EM: Consenz/Samson/ Keane/Margaret	12:00pm	<u>Collective Mass</u> Conrad Philip Metzger John J. Kerrane Conrad Metzger

Dear Friends,

We are now in the ordinary time of our Church cycle. But I am sure that you would agree with me there are times that the days don't feel so ordinary, so CELEBRATE THEM!

I received a few responses from my last's week's reflection and thought I would share some of the thoughts, respecting the privacy of the individuals. I hope these thoughts will add to your own reflection and perhaps even affirm them. May you continue to reflect and name your year and gifts etc. Be graced and blessed.

"I would describe this past year as one of "waiting in darkness" in which I have been unable to pray except in frustration. Physical challenges plague me and the loss of my independence has been most frustrating if not unreal. I have always been accustomed to being a woman of action and decisiveness. In this past year I have had to wait for a kind hand to assist me in the dawning hours of the morning and throughout the day.

"As for this year, I would describe it as 'waiting in light'. It has been said that there is always a light at the end of the tunnel. Well, this New Year is only a few days old, and I am still looking for the tunnel. I have turned from frustration to gratitude and hope in my prayer. I am thankful for the cross given to me to carry, but I beg daily for the stamina to be able to bear it. One day soon, when I find that tunnel, I know I shall walk into the brightness of THE LIGHT when darkness will be no more."

Another called her past year "tremendous" and her life and energy come from her family. And although raising a family with a newborn can be tiring, she is willing to move on. There is a fear of losing herself and her job along with the thought of relocating and yet her wish is to find a better neighborhood for her family. She is asking Jesus to come back into her life.

"I called last year 'challenging' and would describe it to one of my friends as being overwhelming as different challenges came down the path. One of my epiphanies of the past year was that I am capable of facing those challenges and was supported by those around me who wanted to see me succeed. They helped me realize that all acts of kindness, no matter how small, affect others, making the world a better place. This New Year I would like to call Prayerful Courage. There is a resistance of not being sure of myself, but hopefully with the support of prayer and surrounding myself with people who are like minded and want to move out of their own comfort zone, this will be a great year. I hope to use my gifts to bring some kindness and joy into the world, we could use it!"

So there you have it. Reading these makes me feel hopeful that all people are looking to rise above their challenges and move forward. The key is that we do need to have that faith that God is with us and has plans for the good for us. We need to continue on and know that we are blessed no matter what. Each of us has so many gifts that we can share with one another, now is the time to bring them forth for God is with us.

**Till next week,
Sister Theresita**

RCIA MINISTRY

"I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, And there will be one flock, one shepherd."

1/16	2 nd Sunday	The Sacrament of Marriage
1/23	3 rd Sunday	The Sacraments of Healing
1/30	4 th Sunday	The Eucharist



**SECOND COLLECTION THIS
WEEKEND**
JANUARY 14TH & 15TH

***IS TO HELP WITH SNOW
REMOVAL COSTS***

**YOUR GENEROSITY IS SO
GREATLY APPRECIATED**

Music Ministry

Well, we are back in ordinary time. The sounds of Christmas fade and the future awaits Lent and Easter. Now I start to look ahead to the next church season. The Mass parts will stay the same until Ash Wednesday.

Now is the time to think about joining the choir. Did you like what you heard at Christmas and want to become part of the Music ministry? Just come to a rehearsal or see me, Margaret Adams, after Mass on the weekend. It is easy to join and fun too.

Remember "he who sings prays twice"

See you on Sunday

Parish Social Ministry



We Remember...

***Gloria M. O'Brien
Anthony Novellino***

Safely home in the arms of Jesus

Our Food Pantry Needs:

**Paper Towels
Dinty Moore Stew
Hormel Chili**



Practical Ways to Care for Creation

Go outside. Connecting with creation and being reminded of God's goodness is a powerful way to motivate ourselves and others to care for our earth.



This Sunday, January 16th, is National Religious Freedom Day.

Please pray for the protection of religious freedom for members of all faiths.

Consider spending some time in quiet prayer on Mondays at Eucharistic Adoration. Perhaps you would like to join your fellow parishioners in the Prayer Room of Church at 8 am to recite the Rosary. Teach your children/grandchildren how to pray a Rosary. There are a number of Catholic based websites for children to learn more about the Rosary.

[Rosary Activities \(thereligianteacher.com\);](http://thereligianteacher.com/)
<https://www.teachingcatholickids.com/teaching-children-the-rosary>



JANUARY 19-27, 2022

9 Days for Life is a novena for the protection of human life. Each day's intention is accompanied by a short reflection and suggested actions to help build a culture of life.

Join today at www.9daysforlife.com!



3 WAYS TO JOIN



9DaysforLife.com

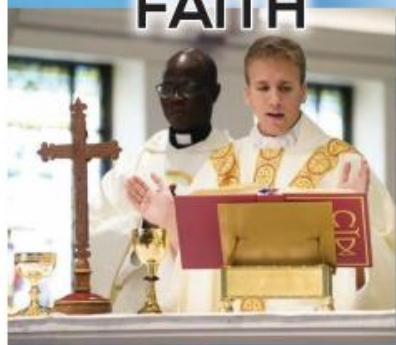
Image: A statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe decorates a side altar in the Church of Santa Maria della Famiglia at the Vatican. Dec. 15 (CNS photo/Paul Haring)

2022 Catholic Ministries Appeal

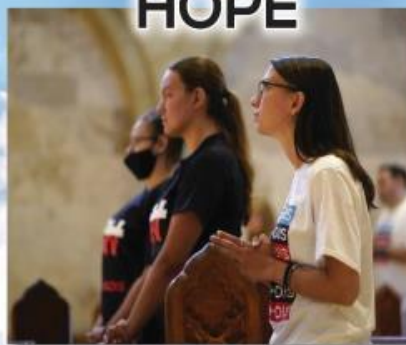
DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE

One Family in Mission – Building a Community of

FAITH



HOPE



& LOVE



"God's love calls us to move beyond fear. We ask God for the courage to put on faith, hope and love as we go out into the world and become the Word in body as well as spirit."

– Pope Francis

Please consider making a gift to the
2022 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



Saints Philip and James School and Academy

Open House and Registration

Sunday, January 30, 2022

11:00am – 1:00pm

Saints Philip and James School is dedicated to providing a Catholic education which nourishes the respect for individual diversity, fosters cooperative learning and promotes global awareness. Our primary commitment is to integrate the Gospel message with the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, social, and physical development of our students, thus enabling them to become the leaders of tomorrow.

Early Education-Grade 8 Programs

NURSERY

Half Day Program: 8:30am - 12:30pm

2 Days - Tuesday/Thursday

3 Days - Monday/Wednesday/Friday

5 Days - Monday - Friday

Full Day Program: 8:30am - 2:50pm

2 Days - Tuesday/Thursday

3 Days - Monday/Wednesday/Friday

5 Days - Monday - Friday

PRE-KINDERGARTEN - 5 Day/Full Day

8:30 am - 2:50pm

KINDERGARTEN - GRADE 8

5 Day/Full Day

8:50am - 3:00 pm



- Before and After School Care
- Foreign Language – Spanish
- Band Program including Violin & Ukulele
- NYSSMA Member
- Variety of After School Clubs
- Drama Club/Broadway Jr.
- Prayer services/Spirit assemblies throughout the year
- Weekly attendance at Mass

- Community-related service projects
- 9th Grade Math Class-Algebra
- 9th Grade Science Class-Living Environment
- CMSAA -Catholic Middle School Athletic Association
- Success on Catholic High School Entrance Exam
- Weekly Electives for Academy students
- iPad/Chromebook Classrooms
- And Much More!



For further information and to arrange a tour, please call 631-584-7896

www.sspjschool.net

The Knightline

Sts. Philip & James

Council 12839



Grand Knight's Message

WELCOME TOM SICA ~ GRAND KNIGHT~ STS. PHILIP & JAMES PARISH

Tom has been a Parishioner of Sts. Philip & James Parish since his family moved here in 1968. Tom and his wife Evelyn were married in the parish in 1984. Both of their children, Elizabeth and Robert attended the parish school and received their sacraments in the parish.



Elizabeth and her Husband, Christopher were married in our church in 2013 and Robert, (Father John Sica) is an ordained Dominican Priest who has celebrated many masses at SSPJ Parish while he is visiting his parents.

When his children were attending SSPJ School, Tom was a member of and eventually the President of the SSPJ School Board.

Tom has also been active in parish affairs and at one time was a member of the Parish Council.

Tom has been an active Knight in the SSPJ Knights of Columbus Council 12839 for over twenty years. He has participated in many of the Knights fundraisers and events and has chaired the Knights of Columbus golf outing since its inception 8 years ago.

At the present time, Tom is a retired attorney who practices occasionally and enjoys traveling and playing golf.

Recently, Tom & Evelyn have become Grand Parents! Their Grandson, Samuel was born in September.

Should you have any questions about joining our Council or the Knights of Columbus in general, do not hesitate to speak to Tom when you see him.

My Weekly Sunday Gospel Reflection For Grades 1-3

The Second Sunday in Ordinary Time ~ Sunday, January 16th, 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 22nd or Sunday,

January 23rd, 2022

The Gospel Message:



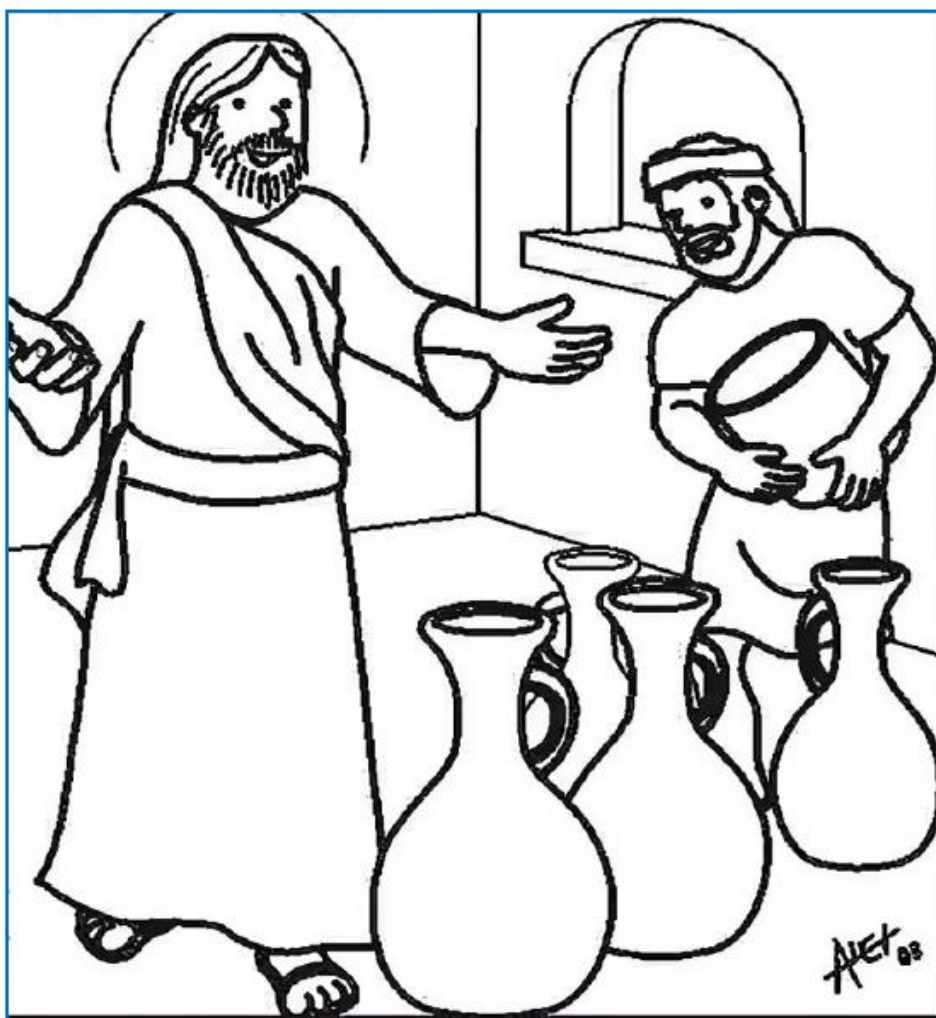
Jesus performs his first sign at a wedding feast in Cana.

He teaches us that God is always with us and responds to our needs.

When did Jesus help you when you needed him?

What did Jesus pour into the jugs?

Jesus,
Thank you for always
giving us what we
need. Help us to see
the needs in others
and lead them to your
loving grace.
Amen



Weekly Sunday Gospel Reflection For Grades 4-6

The Second Sunday In Ordinary Time~ Sunday, January 15th, 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 22nd or Sunday January 23rd, 2022

The Gospel Message:



At the wedding feast at Cana, Mary observed the needs of the hosts and brought the concern to Jesus, confident that Jesus would respond. We follow Mary's example when we observe and present these needs to God in prayer, confident that God answers our prayers in extraordinary ways.

What need did Mary bring to Jesus at the Wedding reception?

What did Jesus place into the empty jugs? What was poured out of the jugs once Jesus did this?

What do you think this lesson teaches you about asking Jesus for help?

Dear Jesus,

I sometimes forget that you are always by my side, especially when I am feeling down or needing help. Please guide me to your voice and the needs of others so that I can also be a loving presence to those who are hurting.

Amen

Weekly Sunday Gospel Reflection For Grades 7-8

The Second Sunday In Ordinary Time~ January 15th, 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 22nd or Sunday, January 23rd.



The Gospel Message: John 2: 1-11

Jesus performs his first sign at a wedding feast in Cana. At the wedding feast at Cana, Mary observed a human need and presented it to Jesus, confident that Jesus would respond. We follow Mary's example when we bring our needs and the needs of our world to God in prayer, confident that God will answer our prayers in extraordinary ways.

In your bible, read this this gospel passage: John 2: 1-11. This week, summarize your understanding of this gospel passage. What was the story about?

What is your understanding of the use of water and wine? When is another time you see their presence used?



Let Us Pray,

Dear Jesus, you are always near to those who call upon you. I forget the power of a simple prayer, "Jesus please" can do to help me when I am struggling. I call upon you to hear my prayers for myself and my family, but most importantly, please help me call upon you for the needs of others. Help me be an instrument of your love.

Amen

Good News

INSPIRATION FOR DAILY LIFE

3rd Sunday of Ordinary Time

Nehemiah 8:2-6,8-10
Ps 19:8-10,15
1 Corinthians 12:4-11
Luke 1:1-4; 4:14-21

Monday January 24
St. Francis de Sales
2 Samuel 5:1-7,10
Ps 89:20-22,25-26
Mark 3:22-30

Tuesday January 25
Conversion of St. Paul
Acts 22:3-16 or Acts 9:1-22
Ps 117:1bc,2
Mark 16:15-18

Wednesday January 26
Sts. Timothy and Titus
2 Tim 1:1-8 or Titus 1:1-5
Ps 96:1-2a,2b-3,7-8a,10
Mark 4:1-20

Thursday January 27
2 Samuel 7:18-19,24-29
Ps 132:1-5,11-14
Mark 4:21-25

Friday, January 28
St. Thomas Aquinas
2 Samuel 11:1-10a,13-17
Ps 51:3-4-7,10-11
Mark 4:26-34

Saturday, January 29
2 Samuel 12:1-7a,10-17
Ps 51:12-17
Mark 4:35-41

In today's Gospel, we see Jesus announcing the reality of his ministry: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set the oppressed free, and to proclaim a year acceptable to the Lord.... Today this Scripture passage is fulfilled in your hearing."

Did this ministry come to an end when he ascended to heaven and disappeared off the face of the earth? As the reading from Corinthians points out, *we* are now the Body of Christ on earth.

We are *all* – every one of us – *important* parts of this body! Do not underestimate yourself. God created you and brought you into the Church because you can make a significant difference. No one else can do what you can do, the way you can do it, in the plans that he has for making this world a better place through you.

We Christians are, as a community of believers, the Body of Christ on earth. Every time we receive the Body of Christ in Holy Communion, we receive what we are, and thus we're renewed in the continuation of Christ's ministry. His mission is our mission.

By receiving Jesus in the Eucharist, we consume not only Jesus in his full humanity and his full divinity, we



also consume his ministry. The Spirit of the Lord comes upon us. Every Mass is a renewal of our vocation to bring good news to the poor, to proclaim liberty to captives and recovery of sight to the blind,

to set the oppressed free, and to proclaim what is acceptable to God.

Whenever the prayers of others are not answered, whenever evil is allowed to prevail, whenever souls suffer because they have not heard the good news of salvation in Jesus, it's because the parts of Christ's earthly body that can do something about it are not doing it. God provides everything that's needed on earth *through us!* Jesus continues his ministry on earth *through us!*

Reflect & Discuss:

1. How does it feel to know that you're called to continue Christ's ministry? Reflect on how important you are to the Body of Christ and his mission.
2. What are you good at? What do you feel passionate about? What particular evils disturb you most? This is where you can make a difference!
3. Name ways that ordinary people can bring good news to the poor, or free captives, or help the blind see, or set the oppressed free, or proclaim what is acceptable to the Lord.
4. What are your experiences doing this?

WHAT WE DO IN PRIVATE

No one is an island; indeed, no one is ever really alone. If you are a person of faith or even just someone with a highly attuned intuitive sense, you will know that there is no such thing as a truly private act, for good or bad. Everything we do, no matter how private, affects others. We aren't isolated monads whose private thoughts and acts have no effect on anyone else. We know this, and not just from our faith. We know it intuitively by what we sense in our lives.

How do we sense what lies hidden in the privacy of other people's lives? Conversely, how does what happens in the privacy of our own lives affect others?

We don't have a metaphysics, a phenomenology, or a science through which we can tease this out explicitly. We just know it is true. What we do in the private recesses of our hearts and minds is in some ways sensed by others. Every religion worthy of the name teaches this, namely that we are all in some real, mystical, symbiotic communion with each other where ultimately nothing is truly private. This belief is shared by basically all the great world religions – Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Taoism, and American and African Native religions. No religion allows for a private sin that does not affect the whole community.

This explains some of Jesus' teachings. Jesus teaches that it's not only our outward actions that help or hurt others; it's also our innermost thoughts. For him, not only may we not do harm to someone we hate, we may not even think hateful thoughts about him in our private thoughts. Likewise it not enough to discipline ourselves sexually so as to not commit adultery, we have to even discipline the erotic thoughts we have about others.

Why? What's the harm in private thoughts? It is more than the danger that if we think certain bad thoughts about others we will eventually act them out (true though this may be). What is at issue is something deeper, something contained explicitly in the Christian notion of the *Body of Christ*.

As Christians, we believe that we are all members of one living organism, the Body of Christ, and that our union with each other is more than metaphorical. It is real, as real as the physicality of a living body. We are not a corporation, but a living body, a living organism, where all parts affect all other parts. Hence, just as in a live body, healthy enzymes help bring health to the whole body, and infected and cancerous cells threaten the health of the whole body, so too inside the Body of Christ. What we do in private is still inside the body. Consequently, when we do virtuous things, even in private, like a healthy enzyme, we help strengthen the immune system within the whole body. Conversely, when we are unfaithful, when we are selfish, when we sin, no matter that this is only done in private, like an infected or cancerous cell, we are helping break down the immune system in the body. Both healthy enzymes and harmful cancer cells work in secret, below the surface.

This has important implications for our private lives. Simply put, nothing we think or do in private does not have an effect on others. Our private thoughts and actions, like healthy enzymes or infected cells, affect the health of the body, either strengthening or weakening its immune system. When we are faithful, we help bring health to the body; when we are unfaithful, we are an infected cell challenging the immune system within the body.

Whether we are faithful or unfaithful in private affects others, and this is not something that is abstract or mystical. For example, a spouse *knows* when his or her partner is unfaithful, irrespective of whether or not the affair is exposed. Moreover, the spouse knows this not just because there may be subtle betrayals of the infidelity in the other's body language and behavior. No, she knows this at a gut level, inchoately, mystically, because in some dark inexplicable way *she senses the betrayal as a strain on the health and integrity of their marriage*. This may sound more metaphorical than real, but I invite you to check it out in life. We *feel* infidelity.

We know some things consciously and others unconsciously. We know certain things through observation and others intuitively. We know through our heads, our hearts, and our guts, and through all three of these faculties, sometimes (because inside of a body all parts affect each other) we know something because we sense it as either a tension or a comfort inside our soul. There are no private acts. Our private acts, like our public ones, are either bringing health or disease to the community.

I leave the last words to the poets: *If you are here faithfully, you bring great blessing.* (Parker Palmer) *If you are here unfaithfully, you bring great harm.* (Rumi)