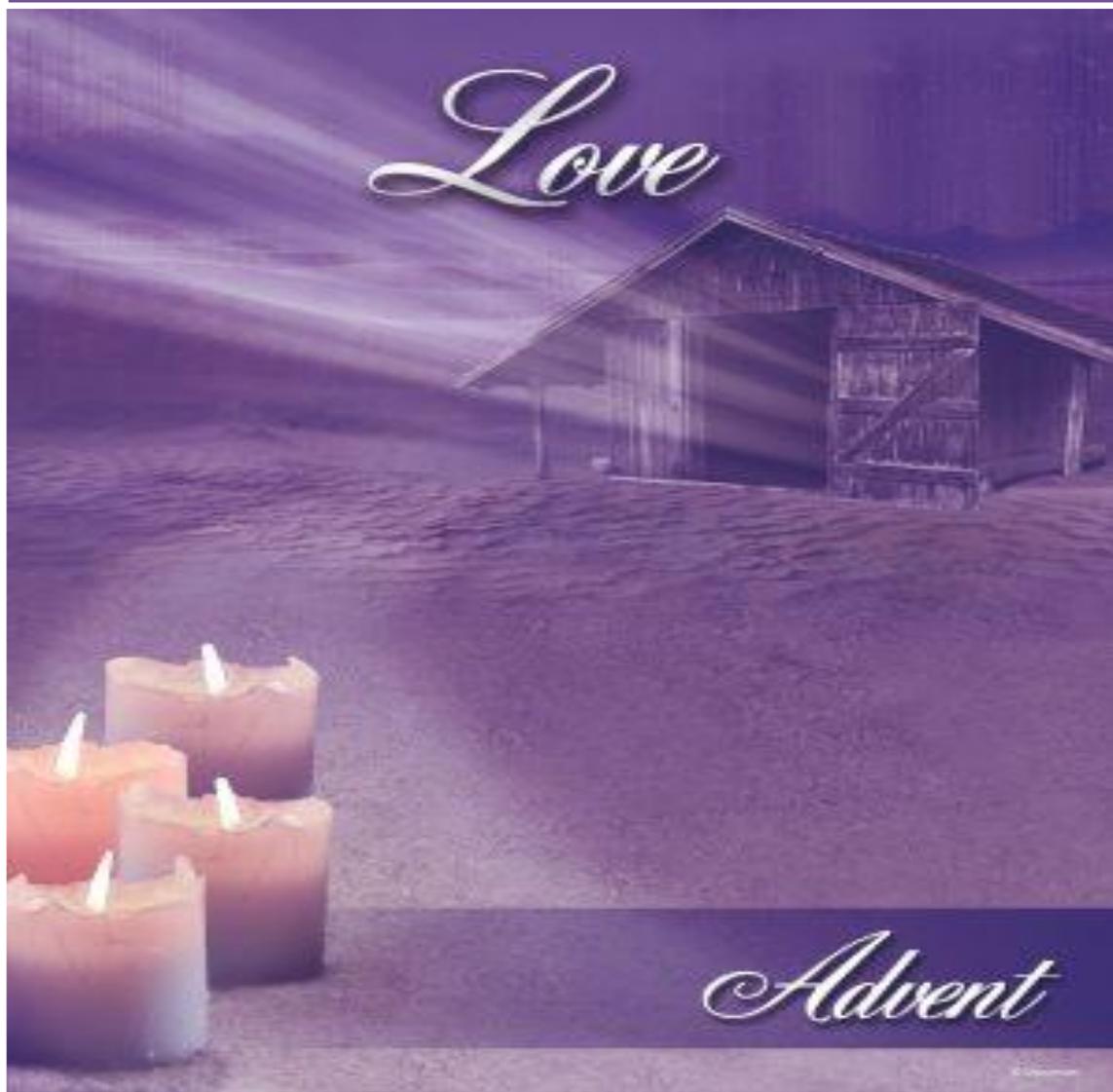




The Parish of Saints Philip and James  
1 Carow Place, St. James, NY 11780

631-584-5454

December 19th, 2021  
Fourth Sunday of Advent



*"Blessed are you who believed that what was spoken to  
you by the Lord would be fulfilled."*

*Luke 1:45*

*"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

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

Weekly Collection: December 12th, 2021: \$13,036.

Faith Direct : (131 Participants) 3,622

Total Collections: \$16,658.

Collection for Immaculate Conception: (To DRVC) \$ 1,487.

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,

*One of the things I love in today's gospel is how baby John takes a literal leap of faith which his mother can feel. I wonder if we are as aware of the nearness of Christ as we are of the approach of Christmas? When Christ is present, as he promised to be when two or more are gathered in his name, do our hearts leap to attention? Does new life stir within us perceptibly?*

*Upon hearing this, some folks will nod and smile, knowing the experience well and intimately. Others may feel something spiritually exotic is being spoken of, an apparition that does not and is not meant to include them. The commemoration of the Visitation of Mary and Elizabeth is your personal invitation to welcome that experience for yourself. Jesus would like to visit with you. He may come hidden in the body of another: a friend or family member, woman or man or child, homeless stranger, or familiar neighbor. It makes no difference. Wherever you are, look for him.*

*Many thanks to all who so generously joined in our Pick a Star program. It was a delight to watch the caravan of goods (along with all the gift cards!) be carried over to the Bethany Center! No doubt, many, many hearts will be touched by your goodness!*

*As we look forward to celebrating Christmas this Saturday let's seize the opportunity to welcome the many who join us to celebrate this great feast. While the covid pandemic is still very much with us, we still anticipate many more people at Christmas Masses. Let's allow the spirit who sang in Mary's heart to sing in our hearts. Let's make a special effort offer warm greetings to all and to allow Jesus to touch our lives, birthing wonder, love, faith and hope in our hearts.*

*I wish you many blessings this Christmas and offer many thanks for the many ways you have lived out being Apostles of Hope. For the past few years, we've printed this prayer in the bulletin. We do so again this year.*

## A Christmas Prayer

**(Perhaps your family might pray this prayer as a special grace before Christmas dinner. The blank lines are for family members to name the fun, food and family they want to pray for.)**

**Loving God, at Christmas we celebrate the gift of Jesus, and we thank you for all the many and different gifts in our lives.**

**Thanks for fun -**

- for football and baseball and bowling,
- for Monopoly and Candyland and Words With Friends,
- for singing and dancing and moments of laughter,
- for \_\_\_\_\_.

**Thanks for food -**

- for turkey and ham and pasta,
- for Christmas cookies, candy canes and apple pie,
- for stuffing and gravy and even some vegetables,
- for \_\_\_\_\_.

**Thanks for family -**

- for moms, dads, kids, brothers, and sisters,
- for grandmas, grandpas, aunts, uncles and cousins,
- for extended family - our neighbors, our friends, our parish,
- for \_\_\_\_\_.

**Finally, thank you for the gift of Jesus being born and being with us every day in every way.**

**Jesus, you bring us joy and hope. You show us how to love one another.**

**Help us to share our many gifts with others.**

**Jesus, you are our best gift! Amen!**

Peace,

*Father Tom*

# Mass Intentions, For the week of December 19th, 2021

**For the Week of  
December 19th, 2021**

**Our Bread & Wine are offered  
In Memory of,  
Russell Armstrong**

**“On his 22nd Birthday in  
Heaven”**

**With all our love, your family**

**The Pro-Life Rose  
For the Week of,  
December 19th, 2021  
Is Offered for,**

**William Thomas Fisher**

**Beloved Son, Husband,  
Father & Brother**

**“Love Is Forever”  
Your Loving Family**



*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 Scomillio  
Joseph H

**Joseph**  
James Macchiano  
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 Kevin  
Maria Clark  
Marie del Cielo  
Marilyn Suli  
Matthew Parrella  
Marie & Frank Fiecco  
Melissa C.  
Michael Fisher  
Michael Viviano  
Mike Lofaro  
Monsignor Iocavacci  
Nancy & Paul Bertran  
Nancy Cuccinotta  
Pasquale Savarese  
Pat LeDoux  
Peter Donach  
P.I.  
Ricardo Buffit  
Riordan Cavooris  
Richard Chiorando  
Robert Koop  
Sara Jean Andersen  
Stephen Dolce  
Suzanne Orlando  
Tara Cesarski  
Vivien Cordes  
Veronica Broderick  
Wayne Hendricks  
William Capurso

<b>Saturday December 18th</b>	<b>Presider: Father Tom Lector: Shor/Student EM: Sisti/Anderson/ Damato</b>	<b>9:15am  5:00pm</b>	<b>Evelyn Eustace  Deacon Ken Maher</b>
<b>Sunday December 19th</b>	<b>Presider: Father Tom Lector: Koke/Auletta EM: Koke/Martin/ Portanova</b>	<b>8am</b>	<b>For the People of SSPJ</b>
	<b>Presider: Father Joe Lector: Nicastro/Burke EM: Luna/Amen/Latino</b>	<b>10:00am</b>	<b>Margaret Castiglie</b>
	<b><u>Collective Mass</u> Presider: Father Joe Lector: Just/Latino EM: Napolitano/ Consenz/Samson</b>	<b>12:00pm</b>	<b>James Sangemino John P. Boland Ann Sacks Goerge Gates Roy Viducich Kim Valpolicella</b>
<b>Monday December 20th</b>	<b>Late Advent Weekday</b>	<b>7:30am  9:15am</b>	<b>William LaBrake  Philip Giarruputo , Angelo &amp; Theresa Marinello</b>
<b>Tuesday December 21st</b>	<b>Late Advent Weekday Saint Peter Canisius</b>	<b>7:30am  9:15am</b>	<b>Robert &amp; John Assatly  Theresa Orlik</b>
<b>Wednesday December 22nd</b>	<b>Late Advent Weekday</b>	<b>7:30am  9:15am</b>	<b>Living~Juan Madariaga  Mary &amp; Bernard Buckley</b>
<b>Thursday December 23rd</b>	<b>Late Advent Weekday</b>	<b>7:30am  9:15am</b>	<b>Eva Maria &amp; Philip Alaimo <u>Collective Mass:</u> William Thomas Fisher John &amp; Joan Purcell Matthew Ryan Martin</b>
<b>Friday December 24th</b>	<b>Late Advent Weekday</b>	<b>7:30am  9:15am</b>	<b>No Intentions  No Intentions</b>
<b>Saturday December 25th</b>	<b>The Nativity of the Lord</b>	<b>8:00am 10:00am 12:00 noon</b>	<b>No Intentions</b>
<b>Sunday December 26th</b>	<b>Presider: Father Joe Lectors: EM:</b>	<b>8:00am</b>	<b>For the People of SSPJ Parish</b>
	<b>Presider: Father Tom Lectors: EM:</b>	<b>10:00am</b>	<b>Christmas Novena</b>
	<b><u>Collective Mass</u> Presider: Father Tom Lector:ino EM:</b>	<b>12:00pm</b>	<b>Charles Forzano Gertrude Christy Mary Ellen Sanders Helen Cuttaia John Bardong Sophia &amp; Daniel Cyganowski</b>

# Sts. Philip & James 2021 Christmas Mass Schedule



## Christmas Eve

4:00pm Mass Upstairs  
4:00pm Mass Downstairs  
6:00pm Upstairs  
8:00pm Upstairs

## Christmas Day

8:00am Upstairs  
10:00am Upstairs  
12 noon Upstairs & Downstairs

## New Year's Eve

5:00 pm Mass

## New Year's Day

8:00am Mass  
10:00am Mass  
12:00pm Mass



*As we gratefully come together to celebrate the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ,*

*We ask that each of you express your love, gratitude, and understanding by*

### **WEARING YOUR FACE MASK INSIDE OF CHURCH**

*Let us continue to celebrate with Hope, Peace, Joy, Love and the Light of Jesus in our hearts this Christmas Season and always*

*Thank you from SSPJ Parish and from each heart you are sitting with this Christmas season*



## **THE BLESSING OF TIME**

*Please join us at the 5:00pm Mass on December 31st for the Blessing of Time.*

*Bring your watches, clock, cell phone, calendar or any other instrument used to measure or track time to be blessed during mass.*

*Right after, join us for a short celebration as we welcome in the New Year!*

*We Invite You to Decorate the Church for the Christmas Season*

*On Thursday, December 23rd, 2021 at 10am*

*If you have any questions, please contact the Parish Center at*

*631-584-5454*



*"Oh Come Let Us Adore Him"*

## SSPJ MUSIC MINISTRY INVITES ALL TO A CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Please join us this evening, Sunday, December 19th, 2021, as the Music Ministry presents our annual Christmas Concert, at 6pm.

All are welcome.

Our hope is that music fills your heart as you make your final preparations for Christmas.

Lord, tonight we lose ourselves in the infant,  
tiny, vulnerable, new-born,  
whom we encounter as the savior of the world.  
We have come to this night with our gift of music.

It is the finest we have,  
well-polished, glimmering, sparkling winter song,  
meant for infant ears

as the first song of his birthing night.

Help us to find you in our worship tonight.

Let our music take us to a more tender place.

Lift our souls to your birthing place,

where all creation pauses in awe

at the possibility,

the reality of communion.

The blending of our humanity and your divinity.

May the rapture of the miracle enfold us,

inspire us,

so that all may

be filled with Christmas holiness

Jeanne Hunt

Everyone in the Music Ministry

wishes you a

Blessed Christmas and Happy New Year

Sing your praise to God during this Christmas Season and always.



### Calling All SSPJ School Alumni

Are you a former graduate or student of Saints Philip & James School?  
Ever wonder what your former classmate might be up to these days?

We'd love to hear from you and help you rekindle an old connection.  
Tell us more about yourself & become part of our new Alumni Directory  
Simply Scan this QR Code below & fill-in the questionnaire.



Looking forward to hearing from you!!

# Love



## Fourth Sunday of Advent

On the brink of Jesus' coming into the world, we anticipate, yet try to remain grounded in this present moment. Let us not neglect the gift of this very time and place; our waiting, our joy, our expecting; these are gifts! May we embrace them and reverence the goodness of this moment. Just as Mary journeyed to see her cousin Elizabeth in final preparation for Jesus' coming, we gather with our loved ones and those with whom we can share our joy as we look toward the miracle of Christmas.



#StJudePrayforUs  
National Shrine of St. Jude  
[www.shrineofstjude.org](http://www.shrineofstjude.org)

## An Advent Reflection from Sister T~

December 15, 2021

Dear Friends,

**In a few short days we will be celebrating the miracle in Bethlehem. I sometimes think that we constantly have our eye on the end event and forget the journey that gets us there. In the reflection book I am using REJOICE! They speak of the events that lead up to the promise and miracle of Bethlehem. So, let's look at some of them that lead us to the hidden stable of Bethlehem.**

**Mary's Annunciation:** It all began here what a different story of salvation we would have had not Mary proclaimed her YES. There were lots of unknowns, and yet she heard God's call and responded. It can be really scary. Have you ever found yourself in this place, being asked/called to something that has lots of unknowns? What is your response?

**The Visitation:** Mary couldn't wait to share the 'good news' with Elizabeth and also help her rejoice in her blessed state. She was going to minister to Elizabeth. Am I willing to celebrate someone else's success and share mine joyfully? What stops me if I can't, is it jealousy, pride...?

**Joseph's annunciation:** We sometimes forget that Joseph also experienced an Annunciation. It came at a time when Joseph was full of doubt and struggling with his relationship with Mary and God. Surprisingly God met Joseph where he was during his struggle. We need to remember that God meets us where we are and not where we think we should be. God loves us so much that after he meets us there, He moves us forward. Do I think I need to be perfect to present myself before God? What prevents me from believing God Loves me as I am and calls me to growth and greatness?

**The Census:** God certainly has a clever plan, and it always brings things together. A census, why a census? The fascinating thing about the Advent story is that it is FULL OF SURPRISES! Just when Joseph and Mary thought they had mastered the last surprise, here comes the census. Another surprise to adjust to. God is the God of Surprises, and He uses the surprises for His glory. How do we deal with the surprises that catch us off guard? They can bring out the best and worst of us. Sometimes we need to step back and just breathe. Easier said than done, the key is to stay in relationship with God and ask Him what He is doing in your life.

**The Pilgrimage:** Life is Hard, there is no doubt about it and for Joseph and Mary who have been facing each surprise with a positive attitude the journey of the trip to Bethlehem almost seemed to be the last straw. This trip of 90 miles was complicated by Joseph's lack of means and Mary's delivery date close at hand. Could things get any harder? But God wanted to enter real life and life is hard. The message is that He is with us especially in the hard times, Emmanuel- God with us!

**The Inn:** NO ROOM! Can this be? The savior needs to be born in a special place. Although there was no room for them in the usual places, we know God provided. (more to come on that) No room in the Inn what about in our hearts? After most of this Advent has passed, have I found room for the Holy Family? Christ wants to be born in my heart. What two things can I do to make room in my heart for Jesus? I am sure you can come up with a few ideas. I have given you lots to think about before we reach the miracle of Christmas. May your week be filled with a Surprising Journey!

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."*



12/19	4 <sup>th</sup> Sun Advent	Charity
1/2	Epiphany	New Year's Day Weekend
1/9	Baptism of Lord	Sacraments of Initiation: Baptism & Confirm.
1/16	2 <sup>nd</sup> Sunday	The Sacrament of Marriage
1/23	3 <sup>rd</sup> Sunday	The Sacraments of Healing
1/30	4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday	The Eucharist

## Parish Social Ministry

*God be in my head, and in my understanding. God be in mine eyes, and in my looking. God be in my mouth, and in my speaking. God be in my heart, and in my thinking. God be at mine end, and at my departing.*

**We Remember in Our Hearts, In Our Prayers....**

*Jessica Connors  
Ann De Luca  
Kelly Clayton*

**Safely Home....**



The most fundamental law is to recognize that we share the planet with other beings, and that we have a duty to care for our common home.



### Religious Education News

To Our Wonderful Families and Students,

Religious education classes will not be held -  
online or in person from:

Sunday, December 19th, 2021- December 26th,  
2021

Classes will resume:  
January 2nd, 2022

Wishing each of you a very Blessed  
Christmas and Happy and  
healthy New Year



### DECEMBER PRAYER OF THE MONTH

*Glory be to the Father  
and to the Son  
and to the Holy Spirit.  
As it was in the  
beginning,  
is now, and ever shall be,  
world without end.  
Amen.*

### A PRAYER FOR ADVENT

Lord Jesus, Master of both light and darkness, send your Holy Spirit upon our preparations for Christmas.

We who have so much to do  
seek quiet spaces to hear your voice each day.

We who are anxious over many things  
look forward to your coming among us.

We who are blessed in so many ways  
long for the complete joy of your Kingdom.

We whose hearts are heavy  
seek the joy of your presence.

We are your people, walking in darkness, yet seeking the light. To you we say, "Come, Lord Jesus!"

-Father Henri JM Nouwen



## The Great Blessings at SSPJ School!

Congratulations and God Bless Daniel and his sister Alexa on their Baptism!



Mr. & Mrs. Porter, parents of Daniel, a Second Grade student at SSPJ School have committed to raising their son and daughter in the Catholic faith. Surrounded by classmates and the entire school community Daniel and Alexa were Baptized. Thank you to our Pastor, Fr. Tom and our Pastoral Associate, Sr. Theresita for making this celebration so special.



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

The Fourth Sunday of Advent ~ Sunday, December 19th, 2021

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

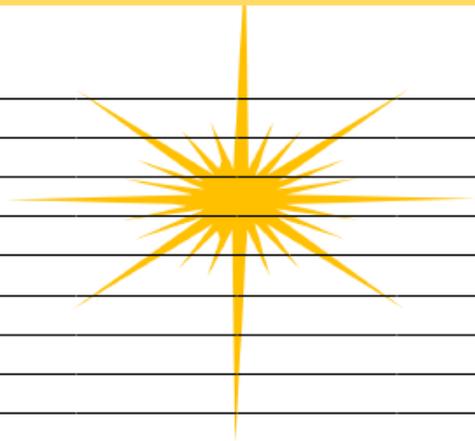
Please share this time with Jesus, Complete your reflection from your heart, **and bring it to mass with you next weekend Christmas Day, December 24th or 25th or Sunday, December 26th, 2021**

### **My Christmas Prayer to Jesus....**

*Writing a prayer is sending Jesus a beautiful message from your heart....it begins with a "Thank you" for all the wonderful blessings he has filled your heart with...Then, during times that we feel hurt or worried, it is then that we offer those worries to Jesus, so that he can hold them in his loving hands for you, Finally, we ask Jesus to fill our hearts with HOPE, with PEACE, with JOY and with LOVE so that we can continue the journey as Apostles of Hope with Loving Hands of a Servant.*

*Wishing you all a Blessed, Beautiful Christmas, your prayers will lie with Jesus in the manger upon the Altar during this Christmas season.*

Dear Jesus,



Love,



**Weekly Sunday Gospel Reflection For Grades 4-6**

The Fourth Week of Advent~ Sunday, December 19th, 2021

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 on Sunday December 26th, 2021**

**My Christmas Thank You to Jesus....**

*We sometimes ask Jesus more than we thank him for all the wonderful blessings he has offered us.*

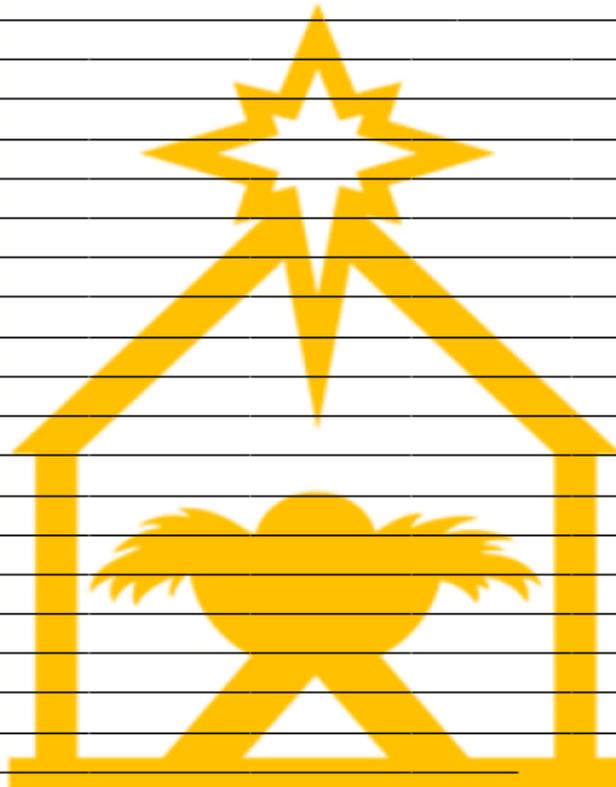
*This Christmas, we ask you to share in your heart all those treasured things that came into your life from Jesus. We thank him in so many different ways~especially when we respond to the needs of others.*

*Wishing you all a Blessed, Beautiful Christmas, your prayers will lie with Jesus in the manger upon the Altar during this Christmas season.*

Dear Jesus,

THANK YOU

FOR.....



Love,

\_\_\_\_\_

Weekly Sunday Gospel Reflection For Grades 7-8

Fourth Week of Advent ~ Sunday, December 19th, 2021

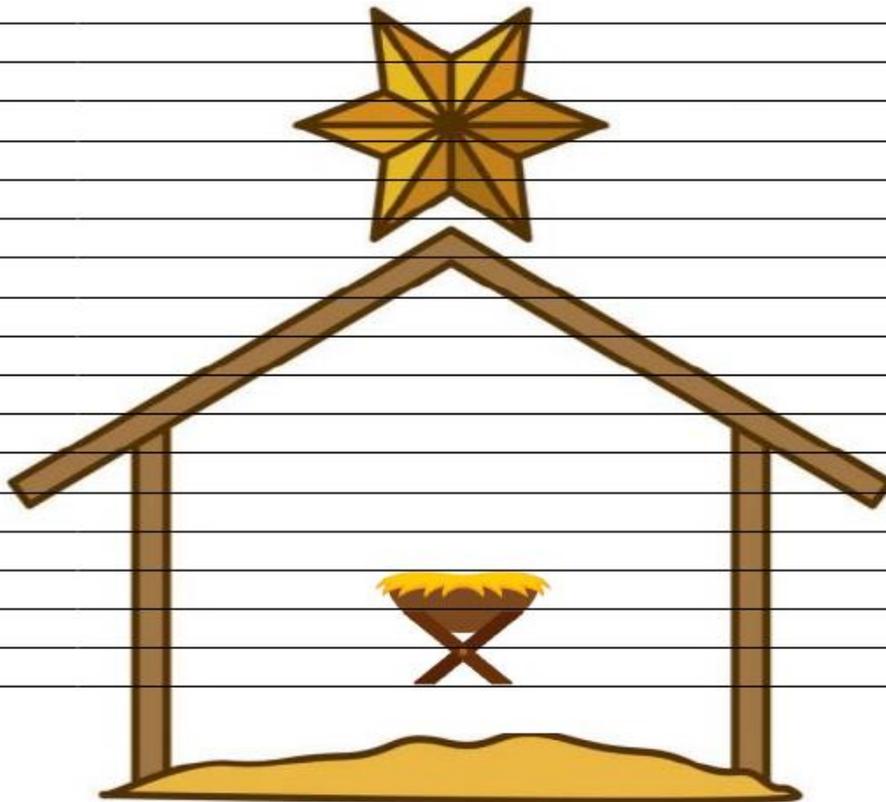
Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_ SSPJ SCHOOL

Please share this time with Jesus, Complete your reflection from your heart,  
Next Weekend, Sunday December 26th, 2021

**My Christmas Reflection~ How do I reflect the image of Jesus**

*It isn't easy to live up to the example that Jesus life has taught us. Sometimes, it is downright tough. But, you do, in your own very special ways, imitate him, especially when you recognize the needs of others. This Christmas, we ask you to share in your heart the ways your heart and life imitate the footsteps of Jesus, and thank him for his powerful intercession upon your choices, your feelings, and your journey with him as you prepare for your Confirmation. Wishing you all a Blessed, Beautiful Christmas, your prayers will lie with Jesus in the manger upon the Altar during this Christmas season.*

Dear Jesus,  
Please guide  
me.....



Love,

# Good News

INSPIRATION FOR DAILY LIFE

## Solemnity of the Holy Family

Sirach 3:2-6,12-14 or  
1 Sam 1:20-22,24-28  
Ps 128:1-5 or  
Ps 84:2-3,5-6,9-10  
Colossians 3:12-21 or  
1 John 3:1-2,21-24  
Luke 2:41-52

**Monday December 27**  
**St. John the Apostle**  
1 John 1:1-4  
Ps 97:1-2,5-6,11-12  
John 20:1a,2-8

**Tuesday December 28**  
**Holy Innocents**  
1 John 1:5 – 2:2  
Ps 124:2-5,7b-8  
Matthew 2:13-18

**Wednesday December 29**  
1 John 2:3-11  
Ps 98:1-3,5b-8  
Luke 2:22-35

**Thursday December 30**  
1 John 2:12-17  
Ps 98:7-10  
Luke 2:36-40

**Friday December 31**  
1 John 2:18-21  
Ps 96:1-2,11-13  
John 1:1-18

**Saturday January 1**  
**Mary, Mother of God**  
Numbers 6:22-27  
Ps 67:2-3,5-6,8  
Galatians 4:4-7  
Luke 2:16-21

Saint John Paul II wrote about today's Gospel story in his encyclical on the Rosary, *Rosarium Virginis* (paragraph #20). This scripture, he pointed out, reveals that Jesus was already wholly dedicated to his Father's affairs. And it shows "the radical nature of the Gospel, in which even the closest of human relationships are challenged by the absolute demands of the Kingdom." Which relationships? Family relationships!

Today, we are like Mary and Joseph in their moment of failing to understand the words of Jesus. His teachings challenge us to accept a more difficult life, a life of doing good to our enemies, taking a stand against injustices, standing up for Christian values, getting persecuted for it, turning the cheek and going the extra mile, a life of courageously adhering to the ways of God.

Our preference, when it's inconvenient or unpleasant to be so holy, is to rationalize and make excuses for any behavior that the world says is good and right but which

contradicts the Church's scripture-based teachings. However, if we are sincere about following Christ, we are willing to do what is difficult. And it's usually in the doing that we begin to understand the benefits of becoming more like Christ.



Without this understanding, however, we have to trust that the words of Jesus are truth. Like Mary and Joseph, we need to ponder in our hearts what we do not understand and at the same time move forward in holy living. Then we discover the joy

that comes from a life that's lived wholly in Christ.

On this Feast of the Holy Family, let us pray that Mary and Joseph will help us hear Jesus whenever our troubles or temptations get so distracting that we lose sight of him. Let us learn to recognize that Jesus is always present with us in his Holy Spirit, helping us, guiding us, and mercifully loving us, especially in the challenges we face.

### Reflect & Discuss:

1. What teaching of the Church have you rationalized away so that you don't have to obey it? Or what teaching in scripture?
2. Assume your disobedience is due to not understanding what is really being taught. What will you do to learn more about it?
3. What is it about the relationships between Jesus, Mary and Joseph that appeals to you?
4. What has this taught you about God's Kingdom?

LISTENING TO OUR SOULS

During the Nazi occupation of France during the Second World War, a group of Jesuit theologians who were resisting the occupation published an underground newspaper, *Cahiers du Temoignage Chretien*, which had a famous opening line in its first issue: "*France, take care not to lose your soul.*" That brought to mind a comment I once heard from Peter Hans Kolvenbach, then the Superior General of the Jesuits. Speaking of globalization, he commented that one of the things he feared about globalization was *the globalization of triviality*. Fair warning!

Today we are witnessing a trivialization of soul within the culture. Few things are sublime anymore, meaning few things are soulful anymore. Things that used to have deep meaning are now related to more casually. Take sex, for instance. More and more (with a few churches being the sole holdouts) the culture believes that sex need not be soulful, unless you want it to be and personally invest it with such meaning. For example, I recently heard an argument in which someone downplayed the moral seriousness of a teacher sleeping with one his students with this logic: what's the difference between this and a professor playing a game of tennis with his student? His point? Sex needn't be special unless you want it to be special. What makes sex different from a game of tennis?

Only someone dangerously naïve does not see a huge *soulful* difference here. A game of tennis does not touch the soul with any depth. Sex does, and not just because some churches say so. We see this when it is violated. Freud once said that we understand things most clearly when we see them broken. He's right, and nowhere is this clearer than in how sexual violence and exploitive sex affect a person. When sex is wrong, there is violation of soul that dwarfs anything that ever results from a tennis game. Sex is not soulful because some churches say so. It's soulful because it's connected to the soul in ways that tennis isn't. Ironically, just as the culture is trivializing society's traditional view on sex as innately soulful, persons working with those suffering sexual trauma are seeing ever more clearly how exploitive sex is on a radically difference plane, in terms of soul, than playing tennis with someone.

However, it's not just that we are trivializing the soulful; we are also struggling to hear our souls. It's noteworthy that today this warning is coming not as much from the churches as from a wide range of voices from agnostic philosophers to Jungian analysts. For example, the leit motif in the writings of the agnostic philosopher of soul, James Hillman, is that the task of life is to live soulfully and we can do that only by truly listening to our souls. And, he submits there's a lot at stake here. In a book entitled, *Suicide and the Soul*, he suggests that what sometimes happens in a suicide is that the soul, unable to make its cries heard, eventually kills the body.

Depth psychology offers similar insights and suggests that the presence in our lives of certain symptoms like depression, excess anxiety, guilt disorders, and the need to self-medicate are often the soul's cries to be heard. James Hollis suggests that sometimes when we have bad dreams it's because our soul is angry with us, and suggests that in the face of these symptoms (depression, anxiety, guilt, bad dreams) we need to ask ourselves: "*What does my soul want from me?*"

Indeed, what do our souls want from us? They want many things, though in essence, they want three things: to be *protected*, to be *honored*, and to be *listened to*.

First, our souls need to be protected from violation and trivialization. What lies deepest inside us, at the center of our souls, is something Thomas Merton once described as *le point vierge* (the "virgin point"). All that is most sacred, tender, true, and vulnerable in us is housed there, and while our souls send us constant cries wanting protection, they cannot protect themselves. They need us to protect their *point vierge*.

Second, our souls need to be honored, their sacredness fully respected, their depth properly recognized. Our soul is the "burning bush" before which we need to stand with our shoes off, reverent. To lose that reverence is to trivialize our own depth.

Finally, our souls need to be heard. Their cries, their beckonings, their resistances, and the dreams they give us while we sleep, need to be heard. Moreover, they need to be heard not only when they are buoyant, but also when they are heavy, sad, and angry. As well, we need to hear both their plea for protection and their challenge to us to take risks.

Soul is a precious thing worth protecting. It's the deepest voice inside us, speaking for what's most important and most soulful in our lives, and so we need ever to heed the warning: *take care not to lose your soul*.