



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

631-584-5454

August 23rd, 2020
Twenty-first Sunday
In Ordinary Time



*"I will give you the keys to the kingdom of heaven.
Whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven; and
whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven."*

Matthew 16: 19-20

*"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-8pm

Open Thursday 9am-5pm

Open Saturday 10am-2pm

Closed Friday and Sunday

CLERGY

Father Tom Haggerty, Pastor

Father Patrick Osei-Poku-Associate Pastor

Deacon Ronald Blasius

Deacon John Keenan

Deacon Ken Maher

PASTORAL ASSOCIATE

Sister Theresita Donach, CSFN

BUSINESS MANAGER

Virginia Portanova

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ADMINISTRATOR

Catherine Darrow

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

TEXT TO GIVE PROGRAM:
ONLINE OFFERTORY
GIVING
TEXT:

148parishssphilipandjames
TO: 516-271-3338

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— Thursday 2-4pm
Friday 8-9pm

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
GREGORY DEVANEY- 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—2ND LT. US ARMY NATL.GUARD
STAFF SGT MICHAEL J BANG SPECIAL FORCES US ARMY

Financial Support Needed weekly to meet Parish budget:

Weekly Collection: Sunday August 16th, 2020

Religious Education donation:

Sanitizing donation:

Assumption

Faith Direct :

Total Weekly Collection:

\$ 10,317.

650.

500.

1,074.

3,035.

\$17,890.

\$15,576.

A Reflection from Sister T

August 19, 2020

Dear Friends,

As I sit to write this reflection, the sun is shining. It came out after a visit from Tropical Storm Isaias. Reminds me of the song from Annie, "The Sun Will Come Out Tomorrow." I am going on vacation for a week and so decided to write this reflection while I can, as internet can be hard to come by when I am away. With August nearing an end, I thought I would take one more look at the beauties of this season.

During my recent drive home, I couldn't help but take in all of the beautiful scenery that surrounded me, despite all the fallen trees and debris. The masterful work of our God still abounds, especially in the sunsets during this time of year near the water. During evening prayer, I came across this quote: "Beauty, like God, abounds. It is not where you look but how." (Taken from a photograph at the Carmelite Spiritual Center in Darien, IL)

It made me realize that there is beauty all around us, whether it's scenery, plants, animals, people. It is how we look at them that make all the difference in the world. The trees and mountains, as well as all the flat land, shines with God's glory. Even the road construction helps me to turn my focus to the beautiful sky and clouds.

On another level, the quote helped me think about how I look at different situations, people, and life in general -- "...it is not where you look but how." There is so much food for thought in that phrase. How do I look at difficulties? Do I let them get me down? It can be hard to remember that God is near when I am in the heat of a disagreement. How simple, loving, and peaceful our life and the life of those around us could be.

This story just came to mind: A king put out a decree asking for artists to paint the most peaceful scene they could. As you can imagine, they came up with the most serene sites. And yet the winning picture was a mother bird whose nest was in a crevice of a mountain. She was feeding her young in the midst of a tremendous thunderstorm. It was calm and peace in the midst of chaos. If only we could be so serene! I need a lot of practice!

This week, can you look and see that which abounds before you, no matter what it is? Take the time to see how you deal with the bounty. It will come in all sizes and shapes. How do you respond, not react? I know for me this will be a challenge, but what a difference it can make in our life and the life of others. Know for sure the Son will come out tomorrow and be with us on our journey!

*Till next week,
Sister Theresita*

Mass Intentions, For the week of August 23rd, 2020

*Our Bread & Wine
For the Week of
August 23rd, 2020*

Are Offered in Thanksgiving for

Father Patrick Osei-Poku

Thank you for sharing your
gifts ,your presence, your spirit, with
SSPJ

Love,

Your SSPJ Parish Family

Our Altar Candles

For the Week of
August 23, 2020

Are Illuminating the light of

Father Patrick Osei-Poku

Thank you for sharing your gifts,your
presence, your spirit, with SSPJ

Love,

Your SSPJ Parish Family

Remembering in Our Prayers~

<p>Angie Mingione Angela Amoroso Anna Ormsby Baby Ben Barbara Bombace Barbara Sisti Russo Mattia Rose Lubrano Belinda Groneman Belinda Vega Bob Keenan Brooke Remhild Claudia Chandler Daniel Radice Deirdre W. Dolores North Donna Patrissi Dylan Beach Ellie Walsh Ginny & John Rief Gladys Blake Gregory Parker Ida Wehman Jack Donohue John DeStefano J.C. Joseph S. Judy Cunnius</p>	<p>Alphonsus M.Hoonhout Antonette Sabatino Judy Rampola Kathleen N. Kitty Cronin Leon Donach Maria Clark Marie del Cielo Matthew Parrella Michael Fisher Mike Lofaro Monsignor Iocavacci Peter Donach P.I. Ricardo Buffit Riordan Cavooris Sara Jean Andersen Stephen Dolce Tara Cesariki Tom Focone Vivien Cordes Victoria Zubrycky Vicki Archdeacon William Quinn</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>For our Nation in time of crisis</i></p>
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Saturday	August 22nd, 2020 <i>The Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary</i> Presider: Father Patrick Lector: B. Thompson	9:15am	<i>Conor Semple</i>
		5:00pm	<i>Johanna Devlin</i>
Sunday	August 23rd, 2020 Presider: Father Kevin Lector: A. Willman	8am	<i>For the People of SSPJ</i>
		10:00am	<i>Robert Tardona</i>
	Collective Mass Presider: Father Kevin Lector: G. Hoonhout	12:00pm	<i>Fran Settoducato Richard J. Blake Theresa P. Orlik Joseph "Chickie" Martin</i>
Monday	August 24th, 2020~ <i>Saint Bartholomew</i>	7:30am	
		9:15am	<i>Richard J. Blake</i>
Tuesday	August 25th, 2020~ <i>St. Louis, St. Joseph Calasanz</i>	7:30am	
		9:15am	<i>Donalea Donach Vanos</i>
Wednesday	August 26th, 2020	7:30am	<i>John Long</i>
		9:15am	<i>Cynthia Decker</i>
Thursday	August 27th, 2020~ <i>Saint Monica</i>	7:30am	<i>John Fahey~</i>
		9:15am	<i>Jon Kessel</i>
Friday	August 28th, 2020~ <i>Saint Augustine</i>	7:30am	
		9:15am	<i>John Muller</i>
Saturday	August 29th, 2020~ <i>The Passion of Saint John the Baptist</i> Presider: Father Kevin Lector: M. Cashman	9:15am	<i>William Thomas Fisher</i>
		5:00pm	<i>Thomas Reilly</i>
Sunday	August 30th, 2020 Presider: Father Kevin Lector: P. Kanuika	8:00am	<i>For the People of SSPJ</i>
		10:00am	<i>Alan Evans</i>
	Collective Mass Presider: Father Kevin Lector: L. Kenton	12:00pm	<i>Steve Rannizzisi Peter j. Loughlin Anita Triolo</i>

***Please Join Us as we celebrate and thank Father Patrick Osei-Poku~
On Sunday, August 30th, 2020 at the 12:00mass~
Concelebrated by Father Tom and Father Patrick***

We ask that all register for this Mass of thanksgiving on our website: SSPJ.org . If you are unable to do so, please contact the Parish Center office at 631-584-5454 and we will be happy to assist you.

Father Patrick will be greeting parishioners after mass in the "Garden of the Sacred Heart" for your socially distant well wishes.

We wanted to make sure we send Father Patrick to his new parish knowing how much we love and appreciate all he has shared with us over the past five years. It was our intention to host a reception for Father Patrick in September pending CDC and DOH guidelines, unfortunately restrictions have not been eased in order for us to do so.

In lieu of a reception we will be giving Father Patrick a gift from the Parish.

Your understanding is very much appreciated.



A Note from Father Patrick~

On June 1 2015, I was appointed by Bishop Murphy of the Diocese of Rockville Center to work at St. Philip and James Parish. The five years at St. Philip and James Parish is my second longest assignment, in one place for the 25 years that I am a priest. The longest was when I worked for ten years as the notary to Kumasi Provincial Tribunal, which I combined with duties at St. Benedict Parish at Kotei in Kumasi. My other assignments within the period have also included teaching in St Hubert Seminary and a Chaplain to Immaculate Conception University at Davao City in the Philippines.

My life at St. Philip and James Parish has been full of exciting and painful events. It was always delightful to celebrate the mysteries of Christ's sacraments with families on some pleasant occasions and share with them their joyful moments. More and more, as I came to know the people it was also painful to witness the misfortunes and the sickness as well as the death of parishioners and some in their families. It was an exclusive privilege to share the inner depth of family life of many parishioners. The experience is a great deal of insight to my priestly life.

Largely, my life at the parish has been splendid. I have enjoyed a great amount of good health. I deeply cherish the true friendship I have received from the parishioners. I cannot recount the kindness shown to me during my birthdays, Christmas, and other festivities. I am indebted to the parish for the donation I received for the roofing of St, Thomas Church at Nahinso in Kumasi. No amount of words is enough to express my gratitude.

I am thankful to Fr. Thomas Haggerty , the Pastor of St. Philip and James Parish. We shared a comfortable life together at the rectory. I have learned a lot from my life with him to accrue more experience for my priestly life. We were occasionally blessed with visiting priests who came to assist in the parish. I appreciate the assistance and support received from the parish staff, the reverend deacons and the parish volunteers of the various ministries and services. I admire the efforts and the sacrifices made to collaborate the services rendered to the faithful of the parish.

Finally, I express my gratitude to Bishop John Barres for the trust reposed in me to be granted a new assignment at St. Joseph Parish at Kings Park. It is another opportunity for me to serve the diocese in another community. Similarly, I am gracious to Archbishop Gabriel Anokye for the extended permission granted to me to work in this diocese. It is my prayer that the Good Lord may bless the little we all do in His vineyard to promote His kingdom here on earth and hallow his name in the world.

At the heart of financially supporting our parish

Because....

*Giving is compassionate,
Giving is ministry,
Giving is wise,
Giving is worship,
and Giving is safe*

because we serve the God of abundant riches



Giving is Compassionate~

“Yet it was kind of you to share my trouble (Philippians 4:14)

Ministries care for hurting people around the world. If financial assistance will bring some relief, then giving will be an act of compassion. Christian compassion always extends beyond care for people’s physical well-being to their spiritual well-being. When you support Christian ministries striving to advance the gospel of Jesus Christ, you are being compassionate.

Parish Social Ministry

We Remember and we pray for the family of,

Mary Marino

He is Safely home...

FOOD PANTRY HELP

DINTY MOORE BEEF STEW

BABY WIPES

KING KULLEN & STOP & SHOP
GIFT CARDS

GAS GIFT CARDS
Thank you for sharing.



Regardless of how the face of the new school year evolves, one thing is certain, OUR CHILDREN WILL STILL NEED SUPPLIES.

Your contributions will be greatly appreciated. You may leave them in the Church Prayer Room, the St. Anthony’s Bread Closet or drop them off at the Rectory Office.

Crayola Washable Markers,
Crayola Crayons,
Colored Pencils,
Black & White Composition Books,
Loose Leaf Paper,
#2 Pencils,
Latex Free Erasers,
Index Cards, Rulers,
2 Pocket Folders,
Paper Mate Erasable Pens,
Highlighters,
Sharpies,
Pocket Dictionaries, Pocket Thesaurus
Back-Packs.

Thank you for your ongoing care and support.

Banns of Marriage

Second

Benjamin Ilg ~ SSPJ

To

Jessica Dobbins ~SSPJ

Care of Creation Four Reasons Christians Care for Creation

1. We care for creation because Christianity is a comprehensive worldview.
2. We care for creation because we live in it.
3. We care for creation because it reveals God’s character.
4. We care for creation because doing so validates and displays the gospel.

Sharing a... “cup of coffee” with SSPJ

Whether it's French press, a latte, a cold brew, a K-cup or an old-fashioned percolator – the relationship between coffee and coffee-lovers is fierce.

What better way to get a conversation started than over a fresh brewed cup?

“Coffee is the common man's gold, and like gold it brings to every person the feeling of luxury and nobility” – Sheik-Abd-al-Kadir

Coffee is more than popular: it's ubiquitous. Worldwide, we drink over 500 billion cups of coffee every year. American coffee drinkers average 3-and-a-half cups of coffee every day.

Coffee exporting alone is a \$20 billion dollar industry

I'm sure we can each place our own value on a cup of coffee, depending on the stress level of a day, the time of the day and who we are sharing it with. Would you be willing to share a cup of coffee with SSPJ every week...maybe once a month? There is great value to your \$5 cup of coffee.

We have approximately 4,000 registered families in our parish.

1,150 choose to be marked as inactive – meaning they are registered but do not wish to receive mailings, important information about our parish or use the envelopes to financially support the parish

132 families utilize Faith Direct for their donations. Perhaps they are snow-birds who chose to support their parish during the times they are away. Maybe they frequent different churches for convenience on weekends but chose to support their home parish of SSPJ. If they are like most people now-a-days, they prefer not to carry cash but to pay direct through on-line services. For whatever their reason, we are grateful for their contributions, and we save on envelope mailings too!

2830 families receive contribution envelopes monthly. Our weekly collections average \$13,000. An average of \$4.60 per family per week.


When we combine our efforts, the results could be astounding! The financial support of the parish seems to fall on a few generous contributors. All it takes is many people doing a small part for the greater good of all.

If 2,000 families shared one \$5 cup of coffee with the parish weekly – that would equate to \$260 a year per family OR \$520,000. Can you imagine the outreach we could provide to our community with those funds!

Perhaps one \$5 cup of coffee weekly is not doable for you and you would be able to sacrifice one cup of coffee a month – that you equate to \$60 a year. Multiply that times 2000 families and we would generate \$120,000.

It's not a far-off dream – it can easily be reality. A sacrifice indeed - but together we can do it. My cup is filled to the brim and I offer it to SSPJ – are you willing to join me in a cup of coffee yours?

Respectfully submitted by Virginia Portanova

▷ ALL I NEED TODAY ◁
is a little bit of
COFFEE & 
a whole lot of JESUS



As of August 18th, 2020, we have received pledges totaling \$98,054. toward our 2020 CMA Goal of \$111,000 and payments totaling \$85,489.

OUR PLEDGES ARE AT 88% OF GOAL
OUR PAYMENTS ARE AT 77% OF GOAL

During this very difficult time, it is with great appreciation and gratitude for your sacrifices and generosity to the SSPJ 2020 Catholic Ministries Appeal.

Our Parish receives its CMA rebate only when our payments received equal our goal of \$111,000

Our Parish Rebate will support us in the efforts necessary to ensure our compliance with regulations for maintaining the infrastructure of our Parish.

CATHOLIC MINISTRIES APPEAL

**“HELPING OTHERS
WHILE
HELPING OUR
PARISH”**



Learning from Saint Teresa of Calcutta

Next month, we celebrate the feast day of Saint Teresa of Calcutta. She was such an influential woman who touched the lives of so many people... and continues to do so even now! She reminds us that we are all called to be the *Hands of Christ's Mercy* in our communities today.

We need not be in the streets of Calcutta to do good for our brothers and sisters in Christ. We can help our community here on Long Island through the 2020 Catholic Ministries Appeal.

Your gift to the Catholic Ministries Appeal will help more than 600,000 of our sisters and brothers receive support and assistance from the funds shared through the CMA each year. It is rare that just one person or one parish could touch this many lives. The CMA brings us beyond the individual, the group and the parish and unites us as one Church of Long Island.

Saint Teresa of Calcutta, pray for us!

The Catholic Ministries Appeal is Stewardship in Action!

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

Thank You!

Make checks payable to:

Catholic Ministries Appeal

Parish _____ Pledge: \$ _____

Name _____ Down payment: \$ _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip: _____

Phone: _____





THANK YOU FATHER PATRICK!



Sts. Philip and James School's Students, Faculty, Staff and Parents
Thank You for all the **SPECIAL MEMORIES** that were shared
during your 5 years of service as Associate Pastor at SSPJ Parish.



GOD BLESS YOU ON YOUR NEW ASSIGNMENT!

God
Bless
You

WE WILL MISS YOU!



WON'T YOU PLEASE SUPPORT MARK STEPHEN'S EAGLE SCOUT FUNDRAISER? *Order Forms due by August 25th*

Hello, my name is Mark Stephen from Troop 7 here at SSPJ. I will be leading an Eagle Scout Project expected to take place in late August/early September. This project will focus on landscaping the front of the Mary B. Monte Building along with removing old shrubs and bushes. In order to start this project, all money must be raised via fundraiser/donations. Because of the current Covid guidelines traditional fundraising needed to be modified. I am running a Bagel Fundraiser with Everyday Bagels.

Attached, you will see an order form for the fundraiser. On this form you can order any type of bagel listed, all money will be used for the Eagle Scout Project. The order forms must be submitted to the rectory or mailed to me at 2 Martingale gate St. James with payment by August 25th.

I will deliver the bagels to the address you listed on the order form on Sat. August 29th. If you have any questions about donating, ordering, or the delivery you can call me at (631) 901-5673. Your support and generosity is greatly appreciated!

Eagle Scout Bagel Fundraiser

Mark Stephen's Eagle Scout Project Fundraiser Order Form

Sponsored By Everyday Bagels 731 Middle Country Rd, St. James



<u>Baker's Dozen(13): \$20</u>	Amount
<input type="radio"/> Plain.....	_____
<input type="radio"/> Sesame.....	_____
<input type="radio"/> Poppyseed.....	_____
<input type="radio"/> Onion.....	_____
<input type="radio"/> Everything.....	_____
<input type="radio"/> Whole Wheat.....	_____
<input type="radio"/> Whole Wheat Everything.....	_____
<input type="radio"/> Salt.....	_____
<input type="radio"/> Garlic.....	_____
<input type="radio"/> Egg.....	_____
<input type="radio"/> Egg Everything.....	_____
<input type="radio"/> Cinnamon.....	_____
<input type="radio"/> Pumpernickel.....	_____
<input type="radio"/> Sunflower.....	_____
<input type="radio"/> Blueberry.....	_____
<input type="radio"/> Chocolate.....	_____

Name: _____	Total: _____
Address: _____	
Contact Number: _____	Total Donation\$: _____

Celebrating First Holy Communion

"Let Jesus live in your heart"



Sunday is Special

God our loving Father,
Thank you for all the ways you bless me.
Help me to be aware that every person,
Place, and adventure I experience is an opportunity to love you more.
Fill me with a desire to change and grow, and give me the grace to become the -best-version-of-myself in every moment of every day.
Amen



Nicholas Comanzo
August 15th, 2020



Agnes Rizzo
August 15th, 2020



Daniel Keegan
August 15th, 2020



Brianna Feeny
August 15th, 2020



Emma Schaefer
August 10th, 2020



Jack Orth
August 12th, 2020



Abigail Mills
August 15th, 2020



Kellen Pennisi
August 15th, 2020

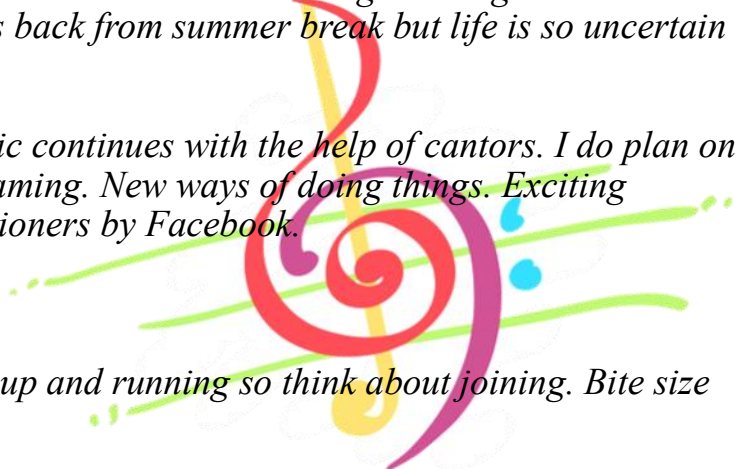
MUSIC MINISTRY

Normally during this time of the year, I would be excited about starting choir again. Start dates, rehearsal starting, seeing all our choirs back from summer break but life is so uncertain these days.

Choirs are on hold for the time being but music continues with the help of cantors. I do plan on exciting music happenings as we are live streaming. New ways of doing things. Exciting discoveries. Ways to reach more of our parishioners by Facebook.

Stay tuned we'll see what comes next.

*** Remember the **Baptism Music Ministry** is up and running so think about joining. Bite size pieces= tremendous help.*



Registration for the 2020~2021 Religious Education Year has begun

We welcome all New Families to our Religious Education Program! We ask that you contact the Religious Education Office at 631-584-3204 so that we can welcome you to our program and discuss information needed to register.

We welcome back all Religious Ed families and ask you to Complete the application for re-registration emailed to all families. If you should have any questions kindly contact the religious education office



A note on 2020-2021 Parish Family Contribution request...

Our parish has been blessed to weather the Pandemic with doors open, and a minimal staff managing daily the needs of the community as well as the needs of our Parishioners. Hands were extended to grieving families, hungry families, desperate souls searching for help during this very dark and uncertain time.

While mass attendance was called to a halt, the dedication of "A Parish Family" remained steady.

As all families encounter financial obligations ~ so too does Sts. Philip & James Parish. For that, we have been blessed by the generosity of the parishioners that consider SSPJ~ home... We do not receive funding from any other source, but through our weekly collections.

The Parish Family Contribution of \$325 or \$6.25 per week, assists SSPJ in continuing to offer help to those in need, provide religious instruction, retreats, and parental teaching resources to over 700 families registered in religious education, and allows us the grace to keep our doors open, our church sanitized and safe, and the utilities on.

If you have any concerns or if there is assistance we can provide please do not hesitate to reach out to us at 631-584-3204.

Thank you and may you continue to feel God's wonderful blessings in your hearts.

God Needs Better Press

The word "Protestant" is generally misunderstood. Martin Luther's protest that led to the Protestant reformation was not, in fact, a protest against the Roman Catholic Church; properly understood, it was a protest for God. God, in Luther's view, was being manipulated to serve human and ecclesial self-interest. His protest was a plea to respect God's transcendence.

We need a new protest today, a new plea, a strong one, to not connect God and our churches to intolerance, injustice, bigotry, violence, terrorism, racism, sexism, rigidity, dogmatism, anti-eroticism, homophobia, self-serving power, institutional self-protection, security for the rich, ideology of all kinds, and just plain stupidity. God is getting a lot of bad press!

A simple example can be illustrative here: In a recent book that documents an extraordinary fifty-year friendship with his former coach, basketball legend (and present-day exceptional writer), Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, shares why he became a Muslim. Raised a Roman Catholic, a graduate of Catholic schools, he eventually left Christianity to become a Muslim. Why?

In his own words: Because "the white people who were bombing churches and killing little girls, who were shooting unarmed black boys, who were beating black protestors with clubs loudly declared themselves to be proud Christians. The Ku Klux Klan were proud Christians. I felt no allegiance to a religion with so many evil followers. Yes, I was also aware that the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was also a proud Christian, as were many of the civil rights leaders. Coach Wooden was a devout Christian. The civil rights movement was supported by many brave white Christians who marched side by side with blacks. When the KKK attacked, they often delivered even worse beatings to the whites, whom they considered to be race traitors. I didn't condemn the religion, but I definitely felt removed from it."

His story is only one story and by his own admission has another side to it, but it's highly illustrative. It's easy to connect God to the wrong things. Christianity, of course, isn't the only culprit. Today, for instance, we see perhaps the worst examples of tying God to evil in the violence of *ISIS* and other such terrorist groups who are killing, randomly and brutally, in the name of God. You can be sure that the last words uttered, just as a suicide bomber randomly kills innocent people, is: *God is great!* What horrible thing to say as one is committing an act of murder! Doing the ungodly in the name of God!

And yet we so often do the same thing in subtler forms, namely, we justify the ungodly (violence, injustice, inequality, poverty, intolerance, bigotry, racism, sexism, the abuse of power, and rich privilege) by appealing to our religion. Silently, unconsciously, blind to ourselves, grounded in a sense of right and wrong that's colored by self-interest, we give ourselves divine permission to live and act in ways that are antithetical to most everything Jesus taught.

We can protest, saying that we're sincere, but sincerity by itself is not a moral or religious criterion. Sincerity can, and often does, tie God to the ungodly and justifies what's evil in the name of God: The people conducting the Inquisition were sincere; the slave traitors were sincere; those who protected pedophile priests were sincere, racists are sincere; sexists are sincere; bigots are sincere; the rich defending their privilege are sincere; church offices making hurtful, gospel-defying pastoral decisions that deprive people of ecclesial access are very sincere and gospel-motivated; and all of us, as we make the kind of judgments of others that Jesus told us time and again not to make, are sincere. But we think that we're doing this all for the good, for God.

However in so many of our actions we are connecting God and church to narrowness, intolerance, rigidity, racism, sexism, favoritism, legalism, dogmatism, and stupidity. And we wonder why so many of our own children no longer go to church and struggle with religion.

The God whom Jesus reveals is the antithesis of much of religion, sad but true. The God whom Jesus reveals is a prodigal God, a God who isn't stingy; a God who wills the salvation of everyone, who loves all races and all peoples equally; a God with a preferential love for the poor; a God who creates both genders equally; a God who strongly opposes worldly power and privilege. The God of Jesus Christ is a God of compassion, empathy, and forgiveness, a God who demands that spirit take precedence over law, love over dogma, and forgiveness over juridical justice. And very importantly, the God whom Jesus incarnates isn't stupid, but is a God whose intelligence isn't threatened by science, and a God who doesn't condemn and send people to hell according to our limited human judgments.

Sadly, too often that's not the God of religion, of our churches, of our spirituality, or of our private consciences.

God isn't narrow, stupid, legalistic, bigoted, racist, violent, or vengeful, and it's time we stopped connecting God to those things.

~ archive August 14, 2017

August 30, 2020 • 22nd Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year A

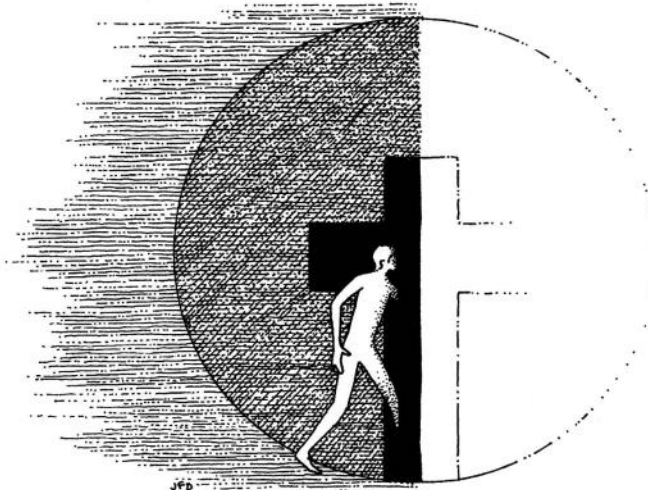
Losing but Gaining Life

This Week's Readings at Mass

- ▶ Jeremiah 20:7-9 - Jeremiah's conflict
- ▶ Romans 12:1-2 - A living sacrifice
- ▶ Matthew 16:21-27 - "Get behind me Satan"

One of the reasons that so many Jews of Jesus' day had trouble accepting him as their Messiah is that they were waiting for a Messiah who would liberate their country from their Roman occupiers with military strength. Not only did Jesus not train an army against the current empire, but he also taught non-violent resistance against the Romans. He showed his willingness to suffer at the hands of the religious leaders rather than retaliate. Many people couldn't wrap their minds around such a leader. (The Newbery Medal book, *The Bronze Bow*, by Elizabeth George Speare, depicts this well.) In this passage, we see Peter resist this idea too.

Peter was one of Jesus' closest friends. Who can fault him for not wanting to see Jesus suffer and die? Who among us would have wanted to see Mahatma Gandhi or Martin Luther King, Jr. or Oscar Romero suffer and die because of their unwavering commitment to justice and love for all peoples? It is a natural human response to instinctively want to save our lives and save the lives of our loved ones. Yet Jesus (and Gandhi, King, and Romero) was guided by something higher than an instinct for self-preservation. He un-



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"Do not conform yourselves to this age but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may discern what is the will of God."

Sheepish Question:
How do some "easy steps" to attaining worldly desires lead me astray from following Jesus?

derstood that something even greater could come out of suffering and death—new life. Jesus' resurrection unleashed a force of love that has forever changed history because Jesus was willing to die rather than have God overpower human free will and save him from the cross.

We can try to avoid suffering, preserve our life as we know it, and "gain the whole world" in riches and security, but ultimately that will kill our souls. Jesus doesn't teach that the point is to suffer for the sake of suffering, but that when pain comes to us, as it inevitably will, we can face it head-on rather than run from it. Then, in losing our lives, we will eventually discover that we have found new life.

Questions of the Week

- 1 Share about a time when you saw or experienced new life come out of someone's suffering.
- 2 How might God be inviting you to deny yourself or take up your cross now so that you can gain new life?

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