



The Parish of Saints Philip and James
1 Carow Place, St. James, NY 11780
631-584-5454

August 4, 2019
Eighteenth Sunday
In Ordinary Time



"Take care to guard against all greed, for though one may be rich, one's life does not consist of possessions"

Luke 12:15-21

*"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 1-2

Charlotte Czujko

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR Grades 3-6

Barbara Luna

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR Grades 7-8

Dominick Avento

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Margaret Adams

COORDINATOR OF PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRY

Lynn Sisti

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, Connor Donnelly, Richard Frazita, Lou Guerra,
Kelsey Greco, Cynthia Lombardi, Paul Damato
Martin Marut, Ann Mondrone, Maureen Burke

Stewardship, A Way of Life

*As we continue our journey, we share our "Time,
Talents and Treasures" with our family, friends, and
our parish community.*

*Thank you for your support of
Sts. Philip & James Parish*

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 12:00mass 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
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 MCCLAUGHLIN— 2ND LT. US ARMY NATL. GUARD

Financial Support Needed weekly to meet Parish budget:

\$21,000

Weekly Collection: Sunday, July 29th, 2019

\$ 9,716.

Faith Direct:

\$ 2,877.

Total Weekly Collection:

\$12,593.

Thank you for your stewardship and contributions to our Parish

Sunday's with Sister T

Dear Friends,

While Fr. Tom is away, I offered to share with you some of the reflections I write for my Community each Wednesday. At times they connect with the scriptures and other times it is what the spirit puts in my heart. My prayer is that in some way the words on the page help you to grow in your faith life. If not, then there is usually a little chuckle in there somewhere.

This past weekend's readings share with us the themes of praying, of asking and of being hospitable. These were some of the topics we discussed during the Leadership Retreat we held for the new youth leaders as well. I am hoping that a few will share some of their thoughts with you. Each of these students are striving to be better leaders in our Parish community therefore prayer during this time was very important. It was with delight that they welcomed our guest Speaker and Author, Gail Lowney Alofsin, showing her our famous SSPJ hospitality. Don't forget asking and receiving. The students were comfortable to ask questions and work on solutions for projects they began planning. They truly lived out the gospel Message.

Let me share with you a few of their comments:

"The retreat was an enlightening experience for me and the other youth leaders which helped us gain both confidence and a desire to serve those in need. Sister Theresita and Father Tom allowed us to develop a connection with God with the three days we were in the Rectory and the summer time camp. We utmost believe that with determination and passion we can rebuild youth group into a thriving force in the community." Anthony

"The three-day youth leader retreat held by Sister T, Fr. Tom and Gail Lowney Alofsin was truly an eye-opener. They provided prayers, guidance, ways to explore our faith, ways to improve our mental being, and so much more. The retreat most importantly, besides from leadership, taught me teamwork. Discussing plans for the youth group and working as a team (whether it be for pizza competitions or helping the vacation bible school kids) truly allowed me to realize how well we all work together and how amazing we can make youth group next year. We also watched movies, heard a speaker, and were privileged to hear about Sister T's life of service which I found truly inspiring." Erin

"This week I attended SSPJ Youth Leadership training. Not only did I have the opportunity to work with inspirational people, like Father Tom and Sister T, to strengthen my relationship with God, but I also learned several tips on how to lead by faith. The first day we focused on self-improvement and working to shape a positive and complaint-free mindset. The second day we focused on leadership strategies and had an amazing presentation done by Gail Alofsin. The third day was focused on service and we got to help out with VBS and Pick-A-Star. Overall, I feel that this experience has made me even more excited and ready to be a Youth Leader this year." Hailey

"My time with Father Tom and Sister T during the Youth Leadership Retreat was nothing but amazing and special. I had a great time connecting with my fellow youth leaders and God, and I can't wait to share my new knowledge that I gained while on the retreat." Liam

Well there you have it, words of hope from some of our future leaders. For more thoughts and pictures check out this week's bulletin as well as last weeks. Hope you find a personal challenge in their thoughts, as each of us is called to stretch and grow.

May Joy be your companion this week,

Sister T

Apostles: We Who Are Sent...Hope: God's constant gift of new possibilities

Summertime With Jesus Fun!



*For the past two weeks the parish staff and volunteers have been blessed to offer your children the opportunity to spend **Vacation Fun With Jesus**. Through prayer, stories, videos, song and dance and creativity they learned who Jesus is – their best friend and Super Hero!*

*The children decorated their “**SHIELDS OF FAITH**” which you can see displayed across the choir loft. They recited their prayers every day and learned how to talk to Jesus. Let the children come to me – and they did...with their hearts in their hands. They came to know that Jesus loves them all the time and in all ways. Their reflection in the mirror they decorated is that of Jesus in them. It is through His eyes that they see and His ear that they hear. When they speak, it is with His words of loving kindness.*

*Jesus doesn't need special web power or a lightning fast car or magical strength... Jesus is the greatest and above all things. His **LOVE** is all they need and they offer that **LOVE** to each other.*

*They know how they too can **follow Jesus** and walk with Him as they placed their feet before the cross. They created kindness rocks to adorn the pathway to our Old Church/Bethany Center. When they attend religious lessons in the Fall they will see and recall how Jesus asks us to follow him.*

*They learned that **JESUS** is their **LIGHT** and calms all their fears. The Lighthouses And lanterns they created remind them to turn toward Jesus in love, prayer and thanksgiving.*

Thank you for sharing your children with us.....

Vacation Time with Jesus Staff.....





We would love to give a big SHOUT out to our student counselors who are helping your little ones have so much fun at camp this week.

What great "big sisters and brothers" they are to the young ones in our parish.

THANK YOU TO:

**Brady Doran, Logan Doran,
Meg Bowden, Daniela Muro,
Genevieve Talento,
Anthony Scarpelli and Vincent Scarpelli**



Let The Children Come...

SSPJ CHILDREN'S LITURGY OF THE WORD MINISTRY

EVERY CHILD IS BORN WITH A SONG IN THEIR HEARTS...

PARENTS NURTURE THAT SONG....

LOVING FAITH FILLED APOSTLES OF HOPE

ENCOURAGE THAT SONG TO BE SUNG....

THE SSPJ CHILDRENS LITURGY OF THE WORD EMBRACES THE HEARTS, AND MINDS OF OUR YOUNG CHILDREN, BY DELIVERING THE GOSPEL TO "WHERE THEY ARE AT" IN THEIR GROWTH, UNDERSTANDING AND FRIENDSHIP WITH JESUS.

BUT WE NEED YOUR HELP TO CONTINUE

WE ARE SEEKING VOLUNTEERS TO LEAD THE WEEKLY LITURGY LESSONS

AS WELL AS ADULT VOLUNTEER MONITORS

LEADERS~ share the Gospel message discussion and craft

MONITORS ~ Assist the children with craft as well as provide supervision

ALL WEEKLY MATERIALS WILL BE PREPARED FOR YOU!!!

CHILDRENS LITURGY IS HELD AT THE 5:00PM MASS ON SATURDAYS AS WELL AS THE

10:00 AM MASS ON SUNDAYS AND IS OPEN TO CHILDREN IN GRADES K-3.

IT IS A FAST PACED, FAITH FILLED 20 MINUTES OF PRAYER, GOSPEL SUMMARY AND CRAFT

NO PRIOR EXPERIENCE IS NECESSARY, AS WE WILL BE HOLDING AN INTRODUCTORY GET TOGETHER

On Tuesday, August 27th, 2019 at 7:00pm in the Sts. Philip & James Room

IF YOU SHOULD HAVE ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE DO NOT HESITATE TO

Contact Paula Klee Parish at 631-265-3567

SUMMER FOOD PANTRY NEEDS:

GRANOLA BARS

CHEERIOS

SAUCE IN PLASTIC CONTAINERS

Thank you so very much for your kindness and generosity!

SSPJ STAINED GLASS SALE THIS WEEKEND!

**THE STAINED GLASS CLUB IS HAVING
THEIR WONDERFUL CROSSES TO
COLLEGE SALE THIS WEEKEND!**
Please support their wonderful ministry.

The Stained Glass club is open for students in the 6th grade and above. They meet Sundays from 11-1pm and Tuesday evening from 7-8:30pm.

For more information, please contact:
sspjstainedglass@gmail.com
Or John P. Garvey at 631-682-0699

***A LITTLE BIT MORE HELP COULD CARRY US
OVER THE FINISH LINE!!!***

Any contribution is a gift...to help those in need...

*If you can help us achieve our goal, no matter the amount of your sacrifice,
kindly place your offering in an envelope labeled **"OVER THE TOP"** and put
it in the weekend collection basket.*

***2019 SSPJ GOAL ~ \$119,700.00: SSPJ is at 94.2% of Goal
Pledges received to date: \$112,724! Thank you!***

Religious Education Ministry

Catechist Meeting– 6th Grade

Tuesday, August 6th, 2019 at 7:00pm in the Bethany Center

*"Participating in the faith formation of our children,
that is where a relationship with Jesus, is born...
It begins with loving parents
and continues in the faith filled hands of a Catechist"*

**Registration for the 2019-2020 Religious Education
Is in Progress, Registration will end on August 31, 2019**

***Please visit the Parish website at: www.sspj.org and
follow the instructions to enroll your child/children in our
Religious Education Program for the
2019-2020 school year.***

***_Any family registering a First Grader or a child new to
our Parish, is asked to contact us via email at
religioused@sspj.org
or by phone at 631-584-3204
To arrange a convenient appointment date
and time.***

SSPJ Parish Calendar For The Week of August 4th, 2019

Sunday, August 4th, 2019

8:00am Stained Glass Sale	School Lobby
11:00am Stained Glass	Stained Glass Wkshp
7:00pm AA Meeting	Philip & James Room

Thursday, August 8th, 2019

7:15am Camps R Us	Main School Building
2:00pm Eucharistic Adoration	Church

Monday, August 5th, 2019:

7:15am Camps R Us	Main School Building
1:00pm Rosary Makers	Philip & James Room

Friday, August 9th, 2019:

7:15am Camps R Us	Main School Building
7:00pm AA Meeting	Philip & James Room
8:00pm Eucharistic Adoration	Church

Tuesday, August 6th, 2019:

7:15am Camps R Us	Main School Building
1:30pm Cantor Training	Church
1:30pm Spirit of Love Prayer Group	Prayer Room Church
7:00pm Boy Scout Summer Merit Program	Auditorium
7:00pm REO 6th Grade Catechists Meeting	Bethany Main
7:00pm Stained Glass	Stained Glass Wkshp
7:30pm KOC Officer Meeting	Philip & James Room

Saturday, August 10th, 2019

No Activities Planned

Sunday, August 11th, 2019:

11:00am Stained Glass Club	Stained Glass Wkshp
7:00pm AA Meeting	Sts. Philip & James Room

Wednesday, August 7th, 2019

7:15am Camps R Us	Main School Building
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Music Ministry

I hope you are prayerfully considering joining our Music Ministry. There are quite a few ways you can help. During the coming weeks and into September I will be highlighting the different parts of the Music Ministry and how you can join.

Some reasons to consider:

Church choirs enhance the church as a whole by:

- * Enhancing all worship services and significant celebrations with musical beauty
- * Becoming an extension of almost every facet of the church, a catalyst for excitement and promotion
- * Being a significant source of public relations for the church, spreading good will and creating a positive image to the community
- * Drawing in relatives and friends into the walls of the church, where support and relationships with church might be nurtured.

Our Pro Life Rose
For the Week of August 4th, 2019
Is Offered

For Our Beloved Husband and Father,

Joseph Chickie Martin

Happy Birthday In Heaven

Love,

Margie and Children

All are invited to attend the next
Rosary Makers Club

On

Monday, August 5th, 2019

At 1:00pm

In the Sts. Philip & James Room

All supplies are provided

Mass Intentions, For the week of August 4th, 2019

Saturday August 3rd, 2019

5:00pm James Jackmore

Sunday, August 4th, 2019

8:00am For the Parishioners of SSPJ

10:00am William Olsen

12:00Noon Collective Mass:

Jack Kaminski

Jerry Borelli

Lori Manienti

Anthony M. Lombardo

Michelle Ann Albi

Michael McDermott

Monday, August 5th, 2019

7:30am Florence Dunn

9:15am Marie Melo

Tuesday, August 6th, 2019

7:30am Anna Hryckwian

9:15am Philip Fiorentine

Wednesday, August 7th, 2019

7:30am Gerard & Madelyn McNulty

9:15am Bertha Langman

Thursday, August 8th, 2019

7:30am Patricia McNulty

9:15am Collective Mass:

Vincent Priebe

Friday, August 9th, 2019

7:30am Paul J. Czujko

9:15am Larry Rocmet

Mary B. Cournane and Michael Julian

Saturday, August 10th, 2019

9:15am Christina Pue

5:00pm Paul Regina

Sunday, August 11th, 2019

8:00am For the Parishioners of Sts Philip & James

10:00am Matthew Ryan Martin

12:00Noon Collective Mass:

Charles T. Bellizzi

Joan A. Ward

Theresa Stramiello

Juan Henry Heron

Michael McDermott

We Remember

**Those Who are resting peacefully
in the loving arms of Jesus....**

**Donald T. Force
Willvonja J. Roemer**

Banns of Marriage

First

Chris Cash~ Caroline Church Setauket

To

Danielle Sharkey ~ SSPJ

Second

Kevin Joseph John Zajack~Avon, NJ

To

Meaghan McKeever~SSPJ

Prayer for Comfort

Lord Jesus, who went about doing good and healing all, we ask you to bless your friends who are sick. Give them the strength in body, courage in spirit, and patience in pain.

Let them recover their health, so that, restored to the Christian community, they may joyfully praise your name, for you live and reign for ever and ever. Amen

To add a name to prayers for the sick, kindly contact the Parish Center Office at 631-584-5454

Allison Ioli,
Angela Amoroso,
Angelo Peluso,
Anna & John Capizzio
Baby Adeline ,
Baby Kennedy
Baby Mattia Rose Lubrano,
Brian R.
Bob Keenan,
Carole Hennessy ,
Charles Morgan,
Dena Pollina
Donalea Donach
Elinor Glasser
Gail Morreale
Gene Morda
Helen McDowell,
Ian Dowling,
Jeanine Esposito-Tansey
J.C.

Joann Boccia
John Boland ,
John Cuccia
Jordan Marvelli
Joseph ,
Karlyn Phillips,
Kathleen N.,
Kitty Cronin
Marie Sabry,
Marty Caltabiano
Matthew
Michael LaVecchia
Pat I.
Patricia Fontana,
Patricia Monetti,
Robin Graham Denis,
Tim Cavooris,
Tom Sica,
Vicki Archdeacon-Gibb,
Vivien Cordes ,
Zachary Esposito-Tansey

AUGUST 2019

A Whole Month of Liturgical Content on formed.org!

4

SAINT JOHN VIANNEY

Study: [Symbolon: Living the Faith, Session 4: Penance and Anointing of the Sick /](#)
[Symbolon: Vivendo la Fe, Sesión 4: Reconciliación y Unción de los Enfermos*](#)
Read: [The Curé d'Ars Today](#)

6

FEAST OF THE TRANSFIGURATION

Study: [Lectio: Peter, Session 6: In the Shadow of the Galilean](#)
Listen: [Theology for Beginners](#)

9

SAINT TERESA BENEDICTA OF THE CROSS (EDITH STEIN)

Watch: [Edith Stein / Edith Stein*](#)
Read: [Edith Stein and Companions](#)

11

SAINT PHILOMENA

Listen: [Saint Philomena: Saint for Our Times / Santa Filomena: Poderosa intercesora ante Dios*](#)
Listen: [Saint Philomena \(audio drama\)](#)

11

SAINT CLARE

Watch: [Clare and Francis / Clara y Francisco*](#)

14

SAINT MAXIMILIAN KOLBE

Study: [Divine Mercy, Episode 9: Mary's Knight](#)
Watch: [Ocean of Mercy](#)
Watch: [Life for Life / Una Vida por Otra*](#)

15

SOLEMNITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY

Study: [Footprints of God: Mary](#)
Listen: [Answering Common Objections: Mary](#)
Read: [Faith Basics: Understanding Catholic Teaching on the Blessed Virgin Mary](#)

18

SAINT HELEN

Read: [Saint Helena and the True Cross](#)

28

SAINT AUGUSTINE

Watch: [Restless Heart](#)
Watch: [Augustine: A Voice for All Generations / Agustín: Una Voz para Todas las Generaciones*](#)
Watch: [Catholic Heroes: The Story of Saint Augustine / Héroes Católicos: La Historia de San Agustín*](#)
Listen: [Saints for Sinners](#)
Listen: [The Restless Flame](#)
Read: [Confessions](#)

* This title is in both English and Spanish

Youth Leadership Retreat~ *Jesus' hands in action, service, faith and love...*



Here are some of the final pictures of our new youth leaders and their activities. Last week's bulletin shared some of the thoughts the students had, and I would like to share with you some of my thoughts.

When the opportunity to present a leadership training to our new youth leaders came knocking at my door, it was hard to resist being a part of the process. Our young people needed the opportunity to grow in their prayer life as well as their skill set for being good leaders.

Alex, Anthony, Erin, Hailey and Liam took to the training like a duck to water. I was so delighted with their positive responses to all we had prepared for them, fun and all. Any one of them can whip up a creative pizza, just for you, even Fr. Tom!

I am so proud to know them and to have spent this special time with them. There is great hope for our young leaders, and I pray that you have the opportunity to meet them and experience their hopeful goodness. Sister Theresita

Sister Theresita Donach CSFN



"Be who God meant you to be and you will set the world on fire." (St. Catherine of Siena)

Celebrating the Liturgy- With Grateful Hearts We Serve

PRESIDER SCHEDULE-FOR August 10th & 11th, 2019

Saturday, August 10, 2019 5:00pm	Sunday, August 11, 2019 8:00 AM MASS	Sunday, August 11, 2019 10:00 AM MASS	Sunday, August 11, 2019 12:00 MASS
Father Maxim Rosario	Father Maxim Rosario	Father Patrick Osei-Poku	Father Patrick Osei-Poku
		Deacon Ron	Deacon Ron

EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS SCHEDULE -FOR August 10th & 11th, 2019

Saturday, August 10, 2019	Sunday, August 11, 2019	Sunday, August 11, 2019	Sunday, August 11, 2019
5:00PM	8:00 AM MASS	10:00 AM MASS	12:00 NOON MASS
D. Anderson	J. Harvey	B. Carey	M. Hoonhout
C. Lombardi	P. Kanuika	M. Koke	E. Law
L. Tepedino	M. Kenney	N. Locastro	D. McCormick
K. Consenz	P. Martin	S. McKie	M. McCreesh
J. Giacalone	V. Portanova	M. Morbillo	M. Peykar
P. Kaleita	W. Ramos	P. Rizzo	P. Roman
H. Keenan	K. Rapp	D. Anderson	C. Rubano
G. Priebe	E. Sica	C. Lombardi	V. Rubano
I. Arevalo	T. Sica	L. Tepedino	A. Mantia
D. Toto	P. Agolia	J. Alternative	E. Sotomayer

ALTAR SERVERS SCHEDULE -FOR August 10th & 11th, 2019

Saturday, August 10, 2019	Sunday, August 11, 2019	Sunday, August 11, 2019	Sunday, August 11, 2019
5:00PM MASS	8:00AM MASS	10:00 AM MASS	12:00 NOON MASS
A. Balocda	B. Keese	K. Tomasic	A. Frankenberger
R. Laro	K. Keese	M. Tomasic	B. Frankenberger
J. Scamillo	T. Dorrian	J. Prew	P. Mazola
C. William		N. Pilero	S. Glen

LECTOR SCHEDULE -FOR August 10th & 11th, 2019

Saturday, August 10, 2019	Sunday, August 11, 2019	Sunday, August 11, 2019	Sunday, August 11, 2019
5:00PM MASS	8:00 AM MASS	10:00AM MASS	12:00 NOON MASS
M. Drechsler	A. Willman	M. Sehne	V. Rubano
A. Mantia	B. Luna	J. Auleta	P. Geier

August 11, 2019 • 19th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year C

Bad or Good News?

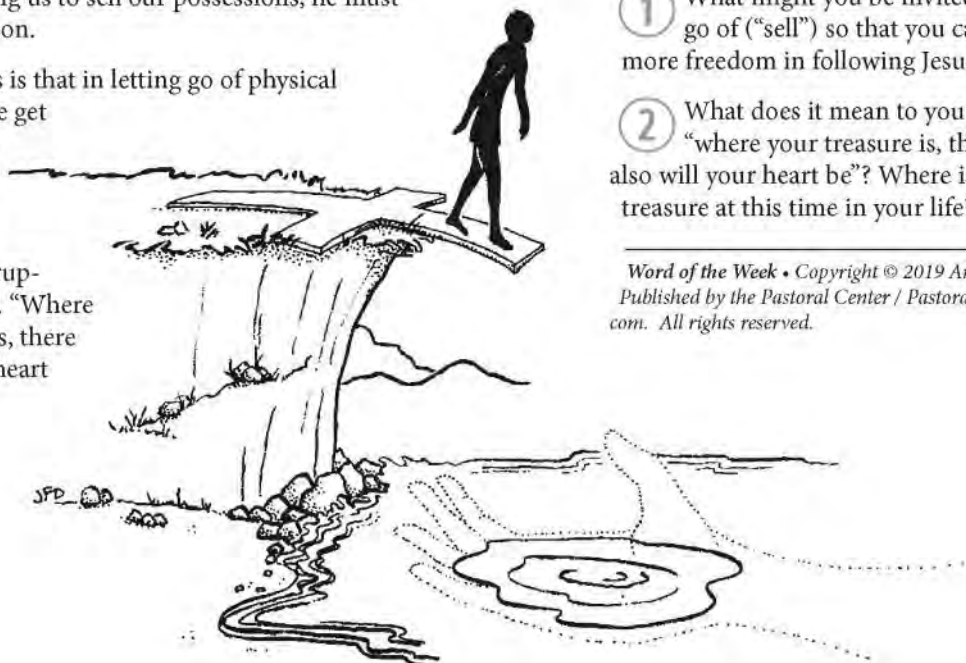
This Week's Readings at Mass

- Wisdom 18:6-9 - On the death of the Egyptian firstborn
- Hebrews 11:1-2, 8-19 or 11:1-2, 8-12 - Faith of Abraham
- Luke 12:32-48 or 12:35-40 - We depend on God; prepare for the master's return

Luke's Gospel, more than any others, has an emphasis on money, possessions, and wealth. Luke includes parables about riches (such as last week's parable about the rich man who built bigger barns) that are not found in Matthew, Mark, or John. The Gospel also states *several* times that Jesus directed his disciples to go out and continue his ministry without taking any personal belongings along with them.

It's a challenge that is hard for most of us to hear, and we can quickly go to rationalizations about why we may not be called to do the same thing. Of course it would have been just as hard for Jesus' disciples to hear too. But instead of reacting to what sounds like bad news to us ("sell your belongings and give alms") can we instead listen for the good news in the directive? After all, Jesus didn't come to make our lives more difficult, or impoverished. He said that he came so that we may have life, and have life in its fullness. So if he is asking us to sell our possessions, he must have good reason.

The good news is that in letting go of physical possessions, we get an "inexhaustible treasure" in return that no thief can reach, nor corruption can touch. "Where your treasure is, there also will your heart be." When we come to our



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"Blessed are those servants whom the master finds vigilant on his arrival."

Sheepish Question:

As God's servant, how can I be ready to meet others' needs in unexpected situations?

last moments on this earth, where do we want our treasure to be? In our material belongings? Or in the store of love we have given and received amidst our relationships?

Questions of the Week

- 1 What might you be invited to let go of ("sell") so that you can have more freedom in following Jesus?
- 2 What does it mean to you that "where your treasure is, there also will your heart be"? Where is your treasure at this time in your life?

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Our Grandiosity and Our Wounds

We wake up into life with the incurable sense that we're special, that we're the center of the universe. And, subjectively, we are! In our awareness we're the center of the universe and life does revolve around us. Our own being is what's most massively real to us. As Descartes famously said, the only thing that we know for sure is real is our own selves; *I think, therefore, I am*. We may be dreaming everything else.

Spirituality has perennially judged this negatively. Egocentricity, feelings of grandiosity, self-centeredness, and pride were seen as the result of the corruption of human nature through original sin. We called it, *The Fall*. Our first parents attempted to overreach, to be more than God intended them to be, and this irrevocably corrupted their nature and we, their children, inherit this. So we, adult children of Adam and Eve, too instinctually tend to overreach, to puff up in self-importance, to fill with pride, and think first about ourselves.

That doctrine of original sin has something important to say, but it isn't first of all to shame us in our natural pride and sense of specialness. The real reason why pride and grandiosity are incurably ingrained inside us is because God built us that way, and that, of itself, is not a fault or a corruption but instead constitutes what's highest and most precious inside us. Both Christianity and Judaism take as dogma that we're born, every one of us, in *the image and likeness of God*. That's not to be imagined piously as some beautiful icon stamped inside our souls but rather as fire, divine fire, which because it is godly brings with it a sense of the preciousness, dignity, and uniqueness, of our lives. But with that too comes (as part of the same package) pride and grandiosity. Simply put, we can't have Godliness inside us and not feel ourselves as special.

And that makes for a less-than-serene situation for the planet. We're now seven and half billion people on this earth, each one with the same innate sense that he or she is the center of the universe and that his or her own reality is what's most real. That's the real cause behind what you see happening on the world news each night, for worse and for better. Grandiosity is the source of human strife, but equally the source of human greatness.

Important in our understanding of this is that our innate sense of godliness is also the place where we suffer our deepest wounds. What most wounds the image and likeness of God inside us? These things: humiliation, lack of adequate self-expression, the perennial frustration of bumping up against the limits of life, and the martyrdom of obscurity.

Each of us, by our nature, possesses a divinely-given uniqueness and dignity and thus nothing wounds us more than being humiliated and shamed in our struggle to live this out. A shameful humiliation, even as a very young child, can scar us for the rest of our lives. It's one of the reasons why we have mass killings. Likewise, as Iris Murdoch once said, the greatest human pain is the pain of inadequate self-expression. There's a great artist, composer, teacher, athlete, and performer inside each of us, but few people can ever give that satisfying expression. The rest of us have to live with perennial frustration because what's deepest in us lies unexpressed. As well, we're forever bumping up against the real limits of our own lives and limits of life itself. In Karl Rahner words: *In the torment of the insufficiency of everything attainable, we ultimately learn that here in this life there is no finished symphony*. In the end, all of us die with a life that was never fully consummated. And that isn't easily accepted! Everything inside us militates against this. Finally, almost all of us live a certain martyrdom of obscurity, recognized and famous only inside our own daydreams, our greatness hidden from the world. That too isn't easily accepted.

What's to be taken away from this? Since we secretly nurse thoughts of specialness should we also nurse a secret shame? Is our innate pride something that sets us against holiness? Is our grandiosity a bad thing? Is our frustration with the limits and inadequacy of our lives something that displeases God? Are our daydreams of uniqueness and greatness something which taints our contemplation and prayer? Is our nature, of itself, somehow corrupt? Must we somehow step outside of our own skin to be saints?

Each of these questions can be answered in two ways. Grandiosity, pride, shame, frustration, and daydreams of greatness, can indeed be our downfall and turn us into awful persons, selfish, jealous, spiteful, and murderous. But they can also be the source of greatness, of nobility of soul, of generosity, of selflessness, of generativity, of true prayer, and can turn us into selfless martyrs of faith, hope, and charity. Our godliness is very mixed blessing; but it is, no doubt, our greatest blessing.



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