



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

631-584-5454

# Third Sunday In Ordinary Time January 21, 2018



*“Come After Me and I will make you  
fishers of men.”*

*Mark 1:17*

“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

**Parish Center Office Hours:**

*Sunday ~ Closed  
Monday: 9am-8pm*

*Tuesday & Wednesday: 9am-5pm  
Thursday: 9am-8pm*

*Friday: 9am-12 Noon  
Saturday: 10am-2pm*

*Parish Center Phone ~ 631-584-5454*

*Parish Center Fax~ 631-862-9675*

*Web ~ [www.sspj.org](http://www.sspj.org)*

**Pastoral Team**

Father Tom Haggerty		Pastor
Father Patrick Osei-Poku		Associate Pastor
Deacon Ronald Blasius		Deacon
Deacon John Keenan		Deacon
Deacon Ken Maher		Deacon
Margaret Adams		Director of Music
Virginia Portanova		Business Manager
John Cordes		Director of Facilities
Lynn Sisti		Coordinator of Parish Social Ministry
Charlotte Czujko		Religious Education Coordinator Grades 1-2
Barbara Luna		Religious Education Coordinator Grades 3-6
Dominick Avento		Religious Education Coordinator Grades 7-8
Suzanne Fitzgibbon		Religious Education Administrator
Frank Brancaccio		Youth Minister

**Pastoral Council**

Rita Byrne, Claire DiCarlo, Chris Donnelly, Ryan Doyle, Richard Frazita, Lou Guerra, Cynthia Lombardi, Martin Marut, Ann Mondrone, Mary Ann Pose, Noel Rannazzisi, Tom Sica, Robert Thompson

**Trustees**

Jerry Linder ~ Tina Cafaro

**SSPJ School—Principal Ruth E. Testa**

School Phone : 631-584-7896 School Fax: 631-584-3258

**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 RCLA.

**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

*Live Theatrical Production at  
SSPJ Parish!*

# **Sts. Philip & James Parish presents**

*The Long Island Repertory Company*

*performance of **To Kill A Mockingbird***



The Trial of the Century  
is about to begin.

**ONE PERFORMANCE ONLY: SUNDAY 1/28/18 @ 3PM**

**Sts. Philip & James School Auditorium  
359 Clinton Avenue, Saint James, NY**

*Tickets to this amazing production are available at the  
Parish Center Office*

*Cost: \$15.00 per ticket (cash or check)\**

*(A limited number of tickets will be available at the door\*)*

*Delicious Cake and Coffee will be served during Intermission  
Proceeds will help defray the costs of our  
Parish Easter Book distribution.*



## *Parish Social Ministry*

*When the song of the angels is stilled,  
when the star in the sky is gone,  
when the kings and princes are home,  
when the shepherds are back with their flocks,  
the work of Christmas begins:  
to find the lost,  
to heal the broken,  
to feed the hungry,  
to release the prisoner,  
to rebuild the nations,  
to bring peace among the people,  
to make music in the heart.*

*There is much to do in 2018*

*Together we can make a difference...*

*Together we can be the light...*

### **Our Food Pantry Is In Need Of Your Generosity & Help**

*Items Needed and Greatly Appreciated*



**Corned Beef Hash  
Stew  
Canned Hams  
Chili With Meat  
Jarred Sauce (Preferably in Plastic containers)  
Small Boxes of Cheerios  
Brown Paper Grocery Bags**



# THE MEN'S FORUM

AT THE CHURCH OF SAINTS PHILIP & JAMES

A brotherhood of men dedicated to growing in their faith & discipleship in the Lord Jesus Christ.



**MONDAY, JANUARY 22, 2018**

**Guest Speaker: Father Kevin Cronin**

**Topic:** *"St. Francis, all you wanted to know but didn't ask"*

My utmost desire is to Live the Gospel of Jesus Christ, and to Preach Him & that Good News "simply & plainly" as St. Francis asked us to do... with joy, enthusiasm, compassion & humor, as the really "Good News" that it truly is." Father Kevin has been Preacher/ Director of Franciscan Ministry of the Word since September 1993 proclaiming the Love, Mercy, and Healing Presence of the Risen Lord, through Parish Missions, Days of Renewal, & Adult education workshops. He was ordained in 1974 by the late Cardinal Joseph Bernardin, Today, 37 years later, he is the only one of those originals remaining from his novitiate as a Franciscan priest in Holy Name Province.

**LOCATION:** Main Church: North Country Rd., Saint James, NY  
6:30 PM: Adoration • 7:30 PM: Speaker Talk • 8:30 PM: Coffee & Cake



## Upcoming Meeting Dates

**2018:**

Jan. 8  
Jan. 22  
Feb. 5  
March 5  
March 19

**2018:(cont.)**

April 9  
April 23  
May 7  
May 21  
June 8



## WE WELCOME ALL MEN TO SHARE IN THIS MISSION.

We are a brotherhood of Catholic men who meet at Saints Philip & James R.C. Church and are dedicated to growing in our faith and discipleship in the Lord Jesus Christ. We gather twice a month to pray, listen

to spiritual wisdom, and draw strength from one another in fellowship. We seek to become better men of Christian virtue and witness in our families, friendships, Church, and community.

*Real Men, not without Real Struggles. With the Courage to Believe in Today's World.  
Our Faith Helps us Face Life's Big Questions. Our Strength Is Following Christ Together.*

**[www.sspjmensforum.org](http://www.sspjmensforum.org)**



**CHURCH of SAINTS PHILIP & JAMES**

1 Carow Place • St. James, NY 11780 • 631-584-5454 • [www.sspj.org](http://www.sspj.org)

Come for all, or part of our evening's schedule • No membership required. Open to all men!





# SSPJ Parish Calendar For The Week of January 21st, 2018

## Sunday, January 21st, 2018

8:00am	Wash Kit Gang Superbowl Raffle	School Lobby
8:30am	RCIA	Philip & James Room
10:00am	Children's Liturgy	Auditorium
11:00am	Stained Glass Club	Stained Glass Wkshp.
11:15am	Peanut Butter & Jelly Gang	Auditorium
7:00pm	AA Meeting	Philip & James Room

## Monday, January 22nd, 2018

1:15pm	Senior Group Meeting	Philip & James Room
5:45pm	REO Confirmation Mentor Conversations	Auditorium
6:30pm	Men's Forum	Church

## Tuesday, January 23rd, 2018:

1:30pm	Spirit of Love Prayer Group	Prayer Room Church
7:30pm	Chords of Faith Rehearsal	Choir Loft
8:00pm	Boy Scout Leadership Meeting	Monte Building

## Wednesday, January 24th, 2018:

5:45pm	REO Confirmation Mentor Conversations	Auditorium
7:00pm	Youth Ministry	Auditorium

## Thursday, January 25th, 2018:

2:00pm	Eucharistic Adoration	Church
5:45pm	REO Confirmation Mentor Sessions	Auditorium
6:00pm	Junior Catholic Daughters Meeting	Philip & James Room
7:30pm	Adult Choir Rehearsal	Choir Loft

## Friday, January 26th, 2018:

3:00pm	Stained Glass Club	Stained Glass Wkshp
6:30pm	Theatre Rehearsal	Auditorium
7:00pm	AA Meeting	Philip & James Room
8:00pm	Eucharistic Adoration	Church

## Saturday, January 27th, 2018:

10:00am	Stained Glass Club	Stained Glass Wkshp
5:00pm	Wash Kit Gang Superbowl Raffle	School Lobby

### Weekly Collection: Sunday, January 14th, 2018



Sunday Collection: \$15,499.  
Faith Direct: \$3,823.  
Children's Jug: \$ 136.  
Total Collection: \$19,458.

Many thanks for your generous support of SSPJ!  
Sts. Philip & James Parish

For the Week of  
January 21st, 2018,

Our Altar Candles

Are burning,

In loving memory on your

First Anniversary In Heaven,

Joseph Chickie Martin

Always love you,

Margie



Our Pro Life Rose  
For the week of,  
January 21st, 2018

Is Dedicated to,  
Assemblyman  
Michael Fitzpatrick  
In Thanksgiving for his  
persistent defense of life in all  
stages.

From,  
The Respect Life  
Committee



Saints Philip and James School and Academy

## Open House and Registration

Sunday, January 28, 2018

11:00 a.m. – 1:30 p.m.

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



Full-day Pre-K/Kindergarten Programs  
Foreign Languages – Spanish and Mandarin  
Before and After School Care  
Band Program including Violin  
Weekly attendance at Mass  
NYSSMA Member  
Student prayer services throughout the year  
Variety of After School Programs/Clubs  
Community-related service projects  
Drama Club/Broadway Jr.  
9<sup>th</sup> Grade Math Class  
Member of Catholic Middle Schools  
Athletic Association  
iPad/Chromebook Classrooms  
Success on Catholic High School Entrance Exam  
Weekly Electives for Academy students  
And much more!!



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

[www.sspjschool.net](http://www.sspjschool.net)

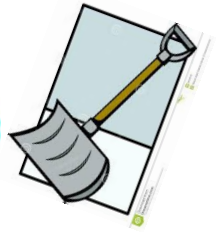




*Many Thanks for Your Generous Consideration for Our  
**Snow Removal Collection***

***THIS WEEKEND***

*Your Kindness is greatly appreciated as Mother Nature has  
been a bit too generous  
so far this season!*



*A Happy New Year to all from the Music Ministry.  
Have you made your new year resolutions ??  
How about joining the Music Ministry. Just think of all the fun you  
will have while praising God through music.  
There are many ways to serve. Some only take bite size pieces of your  
time. Stop by the choir loft to find out how.*

*A special thank you to all members of the Music ministry.  
Your time, talent and dedication helped to make the Advent and  
Christmas seasons special.*



***Wash Kit Gang Annual Super Bowl Raffle!***

*Held after all masses  
Please stop by and purchase raffle tickets that support  
the wonderful work of the SSPJ Wash Kit Gang.*



*All proceeds go toward providing supplies for making wash kits and messages of hope  
to homeless families and individuals living at shelters on Long Island.*

*The Wash Kit Gang Ministry also provides teaching and service opportunities for young  
people in our parish to help those among us that are the most vulnerable in our society.*

***The tickets are \$5.00 each***

***1st Prize- 55" Samsung Smart TV***

*Donated by Baranowski, Hamilton, Karvecky, Koke, and Zito Families*

***2nd Prize- AMC Movie Package and O Solo Mio Gift Card***

*Donated by AMC Loews Stony Brook and a Generous Parishioner*

***3rd Prize- Super Bowl Party Pack - A \$80 Value***

*Donated by Seaqua Deli*

***Drawing on Sunday, January 28, 2018 after the 12:00noon Mass***



*If you feel a calling to become an Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion or a Lector, it is necessary that you first contact the Parish Center Office at 631-584-5454.*

*Thank you for your prayerful consideration for these most touching of ministries.*

# Liturgical Ministry Training

**ANY QUESTIONS PLEASE CALL THE OFFICE OF WORSHIP 516-678-5800 x504**

**1. TRAINING FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTERS OF HOLY COMMUNION:** required for all those who are beginning as Ministers. Session "A" is required of ALL Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion. Those who minister in hospitals, nursing homes and to homebound persons are required to attend Session "B" **in addition** to Session "A". **SESSION "A" MUST BE ATTENDED PRIOR TO SESSION "B".**

**TO REGISTER FOR EXTRAORDINARY MINISTER TRAINING:** the pastor must send a letter to Bishop Barres **at least 5 days in advance** requesting the training for each person attending.

**DO NOT USE THE TEAR-OFF BELOW.**

**This letter must mention the date and place of the training session the person(s) will attend.**

**2. TRAINING FOR LECTORS: PLEASE USE THE TEAR-OFF BELOW.**

**TIMES AND PLACES FOR MINISTRY TRAINING:**

**In Nassau: EM "A" Session and Lectors**  
April 14, 2018; 9 AM—1 PM  
St. Agnes Parish Center, Rockville Centre

**In Suffolk: EM "A" Session and Lectors**  
May 12, 2018; 9 AM—1 PM  
St. Rosalie, Hampton Bays

**"B" session for Extraordinary Ministers**  
April 21, 2018; 9 AM—1 PM  
St. Agnes Parish Center, Rockville Centre

**"B" Session for Extraordinary Ministers**  
May 19, 2018; 9 AM—1 PM  
St. Rosalie, Hampton Bays

**EVENING SESSIONS for Extraordinary Ministers and Lectors at St. Elizabeth, Melville**

Session "A" - Wednesday, May 16 2018; 7:00—10 PM  
Session "B" - Wednesday, May 23, 2018; 7:00—10 PM

**WORKSHOP FEES:**

Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion: \$30 per person  
Lectors: \$20 per person

## REGISTRATION FORM FOR LECTOR TRAINING ONLY

Mail this registration to the Office of Worship, PO Box 9023, Rockville Centre, NY 11571-9023, e-mail to worship@drvc.org, or fax to 516-764-3316.

I wish to register for Lector Training

- St. Agnes Parish Center, Rockville Centre (Saturday, April 14, 2018)
- St. Rosalie, Hampton Bays (Saturday, May 12, 2018)
- St. Elizabeth, Melville (Wednesday, May 16, 2018)

Name ..... Phone .....

Parish ..... Town .....

## Religious Education News for the Week of January 21st, 2018

### Confirmation II Mentor Conversations:

**MONDAY, JANUARY 22, 2018**  
**5:45pm**

In the AUDITORIUM  
CLASSES OF THE FOLLOWING TEACHERS:

**Nina Deleon**  
**Jolene DiPalo**

**Stacey Stevenson**

CLASSES OF THE FOLLOWING TEACHERS:

**7:00pm**

**Susan Ricci**

**Stephanie Hergott**

**Anne DeNicola & Noelle Ciminiello**

**Amy Jo DiConza**



### Confirmation II Mentor Conversations:

**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 24, 2018**  
**7:00PM**

In the AUDITORIUM  
CLASSES OF THE FOLLOWING TEACHERS:

**Elizabeth Sheridan's Class**

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 25, 2018**  
**7:00PM**

CLASSES OF THE FOLLOWING TEACHERS:

**Paul Damato**  
**Debbie Indelicato**

# Mass Intentions, For the week of January 21st, 2018

## Saturday, January 20th, 2018

5:00pm Mary Castiglie-Anderson

## Wednesday, January 24th, 2018

7:30am Taylor Haight  
9:15am Pat Torchiano(Living)

## Sunday, January 21st, 2018 For The Parishioners of SSPJ

8:00am Henry ToebeImann  
10:00am Collective Mass:  
12:00Noon Geraldine Campbell  
Henry (Hank) Buckley  
Alexander Charles Renz  
Eileen Frazita

## Thursday, January 25th, 2018

7:30am Jennie SanPaolo  
9:15am Collective Mass  
Tara Routi

## Monday, January 22nd, 2018

7:30am Katie Farrell  
9:15am Palma D. Tomasso-Sharp(Living)

## Friday, January 26th, 2018

7:30am John Reynolds  
9:15am Johnny Attanasio, Jr. (Living)

## Tuesday, January 23rd, 2018

7:30am Mary Aiello Scarcella  
9:15am Paul R. Winski

## Saturday, January 27th, 2018

9:15am Frederick Anusiak  
5:00pm Patricia Brown

*We Ask You to Remember Our Brothers & Sisters In your Prayers those who are ill...*

## Sunday, January 28th, 2018

8:00am For The Parishioners of SSPJ  
10:00am Theresa O'Leary  
12:00Noon Collective Mass:  
Josephine Yankowski

Anna Capizzio	Joe Alberigo
Angela Amoroso	John Capizzio
Angela Boccio McComb	John Hernandez
AnnMarie M.	Julianne
Baby Mattia Lubrano	Kathleen N.
Betty Schmidt	Kitty Cronin,
Brett Dowling	Kylie Quigley
Brennan Steinorth	Laura Andrucki & family
Bryan Van Colt	Linda Sue
Carole Hennessy	Louis Giordano
Carol Walz	Marie DelCiello,
Catherine Burseind	Marie Loughlin
Christel DeBlasio	Mary McDonough
Christopher Gerver	Nancy Fornabia
ChristopherTallarico	Pasquale Campano
Dawn Kopel	Pasquale Santoro
Dylan Lauro	Patricia Casey
Eileen Zink	Raymond Fox
Elinor Glasser	Rosemary Morgan
Faith VanGostein	Suzanne McCue
Florence Donahue	Thomas Vitale
Ginny McAuley	Terence Hobbes
Hillary Boehme	Teresa Orlik
Jeanine EspositoTansey	Vivien Cordes

## *We Pray for those Who Serve*



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  
CORPORAL DANIEL P. STEELE, USMC  
SGT. CORY O'HARA USMC  
CDR. ROBERT J. MARSH, USN  
PFC. CHARLES CHRISTOPHER HOWELL  
JOHN VINCENT KNOBLOCH, USMC  
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, U.S.C.G.  
RICHARD MAIER, U.S.M.C.  
PRIVATE JOSHUA OLSEN, USARNG  
GLEN CRIMA-U.S. ARMY  
PFC. ANTHONY SCIAMETTA  
MARIO CATANIA, USMC  
RYAN ANTHONY NASCIMENTO, U.S.M.C.  
ENS. RYAN M. SHOWS U.S.N.  
STAFF SGT. RYAN REXRODE U.S.M.C.

## *Safely Home...*



Paige Elizabeth Keely  
Raoul Castro  
Albert B. Miro  
Philip Covino  
Robert S. Thompson  
Maria D'Angelo



FAMILY OWNED & OPERATED - CELEBRATING OUR 25th ANNIVERSARY!

# CAMPS 'R' US

*is coming to town!*



ACCREDITED • AWARD-WINNING • AFFORDABLE  
**SUMMER DAY CAMP**  
SS. PHILIP & JAMES PARISH - SAINT JAMES, NEW YORK

*featuring*

SPORTS • ARTS & CRAFTS • EDUCAMP • FIELD TRIPS • FITNESS  
GAGA • SWIMMING • BOWLING • GAMING • SPECIAL EVENTS

**516.935.CAMP | CAMPSRUS.ORG**

GIVE THE  
GIFT OF CAMP  
**SAVE**  
UP TO **20%**

Watch the bulletin for upcoming  
Camps "R" Us News  
And Camp Open House Information!





# Celebrating the Liturgy- With Grateful Hearts We Serve

## *PRESIDER SCHEDULE-FOR January 27th & 28th, 2018*

Saturday, January 27, 2018 5:00 PM	Sunday, January 28, 2018 8:00 AM MASS	Sunday, January 28, 2018 10:00 AM MASS	Sunday, January 28, 2018 12:00 MASS
Father Tom Haggerty	Father Tom Haggerty	Father Patrick Osei-Poku	Father Patrick Osei-Poku
Deacon Ron	Deacon Ron	Deacon John	Deacon John

## *EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS SCHEDULE -FOR January 27th & 28th, 2018*

Saturday, January 27, 2018 5:00 PM MASS	Sunday, January 28, 2018 8:00 AM MASS	Sunday, January 28, 2018 10:00 AM MASS	Sunday, January 28, 2018 12:00 NOON MASS
M. Fox	R. Fabian	B. Carey	V. Rubano
P. Kaleita	C. Haff	H. Collins	D. Coppola
A. Keenan	W. Haff	N. Locastro	B. Chandler
H. Keenan	J. Harvey	P. Rizzo	J. Hanrahan
T. Laiz	P. Kanuika	B. Luna	M. Lebrun
R. Piazza	M. Kenney	S. McKie	J. Linder
G. Priebe	A. Mantia	J. Sweeney	M. Loughlin
L. Taurassi	P. Martin	J. Tafra	M. Napoli
L. Tepedino	W. Ramos	M. Tangel	T. Pace
D. Toto	K. Rapp	M. Tully	A. Santo

## *ALTAR SERVERS SCHEDULE -FOR January 27th & 28th, 2018*

Saturday, January 27, 2018 5:00PM MASS	Sunday, January 28, 2018 8:00AM MASS	Sunday, January 28, 2018 10:00 AM MASS	Sunday, January 28, 2018 12:00 NOON MASS
P. Bisel	I. Dobokowski	J. Ricupero	I. Cole
S. McCalvin	S. Dobokowski	A. Kaiser	N. Hoonhout
C. Williams	A. Willman	K. Tomasic	S. Santo
M. Pappas	B. Willman	M. Tomasic	E. Zemen
J. Leber			

## *LECTOR SCHEDULE -FOR January 27th & 28th, 2018*

Saturday, January 27, 2018 5:00 PM MASS	Sunday, January 28, 2018 8:00 AM MASS	Sunday, January 28, 2018 10:00AM MASS	Sunday, January 28, 2018 12:00 NOON MASS
C. McAlvin	L. Willman	G. Law	E. Wittish
8th Grade Student	C. Czujko	J. Iaquinto	C. Philips

# Getting Ready for Next Sunday

January 28th—4th Sunday in Ordinary Time—Cycle B

## Scripture Readings ONLINE

The website of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops provides the text of the Scripture Readings. Go to: [www.usccb.org](http://www.usccb.org). Click on the date.

### Reflections on Next Sunday's Celebration

*Deuteronomy 18:15-20*

*Psalms 95*

*1 Corinthians 7:32-35*

*Mark 1:21-28*

When we read the help-wanted ads, we usually look at the background, experience, and qualifications being sought. When it is a question of God's or the Church's calling, we may tend to disqualify ourselves. Today's readings show us that to respond to the help wanted ad for prophecy is to look beyond oneself to the problems of the community.

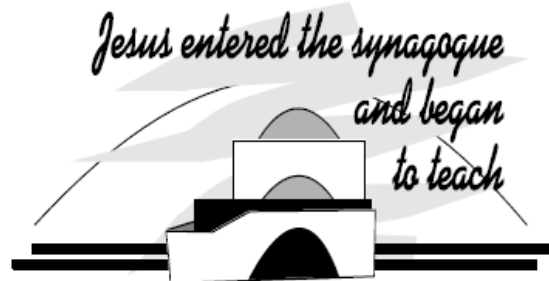
The author of the first reading lacks a direct commission from Yahweh to establish the prophetic office in Israel, so he reinterprets the divine manifestation on Mount Sinai (see Exodus 20:19-21). God uses intermediaries; Moses was the first. The author pictures the prophet not as self-trained but as one into whose mouth God places the words. The common good, rather than personal distinction, is emphasized.

Although Paul refers to himself as an apostle, he exercises a prophetic role as well. He does not place his own restrictions. Believing the Second Coming to be imminent, he attempts to achieve the good of the Corinthians, not his own good. Seeing himself as a go-between, he promotes the best interests of the community.

Mark sees Jesus as God's final spokesperson. In today's reading, Jesus teaches in the synagogue. The teaching style, however, differs greatly from that of the scribes, the "lay experts." He speaks prophetically. He does not quote the authorities, he teaches with authority. Jesus links his prophetic office with alleviating all that oppresses and depresses the human spirit. Jesus seeks not personal gain but comfort for the hurting.

Baptism empowers Christian spokespersons to address the community for the common good. Our God endorses comforting the depressed, helping the lonely, and visiting the shut-ins. Whenever we reach out to these and similar people, we communicate in a most realistic way the message of God. To share God's Word in action is nothing less than prophetic ministry.

- John Craghan, Th.D., S.S.L.  
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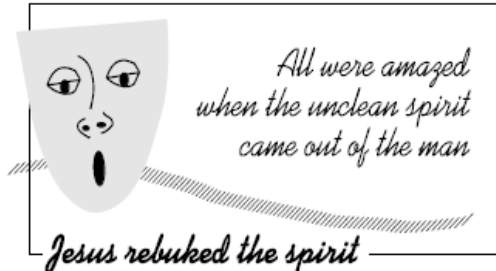
### For reflection...

*How was Jesus' authority confirmed for the people in Capernaum? Would you like "confirmation" of Jesus actions and authority at times? If you can't have absolute certainty, what helps you to trust?*

*Jesus' message is, "Love God above all else and your neighbor as yourself" What is astonishing and spellbinding about this command? How is it different from what the scribes had been saying? What do you find spellbinding about Jesus?*

*God can raise ordinary people to become prophets? Can you think of some people you would call prophets? How are they prophets? Could you be a prophet for any cause?*

*Have there been times in your life when God has put "words into your mouth"? What was that like? How did you feel about it?*



## **CAN YOU LOSE YOUR VOCATION?**

Recently I received a letter from a man who shared that he was still deeply haunted by a story he'd heard in grade school many years before. One of his religion teachers had read them a story about a priest who went to visit a childhood friend. While staying with his friend, the priest noticed that, while his friend was cheerful and affable enough, he seemed to be harboring some deep, residual sadness. When he asked his friend about it his friend confessed that he "had lost his salvation" because he had felt a call to priesthood when he was young but had chosen instead to marry. Now, he felt, there was no existential redemption from that. He had had a vocation and lost it and, with that, also lost for good his chance at happiness. Though happily enough married, he felt that he would bear forever the stigma of having been being unfaithful in not accepting his God-given vocation.

I was raised on stories like that. They were part of the Catholicism of my youth. We were taught to believe that God marked out a certain vocation for you, that is, to be a priest, a sister, a married person, or a single person in the world, and if you didn't accept that, once you knew your calling, then you had "missed" or "lost" your vocation and the consequence would be an abiding sadness and even the danger of missing heaven. Such were the vocation stories of my youth, and, truth be told, I went to the seminary to become a priest with that lingering as a shadow in my mind. But it was only a shadow. I didn't enter religious life and priesthood out of fear, though some moral fears did play a part in it, as they should. Fear can also be a healthy thing.

But it can also be unhealthy. It's not healthy to understand both God and your vocation in terms that can have you missing out on happiness and salvation on the basis on singular choice made while you are still young. God doesn't work like that.

It's true that we are called by God to a vocation which we are meant to discern through conscience, through community, through circumstance, and through the talents that we've been given. For a Christian, existence does not precede essence. We're born with a purpose, with a mission in life. There are many clear texts in scripture on this: Jesus, praying for entire nights to know his Father's will; Peter conscripted on a rock to led by a belt that will take him where he would rather not go; Paul being led into Damascus and instructed by an elder as to his vocation; Moses being called to do a task because he saw the suffering of the people; and all of us being challenged to use our talents or be stripped of them. We're all called to mission and so each of us has a vocation. We're not morally free to live our lives simply for ourselves.

But God doesn't give us just one chance which if we miss it or turn down will leave us sad forever. No. God opens a new door every time we close one. God gives us 77x7 chances, and more after that, if needed. The question of vocation is not so much a question of guessing right (*What very specifically was I predestined for?*) but rather a question of giving oneself over in faith and love to the situation that we've chosen (or which more often than not has by circumstance chosen us). We should not live in unhealthy fear about this. God continues to love us and desire our happiness, even when we don't always follow to where we are ideally called.

Recently I heard a homily in a church in which the priest compared God to a GPS, a *Global Positioning System*, that is, that computerized instrument, complete with human voice, that countless people have today in their cars and which gives them ongoing instructions on how to get to their destination. One of its features is this: No matter how many times you disregard or disobey its command, the voice never expresses impatience, yells at you, or gives up on you. It simply says "Recalculating". Sooner or later, no matter how many times you disregard it, it gets you home.

Delightful as is that image, it's still but a very weak analogy in terms of understanding God's patience and forgiveness. None of us should be haunted, long-term, by sadness and fear because we feel that we've missed our vocation, unless we are living a selfish life. Selflessness rather than selfishness, a life in pursuit of service rather than a life in pursuit of comfort, not guessing correctly, constitutes one's vocation. Our Christian vocation is to make what we are in fact living – married, priest, religious, single in the world – a life of selflessness and service to others. Happiness and salvation are contingent upon that, not upon guessing correctly.