



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

631-584-5454

# December 20th, 2020

## Fourth Sunday of Advent



"Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord.

May it be done to me according to your word."

Luke 1:38

"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

Deacon Ken Maher

### PASTORAL ASSOCIATE

Sister Theresita Donach, CSFN

### BUSINESS MANAGER

Virginia Portanova

### 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



**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**— Monday 1:30pm -7pm

### PLEASE REMEMBER THOSE WHO SERVE FOR US IN YOUR PRAYERS



LCDR. MEGAN M. SHUTKA-VIK, USN

CAPT. WILSON MARKS- USN

CAPTAIN MICHAEL DOLAN- JR.

LT. COL. JOHN KAIRES

SPC. NICOLE A. CANNON

SGM. MICHAEL P. BORRELLI-US ARMY

CAPT. JOHN TULLY- USN

LT. COL. JAMES TULLY-US ARMY

JOSEPH SAGGIO- USNC

CAPTAIN PAUL WILLMS

STAFF SGT. MICHAEL LONGHENRY

LT. COL. PAUL T. JACKSON-

STAFF SGT ALEXANDER PARRELLA-USAF

RICHARD SOTOMAYER- USAF

SGT. CONNOR F. SCOTT- USMC

SGT. CORY O'HARA -USMC

CDR. ROBERT J. MARSH-USN

PFC. CHARLES CHRISTOPHER HOWELL

STEVEN CAVA-USN

ERIC SEELIN- USMC

CW2 CHRIS MUNZ

CW2 NATASHA WORTMAN

CORPORAL JAMES T. CASEY-USMC

SGT. JOSHUA MAHONEY- US ARMY

KEVIN JONES-USCG

PRIVATE JOSHUA OLSEN-USARNG

GLEN CRIMA-US ARMY

STAFF SGT. ANTHONY SCIAMETTA— US ARMY

MARIO CATANIA-USMC

RYAN ANTHONY NASCIMENTO-USMC

KYLE ANTHONY NASCIMENTO-US ARMY

ENS. RYAN M. SHOWS -USN

STAFF SGT. RYAN REXRODE-USMC

DR. KARA VANDEKIEFT, COL.-USAF

SGT. STEPHEN D. OUTCAULT-USMC

PAUL MUMOLO-USN

VICTORIA ZEMAN, USCG

KYLE J. GRUNER -US ARMY

MARK GIORDANO—US COASTGUARD

KELLI MCLAUGHLIN— 2ND LT. US ARMY NATL.GUARD

STAFF SGT MICHAEL J BANG SPECIAL FORCES US ARMY

MATTHEW PATRICK GALLAGHER US ARMY

### **Financial Support Needed weekly to meet Parish budget:**

**Weekly Collection: Sunday December 13th, 2020**

**Christmas Flowers**

**Christmas Offering**

**Faith Direct : (121 Participants)**

**Total Weekly Collection:**

**PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRY**

**\$17,890.**

**\$ 14,503.**

**295.**

**1,000.**

**3,044.**

**\$18,842.**

**\$2,500.**

# Father Tom's Letter

Dear Friends,

On the fourth Sunday of Advent, we're still longing. What are we longing for? For peace, for security, for hope, for experiencing Jesus deep in our hearts, for Christmas. In this year of pandemic, we also long for a return to "normalcy". Or do we?

Today's psalm response is *Forever I will sing the goodness of the Lord*. The psalmist who wrote those words and the faithful who pray (and continue to pray) those words did so and do so in all kinds of situations – good and bad. How important it is to pause and reflect on the goodness of God which is always present – even in the midst of a pandemic.

During Advent and Christmas we hear often from the prophet Isaiah. One of those passages includes the line, ***"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light."*** (Is. 9:1) Pope Francis reflects on this line saying, *"This prophecy of Isaiah never ceases to touch us, especially at Christmas. This is not simply and emotional or sentimental matter. It moves us because it states the deep reality of what we are: a people who walk, and all around us – and within us as well – there is darkness and light."*

So often during this past year we have experienced the darkness – illness, covid, death, unemployment, unrest, division, and more. But we have also seen great light – the generous outreach of so many to assist those in need, the creativity of people finding new ways to stay connected, the flexibility of people by adjusting to different ways of learning, of gathering, of celebrating, of praying. As is also proclaimed at Christmas from the gospel of John: ***"The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."***

As we long for the Light, we realize we are called to bring the Light to our world. We're called to return not to "normal", but to go deeper. We're called to shatter darkness with the lights of compassion, graciousness, patience, hope, love and joy. Let's celebrate the birth of the One who is Light and Love by being light and love in our world.

As we ready ourselves to celebrate our Savior's birth during these difficult days please know the love of our Parish Team for all of you. We are making every effort to keep everyone safe. Unfortunately, reservations are necessary to maintain that safety and not every request was able to be satisfied. We are deeply saddened by that, as we know you are as well. In our church calendar while Christmas is of course is December 25<sup>th</sup>, it is also a season. Please, if your health permits, come and celebrate with us on a Christmas weekday.

Thanks to Margaret Adams, our Director of Music, and members of our music ministry for their early Christmas gift -- this year's virtual Christmas Concert featuring among our talented seasoned singers, an addition -- my compadre, Father Joe! It was a delight and is accessible on our parish website. Give yourselves a treat! Thanks to all!

I pray that we all experience the joy and hope which Christmas brings, not only on the day itself, but throughout the coming year.

And, *In Unexpected Places*

*No one has learned the first essential of the good life  
until one knows that every day is Christmas Day.  
Every day God can be found somewhere,  
getting a fresh start in unexpected, stable-like places.  
Anyone has learned life's first essential who knows that  
one such humble, manger place is one's very own heart.*

*(Author Unknown)*

Peace,

*Father Tom*

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

# Mass Intentions, For the week of December 20th, 2020

## We Remember.... Joseph Mammana



May you be filled with  
the wonder of Mary, the  
obedience of Joseph, the  
joy of the angels, the  
eagerness of the  
shepherds, the  
determination of the  
magi, and the peace of  
the Christ child.  
Almighty God, Father,  
Son and *Holy Spirit* bless  
you now and forever.

### Remembering in Our Prayers~

Angie Mingione  
Angela Amoroso  
Anna Ormsby  
Antoinette Fisher  
Arthur Gureck  
Baby Ben  
Barbara Bombace  
Barbara Ruland  
Mattia Rose Lubrano  
Belinda Groneman  
Belinda Vega  
Brianna Florio  
Bob Keenan  
Claudia Chandler  
Daniel Radice  
Deirdre W.  
Dolores North  
Donna Patrissi  
Dorothy Mitchell  
Dylan Beach  
Ellie Walsh  
Gary McLean  
Ginny & John Rief  
Gladys Blake  
Gregory Parker  
Ida Wehman  
Jack Donohue  
John Cronin  
John DeStefano  
J.C.  
Joseph S.

Luis Anthony  
Antonette Sabatino  
Judy Cunnius  
Judy Rampola  
Kathleen N.  
Kitty Cronin  
Leon Donach  
Lisa McLean  
Mary Fresi  
Maryann Kevlin  
Maria Clark  
Marie del Cielo  
Matthew Parrella  
Michael Fisher  
Mike Lofaro  
Monsignor Iocavacci  
Pasquale Savarese  
Peter Donach  
P.I.  
Ricardo Buffit  
Richard Cembrale  
Riordan Cavoris  
Sara Jean Andersen  
Stephen Dolce  
Theresa Kassay  
Tara Cesarski  
Vivien Cordes  
Victoria Zubrycky  
Vicki Archdeacon

<b>Saturday</b>	<b>December 19th 2020</b> Presider: Father Tom Lector: C. Lombardi EM: D. Anderson	9:15am  5:00pm	Pasquale Savarese-Living  Margaret Castiglie
	<b>Sunday</b> <b>December 20th, 2020</b> Presider: Father Tom Lector: B. Luna EM: M. Kenny	8am	For The People of SSPJ
	Presider: Father Joe Lector: E. Nicastro EM: L. Sisti	10:00am	Philip & Eva Alaimo
	<b>Collective Mass</b> Presider: Father Joe Lector: A. Latino EM: P. Parish	12:00pm	John Boland Harry Schrader Ronald O'Connor Phillip Giarraputo, Angelo & Theresa Marinello
<b>Monday</b>	<b>December 21st, 2020</b>	7:30am  9:15am	Joseph Napolitano  Mary & Bernard Buckley
<b>Tuesday</b>	<b>December 22nd, 2020~</b>	7:30am  9:15am	Russell Armstrong  Frank Spatarella
<b>Wednesday</b>	<b>December 23rd, 2020~</b>	7:30am  9:15am	Matthew Ryan Martin  William Thomas Fisher
<b>Thursday</b>	<b>December 24th, 2020~</b>	7:30am 9:15am 2:00pm 4:30pm 8:00pm	No Intentions
<b>Friday</b>	<b>December 25th, 2020~</b>	8:00am 10:00am 12:00pm	
<b>Saturday</b>	<b>December 26th, 2020~</b> Presider: Father Joe Lector: C. Burke EM:	9:15am  5:00pm	Christmas Novena  Steve Rannazzisi
<b>Sunday</b>	<b>December 27th, 2020</b> Presider: Father Joe Lector: B. Tobin EM:	8:00am	Christmas Novena
	Presider: Father Tom Lector: P. Wos EM:	10:00am	For the People of SSPJ
	<b>Collective Mass</b> Presider: Father Tom Lector: P. Suski EM:	12:00pm	John & Elizabeth McCarthy Richard Blake Nick Bellini Living-Pasquale Savarese

Banns of Marriage: Second~ Michael Dimotsis & Alli Zegal ~ SSPJ



## Christmas 2020 ~ At Sts. Philip & James Parish

*"We are called to Love One Another" with simple acts of kindness and compassion"*

It is with LOVE in our intentions, and the DESIRE to welcome ALL that we ask:

PLEASE MAKE YOUR RESERVATION FOR CHRISTMAS MASSES:

AT: SSPJ.ORG

OR BY CALLING THE PARISH CENTER OFFICE AT 631-584-5454

(Monday-Thurs 9am-5pm)

INQUIRIES CAN BE MADE AT INFO@SSPJ.ORG

DUE TO COVID REGULATIONS BY DRVC AND CDC ~ SEATING IN CHURCH IS LIMITED

### Christmas Eve Masses:

The 2:00pm , 4:30pm, and 8:00pm Masses Upstairs ~ ARE FULL

The overflow masses on Christmas Eve, in the Auditorium are nearing capacity at 2:15pm, 4:45pm and 8:15pm

### Christmas Day Masses:

8:00am and 10:00am In Church have available seating  
12:00noon in church is nearing capacity

*Creator,  
As I prepare to go into the world,  
help me to see the sacrament  
in the wearing of this cloth –  
let it be "an outward sign  
of an inward grace" –  
a tangible and visible way  
of living love for my neighbors,  
as I love myself.*

*Christ,  
since my lips will be covered,  
uncover my heart,  
that people would see my smile  
in the crinkles around my eyes.  
Since my voice may be muffled,  
help me to speak clearly,  
not only with my words,  
but with my actions.*



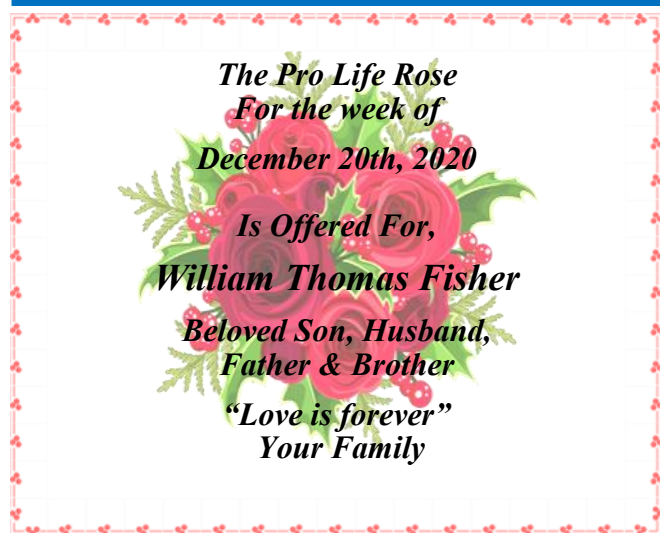
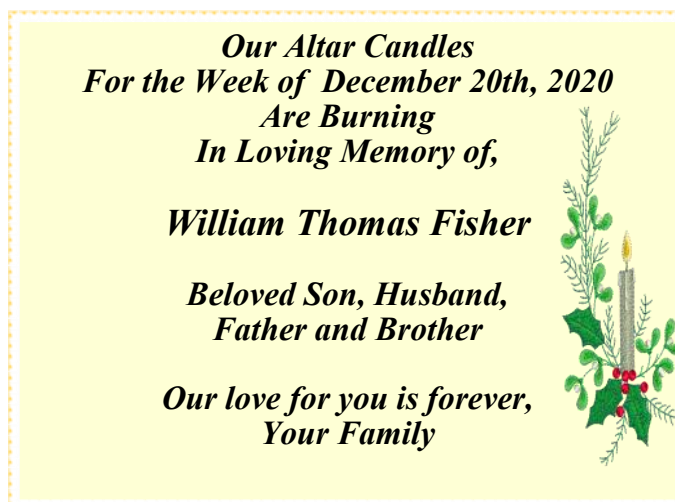
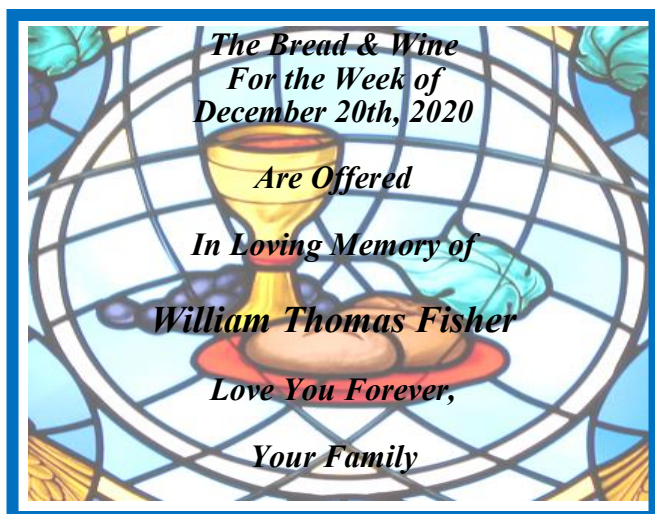
*Holy Spirit,  
as the elastic touches my ears,  
remind me to listen carefully –  
and full of care –  
to all those I meet.*

*May this simple piece of cloth  
be shield and banner,  
and each breath that it holds,  
be filled with your love.*

*In your Name  
and in that love,  
I pray. May it be so.  
May it be so.*

*Rev. Richard Bott*

*Altar Memorials for the Week of December 20th, 2020*



**Music Notes**

*We are in desperate need of volunteer accompanists for our downstairs Christmas Masses.  
Masses are scheduled on the Eve: 2pm, 4:30pm, and 8pm.  
Christmas Day: 8am, 10am, 12pm*

*If we do not have any volunteers our cantors will have to sing with no accompaniment. The  
NEED is GREAT!!*

*All the music will be given to you in advance. Please help!!  
Call me, Margaret Adams, at the Parish Center (631) 548-5454 or email at  
[sspjmusicministry@gmail.com](mailto:sspjmusicministry@gmail.com)*

*I can believe Christmas is this week. We, in the music ministry hope everyone is enjoying  
the Christmas Concert.*

*A great deal of love and hard work went into making it.  
We would like to wish everyone a  
Blessed Christmas and a Happy, Healthy New Year*





DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE  
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

## Christmas 2020

To the People of God of the Diocese of Rockville Centre:

When he was elected as a Successor of St. Peter on March 13, 2013, our Holy Father chose the name *Francis*. It was a weighty decision with a prophetic message. Especially now, seven years later and with the publication of his latest encyclical *Fratelli Tutti* from the tomb of St. Francis of Assisi on October 3, 2020, the significance of the choice is clear: Pope Francis connects his papacy to St. Francis.

Through the ministry of our Holy Father, St. Francis of Assisi is close to the Church in these times. Therefore, as we draw near to Bethlehem at the end of this difficult year, I wish to recall two points Pope Francis highlights from the life of St. Francis. One will help us celebrate the Nativity of Our Lord; the other indicates a grace for which to pray during the holy season.

First, in his 2019 Apostolic Letter *Admirabile Signum: On the Meaning and Importance of the Nativity Scene*, Pope Francis emphasizes St. Francis of Assisi's foundational role in our celebration of Christmas. The Holy Father recalls the origins of the crèche and the first nativity scene inspired by the holy friar in 1223, by which the saint sought "to bring to life the memory of that babe born in Bethlehem." Importantly, the remembrance of Christ's birth that St. Francis desired to convey was brought alive in Greccio, a small village in Italy, not by statues but by people from the surrounding towns and countryside. Together with St. Francis, his friars, an ox and a donkey, they gathered at a cave to behold a manger full of hay over which the Eucharist was celebrated. That Christmas night, almost 800 years ago, Pope Francis reminds us, "the nativity scene was enacted and experienced by all who were present." That night, there was "no distance between the original event and those sharing in its mystery." (2) Encountering Christ, there was simply joy and hope.

This Christmas, in our world laden with the Crosses of COVID-19, political and economic turmoil, racism, financial hardship, and so many other societal ills and challenges – challenges that impact us on Long Island – let us remember this lesson from Greccio: Christmas is an event to be lived. It demands our participation. Like the women and men who embodied that first crèche, we must be present to Christ who is born for us. We must behold and receive Him.

## *Bishop Barres Christmas Letter Continued:*

DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE  
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

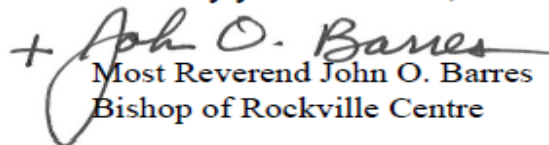
Second, in *Fratelli Tutti*, Pope Francis shows St. Francis as an icon of Christocentric-listening. With great humility and charity, the saint reverently listened to others. He was present to the various voices in his life – the voice of God, the voice of his neighbor, the voice of the poor, the voice of the sick, the voice of nature – and by truly hearing them, he was an instrument of peace, healing, and understanding. How different it can be for us! The Holy Father says well what we know: “Today’s world is largely a deaf world...At times, the frantic pace of the modern world prevents us from listening attentively to what another person is saying.” Aware of this fact, the Pope encourages us, in the midst of our hectic and polarized world, to be like St. Francis and “not lose our ability to listen.” (48)

This Christmas, when we approach the crib, let us ask for the grace to be attentive listeners. Let us ask for the grace to be like St. Francis, so that we may hear the voice of God and the voice of our neighbor and respond with the radical charity he exhibited.<sup>1</sup>

Like Pope Francis, may we be moved by the example of St. Francis, and may St. Francis of Assisi’s love for the Mystery of the Nativity, his ecstatic mysticism, his love for the poor, and his spirit of universal fraternity animate our celebration of Christmas this year.

May God bless you and your families this Christmas.


Sincerely yours in Christ,

+   
Most Reverend John O. Barres  
Bishop of Rockville Centre

### **FOOD PANTRY NEEDS:**

**PARMALAT BOXED MILK**

**BABY WIPES**

 Thank you to all who respond so generously to the needs of all that walk beside them...  
**Simple Acts of Love...  
It's a great thing!**

*The Parish of St. Gerard Majella in Port Jefferson Station is seeking a full time Business Manager to oversee the physical and financial resources of the parish.*

*This position requires flexibility in schedule to attend meetings, coordinate projects and attend to emergencies. This position reports directly to the Pastor.*

*College degree required, preferably in Accounting or related fields. Send cover letter and resume to Fr. Gregory Rannazzisi, Pastor, by email only:*

*[frgreg@stgmajella.org](mailto:frgreg@stgmajella.org).*

The crisis in creation is real. People, animals and plants are dying because we human beings have abused God’s world.  
Even if there were no environmental problems, we should still be tending his world with compassion and gentleness.



## *Remembering...2020 Christmas Lights of Love*

*Called to be remembered by ~  
Margaret & Tim Adams  
Mary Castiglie, Joseph Castiglie,  
Margaret Castiglie*

*Called to be remembered by ~  
Diane Anderson  
Antoinette Genco*

*Called to be remembered by ~  
Mom, Dad, Brittany, Marc & Dean  
Birbiglia  
Ryan Birbiglia*

*Called to be remembered by ~  
Mom, Dad, Mark, Christopher,  
Lynette and Families  
Frankie Cafaro Jr.*

*Called to be remembered by ~  
Janice Caltabiano  
Joey Morda, Benedetta  
Caltabiano, Joseph Caltabiano*

*Called to be remembered by ~  
the Chiorando Family  
Louis R. Chiorando, Mary & Luigi  
Chiorando, Paul & Vincenza  
Fabrizio  
Bernard & Veronica Wehman*

*Called to be remembered by ~  
The Cullen Family  
Patrick Halpin, Gerry Reilly*

*Called to be remembered by  
~Charlotte Czujko  
Paul J. Czujko*

*Called to be remembered by ~  
J. Danese*

*Vincent Danese, Jr.  
Called to be remembered by ~  
Sister T Donach  
Donnalea Donach Vanos*

*Called to be remembered by~  
Ruth Diaz & Family  
Gregoria Diaz, Sixto E. Diaz, Evelyn  
Eustace, Richard Walsh*

*Called to be remembered by ~  
Jackie Duffy  
Jack Duffy, William Olsen, Margaret  
Olsen, Patricia Henrich, Stella  
Williams*

*Called to be remembered by ~  
Lucy & Glen Eschbach & Family  
Suellen Eschback*

*Called to be remembered by –  
John Fleming  
Joel Mantone, Louis Mantone,  
Josephine Mantone, Thomas &  
Kathleen Fleming*

*Called to be remembered by -  
Patricia Fisher  
William T. Fisher*

*Called to be remembered by -  
Nick & Ryan Gampel  
Great Grandma Nina & Great Grandpa  
Iggy Griffo,  
Great Grandma & Great Grandpa Melo,  
Nana Vicki & Grandpa John Gampel  
Called to be remembered by – Sheila &  
Thomas Ginty  
Julia & John Murphy, Annie & James  
Ginty*

*Called to be remembered by – The  
Leonard & Lorraine Gombert  
Valentine, Jean & Charles Gombert,  
William & Adelaide Tschinkel,  
Michael Kaleita*

*Called to be remembered by -  
Jim & Judy Hanrahan  
Pat & Kay O'Brien, Christopher  
O'Brien, Dolores Kaleita O'Brian,  
Jim & Edith Hanrahan*

*Called to be remembered by ~  
Chris Hensen  
Mary C. Michalek and  
John J. Michalek*

*Called to be remembered by ~  
The Kaplon Family  
Michael Kaplon*

## *Remembering...2020 Christmas Lights of Love*

*Called to be remembered by ~  
Maryjane Kenney  
Lawrence Kenney*

*Called to be remembered by ~  
Barbara Luna  
Vincent Luna*

*Called to be remembered by~  
Patricia & Bill Martin  
Maureen McLaughlin, John & Richard,  
Marie & Beth Martin  
Thomas & Catherine Moffatt, Mary  
Moffatt, Mary Moffatt Roethgen*

*Called to be remembered by~  
Virginia McCauley  
James A. McCauley*

*Called to be remembered by~  
The McKie Family  
John R. McDonald, Joseph McKie, Ann  
McKie, Claire Fredeman, Brycen  
McDonald*

*Called to be remembered by ~ Her  
Husband, Thomas G McCormick  
Dr. Colene Young*

*Called to be remembered by ~  
Christine McGrath*

*Thomas Anthony McGrath & Marion &  
Tom McGrath*

*Called to be remembered by ~  
The Napolitano Family  
Joe Napolitano, Jenny Reichert, Joan  
Ward, Jim Jackmore &  
Haley Marie Ward*

*Called to be remembered by ~  
Phil & Dorothy Nunziata  
John & Fay Nunziata &  
Catherine Zettwoch*

*Called to be remembered by ~  
The Pascalli Family  
Gail Pascalli*

*Called to be remembered by~  
The O'Hara Family  
Agnes & William Kingston  
Isabelle & Joseph O'Hara*

*Called to be remembered by ~  
The Portanova Family  
Pasquale Campano, Lydia Portanova,  
Concetta Cerrito, Frances LaCalamita,  
John Portanova, Jelenich Babies,  
Annie Portanova*

*Called to be remembered by~  
The Schlee Family  
John Schlee*

*Called to be remembered by ~  
The Sehne Family  
Jakob M. Sehne and  
Philip & Eva Maria Alaimo*

*Called to be remembered by~  
Lynn Sisti  
Anthony J. Sisti and Mary & Charles  
Vanek*

*Called to be remembered by ~  
The Smith Family  
Ned Smith*

*Called to be remembered by ~  
Edward H.L. Smith Family  
Edward H.L. Smith, Jr., Edward H.L.  
Smith III, The William Dugan Family*

*Called to be remembered by ~  
Patricia Tripptree  
Thomas Tripptree, Lorraine Booras,  
Ann Love*

*Called to be remembered by ~  
Virginia Portanova  
Suzanne Fitzgibbon, John Long,  
John Soscia, Sr., Jeff Pose*



## *A Reflection from Sister T*

*December 16, 2020*

*Dear Friends,*

*We are getting ready to head into the Fourth week of Advent. As you continue your journey with Joseph let us turn to those last days before the birth. Like most of us, Joseph and Mary had expectations on how their lives would play out. We have come to reflect during these past weeks of Advent on how a message from God through an angel changed all of that.*

*A friend once said to me “no expectations, no disappointments”. I don’t think that Mary and Joseph lived by that rule for there were no disappointments just opportunities. Since they were in a deep relationship with God, they recognized that every change in their plans reminded them that they needed God all the more.*

*Have you ever found yourself vulnerable and perhaps in the middle of a change and reached out for help? That is a risky situation for you have no control of the response. Perhaps help will come, or it won’t. The difference with Mary and Joseph is that in their most vulnerable and challenging of times they knew what they needed, they needed God. And the response would be consistent for God was always there for them.*

*All the unknowns that Mary and Joseph encountered did not sway their trust in God. They were spiritually grounded. Initially they may have been fearful but the message of ‘do not be afraid’ reassured them of God’s love for them. During these times of so much uncertainty what are my/your needs? Can you name your needs before the Lord? This can place us in a very vulnerable position for we then need to admit that we are limited, weak. In 2Corinthians 12: 10 St. Paul says “...for Christ’s sake, I delight in my weakness...For when I am weak, then I am strong.” Are we able to see and know our weakness and ask God for help? In 2020 it can be very hard to admit that we are weak as we have become very self-sufficient.*

*As we approach the feast of Christmas let us remember that we have been waiting for a **‘person not a day’**! With this in mind, let go and bring your needs to the crib. I truly know that you will be listened to for our God is a faithful God.*

*Till next week,*

*Sister Theresita*



***For when I am weak, then I am strong***



## Religious Education News

**A GREAT BIG THANK YOU TO OUR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STUDENTS AND FAMILIES!!**  
**YOU RESPONDED TO THE MISSION THAT ALL APOSTLES OF HOPE ASPIRE TO, THAT IS, PERFORMING SIMPLE ACTS OF KINDNESS WITH GREAT LOVE....**  
**WE ARE SO PROUD OF EACH OF YOU!**

The religious education students began the Advent season during the SSPJ Parish Tree Lighting as we gathered together to light the Christmas tree. Not only did we remember those in whose memory we illuminate the beauty and splendor of the lights that adorn our Parish Christmas tree, we also introduced an Advent Act of Service program.

Our students received an Advent service packet. The packet contained week by week prayers for both parents and students, craft idea, and an ornament. After they accomplished their act of service, they adorned their Christmas tree at home with a special ornament that read, HOPE, PEACE, JOY and LOVE, our Advent weekly themes. Students and families crafted homemade cards, they shared their cards with those who hunger, those who are grieving, essential workers, and for all who receive donated pick a star gifts.

### *Simple Acts of Service With Great Love!*



*Just some of the many hand crafted cards received from our Students*

**A VERY SPECIAL THANK YOU TO MISS CHARLOTTE'S RELIGIOUS ED STUDENTS WHO FILMED A BEAUTIFUL ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS PRAYER FOR ALL THEIR PEERS AND FAMILIES ON GOOGLE CLASSROOM! THEY DID AN OUTSTANDING JOB!**



**Brianna Everoski (2nd grade)**

**Michael Chisari (3rd grade)**

**Emily Mossdrop (3rd grade)**

**Colin Craine (3rd grade)**



## Christmas Tree Lighting ~ 2020 ~ ALL WAS CALM ALL WAS BRIGHT!



SIMPLE ACTS OF SERVICE ~ GRACIOUSLY PERFORMED BY OUR TERRIFIC RELIGIOUS ED STUDENTS AND FAMILIES!

DATE 12/12/2020 ACTION: Helped my mom.

I helped my mom do the laundry. She lets me put the soap in the machine and ~~then~~ then i help her fold the clothes.





## Apostles of Hope November 2020

### Pre-K A

**Cecily Coleman** is an Apostle of Hope. Cecily loves coming to school to learn something new every day. She is a great friend and always tries her hardest to help out all her friends in the classroom. She has the kindest heart like Jesus and can always bring a huge smile to your face.

### Pre-K B

**Bradley Bocchino** is an Apostle of Hope. Bradley is a hard worker and is always focused on what needs to be done. Bradley is also a great friend and is always the first to help when he sees a friend struggling. During quarantine, Bradley did not slow down at all. He made sure to keep up with all his work, join every meet and even went above and beyond on his assignments. Bradley's hard work and kindness make him an excellent follower of Jesus.

### Kindergarten

**Ava Gramer** is an Apostle of Hope. Ava is prepared and ready to learn every day. As one of our remote learners, she is dedicated to her schoolwork and loves learning new things. She works hard each day and is respectful to her teacher. Ava sets a wonderful example to her classmates and models what Jesus would do.

**Makayla McKeithan** is an Apostle of Hope. Makayla signs on to Google Classroom every day ready to learn. She works hard each day on her schoolwork, especially her handwriting. She has a positive attitude and a smile that brightens her teacher's day. Makayla loves to say her prayers & knows God is always with us.

### Grade 1

**James Cullen** is an Apostle of Hope. James comes to school everyday motivated, focused and ready to learn. James plays a big role in our classroom collecting plastic water bottles from his house and bringing them into school. The bottles will soon be recycled and the money will be donated to a local charity. Thank you James for the continuous contributions and leadership.

**Luciano Saladino** is an Apostle of Hope. Luciano has been working extremely hard since September working remotely. Luciano participates everyday and loves to share with his classmates. Luciano has been focusing on his reading and writing skills which has improved greatly since September. Continue working hard Luciano, we can't wait to see you in class soon!

### Grade 2

**Ava Grace Brownsey** is an Apostle of Hope. Ava is a friendly and caring new student in our class. She is always thinking of others and willing to share supplies and ideas with her classmates. At lunch, Ava shares a joke and a fun fact with her classmates. Ava likes to learn about Jesus and treats others like Jesus would. Ava is a follower of Jesus.

**Alex Cotter** is an Apostle of Hope. Alex is polite and respectful to his peers at all times. Alex enjoys sharing stories and adventures with his classmates. He treats others the way Jesus taught us to treat others. At dismissal we see that he is a kind, loving, big brother to his sister. Alex is a follower of Jesus.



### Grade 3

**Brendan McAlvin** is an Apostle of Hope. Brendan comes to school with a smile on his face and ready to learn each day. He strives to do his best and is a friend to everyone in the class. Brendan is compassionate and kind to all the children in our school.

**Nicole Wille** is an Apostle of Hope. Nicole is new to our school this year. In only a few months, she has made many new friends. Nicole comes to school each day ready to learn new things and to share her artistic abilities with the class.

### Grade 4

**Andrew McCulloh** is an Apostle of Hope. Andrew is friendly and kind to all his classmates. He works diligently to complete his assignments. Andrew has a great sense of humor and he enjoys making others laugh. He is fun to be around. His kindness and fun-loving attitude is contagious.

**Abigail Piliero** is an Apostle of Hope. Abigail enjoys volunteering in class and she is always offering a helpful hand. She participates actively in prayers and she is a wonderful role model for all. Abigail is a hard working student who always strives to do her best. She has a positive attitude towards attending school and learning.

### Grade 5

**Vincenza Franco** is an Apostle of Hope. Vincenza is kind to her friends and respectful to her teachers. She participates often in class and during Mass times. Even through her mask Vincenza's personality shines and provides light and positivity to the class.

### Grade 6

**Tessa Bennett** is an Apostle of Hope. Tessa is such a kind, caring, and hard-working student. She has been especially kind to the new students in the class and is constantly going out of her way to make sure they feel welcomed. Her quiet kindness and outstanding creativity makes her a wonderful disciple of Jesus.

### Grade 7

**Madison McCulloh** is an Apostle of Hope. Madison comes to school each day ready to learn. She puts thought and effort into each assignment she turns in. Madison has begun to find her niche in the classroom by actively participating, engaging in other students' reflections to strengthen her own, and being a friend to all.

### Grade 8

**Olivia Jacobs** is an Apostle of Hope. Olivia is always willing to help others in the class. She is a great friend to her classmates and is always willing to listen if they need someone to talk to. Olivia tries her best in class and always asks questions if she needs help. Olivia is very respectful to all of her teachers. Olivia is part of the Odyssey team who worked extremely hard last year.

### Faculty

**Ms. Nocera** is an Apostle of Hope. Ms. Nocera has gone above and beyond to make an impossible situation possible. Her attention to detail is remarkable and her Technological capabilities are commendable. Ms. Nocera's smile and enthusiasm for teaching and learning brighten each day and provide her students with a top notch education.

**Mrs. O'Connor** is an Apostle of Hope. During these most uncertain times it is comforting to know that Mrs. O'Connor is always here for us. Whether she is taking temperatures, caring for students or completing the NYS daily health screen report we all know Mrs. O'Connor is helping to keep us safe!



THE  
AWESOME  
WORK  
AT  
SSPJ  
SCHOOL



*Saints Philip and James School recently partnered with the Smithtown Children's foundation to make a child's Christmas a little more merry this year.*

The students in Miss Luciano's first grade class recycle bottles. Each trimester, one student volunteers to take the bottles to the redemption center. This trimester, James Cullen volunteered and raised \$38. James chose to donate the deposit funds to Smithtown Children's Foundation so that presents can be bought for other children.



Pictured in this photo are Miss Luciano, James Cullen and Christine Fitzgerald.



Miss Luciano truly shows her students how to be Apostles of Hope.

The SSPJ Academy Tree - # 305 at the Stony Brook Shops  
***Let There Be Peace on Earth***

**Made with Love by:**

Juliana and Nicolas  
Merlino,  
Jack and Ryan  
Hurlbert,  
Liam Regan,  
Ryan Tobin, and  
Bradley Garger



**We are most grateful for all our Parishioners and grateful for your generosity. Unfortunately, we remain \$3,000 away from our 2020 Catholic Ministries goal of \$111,000.**

**We are unable to receive our rebate if payments are not received by January 31, 2021.**

***God always holds us in the palm of his hands and will guide us through each of our moments...we simply have to let his will be done.***

**If you are able to assist us, kindly use the form below.  
Blessings and Peace to all....**



**Thank you for your generous support of the  
2020 Catholic Ministries Appeal.**

**Completing your 2020 pledge ensures that our Parish  
will benefit by receiving our full rebate.**

**If you have not yet had the opportunity to give, please  
prayerfully consider making a donation to the Appeal.**

***Pledges can be accepted until December 31, 2020  
and payments can be made through January 31, 2021!***

**Self-Mailers are provided in the back of the church.**

**Join us as we join together as *One Family in Mission!***

**Thank You!**

✂-----  
Please make checks payable to *Catholic Ministries Appeal*.

Parish: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Pledge: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Down payment: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



## 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent, Cycle B

2 Sm 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16  
Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29  
Romans 16:25-27  
Luke 1:26-38

**Monday December 21**  
Song of Songs 2:8-14  
or Zephania 3:14-18a  
Ps 33:2-3, 11-12, 20-21  
Luke 1:39-45

**Tuesday December 22**  
1 Samuel 1:24-28  
1 Sm 2:1, 4-8  
Luke 1:46-56

**Wednesday December 23**  
Malachi 3:1-4, 23-24  
Ps 25:4-5ab, 8-10, 14  
Luke 1:57-66

**Thursday December 24**  
2 Samuel 7:1-5, 8b-12, 14a, 16  
Ps 89:2-5, 27, 29  
Luke 1:67-79

**Friday December 25**  
**Christmas Day**  
Isaiah 52:7-10  
Ps 98:1-6  
Hebrews 1:1-6  
John 1:1-18

**Saturday December 26**  
**Saint Stephen**  
Acts 6:8-10; 7:54-59  
Ps 31:3cd-4, 6, 8ab, 16bc, 17  
Matthew 10:17-22

Today's Gospel shows us how the mission of Christ affected the Virgin Mary even before Jesus became human through her.

However, that is not when his salvation plan began. Jesus is God; he has always existed. His salvation plan impacted Mary in the moment of her own conception.

In the Nicene Creed we say that God "came down from heaven, and by the Holy Spirit was incarnate of the Virgin Mary, and became man." In other words, his Spirit bathed Mary in his pure, holy presence. Even though she could not understand how the Messiah could possibly be conceived within her, by the grace of God's Spirit she could know that God was the one who was asking for it and God was the one who was doing it.

All of us are called by God to carry the presence of Christ and birth him more fully into the world. What are you doing about it? How much are you fulfilling your divine destiny? Remember, he always empowers us to accomplish whatever he asks us to do. God knows what he's doing when he calls us to continue what Mary began, and he is always trustworthy and dependable. There is nothing to fear, no reason to hold back from fulfilling our true destiny.

Everything that God does is always good, even when his plan for our mission requires a journey through the cross. If we follow Christ, sooner or later we hang with him on the cross, persecuted for our faith.



With this in mind, when he asks us to do something for his kingdom, of course our answer is yes, right?

Why wouldn't it be? Of course we want to cooperate with his plan. Mary shows us that we can yes

to his plan even when we don't understand it nor see how God could possibly do what he says he'll do.

It's normal to feel inadequate, like he cannot fulfill his plan *through us*, because we know we are weak, sinful, and unqualified. Don't trust your feelings about it; trust God!

### Reflect & Discuss:

1. When was the last time you said to God, "But how can this be? You want me to do WHAT? I don't understand why!" What were you afraid of?
2. How strong was your trust in God?
3. When God chooses you for a task or responsibility, what helps you move from uncertainty or confusion or reluctance into saying "yes"?
4. When the plans of God don't make sense or they seem unpleasant, how do you overcome your reluctance?



## THE ILLUSION OF INVULNERABILITY

*Whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger.* That's a pious axiom that doesn't always hold up. Sometimes the bad time comes and we don't learn anything. Hopefully this present bad time, Covid-19, will teach us something and make us stronger. My hope is that Covid-19 will teach us something that previous generations didn't need to be taught but already knew through their lived experience; namely, that we're not invulnerable, that we aren't exempt from the threat of sickness, debilitation, and death. In short, all that our contemporary world can offer us in terms of technology, medicine, nutrition, and insurance of every kind, doesn't exempt us from fragility and vulnerability. Covid-19 has taught us that. Just like everyone else who has ever walked this earth, we're vulnerable.

I'm old enough to have known a previous generation when most people lived with a lot of fear, not all of it healthy, but all of it real. Life was fragile. Giving birth to a child could mean your death. A flu or virus could kill you and you had little defense against it. You could die young from heart disease, cancer, diabetes, bad sanitation, and dozens of other things. And nature itself could pose a threat. Storms, hurricanes, tornadoes, drought, pestilence, lightening, these were all to be feared because we were mostly helpless against them. People lived with a sense that life and health were fragile, not to be taken for granted.

But then along came vaccinations, penicillin, better hospitals, better medicines, safer childbirth, better nutrition, better housing, better sanitation, better roads, better cars, and better insurance against everything from loss of work, to drought, to storms, to pestilence, to disasters of any kind. And along with that came an ever-increasing sense that we're safe, protected, secure, different than previous generations, able to take care of ourselves, no longer as vulnerable as were the generations before us.

And to a large extent that's true, at least in terms of our physical health and safety. In many ways, we're far less vulnerable than previous generations. But, as Covid-19 has made evident, this is not a fully safe harbor. Despite much denial and protest, we've had to accept that we now live as did everyone before us, that is, as unable to guarantee own health and safety. For all the dreadful things Covid-19 has done to us, it has helped dispel an illusion, the illusion of our own invulnerability. We're fragile, vulnerable, mortal.

At first glance, this seems like a bad thing; it's not. Disillusionment is the dispelling of an illusion and we have for too long (and too glibly) been living an illusion, that is, living under a pall of false enchantment which has us believing that the threats of old no longer have power to touch us. And how wrong we are! As of the time of this writing there are 70.1 million Covid-19 cases reported worldwide and there have been more than 1.6 million reported deaths from this virus. Moreover the highest rates of infection and death have been in those countries we would think most invulnerable, countries that have the best hospitals and highest standards of medicine to protect us. That should be a wake-up call. For all the good things our modern and post-modern world can give us, in the end it can't protect us from everything, even as it gives us the sense that it can.

Covid-19 has been a game-changer; it has dispelled an illusion, that of our own invulnerability. What's to be learned? In short, that our generation must take its place with all other generations, recognizing that we cannot take life, health, family, work, community, travel, recreation, freedom to gather, and freedom to go to church, for granted. Covid-19 has taught us that we're not the Lord of life and that fragility is still the lot of everyone, even in a modern and post-modern world.

Classical Christian theology and philosophy have always taught that as humans we are not self-sufficient. Only God is. Only God is "Self-sufficient Being" (*Ipsum Esse Subsistens*, in classical philosophy). The rest of us are contingent, dependent, interdependent ... and mortal enough to fear the next appointment with our doctor. Former generations, because they lacked our medical knowledge, our doctors, our hospitals, our standards of hygiene, our medicines, our vaccines, and our antibiotics, existentially felt their contingency. They knew they weren't self-sufficient and that life and health could not be taken for granted. I don't envy them some of the false fear that came with that, but I do envy them not living under a pall of false security. Our contemporary world, for all the good things it gives us, has lulled us asleep in terms of our fragility, vulnerability, and mortality. Covid-19 is a wake-up call, not just to the fact that we're vulnerable, but especially to the fact that we may not take for granted the precious gifts of health, family, work, community, travel, recreation, freedom to gather, and (yes) even of going to church.