



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

Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

December 30, 2018



"Lord every nation on earth will adore you"

Psalms 72

*"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

Sunday ~ Closed
Monday: 9am-8pm

Parish Center office Hours
Tuesday & Wednesday: 9am-8pm
Thursday: 9am-5pm

Friday: Closed
Saturday: 10am-2pm

Parish Center Phone ~ 631-584-5454

Parish Center Fax~ 631-862-9675

Web ~ www.sspj.org

Pastoral Team

Father Tom Haggerty
Father Patrick Osei-Poku
Deacon Ronald Blasius
Deacon John Keenan
Deacon Ken Maher
Sister Theresita Donach, CSFN
Margaret Adams
Virginia Portanova
John Cordes
Lynn Sisti
Charlotte Czujko
Barbara Luna
Dominick Avento
Catherine Darrow
Frank Brancaccio

Pastor
Associate Pastor
Deacon
Deacon
Deacon
Pastoral Associate
Music Director
Business Manager
Director of Facilities
Coordinator of Parish Social Ministry
Religious Education Coordinator Grades 1-2
Religious Education Coordinator Grades 3-6
Religious Education Coordinator Grades 7-8
Religious Education Administrator
Youth Minister

Pastoral Council

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

Trustees

Jerry Linder ~ Tina Cafaro

SSPJ School—Principal Diane M. Anderson

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 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.

RCIA— 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

Father Tom's Letter

Dear Friends,

Christmas Day has come and gone, but the Christmas Season continues on!

Have you ever experienced a child "wandering off"? That's what's described in today's gospel - Mary and Joseph lost sight of Jesus. How could this be? According to Fr. Jude Siciliano,

The adolescent Jesus was at a transitional stage between the worlds of his mother and father. In the caravan people traveled according to gender; just as their society was strictly divided. So, each parent might have concluded that Jesus was "over there" with the others. Mary would have been proud that Jesus was with the men; Joseph would have thought Jesus returned to the comfort of the women. Parents with adolescents can testify to the difficulties they and their children also face at this stage of the child's life.

On this feast of the Holy Family, we're reminded that Jesus, Mary and Joseph lived in the real world of their time, experiencing joys and challenges, and together nurtured their relationships with each other and with God. How might we learn from them?

Here are seven ways parents can teach their children to know God and cultivate a "holy family":

1. God is love. God as love will only begin to make sense to our children when they experience loving and being loved in their daily lives.
2. Through prayer. Help your children know and acknowledge their true feelings, because we pray best when we pray honestly from the heart.
3. In service to others. Children have a natural sense of justice that can be used to help them learn compassion and they deepen their relationship with God through serving those around them.
4. In scripture. Make it a habit to discuss the scripture readings before and after Mass.
5. In nature. Some children learn best experientially, which often means being out in nature and experiencing up close the glory of God's handiwork.
6. God is on your side. It's important for our children to know that God is their greatest ally in discovering their true path in life and achieving the good through their unique gifts.
7. God forgives. Give your children a taste of God's forgiveness by raising them in a home where both accountability and forgiveness flow freely.

Many thanks to all who helped make our Christmas celebrations so meaningful. Our SSPJ Music Ministry's wonderful concert and their faithful presence at our Christmas liturgies touched many hearts. Kudos to our Director of Music, Margaret Adams, for bringing it all together.

Due to bulletin deadlines, I'm writing this before Christmas, so I have not yet seen this year's church decorations. Many thanks to the members of our Youth Group who so graciously offered to do the decorating. You are Apostles of Hope.

January 1st is traditionally set aside by the Pope as the World Day of Peace. Prayers for peace are so needed in this time of violence at home and abroad. As we honor Mary, the Queen of Peace, I invite each of us to renew or to take for the first time the "Vow of Non-Violence" printed in the bulletin. Taking this vow is a concrete way in which we can help make real the peace and harmony God always desires for us. Is this easy? No, it isn't. Read the vow carefully. Pray about it. And hopefully you will choose to commit (or recommit) to this vow as the New Year begins.

Perhaps our New Year's resolutions might include:

Resolve to be tender with the young, compassionate with the aged, sympathetic with the striving and tolerant with the weak and wrong. Sometime in your life, you will have been all of these.

I wish you all a peaceful, healthy and hope-filled 2019!

Peace,

Father Tom

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

Sts. Philip & James New Year's Mass Schedule

New Years Eve Mass Schedule:

December 31st, 2018 at 5:00pm

New Years Day Mass Schedule:

January 1st, 2019 at 9am and 12:00noon

Overcome Indifference and Find Peace ~World Day of Peace Jan 1

*Any who wish to again renew or take the Vow of Non Violence will be invited to do so, on New Year's Day.
To prepare, kindly pray over the vow and discern whether you feel ready to make it for
The New Year, 2019*

"Peace is to be worked at: it is not something that one gains without efforts" Pope Francis

VOW OF NON VIOLENCE

Recognizing the violence in my own heart,
yet trusting in the goodness and mercy of God,
I vow for one year to practice the nonviolence of Jesus
who taught us in the Sermon on the Mount:

*Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called children of God...
You have learned how it was said,
"You must love your neighbor and hate your enemy".
But I say to you, "Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you."
In this way you will be daughters and sons of your Creator in heaven.*

BEFORE GOD THE CREATOR AND THE SANCTIFYING SPIRIT,

I VOW TO CARRY OUT IN MY LIFE THE LOVE AND EXAMPLE OF JESUS

- BY STRIVING FOR PEACE WITHIN MYSELF AND SEEKING TO BE A PEACEMAKER IN MY DAILY LIFE;
- BY ACCEPTING SUFFERING RATHER THAN INFLECTING IT;
- BY REFUSING TO RETALIATE IN THE FACE OF PROVOCATION AND VIOLENCE;
- BY PERSEVERING IN NONVIOLENCE OF TONGUE AND HEART;
- BY LIVING CONSCIENTIOUSLY AND SIMPLY, SO THAT I DO NOT DEPRIVE OTHERS OF THE MEANS TO LIVE;
- BY ACTIVELY RESISTING EVIL AND WORKING NONVIOLENTLY TO ABOLISH WAR AND THE CAUSES OF WAR FROM MY OWN HEART AND FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH.

GOD, I TRUST IN YOUR SUSTAINING LOVE, AND BELIEVE THAT JUST AS YOU GAVE ME THE GRACE
AND DESIRE TO OFFER THIS VOW,
SO YOU WILL ALSO BESTOW ABUNDANT GRACE TO FULFILL IT.



Sisters of the
Holy Family of Nazareth

On this Holy Family Sunday, the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth wish to let you know that we are praying for all the families at Saints Philip and James Parish. May the Holy Family who experienced doubt, challenges, unknown situations, sorrow, and most of all joys, be your role model. Prayer is powerful and so do not hesitate to ask us for prayer. We have a section on our Web page for prayer requests Why not check us out at www.nazarethcsfn.org

**Faith Formation Religious Studies Program Beginning in January, 2019
At Sts. Philip & James Parish**

Under the auspices of the Diocese of Rockville Center, Father Patrick Osei-Poku will offer Basic Adult Religious Education Courses at Saint Philip and James Parish.

The Program begins on January 8th, 2019 to offer certification to Lay Adults Catechists in the Religious Education Program.

Interested persons should contact the Parish Center 631-584-5454 for enrollment or reach Fr. Patrick by his email (patosepo.21661@gmail.com) for further information. Kindly find below the detail schedules for the courses:

Classes to be held in the SSPJ Room from 4:30-6:30pm

The Basic Studies courses include:

Old Testament ~ January 8, 15, 22, 29 and February 5, 2019

Participants will be introduced to the basic principles in the Old Testament

New Testament ~ March 5, 12, 21, 28 and April 4, 2019

Participants are introduced to the basic principles in the New Testament

Christology ~ April 30, May 7, 14, 21 and 28

An introduction to the Principles of Christology

Church ~ August 27, September 3, 10, 17 and 24, 2019

Liturgy & Sacraments ~ October 1, 8, 15, 22 and 27

Morality

Spirituality and Morality

Future dates will be announced in upcoming bulletin publications and on the Diocesan website:

www.drvc-faith.org

If interested please contact the Parish Center at 631-584-5454

Religious Education Ministry : For Week of December 30th, 2018

COMMUNION II CATECHIST WORKSHOP

THURSDAY JANUARY 3RD, 2019

AT 10:00AM AND 7:00PM PHILIP & JAMES ROOM

We've adopted a **new** and **improved** way of communicating that will make it much simpler for you to get the information you want from us! It's powered by a service called **Flocknote**.

By just taking a few minutes to sign up, you'll be able to receive email or text messages from Religious Education .

AS WE APPROACH WINTER WEATHER, IT IS IMPERATIVE THAT ALL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FAMILIES ARE ENROLLED IN FLOCK NOTES.

Simple Instructions:

On your cell phone press the Text application button.
For Religious Education Parents and Catechists follow the instructions below.

For First and Second Grade Parents or Catechists: TEXT the word
SSPJ-Communion (*no spaces*) to number **84576** and follow the instructions on your phone
and you're done.

For Third thru Sixth Grade Parents or Catechists: TEXT the word
SSPJ-CRE (*no spaces*) to number **84576** and follow the instructions on your phone and
you're done.

For Seventh and Eighth Grade Parents or Catechists: TEXT the word
SSPJ-Confirm (*no spaces*) to number **84576** and follow the instructions on your phone and
you're done.

.And it's important for you to know that you can update your communication preferences or
unsubscribe from any of these updates at any time!

Prayer of the Month for January, 2019



Act of Contrition

My God,
I am sorry for my sins with all **my heart**.
In choosing to do wrong, and failing to do good,
I have sinned against You,
Whom I should love above all things.
I firmly intend, with your help,
to do penance, to sin no more, and to avoid whatever leads
me to sin.
Our Saviour Jesus Christ suffered and died for us.
In his name, my God, have Mercy. **Amen!**

Our Family Prayer Intention: Please Bring to Mass January 6th, 2019

(Please write your name, circle your grade, and write your teachers name)

Student Name:	Grade (Please circle)	Teacher Name:
	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	
	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	
	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8	

God knows *you*, and He wants to hear from *you*

Maybe you need help with a decision or you want to understand something better. Or maybe you're looking for comfort and peace from His Holy Spirit.

Maybe your prayers are for someone who is sick, in trouble, or in need of God's blessings. Perhaps you need God's forgiveness, or you simply need Him to help you recognize His answer.

You can pray for anything and everything.

Yes, Jesus knows what you need before you even ask”(Matthew 6:8).

This image shows a full page of blank handwriting practice paper. It features ten horizontal black lines spaced evenly down the page. The entire page is framed by a decorative border made of small, light blue triangles pointing outwards. There are no markings, text, or illustrations on the page.

Thank you Jesus, for always being by our side, and always hearing our prayers. Amen

SSPJ SCHOOL NEWS

December has been a busy month for the 7th grade students at SSPJ. The 7-8th grade students wrote essays or poems for the Diocesan Respect Life contest. They also continue to gather service hours in preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation.

On December 4th, 7th grade celebrated the Christmas season by making Christmas stockings and hanging them in the front of the classroom. Afterward, they enjoyed hot chocolate and brownies.

On December 11th, they helped their pre-K prayer buddies write letters to Santa. They are also looking forward to Craft/Giving Day on December 13th.



The children in second and sixth grades worked together to make Christmas Ornaments for the local nursing homes.



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.



The men of the Men's Forum joins the Parish of Sts. Philip and James in rejoicing at the birth of our Savior Lord Jesus Christ. We thank God for the blessings of this past year and through the intercession of the Mother of God, we ask for God's grace and peace in the New Year.



Upcoming Meetings:

MONDAY, JANUARY 7, 2019

Video Presentation: Topic TBA

MONDAY, JANUARY 28, 2019

Speaker and Topic TBA

2019 MEETING DATES



- January 7
- January 28

- February 11
- March 4

- March 18
- April 1

- May 6
- May 20

- June 17

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



LOCATION: Main Church: North Country Rd., Saint James, NY
6:30 PM: Adoration • 7:30 PM: Speaker Presentation • 8:30 PM: Coffee & Cake
Come for all, or part of our evening's schedule • No membership required. Open to all men!



SSPJ Parish Calendar For The Week of December 30th, 2018

Sunday, December 30th 2018:

8:30am	RCIA	Cantina
10:00am	Children's Liturgy of the Word	Auditorium
7:00pm	AA Meeting	Philip & James Room

Monday, December 31st, 2018 ~ New Year's Eve

Tuesday, January 1st, 2019~ Happy New Year!

Wednesday, January 2nd, 2019

7:00pm	Youth Ministry	Bethany Center
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Thursday, January 3rd, 2019

10:00am	REO 2nd Grade Catechist Workshop	Philip & James Rm
2:00pm	Eucharistic Adoration	Church
7:00pm	REO 2nd Grade Catechist Workshop	Philip & James Rm
7:30pm	Pre—Baptism Class	Bethany Center Main

Friday, January 4th, 2019:

3:00pm	Stained Glass Club	Stained Glass Workshop
7:00pm	AA Meeting	Philip & James Room
7:00pm	Boy Scout Eagle Court of Honor	Auditorium
8:00pm	First Friday Nocturnal Adoration	Church

Saturday, January 5th, 2019:

5:00pm	Children's Liturgy	Church
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Sunday, January 6th, 2019:

8:30am	RCIA	Cantina
10:00am	Children's Liturgy of the Word	Church
11:00am	Stained Glass Club	Stained Glass Workshop
7:00pm	AA Meeting	Philip & James Room

In
EVERYTHING
give thanks.

We Remember....

**Michael Kaplon
Charles V. Masterson**

Weekly Collecton: Sunday December 16th, 2018

Sunday Collection: \$14,333.

Faith Direct: \$3,823

Children's Jug: \$90.

Christmas Flowers: \$1,354.

Total Collection: \$19,600.

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

*Collection figures unavailable at bulletin
submission*

**Our Pro Life Rose
For the Week of
December 30th, 2018**



Is Offered,

**In Memory of
Thomas & Kathleen
Fleming**

Banns of Marriage

Second

**Andrew Ward ~
SSPJ**

To

**Casey Pollack~
SSPJ**

A New Year's Prayer

*Lord, You make all things
new
You bring hope alive in our
hearts
And cause our Spirits to be
born again.*

*Thank you for this new year
For all the potential it holds.
Come and kindle in us
A mighty flame
So that in our time, many will
see the wonders of God
And live forever to praise
Your glorious name.*

Amen

Mass Intentions, For the week of December 29th, 2018

Saturday, December 29, 2018

5:00pm Joachim Melo

Sunday, December 30th, 2018

8:00am Christmas Novena
10:00am Jack Duffy
12:00 Noon Collective Mass:
Vivian Mastantuono
Nicholas Inversa
Joan Ward
Lloyd Spector
Cecelia Quinn
Gregoria Diaz

Monday, December 31st, 2018

7:30am Christmas Novena
9:15am Domenica May Sapienza
5:00pm John O'Loughlin

Tuesday, January 1st, 2019~The Octave Day of the Nativity of the Lord

8:00am Christmas Novena
12:00pm For the People of SSPJ

We Ask You to Remember Our Brothers & Sisters In your Prayers

Anna Capizzio
Angela Amoroso
Angelo Peluso
Angela Boccio McComb
AnnMarie M.
Baby Mattia Lubrano
Betty Schmidt
Brett Dowling
Brennan Steinorth
Bryan Van Colt
Camden Bailey
Carmela Massaro
Carole Hennessy
Catherine Burseind
Charlie Keenan
Christel DeBlasio
Christina Meringolo
Christopher Paul
Daisy Abruzzo
David Shankles
Dawn Kopel
Dolores Weisenreider
Dominic Pace
Dylan Lauro
Eileen Zink
Elinor Glasser
Eugene Krug
Florence Donahue
Frank Orlik
Frank DeFranco
Gerard Duffy
Ginny McAuley
Greg
Helen McDowell
Hillary Boehme
James Gietzen
James P. Klouda
Jane Prato
Jane Wigutow
Jeanine Esposito Tansey
Jim Kelly
Joseph
Joseph Perconti
Joe Alberigo
John Capizzio
Jean McCue
John Harney
John Hernandez
Jordan Marvelli

Madeline Ursillo
Kellie Sexton

Julianne
Joan Ward
Kathleen N.
Kathleen Corcoran
Kitty Cronin,
Krista Farley
Kylie Quigley
Joseph
Lance Mallamo
Laura Andrucki & family
Linda Sue
Livia Parrella
Louis Giordano
Mark Montesano
Marie DelCielo,
Marie Fabry
Mary McDonough
Michael LaVecchia
Michael Vasiento
Nancy Fornabia
Nicole Theresa
Nicole Devlin
Pam Brandon
Pasquale Santoro
Patricia Casey
Pat Corey
Patricia Fontana
Patricia Monetti
Patricia Thompson
Paulette Agoglia
Regina Powers
Richard Cembrale
Roe Hetterich
Russell Caiola
Robert & Madeline
Gaude
Robin Graham Denis
Rosemary Morgan
Sean Winters
Suzanne McCue
Terence Hobbes
Teresa Orlik
Thomas McKay
Thomasine Morrison
Tim Kelly
Tim Cavooris
Terry Pace
Vivien Cordes

Wednesday, January 2nd, 2019~St Basil the Great & Gregory

7:30am Christmas Novena
9:15am Joseph Caltabiano

Thursday, January 3rd, 2019

7:30am Reverend Santiago Dineres
9:15am Collective Mass:
Arthur P. Newill

Friday, January 4th, 2019~St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

7:30am Kevin Kees
9:15am Susan Renda

Saturday, January 5th, 2019

9:15am Christmas Novena
5:00pm Patrick Kelly

Sunday, January 6th, 2019~The Epiphany of the Lord

8:00am For the Parishioners of SSPJ
10:00am Mary Fritz
12:00 Noon Collective Mass:
Peter, Sarah & Mary Cole
Aldo D'Orazio
James R. Farless
Robert Lindemann



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
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
ENS. RYAN M. SHOWS -USN
STAFF SGT. RYAN REXRODE-USMC
DR. KARA VANDEKIEFT, LT.COL.-USAF
SGT. STEPHEN D. OUTCAULT-USMC
PAUL MUMOLO-USN
VICTORIA ZEMAN, USCG
KYLE J. GRUNER -US ARMY

Celebrating the Liturgy- With Grateful Hearts We Serve

PRESIDER SCHEDULE-FOR January 5th & 6th, 2019

Saturday, January 5, 2019 5:00 PM	Sunday, January 6, 2019 8:00 AM MASS	Sunday, January 6, 2019 10:00 AM MASS	Sunday, January 6, 2019 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 5th & 6th, 2019

Saturday, January 5, 2019	Sunday, January 6, 2019	Sunday, January 6, 2019	Sunday, January 6, 2019
5:00 PM	8:00 AM MASS	10:00 AM MASS	12:00 NOON MASS
G. Alfano	P. Kanuika	H. Orlando	M. Laub
D. Coppola	A. Mantia	J. Alternative	E. Sotomayer
P. Damato	R. Doda, Sr.	G. Amen	M. McCreesh
D. Doran	M. Dunn	M. Koke	M. Peykar
J. Duffy	R. Fabian	N. Locastro	P. Roman
D. Earl	C. Haff	B. Luna	C. Rubano
E. Kaleita	W. Haff	S. McKie	B. Chandler
P. Kaleita	G. Beisel	M. Morbillo	T. Pace
A. Keenan	L. Beisel	P. Rizzo	A. Santo
J. Primavera	M. Tully	M. Sehne	

ALTAR SERVERS SCHEDULE -FOR January 5th & 6th, 2019

Saturday, January 5, 2019	Sunday, January 6, 2019	Sunday, January 6, 2019	Sunday, January 6, 2019
5:00PM MASS	8:00AM MASS	10:00 AM MASS	12:00 NOON MASS
B. Doran	L. Dorrian	B. Dearie	A. Miloscia
L. Doran	T. Dorrian	S. Dearie	M. Miloscia
J. Scomillio	J. Koester	O. Jacobs	G. Cusamano
R. Lauro	C. Morbillo		N. Cusamano
A. Nocera	G. Morbillo		P. Cusuamano

LECTOR SCHEDULE -FOR January 5th & 6th, 2019

Saturday, January 5, 2019	Sunday, January 6, 2019	Sunday, January 6, 2019	Sunday, January 6, 2019
5:00PM MASS	8:00 AM MASS	10:00AM MASS	12:00 NOON MASS
J. Auletta	C. Czujko	E. Nicastro	G. Hoonhout
8th Grade Student	G. Priebe	C. Burke	L. Just

Getting Ready for Next Sunday

January 6th - Feast of the Epiphany —Cycle C

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 . Click on the date.

Reflections on Next Sunday's Scripture Readings

Isaiah 60:1-6

Psalms 72

Ephesians 3:2-3a,5-6

Matthew 2:1-12

Faith is not just God and me. As a believer I belong to a community. The joys and pains of the larger group are mine as well. Faith calls me to reveal the presence of a caring God. The Epiphany of the Lord is about revelation: the manifestation of a God who cares in the person of the Son who became man.

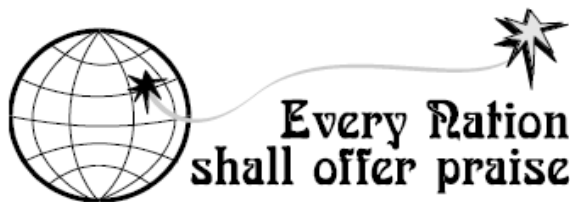
Today's first reading uses the images of darkness and thick clouds to describe the frustration of Judah and Jerusalem after the exile around 500 B.C. Hope is symbolized in the light that will shine upon Jerusalem when the exiles return. This light will be for the good of all, because "nations shall come to your light" as the believers reveal their caring God.

The author of Ephesians unveils God's revelation: the Gentiles are in communion with Israel. Thus the Gentiles are coheirs and partners with Israel in God's promise of salvation. Since the Gentiles have also received the Spirit, the wall of separation between Jew and Gentile has been obliterated. To share the inheritance with Israel is to realize one's dignity.

Matthew writes of the pagan magi following the star. The magi represent all those Gentiles who will enter the Christian Church while the Jews, who possess the Scriptures, reject Jesus. Matthew also sees believers as signs of a caring God. The believer who embraces the lonely and sorrowing reveals a compassionate God.

— John Craghan, Th.D., S.S.L.

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For reflection...

God sent the Magi a message that caused them to ride camels half way across the known world. What causes you to put this kind of effort into something? What was worth this kind of a search for them? For you?

Bethlehem and Jerusalem. The Magi and Herod. How do these places and people compare or relate? What does this say to you about the places and people God chooses?

The Magi brought gold, frankincense and myrrh as their gifts. What are your gifts? What is the most precious gift you have to give to the Christ Child?

The presence of God shone through the star and invited the Magi to follow. Through whom and through what does the presence of God shine for you? Where are you being invited this year?

THE DOUBLE MESSAGE OF CHRISTMAS

I've never been happy with some of my activist friends who send out Christmas cards with messages like: *May the Peace of Christ Disturb You!* Can't we have one day a year to be happy and celebrate without having our already unhappy selves shaken with more guilt? Isn't Christmas a time when we can enjoy being children again? Moreover, as Karl Rahner once said, isn't Christmas a time when God gives us permission to be a happy? So why not?

Well, it's complex. Christmas is a time when God gives us permission to be happy, when the message from God speaks through the voice of Isaiah and says: "Comfort my people. Speak words of comfort!" But Christmas is also a time that points out that when God was born two thousand years ago there wasn't any room for him to be born in all the normal homes and places of the day. *There was no room for him at the inn.* Peoples' busy lives and expectations kept them from offering him a place to be born. That hasn't changed.

But first, the comfort of his birth: A number of years ago, I participated in a large diocesan synod. At one point the animator in charge had us divide into small groups and each group was asked to answer the question: What's the single most-important thing that the church should challenge the world with right now?

The groups reported back and each group named some important spiritual or moral challenge: "*We need to challenge our society towards more justice!*" "*We need to challenge the world to have real faith and not confuse God's word with its own wishes.*" "*We need to challenge our world towards a more responsible sexual ethos. We've lost our way!*" Wonderful, needed challenges, all of them. But no group came back and said: "*We need to challenge the world to receive God's consolation!*" Granted, there's a lot of injustice, violence, racism, sexism, greed, selfishness, sexual irresponsibility, and self-serving faith around; but most of the adults in our world are also living in a lot pain, anxiety, disappointment, loss, depression, and unresolved guilt. Everywhere you look, you see heavy hearts. Moreover, so many people living with hurt and disappointment do not see God and the church as an answer to their pain but rather as somehow part of its cause.

So our churches, in preaching God's word, need first of all to assure the world of God's love, God's concern, and God's forgiveness. Before doing anything else, God's word is meant to comfort us; indeed, to be the ultimate source of all comfort. Only when the world knows God's consolation will it accept the concomitant challenge.

And that challenge, among others, is to then make room for Christ at the inn, that is, to open our hearts, our homes, and our world as places where Christ can come and live. From the safe distance of two thousand years we too easily make a scathing judgment on the people at the time of Jesus' birth for not knowing what Mary and Joseph were carrying, for not making a proper place for Jesus to be born, and for not recognizing him as Messiah afterwards. How could they be so blind? But that same judgment is still being made of us. We aren't exactly making room in our own inns.

When a new person is born into this world, he or she takes a space where before there was no one. Sometimes that new person is warmly welcomed and a cozy, loving space is instantly created and everyone around is happy for this new invasion. But that isn't always the case; sometimes, as was the case with Jesus, there is no space created for the new person to enter the world and his or her presence is unwelcome.

We see this today (and this will constitute a judgment on our generation) in the reluctance, almost all over the world, to welcome new immigrants, to make room for them at the inn. The United Nations estimates that there are 19.5 million refugees in the world today, persons whom no one will welcome. Why not? We are not bad people and we are capable most times of being wonderfully generous. But letting this flood of immigrants enter our lives would disturb us. Our lives would have to change. We would lose some of our present comforts, many of our old familiarities, and some of our securities.

We are not bad people, neither were those innkeepers two thousand years ago who, not knowing what was unfolding, in inculpable ignorance, turned Mary and Joseph away. I've always nursed a secret sympathy for them. Maybe because I am still, unknowingly, doing exactly what they did. A friend of mine is fond of saying: "I'm against more immigrants being allowed in ... now that we're in!"

The peace of Christ, the message inside of Christ's birth, and the skewed circumstances of his birth, if understood, cannot but disturb. May they also bring deep consolation.