



The Parish of Saints Philip and James

1 Carow Place, St. James, NY 11780

631-584-5454

July 25th , 2021
The Seventeenth Sunday
In Ordinary Time



“The hand of the Lord feeds us;
He answers all our needs”

Psalm: 145:

“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

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

Brendan McGovern ~ Tina Cafaro

PASTORAL COUNCIL

Michael Sharkey, Lou Guerra, Cynthia Lombardi, Paul Damato
Martin Marut, Maureen Burke, Erin Nicastro

Financial Support Needed weekly to meet Parish budget: \$17,890

Weekly Collection: Sunday July 18th, 2021 : \$10,413

Faith Direct : (126 Participants) 3,253

Total Collections: \$13,666

FAITH DIRECT: VISIT SSPJ.ORG CLICK ON FAITH DIRECT ICON:
USING SSPJ PARISH CODE: NY232

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 KAIREZ
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— LT. US ARMY NATL.GUARD
STAFF SGT MICHAEL J BANG SPECIAL FORCES US ARMY
MATTHEW PATRICK GALLAGHER US ARMY
MIDN ERIN NICASTRO, USN.

As you probably know, the Diocese of Rockville Centre has declared Bankruptcy under Chapter 11 of the Federal Bankruptcy Law.

In order to be as helpful as possible to the parties that may be affected by this bankruptcy, we will be publishing the following note regarding “proof of claim forms” for the next few months:

Information regarding the deadlines for filing proofs of claim in the Diocese’s chapter 11 case and the forms to use can be found by clicking on the following link to the Diocese’s bankruptcy website and scrolling down the page <https://dm.epiq11.com/drvc>

Father Tom's Letter

Dear Friends,

Once again today's gospel finds Jesus being followed by a large crowd, one that is hungry on many levels. A friend shared these reflections with me:

A crowd, not only physically hungry, but hungry for something more in their lives, follows Jesus, hoping he might have something to fill their deeper hunger – a new insight, healing, new hope. Jesus, on seeing people hurting and in need, feels compassion and a desire to help. Jesus responds to the crowd's needs by empowering and by modeling.

Jesus says, "you give them something to eat". Then Jesus shows how. Take what you have. Acknowledge it is gift. Break it open - free it. Then give it away. Jesus empowers the disciples to respond to the physical hunger of the crowd by **taking, blessing, breaking and giving** – by being eucharist for one another. And through this empowering and modeling, Jesus begins to transform the crowd into the beginnings of community. No longer just individuals, but people connecting with one another, dining together, relaxing with one another - and with God. And the yield was abundant - twelve baskets filled - after feeding not five thousand, but as some scripture scholars suggest, twenty to thirty thousand - counting women and children.

Today we still hunger. We hunger for food, for compassion, for wisdom, for healing, for intimacy. Today we hunger for eucharist. And Jesus is still empowering us and modeling for us. He says to each of us – **You give them something to eat. Take what you have – who you are. Bless - recognize - connect with the Source of all you are. Break - take a risk, open up, let go of what binds, release new possibilities. Give - of your gifts, of yourself - freely. Don't cling. Share. And get the baskets ready, for the yield will be abundant!**

Farewell to Fr. Ciya! Thank you for your gracious presence among us this past month. And welcome back, Fr. Joe! Hope you're well rested and looking forward summer at SSPJ!

And, some memorable signs!

In a Laundromat: AUTOMATIC WASHING MACHINES: PLEASE REMOVE ALL YOUR CLOTHES WHEN THE LIGHT GOES OUT.

In a London department store: BARGAIN BASEMENT UPSTAIRS...

In an office: AFTER TEA BREAK, STAFF SHOULD EMPTY THE TEAPOT AND STAND UPSIDE DOWN ON THE DRAINING BOARD.

Outside a second-hand shop: WE EXCHANGE ANYTHING - BICYCLES, WASHING MACHINES, ETC. WHY NOT BRING YOUR WIFE ALONG AND GET A WONDERFUL BARGAIN?

Peace,

Father Tom

Mass Intentions, For the week of July 25th, 2021

**Our Altar Candles
For the Week of
July 25, 2021
Are burning for,
In remembrance of
Carol Walz
On her third anniversary
in heaven, and for
Karl Walz her husband.
Love,
Tim & Karl Walz Jr.**

**Our Pro-Life Rose
For the Week of J
July 25th, 2021
Is dedicated,
In loving memory of,
Thomas & Kathleen
Fleming
Love, John**



Remember in our hearts and prayers

Angie Mingione Angela Amoroso Anna Ormsby Avery Akhogba Arthur Gureck Baby Ben Barbara Bombace Barbara Ruland Mattia Rose Lubrano Belinda Groneman Brendan O'Connor Belinda Vega Brianna Florio Bob Keenan Carol Carolyn Nehl Charles Figliosi Claudia Chandler Deacon Ron Blasius Deirdre W. Dermot O'Connor Dolores North Donna Patrissi Dorothy Mitchell Dylan Beach Ella Ellie Walsh Esther Styles Grace Bertolone Ginny & John Rief Gladys Blake Gregory Parker Helen Heidi Ray Joanna Jack Donohue John Cronin John DeStefano John Soscia John Scomillio J.C.	Joseph S. Luis Anthony Antonette Sabatino James Macchiano John Harney Judy Rampola Joseph Mazelis Joseph Costa Kenneth Cook Kathleen N. Kitty Cronin Kim Olofson Leon Donach Lynn McDonnell Mark Geld Mark Hildreth Mary Fresi Maryann Kevlin Maria Clark Marie del Ciello Marilyn Suli Matthew Parrrella Marie & Frank Fiecco Michael Fisher Mike Lofaro Monsignor Iocavacci Pasquale Savarese Paul Bertrand Peter Donach P.I. Ricardo Buffit Riordan Cavooris Sara Jean Andersen Stephen Dolce Tara Cesarski Vivien Cordes Vicki Archdeacon Veronica Broderick Wayne Hendricks
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Saturday	July 24th, 2021 President: Father Joe Lector: Thompson/Suski EM: Martin/Consenz/ Sisti	9:15am 5:00pm	Daniel & Sophia Cyganowski Deacon Ken Maher
	July 25th, 2021 President: Father Joe Lector: O'Leary/Mantia EM: Sica/Kenney/Koke	8am	For the People of SSPJ
	President: Father Ciya Lector: Sehne/Cafaro EM: Anderson/Mulhall/ Lombardi	10:00am	Carol Walz Living-Karl Walz
	Collective Mass President: Father Ciya Lector: Rubano/Dinnigan EM: Napolitano/Luna/ Parish	12:00pm	Harrison Thrasher, Jr. Charles Forzano James P. Gerold Edwin Reichert William Harrington Geraldine Tufaro
Monday Sts. Joachim & Anne	July 26th, 2021	7:30am	Lorraine M. Cashman
		9:15am	Elizabeth McSweeney
Tuesday	July 27th, 2021	7:30am	Nicholas Gargiulo
		9:15am	Joyce Wiggins
Wednesday	July 28th, 2021	7:30am	Andrew Münch
		9:15am	Living~Father Tom Haggerty
Thursday Saint Martha	July 29th, 2021	7:30am	Living~Karl Walz & Carol Walz
		9:15am	Collective Mass: Bill Bertini Living~Karl Walz & Carol Walz
Friday St. Peter Chrysologus	July 30th, 2021	7:30am	Joseph Mazelis
		9:15am	Catherine Ginty
Saturday St. Ignatious Loyola	July 31st, 2021 President: Father Ciya Lectors: J Auletta/Smith EM: Mantia/Martin/Rapp	9:15am	Jason Scott Monte
		5:00pm	Leonard Dabalsky
Sunday	August 1st, 2021 President: Father Kevin Lectors: A Willman/Kanuika EM: Kanuika/Sehne/Sica	8:00am	For the People of SSPJ
	President: Father Joe Lectors: Wos/Koke EM: Consenz/Anderson/ Amen	10:00am	Efrain Olivo
	Collective Mass President: Father Joe Lector: Cashman/Just EM: Luna/Klee/ Napolitano	12:00pm	Lawrence M. Kenney Andrea Sciarretta Steven Gnyp Jerome Castronova

"I am with
you always."

Catholic GENERATIONS.com

Celebrating the World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly

Sunday, July 25, 2021

OFFICE OF HUMAN LIFE
Office of Human Life,
Family and Bioethics

What is World Day for Grandparents & the Elderly?

The biblical figures of Abraham and Sarah, Moses, Elizabeth and Zechariah, Simeon, and Anna each remind us, in the words of St. John Paul II, that "...at every stage of life the Lord can ask each of us to contribute what talents we have. The service of the gospel has nothing to do with age!" ([St. John Paul II, "Letter of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to the Elderly" 1999](#))

Pope Francis, in expanding upon the groundwork of his predecessors, has proclaimed the fourth Sunday of July as **World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly** to acknowledge and celebrate the indispensable treasure of those "rich in years." While there are separate days of secular recognition for both grandparents and the elderly in the autumn, this combined day of honor, during the more relaxed days of summer and inserted into the liturgical calendar, offers a grand opportunity to emphasize the holy bonds we share in our families and our communities. The temporal proximity to the Feast of Saints Joachim and Anne, the grandparents of Jesus, is intended to reinforce the vital role of family in honoring the gifts of age.

In preparing for this day, we can contemplate the profound beauty of our Catholic Faith and traditions, the giving and receiving of love through our generational ties, and the perpetual communion we share with our forebearers. We pray this website will be the beginning of a spiritual journey that strengthens faith, family, and community: nurturing intergenerational bonds and helping us to "love the Lord with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself" (Lk 11:25-27) which is the key to our ultimate goal of sharing in God's eternal life.

PRAYER FOR THE FIRST WORLD DAY FOR GRANDPARENTS AND THE ELDERLY

I thank you, Lord,
for the comfort of Your presence
even in times of loneliness,
You are my hope and my confidence,
you have been my rock and my fortress since my youth.

I thank You for having given me a family,
and for having blessed me with a long life,
I thank You for moments of joy and difficulty,
for the dreams that have already come true in my life
and for those that are still ahead of me.

Increase, O Lord, my faith,
make me a channel of your peace,
teach me to embrace those who suffer more than me,
to never stop dreaming
and to tell of Your wonders to new generations.

Protect and guide Pope Francis and the Church,
that the light of the Gospel might reach the ends of the
earth.

Send Your Spirit, O Lord, to renew the world,
that the storm of the pandemic might be calmed,
the poor consoled and wars ended.

Sustain me in weakness
and help me to live life to the full
in each moment that You give me,
in the certainty that you are with me every day,
even until the end of the age.

AMEN.

Parents Prayer

Loving God,
You are the giver of all we possess,
the source of all of our blessings.
We thank and praise you.

Thank you for the gift of our children.

Help us to set boundaries for them,
and yet encourage them to explore.
Give us the strength and courage to treat
each day as a fresh start.

May our children come to know you, the one true
God,
and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

May your Holy Spirit help them to grow
in faith, hope, and love,
so they may know peace, truth, and goodness.

May their ears hear your voice.
May their eyes see your presence in all things.
May their lips proclaim your word.
May their hearts be your dwelling place.
May their hands do works of charity.
May their feet walk in the way of Jesus Christ,
your Son and our Lord.

Amen.

Apostles of Hope in Action! ~ Way to Go SSPJ Girl Scout Troop 2111!

*SSPJ Juniors Troop 2111 Delivered 49 Birthday boxes and Birthday Bags to Long island on June!
These Boxes and Bags will be available to families in need on Long Island when they visit the
Hauppauge Long Island Cares.*

*The boxes include cake mix, icing and a toy for parents to give their child. A party they may not
be able to afford, or for someone who may not otherwise have a birthday for themself.*

*These girls know how fortunate they are to help others in need!
They wear their hearts on their vests !*

Great Job Troop 2111 !



Religious Ed Registration

1. **FIND THE RELIGIOUS ED REGISTRATION FORM FOR THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR AT: SSPJ.ORG UNDER THE RELIGIOUS ED TAB**
2. **PLEASE NOTE: PERMISSION TO PUBLISH PHOTOS IN OUR BULLETIN, ON OUR WEBSITE, PARISH FACEBOOK PAGE AND GABRIEL.**
3. **GRADES 1 & 2 WILL BE INVITED BACK TO PARISH CAMPUS FOR THEIR RELIGIOUS ED CLASSES. THE DAYS AND TIMES ARE BEING FINALIZED. ALL CDC GUIDELINES WILL BE FOLLOWED.**
4. **GRADES 3-8 WILL CONTINUE THEIR LESSONS USING GOOGLE CLASSROOM.**
5. **GRADE LEVEL MASSES TO FOSTER COMMUNITY WILL BE SCHEDULED THROUGHOUT THE YEAR.**
6. **IF YOU SHOULD HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, KINDLY CONTACT THE RELIGIOUS ED OFFICE AT 631-584-3204.**

ALWAYS LOOKING FORWARD

Music Ministry



*May God's Abundant blessings be upon,
Barbara and Steve O'Donnell
For sharing their wonderful gifts with SSPJ Parish.
We will miss you!*

*Seeing with the eyes of amazement.
Jesus leads us to the God of unlikely, unexpected, improbable
and the impossible!!*

*All we need to do is see it. Where will He lead us today....
Maybe to the Music ministry??? I know you want to join. Well
September is the time. Give it a try you never know. Children in
Grades 3-6, Teens in Grades 7-12, Adults 18-up are welcome to
join!! There are many ways to participate. A lot or a little. Think
about it. Maybe God is moving you toward Music how
wonderful!!*

A Heartfelt Reflection from Sister T...

Dear Friends,

As you may or may not realize, Monday, July 26, is the feast of St. Joachim and Anne, grandparents to Jesus. I think that sometimes they are forgotten in the story of Jesus and his life here on earth. Gratefully, Pope Francis has designated July 25 as World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly this year, with the theme of "I am with you always" (Mt 28:20). This year more than ever, because of COVID and visiting restriction, etc., many grandparents have missed visits from their grandchildren, so it is very timely that the Pope has initiated the celebration of this day in connection with Jesus' grandparents.

In the USA, the holiday is celebrated the Sunday following Labor Day. This year it will be on Sept. 12th. I decided to reflect on this idea as I was so fortunate to have both of my grandmothers close by while growing up – Babcia in Polish. My dad's mom worked in the school where our sisters taught and we lived in my mom's mother's apartment building all in Greenpoint NY. Almost every Sunday we would walk or drive to my Babcia Donach's home and have dinner with my other cousins and their parents. We had a grand time!

Every summer for as long as I can remember we went to our Babcia Urbanowicz's shack in Ridge, on Long Island: no running water, electricity, and we built an outhouse each year! Together we learned how to garden, make tomato sandwiches, and pick the right kind of mushrooms. With our three other cousins, we had a wonderful time out of the heat of the city.

Why share all of this? Well, first, it was a nice trip down memory lane, and secondly, it reminded me of the love and respect we had for our grandparents. It wasn't the idea of what they could give us but the simple joy of 'being' with them and celebrating each day. They were a mainstay for us, women of wisdom and experience, holding us close yet allowing us to make our own mistakes. Grandparents have been compared to a sturdy piling in a marina that keeps the boat anchored, allowing the craft a chance to drift away with the tides and current, but always keeping the craft securely connected with lines of love onto the dock in a safe harbor.

If you think about it, it is similar to the relationship that we have with God. He loves and forgives us constantly. Hence, "I am always with you", from Matthew's Gospel. Today, do you have the opportunity to share that intergenerational living? Some are fortunate enough to have that experience, others not so. I fear that as in some areas of our life, the respect for elders has been lost. I often admire those cultures that actually reverence their elders. There are some values worth holding on to.

As we celebrate World Day for Grandparents and the Elderly this year, reflect on your experience of grandparents, what have you kept, what have you forgotten, and what will you share with the next generation. Remember all of this can bring us back to our relationship with God, for "I am always with you."

Till next week,
Sister Theresita

**LOOK!
WE ARE
ON OUR
WAY!!!
2021**

**~Catholic
Ministries**

**Appeal
The 2021
Goal for
SSPJ is:
\$105,300.**

**Status as
of July
20th**

**Pledges:
\$86,520.**

**Payments
Received:
\$73,355.**

**We are at
82% of
GOAL!!**

**Thank
you!**

Pope Francis calls each of us to be instruments of Jesus' love and compassion to those in need. Journeying together with Long Island's faithful, we have the opportunity to act on this call through our support of the Catholic Ministries Appeal (CMA). When we support the CMA, we are working together to create pathways of love and compassion by providing programs that serve disadvantaged families, our senior citizens, those struggling with substance abuse and those in need of housing. Additionally, the Catholic Ministries Appeal helps lay paths of evangelization through the formation of our priests, deacons and lay leaders. It assists in training our religious education catechists and adult faith formation leaders who educate our youth and parish families, and programs that promote the sanctity of life at all stages. Working together, we are all enriching the lives of all Long Island.

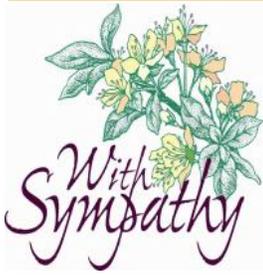
\$105,300

**Pledges at
7/19/21
\$86,520.**

**Payments at
7/19/21
\$73,355.**

\$10,000

Parish Social Ministry



Remembering in Our Prayers

Christopher & Roberta English
Memorial Mass 7/23

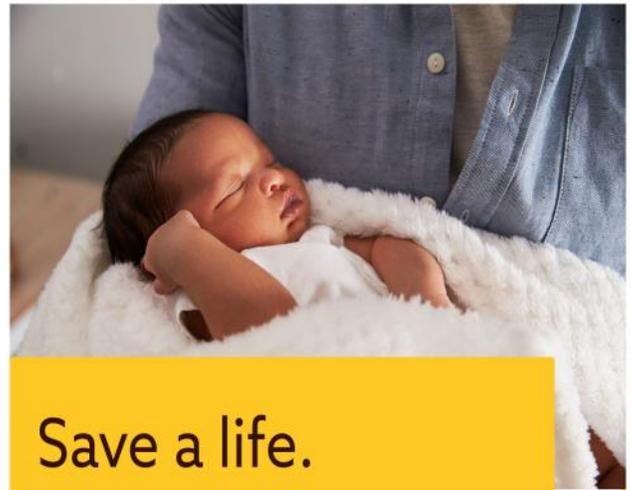


The Season of Creation spans five weeks between the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation (September 1) and the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi (October 4). This "time for creation" offers, in the words of Pope Francis, "individual believers and communities a fitting opportunity to reaffirm their personal vocation to be stewards of creation, to thank God for the wonderful handiwork He has entrusted to our care, and to implore His help for the protection of creation as well as His pardon for the sins committed against the world in which we live."

The bulletin will continue to have additional information in the coming weeks.

BACK TO SCHOOL

There are local children in our community in need of teacher mandated school items. If you would like to help, please take a card from the baskets in the back of the church. You may return unwrapped supplies with the color-coded card attached. The color of the card determines the grade level. Donations can be brought to the rectory office during the week or be placed in the boxes marked "Back to School" as you enter Church for weekend Masses. As always, thank you for your help.



Save a life. Contact Congress.

WHAT

Congress is trying to force Americans to pay for abortion.

HOW

The Hyde Amendment and similar laws have protected taxpayers from funding elective abortion for 45 years. Now, powerful members of Congress want to take away these laws that both Democrats and Republicans have supported for nearly half a century.

WHAT HAPPENS WITHOUT THESE PROTECTIONS?

Billions of taxpayer dollars could be used to pay for abortion.

TAKE ACTION

Sign the petition to Congress at NoTaxpayerAbortion.com!

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Need to talk?

855
818
HOPE(4673)

projecthope@nhcc.us
www.nhcc.us



NY Project Hope
Coping with COVID

Feeling uncertain, overwhelmed, anxious during COVID?



Here to talk | Here to listen | Here to support

NY Project Hope Crisis Counselors understand what you are going through. Talking with a crisis counselor is always free, confidential, and anonymous, allowing you to talk freely about the issues that are affecting you. We will help you navigate these unusual times and take some of the burden off of your shoulders.

Project Hope Crisis Counselors will help you with anything from economic hardships to behavioral health issues. We understand there are a whole range of emotions you might be feeling and we will work through it. A Crisis Counselor will give you self-help tips and come up with a plan for you to be your own advocate. We have a multitude of resources available to you and would love to be the shoulder you lean on. After all, New Yorkers are in this together.

NY Project Hope is a program of the NYS Office of Mental Health
Funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency
Administered by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

Free, anonymous & confidential

A program of the NYS Office of Mental Health
Funded by FEMA

Food Pantry Needs

**Paper Towels
Small Packages of Napkins
Tide Detergent**

Your kindness and generosity are appreciated!



Good News

INSPIRATION FOR DAILY LIFE

18th Sunday of Ordinary Time

Exodus 16:2-4, 12-15
Ps 78:3-4, 23-25, 54
Ephesians 4:17, 20-24
John 6:24-35

Monday August 2
Numbers 11:4b-15
Ps 81:12-17
Matthew 14:13-21

Tuesday August 3
Numbers 12:1-13
Ps 51:3-7, 12-13
Matthew 14:22-36

Wednesday August 4
St. John Mary Vianney
Numbers 13:1-2, 25 –
14:1, 26a-29a, 34-35
Ps 106:6-7ab, 13-14, 21-23
Matthew 15:21-28

Thursday August 5
Numbers 20:1-13
Ps 95:1-2, 6-9
Matthew 16:13-23

Friday August 6
Transfiguration
Daniel 7:9-10, 13-14
Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 9
2 Peter 1:16-19
Mark 9:2-10

Saturday August 7
Deuteronomy 6:4-13
Ps 18:2-4, 47, 51
Matthew 17:14-20

In the Gospel reading, Jesus says: "Do not work for food that perishes but for the food that endures for eternal life." In other words: In your daily life, work hard to obtain whatever will nourish your soul and sustain you past death into eternity.

Jesus says: "The work God wants you to do is to believe in the one he sent." Why does he call this "work"?

To fully believe, we must work at getting rid of every doubt and distrust that interferes with our belief in Christ, our trust in his words (including what he inspired in the official teachings of the Church), and our willingness to conform to his way of life.

This work requires (1) identifying our vulnerabilities that make us doubt and distrust, (2) uncovering what we're afraid will happen if we do trust, and (3) overcoming that fear by gaining a better understanding of the truth. Any fear that interferes with our holiness is always based on something untrue.

Jesus says: "The bread of God, which nourishes your soul, is that which comes down from heaven and gives life." He's referring to his presence in the Eucharist, the bread that he provides in every Mass. What work do you need to do so that you can be nourished more fully by the Eucharist? Is there something that's stopping you from receiving the Eucharist? Work hard to remedy that obstacle! It will make a difference to your eternal soul.



If you're sincere about uniting yourself to Christ, he will make possible whatever is needed to clear the way.

Because the Eucharist is Jesus, it can heal us, purify us, and help us become more like Christ himself. However, it takes conscious effort to fully embrace this opportunity. Why would we want to be lazy about that? The benefits of hard work in our faith life will endure for eternity.

Reflect & Discuss:

1. What raises doubts in your mind about Christ's presence and power in your daily life?
2. What in your relationship with Jesus needs more work so that your belief in him will give you confident hope that he is guiding you to heaven?
3. How has the Eucharist helped you on your journey to heaven? How has it changed you, purified you?
4. Is it possible that Christ's true presence in the Eucharist can also help those who are unable to receive communion? How so?

BRUISED AND WOUNDED - UNDERSTANDING

Some things need to be said and said and said again until they don't need to be said anymore. Margaret Atwood wrote that. I quote it here because each year I write a column on suicide and mostly say the same thing each time because certain things need to be said repeatedly about suicide until we have a better understanding of it.

What needs to be said again and again?

1. First, that suicide is a disease, something that in most cases takes a person out of life against his or her will, the emotional equivalent of cancer, a stroke, or a heart attack.
2. Second, that we, the loved ones who remain, should not spend undue time and energy second-guessing as to how we might have failed that person, what we should have noticed, and what we might still have done to prevent the suicide. Suicide is an illness and, as with a purely physical disease, we can love someone and still not be able to save him or her from death. God also loved this person and shared our helplessness in trying to help him or her.
3. We need a better understanding of mental health. The fact is that not everyone has the internal circuits to allow them the sustained capacity for steadiness and buoyancy. One's mental health is parallel to one's physical health, fragile, and not fully within one's control. Moreover just as diabetes, arthritis, cancer, stroke, heart attacks, amyotrophic lateral sclerosis, and multiple sclerosis, can cause debilitation and death; so too can mental diseases wreak havoc, also causing every kind of debilitation and sometimes death by suicide.
4. The potential role that biochemistry plays in suicide needs more exploration. If some suicidal depressions are treatable by drugs, clearly then some suicides are caused by biochemical deficiencies, as are many other diseases that kill us.
5. Almost invariably, the person who dies by suicide is a very sensitive human being. Suicide is rarely done in arrogance, as an act of contempt. There are of course examples of persons who are too proud to endure normal human contingency and kill themselves out of arrogance, but that's a very different kind of suicide, not the kind that most of us have seen in a loved one. Generally, our experience with the loved ones that we have lost to suicide was that these persons were anything but arrogant. Rather, they were too bruised to touch and were wounded in some deep way that we could not comprehend or help heal. Indeed, often times when sufficient time has passed after their deaths, in retrospect, we get some sense of their wound and their suicide then no longer seems as surprising. There's a clear distinction between being too bruised to continue to touch life and being too proud to continue to take one's place within it. Only the latter makes a moral statement, insults the flowers, and challenges the mercy of God.
6. Suicide is often the desperate plea of a soul in pain. *The soul can make claims that go against the body and suicide is often that.*
7. We need to forgive ourselves if we feel angry with our loved ones who end their lives in this way. Don't feel guilty about feeling angry; that's a natural, understandable response when a loved one dies by suicide.
8. We need to work at redeeming the memory of our loved ones who die by suicide. The manner of their death may not become a prism through which we now see their lives, as if this manner of death colors everything about them. Don't take down photos of them and speak of them and their deaths in hushed terms any more than if they had died by cancer or a heart attack. It's hard to lose loved ones to suicide, but we should not also lose the truth and warmth of their mystery and their memory.
9. Finally, we shouldn't worry about how God meets our loved one on the other side. God's love, unlike ours, can go through locked doors, descend into hell, and breathe out peace where we cannot. Most people who die by suicide awake on the other side to find Christ standing inside their locked doors, inside the center of their chaos, gently saying, "Peace be with you!" God's understanding and compassion infinitely surpass our own. Our lost loved ones are in safer hands than ours. If we, limited as we are, can already reach through this tragedy with some understanding and love, we can rest secure that, given the width and depth of God's love, the one who dies through suicide meets, on the other side, a compassion that's deeper than our own and an understanding that surpasses ours.

Julian of Norwich says, *in the end all will be well, and all will be well, and every manner of being will be well.* I shall be, even after suicide. God can, and does, go through locked doors and, once there, breathes out peace inside a tortured, huddled heart.