



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

October 11th, 2020
Twenty-eighth Sunday
In Ordinary Time



CALLED, CHOSEN
AND FAITHFUL

“Many are invited, but few are chosen.”

Matthew 22:14

“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
GREGORY DEVANEY- 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

Financial Support Needed weekly to meet Parish budget:
Weekly Collection: Sunday October 4th, 2020

Faith Direct : (121 Participants)

Total Weekly Collection:

Your continued support of SSPJ is very much appreciated.

\$17,890.
\$ 12,088.

3,044.

\$15,132.

Father Tom's Letter

Dear Friends,

Today's gospel offers another challenging parable. The king's servants are sent to summon those invited to the wedding feast of his son. The invitations are refused or ignored, and the servants mistreated or killed. Finally, the king sends servants to invite "whomever you find". The feast goes on, but then comes the somewhat troubling part. The king asks one of the guests why he has no wedding garment on, and when there was no response, has this guest thrown out. Yikes!

Fr. Larry Gillick, SJ, offers some thoughts:

What is the "garment" in Matthew's writing? Some experts in scripture write that it is Baptism, the proper incorporation into the "hall" or community. Others write that the garment is how the invitation has changed the person being called.

Perhaps the invitee just sat there eating and drinking, but not relating selflessly with the others. Perhaps he was even taking food and drink from others. He might not have been acting as someone invited, but as someone entitled....

We are invited to the feast of the Eucharist. How has this invitation changed us? St. Augustine tells us upon receiving Eucharist, *become what you eat*. May our reception of Holy Communion touch our hearts, enabling us to be more and more like Jesus. Let Jesus be our wedding garment.

Throughout October, Respect Life Month, we continue to pray for increased respect for the gift of life at all stages and in all places and for policies which promote dignity and justice for all. Throughout his life Jesus clearly states that our relationship to God is determined by our relationships with one another. This demands that Christians be attuned to anything that would diminish life at any of its stages. From the womb to tomb, from birth to death, and at every stage between, we are called to treat all of life with dignity, respect, honor, and reverence.

Congratulations to the young women and young men whose pictures you see in today's bulletin. These newly confirmed are "essential workers in the spread of the gospel". Please keep in your prayers the second half of our confirmation class, scheduled to be confirmed on October 24th.

Please also keep in your prayers our Religious Education classes which began this week. We're very excited about the program. If you would like to learn about it, please check out the overview given on the website. Select the Religious Ed Tab, then select Registration, there you will find an overview of our program as well as a short video.

And,

Five year old Johnny prayed, "Dear God, please don't let Brussel Sprouts be part of a cure for Covid 19!"

I would never have believed 8 weeks of uncut hair would weigh 20 pounds but that's what the scale says!

My husband and I went grocery shopping wearing our masks. When we came home and took off our masks, I had the wrong husband! Stay alert!

Peace,

Father Tom

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

Mass Intentions, For the week of October 11th, 2020

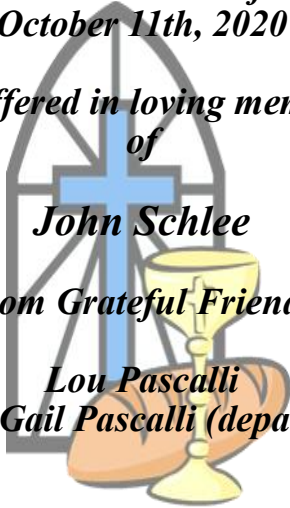
Our Bread & Wine For the Week of October 11th, 2020

Is Offered in loving memory
of

John Schlee

From Grateful Friends,

**Lou Pascalli
And Gail Pascalli (departed)**



Eucharistic Adoration –In Church

Monday's from 1:30-7pm

Except on 10/12 Columbus Day

On 10/19 and 10/26 it will
conclude
At 6pm.



Remembering in Our Prayers~

Angie Mingione	Antonette Sabatino
Angela Amoroso	Joseph Galletta
Anna Ormsby	Joe Napolitano
Arthur Gureck	Judy Rampola
Baby Ben	Kathleen N.
Barbara Bombace	Kitty Cronin
Barbara Sisti Russo	Leon Donach
Mattia Rose Lubrano	Mary Fresi
Belinda Groneman	Maria Clark
Belinda Vega	Marie del Cielo
Bob Keenan	Matthew Parrella
Brendan	Michael Fisher
Claudia Chandler	Mike Lofaro
Daniel Radice	Monsignor Iocavacci
Deirdre W.	Peter Donach
Dolores North	P.I.
Donna Patrissi	Ricardo Buffit
Dorothy Mitchell	Richard Cembrale
Dylan Beach	Riordan Cavoris
Ellie Walsh	Sara Jean Andersen
Ginny & John Rief	Stephen Dolce
Gladys Blake	Tara Cesarski
Gregory Parker	Tom Focone
Ida Wehman	Vivien Cordes
Jack Donohue	Victoria Zubrycky
John Cronin	Vicki Archdeacon
John DeStefano	William Quinn
J.C.	For our Nation in time
Joseph S.	of crisis
Judy Cunnius	

Saturday	October 10th, 2020 <i>Presider: Father Joe Lector: M. Dreschler</i>	9:15am 5:00pm	Anthony Cannone Marie Stickelberger
Sunday	October 11th, 2020 <i>Presider: Father Joe Lector: L. Halluska</i>	8am	For the People of SSPJ
	<i>Presider: Father Tom Lector: A. Kaiser</i>	10:00am	Rosemarie & Don Orrico
	Collective Mass <i>Presider: Father Tom Lector: M. Hoonhout</i>	12:00pm	John Schlee Anna Cvercko Al Marcantonio Anthony Logiudice Peter P. Sicilian
Monday	October 12th, 2020~	7:30am	Robin Avento
		9:15am	Karen Naclario-Negrin
Tuesday	October 13th, 2020~	7:30am	
		9:15am	Gail Pascalli
Wednesday	October 14th 2020~	7:30am	
		9:15am	Living-Kathleen Kelsch
Thursday	October 15th, 2020~	7:30am	
	Collective Mass	9:15am	
Friday	October 16th, 2020~	7:30am	
		9:15am	
Saturday	October 17th, 2020~ <i>Presider: Father Tom Lector: K. Smith</i>	9:15am 5:00pm	Steve Moll Johnny Doran
Sunday	October 18th, 2020 <i>Presider: Father Tom Lector: P. Kanuika</i>	8:00am	For the People of SSPJ
	<i>Presider: Father Joe Lector: M. Koke</i>	10:00am	Jack Duffy
	Collective Mass <i>Presider: Father Joe Lector: L. Kenton</i>	12:00pm	Ginny & Jack Kelly Frank Cotoia



We Remember... Resting in the arms of Jesus...

USHER....

To show or guide (someone) somewhere

Our Ushers participate in a vital role in our Parish especially now, in our NEW NORMAL.

We are asking for your help to grow the fellowship of Ushering at SSPJ.

Please consider this opportunity.

For more information, please contact or STOP, Sister T, or contact Virginia Portanova.

***Both can be reached at :
631-584-5454.***

Thank you



RESERVATIONS FOR WEEKEND MASSES...

DEAR PARISHIONERS,

JUST A FRIENDLY REMINDER AS WE ENTER INTO THE COMING SEASONS:

IT IS OF THE UTMOST IMPORTANCE TO REGISTER FOR SUNDAY MASS.

IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO, KINDLY CALL THE PARISH CENTER: 631-584-5454

WE ARE CALLED TO CARE FOR AND TO BE A LIGHT TO OTHERS...

PLEASE ASSIST US IN THIS CAUSE...AS APOSTLES OF HOPE HELP US TO BE SAFE, BE WELL, BE RESPONSIBLE, AND BE UNDERSTANDING.

Thank you,
From One Parishioner to Another

CHURCH CLOSURE:

In an effort to maintain the health and safety of our parish and school community OUR CHURCH WILL BE CLOSED for ONE HOUR

on
Wednesday and Thursday,
October 28 and 29th
from 1-2 pm.

Every year our students present a Saints Presentation to the Parish commemorating All Saints Day.

Although still in the midst of pandemic and restrictions, we wish the students to continue this tradition and to learn about the saints in a special way. They will “film” their presentation and we will post it to our parish webpage/ facebook page.

We appreciate your understanding.



A Prayer from Fratelli Tutti

O God, Trinity of love,
from the profound communion of your divine life,
pour out upon us a torrent of fraternal love.
Grant us the love reflected in the actions of Jesus,
in his family of Nazareth,
and in the early Christian community.
Grant that we Christians may live the Gospel,
discovering Christ in each human being,
recognizing him crucified
in the sufferings of the abandoned
and forgotten of our world,
and risen in each brother or sister
who makes a new start.
Come, Holy Spirit, show us your beauty,
reflected in all the peoples of the earth,
so that we may discover anew
that all are important and all are necessary,
different faces of the one humanity
that God so loves. Amen.

~[Pope Francis](#)

Fratelli tutti is the title Pope Francis has chosen for his new encyclical – dedicated, as we read in the subtitle, to “fraternity” and “social friendship”. The original Italian title will be used, without being translated, in all the languages in which the document is published.

Parish Social Ministry

FOOD PANTRY HELP
DINTY MOORE BEEF STEW



TISSUES
SIZE 4 DIAPERS

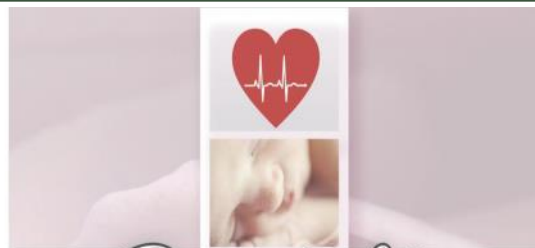
KING KULLEN & STOP & SHOP
GIFT CARDS

GAS GIFT CARDS

Thank you for sharing your treasure.

During this year's Season of Creation, Catholic Climate Covenant hosted a webinar series, "[On the Common Good & Our Common Home](https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/resource/season-creation-webinar-series-common-good-our-common-home)," for U.S. Catholics to understand how Catholic social teaching and creation care are essential to living the fullness of Catholic faith; to facilitate courageous conversations about climate change and Catholic civic participation; and to apply Catholic Social Teaching and creation care to form one's conscience. (ahead of the 2020 elections.) The first four webinars in the series are now available to watch.

<https://catholicclimatecovenant.org/resource/season-creation-webinar-series-common-good-our-common-home>



Respect Life

Be Moved By Mercy

We are called to show mercy because mercy has first been shown to us.

Pope Francis



All Souls Day Mass of Remembrance
Monday, November 2, 2020 at 7:00 PM

At this Mass, we will remember

With love and in a special way

Our dear ones who have died between
September 1, 2019 and August 31, 2020

ALL ARE WELCOME



Sts. Philip and James Respect Life Committee will be holding a **drive-by Baby Shower** after all the Masses on the weekend of Oct. 24th/25th. Baby items needed are diapers up to size 4, wipes, gently used or new clothing up to size 4, strollers, car seats less than 4 years old (look at the dates on the back of the seats). baby bathtubs, bathing supplies, personal care items for the moms, financial donations accepted.

To make a donation, please follow these directions carefully:

Drive your car east on Clinton Ave., turn left on to Remsen St. left into the back parking lot behind the rectory, hand your donations to a member of the Respect Life Committee standing on the sidewalk and exit turning Left onto Clinton Ave. (follow the signs)

Thank you in advance for your donation and especially **for your cooperation with these guidelines.** Any questions, please call 631-862-9370

OCTOBER~RESPECT LIFE MONTH

During October, Respect Life Month, the Committee invites all parishioners to join us in praying for Life in all it's stages in the prayer room after the 7:30 AM Mass, Monday through Friday. When we gather, we must be safely distanced and wearing masks.

The Ministry of Music

You will notice that we are singing Mary hymns for the rest of October as it is a month dedicated to our Holy Mother.

This weekend we are also invited to a wedding feast, so Table of Plenty, our Gathering hymn invites us to the feast. God will provide for all that we need,

Here Table of Plenty.

“Lavish your Spirit upon us, for we hunger to partake of your feast.”



The Distribution of Communion~

Communion Will be distributed at “usual” time. Bishop Barres has permitted parishes to return to the distribution of Communion after the Lamb of God (and not after the conclusion of Mass). Please remember the following:

- ♦ Masks are worn at all times, including when you approach for Communion.
- ♦ Place one hand firmly under the other so as to avoid any contact.
- ♦ Say “Amen,” step to the side, and consume the host.
- ♦ Return to your seat for the Closing Prayer and the Blessing.
- ♦ We will sing one verse of a Closing Hymn.
- ♦ There are still no processions of the priest/ministers before or after Mass.
- ♦ Other Notes:
- ♦ Mass will continue to be live-streamed at 5:00pm, 8am and 10am for those who choose to stay at home.
- ♦ There is no obligation to attend Sunday Mass until further notice.
- ♦ Those who are at higher risk from COVID-19 are strongly encouraged to stay at home. This includes our Seniors and those who have underlying health conditions.
- ♦ Those who are not feeling well, those with fever or cough of any sort should not come to church for Mass or for a visit.
- ♦ During Mass for your safety and those around you: Safe distancing must be maintained: at least six feet: outside of church, the parking lot and inside the church. There is no congregating inside or outside church.
- ♦ Seating: families may sit together all others stay six feet apart. Those who arrive early are to move to the center. No one is permitted to “climb over” those already seated. Pews have been closed in order to help with safe distancing.



CMA UPDATE:
WE ARE ALMOST AT GOAL:
\$9,286 AWAY FROM PLEDGED GOAL
\$17,196 AWAY FROM

**2020 CMA
GOAL
\$111,000**

**Pledges
received as
of
October 6
\$101,714.**

**Payments
As of
October
6th
\$93,804.**



Celebrating the Sacrament of Confirmation October 4th, 2020

Seven Gifts of the Holy Spirit

*Wisdom.
Understanding.
Counsel.
Fortitude.
Knowledge.
Piety.
Fear of the Lord.*



*Blessing of the Animals 2020~
God bless those who never leave our side....*



SSPJ School Welcomes~ Mrs. Dubois and Socially Distanced Physical Education!

WELCOME MRS. DUBOIS



Hello, my name is Tabatha DuBois and I'm the new Physical Education teacher at Sts. Philip and James School & Academy. I have been teaching various subjects for over ten years and I am excited to concentrate my efforts on Health and Physical Education. I have a double Bachelors in Physical Education and Health along with a Masters in Sports Sciences.

When I'm not at school I can be found enjoying Long Island's beaches and trails with my husband and three children, as well as in the gym training and competing in Strongman competitions.

I look forward to working with the children on how to keep our friends and ourselves safe while being physically active and having fun.



Religious Education:



All Confirmation Students scheduled to receive Confirmation on Saturday, October 24th, 2020:

You are invited to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation, on Saturday, October 17th from 3pm-5pm in the church.

Your Confirmation is truly a once-in-a-lifetime event. Do not let it pass you by without taking the time to really contemplate the power and the beauty of this Sacrament.



CONFIRMATION REHEARSAL: MONDAY, OCTOBER 19TH, 2020 7PM IN THE CHURCH

(PLEASE BEGIN ARRIVAL BY 6:30PM FOR THIS ONE HOUR REHEARSAL)

FOR

**THOSE STUDENTS SCHEDULED TO RECEIVE THE SACRAMENT OF CONFIRMATION ON
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24TH, 2020
AT BOTH THE 11AM SESSION AND THE 2PM SESSION**



Registration for the 2020~2021 Religious Education Year WILL CONCLUDE ON OCTOBER 13TH, 2020

**OUR ON LINE CLASSES HAVE BEGUN
YOU ARE INTERESTED IN REGISTERING IN OUR RELIGIOUS ED PROGRAM,
PLEASE DO SO BY OCTOBER 13TH AT 9AM.**

**OUR REGISTRATION FORMS ARE ON THE RELIGIOUS ED TAB FOUND AT SSPJ.ORG.
KINDLY COMPLETE AND BRING TO THE PARISH CENTER OFFICE**

*If you have any concerns or if there is assistance we can provide please do not hesitate to reach out to us at
631-584-3204*

OR EMAIL: RELIGIOUSED@SSPJ.ORG

Thank you and may you continue to feel God's wonderful blessings in your hearts.

To Our Religious Ed Families,

We greatly appreciate your patience and understanding as we navigate the waters of Google Classroom.

GOOGLE CLASSROOM LESSONS FOR ALL GRADE LEVELS, FOR THE FOLLOWING WEEKS WILL REMAIN AS AN ACTIVE ASSIGNMENT IN THEIR RESPECTIVE CLASSROOMS UNTIL OCTOBER 24TH, 2020.

OCTOBER 4TH, OCTOBER 11TH, OCTOBER 18TH, 2020

EFFECTIVE OCTOBER 25TH, 2020 ALL LESSONS WILL APPEAR FOR A ONE WEEK DURATION ONLY.

For families that registered during the week of September 28th-October 2nd, 2020 your patience is necessary as we are processing your registrations, which will then provide us your children's unique Google classroom log on information. We will complete this process during the week of October 4th and will email confirmation of log on information as soon as it becomes available.

FAMILIES THAT DID NOT PICK UP BOOKS DURING BOOK COLLECTION WEEK, PLEASE COME TO THE PARISH CENTER OFFICE AS SOON AS POSSIBLE.

Again, we are in this together, and therefore, we ask that we all hold love in our hearts, in our voices and in our union as a Parish Family.

A Reflection from Sister T~

October 7, 2020

Dear Friends,

For the past week, when waking up, the first thing that pops into my head is the song "This day was made by the Lord, lets us rejoice, let us be glad...". And, when I wake up during the night, The Gloria we sing in our parish is running through my head. Believe me, with all that is going on in the world, I am grateful for the little reminders.

Recently, I rediscovered a booklet on evangelization published by our sisters back in the 1970s. I was hoping to share some quotes with you but as surprised as I was to find it, so have I misplaced it! So, I will have to share with you the ideas the booklet stirred in my heart and head. During the time after Vatican II, when the booklet was written, we were ALL reminded that by our baptism we are called to be witnesses to the Gospel. I think in some situations we need to reclaim that right.

If we are all called to be that light Jesus speaks of, how do we accomplish that? We have several ways to go, but first and foremost we need to know what God is asking of us. How do we find that out? Interestingly, it is by becoming still and taking time to listen to what God is saying. For several of us, the quiet time can be deafening, and even uncomfortable, but so necessary.

After we have spent time in prayer and have listened to God, we need to take some action. For some of us that might mean preaching to others or trying to make them listen. The best way, but certainly not the easiest, is to lead by example. Jesus taught about the Kingdom by showing how to live and treat others. Not easy -- it took Him to the cross.

How can we be that light that brightens the day for someone who is struggling through a loss, depression, anger, disappointment, injustice, or just feeling lost? Although each of us needs to answer that question individually, the starting point is prayer. Take some extra time to pray. If possible, try praying before the Blessed Sacrament. Then, do what God is calling you to do – bring light to someone who is perhaps in a dark place and needs to be reminded of His love.

This week ponder this quote from William Arthur Ward: "Will someone else's life be brighter tomorrow because of what you have done today?"

Till next week,

Sister Theresita

SPIRITUALITY AND THE SECOND HALF OF LIFE

One size doesn't fit everyone. This isn't just true for clothing, it's also true for spirituality. Our challenges in life change as we age. Spirituality hasn't always been fully sensitive to this. True, we've always had tailored instruction and activities for children, young people, and for people who are raising children, carrying a job, and paying a mortgage, but we've never developed a spirituality for what happens when those years are over.

Why is one needed? Jesus seemingly didn't have one. He didn't have one set of teachings for the young, another for those in mid-life, and still another for the elderly. He just taught. The Sermon on the Mount, the parables, and his invitation to take up his cross are intended in the same way for everyone, irrespective of age. But we hear those teaching at very different times in our lives; and it's one thing to hear the Sermon the Mount when you're seven years old, another when you're twenty-seven, and quite another when you're eighty-seven. Jesus' teachings don't change, but we do, and they offer very specific challenges at different times of our lives.

Christian spirituality has generally kept this in mind, with one exception. Except for Jesus and an occasional mystic, it has failed to develop an explicit spirituality for our later years, for how we are meant to be generative in our senior years and how we are to die in a life-giving way. But there's a good reason for this lacuna. Simply put, it wasn't needed because up until this last century most people never lived into old age. For example, in Palestine, in Jesus' time, the average life expectancy was thirty to thirty-five years. A century ago in the United States, it was still less than fifty years. When most people in the world died before they reached the age of fifty, there was no real need for a spirituality of aging.

There is such a spirituality inside the Gospels. Even though he died at thirty-three, Jesus left us a paradigm of how to age and die. But that paradigm, while healthily infusing and undergirding Christian spirituality in general, was never developed more specifically into a spirituality of aging (with the exception of some of the great Christian mystics).

After Jesus, the Desert fathers and mothers folded the question of how to age and die into the overall framework of their spirituality. For them, spirituality was a quest to "see the face of God" and that, as Jesus makes clear, requires one thing, *purity of heart*. So for them, no matter your age, the challenge was the same, trying to achieve purity of heart. Then in the age of the persecutions and the early Christian martyrs, the idea developed that the ideal way to age and die was through martyrdom. Later, when Christians were no longer physically martyred, the idea took hold that you could take on a voluntary type of martyrdom by living the evangelical counsels of poverty, chastity, and obedience. They believed that living these, like the quest for purity of heart, taught you all you needed to know, no matter your age. Eventually this was expanded to mean that anyone who faithfully responded to the duties in his or her life, irrespective of age, would learn everything necessary to come to sanctity through that fidelity. As a famous aphorism put it: *Stay inside your cell and it will teach you all you need to know*. Understood properly, there's a spirituality of aging and dying inside these notions, but until recently there was little need to draw that out more explicitly.

Happily, today the situation is changing and we're developing, more and more, some explicit spiritualities of aging and dying. Perhaps this reflects an aging population, but there's now a burgeoning body of literature, both religious and secular, that's taking up the question of aging and dying. These authors, too numerous to mention, include many names already familiar to us: Henri Nouwen, Richard Rohr, Kathleen Dowling Singh, David Brooks, Cardinal Bernardin, Michael Paul Gallagher, Joan Chittister, Parker Palmer, Marilyn Chandler McEntyre, Paul Kalanithi, Erica Jong, Kathie Roiphe, and Wilkie and Noreen Au, among others. Coming from a variety of perspectives, each of these offer insights into what God and nature intend for us in our later years.

In essence, here's the issue: today, we're living longer and healthier late into life. It's common today to retire sometime in our early sixties after having raised our children, superannuated from our jobs, and paid our mortgages. So what's next, given that we probably have twenty or thirty more years of health and energy left? What are these years for? What are we called to now, beyond loving our grandkids? Abraham and Sarah, in their old age, were invited to set out for a new land and conceive a child long after this was biologically impossible for them. That's our call too. What "Isaac" are we called to give birth to in our later years? We need guidance.

October 18, 2020 • 29th Sunday in Ordinary Time • Year A

Turning the Tables

This Week's Readings at Mass

- Isaiah 45:1, 4-6 - Rewards to Cyrus, king of Persia
- 1 Thessalonians 1:1-5 - A model for believers
- Matthew 22:15-21 - Paying tax to the emperor

The Pharisees are getting more and more uncomfortable with Jesus' teachings, so they try to turn the tables and trap him. The irony is that usually the Pharisees dislike the Herodians who are supporters of King Herod, the Roman ruler of their land. However, in their desire to unite against a common enemy—Jesus—they enlist the Herodians' help.

The Jews were required to pay taxes to their hated occupiers, the Romans. Not only were the taxes oppressive to the majority of people who were poor, but they had to be paid with Roman coins engraved with Caesar's image. Jewish laws strictly forbid images or engravings of God, and the fact that Caesar billed himself as a god was especially offensive to Jews. Understandably, Jews were resentful about the entire situation because paying the tax gave the impression that they were participating in Caesar's worship. So if Jesus were to respond that it is lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, the Pharisees would find fault with him. On the other hand, the Herodians, as representatives of the Romans, will take issue with Jesus if he suggests they shouldn't pay the taxes.

Jesus responds brilliantly, refusing to give a yes or no answer. When the Pharisees hand him a Roman coin, they convict themselves. This episode takes place in the Jerusalem temple, and Jewish tradition said that they could not carry such coins in the sacred temple. (That is why there were money-changers on hand—to convert the Roman money to Jewish money for currency in the temple.) So the Pharisees are "outed" for



"I have called you by your name...I am the Lord and there is no other."

Sheepish Question:

What am I missing in my prayer?

their cooperation with Rome, and Jesus moves the conversation to a different level. The coin with the emperor's image belongs to the emperor to begin with—so give it back to him, he says. Then, he lays out the real challenge for those trying to trap him—discern what is of God and give that your attention and respect.

Questions of the Week

- 1 History is full of examples of repressive rulers requiring the oppressed people to do demeaning things. Can you give a more recent example?

- 2 When have you experienced a conflict between your religious beliefs and the laws of a secular government?

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