



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

631-584-5454

Twentieth Sunday
In Ordinary Time
August 19, 2018



*"Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me and
/ in him, says the Lord"*

John 6:56

*"With Philip & James we pray to live lives worthy of the call to be
Apostles of Hope"*

Daily Mass: 7:30am and 9:15 am
Saturday 5pm Sunday: 8am 10 am 12noon

Parish Center Office Hours:

Sunday ~ Closed
Monday: 9am-8pm

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

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

Parish Center Phone ~ 631-584-5454

Parish Center Fax~ 631-862-9675

Web ~ www.sspj.org

Pastoral Team

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

Pastor
Associate Pastor
Deacon
Deacon
Deacon
Director of Music
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

Claire DiCarlo, Chris Donnelly, Richard Frazita, Lou Guerra, Kelsey Greco, Cynthia Lombardi,
Martin Marut, Ann Mondrone, Mary Ann Pose, Noel Rannazzisi, Tom Sica,

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.

R.C.I.A.— Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults (non-Catholic adults desiring to become Catholic) are asked to contact the Parish Center Office.

Eucharistic Adoration In The Church— Thursday 2-4pm Friday 8-9pm

A Note from Father Tom....

Father Leo returns to teach at his Diocesan Seminary in Mangalore, India in October. In addition to helping us here at SSPJ this third and last summer, he has ordered some theological books which are only available in the United States and will assist him in his seminary formation.

As a way of acknowledging him, should you wish to help augment the seminary library and the formation of the seminarians, please consider donating to St. Joseph's Seminary, India.

Kindly, make your check payable to SS Philip & James Church. We will then write a check to the seminary for the total of all donations.

Your donation can be either dropped off at the rectory office or placed in the collection.

Thank you.

Father Tom

Classes on Bioethics

Father Leo Lasrado is conducting an Adult education session on An Ethical-Theological outlook on the issues regarding the beginning and the end of human life.

This session began on August 9th, 2018 and will continue each Thursday evening concluding on Thursday, September 20th, 2018.

(August 9, 16, 23, 30/ September 6, 13, 20)

Place: Bethany Center Time: 7:00-8:30pm

If you missed a session, please, come join the discussion when you are able.

Father Leo Lasrado holds a PhD in Moral Theology from the Urban University in Rome and has the experience of teaching in the Seminary.



Our Blessed Mother Always hears our prayers...

*The Feast of the Assumption,
August 15, 2018*

Hail Mary !

Full of grace, the Lord is with thee
Blessed art thou among women
and blessed is the fruit of thy womb,
Jesus.

Holy Mary, Mother of God

pray for us sinners,

now and at the hour of our death

Amen



The Katie Farrell Memorial Playground

I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank all who have generously made a donation to The Katie Farrell Memorial Playground.

We are well on our way to brightening up Sts. Philip and James School's recess yard and are close to reaching our goal! Donations can be placed in the collection baskets at mass, using the form below, dropped off or mailed to SSPJ School or Rectory.

I am currently working with Play and Park Structures and Susan and Bridget from Risk Management to ensure the safety of the SSPJ community.

I anxiously await the sounds of laughter and sights of smiles!

Many Blessings, Ms. Diane Anderson, SSPJ Principal

SSPJ continues to grow in God's love and light... we are pleased to announce The Katie Farrell Memorial Playground

In memory of Katie Farrell, SSPJ Graduate Alumni, who loved children more than anything, and whose son attends the school now.



*Angel of God, My Guardian dear to whom God's
love commits me here.
Ever this day be at my side, To light and guard,
to rule and guide.
Amen*



Angel Patron \$50

Patron of a place for children to play for generations and Listing in program at dedication blessing

Archangel Patron \$100

Patron of a place for children to play for generations, listing in program at dedication blessing, Name or family name included in prayer at dedication blessing

Guardian Angel Supporter \$250

Patron of a place for children to play for generations, listing in program at dedication blessing, Name or family name included in prayer at dedication blessing, Name or family name memorialized at playground

Become a Patron/Supporter:

_Guardian Angel Supporter \$250 Name: _____

_Archangel Patron \$100 Address: _____

_Angel Patron \$50 _____

Phone: _____

Memorial will include a name or a family name, please indicate your choice, below: (i.e., John Smith or The Smith Family)

*Checks made payable to SSPJ Church with playground in memo- mail or return in Sunday collections
For more information e-mail Ms. Diane Anderson at danderson@sspj-school.net or call 631.584.7896*

Good Things Come in Small Packages!

That saying is definitely true as we welcome the pioneers of SSPJ's New Nursery Program!



Miss Elise Werner

Miss Werner received her Masters in Education this past May from Molloy College. She holds NYS dual certification in special education first to sixth grade and general education birth to sixth grade.

Miss Werner recently completed a leave replacement at St. Mary's in East Islip and has been a substitute teacher at Trinity Regional School for the past 2 years.

Miss Werner graciously volunteers her time and talent as the program coordinator for St. Anthony of Padua's Vacation Bible Camp and helps to prepare and serve meals for the needy at a community soup kitchen -Project Hope.

Miss Werner looks forward to setting up the New Nursery Classroom and she anxiously awaits the arrival of the littlest Apostles of Hope!

Mrs. Kelly D'Aprile

What do you do after you raise 4 boys of your own? If you are Miss Kelly, you start watching and you help raise other people's children. For the past 11 years, Miss Kelly has helped make the lives of working parents much easier as they went off to work knowing that their child/children were in good hands and would be well cared for. Miss Kelly looks forward to sharing her love of children with the SSPJ community. Her dedication to her family and to others is commendable!



From the looks of it, these two are going to make a **GREAT TEAM!**



SSPJ ALUMNI NEWS

How do you spend a portion of your summer vacation following eighth grade graduation from Saints Philip & James School? You tour Europe with the Diocese of Rockville Centre Teen Choir and The St. Agnes Choir of Men and Boys.



This amazing journey began three years ago with a recommendation from the St. Philip and James choral director to attend an audition. It ended with Anthony Brown and Timothy Nigro singing in an international chorus.

The boys performed Mozart's Requiem at St. Stephen's Cathedral Vienna, Austria to an audience of 700 spectators. Gerald Wirth, director of the Vienna Boys Choir, presided as conductor.



Additional choral performances were held at St. Nikolai Church in Prague, The Melk Abby and Salzburg Cathedral in Austria and St Nicholas Church in Germany. When not performing, the boys toured many points of interest, attended receptions held in their honor, and marched in a parade through the streets of Marnau celebrating their musical accomplishments.

The trip commenced on July 8th and culminated on July 21st. The boys returned home with amazing memories and stories to share. Both boys will remain active members of the Diocese of Rockville Centre Teen Choir and are looking forward to future performances.

Religious Education Ministry

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: 2nd Grade

CATECHIST WORKSHOP

TUESDAY

AUGUST 21, 2018 AT 7PM

OR

THURSDAY, AUGUST 23 AT 10:00AM

IN THE STS PHILIP & JAMES ROOM

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: 3rd & 4th Grade

CATECHIST WORKSHOP

WEDNESDAY

AUGUST 22, 2018

AT 10:00AM OR 7:00PM

IN THE STS PHILIP & JAMES ROOM

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: 5th & 6th Grade

CATECHIST WORKSHOP

WEDNESDAY

AUGUST 21, 2018 AT 10:00AM

OR

THURSDAY, AUGUST 23 AT 7PM

IN THE STS PHILIP & JAMES ROOM

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: 7th Grade

CATECHIST WORKSHOP

THURSDAY

AUGUST 23, 2018 AT 7PM

IN THE BETHANY CENTER



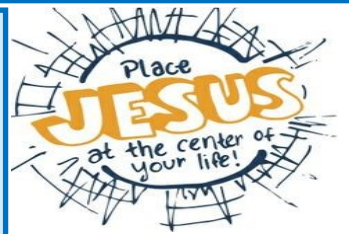
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION: 8th Grade

CATECHIST WORKSHOP

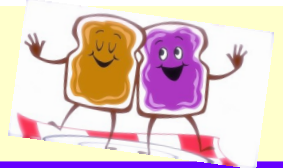
MONDAY

AUGUST 20, 2018 AT 7PM

IN THE STS PHILIP & JAMES ROOM



**It's Almost Time for
Peanut Butter and Jelly Gang!**



SAVE THE DATE!

**THE PEANUT BUTTER AND JELLY GANG
WILL BE MEETING AGAIN ON:**

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2018

AT 11:15AM IN THE AUDITORIUM

***PLEASE JOIN US AS WE SPREAD THE
LOVE ONE SANDWICH AT A TIME!***

**MORE DETAILS TO FOLLOW IN NEXT WEEKS
BULLETIN!**

JOIN TOGETHER WITH
THE
DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE
CENTRE
AS WE STUDY:

Presence™

THE MYSTERY OF THE EUCHARIST

PRESENCE IS COMPRISED OF FOUR SESSIONS:

AUGUST 4/5 EPISODE 1 - GOD IS WITH US
AUGUST 11/12 EPISODE 2 - THE STORY OF THE EUCHARIST
AUGUST 18/19 EPISODE 3 - BREAD FOR THE JOURNEY
AUGUST 25/26: BIBLICAL FOUNDATIONS OF THE EUCHARIST

THE 4 PART PRESENCE CAN BE FOUND ON FORMED.ORG
IF YOU HAVEN'T ALREADY SIGNED UP, PLEASE CONTACT YOUR
PARISH

The message below is from Bishop Barres regarding
FORMED's new series: ***Real Presence***.

From the Weekend of July 28-29 (17th Sunday of Ordinary Time) to the Weekend of August 25-26 (21st Sunday of Ordinary Time), we will focus on the Bread of Life Discourse in the Sixth Chapter of the Gospel of John. It is an ideal time to reflect, pray, evangelize and engage in a vibrant liturgical catechesis of the Eucharist and the Mass.

So many of our parishes are now actively invested in the Augustine Institute's FORMED (a Catholic version of Netflix) and I would like to suggest that we all promote FORMED's new series on the Eucharist Presence: The Mystery of the Eucharist. It is ideal for our reflection these coming weeks on John 6.

The Diocese of Rockville Centre is setting national records in regard to the number of minutes our parishioners are investing in the FORMED Catholic Formation and Evangelization material – yet another sign of the Holy Spirit leading us to dramatic missionary growth on Long Island.

Many thanks to all for the contemplative missionary spirit with which you are evangelizing all of Long Island!

In the words of Blessed Archbishop Oscar Romero:

***“La misa es Cristo que evangeliza!”
“The Mass is Christ who evangelizes!”***

Bishop John Barres

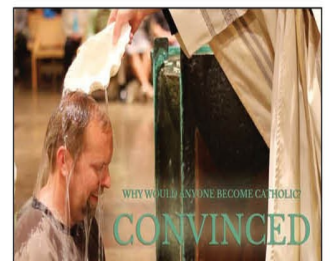
FORMED PICK OF THE WEEK

Convinced

Why Would Anyone Become Catholic?

Why would intelligent, successful people give up careers, alienate friends, and cause havoc in their families...to become Catholic? As he was considering his own move into the Church, Donald Johnson traveled around the country to get answers from some of today's most prolific Catholic converts.

Watch on [formed.org](https://www.formed.org)



“My own faith has been strengthened through these heartfelt and articulate accounts. Thank you!”

—Alison M.
Our Lady of the Mount, NJ

FORMED® | THE CATHOLIC FAITH.
ON DEMAND.



SSPJ HELPED: RAISE THE ROOF!

With the generosity and kindness of Our SSPJ Parish Family, a total of \$10,000 was raised
For St. Thomas Church in Nahinso, Ghana



On July 29, 2018, Father Patrick Osei-Poku celebrated mass at St. Thomas Church beneath their NEW ROOF!

The congregation expressed their gratitude for the kindness and generosity of all who contributed to the SSPJ Raise the Roof effort.

They asked Father Patrick to thank each and everyone who helped them to achieve this monumental goal.



**St. Catherine of Siena
Medical Center**

Catholic Health Services
At the heart of health

2nd Annual "Field of Dreams" Youth Baseball Clinic

Sunday, August 26, 2018

11:30am – 12:00pm Check-in

12:00pm – 1:30pm Baseball Clinic

1:30pm – Lunch

Smithtown High School East Baseball Field

10 School Street

St. James, NY 11780



THE EVENT IS FREE—BUT SPACE IS LIMITED!

PLEASE REGISTER EARLY!

For more information or to register, please call the St. Catherine of Siena Medical Center Foundation at:

(631) 862-3780

lia.crowley@chsli.org

www.stcatherines.chsli.org

SSPJ Parish Calendar For The Week of August 19th, 2018

Sunday, August 19th, 2018:

7:30am	CDA Labor Day Raffle	School Lobby & Outside
7:30am	Stained Glass Sale	School Lobby & Outside
7:00pm	AA Meeting	Philip & James Room

Monday, August 20th, 2018:

8:30am	School Transitional Camps	School Building
7:00pm	REO 8th Grade Catechist Workshop	Philip & James Room

Tuesday, August 21st, 2018:

8:30am	School Transitional Camp	School Building
10:00am	REO 5th & 6th Grade Catechist Wkshp	Philip & James Room
1:30pm	Spirit of Love Prayer Group	Philip & James Room
7:00pm	CDA Meeting	Bethany Center Main Room
7:00pm	REO 2nd Grade Catechist Wkshp	Philip & James Room
7:00pm	Stained Glass Meeting	Stained Glass Workshop

Wednesday, August 22nd, 2018:

8:30am	School Transitional Camp	School Building
10:00am	REO 3rd & 4th Grade Catechist Wkshp	Philip & James Room
7:00pm	REO 3rd & 4th Grade Catechist Wkshp	Philip & James Room

Thursday, August 23rd, 2018:

8:30am	School Transitional Camp	School Building
10:00am	REO 2nd Grade Catechist Wkshp	Philip & James Room
2:00pm	Eucharistic Adoration	Church
7:00pm	Adult Ed Class-Bioethics	Bethany Center Main Room
7:00pm	REO 5th & 6th Grade Catechist Wkshp	Philip & James Room
7:00pm	REO 7th Grade Catechist Wkshp	Bethany Center

Friday, August 24th, 2018:

8:30am	School Transitional Camp	School Building
7:00pm	AA Meeting	Philip & James Room
8:00pm	Eucharistic Adoration	Church

Saturday, August 25th, 2018:

No Events Scheduled

*The Pro-Life Rose
For the Week of
August 19th, 2018*

*Is Offered,
For the intentions of*

*Pete & Pat O'Hara
On the occasion of their
50th Wedding Anniversary*

*May God keep them
In His Care.*

*Love,
Mary O'Hara*



**Catholic Daughters
2018 Labor Day 50/50 Raffle**

**Ticket Sales this weekend
after all masses
in the school lobby.**

**Drawing to be held on Labor Day.
Thank you for your support.**

Weekly Collection: Sunday August 12, 2018

**Sunday Collection: \$10,436.
Faith Direct: \$3,823
Children's Jug: \$19.**

Total Collection: \$14,278.

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

Banns of Marriage

First

**Virgilio Varandas-SSPJ
To
Nancy Wolfe
St. Hugh-Huntington**

Second

**Patrick Joseph Pollari-SSPJ
To
Diana Marie Amen-SSPJ**

***HOPE**
Is seeing light
in spite
of being
surrounded
by darkness.*

Live Purposefully Now

Mass Intentions, For the week of August 19th, 2018

Saturday, August 18th, 2018

5:00pm Adrea Charles

Sunday, August 19th, 2018

8:00am For the Parishioners of SSPJ

10:00am Harry Nordin

12:00 Noon Collective Mass:
Peter Joseph Loughlin
Carol M. Thompson
Frank, Maria & Lourdes Borg
Peter J. Hofmann

Monday, August 20th, 2018-St. Bernard, Abbot

7:30am Jack Truncala

9:15am David McCulloch

Tuesday, August 21st, 2018-St. Pius X, Pope

7:30am Pete Bruno

9:15am Lucy Bruno (Living)

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
Carole Hennessy
Catherine Burseind
Christel DeBlasio
Christina Meringolo
Daisy Abruzzo
David Shankles
Dawn Kopel
Dominic Pace
Dylan Lauro
Eileen Zink
Elinor Glasser
Florence Donahue
Gerard Duffy
Ginny McAuley
Greg
Helen McDowell
Hillary Boehme
James Gietzen
Jane Prato
Jane Wigutow
Jeanine Esposito Tansey
Joseph Perconti
Joe Alberigo
John Capizzio
Jean McCue
John Harney
John Hernandez

Julianne
Kathleen N.
Kathleen Corcoran
Kitty Cronin,
Krista Farley
Kylie Quigley
Laura Andrucki & family
Linda Sue
Livia Parrella
Louis Giordano
Mark Montesano
Marie DelCiello,
Marie Fabry
Marie Loughlin
Mary McDonough
Michael LaVecchia
Nancy Fornabia
Nicole Theresa
Pasquale Santoro
Patricia Casey
Pat Core
Patricia Fontana
Patricia Monetti
Patricia Thompson
Paulette Agoglia
Roe Hetterich
Russell Caiola
Robin Graham Denis
Rosemary Morgan
Sean Winters
Suzanne McCue
Terence Hobbes
Teresa Orlik
Thomas McKay
Tim Cavooris
Terry Pace
Vivien Cordes
Vicky Gibb

Wednesday, August 22nd, 2018-The Queenship of the Blessed Virgin Mary

7:30am Fara Giacalone

9:15am Yolanda Gallego

Thursday, August 23rd, 2018-St. Rose of Lima

7:30am Ed Reid

9:15am Collective Mass:
Thomas E. McCarthy
Richard Dolce
Mikaila Davi (Living)

Friday, August 24th, 2018-St. Bartholomew

7:30am Pete & Pat O'Hara (Living)

9:15am Cynthia Donahue

Saturday, August 25th, 2018

9:15am Kopcinski, Belot, and Dunn Families
5:00pm Frank Grieco

Sunday, August 26th, 2018

8:00am For The Parishioners of SSPJ

10:00am Caroline Pizzorusso

12:00 Noon Collective Mass:
Peter Joseph Loughlin
Ralph M. Duhning, Jr.
Joseph (Chickie) Martin
Peter J. Hoffman
(Living) Barbara & Al Chandler-50th Anniversary

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



Safely Home... We Remember,

Arthur J. Byrnes
Lola Earl

Celebrating the Liturgy- With Grateful Hearts We Serve

PRESIDER SCHEDULE-FOR August 25th & 26th, 2018

Saturday, August 25, 2018 5:00 PM	Sunday, August 26, 2018 8:00 AM MASS	Sunday, August 26, 2018 10:00 AM MASS	Sunday, August 26, 2018 12:00 MASS
Father Patrick Osei-Poku	Father Patrick Osei-Poku	Father Leo Lasrado	Father Leo Lasrado

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS SCHEDULE -FOR August 25th & 26th, 2018

Saturday, August 25, 2018	Sunday, August 26, 2018	Sunday, August 26, 2018	Sunday, August 26, 2018
5:00 PM	8:00 AM MASS	10:00 AM MASS	12:00 NOON MASS
J. Giacalone	K. Consenz	M. Latino	M. McCreesh
R. Byrne	B. Carey	C. Lombardi	M. Peykar
D. Doran	H. Collins	H. Orlando	P. Roman
J. Duffy	N. Locastro	P. Schfilliti	C. Rubano
D. Earl	P. Rizzo	J. Alternative	V. Rubano
M. Fox	M. Koke	G. Amen	C. Zito
A. Keenan	B. Luna	D. Bleggi	G. Zito
H. Keenan	S. McKie	R. Bleggi	M. Hoonhout
T. Laiz	M. Morbillo	T. Boboris	M. Laub
F. Orlik	M. Sehne	M. Dolce	E. Sotomayer

ALTAR SERVERS SCHEDULE -FOR August 25th & 26th, 2018

Saturday, August 25, 2018	Sunday, August 26, 2018	Sunday, August 26, 2018	Sunday, August 26, 2018
5:00PM MASS	8:00AM MASS	10:00 AM MASS	12:00 NOON MASS
A. Balocca	L. Dorrian	C. Donnelly	N. Hoonhout
T. Miller	T. Dorrian	S. Donnelly	Sanchez-Rincon
C. Williams	K. Illari	B. Roberts	D. Sanchez-Rincon
A. Hughes	T. Illari	B. Dearie	G. Lombardi
	K. Dobokowski	S. Dearie	J. Lombardi

LECTOR SCHEDULE -FOR August 25th & 26th, 2018

Saturday, August 25, 2018	Sunday, August 26, 2018	Sunday, August 26, 2018	Sunday, August 26, 2018
5:00PM MASS	8:00 AM MASS	10:00AM MASS	12:00 NOON MASS
G. Priebe	B. Willman	G. Sehne	G. Law
A. Kaiser	L. Auleta	T. Cafaro	A. Dinneegan

Getting Ready for Next Sunday

August 26th - 21st Sunday in Ordinary Time - Cycle B

Scripture Readings ONLINE

The website of the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops provides the text of the Scripture Readings. Go to: www.usccb.org . Click on the date.

Reflections on Next Sunday's Scripture Readings

Joshua 24:1-2a,15-17,18b Psalm 34
Ephesians 5:25-32 John 6:60-69

Loyalty is demanding. Husbands and wives test their vows of loyalty in moments of tension; the best of friends are tempted to gossip in moments of envy; members of the parish are committed to unity yet fall into division over issues of minor importance. Today's readings show that loyalty is a virtue that cannot be taken for granted.

The final chapter of Joshua is the hero's farewell speech to his people -- a speech that describes covenant making. Settled in the Promised Land, the tribes of Israel must now decide to whom they will pledge their loyalty. To reawaken the audience's sense of loyalty, the author has Joshua recount Yahweh's wholehearted concern for Israel during the Exodus, the journey in the desert, and the conquest. Yahweh is the only choice; to be Israelite is to be faithful.

The author of Ephesians addresses the duties of a Christian household by listing each member's obligations. Loyalty is the underlying quality that motivates love. This virtue is a power to support the other with one's whole heart. This is a covenant relationship requiring total self-giving.

The author of John records the mixed reactions of Jesus' audience to the Bread of Life discourse. Many refuse to take Jesus seriously. Because they are unwilling to believe that he is the bread come down from heaven, they revoke their loyalty. The second reaction is that of the Twelve. Peter calls Jesus both Lord and God's holy one. This answer in faith is the apostles' response to Jesus' poignant question: "Do you want to leave me too?"

— John Craghan, Th.D., S.S.L.
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For reflection...

During a time of difficulty for many, Jesus asked the disciples, "Do you also want to leave"? If you were there how would you have responded? Reflect on a time in your life when following Jesus was difficult. Hear him ask you the same question. How do you respond?

Joshua says in the first reading, "As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord." Do you make that choice today? How do you and your household live out that choice?

What helps you to taste and see the goodness of the Lord? What helps you to trust in the message and values of Jesus?



THE POWER OF A COMPLIMENT

Thomas Aquinas once suggested that it's a sin to not give a compliment to someone when it's deserved because by withholding our praise we're depriving that person of the food that he or she needs to live on. He's right. Perhaps it's not a sin to withhold a compliment but it's a sad impoverishment, both for the person deserving the compliment and for the one withholding it.

We don't live on bread alone. Jesus told us that. Our soul too needs to be fed and its food is affirmation, recognition, and blessing. Every one of us needs to be healthily affirmed when we do something well so as to have resources within us with which to affirm others. We can't give what we haven't got! That's self-evident. And so, for us to love and affirm others we must first be loved, first be blessed, and first be praised. Praise, recognition, and blessing build up the soul.

But complimenting others isn't just important for the person receiving the compliment, it's equally important for the person giving it. In praising someone we give him or her some needed food for their soul; but, in doing this, we also feed our own soul. There's a truth about philanthropy that holds true too for the soul: We need to give to others not just because they need it but because we cannot be healthy unless we are giving ourselves away. Healthy admiration is a philanthropy of the soul.

Moreover, admiring and praising others is a religious act. Benoit Standaert submits that "giving praise comes out of the roots our existence." What does he mean by that?

In complimenting and praising others, we are tapping into what's deepest inside us, namely, the image and likeness of God. When we praise someone else then, like God creating, we are breathing life into a person, breathing spirit into them. People need to be praised. We don't live on bread alone, and we don't live on oxygen alone either.

The image and likeness of God inside us is not an icon, but an energy, the energy that's most real inside us. Beyond our ego, wounds, pride, sin, and the pettiness of our hearts and minds on any given day, what's most real within us is a magnanimity and graciousness which, like God, looks at the world and wants to say: "It is good! It is very good!" When we're at our best, our truest, speaking and acting out of our maturity, we can admire. Indeed, our willingness to praise others is a sign of maturity, and vice versa. We become more mature by being generous in our praise.

But praise is not something we give out easily. Mostly we are so blocked by the disappointments and frustrations within our lives that we give in to cynicism and jealousy and operate out of these rather than out of our virtues. We rationalize this of course in different ways, either by claiming that what we're supposed to admire is juvenile (and we're too bright and sophisticated to be impressed) or that the admirable act was done for someone's self-aggrandizement and we're not going to feed another person's ego. However, more often than not, our real reason for withholding praise is that fact that we ourselves have been insufficiently praised and, because of that, harbor jealousies and lack the strength to praise others. I say this sympathetically, all of us are wounded.

Then too in some of us there's a hesitation to praise others because we believe that praise might spoil the person and inflate his or her ego. Spare the rod and spoil the child! If we offer praise it will go to that person's head. Again, more often than not, that's a rationalization. Legitimate praise never spoils a person. Praise that's honest and proper works more at humbling its recipient than spoiling him or her. We can't be loved too much, only loved wrongly.

But, you might ask, what about children who end up self-centered because they're only praised and never disciplined? Real love and real maturity distinguish between praising those areas of another's life that are praiseworthy and challenging those areas of another's life that need correction. Praise should never be undeserved flattery, but challenge and correction are only effective if the recipient first knows that he or she is loved and properly recognized.

Genuine praise is never wrong. It simply acknowledges the truth that's there. That's a moral imperative. Love requires it. Refusing to admire when someone or something merits praise is, as Thomas Aquinas submits, a negligence, a fault, a selfishness, a pettiness, and a lack of maturity. Conversely, paying a compliment when one is due is a virtue and a sign of maturity.

Generosity is as much about giving praise as about giving money. We may not be stingy in our praise. The 14th century Flemish mystic, John of Ruusbroec, taught that "those who do not give praise here on earth shall be mute for all eternity."