Thirtieth Sunday In Ordinary Time

October 29, 2017

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

"You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment." *Luke 10:27*

"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	Pastor
Father Patrick Osei-Poku	Associate Pastor
Deacon Ronald Blasius	Deacon
Deacon John Keenan	Deacon
Deacon Ken Maher	Deacon
Margaret Adams	Director of Music
Virginia Portanova	Business Manager
John Cordes	Director of Facilities
Lynn Sisti	Coordinator of Parish Social Ministry
Charlotte Czujko	Religious Education Coordinator Grades1-2
Barbara Luna	Religious Education Coordinator Grades 3-6
Dominick Avento	Religious Education Coordinator Grades 7-8
Suzanne Fitzgibbon	Religious Education Administrator
Frank Brancaccio	Youth Minister

Pastoral Council

Rita Byrne, Claire DiCarlo, Chris Donnelly, Ryan Doyle, Richard Frazita, Lou Guerra, Cynthia Lombardi, Martin Marut, Ann Mondrone, Mary Ann Pose, Noel Rannazzisi, Tom Sica, Robert Thompson

Trustees

Jerry Linder ~ Tina Cafaro

SSPJ School—Principal Ruth E. Testa

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*

Father Tom's Letter

Dear Friends,

"You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind....

You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

These words from today's gospel sound so familiar, and so ? simple? easy? challenging? We've learned these two great commandments – at least through head knowledge. What about heart knowledge? What about life knowledge? Fr. John Foley, SJ, writes,

And: what about love in your own life?.... Have you discovered that love is quite a bit more than pretense, more than an ideal, more than just a thing we crave from others, and certainly more than just pleasure? Have you seen that learning to love is the very air inhaled by such everyday importance's as work, relaxation, attractions, happiness? Without love's living atmosphere none of these could breathe, and neither could we….

God does not fail at love. God waits. God says, "how wonderful that you are learning!" God says, "I love every person on earth. And you—you are my beloved. I am at your side as you learn to open to me and to others."

Let us continue to learn to love as God loves.

Hopefully you've noticed the seventh and eighth graders bringing up their Sunday Mass reflections. These papers are sorted and given to people who have volunteered to respond to the students with a good word, an encouraging thought. I do so hope that you might consider joining in this ministry of responding to our young ones, encouraging them to grow in faith and in love of God and neighbor. Here's how one of those responding, Noel Rannazzisi, describes the ministry:

> *"If you read in the newspaper about young- people today and feel a little depressed lift your spirits by reading our parish children's weekly reflections! You will be pleasantly surprised and impressed with how much they think about the readings and their responses are very honest. It only takes about a half hour to read them over, a small amount of time to make a positive impact on a young person's religious experience."*

Wouldn't you like to say to a first or second grader, "Good work!" or "I like how you answered that question!" Or perhaps you might choose to give some short feedback to a 3rd, 4th, 5th, or 6th grader. Please, we need 50 more people to answer the call! Don't think, "Oh, I'm sure other people will respond. I'm not really needed." **YOU ARE NEEDED**! Please contact the Parish Center to volunteer!

This Sunday, Bishop Barres will award Tina Cafaro with the St. Agnes Medal, acknowledging her years of service to our parish community. We your parish family thank you, Tina, for the many ways in which you as an Apostle of Hope witness to gospel joy, mercy and hope. Thank you, Tina, for continually revealing the face and heart of Christ to all.

Wednesday we celebrate the Feast of All Saints, a holy day of obligation. Please check today's bulletin for the Mass schedule. The following evening as we celebrate the Feast of All Souls we invite all, and in a special way those who experienced the loss of a loved one this past year, to a special Mass of Remembrance on Thursday evening at 7:30pm. During the month of November we will remember all of our loved ones at each of the parish Masses. All are invited to write the names of loved ones in the Book of Remembrance which you will find near Our Lady's Shrine.

Many thanks to Rich Lombardi and the members of the Knights of Columbus for hosting the Murder Mystery evening. I actually thought Father Rene had kept a key and was the culprit!

And,
Did you ever notice that when you put the two words. "The" and "IRS" together they spell the word "THEIRS"?

The optimist believes the glass is half full. The pessimist believes it is half empty. The mother just wants to know why you didn't use a coaster.

Peace, Father Tom

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

SSPJ Parish Calendar For The Week of October 29th, 2017

Sunday, October 29th, 2017

7:30am	Respect Life Christmas Card Sale	School Lobby
8:30am	RCIA	Parish Ctr Cantina
10:00am	Children's Liturgy	School
11:00am	Children's Liturgy Reception	Auditorium
11:00am	REO Reception for Grade Masses	Auditorium
7:00pm	AA Meeting	Philip & James Room

Monday , October 30th, 2017

7:00pm	Boy Scout Troop 7 Meeting	Auditorium

Tuesday, October 31st, 2017:

1:30pm	Spirit of Love Prayer Group	Prayer Room of Church
47:30pm	Chords of Faith Rehearsal	Choir Loft
8:00pm	Boy Scout Leadership Meeting	Monte Building

Wednesday, November 1st, 2017:

47:00pm	Youth Ministry Meeting	Auditorium

Thursday, November 2nd, 2017:

2:00pm	Eucharistic Adoration	Church
7:00pm	Youth Ministry Retreat Meeting	Philip & James Rm.
7:30pm	Adult Choir Rehearsal	Church
7:30pm	Pre-Baptism Class	Philip & James Rm.
8:30pm	All Souls Day Reception	Auditorium

Friday, November 3rd, 2017:

3:00pm	Stained Glass Club	Stained Glass Workshop
7:00pm	AA Meeting	Philip &James Room
7:00pm	Pre-Cana Weekend	Auditorium
8:00pm	First Friday Nocturnal Adoration	Church

Saturday, November 4th, 2017:

8:30am	**Pre Cana Weekend**	**Auditorium**

Weekly Collection:
Sunday, October 22nd, 2017

Sunday Collection: $13,194.
Faith Direct: $3,823.
Children's Jug: $ 24.
Mission Collection: $3,114.
Total Collection: $20,155.

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

All Souls Day Mass of Remembrance
Thursday, November 2, 2017
7:30pm
At this mass, we will remember, in a special way, Our loved ones who have died during the past year. Hospitality immediately following in the auditorium.
All are invited.

Banns of Marriage

Second

Ryan O'Toole~SSPJ

To

Brittany Vallarella~SSPJ

Third

Matthew Caulfield
St. John's Lutheran Church-Poughkeepsie
To
Alyssa Granice~SSPJ

Third

Christopher Johnson
Our Lady of Lourdes-W. Islip
To
Laura Kelly
Our Lady Queen of Martyrs, MA

Mass Intentions, For Week of October 29th, 2017

Saturday, October 28th, 2017

5:00pm Henry Cahen

Sunday, October 29th, 2017

8:00am John Blazich
10:00am Jack Duffy
12:00noon Collective Mass & For The Parishioners of SSPJ
Yuknis, LoPresti, Westrich & DiMartino Families
Margaret & Joseph Grieco
Frank Costa
Robert J. Burns

Monday, October 30th, 2017

7:30am Marjorie Weglein
9:15am Jack Duffy

Tuesday, October 31st, 2017

7:30am Evelyn McGreevey
9:15am John Reese
5:00pm

Wednesday, November 1st, 2017~ All Saints Day

7:30am Elaine Brimacombe
9:15am Rita Fitzgibbon
7:30pm

Thursday, November 2nd, 2017 ~All Souls Day

7:30am Patrick Nydegger
9:15am Collective Mass
Gregoria Diaz
7:30pm

Friday, November 3rd, 2017

7:30am Thomas J. Collins
9:15am Lawrence Czuplyski

Saturday, November 4th, 2017

9:15am Stanley Zajdel
5:00pm Theresa & Michael Zirpoli

Sunday, November 5th, 2017

8:00am Adrea Charles
10:00am Carmela Baldeon
Collective Mass & For the Parishioners of SSPJ
John Rafferty
Nick Biscotto
Richard Rudcco
Terrance Lynam

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

For those who are ill…

Anna Capizzio,
Baby Mattia Lubrano
Brett Dowling
Bradley Shutka
Brennan Steinorth
Carol Walz
Catherine Burseind
Christel DeBlasio
Christopher Gerver
ChristopherTallarico
Dawn Kopel
Ed Gallagher
Eileen Zink
Elinor Glasser
Eva Alaimo
Florence Donahue
Jeanine EspositoTansey
Joe Alberigo
John Hernandez
John F. Capizzio, Jr.
Julianne
Kathleen N.
Kitty Cronin,
Laura Andrucki & family
Louis Giordano
Marie DelCiello,
Mary McDonough
Pasquale Santoro
Raymond Fox
Suzanne McCue
Terence Hobbes
Teresa Orlik
Vivien Cordes

We Remember…

Roseanne Casamassima
Thomas M. Costello

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,
SR AIRMAN E4 ALEXANDER PARRELLA
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
JOHN VINCENT KNOBLOCH, USMC
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, U.S.C.G.
RICHARD MAIER, U.S.M.C.
PRIVATE JOSHUA OLSEN, USARNG
GLEN CRIMA-U.S. ARMY
PFC. ANTHONY SCIAMETTA
MARIO CATANIA, USMC
RYAN ANTHONY NASCIMENTO, U.S.M.C.
ENS. RYAN M. SHOWS U.S.N.
STAFF SGT. BRYAN REXRODE

Altar Memorials for the Week of October 29th, 2017

Our Bread and Wine

For the Week of October 29th, 2017

Are offered ,
In Memory of
Lawrence M. Kenney II
On the 3rd Anniversary In Heaven.
With love from,
Maryjane Kenney and Family

The Altar Candles

For the Week of October 29th, 2017

Are Burning

In Loving Memory of,

Lawrence M. Kenney II
On the 3rd Anniversary In Heaven.
With love from,
Maryjane Kenney and Family

Our Sanctuary Lamp

For the Week of October 29th, 2017

In Loving Memory of

Walter Drechsler

Missed every day in every way.

Love,

Jamie, Amy, Tommy, Mikey
& Marti

Our Pro Life Rose

For the Week of October 29th, 2017

October 28, 2017

Jack Duffy
Happy Second Anniversary
In Heaven
I am so lucky that I loved You,
and that you loved me.
Love,
Jackie

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.

Monday, November 6, 2017

Guest Speaker: Dr. Daniel Frascella,
Adjunct Professor of Church History, St. Joseph's Seminary
Topic: "The Protestant Reformation at 500"

October 31, 2017 marks the 500th anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, begun by Martin Luther and his 95 Theses. This significant and challenging moment in history still impacts the Church today, and to better understand it Dr. Frascella will explain what was happening in the Catholic Church at the time, the motivations of Luther and the other Reformers, and how the Catholic Church responded. Knowing this history and what issues divide Catholics and Protestants will be helpful for our subsequent open forum on November 20, 2017 when we will discuss how to respond to the objections Protestants have about the Catholic Faith. We hope you'll join us.

WHERE & WHEN: Main Church: North Country Rd., Saint James, NY
6:30 PM: Adoration • 7:30 PM: Speaker Talk • 8:30 PM: Coffee & Cake

Come for all, or part of our evening's schedule • No membership required. Open to all men!

For more information, visit our website: www.sspjmensforum.org

CHURCH of SAINTS PHILIP & JAMES
1 Carow Place • St. James, NY 11780 • 631-584-5454 • www.sspj.org

Parish Social Ministry

Dear Parishioners,

This week I would like to highlight one of our ministries which is in urgent need of additional volunteers. The Ministry of Consolation is seeking Companions. The Ministry of Consolation Companions involves meeting with the family of the deceased to learn about their life. In addition, they assist the family in preparing readings and music for the funeral mass.
At the funeral, the Companion guides the family through the funeral process, such as escorting the readers to the Ambo and during the presentation of the gifts.

Training and materials are provided for all Consolation Companions.

This is such a rewarding ministry. If you have any questions, please contact me at the Parish center at 631-584-5454. Prayerfully listen to the call of the Holy Spirit.

Thank you,

Lynn Sisti~ Parish Social Ministry Coordinator

SSPJ 2017 Thanksgiving Drive~ A different focus...

In order to promote the independence of our service users and to respect their dignity, we would like to empower them to make their own choices for a holiday dinner.

Therefore, this year, we would appreciate more supermarket gift cards or monetary contributions and less in the way of food items.

We will be collecting your donations after the Masses on Saturday, November 11th, and Sunday, November 12th, 2017.

Thank you and God bless you for your generosity.

The Branch FUNERAL HOME

The Branch Funeral Home and Vigliante family would like to extend an invitation to attend a special seminar for those who have lost a family member or friend this past year.

It will be facilitated by Eileen McCormick, LMHC, FT. our bereavement specialist. You will be given suggestions and information on how to cope with the holiday season while grieving the death of a loved one.

Date: Saturday
November 18, 2017

Time: 10:30am-12:00p,m

Place: The Branch Funeral Home
190 East Main Street
Smithtown, NY 11787

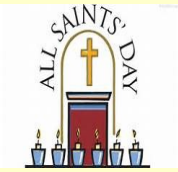
Please call 631-724-9500 by November 14, 2017 to reserve a seat.

Our thoughts and prayers are with you during this holiday season.

Sincerely,

The Vigliante Family~Branch Funeral Home

Wednesday, November 1st, 2017 Is All Saints Day~ A holy day of obligation



Masses will be as follows: Tuesday, October 31, 2017 at 5:00pm
Wednesday, November 1st, 2017 at 7:30am, 9:15am and 7:30pm

HOLIDAY VISIT TO
CALVERTON NATIONAL CEMETARY

DATE: Wednesday, November 29, 2017

ARRIVAL AT CALVERTON: 9:45AM

DEPARTURE FROM CALVERTON: 2:00PM

BUS PICK-UP TIMES AND LOCATIONS:
(BUS WILL MAKE STOPS AT BOTH LOCATIONS ON RETURN TRIP)

8:30AM: THE BRANCH FUNERAL HOME
190 East Main Street
Smithtown, NY 11787

8:45AM: SMITHTOWN SENIOR CENTER
420 Middle Country Road
Smithtown, NY 11787

YOU MUST CALL (631)724-9500~THE BRANCH FUNERAL HOME TO RESERVE A SEAT ON THE BUS BY :
WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 21ST, 2017

THIS IS A FREE TRIP SPONSORED BY
THE BRANCH FUNERAL HOME

COFFEE, COOKIES AND COLD DRINKS WILL BE SERVED,
ALONG WITH PIZZA ON THE WAY BACK.
THE BUS HAS A LAVATORY.

COMMUNITY OPIOID AWARENESS FORUM
St. Andrew's Parish Hall
30 Brooksite Drive Smithtown
Saturday, November 4th, 2017
2-4pm
For more information please call 631-265-2288

An Excerpt from America *The Jesuit Review Magazine*

A 3-question examination of conscience on immigration that all Catholics need to do

By: Cecilia Gonzalez-Andrieu

October 18, 2017

CREATED EQUAL

How we treat each other is related to how we view each other. Recall the piercing words of Standing Bear, the Ponca chief who addressed a U.S. District Court in Oklahoma in 1879. The chief (a title he did not like, as he believed his people were all equal) and his tribe were forced off their land in Nebraska by the U.S. government and driven south to Oklahoma.

On his young son's death, a small group set out on a treacherous trip through a brutal winter to reach their ancestral burial grounds in the north. They were arrested at the "border." The United States now controlled what had always belonged to the Ponca people; yet it was illegal for them to return. For close to a century, Native Americans had not been part of the "we the people" of the Constitution, and the essence of the government's case barring them from their land was to deny them their personhood. Writing about the trial in *I Am A Man*, the journalist Joe Sarita quotes Standing Bear's words to the court as he somberly held out his hand:

> That hand is not the color of yours, but if I pierce it, I shall feel pain. If you pierce your hand, you also feel pain. The blood that will flow from mine will be of the same color as yours. *I am a man*. The same God made us both.

Standing Bear's words led to the recognition of Native Americans as persons under U.S. law. The polemics of immigration, with its negative emphasis on differences and racial inferiority, strips others of their God-given dignity. If we can make this not be a partisan issue but a universally human one about protecting the inviolable dignity of human life, we have begun to make some progress.

Religious Education News

THERE WILL NOT BE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CLASSES ON :
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 31, 2017 , ***Halloween***,
OR WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 1, 2017, *All Saints Day*

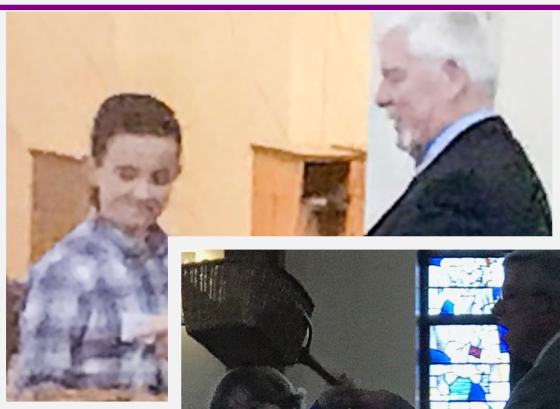
REO Grade Masses:

Sunday, November 5th: 10:00am Grade: 6

Saturday, November 11th: 5pm
Grade:7

We are Family...SSPJ REO Grade 4 Mass

Our 4th grade REO Students Greeting Parishioners with Father Tom



4th Grade Ushers

4th grade student gift bearers...

7th & 8th Grade Students presenting their weekly reflections to Father Tom.

SSPJ School News!

SSPJ First Grade students loved their visit from Police Officer McVeigh.

The students learned what every tool is used for on the Police Officer belt. Along with the intense training a Police Officer has to go through.

Thank you for sharing what it is like to be a Police Officer. First Grade enjoyed your visit tremendously!

OUR ACADEMY HAD A GREAT TIME ON TECHNOLOGY DAY AT ADVENTURELAND!

Adventureland
LONG ISLAND'S AMUSEMENT PARK
SINCE 1962
A Tradition of Creating Family Memories

F
U
N

Celebrating the Liturgy- With Grateful Hearts We Serve

PRESIDER SCHEDULE–FOR November 4th & 5th, 2017

Saturday, November 4 , 2017 5:00 PM	Sunday, November 5, 2017 8:00 AM MASS	Sunday, November 5, 2017 10:00 AM MASS	Sunday November 5, 2017 12:00 MASS
Father Patrick Osei-Poku	**Father Patrick Osei-Poku**	**Father Tom Haggerty**	**Father Tom Haggerty**
Deacon Ron		**Deacon Ron**	**Deacon John**

EUCHARISTIC MINISTERS SCHEDULE -FOR November 4th & 5th, 2017

Saturday, November 4, 2017	Sunday, November 5, 2017	Sunday, November 5, 2017	Sunday, November 5, 2017
5:00 PM MASS	**8:00 AM MASS**	**10:OO AM MASS**	**12:00 NOON MASS**
B. Carey	M. Sehne	J. Alternative	P. Agoglia
H. Orlando	G. Beisel	G. Amen	M. Laub
P. Rizzo	L. Beisel	D. Bleggi	D. Coppola
K. Consenz	C. Czujko	R. Bleggi	E. Sotomayer
J. Giacalone	R. Doda, Sr.	T. Boboris	M. Hoonhout
W. Van Gostein	M. Dunn	T. Cafaro	E. Law
M. Latino	R. Fabian	M. Dolce	M. Peykar
C. Lombardi	C. Haff	A. Giordano	P. Roman
P. Schfilliti	W. Haff	A. Henchel	C. Rubano
J. Primavera	P. Kanuika	L. Sisti	V. Rubano

ALTAR SERVERS SCHEDULE -FOR November 4th & 5th, 2017

Saturday, November 4, 2017	Sunday, November 5, 2017	Sunday, November 5, 2017	Sunday, November 5, 2017
5:00PM MASS	**8:00AM MASS**	**10:00 AM MASS**	**12:00 NOON MASS**
A. Balocca	J. Auletta	C. Donnelly	C. Tsoumpelis
A. Bjorklund	L. Auletta	S. Donnelly	D. Sanchez-Rincon
T. Miller	B. Keese	B. Roberts	D. Sanchez-Rincon
A. Romero	K. Keese	V. Scarpelli	
G. Romero	M. Russo		

LECTOR SCHEDULE -FOR November 4th & 5th, 2017

Saturday, November 4, 2017	Sunday, November 5, 2017	Sunday, November 5, 2017	Sunday, November 5, 2017
5:00 PM MASS	**8:00 AM MASS**	**10:00AM MASS**	**12:00 NOON MASS**
M. Dreschler	M. Koke	C. Burke	P. Geier
8th Grade Student	L. Willman	A. Kaiser	S. D'Agostino

Getting Ready for Next Sunday

November 5th— 31st Sunday in Ordinary Time —Cycle A

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

Malachi 1:14b--2:2b,8-10 *Psalm 131; 1*
Thessalonians 2:7b-9,13 *Matthew 23:1-12*

We sometimes imagine ideal Christians to be esoteric types. We imagine them to be divorced from our "real" world. Today's readings show us that people who wish to follow God are people who decide upon a course of action and pursue it relentlessly. Since they opt for God's vision, they refuse to be tied down by any force or power opposed to that vision.

The book of Malachi more than likely represents the preaching of a prophet who spoke sometime before the reforms of Ezra and Nehemiah, around 460 B.C., for he seems to condemn what those two leaders were to correct. Malachi is a word which means "my messenger." More than likely the person was a very staunch Jew with little tolerance for anyone or anything that would blemish the purest Judaic traditions. The style of the book is catechetical: Nearly every section begins with a statement by either God or the prophet and is challenged with a question from the people.

Thessalonica was an important port city on the Thermaic Gulf in northern Greece. It was founded around 316 B.C. by Cassander, a general under Alexander the Great. In the first century A.D., it was a large cosmopolitan city with many Jewish inhabitants. Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy arrived there in the year A.D. 50 and began to preach the gospel in the Jewish synagogue. The intensity with which Paul gave himself to this community is shown in today's passage.

The scribes and the Pharisees do not practice what they preach. In the passage from Malachi, we heard of similar so-called "leaders" who actually took the people away from God. As opposed to Paul, who gives heart and soul to the mission, the scribes and Pharisees seek only their own increase. Jesus gives us the vision we must pursue if we are to be Christian leaders: "The greatest among you will be your servant" (Matthew 23:11).

- John Craghan, Th.D., S.S.L.
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For reflection…

Jesus speaks and models a call to service. He warns that titles and outward signs sometimes increase social status, but do not necessarily help us to serve. What in your life helps you to serve others?

How would you define or describe true humility? What are ways of practicing true humility?

"Don't just talk the talk, walk the walk." This familiar line could be a paraphrase of Jesus' teaching. Who are some of the people who really do "walk the walk"? How do you "walk the walk"?

In the second reading, Paul speaks of the disciples as being "gentle among you". Who has shown you the gentleness of God's love in your life? How do you share the gentleness of God's love with others?

Spiritual Reflection by Ron Rolheiser, OMI

KATHLEEN DOWLING SINGH, RIP

No community should botch its deaths. That's a wise statement from Mircea Eliade and apropos in the face of the death two weeks ago of Kathleen Dowling Singh. Kathleen was a hospice worker, a psychotherapist, and a very deep and influential spiritual writer.

She is known and deeply respected among those who write and teach in the area of spirituality on the strength of three major books: *The Grace in Living; The Grace in Aging,* and *The Grace in Dying.* Interestingly, she worked backwards in writing this trilogy, beginning with dying, moving on to aging, and finally offering a reflection on living. And she did this because her grounding insights were taken from her experience as a hospice worker, attending to terminally ill patients. From what she learned from being with and observing the dying taught her a lot about what it means to age and, ultimately, what it means of live. Her books try to highlight the deep grace that's inherent in each of these stages in our lives: living, aging, dying.

I want to highlight here particularly the insights from her initial book, *The Grace in Dying.* Outside of scripture and some classical mystics, I have not found as deep a spiritual understanding of what God and nature intend in the process we go through in dying, particularly as is seen in someone who dies from old age or a terminal illness.

Singh encapsulates her thesis in one poignant line: *The process of death is exquisitely calibrated to bring us into the realm of spirit.* There's a wisdom in the death process. Here's how it works:

During our whole lives our self-consciousness radically limits our awareness, effectively closing off from our awareness much of the realm of spirit. But that's not how we were born. As a baby, we are wonderfully open and aware, except, lacking self-consciousness, an ego, we aren't aware of what we are aware. A baby is luminous, but a baby can't think. In order to think it needs to form an ego, become self-aware, and, according to Singh, the formation of that ego, the condition for self-awareness, is predicated on each of us making four massive mental contractions, each of which closes off some of our awareness of the world of spirit.

We form our egos this way: First, early on in a baby's life, it makes *a distinction between what is self and what is other.* That's the first major contraction. Soon afterwards, the baby makes *a distinction between living and non-living*; a puppy is alive, a stone is not. Sometime after that, a baby makes *a distinction between mind and body;* a body is solid and physical in a way that the mind is not. Finally, early on too in our lives, we make *a distinction between what we can face inside of ourselves and what's too frightening to face.* We separate our own luminosity and complexity from our conscious awareness, forming what's often called our *shadow.* Each of these movements effectively shuts off whole realms of reality from our awareness. By doing that, Singh says, we create own fear of death.

Now, and this is Singh's pregnant insight, the process of aging and dying effectively breaks down these contractions, breaking them down in reverse order of how we formed them, and, with each breakdown, we are more aware again of a wider realm of reality, particularly the realm of spirit. And this culminates in the last moments or seconds before our death in the experience of ecstasy, observable in many terminal patients as they die. As the last contraction that formed our ego is broken, spirit breaks through and we break into ecstasy. As a hospice worker, Singh claims to have seen this many times in her patients.

Elizabeth Kubler Ross, in what has now virtually become the canon on how we understand the stages of dying, suggested that someone diagnosed with a terminal disease will go through *five* stages before his or her death: *Denial, Anger, Bargaining, Depression, Acceptance*. Singh would agree with that, except that she would add three more stages: *A fall into darkness that verges on despair; a resignation that dwarfs our initial acceptance,* and *an in-breaking of ecstasy.* She points out that Jesus went through those exact stages on the cross: a cry of abandonment that sounds like despair, the handing over of his spirit, and the ecstasy that was given him in his death

Singh's insight is a very consoling one. The process of dying will do for us what a deep life of prayer and selflessness was meant to do for us, namely, break our selfishness and open us to the realm of spirit. God will get us, one way or the other.

We've lost a great woman and a great spiritual writer. Her children, writing on Facebook after her death, said simply that their mother would want us all to know that "she was an ordinary person dying an ordinary death." But the spiritual legacy she left us is far from ordinary.

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An ordinary death...