



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

February 23rd, 2020

Seventh Sunday

In Ordinary Time



“But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes the sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust.”

Matthew 5: 44-45

“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-8pm
Open Thursday 9am-5pm
Open Saturday 10am-2pm
Closed Friday and Sunday

CLERGY

Father Tom Haggerty, Pastor
Father Patrick Osei-Poku-Associate Pastor
Deacon Ronald Blasius
Deacon John Keenan
Deacon Ken Maher

PASTORAL ASSOCIATE

Sister Theresita Donach, CSFN

BUSINESS MANAGER

Virginia Portanova

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ADMINISTRATOR

Catherine Darrow

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR Grades 1-2

Charlotte Czujko

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR Grades 3-6

Barbara Luna

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR Grades 7-8

Dominick Avento

MUSIC DIRECTOR

Margaret Adams

COORDINATOR OF PARISH SOCIAL MINISTRY

Lynn Sisti

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



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— Thursday 2-4pm
Friday 8-9pm

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, February 16th, 2020

Faith Direct:

\$ 10,210.

\$ 2,877.

\$17,800.

Total Weekly Collection:

\$13,087.

MANY THANKS FOR YOUR GENEROSITY

Father Tom's Words for the Week

Dear Friends,

In Today's gospel, Jesus invites us to change conflicts into opportunities for forgiveness. He is guiding us to co-create with God a world without violence. Fr. Jude Siciliano, OP, reflects on this message.

"But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you...." When we face an opponent we ready ourselves for conflict – if not physical, then oral. Jesus is instructing us to change our world by turning an enemy into a friend. That's risky business and leaves us vulnerable. But using force and coercion will never accomplish the realm Jesus has in mind when he speaks of the presence of the kingdom of heaven in our midst....

Jesus also says: turn the other cheek, go the extra mile, give your cloak to the one who wants to take you to court for your tunic. Well, no one expects that kind of behavior "in the real world." Maybe that's Jesus' point – use your imaginations, do the unexpected to break down conflict and create the possibilities for a relationship....

Granted that turning the other cheek and going the extra mile are not strategies that always work. Jesus is offering these as alternative ways to respond when one meets force or coercion. He suggests that doing the unexpected just might break the cycle of violence between one doing the offense and the offended. There is more than one way to respond in conflict situations. We can reciprocate with more violence, or use our imaginations to try other, more relationship-building possibilities...

Here's a little story: A beggar had been sitting by the side of the road for over 30 years. One day a stranger walked by. "Spare some change?", mumbled the beggar, mechanically holding out his old baseball cap. "I have nothing to give you", said the stranger. Then he asked, "what are you sitting on?" "Nothing," replied the beggar. "Just an old box. I have been sitting on it for a long time, so long I can't remember". "Have a look inside," said the stranger. "No," said the beggar. "What's the point? There's nothing in there". "Have a look inside" insisted the stranger. The beggar managed to pry open the lid. With astonished disbelief and elation he saw that the box was filled with gold.

What's the point of the story? I encourage each of us to set aside the following days: March 16, 17 and 18, to be given a new look, a 2020 glimpse at what St Paul means when he writes of you: "you are God's work of art, created in Christ." We are most fortunate to have Father Richard Fragomeni, a well-known and revered international scholar and retreat master coming to SSPJ to lead us in a Lenten mission. It promises to be *Extraordinary!* Be sure to spread the word. The morning session following the 9:15 Mass will be an adult education opportunity which will not be the same as the evening mission.

If you haven't yet called in for Mardi Gras, please be sure to do so ASAP. The evening begins with a brief prayer service at 5:55pm sharp at the doors of the school. At that time we will burn the palms brought from last year's Palm Sunday celebration.

The Lenten Soup Supper precedes the 7pm Ash Wednesday Mass.

And...

A minister was completing a temperance sermon. With great emphasis he said,

"If I had all the beer in the world, I'd take it and pour it into the river."

With even greater emphasis he said, "And if I had all the wine in the world, I'd take it and pour it in the river."

And then finally, shaking his fist in the air, he said, "and if I had all the whiskey in the world, I'd take it and pour it into the river."

With the sermon complete, he sat down.

The leader of song stood very cautiously and announced with a smile, nearly laughing,

"For our closing song, let us sing hymn #365, 'Shall We Gather at the River?'"

Peace,

Father Tom

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



DIOCESE OF ROCKVILLE CENTRE
OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

LENT 2020

Dear Friends:

The season of Lent offers us a sacred time for contemplating what it means to accompany Our Lord as he carries the Cross.

During his Passion, we see Christ laboring under the burden of our sufferings and of those whom we love. As the prophet Isaiah says, "*He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows*" (cf. Is 53:4), and he still carries them today. Perhaps this year we might pray for the grace to accompany more closely our neighbors and loved ones who are suffering, and so participate in Christ's own sacrificial love as he shoulders their burdens.

Throughout our Diocese there are many who are suffering. We know this. Every parish has its stories of families experiencing hardship and loss. Our hospitals and shelters have their stories. Our nursing homes and schools have theirs. Indeed, we find the Cross in our own homes. Our parents and grandparents know heartache, and our children have burdens as well. Our Lord carries them all.

Perhaps you know a person who is sick or grieving the loss of a loved one. Maybe you know someone who is suffering from addiction or depression and is tempted to despair. Perhaps you know of someone who is lonely or has been altogether abandoned. It is good to remember that Our Lord is carrying each of them already with great love, placing his sheep on his shoulders (cf. Lk 15:5). And this Good Shepherd invites us to accompany him in holiness that we might share more fully in his mission.

Consider the figure of Simon of Cyrene. We know him from the Fifth Station of the Cross and from the Synoptic Gospels. He was compelled to carry the Cross of Christ (cf. Mt 27:32; Mk 15:21; Lk 23:26). We recognize his initial fear; it is the same as our own. We do not fault Simon for his resistance. Helping Jesus could not have been easy. And yet with God's grace what began as servitude was transformed into a gesture of compassion, even a sublime privilege.

To be sure, we may have cause to be fearful of accompanying Christ under the Cross. Social stigmas associated with some sufferings may cause us to stay away. We might fear our own inadequacies; weaknesses and wounds can cause self-doubt. We may even feel some degree of responsibility for the person's suffering: "*I could have done more*". Simon would have experienced these fears as Christ was passing by. Indeed, he needed to be driven by the Roman soldiers to accompany Jesus (cf. Mk 15:21). But the gaze of Christ prevailed on Simon and moved him beyond his fear.

Christ himself prayed in the garden before taking up the Cross, "*Father if it be possible, let this cup pass*", but he saw the Father's love for humanity and was moved to pray, "*yet not as I will, but as you will*" (cf. Mt 26:39). Love bends the will to the other. It was Christ's love that changed Simon's servitude into sacrifice. And it is Christ's love that can transform our fear into accompaniment.

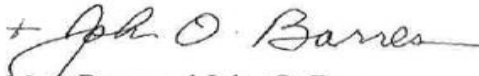
As your bishop, I have the privilege of seeing that so many of you are already living as Simon, already accompanying Christ who carries the burdens of your neighbors and loved ones. I visit your homes and pray with you in your parishes. I witness your dedication to the people of your ministries and organizations. And I see that many of you, like Simon, allow the gaze of Christ to draw you underneath the weight of the Cross, where your own servitude becomes a privileged encounter with Father, Son, and Holy Spirit and an encouragement to us all.

In light of this witness, I wish to bring particular attention to the newly formed Morning Star Initiative, designed to revitalize Catholic elementary school education on Long Island. I ask all of you to pray for our parishes and schools, our administrators and teachers, our students and their families, and all who are promoting a bold new era of Catholic education and evangelization on Long Island.

This way of sharing in the life of Christ moves us beyond imitation into a real participation with him in his relationship with the Father. The Cross is not a punishment to be endured; it is a decision to love. "*He was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities*" (cf. Is 53:5). And when we move in this way toward others in their need, our experience of their suffering is transformed from a burden into an encounter with love. We find, with Simon, that our servitude becomes a mysterious privilege of accompaniment. Underneath the weight of a cross carried with love, we see Jesus.

Too often we feel regret for not drawing near to those who are suffering. Let us pray during this holy season, this season of conversion, for the grace to recognize the gaze of Christ in those who are suffering and to respond to his invitation to share in his Cross. In this way, the Church on Long Island will grow together with Our Lord in grace.

Sincerely in Christ,



Most Reverend John O. Barres
Bishop of Rockville Centre

It has been a Lenten tradition to pray the Stations of the Cross as a community on Friday evenings during Lent.

As we continue the tradition this year, we will focus on connecting the cross and suffering of Jesus with the crosses and sufferings so many may be experiencing in life.

Our Stations are simple and low-key, taking about a half hour.

With the cross of Christ always at the center, all are invited to gather to pray the Stations.

***Friday, February 28th–
The Cross and Family Challenges***

Friday, March 6th–The Cross and Grief

Friday, March 13th– The Cross and Times of Crisis

Friday, March 20th– The Cross and Illness

Friday, March 27th–The Cross and Human Hungers

Friday, April 3rd–The Cross and the World Around Us

***Stations are prayed in the Church Friday's in Lent at
7:00pm***

**Adult Formation Program
Of the Diocese of Rockville Center
Basic Religious Formation Course
Beginning in March 3rd, 2020
Moderated by Father Patrick Osei-Poku**

IN THE SSPJ ROOM

On Tuesdays 4.30pm -- 6.30pm in the Philip & James Room

Part 1

Old Testament – March 2020 – 3, 10, 17, 24, 31.

New Testament – April 2020 – 7, 21, 28,

May 5, 12

Part 2 (Tentative Dates)

Christology – September 2020 – 8, 15, 22, 29, October 6

Ecclesiology/Church – January 2021-11, 18, 25

February 2,9,

Sacrament and Liturgy – February 2021—16, 23,

March 2, 9, 16

Spirituality and Morality – March 2021 - 23, 30,

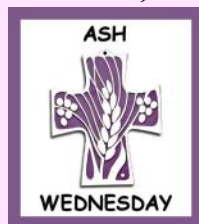
April 6, 17, 24

Contact:

**Fr. Patrick Osei-Poku
SS Philip and James Parish
Saint James, NY 11780
631-584-5454**

**Can You Assist Our Parish Family by
Distributing Ashes and Lenten
Bracelets on Ash Wednesday?**

**Brief instructional meeting will be
held after all masses this weekend,
February 22nd & 23rd.**



Thank you

**GIRL SCOUT SUNDAY
Sunday March 8, 2020 10 am Mass.**

Calling All Girls Scouts.

**All girls are invited to wear their uniforms
to the 10 am mass on Sunday, March 8.**

**Please contact Brenda Osyguss if you would
like to help us celebrate.**

201-240-6414

bmosyguss@hotmail.com



***SECOND COLLECTION NEXT
WEEKEND:***

FEBRUARY 29TH & MARCH 1ST, 2020

FOR THE CHURCH IN NEED

This week, our special collection supports the Church in Central and Eastern Europe. The fall of communism occurred over 25 years ago, but the Church still struggles to rebuild after years of oppressive rule. Many churches in this region were confiscated or destroyed, leaving the faithful without a place to worship or find pastoral support. Your support of this collection helps rebuild churches, supports seminary programs, promotes ministries and education for children and families, and renews community life around the region. Please be generous, and prayerfully consider how you can support this collection today.

The 2021 Mass Book

***Will be open to receive Mass
Intentions for 2021***

***Beginning Monday, March 9, 2020
At 9:00am in the
Parish Center Office.***

***LIMIT OF 3 MASS INTENTIONS
TAKEN***

***The contribution for a mass intention
is \$20.***

The Spirit of Love Prayer Community

***The Spirit of Love prayer group has been meeting
weekly for the past 40 years.***

***We will resume our weekly meetings on March 17th,
2020 at 1:30pm in the prayer room of the church.***

***If you have a special need for prayers in the interim,
please call Joan at 631-265-7260 and a prayer network
will be formed.***

***Please take advantage of the wonderful devotions
offered during Lent at our church.***

***PS: A former member sent to us the following
testimony after having moved...***

***"My time with the prayer group was one of the
highlights of my life and truly a blessing! I want to
thank you for teaching me about the power of prayer
and the Holy Spirit and for allowing me to grow in my
prayer life in my own time."***

All are invited to attend.

**ASH WEDNESDAY ~
FEBRUARY 26TH, 2020
ASH DISTRIBUTION:**

MASS SCHEDULE:

**7:30AM
9:15AM
7:00PM**



**WORD SERVICE~
ASH DISTRIBUTION**

**12:00PM
3:00PM
5:00PM**

Lenten Regulations 2020

Traditionally, the Lenten Season is a time of penance throughout the Catholic Church. Lent is a season in which prayer, the reception of the sacraments, charity and almsgiving are emphasized. Fast and abstinence are to be observed Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. All Fridays of Lent are days of abstinence from meat.

Ash Wednesday and Good Friday:

These are days of *Fast and Abstinence from meat*. There is a limit of one full meal on these days for all between the ages of 18 and 59 inclusive.

Days of Abstinence: (All Fridays in Lent):

All who have reached their 14th year are bound to abstain totally from meat.

Won't you consider beginning Lent in the spirit of fasting and prayer?

**Lent will begin on Wednesday,
February 26th, 2020~Ash Wednesday**

All are invited to a



**A Traditional, "Simple"
LENTEN SOUP & BREAD SUPPER**

Ash Wednesday, February 26th, 2020

In the SSPJ Auditorium from 5:30pm to 7:00p:

(Before the 7:00pm Mass & Ash Distribution)



A Free Will Offering will be accepted for the benefit of,
ECHO ARMS ADULT HOME, PORT JEFFERSON

YOUR HELP IS NEEDED:

*We are seeking donations of homemade, **MEATLESS** soups
in a pot or crockpot.*

If you are interested and able to donate soup, kindly contact the Parish Center
Office at 631-584-5454

Please leave your name and the type of soup you will be contributing.

Thank you for your generosity!

AN INVITATION TO ALL: PLEASE DONATE LAST YEARS PALMS!

**WE WOULD GREATLY APPRECIATE ANY AND ALL PALMS YOU MAY HAVE FROM LAST YEARS
PALM SUNDAY CELEBRATION AS WE WILL BE BURNING THEM AND USING THEM ON ASH
WEDNESDAY ~**

**Please bring old Palms to the Parish Center Office or with you to our Mardi Gras celebration on
February 25th at 6:00pm**



Lent 2020 ~ I Say YES My Lord

**The RCIA MINISTRY says
YES MY LORD**

There is a quote from Mt. 5:37 that states "Say Yes when you mean Yes and No when you mean No." Strange, you would think that everyone would do that. And yet many people respond the way they think others want them to, be it yes or no.

In the RCIA process we pray and look for people to join us because they are searching for or know their YES. Yes, they want to enter into our faith life through Baptism or want to be fully part of the church by completing their sacraments. Their Yes is theirs. They are entering into a deeper relationship with God because it is their desire, not anyone else's.

People also say Yes to the process to brush up on the church's teachings. Sometimes we just need to reenergize our Faith life. We are so happy that people have taken part in our "After Mass" sessions. We know there is a hunger, so we encourage you to say Yes and be fed.

The RCIA ministry affords those looking for a fullness in their Faith experience, a place to come, a place to be recognized and a place to have the opportunity to say Yes to the mysteries of our faith. Why not consider saying Yes to some part of this process, you will be glad you did.

**Charlotte Czujko REO Coord:
Says YES MY LORD**

I say "Yes" to the Lenten theme as the Communion Coordinator of grades 1 & 2, because it is my hope that I can instill in our very young children, on their journey in Religious Education and their lives, the love of God and Jesus. I wish to encourage them to be the best that they can be every day. By saying "Yes" I hope that I have been an example for them as they grow and share the love of God and Jesus with those they meet as Apostles of Hope in our troubled world.

**The SSPJ School Guild
"Says YES MY LORD"**

I am President of the Sts. Philip and James School Guild. As Guild president and also as a parent of three current SSPJ students, the phrase "I say Yes" resonates deeply. I welcome our faith into every aspect of our children's education. Today's youth face so many obstacles and decisions that a strong foundation in our faith will help guide them to make the right decisions and choose the right paths. As a parent organization, we must volunteer our time and efforts to help further Catholic education and programs. Catholic education is a foundation for our children and it is only with the support of our families and parish that SSPJ will continue to be a beacon of education. We say yes and accept God's calling to help our children develop into smart, bold and faith-filled members of our society.

2020 CATHOLIC MINISTRIES APPEAL

SSPJ 2020 GOAL ~ \$111,000

Thus says the Lord: 'share your bread with the hungry, shelter the oppressed and the homeless; clothe the naked when you see them, and do not turn your back on your own. Then your light show break forth like the dawn'



"...let us stand beside our brothers and sisters in need, sharing our spiritual and material goods with them."

- Pope Francis

Almsgiving in Lent

During the Lenten Season we are asked to pray, fast and give alms.

Lent is a perfect time for us to pray for those in need - whether it is for their material, emotional or spiritual needs. And when you practice fasting and abstinence during these forty days, please remember those of our neighbors who are hungry, and consider sharing your gifts with them.

One way to do this is by making a gift to the **Catholic Ministries Appeal**, which supports programs that help to feed people in our community each year through Catholic Charities and our Parish Outreach programs.

Have you thought about "fasting" from a regular purchase of something - i.e., a hand-crafted beverage? Over a 10 month period, this simple "fast" can serve many people need!

\$6.25 a week for one month is \$25 -- over 10 months it is \$250.



For more information about the Catholic Ministries Appeal, please visit CatholicMinistriesAppeal.org or call 516-678-5800 ext. 296.

**2020
Goal**

\$111,000

**Pledges at
2/19/2020**

\$26,115

Make checks payable to: **Catholic Ministries Appeal**

Parish: 059 - St. Martha, Uniondale

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Phone: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

My gift is __ in Memory of/ __ in Honor _____

Please send an acknowledgement to:

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Acknowledgement Message: _____

Pledge: _____

\$ _____

Down payment: _____

\$ _____

To make a donation, you can also visit **CatholicMinistriesAppeal.org**

Save the Dates

Lenten Parish Mission

March 16 - 18

IS YOUR VISION FOR LENT, 2020?

“How well do you see....?”

Enhance your vision,
Of God ,yourself, and others
As we journey through Lent
Seeing through the eyes of :

Rev. Richard Fragomeni

A morning session will begin at the 9:15am mass followed by discussion in the auditorium to Read, Reflect and Renew ourselves through the 2020 vision of Pope Francis,

“The Call to Holiness in Today’s World.

(Light refreshments will be served)

An Evening Prayer session will begin at 7:00pm and conclude at 8pm

Father Fragomeni will be sharing on the theme of St. Paul’s words,

“We hold a treasure”, along with

“What is the 2020 vision for staying Catholic”

“How does this effect my everyday life?”

(Content of evening and morning sessions differ)



Rev. Richard Fragomeni is a Priest in the Diocese of Albany, New York, and has been a member of the CTU faculty, Catholic Theological Union, since 1990. His teaching involves him in Roman Catholic theology, interpretation theory, and poetry. His current work is in the field of word and sacrament: the intersection of symbolic activity and language as it creates insights into the Christian proclamation of grace. Central to this work is a fascination with the power of liturgy and preaching in the transformation of the human heart.

Richard is an adjunct faculty member in the Department of Religious Studies at DePaul University. . In addition to his teaching duties he is a preacher of parish missions and gives presentations nationally and internationally on liturgical, sacramental, and catechetical topics.

Lent begins Wednesday, February 26. So, Let's Party for Mardi!



SSPJ YOUTH GROUP MINISTRY

It's Mardi Gras!

On Tuesday, February 25th from 6 - 7:30pm

SSPJ Youth Group Ministry invites **ALL**
parishioners to gather for a **CELEBRATION**
~ as we **PRAY**, **BURN** (last year's palms into ashes*)
and then **TURN** calories into energy to party !!!

SSPJ Auditorium

Adults: \$5.00 Children: \$3.00

Children under 3 are free
Pay at the door

Entertainment • Games • Laughing • Crafts • Food • Beverages
Jumbo Jenga • Twister • Horse Races • Line Dancing • Face Painting

PLEASE RSVP to the **Rectory 584-5454** by **FRIDAY, FEB. 14th!**

Happy Mardi Gras

Want to HELP US? – Face painting, balloon art, magic, crafts, desserts (set-up / break down), please contact the rectory office and then come and join us as we gather as a Parish Community to celebrate.

**to be used on Ash Wednesday*

A Note from Music Ministry...

This week marks the beginning of Lent. Purple vestments are worn and it's a time of quiet and reflection. You will notice several changes happening with the music. There will be no Gathering as the procession will walk to the altar in silence. The sung Lord have Mercy will replace the singing of the Gloria. During the season of Lent the Gloria as well as the Alleluia will not be sung. The acclamations during the eucharist prayers will also change. We will be singing the Mass of Resurrection. This can be found in the Music Issue #'s 853, 856, 857, and 858.

Once again, we will be singing, I Say "Yes" Lord by Donna Pena. This is our parish theme. It will be sung at the Presentation for the five weeks of Lent to remind us of our willingness to say "Yes" to all the Lord needs us to do. You can listen to the song online as well. We will be singing the echo parts of the song in Spanish, which is how the song is written.

Something different. It's nice to sing in a different language. It tells of our connection. No matter what the language, we are all one body in the Lord.



RCIA News

So if you would like to continue to be salt for the Earth and Light for the World why not consider joining us (the RCIA team) on the Sunday's in Lent after the 8 AM or Noon Mass right in church.

Here are the topics we are discussing:

2/23 Intro What is Lent – (In Church) Fr. Tom

**3/1 Who does God say that I am? -
Created in His Image (In Church)**
Michael Hoonhout

**3/8 Who does God say that I am? -
Fallen and sinful (In Church)** Michael Hoonhout

**3/15 Who does God say that I am? - Redeemed in
Grace (In Church)** Michael Hoonhout

3/22 (Rejoice!) In Lent, Christian JOY (In Church)
Glee Hoonhout

3/29 Why is Good Friday Good? (In Church)
Sister Theresita

**4/5 Palm Sunday – The Importance of Holy Week,
the Triduum (In Church)**
Michael Hoonhout

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, FEBRUARY 24, 2020

Speaker and Topic: To Be Announced

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

Join us for inspiring talks and fellowship. Experience new opportunities to be open to the inspirations of the Holy Spirit in how the Lord is calling us to grow as Catholic men of faith.

NEW MEETING TIMES: Holy Hour: 7-8 PM, Main Church

Speaker Presentation: 8-9 PM, Bethany Center (Old Church) • Coffee & Cake Social: 9-9:30 PM

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



Website: www.sspjmensforum.org

Church of Saints Philip & James • 359 Clinton Avenue • St. James, NY 11780 • 631-584-5454



*Interested in becoming a Sponsor for the
2nd Annual Magic of Ireland Event?*



Saint Patrick Sponsor ~ \$1,000

Includes prominent acknowledgement in the church lobby, church bulletin, and

TWO tickets to the event and ONE "Grand Prize Pot O' Gold" raffle book

Shamrock Sponsor ~ \$500

Includes prominent acknowledgement in the church lobby, church bulletin and EITHER:

TWO TICKETS TO THE EVENT OR TWO "Grand Prize Pot O' Gold" raffle books

Celtic Sponsor ~\$250

Includes acknowledgement in church lobby, church bulletin and EITHER:

ONE TICKET THE EVENT OR ONE "Grand Prize Pot O' Gold" raffle book

Leprechaun Sponsor ~ \$100.

Includes acknowledgement in the church bulletin

For more information please contact Marianne Koke at 631-335-7111

Saint Patrick Sponsors ~ \$1,000

Marianne J. Koke, *Daniel Gale Sotheby Realty*

Catherine D. Smith, *The Smith Family*

Celtic Sponsors ~ \$250

**The Sica Family~Tom Evelyn, Elizabeth & Father John
Sal & Maria Inserra**

Duane Shank, DDS,~Practice Limited to Orthodontics

The Zito Family

Clare Farrell ~ "In Memory of Katie Farrell

Dr. and Mrs. Cesa

Smithtown Appliance

Enspire Design Group Architects-Michael Morbillo

John & Pam Primavera

Pat & Mike Tully

Branch Funeral Home

Dr. & Dr. Mark & Lisa Stephen

Sts. Philip & James Knights of Columbus

Lucy Kenton

Shamrock Sponsors ~ \$500

Bill & Patricia Martin

Dr. and Mrs. Augustus Mantia

Leprechaun Sponsors ~ \$100

Margaret & Tim Adams

Mr. & Mrs. Richard Wehman, Sr.

Paula Parish ~ "Yoga & You"

Living Waters Catholic Therapeutic Counseling

Spages Pharmacy

Villa Sorrento Restaurant and Caterers

O Solo Mio Restaurant

Rocco's Pizza

Seaquia Deli and Catering

Magic of Ireland:



The Rush Is On!! Tickets are going very fast!
Tickets are being sold after all masses in the school lobby!

The Magic Of Ireland~ Saturday, March 7th, 2020

Celebration begins at the 5:00pm mass of Irish inspiration

Then continues on the other side of the rainbow with

A traditional Irish dinner, live music by

Gerry Finlay and the Cara Band dancing, raffles, door prize and Fun!

Ticket includes: Dinner, beer, soda, dessert & coffee



SECOND ANNUAL MAGIC OF IRELAND EVENT

~MARCH 7, 2020

POT OF GOLD RAFFLE PRIZES

1st Prize: St. Croix Time Share Unit plus \$1,500 cash (airfare & expenses)

2nd Prize: 4 Tickets to spring Yankees Game (includes access to Audi Club)

Donated by Corporate Transfer & Storage-The Verderber Family

3rd Prize: Webber BBQ Freestanding Spirit II (\$500.00 value)

The Magic of Ireland ~ Ticket Form

Guest Name(s): _____

Tickets: _____ At: \$40.00 per person ~Total Enclosed: _____

If you have any questions, kindly contact: Clare Farrell at: clarefarrellnp@yahoo.com

PLEASE RETURN TICKET ORDER FORM WITH FULL PAYMENT TO THE PARISH CENTER OFFICE

Parish Social Ministry



"A healthy relationship with creation is one dimension of overall personal conversion, which entails the recognition of our errors, sins, faults and failures, and leads to heartfelt repentance and desire to change."

Honoring Couples Married Fifty Years or More

This Spring, couples who have been married fifty years will be honored at a Mass on Sunday, May 3, 2020 at St. Patrick's Roman Catholic Church in Smithtown.

Mass will begin at 2:00 p.m., Bishop Robert J. Coyle will preside.

Registration forms and complete instructions can be obtained at the Parish Center Office or on line at www.drvc-faith.org. Space is limited, registration will be accepted on a first come first served basis. If you have any questions you may call 516-678-5800, extension 223.

LOOKING FOR A SPIRITUAL LENTEN PRACTICE. JOIN US!! PEACEFUL PRAYER



40 DAYS FOR LIFE®

February 26 - April 5

HELP SAVE LIVES IN SMITHTOWN, NY!

Join our 2020 Campaign of Prayer and Fasting!

You can help protect mothers and children by joining this worldwide mobilization to pray and fast for an end to abortion!

Through prayer and fasting, peaceful vigils, and community outreach, 40 Days for Life has inspired over 1,000,000 volunteers!

With God's help, here are the proven results in 25 coordinated campaigns:

16,742 babies saved from abortion

196 abortion workers quit

104 abortion centers closed

More info.: 40DFLsmithtown@gmail.com

STS PHILIP AND JAMES call 631-862-9370

Here's how to take part in our 40 Days for Life prayer campaign (choose one or all three):

(1.) Prayer Vigil – pray on sidewalk in front of Planned Parenthood building, 70 Maple Ave., Smithtown. (Park in public lot, corner of Main St. & Maple Ave. near CVS.) Join your fellow parishioners

Please sign up for your hour(s) each week at: 40daysforlife.com/Smithtown

~February 26 -April 5 from 7 am to 7 pm

(2.) Pray with friends and family at your local parish/church and at home

@SSPJ Wed. 2-4 / Fri. 8-9pm **ADORATION**

(3.) Fast and Sacrifice as your health permits

40daysforlife.com/Smithtown

SSPJ Parish Calendar For The Week of February 23rd, 2020

Sunday, February 23rd, 2020

8:00am Magic of Ireland Ticket Sales Outside
 8:30am RCIA Cantina
 10:00am Children's Liturgy Auditorium
 11:00am Stained Glass Club Stained Glass Wkshp
 7:00pm AA Meeting Monte Building

Monday, February 24th, 2020

1:00PM Senior Group Meeting SSPJ Room
7:00pm Boy Scout Troop 7 Meeting Auditorium
7:00pm Men's Forum Holy Hour Church
8:00pm Men's Forum SSPJ Room

Tuesday, February 25th, 2020:

1:30pm Spirit of Prayer Ministry Mtg Church Prayer Rm
7:30pm Chords of Faith Church Choir loft

Wednesday, February 26th, 2020~ AshWednesday

5:30pm PSM Ash Wednesday Soup Supper Auditorium
7:00pm Youth Ministry Meeting Bethany Center

Thursday, February 27th, 2020:

2:00pm Eucharistic Adoration Church
7:00pm Boy Scout Leadership Meeting Monte Building
7:30pm Adult Choir Church

Friday, February 28th, 2020

7:00pm AA Meeting Philip & James Room
7:00pm Stations of the Cross Church
8:00pm Eucharistic Adoration Church

Saturday, February 29th, 2020

5:00pm Magic of Ireland Ticket Sales School lobby
5:00pm Children's Liturgy Auditorium

Sunday, March 1st, 2020:

8:00am Magic Of Ireland Ticket Sales School Lobby
8:30am RCIA Sessions SSPJ Room
10:00am Children's Liturgy Auditorium
11:00am Stained Glass Club Stained Glass Wkshp
7:00pm AA Meeting Sts. Philip & James Room

Religious Education Ministry

Saints Philip & James Stained Glass Club



Community Service Opportunity for Confirmation Candidates

The SSPJ Stained Glass Club will offer to our confirmation candidates community service hours on three special sessions on March 1st, 8th and 15th from 11AM till 1PM.

Each candidate will make a basic cross that will be used for the Crosses for College campaign. All tools, supplies, and instructions will be provided and included in the \$10.00 registration fee. Children will need to attend two sessions to complete their projects. Future sessions will be available if needed. All are welcome to continue to make additional projects for themselves if desired.

The club meets in the stained glass shop which is in the basement of the rectory center. Call or email us for registration forms. They are also available on the parish website under the ministries tab in the stained glass area.

For additional information please contact: sspjstainedglass@gmail.com or John P. Garvey - 631 682-0699

A Note to our Confirmation II Students...

We, your Parish Family pray for each of you as you attend your Confirmation retreat on Saturday, February 29th, 2020.

As our Confirmation II students approach receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation, We pray that you will feel the presence and gifts of the Holy Spirit in your minds, hearts and lives.

May you be filled with and recognize the gifts you are all blessed with, and continue to use them in our parish family and as you travel your journey of faith.

Keeping you and your families in our hearts and prayers.

Blessings,
Your SSPJ Parish Family

Our Family Prayer Intention
For the month of March, 2020



Please offer your intentions next weekend, February 29th & March 1st., 2020

Welcome to the Seventh Sunday In Ordinary Time

Gospel Reading : Matthew 5: 38-48

Jesus says "My command to you is: love your enemies, pray for your persecutors."

Jesus loves all people. He asks us to do the same, even though it is difficult

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

God knows you, and He wants to hear from you

Maybe you need help with a decision or you want to understand something better.

Or maybe you're looking for comfort and peace from His Holy Spirit.

Maybe your prayers are for someone who is sick, in trouble, or in need of God's blessings.

Perhaps you need God's forgiveness, or you simply need Him to help you recognize His answer.

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

Together as a family, we offer the following prayer intention...



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

Mass Intentions, For the week of February 23rd, 2020

Saturday, February 22nd, 2020

5:00pm Carmela Massaro

Sunday, February 23rd, 2020

8:00am For the Parishioners of SSPJ

10:00am Norma Montalto

12:00 Noon Collective Mass:

Jon M. Kessel

Edward H.L. Smith

Joseph Pellechi

Barbara Jendroska

Monday, February 24th, 2020

7:30am Mercedes Baker

9:15am Virginia Koop

Tuesday, Wednesday, February 25th, 2020

7:30am

9:15am Patricia Henrich

Wednesday, February 26th, 2020~Ash Wednesday

7:30am

9:15am Living ~ Father Tom

12:00pm Word Service

3:00pm Word Service

5:00pm Word Service

7:00pm

Thursday, February 27th, 2020

7:30am Ryan Birbiglia

9:15am Collective Mass:

Friday, February 28th, 2020

7:30am Patricia Mc Neely

9:15am Pasquale Campano

Saturday, February 29th, 2020

9:15am Olivia DiNucci

5:00pm Kurt Otto Walddoerfer

Sunday, March 1st, 2020

8:00am For the Parishioners of Sts. Philip & James

10:00am Harriette Intardonato

12:00 Noon Collective Mass:

Thomas Lawles

Virginia Kelly

Burke John Samson

Toni Donals

Banns of Marriage

Third:

Justin Cucarese

St. Ambrose Church, Old Bridge, New Jersey

To

Stephanie Kollmer

SSPJ

**The Altar Candles
For the Week of February 23rd, 2020
Burn In Memory of**



Virginia Koop



4th Anniversary In Heaven

**Always loved, Always missed, Always
remembered**

**Love,
Bob Koop & Eileen O'Connor**

The Pro Life Rose

For the Week of February 23rd, 2020



**Is Offered For,
Andrea Jean Martin**

**"Dear Daughter,
Happy Birthday in Heaven"**

**With Love,
Mommy, Donna and Joseph**

**Remembering in Our Prayers~
Those who are ill**

Angela Amoroso
Arthur Gureck
Anna Capizzio
Barbara Bombace
Baby Mattia Rose
Lubrano
Belinda Vega
Bob Keenan
Claudia Chandler
Deacon Ron Blasius
Daniel Radice
Deirdre W.
Diana C.
Dorothy E. Mitchell
Donalea Donach
Ellie Walsh
Gladys Blake
Gregory Parker
Jim McLean
John DeStefano
Judy Hanrahan
J.C.

Joseph S.
Joseph G.
Joyce Wiggins
Kathleen N.
Kitty Cronin
Leon Donach
Matthew Parrella
Melissa C.
Michael Fisher
Peter Donach
P.I.
Richard Blake
Richard Cembrale
Sara Jean Andersen
Tim Cavooris
Vivien Cordes
Vicki Archdeacon

If you wish to include a
name on our prayer
listing, kindly contact the
Parish Center Office at
631-584-5454

Sts. Philip and James School

Apostles of Hope

February

Nursery A

Oliver Anderson is an Apostle of Hope. Oliver is a kind student who loves to lend a helping hand to his friends. Oliver's bright smile and caring heart makes him a wonderful disciple of Jesus.

Nursery B

Lily Stellato is an Apostle of Hope. Lily loves being at school with her teachers and friends. She has made lots of new friends and loves to play with them all. Lily works hard every day and always tries her best. She loves learning all about Jesus.

Bryce Miller is an Apostle of Hope. Bryce walks into class with a smile on his face and loves being in school with his friends. He has improved so much with his schoolwork and loves learning about Jesus. Bryce always has the best stories to share and makes everyone in the class laugh.

Pre-Kindergarten

Sophia Bodo is an Apostle of Hope. Sophia is a good friend to her classmates and shows great kindness. She always has a smile on her face, which makes everyone around her smile as well. Sophia is an excellent follower of Jesus.

Dahlia Cacciani is an Apostle of Hope. Dahlia works hard and always tries her best. She shows great leadership skills and is always looking out for her classmates. Dahlia continues to follow in Jesus' footsteps.

Matthew Piliero is an Apostle of Hope. Matthew always tries his hardest to follow classroom rules and is a good friend to his classmates. He brings joy and cheer to our classroom. Matthew is a wonderful disciple of Jesus.

Kindergarten

Matthew Struss is an Apostle of Hope. Matthew loves to learn new things. He comes in, works hard, and tries his best every day. He is a good follower of Jesus.

First Grade

Giovanni Ridente is an Apostle of Hope. Giovanni always tries his hardest and never gives up. He is eager to learn, participate, and model to his classmates how to be a good leader. Keep following in Jesus' footsteps and keep up the good work!

Second Grade

Nico Ciaravino is an Apostle of Hope. Nico received the Sacrament of Reconciliation this month and is feeling close to Jesus. Nico is working hard to make good choices and act the way Jesus would. He is reading Bible Stories to prepare himself for his First Holy Communion.

Third Grade

Matilda Dias is an Apostle of Hope. Matilda is friendly and kind to all her peers. She works hard each day to do her best work. Matilda is a polite and caring student. She is very helpful to all who need assistance. Matilda likes to write stories, especially in spelling, and share them with the class.

Fourth Grade

Gabriella D'Agostino is an Apostle of Hope. Gabby is friendly and kind to her classmates. She works hard at her classwork and she attends extra help to further strengthen skills. Gabby is an altar server, she attends Mass weekly, and she completes her weekly Mass reflections.

Colin Beam is an Apostles of Hope. Colin pushes himself to do his best work. He takes time to study, he attends extra help to further strengthen skills, and he is always willing to help others. Colin is an altar server, he attends Mass weekly, and he submits his weekly Mass reflections.



Fifth Grade

Nicolas Merlino is an Apostle of Hope. Nicky is a bright and creative young man who comes into school everyday with a positive attitude. He works hard in the classroom and is kind to his classmates. Along with submitting his reflections, Nicky attends Mass every week. He is also a member of the SSPJ school band.

Sixth Grade

Julianna Donegan is an Apostle of Hope. Julianna's sweet and kind disposition is a gift to her classmates. Julianna is always aware of everyone's feelings and tries to include everyone in class games and conversations. She serves the Lord by altar serving in Mass and completing weekly reflection sheets.

Seventh Grade

Rylan Baxter is an Apostle of Hope. Rylan constantly produces work that showcases his stellar knowledge and extraordinary work ethic. Along with excelling academically, Rylan is always seen actively participating in Mass, is a member of the Odyssey team and Drama Club, is a Trimester II Student Council representative, and is a wonderful role model for his Pre-K buddies. Rylan shows up to school every day excited to learn something new and helps to establish the positive classroom environment needed to be successful.

Katelynn Sandbichler is an Apostle of Hope. Katelynn comes in to the classroom with a smile on her face every morning. Katelynn is a friend to all and always makes sure others are included, accepting them with open arms. Katelynn works extremely hard and this does not go unnoticed; she is willing to put in the extra effort if it means being successful inside the classroom. Outside the classroom, Katelynn actively participates in Mass and is a member of the orchestra, Stained Glass, Drama Club, and the Odyssey team.

Eighth Grade

Emma Ryan is an Apostle of Hope. Emma is a hard worker in the classroom and she always puts forth her best effort which has earned her first trimester Honor Roll. Emma is a monitor for nursery and the children love her. She is also a Trimester II Student Council representative. Emma completes her weekly reflections and is preparing herself for Confirmation by completing many service projects. In addition to her school work and service, Emma finds time to participate in Catholic Middle School sports as well as playing on another basketball team.

Faculty

Kristen Tuarno is an Apostle of Hope. Mrs. Tuarno makes learning Spanish fun from Nursery through Grade 8. Her positive attitude and contagious smile makes her a wonderful disciple of Jesus.

Celebrating the Liturgy- With Grateful Hearts We Serve

PRESIDER SCHEDULE-FOR February 29th & March 1st, 2020

Saturday, February 29th, 2020 5:00pm	Sunday, March 1st, 2020 8:00 AM MASS	Sunday, March 1st, 2020 10:00 AM MASS	Sunday, March 1st, 2020 12:00 MASS
Father Tom Haggerty	Father Tom Haggerty	Father Patrick Osei-Poku	Father Patrick Osei-Poku
Deacon John	Deacon John	Deacon Ron	Deacon Ron

Eucharistic Minister Schedule-For February 29th & March 1st, 2020

Saturday, February 29th,2020	Sunday, March 1st, 2020	Sunday, March 1st, 2020	Sunday, March 1st, 2020
5:00PM	8:00 AM MASS	10:00 AM MASS	12:00 NOON MASS
B. Carey	K. Rapp	T. Cafaro	M. Laub
D. Anderson	M. Sehne	D. Mulhall	B. Luna
C. Lombardi	E. Sica	W. Rodriguez	C. Zito
L. Tepedino	T. Sica	P. Schfilliti	G. Zito
H. Keenan	P. Kanuika	J. Scott	M. Peykar
P. Klee	K. Consenz	L. Sisti	P. Roman
C. Zito	A. Mantia	E. Sotomayer	C. Rubano
G. Zito	N. Locastro	J. Sweeney	V. Rubano
L. Taurassi	M. Morbillo	J. Taфра	J. Linder
D. Toto	P. Rizzo	M. Tully	M. Napoli

*We kindly ask all scheduled Ministers to arrive in the Prayer Room 15 minutes before mass begins, for prayer
Thank you*

ALTAR SERVERS SCHEDULE-FOR February 29th & March 1st, 2020

Saturday, February 29th, 2020	Sunday, March 1st, 2020	Sunday, March 1st, 2020	Sunday, March 1st, 2020
5:00PM MASS	8:00AM MASS	10:00 AM MASS	12:00 NOON MASS
J. Leber	C. Morbillo	S. Cheeseman	A. Miloscia
T. Miller	G. Morbillo	V. Franco	M. Miloscia
A. Hughes	J. Carey	S. Dearie	R. Osorio
J. Hughes		S. Waldman	D. Sanchez-Rincon/C. Tsoumpelis

LECTOR SCHEDULE-FOR February 29th & March 1st, 2020

Saturday, February 29th, 2020	Sunday, March 1st, 2020	Sunday, March 1st, 2020	Sunday, March 1st, 2020
5:00PM MASS	8:00 AM MASS	10:00AM MASS	12:00 NOON MASS
K. Smith	A. Willman	M. Koke	V. Rubano
8th Grade Student	G. Fitzpatrick	A. Latino	L. Kenton

March 1, 2020 • 1st Sunday of Lent • Year A

Accepting Limitations

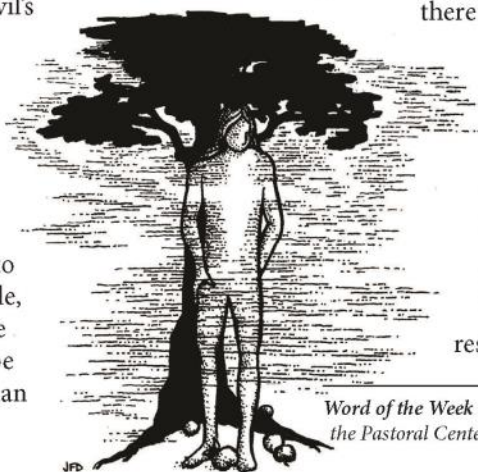
This Week's Readings at Mass

- Genesis 2:7-9; 3:1-7 - The fall of humankind
- Romans 5:12-19 - Humanity's sin through Adam
- Matthew 4:1-11 - The temptation of Jesus

As we move into this Lenten season of penitence, the readings for this first Sunday revolve around the themes of temptation and sin. The first reading recounts the story of the "Fall" of the first man and woman in the Garden of Eden. The second reading reflects back on that story. The Gospel reading, on the other hand, gives a glimpse of how we might be tempted yet remain faithful to God as Jesus was. It is as if Jesus' obedience brings the first story full circle, giving us hope that we aren't all doomed to give in to temptations to do what is wrong.

Between the first reading from Genesis when Adam and Eve eat the fruit they aren't supposed to eat, and the Gospel reading of Jesus resisting extreme temptations in his hunger and exhaustion, we are given two examples of how to deal with our own temptations. Adam and Eve were seemingly set up for an easy, blissful life with all they needed and more at their disposal. Yet the slightest suggestion from the serpent that they shouldn't be limited in what they had or in their power and knowledge was all it took for them to decide they knew better than God. How often we give in so easily when presented with options for more things even though we already have enough!

On the other hand, Jesus was in extreme physical need when he resisted the devil's temptations to feed himself and claim power. He had more reasons to give in, and most of us would be understanding if he did. But rather than grasp at physical comfort, reassurance, and strength, he chose to remain vulnerable and humble, even frail. When God became human in Jesus, he chose to be fully human and endure human



"The woman answered the serpent: 'God said, You shall not eat it or even touch it, lest you die.'"

Sheepish Question:

But seriously, about temptation: How am I like Adam or Eve?

limitations, from his 40 days in the desert all the way through to his agonizing death.

What is the lesson here then? Perhaps it is about not grasping for more things, more power, or more security, but trusting we will be cared for, even in our vulnerabilities and need. Jesus accepted and lived with his human limitations. Certainly, it's uncomfortable and oftentimes outright painful to have physical, emotional, and intellectual limits as we live out our lives in imperfect bodies in an imperfect world. God isn't a masochist who wants us to be in pain and need, any more than God wanted that for Jesus, but Jesus shows us there is dignity in being limited, and there is strength in needing God.

Questions of the Week

- 1 In what areas of your life are you most vulnerable to being tempted into choosing something that is not good for you?
- 2 How might you call upon the support of God and others to resist temptations this Lent?

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Speaking with Authority

We are growing ever more distrustful of words. Everywhere we hear people say: “That’s just talk! That’s nothing but empty words!”

And empty words are all around us. Our world is full of lies, of false promises, of glittering advertising that doesn’t deliver, of words never backed up by anything. We trust less and less in what we hear. We’ve been lied to and betrayed far too often, now we’re cautious about what we believe.

But distrust in the words we hear is only one way in which our spoken word is weak. Our words can be truthful and still have little power. Why? Because, to use Gospel terms, we may not be speaking with much *authority*. Our words may not have what they need to back them up. What’s meant by this?

The Gospels tell us that one of things that distinguished Jesus for the other religious preachers of his time was that he spoke with *authority*, while they didn’t. What gives words authority? What gives them transformative power?

There are, as we know, different kinds of power. There’s a power that flows from strength and energy. We see this, for example, in the body of a gifted athlete who moves with authority. There’s power too in charisma, in a gifted speaker or a rock star. They too speak with a certain authority and power. But there’s still another kind of power and authority, one very different in kind from that of the athlete and the rock star. There’s the power of a baby, the paradoxical power of vulnerability, innocence, and helplessness. Powerlessness is sometimes the real power. If you put an athlete, a rock star, and a baby into the same room, who among them is the most powerful? Who has the most authority? Whatever the power of the athlete or the rock star, the baby has more power to change hearts.

The Gospel texts which tell us that Jesus spoke with “authority” never suggest that he spoke with “great energy” or “powerful charisma”. In describing Jesus’ authority they use the word “*exousia*”, a Greek word for which we don’t have an English equivalent. What’s “*exousia*”? We don’t have a term for it, but we have a concept: “*Exousia*” might be described as the combination of vulnerability, innocence, and helplessness that a baby brings into a room. Its very helplessness, innocence, and vulnerability have a unique authority and power to touch your conscience. It’s for good reason that people watch their language around a baby. Its very presence is cleansing.

But there are a couple of other elements too undergirding the authority with which Jesus spoke. His vulnerability and innocence gave his words a special power, yes; but two other elements also made his words powerful: His words were always grounded in the integrity of his life. As well, people recognized that his authority was not coming from him but from something (Someone) higher whom he was serving. There was no discrepancy between his words and his life. Moreover, his words were powerful because they weren’t just coming from him, they were coming *through him* from Someone above him, Someone whose authority couldn’t be challenged, God.

You see this kind of authority; for example, in persons like Mother Teresa and Jean Vanier. Their words had a special authority. Mother Teresa could meet someone for the first time and ask him or her to come to India and work with her. Jean Vanier could do the same. A friend of mine shares how on meeting Vanier for the first time, in their very first conversation, Vanier invited him to become a missionary priest. That thought had never before crossed his mind. Today he’s a missionary.

What gives some people that special power? “*Exousia*”, a selfless life, and a grounding in an authority that comes from above. What you see in persons like Mother Teresa and Jean Vanier is the powerlessness of a baby, combined with a selfless life, grounded in an authority beyond them. When such persons speak, like Jesus’, their words have real power to calm hearts, heal them, change them and, metaphorically and really, cast out demons from them.

But we don’t always have to look to spiritual giants like Mother Teresa and Jean Vanier to see this. Most of us have not been so personally influenced by Mother Teresa or Jean Vanier, but have been spoken to with authority by people around us. In my case, it was my father and mother who spoke to me with that kind of authority. As well some of the Ursuline nuns who taught me in school and some of my uncles and aunts had the power to ask sacrifice of me because they spoke with “*exousia*” and with an integrity and a faith that I could not question or deny. They asked me to consider becoming a priest and I became one.

What moves the world is often the powerful energy and charisma of the highly talented; but the heart is moved by a different kind of authority.