

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH



Teach Your Family

Good and gracious God,
who filled Simeon with the Holy Spirit,
we bless you for revealing to us the Light
of your salvation.

Fill your family with grace
and, like Mary and Joseph,
may our love for you remain strong
so that, filled with the light of faith,
your family may grow in obedience
to your Word.

Bless and protect all families who seek
your embrace.

Open their eyes to see the glory of your Son.
You have promised the Church unity in faith
and love;

as you fulfilled your promises by being part
of the Holy Family.

Be present in our midst
and make us the instruments by which you
heal the world.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, December 31, 2017

Wisdom



Today's Readings: Sirach 3:2–6, 12–14 or Genesis 15:1–6; 21:1–3; Psalm 128:1–2, 3, 4–5 or Psalm 105:1–2, 3–4, 6–7, 8–9; Colossians 3:12–21 or Hebrews 11:8, 11–12, 17–19; Luke 2:22–40. In today's Gospel, Simeon announces that Jesus is God's salvation for the world, and that many will oppose him. He even tells Mary that she, too, would be pierced, foreshadowing the sorrow that overcomes her during the Passion. On this feast of the Holy Family, the Church is asked to ponder the mystery of salvation. Jesus, who is the Light of the World, will suffer so that all can share in salvation. In this Gospel, we hear again of the fulfillment of God's promise that the prophets foretold.

While today's Gospel is certainly joyful, it also reminds families that suffering is part of the journey. Following the Gospel and working to reveal God's love and mercy in our world are often met with persecution and ridicule. The Holy Family teaches us that faith in God is necessary to endure suffering and to share the light of Christ.

As you discern the ways in which your family lives out the Gospel, take time to identify wisdom figures in your community and family. Listen to their stories and learn the ways their faith grew in the midst of joy and suffering. What can these wisdom figures teach you? Pray that your family remain strong in faith and trust in God's mercy.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, January 1

Mary, the Holy Mother of God

Today is the octave of Christmas and the oldest Marian celebration in the Roman Catholic Church. The readings help us reflect on Mary's role in the Incarnation. Mary teaches us what it means to keep and contemplate the mystery of Christ within our heart. Because of her yes, we are no longer slaves but heirs to the Kingdom. Spend time in active, imaginative prayer today and dialogue with Mary to learn how to contemplate Jesus. *Today's Readings: Numbers 6:22–27; Psalm 67:2–3, 5, 6, 8; Galatians 4:4–7, Luke 2:16–21.*

Tuesday, January 2

Sts. Basil the Great and Gregory of Nazianzen

Do you know when you fell in love with Christ? The First Reading tells us to keep within us what we heard from the beginning. What did you hear and when? Like Basil and Gregory, we rely on God's grace to help us witness to the truth of Christ and remain faithful. If the Gospel has taken root in our heart, then when it is proclaimed, we are roused to confess that Jesus is Lord. *Today's Readings: 1 John 2:22–28; Psalm 98:1, 2–3ab, 3cd–4; John 1:19–28.*

Wednesday, January 3

Behold

We hear the second line of today's Gospel just before we process to Communion. The words are a beautiful command to gaze upon Jesus and recognize him. John the Baptist knows that Jesus is the Messiah and wants others to encounter Jesus. Do you "behold" Christ in your daily life? Gather some friends and family to go Christmas caroling tonight to a nursing home or soup kitchen to help others behold the joy of the Incarnation. *Today's Readings: 1 John 2:29–3:6; Psalm 98:1, 3cd–4, 5–6; John 1:29–34.*

Thursday, January 4

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

"Come and see" is the message found in today's Gospel. Jesus invited Andrew and the other disciple to follow him. Like the two disciples, we too are invited to follow and learn from the Teacher. St. Elizabeth heard this call and responded by opening schools and orphanages to aid her community. Christ has shown us how to live, but do we have the courage to follow him? Consider researching the Sisters of Charity today and preparing gift baskets for the poor in your community. *Today's Readings: 1 John 3:7–10; Psalm 98:1, 7–8, 9; John 1:35–42.*

Friday, January 5

St. John Neumann

The First Letter of John continues to preach about God's love and the need to love one another. In the Gospel, new disciples continue to respond to the invitation to "come and see." In Baptism, we made our initial response. This response requires the type of love and action the saint we celebrate today personified. The love of Christ leads us to share the Good News. Reach out to the unloved in your community and see the face of Christ. *Today's Readings: 1 John 3:11–21; Psalm 100:1b–2, 3, 4, 5; John 1:43–51.*

Saturday, January 6

Faith

In the First Reading, John turns his attention from the theme of love to the topic of faith. He tells his listeners that Jesus is truly God's Son, to which the Spirit, water (Baptism), and blood (Eucharist) continue to testify. When we look at this in light of the entire Epistle, we learn that those who have faith in God's Son, have eternal life. The Gospel affirms that Jesus is God's Son and so like Jesus, our Baptism calls us to proclaim God's Kingdom. Find a hymn in the parish's hymnal that speaks to the mission of Baptism and faith. Use this for prayer today. *Today's Readings: 1 John 5:5–13; Psalm 147:12–13, 14–15, 19–20; Mark 1:7–11 or Luke 3:23–38.*

