

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY



Help Us to Grow

Father,
through the holy family,
you have made all families holy.
You have given them as a model for us
as we walk through life together.
Help us to be ever more merciful.

Help us to forgive one another and
to do small things with great love.
Help us to grow together in holiness.
Give us the wisdom to imitate Mary,
holding all great mysteries in our hearts.
Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, December 26, 2021 All Families Are Made Holy



Today's readings: Sirach 3:2–6, 12–14; Psalm 128: 1–2, 3, 4–5; Colossians 3:12–21 or 3:12–17; Luke 2:41–52 or 1 Samuel 1:20–22, 24–28; Psalm 84:2–3, 5–6, 9–10; 1 John 3:1–2, 21–24; Luke 2:41–52. Little is known about the life Jesus, Mary, and Joseph lived in Nazareth. From the time they returned from Egypt until the beginning of Jesus' public ministry, the only story that appears in Scripture about the family is the founding of Jesus in the temple. A close reading of this text shows that they were observant Jews and they went to Jerusalem each year for Passover. It also can be seen that they traveled with their extended family, so they had other significant relationships in their lives. They had regular family struggles. Mary asks, "Why have you done this to us?" She sounds like many mothers who are

raising adolescents. Their family life is a model for ours, but it must have been very ordinary indeed.

Imagine what that can mean for us.

Jesus knows our hearts and our struggles because he lived them too. God entered into a family and set the family apart as a place of sanctification. The holy family makes all families holy. The family is an ordinary place filled with ordinary love, peace, mercy, justice, and forgiveness. It is a place to grow in holiness. This week, as you go about your routine, imagine how you are connected to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, across time and space, to their home in Nazareth. If you are preparing a meal or folding the laundry, you are doing holy work, just as they did.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, December 27

St. John, Apostle and Evangelist

Today the Church celebrates the Feast of St. John, apostle and evangelist. He and his brother were early disciples of Jesus and witnesses to the resurrection. He traveled to Ephesus, where he composed his Gospel and letters, and later wrote the Book of Revelation from the island of Patmos. It is traditional to bless wine and cider on the Feast of St. John. *Today's readings: 1 John 1:1–4; Psalm 97:1–2, 5–6, 11–12; John 20:1a, 2–8.*

Tuesday, December 28

The Holy Innocents

When Herod massacred all baby boys under two years of age, he sought to eliminate the threat the messiah posed to his power. His horrific, violent act epitomizes a truth we know even today: those who benefit most from the world's brokenness and injustice will always oppose the transformation God has promised. The infant Jesus needed protection, protection God provided in the person of St. Joseph. The deaths of the children were profound violations of the law of God. God is the God of life. God raised the infants to be saints, that the profound injustice of their deaths might be transformed: from death to life, that is the way of our God. *Today's readings: 1 John 1:5–2:2; Psalm 124:2–3, 4–5, 7b–8; Matthew 2:13–18.*

Wednesday, December 29

Simeon: Waiting in Hope

God had promised Simeon that he would not see death until he had seen the salvation of Israel. The child Jesus, not yet six weeks old, is brought to the temple to be dedicated to the Lord. What must it have been like for him to feel the fulfillment of the promise? What desires of your heart are you awaiting God to fulfill? *Today's readings: 1 John 2:3–11; Psalm 96:1–2a, 2b–3, 5b–6; Luke 2:22–35.*

Thursday, December 30

Anna the Prophetess

Anna the prophetess “spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Israel.” The hope that she has held onto has been realized before her eyes, and she cannot keep it to herself. She goes out into the world to be the bringer of the Good News, to bring hope. When we celebrate Christmas, we are making present the incarnation through which God continues to bring about a renewed world. Christians are to testify about our hope, just as Anna did. How can you share your hope today? *Today's readings: 1 John 2:12–17; Psalm 96:7–8a, 8b–9, 10; Luke 2:36–40.*

Friday, December 31

Word Made Flesh

“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.” The evangelist John tells us the cosmic significance of the birth of Jesus. Because John uses the language of philosophy and poetry, it can be hard to grasp what he means. But because he uses these elevated ways of speaking, it is possible to approach the inexplicable mystery that is contained in the incarnation. Read today's Gospel. What word or phrase sticks out to you most? Copy it and meditate on it as you pray this week. *Today's readings: 1 John 2:18–21; Psalm 96:1–2, 11–12, 13; John 1:1–18.*

Saturday, January 1

Mary, the Holy Mother of God

“Mary kept all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.” Mary's central place in this great mystery of God dwelling among us led her to a place of contemplation. Though she was the one chosen to bring Jesus into the world, she did not have all the answers. Praying the Rosary, we have the opportunity to contemplate like Mary, deepening our reflection while our words proclaim the memorized prayers. Pray the Rosary today and ask Mary to help you to hold all these things in your heart. *Today's readings: Numbers 6:22–27; Psalm 67:2–3, 5, 6, 8; Galatians 4: 4–7; Luke 2:16–21.*

