

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY



Form Us in Love

Triune God,
you entered humanity,
were welcomed by humble parents
and laid in a manger.
On this feast of your human family,
bless our families—received and chosen.
Help us grow in love.
Foster in us patience and kindness.
Open our hearts to make room for you
and guide us on our path to holiness.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Sunday, December 31, 2023

Bless Family Life



Today's readings: Genesis 15:1–6; 21:1–3; or Sirach 3:2–6, 12–14; Psalm 105:1–2, 3–4, 5–6, 8–9; or Psalm 128:1–2, 3, 4–5; Hebrews 11:8, 11–12, 17–19; or Colossians 3:12–21; Luke 2:22–40. On the Feast of the Holy Family, the Church honors Jesus' earthly family, offering encouragement and a model to all families. By sending Jesus to enter the world through a human family, God takes on all the messiness that comes with family life. God shows us tangibly that God desires to be close to us in our everyday living, in our closest relationships, and in the life in our homes. Families are called the hearth of the domestic church because it is within our families that we are first formed in faith and nurtured in love. In both the trials and joys of family life, we learn how to strive for holiness.

Today marks the exact midpoint in the Christmas season. We continue to recall what befell the holy family as they welcomed the infant Jesus during their stay in overcrowded Bethlehem; they were visited by the most unexpected guests and went to great extremes to protect their newborn child.

The Feast of the Holy Family offers us an opportunity to reflect upon the holiness in our primary relationships. Today's second reading from the Letter to the Colossians gives us a blueprint for household living. Read it with loved ones and together prayerfully discern some resolutions for the new year.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, January 1

Mary, Holy Mother of God

According to the Scriptures, Mary reflects in her heart on all the amazing events surrounding the birth of her child. As we move from one calendar year to the next, we are invited to reflect with gratitude on the gifts given to us as well as look forward to the new year with hope, faith, and trust in the abiding presence of Emmanuel. This time of the year, when traditionally New Year's resolutions are made, is also the perfect time to make spiritual promises. Ponder how you hope to grow in your relationship with the living Christ in the coming year. *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 and Gregory

St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory Nazianzen were fourth-century contemporaries, both born to parents who were named saints and both blessed with siblings who became saints. Through their writings, they made important contributions to how the Church understands the mystery of the Trinity. Their articulation of Jesus as fully human and fully divine shaped the language of the Nicene Creed we profess every Sunday at Mass. *Today's readings: 1 John 2:22–28; Psalm 98:1, 2–3ab, 3cd–4; John 1:19–28.*

Wednesday, January 3

The Most Holy Name of Jesus

The Church reserves today as an optional memorial dedicated to the Most Holy Name of Jesus. The name Jesus, (in Hebrew, *Yeshua*) means “Savior.” St. Paul urges all Christians to keep holy the name of Jesus, “*That at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth*” (Philippians 2:10). *Today's optional memorial readings: Philippians 2:1–11; Psalm 8:4–9; Luke 2:21–22.*

Thursday, January 4

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Born in 1774, Elizabeth Ann (Bayley) Seton was by the age of twenty-nine a widowed mother of five children. In her grief she discovered the Catholic faith and received the call to form a new religious order. In starting her first Catholic school for poor girls, Elizabeth founded the Catholic parochial school system that still thrives today. Elizabeth was canonized in 1975 as the first person born in the United States to be named a saint. Today the Sisters of Charity serve in communities around the world following the inspiration of their founder, Mother Seton. *Today's readings: 1 John 3:7–10; Psalm 98:1, 7–8, 9; John 1:35–42.*

Friday, January 5

St. John Neumann

Born in 1811, John Neumann emigrated from Bohemia to New York to care for the spiritual needs of European immigrants. As a young priest he entered the Redemptorists and was subsequently named the bishop of Philadelphia. In just seven years, he built eighty-nine Catholic churches, hospitals, orphanages, and almost one hundred schools. He organized the first diocesan Catholic school system in the United States and is remembered to this day as the patron of sick children and immigrants. *Today's readings: 1 John 3:11–21; Psalm 100:1b–2, 3, 4, 5; John 1:43–51.*

Saturday, January 6

The Twelfth Day of Christmas

The liturgical season of Christmas begins with the vigil of Christmas and concludes on Monday, January 8, with the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord. Throughout the season we celebrate the birth of Christ into our hearts, our lives and our world, and commemorate that Jesus comes to save us and lead us to eternal light. Listen to the Christmas carol “The Twelve Days of Christmas,” originally written to convey the essential elements of the Christian faith during centuries of religious persecution. *Today's readings: 1 John 5:5–13; Psalm 147:12–13, 14–15, 19–20; Mark 1:7–11.*

