

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY



The Whole Family

God our Father,
you entrusted your Son to Joseph and Mary,
who readily accepted all that came into
their lives.

They responded with humility
and faithfulness
to the future you envisioned for them.
Help us imitate their fidelity
to you and to each other.

Favor us with wisdom, goodness, and peace.
Strengthen your love within us,
within our homes,
and within our faith communities
so that we may embrace all that comes
into our lives
and welcome the future you envision for us
and for the whole human family.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, December 27, 2020

Inspiring Holiness



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; Hebrews 11:8, 11–12, 17–19 or Colossians 3:12–21; Luke 2:22–40. Although we use the word *holy* to refer to someone who is good or pious, the term literally means that someone or something is “set apart” for God. God set Abraham apart by making him the father of countless descendants. However, did God choose Abraham because Abraham was good, or did God’s promises call forth goodness from Abraham?

When it comes to Mary and Joseph, it may seem obvious that they were good and pious, but Jesus’ parents must have also grown in holiness as they faced the unique task of raising God’s Son. God also called forth holiness in Simeon

and Anna when he inspired them to prophesy about the child Jesus. Jesus, too, though set apart by his divine nature, also “grew and became strong” as God called forth holiness from him.

In what ways is God calling forth holiness from us? Perhaps we must care for aging parents or work with a difficult sibling or child. Perhaps we are struggling to treat a member of Christ’s body with compassion, humility, or patience. In such moments, God calls forth holiness from us. When we allow that goodness to flow forth, we inspire holiness in others. By God’s grace and the examples of holiness that we offer each other, we become more fully the holy family of God.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, December 28

Feast of the Holy Innocents

Herod shed the blood of others in order to protect his reign. Jesus shed his own blood in order to bring others into his reign. One viciously protected himself and his power, while the other readily surrendered it. Each day we, too, act in ways that are ultimately death-dealing or life-giving. What must we do to make sure that each day we turn away from darkness and toward the light and life of Christ? *Today's Readings: 1 John 1:5–2:2; Psalm 124:2–3, 4–5, 7b–8; Matthew 2:13–18.*

Tuesday, December 29

Stepping into the Light

While fulfilling the requirements of the Jewish Law, Jesus' parents encounter Simeon, who prophesies that God's love incarnate has illuminated the world. When confronted by the light of Christ, however, people too often prefer the darkness. We keep walking in our self-righteousness, greed, or anger. Spend some time reflecting on Jesus' commandment to love one another. To whom can you show greater love this week? *Today's Readings: 1 John 2:3–11; Psalm 96:1–2a, 2b–3, 5b–6; Luke 2:22–35.*

Wednesday, December 30

Favor

God favored the prophets Simeon and Anna with insight into the child Jesus. God especially favored his Son, who grew in wisdom and strength. God likewise favors those who follow his Son, bestowing upon them knowledge, victory over evil, and eternal life. St. John exhorts us to cling to God's favor and resist favoring the things of the world. What particular favor could you do for someone as a way of celebrating the favor that God has shown us all? *Today's Readings: 1 John 2:12–17; Psalm 96:7–8a, 8b–9, 10; Luke 2:36–40.*

Thursday, December 31

Choosing Faith

We speak of our faith as a gift, but we must choose to accept this gift. In both readings for today, we hear that some people did not accept God's gift of grace and truth in Jesus. As we try to understand why people abandon their faith, we gain insight by reflecting on our moments of doubt. What circumstances have challenged your faith? Bring your reflections into a prayer for those who are struggling in similar ways. *Today's Readings: 1 John 2:18–21; Psalm 96:1–2, 11–12, 13; John 1:1–18.*

Friday, January 1

Mary, Mother of God

The blessing that Aaron gave the Israelites was incarnated in Jesus. God now blesses us by filling our hearts with the Spirit of his Son. As Jesus' mother, Mary physically bore that blessing within herself, rightly earning the title "Mother of God." Mary emerged from humble origins to be the most revered woman in the Church. Make a list of all the titles for Mary that you can think of. Choose one or two of them, and learn why that title came to be used for our Lady. *Today's Readings: Numbers 6:22–27; Psalm 67:2–3, 5, 6, 8; Galatians 4:4–7; Luke 2:16–21.*

Saturday, January 2

St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory Nazianzen

"Let what you heard from the beginning remain in you." John the Baptist prepared people to follow and remain with Jesus. St. Basil and St. Gregory helped the Church to remain steadfast in faith by giving brilliant and compelling testimony about Jesus. What testimony have you received about Jesus that helps you remain with him? *Today's Readings: 1 John 2:22–28; Psalm 98:1, 2–3ab, 3cd–4; John 1:19–28.*

