

# FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH



## Teach Your Family

Loving God, protector of families, you entrusted your Son to the care of Mary and Joseph.

Like all families, they experienced difficulties and blessings.

On this Feast of the Holy Family, bless family life everywhere.

Give families heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, and love.

Grant them forgiving hearts and fill them with joy and laughter,

so they may proclaim the Good News of salvation to the ends of the earth.

Grant couples an increase in love and devotion,

so that their bond may reflect the love of the Holy Trinity.

Send forth your Holy Spirit to fill parents with wisdom and understanding as they lead their children in faith and cultivate their relationship with Christ.

May we forever offer you thanks and praise for the gifts you have bestowed upon us.

Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

**Sunday, December 27, 2015**

## Mutuality



*Today's Readings:* Sirach 3:2–6, 12–14 or 1 Samuel 1:20–22, 24–28; Psalm 128:1–2, 3, 4–5 or Psalm 84:2–3, 5–6, 9–10; Colossians 3:12–21 or 1 John 3:1–2, 21–24; Luke 2:41–52. This week the Church invites us to reflect on what it means to be a “holy family.” The Gospel tells the story of Mary and Joseph discovering Jesus in the Temple. Upon finding Jesus, who at age twelve is on the verge of assuming the religious duties of an adult, his parents inquire as to why he remained behind. Jesus’ answer baffles them; yet he goes with them. This passage depicts mutuality in their relationship. Mary and Joseph retained their authority but were awed by Jesus, while Jesus, the Son of God, submitted to their will. This situation is resolved without struggle or humiliation.

This theme of respect and obedience is highlighted in the First and Second Readings as well. These readings outline what is needed for living a life of “compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience” (Second Reading from Colossians). Such qualities require respect and mutuality. Just look at Jesus’ relationship to his parents. They molded him and taught him the tradition; yet he led them closer to God. As members of the household of God, love should guide the way we live with and relate to one another. This week, consider the areas of your life that need forgiveness. How might you witness God’s love?



## THIS WEEK AT HOME

**Monday, December 28, 2015**

### Feast of the Holy Innocents, Martyrs

The story we hear today is a disturbing and unexpected one during the joyful season of Christmas. To protect his reign from the prophesied new king, Herod orders the mass killing of all boys aged two years and under. God's power prevails and the Holy Family escapes the slaughter. The First Reading reminds us to walk always in the light of Christ. Who are the "innocents" today? Revisit the Exodus story (11:1—12:36) and reflect on its connection to today's feast. *Today's Readings:* 1 John 1:5—2:2; Psalm 124:2–3, 4–5, 7cd–8; Matthew 2:13–18.

**Tuesday, December 29, 2015**

### Light of Revelation

In the First Reading, we are reminded to live in the Light and follow the Light. We learn in the Gospel that Jesus is a light to the entire world. Simeon's prophecy declares that God sent Jesus for all the nations. His rule will be unlike anything the world has seen; it will reveal the Kingdom of God. The coming of Christ demands that we change how we live. Simeon's song is called the Benedictus and is sung at Night Prayer. In this prayer, Simeon thanks God that he has seen the coming of the Messiah. *Today's Readings:* 1 John 2:3–11; Psalm 96:1–2a, 2b–3, 5b–6; Luke 2:22–35.

**Wednesday, December 30, 2015**

### Love

The Letter of St. John continues to remind us that our lives must be consonant with God's love. Because of the Incarnation, we have encountered Christ. This encounter should transform our hearts. Christ instructs us to remain rooted in God's love and not to be enticed by worldly things. Is your life rooted in God's love? Perhaps you could gather some friends and family and go Christmas caroling tonight to a nursing home or soup kitchen. *Today's Readings:* 1 John 2:12–17; Psalm 96:7–8a, 8b–9, 10; Luke 2:36–40.

**Thursday, December 31, 2015**

### False Teachers

In the First Reading today, John is warning us against false teachers. He indicates that some have already left the community. I wonder what enticed them to leave. John hints that their faith was insincere. The Gospel highlights the fact that the true teacher, the Word made flesh, dwells among us. Those who accept him will have eternal life. Today, consider how you might do or say something that will spread the light of Christ. *Today's Readings:* 1 John 2:18–21; Psalm 96:1–2, 11–12, 13; John 1:1–18.

**Friday, January 1, 2016**

### Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God

God has surely looked upon Mary and blessed her. Think about everything that she has said yes to and the confusion it must have stirred up. Yet, Mary faced God with confidence and contemplation. She teaches us that God desires to dwell within us. God has blessed us through her; he sent his Son to ransom us and give us peace. To celebrate, sing your favorite Marian song or pray the Rosary. *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, 2016**

### Memorial of Sts. Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen

Today the First Reading continues to warn against false teachers. John proclaims that because we have been anointed in Baptism, Christ dwells within us and we have heard the truth. The saints we honor today were great teachers and fought against false teachings. They were fervent in sharing the Gospel and in helping the Church clarify the language with which it praises the Holy Trinity. Let us pray today that all those who teach might be filled with wisdom and truth. *Today's Readings:* 1 John 2:22–28, Psalm 98:1, 2–3ab, 3cd–4; John 1:19–28.

