

THE CHILD GREW
AND BECAME STRONG,
FILLED WITH WISDOM;
AND THE FAVOR OF GOD
WAS UPON HIM.

LUKE 2:40



THE HOLY FAMILY

OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH

DECEMBER 27, 2020

Feast of Faith

Processions

Why does the liturgy begin with a procession? It is not just a practical matter of getting the ministers of the liturgy from the sacristy to the sanctuary. The procession is a powerful sign of who we are as Christian people. We are not static, staying in one place. We are going somewhere. Our procession leads us to the altar, sign of Christ's presence in our midst. We move, we process, because we recognize our need for what Christ is preparing for us at that table. We go forward eagerly, because we are hungry for that heavenly food.

This procession is an orderly one: servers, deacon, priest presider. Each is set apart by distinctive vesture: albs for the altar servers, dalmatic for the deacon, chasuble for the priest. The procession is an image of the hierarchical structure of the Church. On a deeper level it is an image of unity in diversity. We are all on a journey to the heavenly city, but each of us is clothed with different gifts. We all receive the call to service, but not in the same way. Only by coming together in all our wonderful variety can we achieve the work of the kingdom.

—Corinna Laughlin, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co.



We Are God's Holy Family

The scriptures of Israel are filled with many stories of barren couples who were miraculously granted the gift of children by God. Surely the best known among these is the first reading from today, from which Luke took inspiration when he recounted the miraculous birth of John the Baptist to Zechariah and Elizabeth, and the more miraculous birth of Jesus to Mary and Joseph. In each instance, we are given examples or role models of those who trusted in God. More than examples of those who trust, they are models of self-surrender. They abandoned their own presuppositions and prejudices about the workings of the world and turned their lives over to belief in a God who can make life grow where none ought to; a God who can turn death around into a new and unimagined life; a God who can, today, take a tiny child of humble parents in an insignificant town and make him into a light for all the world. This is what we, as God's holy family, are called to do each day: to trust not in ourselves and the way we think things should be, but to open ourselves and surrender ourselves in faith to a God of endless promise.

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Readings for the Week

Monday:	1 Jn 1:5 — 2:2; Ps 124:2-5, 7b-8; Mt:13-18
Tuesday:	1 Jn 2:3-11; Ps 96:1-3, 5b-6; Lk 2:22-35
Wednesday:	1 Jn 2:12-17; Ps 96:7-10; Lk 2:36-40
Thursday:	1 Jn 2:18-21; Ps 96:1-2, 11-13; Jn 1:1-18
Friday:	Nm 6:22-27; Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21
Saturday:	1 Jn 2:22-28; Ps 98:1-4; Jn 1:19-28
Sunday:	Is 60:1-6; Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-13; Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6; Mt 2:1-12

Saints and Special Observances

Sunday:	The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph
Monday:	The Holy Innocents
Tuesday:	Fifth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord; St. Thomas Becket
Wednesday:	Sixth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord
Thursday:	Seventh Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord; St. Sylvester I; New Year's Eve
Friday:	The Octave of the Nativity of the Lord; Mary, the Holy Mother of God; World Day of Prayer for Peace; New Year's Day; First Friday
Saturday:	Ss. Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen; First Saturday

Time

Do not squander time, for that is the stuff life is made of.

—Benjamin Franklin

Today's Readings

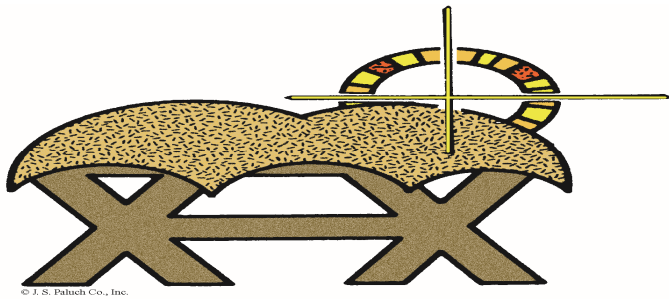
First Reading — Those who honor their parents will be greatly blessed and will atone for sins (Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14) or Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3.

Psalms — Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways (Psalm 128) or Psalm 105.

Second Reading — Be thankful; do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus (Colossians 3:12-21 [12-17]) or Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19.

Gospel — The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom (Luke 2:22-40 [22, 39-40]).

The English translation of the Psalm Responses from the Lectionary for Mass © 1969, 1981, 1997, International Commission on English in the Liturgy Corporation. All rights reserved.



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The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph December 27, 2020

My eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared
in the sight of all the peoples.

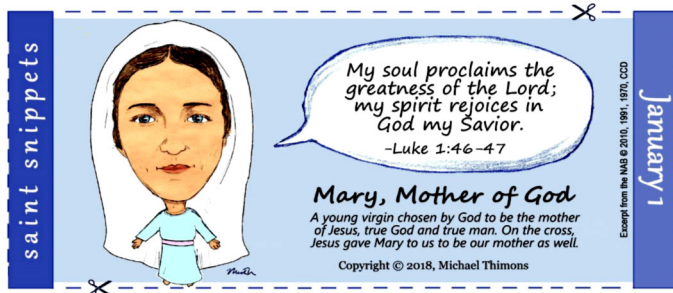
— Luke 2:30-31

Treasures From Our Tradition

We are in the season of the Incarnation, the mystery of God’s love poured out in Christ’s birth. The word derives from the Latin *carnis* meaning “flesh.” Throughout history, some Christians have distrusted the “flesh,” and stressed a hatred of this world and its pleasures. Perhaps they have not paid enough attention to how “embodied” the sacraments are. One third-century author put it plainly in an image that may alarm diet-conscious Americans, explaining that we wash the body so the soul can be cleansed, that we anoint the body so the soul can be strengthened, and that we eat the body and blood of Christ so that “the soul can fatten on God.”

Catholics “get” that God is revealed in this world. The sacraments use the “stuff” of creation: water and oil; the senses of the body, touch and taste and smell. We use the things of this world rightly. After all, God’s love poured out into human flesh means the world has eternal value. Why else would Jesus describe the kingdom to come as a teeming city or a marriage banquet? Catholics are realists, and nowhere is that more evident than when we gather for a sacrament.

—Rev. James Field, Copyright © J. S. Paluch Co



POWER IN PRESCRIBED RITUALS

Joseph and Mary presented Jesus in the temple at eight days old, as was prescribed by Mosaic law. For many Catholic families, baptismal gowns were handed down through generations, and a baptism was a time of great celebration. Sadly, in our culture, baptisms continue to decline. There are many reasons for this: fewer practicing Catholics, more interfaith marriages, more secular weddings, fewer weddings by clergy, and problems or misunderstandings that turn people away. Many have left the church altogether because of the way they were treated. For some the parish is not a welcoming place. For others baptism has become just a ritual they go through for the sake of the grandparents.

When someone does present a child for baptism, it can become too easy for others to pass judgment because the parents don’t know the rubrics well, or aren’t dressed better, or “why is that single mother having her baby baptized during Mass?” Notice that the Gospel says nothing about the priests of the temple and how they received Jesus. Rather it talks about Simeon and Anna. They are worth a study in themselves. Simeon is a devout man who is there waiting for a particular sign, and it is fulfilled when he see the Christ Child. Anna is just in the temple praying, as is her custom. After the presentation of Jesus, she does what she does best—she goes back to praying in the temple. Perhaps these readings teach us how we as a faith community can see the sacredness in those families presenting their children for baptism, and welcome them as did Anna and Simeon. May we all learn from their wisdom!

Today’s Readings: Gn 15:1-6; 21:1-3; Ps 105:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9; Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19;
Lk 2:22-40 [22, 39-40]

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12/27/2020

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DECEMBER 27, 2020

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FAMILY

On this feast of the Holy Family, we want to offer all families blessings. “Family” may have a lot of different connotations these days. In the United States, the “father, mother, child” family is less common now, and large Catholic families are not as common as they once were. The concept of family is more fluid with many forms of blended families due to second marriages, multigenerational households, and other living arrangements. In a recent survey by the Pew research center, four in ten babies are born to single mothers. Other children are being raised by grandparents or foster parents. In today’s Genesis story, Abraham was ready to concede to another form of family, making the child of one of his servants his heir. The reading from Hebrews reiterates the story of Genesis, and “your descendants will be more numerous than the stars.” The Gospel relates the story of the presentation in the temple.

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EXAMPLES IN OUR ELDERS

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TODAY’S READINGS

Genesis 15:1–6; 21:1–3
Psalm 105:1–2, 3–4, 5–6, 8–9
Hebrews 11:8, 11–12, 17–19
Luke 2:22–40 [22, 39–40]



Prayer of the Faithful

Let us pray now to our loving God, whose promises are kept in our presence every day.

For the domestic Church, the Church that lives and grows in our families and homes, let us pray to the Lord.

For families throughout the world, those that are strong and those that are in crisis, let us pray to the Lord.

For those without a home or family to call their own, for those who suffer from the cold winter weather, let us pray to the Lord.

For refugees from war, hunger, or persecution, for immigrants who seek a better life for themselves, and for those who have been exiled from their homes, let us pray to the Lord.

For those who have grown old in wisdom and grace and still have much to offer their communities and our society, let us pray to the Lord.

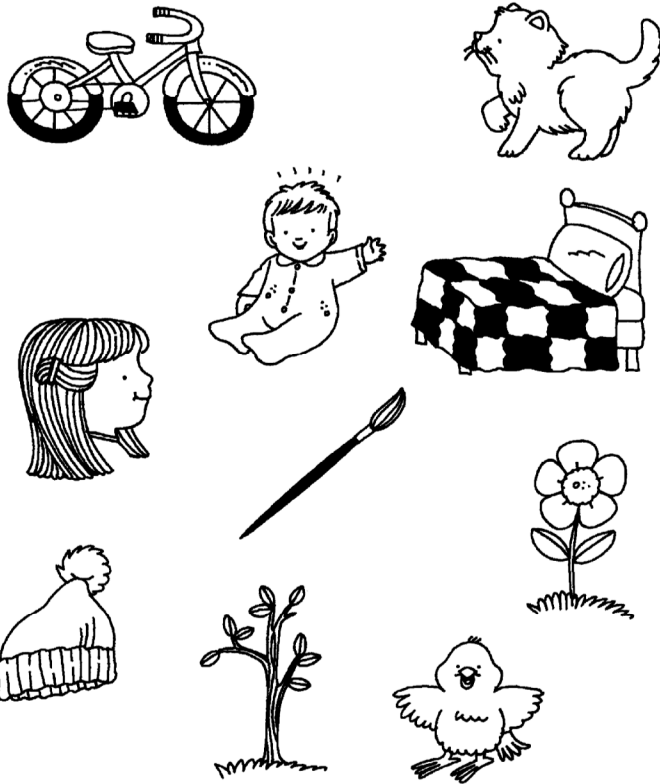
For all those who are sick, for all who suffer from COVID-19, and for all who have died, especially N., N., and N., let us pray to the Lord.

For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, let us pray to the Lord.

Almighty God, faithful and true, in your love for us you kept your promise of salvation through your precious Son.

Graciously hear these our prayers and grant them through your Son, Jesus Christ, who is our Lord and Savior for ever and ever.

The scriptures tell us that Mary and Joseph took Jesus home to the town of Nazareth, where he grew and became strong and wise. Circle all the living things below that can grow!



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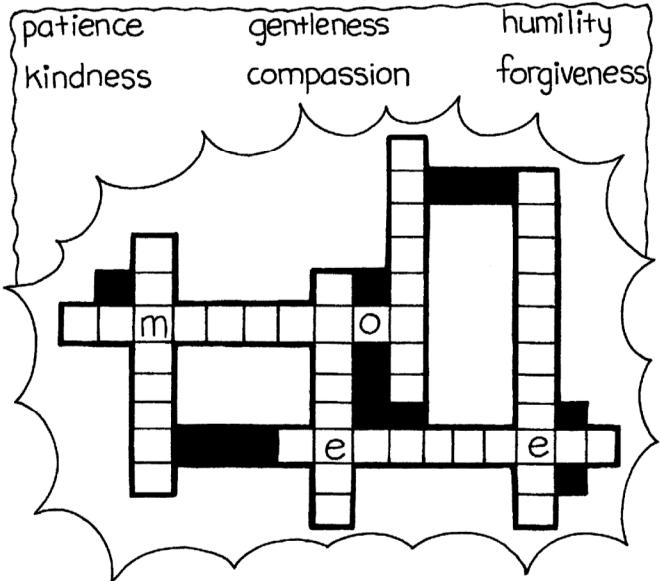
GOD'S WORD FOR CHILDREN!

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

As children of God, we want people to see certain traits in us. Some of the qualities we should strive to practice are listed here.

Work to fit them in the crossword.

Some letters have been written in to help you.



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