

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY



Dwell in Us

God our Father,
you astound us
with life-giving forgiveness.
We are thankful for your gift of peace
and the example of the Holy Family.

Hear our prayer:
Open our hearts.
Help us to dedicate ourselves to you
and to love one another.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, December 29, 2024

Put on Love



Today's readings: 1 Samuel 1:20–22, 24–28 or Sirach 3:2–6, 12–14; Psalm 84: 2–3, 5–6, 9–10; 1 John 3:1–2, 21–24 or Colossians 3:12–21; Luke 2:41–52. As a faithful Jewish family, Joseph and Mary traveled with twelve-year-old Jesus to Jerusalem for Passover. A day into their return to Nazareth, the couple realize that Jesus was not in their caravan. They are filled with anxiety as they make the long trek back to Jerusalem in search of Jesus. The parents find their son engaging in thought-provoking conversations with teachers—something that astounds those in the temple. Though Mary and Joseph do not fully understand Jesus' actions, we hear that Mary “kept all these things in her heart.” As a community, the Body of Christ contemplates the wisdom, faith, and mystery of the Holy Family today.

Regardless of which readings are proclaimed at the Mass at your parish, all of today's options for the Liturgy of the Word express much of what can be learned regarding striving for holiness in family life and in the community of loved ones that surrounds us. Prayer and dedication to the Lord bears much fruit for future generations; we are advised to honor and revere our parents and older generations. To grow in love for others, we remember the importance of letting “the word of Christ dwell” in us. Let us strive to be like the Holy Family: honor, forgive, be patient with one another. Every day this week, commit to one act of service for someone in your family or community that demonstrates putting “on love, that is, the bond of perfection.”



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, December 30 Octave of Christmas

The octave of Christmas begins on Christmas Day and ends on January 1, the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God. An octave is an eight-day feast, or period of celebration. Two of the most important times in the liturgical calendar are the Octave of Easter and that of Christmas. The celebration and joy experienced on Christmas Day carries through the octave of Christmas as we are invited to continue to reflect on the glory of the season. If you are able, attend Mass to continue your celebration of Christmas. *Today's readings:* 1 John 2:12–17; Psalm 96:7–8a, 8b–9, 10; Luke 2:36–40.

Tuesday, December 31 True Light

Today's Gospel is the prologue to the Gospel of John. It highlights many themes that emerge throughout the Gospel, including light and life: "What came to be through him was life, / and this life was the light of the human race; / the light shines in the darkness, / and the darkness has not overcome it." How can you testify to the true light, to Jesus Christ, who enlightens us? With someone you love, share how Christ enlightens you. *Today's readings:* 1 John 2:18–21; Psalm 96:1–2, 11–12, 13; John 1:1–18.

Wednesday, January 1 Mary, the Holy Mother of God

After the birth of Jesus, Mary keeps the shepherd's words about the Christ child, "reflecting on them in her heart." At the end of the octave of Christmas, spend time in silence, reflecting on the season in your heart. The birth of a child can often be a whirlwind for parents, even more so for those who have fled persecution. Say a prayer or, if you are able, send a donation to an organization serving refugee families. *Today's readings:* Numbers 6:22–27; Psalm 67:2–3, 5, 6, 8; Galatians 4:4–7; Luke 2:16–21.

Thursday, January 2 Remain in Him

In today's first reading, John stresses the unity of the Father and Son, stating, "Anyone who denies the Son does not have the Father." Then the apostle reassures followers in their faith: "Let what you heard from the beginning remain in you." Many prepare to return to work today after the holiday festivities. How can you let the joy of Christmas remain in you? Consider starting your days with centering prayer. Return to the sacred word you chose throughout the day so that you can remain in Christ. *Today's readings:* 1 John 2:22–28; Psalm 98:1, 2–3ab, 3cd–4; John 1:19–28.

Friday, January 3 Holy Name of Jesus

Today we remember and honor the Most Holy Name of Jesus. What name or title of Jesus from Scripture stands out to you (for example, Teacher, Prince of Peace, Preacher, Messiah, Savior)? Pray with the most salient one and reflect upon its meaning for you. *Today's readings:* 1 John 2:29–3:6; Psalm 98:1, 3cd–4, 5–6; John 1:29–34.

Saturday, January 4 St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Elizabeth Ann Seton was the first native-born United States citizen to be canonized. After her husband died, she became a Catholic and opened a school for impoverished children and orphans. She founded the Sisters of Charity, a religious society that serves the marginalized. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton is the patron saint of converts, widows, and those ridiculed for their piety. To honor her, reach out to a teacher and ask how you can support them in their work. *Today's readings:* 1 John 3:7–10; Psalm 98:1, 7–8, 9; John 1:35–42.

