

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



Thanksgiving for Families, the Place of Revelation

God our Father,
you presented your Son to us
and loaned us the wise old eyes
of Anna and Simeon—
they who could see salvation
revealed in a young family.
Give us light to recognize your love
revealed in the people we call family,
people who stand so close to us
that often we cannot see you at work
in them.

Give us patience with each other
and trust that you are with us in every
chore and joy,
helping us also to see and be a light
for revelation.

We ask this through the same Lord Jesus
Christ, your Son,
who lives and reigns with you in the unity
of the Holy Spirit,
one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Sunday, December 28, 2014

Faith Unite Us



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. In today's First Reading and Gospel, we see portrayals of faith. When Abram voiced his concern that his heir would be the slave born to his household, God assured him of an heir. Abraham awaited the fulfillment of this promise, and when he was 100 years old, Sarah bore a son. Simeon awaited "the consolation of Israel." The Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would see the Messiah. He allowed himself to be guided by the Spirit to the Temple on the day Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to be presented. And as a person of faith, he rejoiced upon witnessing God's revelation. It is important to note that Simeon is described as "righteous and devout" and that Abram's belief in what God has said is attributed to his "righteousness." Would Simeon

have allowed himself to be guided by the Spirit if he had not nurtured a relationship with God?

The passage from the Letter to the Hebrews lists Abraham's acts of faith. It was with faith that he left his homeland, received the power to bear offspring, and offered his son to God. This account of Abraham's faith is recounted in Hebrews alongside that of Abel, Enoch, Noah, Moses, and Jesus. The author of Hebrews prefaces these examples with an explanation of faith: "By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was made from things that are not visible" (11:3). On this Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, we may want to ponder how well to rest our faith in the Word of God. Such trust may lessen anxiety in our families. And such trust will help us realize the blessings in our families.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, December 29, 2014

**St. Thomas Becket,
Bishop and Martyr**

Thomas Becket (1118–1170) took a stand against the leaders of his day that led to his death as a martyr. His actions have been a light to many through the centuries. It is good to contemplate how one person's actions can make an impression on lives nearly a millennium later. Today's Readings: 1 John 2:3–11; Psalm 96:1–2a, 2b–3, 5b–6; Luke 2:22–35.

Tuesday, December 30, 2014
**Sixth Day within the Octave
of the Nativity of the Lord**

We read in today's Gospel that the prophetess Anna constantly praised God, praying and fasting in the Temple. Although we need to be about our many duties and responsibilities during the day, we are still called to focus our lives on prayer. Beginning each day with a passage from Scripture may provide us with a more prayerful attitude. Could praying with Scripture daily be a New Year's resolution you are willing to make? Doing so could bring about changes in your life. Today's Readings: 1 John 2:12–17; Psalm 96:7–8a, 8b–9, 10; Luke 2:36–40.

Wednesday, December 31, 2014

St. Sylvester I, Pope

Pope Sylvester I, who died in the year 335, served the Church at the time of the Edict of Milan, the emergence of the Church from the catacombs, and the building of great basilicas, including Saint John Lateran. He presided over the Council of Nicaea (325). Such devotion to the Church surely was spurred by a sense of the need for evangelization. Just as we read in today's Gospel that John testified to light, so did St. Sylvester. Today's Readings: 1 John 2:18–21; Psalm 96:1–2, 11–12, 13; John 1:1–18.

Thursday, January 1, 2015

Mary, the Holy Mother of God

Since the Council of Ephesus in 431, *Theotokos*, or God-bearer, has been included among the many titles with which we honor Mary. That Council noted that since Christ is both divine and human, Mary is the Mother of God. Since 1967, today also has been observed as a day of prayer for world peace. It is appropriate to ask the intercession of Mary, Mother of God and Queen of Peace, as we pray for an end to strife. Today's Readings: Numbers 6:22–27; Psalm 67:2–3, 5, 6, 8; Galatians 4:4–7; Luke 2:16–21.

Friday, January 2, 2015

**Sts. Basil the Great
and Gregory Nazianzen**

Sts. Basil (329–379) and Gregory (329–390) modeled the Christian life in so many ways. Both fought the Arian heresy, which held that Christ was not, as we pray in the Creed, “consubstantial with the Father.” Both, too, held prayer as the center of their lives. St. Basil was the founder and father of Eastern monasticism. Gregory lived as a hermit for a time, but also did pastoral work and was an esteemed orator. Today's Readings: 1 John 2:22–28; Psalm 98:1, 2–3ab, 3cd–4; John 1:19–28.

Saturday, January 3, 2015

The Most Holy Name of Jesus

Jesus is “God's chosen one,” we hear in today's readings. A name expresses the nature of a person. Persons who played prominent roles throughout salvation history often received their names from God: Adam—man of the earth; Eve—mother of all the living; Abraham—father of many nations; Peter—the rock. What is the origin of your name? If you do not know the day and date on which you were baptized, find out so that you can celebrate your baptismal name day. Today's Readings: 1 John 2:29—3:6; Psalm 98:1, 3cd–4, 5–6; John 1:29–34.

