

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH



A Call to Prayer

God our Father,
you sent your beloved Son into the world
to share in our humanity.
From all time, you chose the Virgin Mary to
give birth to him,
and placed him in a human family.
With Mary, his mother, and Joseph,
her husband,
to nurture and care for him.
Still, you called him away from them to be
with you in your house

to study the Scriptures and commune with
his true Father.
We ask you to call us too, so that,
as much as we love our parents, our siblings,
and our children,
and desire to spend time with them,
we never forget that we need to spend time
with you each day,
to praise you, to thank you, to pour out our
hearts to you,
and to ask for your guidance.
Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, December 30, 2018
Honor Your Father and Mother



Today's Readings: Sirach 3:2–6, 12–14; Psalm 128:1–2, 3, 4–5; Colossians 3:12–21; Luke 2:41–52. When we are young and first learning the Ten Commandments, one that hits home is the Fourth Commandment: “honor your father and mother.” As we grow older, we realize that this commandment is not just about children obeying parents, but that it applies to our lives as much or more when we are adults.

The Book of Sirach, a Wisdom book from the Hebrew Scriptures, describes the goodness that comes from following this command at all stages of one's life. Sirach also defines what it means to honor: to care for, to be considerate,

to be kind; and what it means *not* to honor: to revile or to be a cause of grief.

When Jesus' parents find him in the temple, they have great anxiety, but Jesus explains that he needs to be in his Father's house. He has not stayed at the temple to dishonor Mary and Joseph, but rather to give honor to his Father.

Why is this commandment important? What would family life be like if children, including grown children, truly honored their parents at all times? Would we become less self-centered? Would elderly people experience less loneliness? What example would our children see?



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, December 31

A New Beginning

On this last day of the year, our thoughts turn to resolutions for the new year. We can always think of areas of our life where we need to start over, and can look for ways to walk more closely with the Lord. Perhaps you could occasionally serve a meal at a homeless shelter, since this is a need every day of the year. How is the Lord asking you to serve his people this year? *Today's Readings: 1 John 2:18–21; Psalm 96:1–2, 11–12, 13; John 1:1–18.*

Tuesday, January 1, 2019

Mary, the Holy Mother of God

Today we honor the Mother of God—and our mother—and recall her essential role in salvation history. The Gospel finds her after the visit of the shepherds, keeping “all these things, reflecting on them in her heart.” Her prayer and reflection give her strength for the joyful and sorrowful days ahead. We can follow her example so that when sad times come, we have trust that God will bring good from them. *Today's Readings: Numbers 6:22–27; Psalm 67:2–3, 5, 6, 8; Galatians 4:4–7; Luke 2:16–21.*

Wednesday, January 2

Sts. Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen

John's letter warns early Christians not to be deceived by false teachings. Fourth-century friends Sts. Basil and Gregory Nazianzen had a deep life of prayer lived out in a monastery and also served as bishops. Eloquent speakers, they discredited a heresy common in their day. Years of prayer deepened their relationship with the Lord and kept them from being deceived. Prayer and study of the Scriptures help us come to know God and his truth. *Today's Readings: 1 John 2:22–28; Psalm 98:1, 2–3ab, 3cd–4; John 1:19–28.*

Thursday, January 3

The Most Holy Name of Jesus

John the Baptist calls Jesus “Lamb of God” and “Son of God.” Gabriel tells Mary his name will be Jesus (meaning “Yahweh saves,” Luke 1:31), Son of the Most High, Ruler forever. An angel tells Joseph in a dream that Jesus will be Emmanuel (which means “God is with us,” Matthew 1:18–23). We are grateful to know these names, which help us to know the One they signify. The name of Jesus is itself a powerful prayer, always to be uttered with reverence and awe. *Today's Readings: 1 John 2:29–3:6; Psalm 98:1, 3cd–4, 5–6; John 1:29–34.*

Friday, January 4

St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, Religious

Soon after Jesus invites Andrew to stay with him, Andrew calls his brother Simon, saying he has found the Messiah. New Yorker Elizabeth Ann Seton embraced the Catholic Church, much to the chagrin of her family, after attending Mass while visiting Italy. A young widow with five children, she shared Jesus by opening the first American Catholic parish school and establishing a religious community. How are you being invited to “stay” with Jesus? Have you found the Messiah? How do you share him with others? *Today's Readings: 1 John 3:7–10; Psalm 98:1, 7–8, 9; John 1:35–42.*

Saturday, January 5

St. John Neumann, Bishop

Jesus continues to call Apostles in the Gospel, and still calls today. John Neumann heard that call and came to America as a missionary. Ordained a priest in New York, he ministered to immigrants in New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, and Maryland. As the first American member of the Redemptorist order, he longed for a life of prayer in community. Instead, he was named bishop of Philadelphia, where he opened one hundred Catholic schools. He once took a vow never to waste a moment of time—quite an examination of conscience for us! *Today's Readings: 1 John 3:11–21; Psalm 100:1b–2, 3, 4, 5; John 1:43–51.*

