

# The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph



## *Bless us, O Lord.*

Bless the mothers and fathers  
of the world who,  
like Mary and Joseph, care for their children  
with love  
and do all they can to keep their children safe.  
Bless the children of the world who  
give us hope in the future we try to create.  
Bless all who have no family  
to support and nurture and love them.  
Bless those who reach out to create bonds  
to unite us with each other.  
Bless those who feel alone,  
and give them comfort and solace.  
Bless those who see all humans  
as belonging to one human family.

Bless us, O Lord. Amen.

**December 30, 2007**

## **The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph**

This Sunday we celebrate the feast of the Holy Family. The Gospel reading, Matthew 2:13–15, 19–23, relates how Mary and Joseph moved their family from their homeland to the country of Egypt so that Jesus would be safe from Herod who had all the little boys in Bethlehem killed. The family lived in Egypt for a time, only returning to Israel after Herod was dead. They must have felt urgent about escaping, and yet doing so must have been heart-breaking. Leaving their family and friends, becoming aliens in another country—creating a new life there couldn't have been easy. Though most of us don't face this kind of hardship and challenge, it is still not easy being a family, living together day after day.

Saint Paul writes to the Colossians that we are to live this way: with heartfelt compassion, with kindness and humility, with gentleness and patience with each other. We are to bear with one another and forgive one another, letting the peace of Christ control our hearts. This ideal is inspiring, but most of us find it very difficult to live up to day after day. Like the Holy Family, we find family life to be both a challenge and a blessing. Looking at Saint Paul's list, today we might try being patient; tomorrow, forgiving or compassionate. If we choose but one of his words each day and try to live it out with our family, we will come closer to being a holy family.



# This Week at Home

## Monday, December 31

### It's Not Over

Today we may see the remnants of used Christmas trees on the curbside. Christmas is over in the secular world. However, Christmas for Catholics begins with the Vigil on December 24 and continues through the feast of the Baptism of the Lord. We have another two weeks to celebrate this great season of Christ's birth by sharing our joy and gratitude. What can help us to not give in to the idea that "It's over, let's get back to normal"? Continuing to rejoice with prayer, carol singing, and our festive decorations can be a statement of our belief in the real Christmas. The birth of the Lord is too great and should glorious a mystery to limit to one day!



## Tuesday, January 1

### The Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God

Today we celebrate the solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God. The Gospel reading, Luke 2:16–21, tells about the shepherds going to Bethlehem, visiting the Holy Family, and returning home glorifying and praising God. Remembering all that the Mother of God has done for us, we too glorify and praise God.

## Wednesday, January 2

### Saint Basil the Great and Saint Gregory Nazianzen

It is fitting that so close to the birthday of God's Son we honor Saint Gregory the Great and Saint Basil the Theologian. They are both well known for helping to put aside Arianism, the heresy that held that Jesus

Christ, the second person of the Blessed Trinity, was not equal in divinity or co-eternal with God the Father. In addition to his scholarly work, throughout his life Basil worked in a soup kitchen and organized famine relief. Now is a good time of year to find a way to help feed those who are hungry. Whether you take food to a food bank, contribute money to a soup kitchen, or volunteer your time, you would be following Basil's example.

## Thursday, January 3

### A Child of God

Today the Church reads from the epistle of John (1 John 2:29—3:6), in which we are reminded that we are dearly beloved and are children of God. Even when we become an adult, we never stop being a child of God. Being child-like is not being child-ish. Talk about that difference at the dinner table tonight or while riding in the car. Both adults and children need child-like qualities such as wonder, joy, and trust. What other qualities would you name?

## Friday, January 4

### Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton

Today we remember the first canonized saint born in the United States. By the age of 30, Elizabeth, once a wealthy New York debutante, was a penniless widow with five little children. She started schools and orphanages and founded the Sisters of Charity. Elizabeth was converted to Catholicism because of the example of Catholics she knew. She saw that they lived their faith each day and she wanted to be like that also. Find a quiet time today to explain how Elizabeth would know that you are a Catholic if she followed you for a few days.

## Saturday, January 5

### Saint John Neumann

Saint John Neumann, whose memorial we celebrate today, followed Christ by using his talents as a teacher. What are the talents you've been given? How do you use them as you follow Christ in your life? *Come, Holy Spirit. Help me to see clearly the talents that God has given me as gifts to use. Stay with me as I hear the same call from Christ that Phillip heard: "Follow me!" Let me discover how to use my talents to live out the command to love one another. Amen.*

