
The Holy Family

Jesus, Mary & Joseph

DECEMBER 31, 2023



THIS WEEKEND'S READINGS

First: Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3

Second: Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19

Gospel: Luke 2:22-4 or Luke 2:22, 39-40

FOCUS: *Imitate the Holy Family, the true model of life.*

In their holiness, Mary, Joseph and their child, Jesus, were not exempt from suffering and the difficulties of life. Yet, they never wavered in their commitment to God or to each other. Theirs was a home where "the child [Jesus] grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the favor of God was upon him." Let us strive to make our homes a haven for others to grow in love, virtue and favor.

LITURGY OF THE WORD:

In the first reading, Abram puts his faith in God's promise of a child despite his and Sarah's old age. In the second reading, the author emphasizes all that Abraham did was by faith. In the Gospel, Joseph and Mary present Jesus at the temple, and meet Simeon and Anna who prophesy about the child.



MASS INTENTIONS

5 p.m.: Louis Miceli, Sonia Del Pilar
and The Ryan, Borst & Costello Families

10 a.m.: John Brinkman, Janet Stinson
and Aaron Stinson

CONDOLENCES

We extend our deepest sympathies to Ernie Martin upon the recent death of her stepmother, Eileen Kelly. Please keep them in your prayers.

JUMP TO JANUARY

Men's Faith-Sharing Group continues

From 6:45-8 p.m. Mondays in January, the men's faith-sharing group continues to encounter Christ through prayer, Scripture and reflection. To register, please email Deacon Carl at carlloc@yahoo.com or call the office at 845-361-3107.

Come Uno, come all to Game Night!

Roll the dice. Move ahead enough calendar spaces to land on Friday, **January 12**. Note the time, 7-9 p.m. Bring yourself, a favorite game and a snack – and be prepared for laughter and levity. Are you game?

Book of Hebrews to be discussed

The **Scripture Discussion Group** will reconvene its Zoom meetings beginning 10-11:15 a.m. **Monday, January 22**. Everyone is welcome to this session, the Book of Hebrews. The study guide is available through Gail Van Tassel. Call her at 845-457-3432.

A PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR

*Dear Lord, please give me ...
A few friends who understand me
and remain my friends;
Work to do that has real value,
without which the world
would be the poorer;
A mind unafraid to travel, even though
the trail be not blazed;
An understanding heart;
A sense of humor;
Time for quiet, silent meditation;
A feeling of the presence of God;
The patience to wait for the coming
of these things,
With the wisdom to recognize them
when they come.*

- Anonymous

TREASURER'S REPORT

Regular Sunday Collection

December 17-24: \$ 6,461.60

Envelopes: \$ 2,729.00 – Online: \$ 3,732.60

Christmas Collection through December 27

\$7,886.00

(Envelopes and WeShare)

THANK YOU!

LAST WEEK'S MASS ATTENDANCE

Fourth Sunday of Advent:

Saturday 168

Sunday – 91

Christmas Eve, Vigil with Pageant – 187

Christmas Day - 90

CHRISTMAS ISN'T JUST ONE DAY

The liturgical season of Christmas begins with the vigil Mass on Christmas Eve and concludes on the Feast of the Baptism of the Lord, January 8 this year.

During this season, we celebrate the birth of Christ into our world and into our hearts and reflect on the gift of salvation that is born with him.



CHRISTMAS PAGEANT ...

*Such as holly, wreaths, mistletoe
and gifts beneath the tree.
For these are only symbols
of what happened
that Christmas morning
when in a little manger
God's only son was born.
God put him here upon the earth
with one idea in mind,
to put new hope around the world
and love in all mankind.
For this is the true
meaning of Christmas!*



... SPEAKS TO EVERYONE

The Nativity Story is not unfamiliar to us. We've seen it, heard it countless times. Yet, when watching the innocence with which our youngsters re-enact this defining event, there is a brand-new sense of awe and wonder. It was seen on the countenances of the congregation – as well as from the altar as Fr. Sean, Deacon Carl and Deacon Michael looked on.

Once again Pageant Coordinator Rebecca Suchy excelled in her self-described labor of love. The young narrators were clear, and the cast most reverent. With their strong voices, the Youth Choir, led by Music Director Debbe Garry, beautifully sang five hymns interspersed to coordinate with the narrative.

Admittedly, as they say, theirs was a hard act to follow. But, armed with his candy cane prop, Deacon Michael flawlessly continued with a homily that spoke to young and old alike.

A German choirmaster is often credited with creating the first candy cane back in 1670, he told us. The choirmaster distributed the hard candy to children to keep them in line during the service, after having first bent it into a hook-like shape. The shape reminds us of



the shepherds' staffs and can also symbolize the care that God provides for his people, like a shepherd tending to his flock. A candy cane is also hard, like a rock, and Jesus is our rock.

The white stripe represents Jesus' purity; the red, his suffering. Its peppermint flavor harkens back to hyssop – a Biblical herb in the mint family used for cleansing, reminding us of our need for spiritual cleansing. And turn a candy cane upside down, and you have a "J" for Jesus!

Then, like the choirmaster, Deacon Michael gave out candy canes – but not as a behavioral bribe. Last Sunday, the symbolic treat was a token of appreciation!

