The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, & Joseph ~ December 27, 2020

Mass for the Holy Day ~
Mary, Holy Mother of God

Thursday, December 31, Vigil Mass at St. Peter at 6 pm

Friday, January 1: 9:30 am at St. John
noon at Holy Family

No Daily Masses This Week

No 8 or 9:30 am Masses Tuesday & Wednesday.

Post-Christmas Activities

In our society, much of the celebration of Christmas comes before the 25th. For Christians the days after Christmas provide a period of calm in which the spiritual meaning of the manifestation of Jesus, *God With Us*, can be explored. These activities can help us appreciate the meaning of the Incarnation as the new year arrives:

- Take some time to look back upon the previous year and identify your personal "joyful mysteries," moments when God was especially present to you. Express your gratitude to God for these moments and your hope that you will experience more fully the presence of God in the new year.
- The slower pace of activity after Christmas makes this a good time for reaching out to family and friends: a phone call, letter, or visit, if possible. Reflect on how God is revealed to you especially in your relationships.
- Spend time in silent prayer before the crib, the Christmas tree, or in church. Invite God to touch your heart at the wonder of the Incarnation.

O God, who in the Holy Family
left us a perfect model of family life
lived in faith and obedience to Your will,
help us to be examples of faith
and love for Your commandments.

~ Pope Benedict XVI

Our True Home

Why did Jesus choose to become a baby born of a mother and father and to spend all but His last years living in an ordinary human family? In part, to reveal God's plan to make all people live as one "holy family" in His Church (2 Corinthians 6:16–18). In the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, God reveals our true home. We are to live as His children, "chosen ones, holy and beloved." The family advice we hear in the readings, for mothers, fathers, and children, is all solid and practical. Happy homes are the fruit of our faithfulness to the Lord, we sing Psalm 128. But the Liturgy is inviting us to see more, to see how, through our family obligations and relationships, our families become heralds of the family of God that He wants to create on earth.

Jesus shows us this in Luke's Gospel. His obedience to His earthly parents flows directly from His obedience to the will of His heavenly Father. Joseph and Mary aren't identified by name, but three times are called "his parents" and are referred to separately as his "mother" and "father." The emphasis is all on their familial ties to Jesus. But these ties are emphasized only so that Jesus, in the first words He speaks in Luke's Gospel, can point us beyond that earthly relationship to the Fatherhood of God. In what Jesus calls "My Father's house," every family finds its true meaning and purpose. The Temple we read about in the Gospel is God's house, His dwelling (Luke 19:46). But it's also an image of the family of God, the Church (Ephesians 2:19–22; Hebrews 3:3–6; 10:21).

In our families we are to build up this household, this family, this living temple of God until He reveals His new dwelling among us and says of every person: "I shall be his God and he will be My son" (Revelation 21:3, 7).

Dr. Scott Hahn

Parenting Pointers — Susan Vogt

Most people know that Christmas is December 25. You may also know that December 26 starts the seven day African American celebration of Kwanzaa. No matter what your ethnic heritage - - family, community, and culture are universal values. Check out: share.america.gov\american-celebrations-of-winter-holidays.

Marriage Moments — Susan Vogt

What a year 2020 has been! The Pandemic, racial strife, a divided nation … Talk with each other about what helps you heal your relationship & brings you together.

If You Do 1 Thing This Christmas Season, Let It Be This

Long before the coronavirus changed our lives, it was said by some that we were living through another epidemic: one of loneliness. Pre-2020, data showed that about 20% of adults (1 in 5!) in the US said they "always or often" felt lonely or socially isolated. A new August survey showed that numbers have only gone up: 28% of adults reported feeling lonely, and, unsurprisingly in this era of social distancing, 41% of adults have reported feeling socially isolated.

According to the National Institute for Health Care Management, the health effects on the lonely and isolated can be severe, including a greatly increased risk of heart disease and dementia (1 statistic: isolation is as damaging as smoking 15 cigarettes a day).

We know too well that feelings of loneliness can be exacerbated by the holiday season, which, while joyous for many, can be a time of pain for others. This year, as we are forced to be separated from the usual merriment and festivities that go along with Christmas, most of us are feeling some loss of community. We are disconnected from family, friends and the events that may normally be central to our lives, and some are disconnected from the Church.

In response to these challenges, we have one simple suggestion for you this Christmas: write a letter by hand to someone you think might be lonely or feeling separated from family, friends or community of any kind. Maybe it's a neighbor who usually comes to your Christmas party, someone who has lost a spouse, a child or a parent in recent months, or an older couple who would normally be spending Christmas with grandchildren. Your heart knows who needs to hear from you. Take your time. Fill it with life, color, detail and love. A physical letter gives longevity to your outreach. It is something tangible to read again and again, and it brings with it a personal sacrifice of time and effort on your behalf.

As you write, pray for the person to whom the letter is addressed: that he or she may be uplifted by your words and feel a sense of connection not only to you, but to Jesus Christ, the one who never leaves us alone. Let this small action be your gift to someone you think may be struggling this season.

At Christmastime, we celebrate the incarnation of Jesus, who entered into the world in the most humble of ways to save us from our sins. By reaching out to one another this season, we can be like the angels on that first Christmas, offering good tidings of great joy to all people — especially those who find themselves alone.

Our Sunday Visitor Editorial Board

Faith Formation

The next Faith Formation: January 10.

8:30 am at St. Peter; 10 am at St. John

Family Perspective — Bud Ozar

The Gospel says Joseph *"made his home in Nazareth."* A home is built on the foundation of love, commitment, and a shared history. It is decorated with forgiveness, acceptance, rituals, discipline, and mutual support. The Holy Family challenges us: Don't live anyplace, live at HOME!

Acts of Kindness — Dominican Retreat Center

This year with so many people struggling financially, emotionally, and spiritually any small act of kindness or compassion can be the greatest gift, the greatest prayer you can offer them. Here are ways to pray through acts of kindness:

- ✓ Call someone who lives alone just to say you are thinking about them.
- ✓ Check with your church and see if they know of a homebound member who could use a prayer partner. Pray with them over the phone or in person (if safe to do so).
- ✓ Look for organizations that are supplying food to those in need. Offer what you can, either by donating food, funds, or assisting in distribution if you are able.
- ✓ Notice the cashiers, janitors, bus drivers. Ask them their name and thank them for what they are doing.
- ✓ Be patient with the driver in the car in front of you who does not start immediately when the light turns green.
- ✓ Bring some extra groceries around to someone you know needs them but will not ask.

Pray that God will show you, each day, the person most in need of a small act of kindness or compassion that you can fill.

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Catholic Face Masks for $7.95

Ascension masks feature Catholic symbols, and are perfect for socially-distanced events. These masks spread the Faith even if you don't say a word! One size fits over N95 masks, is moisture-wicking, breathable, washable/reusable, sustain-able, & eco-friendly. Order: ascensionpress.com.