



Bringing Home the Word

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph (B)

December 27, 2020

Family Peace

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

In his painting, *Rest on the Flight into Egypt* by Federico Flori, the artist captures details of the Holy Family's escape. Although they are refugees in a dramatic, stressful situation, he chooses to show the delightful communion among them. Mary sits comfortably in the center of the family, busily collecting water. Perhaps she will wash the cherries or the toddler's dirty hands. Her face, full of serenity and joy, is lost in thoughts that go beyond the work of the present. She is the model of so many mothers who, in spite of challenging

circumstances, focus their energy on loving their children and creating an oasis of peace.

Saint Joseph stands behind the Madonna and reaches up into the tree to pull off a branch for the child Jesus. His strong arm and hand extend straight down toward the child as they both grasp the wood from opposite ends—one giving and the other receiving. This simple domestic gesture of providing for the son is strongly symbolic of what so many husbands and fathers do on a daily basis. Alongside their wives, they care for their families with hard work.

Jesus is next to Mary and reaches out to Joseph. He receives love from both parents while returning that love with joy and gratitude.

The Holy Family reflects the divine family. One day the heavenly Father will also extend a piece of fruit—this time the bitter passion and the wood of the cross. Although it costs his human nature, Jesus accepts it, thanks in part to the strength he finds in Mary. +

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mothers focus their energy
on their children and
creating an oasis of peace.*

A Word from Pope Francis

Instead of returning home with his family, he stayed in Jerusalem, in the Temple, causing great distress to Mary and Joseph who were unable to find him....

Returning home, Jesus surely remained close to them, as a sign of his complete affection and obedience. Moments like these become part of the pilgrimage of each family.

—Feast of the Holy Family,
December 27, 2015



Sunday Readings

**Sirach 3:2–6, 12–14 or
Genesis 15:1–6; 21:1–3**

Those who honor their father will have joy in their own children, / and when they pray they are heard.

**Colossians 3:12–21 or
Colossians 3:12–17 or
Hebrews 11:8, 11–12, 17–19**

And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection.

**Luke 2:22–40 or
Luke 2:22, 39–40**

The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Does my family know how to gracefully encounter trying times?
- What attitudes allowed the Holy Family to have peace amidst the crosses?

We Can Save Each Other

By Fr. Bruce Lewandowski, CSSR

There is something peculiar about the birth of Jesus, our Savior. God becomes small, a tiny infant-God. Think about it for a moment. Who really needs to be saved?

The kind innkeeper saves Jesus from being born in the street by providing a stall, straw, and a crib. The angels save him from the silence of night and lull him to sleep singing songs of “joy to the world.” The animals breathe warmth over the newborn Jesus, saving him from the cold. The star shines brightly overhead, saving Jesus from the darkness. Mary saves him from hunger. The kings come from afar to share their gifts, saving Jesus from the pain of need and poverty. An angel comes to Joseph in a dream, saving the Baby Jesus from jealous Herod’s wrath.

Jesus uses small things to make a big point.

Of all of the figures in the story, the only one who is helpless, vulnerable, frail, and in need of saving is Jesus. What’s peculiar about the birth of our Lord is that we are given a Savior who needs to be saved! Everyone comes to his rescue, giving him what he needs.

Jesus always uses small things to make a big point—salt, a coin, a mustard seed, yeast, a lamp, wineskins, and a splinter—all small and seemingly insignificant



until Jesus wraps them up in a parable and delivers them as the centerpiece of a big message. God becomes small to make a big point. God gives us a Savior who needs to be saved to teach us what salvation means.

I remember standing in line at a corner store in East Harlem waiting to buy milk. A rough-looking teenager came up to me and said, “Pastor, my mother says, ‘Never buy milk here. It’s always spoiled.’” I looked and, sure enough, the milk was past the expiration date. The young man saved me from spoiled milk and a return trip. Salvation can mean so many things. The parish food pantry...you saved me! A ride to

the doctor...you saved me! A few dollars when I was short...you’re my salvation! We’ve all been there. I’ll bet you’ve said it to someone who has been there for you in your time of need: “You’re my only hope. You’re my salvation. You saved me!”

And it’s Jesus, tiny and frail in the manger, showing us how we can be salvation for each other. Our Savior is born needing to be saved, and in doing so, teaches us that we can be “salvation” for each other. +

PRAYER

Lord, Mary and Joseph helped you to grow in love and wisdom. Surround me with loving and caring people to help me to be a wise, loving, and caring person.

—From *Joyful Meditations for Every Day of Advent and the 12 Days of Christmas*,
Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

December 28–
January 2

Monday, Holy Innocents:
1 Jn 1:5—2:2 / Mt 2:13–18

Tuesday, Christmas Weekday:
1 Jn 2:3–11 / Lk 2:22–35

Wednesday, Christmas Weekday:
1 Jn 2:12–17 / Lk 2:36–40

Thursday, Christmas Weekday:
1 Jn 2:18–21 / Jn 1:1–18

Friday, Solemnity of Mary:
Nm 6:22–27 / Gal 4:4–7 / Lk 2:16–21

Saturday, Sts. Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen: 1 Jn 2:22–28 / Jn 1:19–28

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