

DECEMBER 26, 2021

HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY & JOSEPH

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Office staffed T, W and Th, as we are able.

We continue to offer three masses each week to enable people to attend while maintaining appropriate social distancing. The Sunday 9:30 am mass continues to be live streamed on our Facebook page. We are also offering a Saturday 5:00 pm mass and a Sunday 12:00 pm (noon) mass.

Although state capacity restrictions have been lifted and masks are not currently required, we encourage everyone to participate in ways that are safe and appropriate for them. If you wish to maintain physical distancing, the noon mass has the lightest attendance. We are gradually returning elements that have been missing during the pandemic. We recently reinstated congregational singing and ushers and are working towards the return of lectors and servers.

Fr. Joe, Fr. Jude and the staff hold you all in our prayers, and ask that you pray for us and for all the essential workers who are striving to keep things running.

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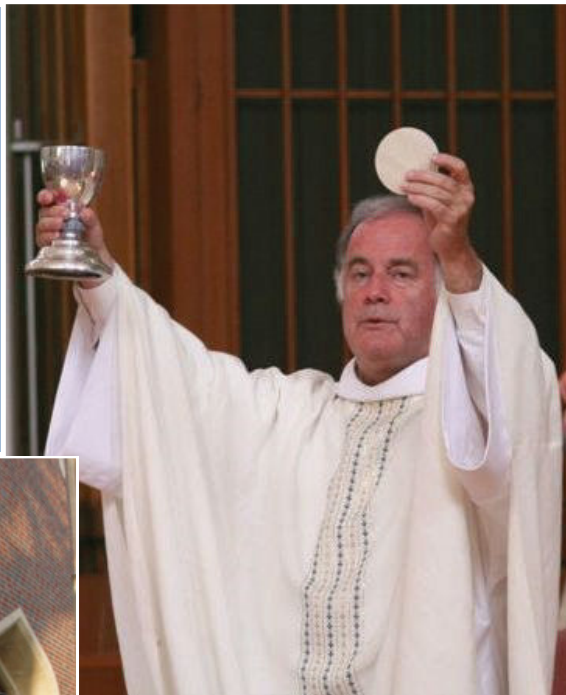
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“Beloved:  
see what love God has  
bestowed on us that we  
may be called the  
children of God.  
And so we are.”

1 John 3: 1-2



Say YES to  
love and peace.  
Amen! Alleluia!



**This week at St. Albert's**(masses and intentions are in **BOLD** type)**Saturday, December 25**

10:00 am mass Nancy Bielinski †  
5:00 pm vigil mass For families in peril

**Sunday, December 26 – The Holy Family**

9:30 am mass Shar Stoddard †  
12:00 pm mass Donald Kitzrow †

**Monday, December 27**

8:15 am In thanks for our money counting & data entry volunteers

**Tuesday, December 28**

8:15 am Victims of recent tornadoes  
9:00 am Staff meeting  
11:00 am Celebration of Life for Ben Wilkie  
(visitation at 10; luncheon follows funeral)

**Wednesday, December 29****Thursday, December 30**

8:15 am Dennis Barta  
12:00 pm Crafts & conversation, Social Hall

**Friday, December 31**

8:15 am In thanks for Glenda Huston's 17 years of service as she retires from St. Albert the Great

**Saturday, January 1 – New Year's Day**

5:00 pm mass Patrick Carter †

**Sunday, January 2 – Epiphany**

9:30 am mass Mike Watowa †  
12:00 pm mass Michael Ester †

**Readings: week of December 26, 2021**

**Sunday:** Sir 3:2-6, 12-14/Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5 [cf. 1]/Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17/Lk 2:41-52 or 1 Sm 1:20-22, 24-28/Ps 84:2-3, 5-6, 9-10 [cf. 5a]/1 Jn 3:1-2, 21-24/Lk 2:41-52

**Monday:** 1 Jn 1:1-4/Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12 [12]/Jn 20:1a, 2-8

**Tuesday:** 1 Jn 1:5–2:2/Ps 124:2-3, 4-5, 7b-8 [7]/Mt 2:13-18

**Wednesday:** 1 Jn 2:3-11/Ps 96:1-2a, 2b-3, 5b-6 [11a]/Lk 2:22-35

**Thursday:** 1 Jn 2:12-17/Ps 96:7-8a, 8b-9, 10 [11a]/Lk 2:36-40

**Friday:** 1 Jn 2:18-21/Ps 96:1-2, 11-12, 13 [11a]/Jn 1:1-18

**Saturday:** Nm 6:22-27/Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8 [2a]/Gal 4:4-7/Lk 2:16-21

**Next Sunday:** Is 60:1-6/Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-11, 12-13 [cf. 11]/Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6/Mt 2:1-12

\* We will continue to offer three Masses each weekend for as long as the Sunday noon mass remains popular/practical. We also continue to livestream the 9:30 AM liturgy.

\* The general dispensation from the Sunday and Holy Day obligation has been lifted. The dispensation remains available to people at high risk of developing serious illness and for people who care for such individuals. Anyone with symptoms or recent exposure to COVID-19 must still remain at home for the safety of all.

\* Morning masses in the chapel have resumed at 8:15 am, with the rosary at 8:00 am. As in the pre-pandemic past, weekday masses will be Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. The East door off the back parking lot will be open for weekday masses, along with the elevator entrance.

\* Use of the front center church doors continues to be encouraged for weekend masses, along with the elevator entrance.

\* There are no seating restrictions. Please respect the desires of those who wish to maintain some physical separation. Hand sanitizer is available. The Sunday 12 noon mass offers the most spaced seating.

★ Masks are strongly encouraged for all people over the age of two. The CDC recommends that all people wear masks indoors in areas with high transmission rates of covid-19. Currently Hennepin County significantly exceeds the threshold for high transmission. Masks should cover both nose and mouth. We have disposable and cloth masks available near the entrance to the church.

\* We invite you to join us in song. The hymnals are in the pews.

\* Give the Sign of Peace to those near you in ways others appear comfortable with.

Please make sure to  
have any financial gifts  
you make to St. Albert's  
(that you want to be able to  
claim on your 2021 taxes)  
to us by  
**Friday, December 31, 2021.**

Thank you!

## “i carry your heart (i carry it in my heart)”

The final line of one of e.e. cummings’ “little poems” carries this beautiful image of one person carrying another’s heart within their own heart. The level of intimacy is unique, and the gift of love is forever understood.

**“here is the deepest secret nobody knows,  
here is the root of the root and the bud of the bud  
and the sky of the sky of a tree called life;  
which grows higher than soul can hope or mind can hide,  
and this is the wonder that is keeping the stars apart:  
i carry your heart (i carry it in my heart)”**

In the time of Jesus, the heart was viewed as the place where all emotions and thoughts were to be processed and understood. The ancient Hebrew was unaware of how blood circulated throughout the body and all the implications of its physiological functions, but emotional reactions were easily assessed and understood in the heart. One could have a cheerful heart or experience stubbornness by hardening one’s heart. In both the gospels of Luke and Matthew, the heart was understood as the place where anything valuable would be kept. *“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be.”*

In today’s gospel reading from St. Luke, Mary *“treasured all these things in her heart.”* The heart reference is consistent, especially in the gospel of Luke, and would become a working metaphor for how individuals would reflect upon the religious mysteries of life. In this gospel passage, Mary and Joseph have been frantically looking for Jesus who was lost, and eventually found him teaching in the temple. Miffed by his disappearance, both Joseph and Mary were astonished by His behavior and Mary said to him: *“Child, why have you treated us like this? You see that your father and I have been searching for you in great anxiety.”* Jesus said to them, *“Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my father’s house?”* Aside from the family squabble, the mysterious nature of Jesus’ divinity was slowly being revealed to both Joseph and Mary. The true understanding of Jesus as the Emmanuel (God with us) would be ongoing. It is comforting to know that, even without the intervention of a family therapist or theologian, *“Jesus went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them.”* Luke concludes the passage by implying that both Joseph and Mary would treasure all these mysteries in their hearts.

Today we are celebrating the Feast of The Holy Family, a feast that we celebrate on the Sunday after Christmas. There is nothing ancient about this feast since it was introduced to the liturgical calendar by Pope Benedict XV in 1921; however, the family events that comprise the early lives of Jesus, Mary and Joseph were drawn from the first century Canonical Scriptures. Stories of the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem, the presentation of Jesus in the temple for ritual circumcision, the flight into Egypt and the finding of Jesus in the temple generate a peek into the Holy Family’s day-to-day activities. The chronology of events is a bit hazy in the gospels of Luke and Matthew, but the non-canonical works of scripture, especially the Gospel of Thomas, offer a fanciful portrait of Jesus as a child. However, these apocryphal works, while imaginative and entertaining, do not pass muster in the world of biblical scholarship.

The chaotic history of the relationship between Mary and Joseph around her mysterious pregnancy is portrayed only

in the gospels of Luke and Matthew, and is often glossed over by theologians in favor of some idyllic couple that got married, had their baby, and lived in relative obscurity in Nazareth. Mary becomes the demur wife, no doubt dressed in blue, and Joseph becomes the dutiful carpenter who provides a living for the family. In many ways, the beauty of including the troubled pregnancy does give hope to the angel Gabriel’s words to Mary that *“All things are possible with God.”* When pointed out, this early crisis might provide genuine hope for non-married teenage mothers.

When Pope John Paul II added the Luminous Mysteries to the rosary in 1982, we began to see the adult Jesus emerging from the Holy Family. As He is baptized by his cousin, John the Baptist, in the River Jordan we glimpse the beginnings of Jesus’ adult ministry. There would be other family events when Mary and Jesus would get into an exchange of opinions regarding the lack of wine at the wedding in Cana, or when Mary wanted to see Jesus and was told by Jesus, *“Who is my mother or father or brothers or sisters?”* What is most interesting psychologically, and which consistently threads its way through the four gospels, is the intimate role that Mary plays in Jesus’ life from birth to death. Mary continues to treasure all the mysteries of Jesus’ life in her heart while she shares the joyful, luminous, sorrowful, and glorious moments of her life with Jesus.

The absence of any mention of Joseph beyond the early days in Nazareth provides room for speculation and conjecture. I recently stared long at a beautiful stained-glass window depicting the death of Joseph, in which the artist has Mary and Jesus comforting him in his final hour. While there is no place in the gospels where this scene is verified, the reality of such an intimate Holy Family portrait would easily have family members caring for one another in moments of life as well as death. The depiction of Mary at the foot of the cross when Jesus is dying creates an everlasting image of Mary carrying the heart of her son Jesus in her sorrowful heart.

Despite the frightening statistics of families plagued with dysfunctional relationships, the ideal of “The Holy Family” is worth pursuing. In Paul’s letter to the Colossians, he exhorts his listeners to *“Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other. Just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love which binds everything together in perfect harmony.”*

What a beautiful “family plan” for happiness and for an opportunity to carry the hearts of one another into a world of peace, justice, and harmony. Finding ways to translate the ideal into the real becomes the ongoing challenge of the church and society. We desperately need the ideal of a Holy Family as a model place where all of us, like Jesus in Nazareth, *“can increase in wisdom and in years, and in favor with God and human beings.”*

**“and this is the wonder that’s keeping the stars apart  
I carry your heart (I carry it in my heart)”**

*Peace and best wishes for a blessed New Year,  
Fr. Joe Gillespie, O.P.*

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