

# ST. THOMAS INDIAN MISSION

**The Holy Family of  
Jesus, Mary, and Joseph.**  
December 27, 2020

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Fr. George "of the desert" Decasa  
Pastor

**For the time being, our Sunday Masses are held outdoors, by the Parish Hall, on Saturdays at 4:30 PM and on Sundays at 8:30 AM. Please come in a face mask and observe social distancing (6 ft. between people of different households).**

## **1st Reading:**

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

The word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying: "Fear not, Abram! I am your shield; I will make your reward very great."

But Abram said, "O Lord God, what good will your gifts be, if I keep on being childless and have as my heir the steward of my house, Eliezer?" Abram continued, "See, you have given me no offspring, and so one of my servants will be my heir." Then the word of the Lord came to him: "No, that one shall not be your heir; your own issue shall be your heir."

The Lord took Abram outside and said, "Look up at the sky and count the stars, if you can. Just so," he added, "shall your descendants be." Abram put his faith in the Lord, who credited it to him as an act of righteousness.

The Lord took note of Sarah as he had said he would; he did for her as he had promised. Sarah became pregnant and bore Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time that God had stated. Abraham gave the name Isaac to this son of his whom Sarah bore him. *The Word of the Lord.*

## **Responsorial Psalm:**

**"The Lord remembers his covenant forever."**

Give thanks to the Lord, invoke his name; make known among the nations his deeds. Sing to him, sing his praise, proclaim all his wondrous deeds.

**R.** Glory in his holy name; rejoice, O hearts that seek the Lord! Look to the Lord in his strength; constantly seek his face.

**R.** You descendants of Abraham, his servants, sons of Jacob, his chosen ones! He, the Lord, is our God; throughout the earth his judgments prevail.

**R.** He remembers forever his covenant which he made binding for a thousand generations which he entered into with Abraham and by his oath to Isaac.

## **2nd Reading:**

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

Brothers and sisters: By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place that he was to receive as an inheritance; he went out, not knowing where he was to go. By faith he received

power to generate, even though he was past the normal age --and Sarah herself was sterile-- for he thought that the one who had made the promise was trustworthy.

So it was that there came forth from one man, himself as good as dead, descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as countless as the sands on the seashore.

By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was ready to offer his only son, of whom it was said, "Through Isaac descendants shall bear your name." He reasoned that God was able to raise even from the dead, and he received Isaac back as a symbol.

*The Word of the Lord.*

## **R. Alleluia, alleluia.**

In the past, God spoke through our ancestors through the prophets.

In these last days, he has spoken to us through the Son.

**R. Alleluia, alleluia.**



**Gospel: Luke 2:22, 39-40**

When the days were completed for their purification according to the law of Moses, they took him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord.

When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions of the law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

*The Gospel of the Lord.*

## **Acclamation:**

We proclaim your Death, O Lord, and profess your Resurrection until you come again.

Please don't forget that once the threat of COVID is gone and we are allowed public worship inside the church, our schedule will be as follows:

### **Sunday Masses**

(We follow Arizona Time):  
Saturday 4:30 PM  
Sunday 9:30 AM

### **Note:**

Each Mass will be preceded by a Holy Hour before the Exposed Blessed Sacrament.

## REFLECTING ON THE WORD . . . . GUIDEPOSTS

### THE SANCTIFICATION OF THE FAMILY

Today we celebrate the feast of the Holy Family --- the family of Joseph, Mary and Jesus. Although Son of God, Jesus became a human child; he grew up in a family. Thus, did God sanctify the human family.

We might think being holy is being free from problems. Like all other families, the family of Joseph, Mary and Jesus had to face dark moments. Like all other families they had to go through crises.

What made them different was their loyalty and dedication to God. Today's gospel shows them as a family religiously observing the practices of their faith which predisposed them to be attentive to God's will at every moment of their life, whether it is an ordinary event like going to Bethlehem for the census or such extraordinary events as the flight to Egypt or the return from Egypt.

God acts in our life, in our family. We need to practice the same attentive listening to God's will as Joseph and his family did in order to find out God's plans for us and our family. Let us seize the opportunity to say a family prayer to the Holy Family.

### FAMILY PRAYER TO THE HOLY FAMILY

O heavenly Father, our loving God,/  
You have given us the Holy Family as our patron/  
to bless and guide our families,/ —  
that the fruits of the Holy Spirit/ —  
love, joy, peace, patience, kindness,/ —  
goodness, faithfulness, humility, and self-control/ —  
shall reign in our homes./

As husbands and wives,/ teach us to love our  
spouses more than ever./

As parents, give us wisdom and knowledge/  
in rearing our offspring to be responsible/  
and successful Christians forever./

As brothers and sisters,/ may we learn to care and  
support one another/ and be an inspiration to  
each other./

As children, teach us to be obedient/ as Jesus showed  
obedience and respect to Mary and Joseph./

As Christians, melt us, mold us, fill us, and use us,/  
in spreading the good news to our community/  
that people may see Christ in us./

When trials come, help us to face them with trusting  
faith/ and confident hope that all things work for  
the good of all those who love God./

May we have a happy, holy family forever, through  
Jesus, Mary, and Joseph — the adorable Holy  
Family, our miraculous patron. Amen.

While today's feast certainly invites us to reflect on the tiny family of Joseph, Mary, and Jesus, it is by no means limited to that. In fact, the biblical readings offered for today's liturgy speak of three different "holy families." The first holy family consists of *Joseph, Mary, and Jesus*. The second family is *the family of Israel*, which extends beyond the core unit of Jesus and his parents. Third is the *holy family of the world*, which moves even beyond that of Israel.

The gospel for today's feast is taken from Luke 2:22-40. It is most fitting because all three aspects of the Holy Family are touched on here. There are Joseph, Mary, and Jesus fulfilling the law regarding purification (Lev 12:2-8) as well as the consecration of the firstborn (Exodus 13:1-2). Then come the prophecies of Simeon and Anna, which extend beyond Joseph, Mary, and Jesus by identifying Jesus as the revelation to the *Gentiles* and the glory for *Israel*. This emphasis is the centerpiece of the entire passage.

It shows how Jesus will be the fulfillment of God's promises, which extends back as far as Abraham. At the heart of this emphasis is Luke's strong theme of universalism, that is to say, of the family of humanity. Jesus has come for the salvation of all peoples.

The story of Jesus is how he left his small local family and created a new family based on faith and discipleship. All three forms of holy family are interrelated. They urge us to be inclusive rather than exclusive. It begins as a tiny group but soon expands to encompass a universe.

### A FAMILY BLESSING

Lord of all,

Bless our families,

Be they formed by blood or by circumstance.

Make them holy.

**May we find you in our relationships.**

In our marriages, in our families,  
in our households, in our communities,  
in our global humanity.

**May we look across all that divides us**  
and see family, and embrace as a family does,  
and love as a family ought to.

For where two or three gather in your name,

**There are you. Amen.**

## PRAYERS OF THE FAITHFUL

### Celebrant:

The family, primary community in God's kingdom on earth, is a preparation ground for living in love with the communion of saints in heaven. Let us pray for goodness in all human families.

### Lector:

For the family of God throughout the world, that its members learn to live in the unity and love for which Christ prayed at the Last Supper, let us pray to the Lord.

For mothers and fathers, that they have the moral strength and Christian character necessary for the growth of their children in grace, let us pray to the Lord.

For children, that by honoring and obeying their parents and by cheerfully helping all members of the family they contribute to the happiness of home life, let us pray to the Lord.

That elderly parents be consoled and strengthened by caring and loving sons, daughters, and grandchildren, let us pray to the Lord.

For families who try to be loving and faithful in the midst of daily challenges and struggles . . . and families separated by hatred, bitterness and pride . . . families separated by distance, issues of faith or other beliefs and viewpoints . . . that they be happily re-united in God's boundless love, let us pray to the Lord.

For peace, hope, and consolation for those families that are dealing with illness or death of a family member, let us pray to the Lord.

### Celebrant:

Heavenly Father, who created the human family in love, help our families, parents and children, grandparents, aunts and uncles, nieces and nephews, in-laws and relatives, and all members of our earthly communities, never to abandon the love in which they were created. This we ask through Christ our Lord.

## REMINDERS:

**St. Thomas Indian Mission 2021 CALENDARS are here. Please take one for your family.**

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**The Boxes of Contribution Envelopes for 2021 are now here. Please pick up yours after Mass.**

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**To all parishioners, please use your numbered parish contribution envelope for your parish contribution to facilitate counting and posting of Sunday contributions.**

## VALUES BEGIN AT HOME

A grade school teacher was telling her class about statistics which indicate that more twins are being born these days than in the past. "Why?" asked a little boy.

"Because," replied a tiny little girl, "little children are afraid to come into the world alone."

That is a very insightful remark. With the major threat to obstruct birth by means of abortion and various contraceptives, not to mention the scare of broken families, indeed, children have all the reason to fear coming out into the world alone!

But, from the beginning God intended that there be a place for parental love, care and affection beginning with infancy when we're helpless, a place where we find warmth and security, where we can make mistakes, where we can grow, where we can be accepted. In short, God intended a FAMILY.

The family, as the basic unit of society, ought to be the origin of change in society. Values and virtues must be found in the family and from there must radiate to our place of work, to schools, and communities. "Charity begins at home," we say. But it doesn't stop there.

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In an old Chinese story, a wise teacher asks people what's the "Most Satisfying Thing in Life."

"A happy marriage," some replied. Others said, "good health."

There were many more answers, but after everyone failed to give the correct one, the teacher said: "The most satisfying thing in life is to see a child confidently walk down the road on his own after you have shown him the right way to go."

This indeed is the deepest joy that parents experience in the delicate task of bringing up children.

Greater than this is the realization that parents are fulfilling the vocation of Joseph and Mary in the Holy Family.

What could be more noble than that!

## THE VOCATION TO FAMILY LIFE

Over and above all the important jobs that they may have, parents should not forget that — a father's principal vocation is to be a husband and father; a mother's principal vocation is to be a wife and mother.

This recalls the story of a father who came home from a tough day in the office and said to his wife, "I've had a bad day. Please! If you have a bad news tonight, keep it to yourself." To which she replied, "Okay, no bad news. Now, for the good news, remember our four children? Well, three of them didn't break an arm today.

Poor husband, he didn't know whether to laugh or to get mad.

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