

ST. THOMAS INDIAN MISSION

The Holy Family of Jesus,
Mary, & Joseph
December 26, 2021

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Fr. George "of the desert" Decasa
Pastor

Entrance: 345
Hark the Herald.
Offertory: 365
What Child is This.
Recessional: 336
Joy to the World.

SATURDAY:

3:15 pm to 4:15 pm – Holy Hour
and Individual Confessions
4:30 pm – HOLY MASS

SUNDAY:

7:15 am to 8:15 am – Holy Hour
and Individual Confessions
8:30 am – HOLY MASS

FAMILY PRAYER TO THE HOLY FAMILY

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 – may 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 offsprings to be responsible and successful Christians forever. Amen.

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- Local, targeted community advertising for **one full year, at one low price.**
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Prayer of the Faithful

Celebrant:

Trusting that we will be heard as we pray here in God our Father's house, we give voice to the needs of our whole human family. Let our response be: ***Be born in us; be born in our world.***

Lector:

For the Church, that our family of faith may find favor before God in the way that we care for our most vulnerable members, we pray...

For leaders of nations, that they may take the shared values of the whole human family and work together to bring justice and peace to all peoples, we pray...

For our country, that we may strive to live up to our name, "United," seeing and treating our brothers and sisters of different backgrounds, races, demographics, and regions as part of one diverse American family, we pray...

For those dealing with difficult family situations, that they may find support and comfort in our parish family, we pray...

For all of us, that we may treat members of our families with kindness, humility, patience and compassion, forgiving them when they let us down, putting on love over all, we pray...

For all the prayers that we hold in the silence of our hearts; for all our intentions spoken and unspoken, we pray...

Celebrant:

Loving God, not wanting the first human to be alone, you created the human family. Let us create in our own families bonds that keep us connected so that we never need to walk alone as we lift these prayers to you through your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

The Mystery of Faith:

Save us, Savior of the world, for by your Cross and Resurrection, you have set us free.

THE READINGS. . . SOME REFLECTIONS. . . AND GUIDEPOSTS.

Introduction to the Liturgy of the Day

Just yesterday we came to this holy place to celebrate our Lord's birth. Today we return to expand that celebration to his immediate family, the Holy Family. Mary and Joseph cared for their son, raising him in the religious traditions of their faith.

In this loving environment, Luke says, "Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and favor before God and man."

Let us pray today that our families may provide fertile ground for our children to grow similarly.

1st Reading – 1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28

²⁰In those days Hannah conceived and at the end of her term bore a son whom she called Samuel, since she had asked the Lord for him. ²¹The next time her husband Elkanah was going up with the rest of his household to offer the customary sacrifice to the Lord and to fulfill his vows, ²²Hannah did not go, explaining to her husband, "Once the child is weaned, I will take him to appear before the Lord and to remain there forever; I will offer him as a perpetual nazirite.

²⁴Once Samuel was weaned, Hannah brought him up with her, along with a three-year-old bull, an ephah of flour, and a skin of wine, and presented him at the temple of the Lord in Shiloh.

²⁵After the boy's father had sacrificed the young bull, Hannah, his mother, approached Eli ²⁶and said: "Pardon my Lord! As you live, my Lord, I am the woman who stood near you here, praying to the Lord. ²⁷I prayed for this child, and the Lord granted my request. ²⁸Now I, in turn, give him to the Lord; as long as he lives, he shall be dedicated to the Lord."

The Word of the Lord. **All: Thanks be to God.**

Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 84:2-3, 5-6, 9-10)

"Blessed are they who dwell in your house, O Lord."

²How lovely is your dwelling place, O Lord of hosts!

³My soul yearns and pines for the courts of the Lord. My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God.

R.

⁵Happy they who dwell in your house! Continually they praise you. ⁶Happy the men whose strength you are! Their hearts are set upon the pilgrimage.

R.

⁹O Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer: give ear, O God of Jacob. ¹⁰Behold, O God our protector: and look on the face of thy Christ. **R.**

2nd Reading – 1 John 3:1-2, 21-24

Beloved: ¹See what love the Father has bestowed on us, that we may be called the children of God. And so we are. The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. ²Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed. We do know that when it is revealed we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

²¹Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence in God ²²and receive from him whatever we ask, because we keep his commandments and do what pleases him. ²³And his commandment is this: we should believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and love one another just as he commanded us.

²⁴Those who keep his commandments remain in him, and he in them, and the way we know that he remains in us is from the Spirit he gave us.

The Word of the Lord. **All: Thanks be to God.**

Alleluia – (Acts 16:14b)

Lector: Alleluia, alleluia. **All:** Alleluia, alleluia.

Lector: ^{14b}Open our hearts, O Lord, to listen to the words of your Son. **All:** Alleluia, alleluia.

Gospel — Luke 2:41-52

⁴¹Each year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, ⁴²and when he was twelve years old, they went up according to festival custom. ⁴³After they had completed its days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. ⁴⁴Thinking that he was in the caravan, they journeyed for a day and looked for him among their relatives and acquaintances, ⁴⁵but not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for him.

⁴⁶After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, ⁴⁷and all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers.

⁴⁸When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety."

⁴⁹And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰But they did not understand what he said to them.

⁵¹He went down with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. ⁵²And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and favor before God and man.

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

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 the very first community sanctified by the presence of God-made-man, is the family.

And, the very first place in the family that Jesus sanctified by his presence was the womb of Mary where he dwelt as the youngest member, as yet unborn, and, as we learned in the gospel of last Sunday, his presence in the womb was recognized by another family member who was as yet in the womb too — John the Baptist.

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. But what makes their family different is their total loyalty and dedication to God. God's will was first in their lives as expressed in Jesus' words, "I must be in my Father's house," or in Mary's keeping "all these things in her heart," or in the attentive listening to God's will displayed by Joseph, the head of this family.

God did not tell Joseph all the plans at once, but only one step at a time. God through the edict of Caesar Augustus tells him to take his family to Bethlehem for the census (Lk 2:1-5). An angel tells him to marry Mary (Mt 1:20-24). Later an angel advises him to flee to Egypt (Mt 2:13-15), and then advises him again to return to Palestine (Mt 2:20), and finally to go back to Nazareth (Mt 2:22).

God also acts in our life. Even if we do not understand right away the events or situations we are in, we should 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.

Values Begin at Home

An old Chinese story relates that 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.*"

Christian values and virtues must be learned first in the family as it is the microcosm of society, and they must radiate from the family to our place of work, to schools, and communities. "Charity begins at home," we say. But it doesn't stop there.

"INTERACTION" IN THE TEMPLE

Let us ponder that moment when Joseph and Mary on the one hand, and Jesus on the other, are having their brief "interaction" right there in the midst of the doctors of the law in the Temple at Jerusalem.

Let's just focus our attention on the anguished "why" of either side. "Why have you done this to us...?" "Why were you looking for me...?"

Could the doctors present there, for all their learning, ever hope to understand, even just the question?

It is a tense moment. We may even say, a moment of conflict; but a conflict borne with love. Lovingly, each side is only seeking to understand the other. No attack on persons at all. No condemnation whatever.

It was a moment that was bound to come because Jesus is not just the Son of Mary; he is also the Son of God. Thus:

As Son of God, Jesus had to answer the call of the Father in the here-and-now without having to inform his human parents anymore: he had to be in his Father's business.

As Son of Man, he had to go down with his parents to Nazareth and be subject to them.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph — a holy family because God's will is at the center of their lives; every moment of their lives is a demonstration of their union with God. Thus, the interaction among them in the Temple is itself a holy moment too.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, help us to be holy!

God Intended a FAMILY

An elementary 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, smart girl, "little children are afraid to come into the world alone."

What 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!

Today's feast reminds us that from the beginning God intended that there be a place for parental love, care and affection beginning with the conception and infancy when we're helpless, a place where we find warmth and security, where we can grow, where we can be accepted. In short, God intended a FAMILY.

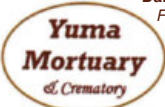
There is the story of the little boy whose religion teacher was talking about God as "Father." In a very serious tone, the little boy blurted out, "I hope he's not like my father. He's too busy."

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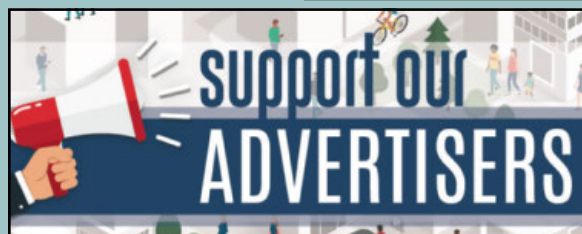
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