



Bringing Home the Word

Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph (C)
December 26, 2021

The Joyful Family

By Fr. Mark Haydu, LC

In Francesco Mancini's *Rest on the Flight into Egypt*, he paints the realistic details that make this scene as ordinary as any family playing with their child in a park. Mary has a bowl of water in her hand, perhaps ready to offer a drink to Jesus after he tastes the strawberry or to clean his stained fingers. A silver bowl of food for the baby rests on a white baby blanket. Perhaps it was just placed there by Joseph, for Jesus has finished his vegetables and now Dad

offers dessert! A traveling basket sits in front of a water jug. These instruments show that they are a pilgrim family, and the Egyptian obelisk in the background indicates their destination.

The circumstances are precarious yet joyful, even playful, in their following of God's path. This was just one of the trying times for the Holy Family, which would eventually include losing the Child Jesus in the Temple. As their whole focus in this painting is on Jesus, imagine their fear when they can no longer find the heart of their family.

This is a fantastic image of the joys and challenges of family life. There is joy in having Jesus in our midst, and no sacrifice is too great when he is present. But when he is lost from the center, fears and anxieties enter.

The words of Colossians sum up this attitude, making one think that Paul had a good idea of what virtues family life require! Let's work in our families to have Jesus at the center, and once he is there, to "put on" all the virtues that his presence inspires. +

*There is joy in having Jesus
in our midst,
and no sacrifice is too great
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A Word from Pope Francis

The works of mercy reawaken in us the need, and the ability, to make the faith alive and active with charity. I am convinced that, through these simple, daily actions, we can achieve a true cultural revolution....If every one of us, every day, does one of these, this will be a revolution in the world!

General audience, October 12, 2016



Sunday Readings

**Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14 or
1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28**

My son, be steadfast in honoring your father; do not grieve him as long as he lives.

**Colossians 3:12-21 or 3:12-17 or
1 John 3:1-2, 21-24**

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

Luke 2:41-52

And Jesus advanced [in] wisdom and age and favor before God and man.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS



- Does one of the virtues mentioned by St. Paul catch my attention?
- Should I pray for and practice that virtue a little more?

God's Opinion

By Kathleen M. Basi

When my first child was born, my mother sent me a card that read, "Babies are God's opinion that the world should go on."

I doubt I'm the only one reading these words who spends a lot of time gnashing my teeth over everything that's wrong with the world: questionable leadership, out-of-whack priorities in our communities, poor choices made by those I love. Not to mention the endless hordes of refugees no one wants to shelter, the suicide bombers, and regimes lusting for more power.

Sometimes being a Christian feels like running around trying to plug holes in a sinking ship.

Yet there's one situation in which all that disappears: when a child is born. New life awakens us to the essential goodness of humanity, the potential for good that each of us is born with. In the presence of babies, we lower our voices. We slow down and breathe in the scent of innocence. We shower families with gifts and meals in recognition of the beautiful thing that has just occurred.

Christmas signifies the most important birth of all. The celebration of Jesus' Nativity is an annual reminder that no matter what terrible things are happening at this moment, we still inhabit a beautiful world, filled with goodness and hope, joy and light.

This season brings out the best in us. Yes, there are fights in the store over door busters—but there are also people



ringing bells for those who need a hand, churches gathering gifts for the needy, choirs caroling at nursing homes, and meals being prepared for and served to those with nowhere else to go.

In this season, we see the works of mercy in action.

Come January, everyone will be worn out. Societal attention will return to football, and then basketball and baseball, and once again we'll have to brainstorm ways to mobilize the masses to make time for the things that really matter.

For now, though, we are collectively tuned in and aware of the world in a way that sensitizes us to the needs of others. This December let's hit "pause" on real life and take a moment to look

around and recognize the power of what is possible in these busy weeks—the great good that humanity is capable of when we put our minds to it. Let's take time to reflect with awe and joy upon the magnitude of the gift given to us by God in the Incarnation, and the way one person can change the world.

The birth of this particular baby is a powerful sign that God most assuredly thinks that the world should go on. +

*Let's pause and think
to ourselves:
what a wonderful world.*

PRAYER

*Lord, through your Word we
receive the knowledge and
wisdom of God. May your Spirit
lead me to your sacred Word
and guide me in my search for
knowledge and truth.*

*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 27–
January 1, 2021

Monday, St. John:

1 Jn 1:1–4 / Jn 20:1a, 2–8

Tuesday, The Holy Innocents:

1 Jn 1:5—2:2 / Mt 2:13–18

Wednesday, Christmas Weekday:

1 Jn 2:3–11 / Lk 2:22–35

Thursday, Christmas Weekday:

1 Jn 2:12–17 / Lk 2:36–40

Friday, Christmas Weekday:

1 Jn 2:18–21 / Jn 1:1–18

Saturday, Blessed Virgin Mary:

Nm 6:22–27 / Gal 4:4–7 / Lk 2:16–21

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