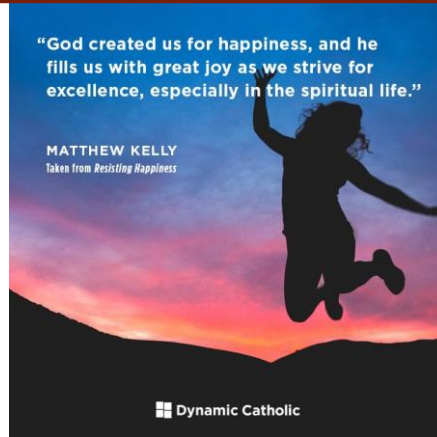


FAMILIES ON FIRE



REFLECTION: JANUARY-JOY

Joy to the world, the Lord has come! Let earth receive her King! Okay, how many times have we heard these words playing in the background the last couple of months? A lot I bet. But now that the hustle and bustle of the holiday season has ended, we can take some time to really let these words continue to sink in. Especially as we carry forward with the Christmas Season! Christmastide, also known as the Twelve Days of Christmas, is the perfect occasion to rejoice in Jesus' birth as a family. Go ahead and keep playing that song and sing along together! Authentic Christian joy is like no other, it reminds us of how near God is to us! As a family, share and tell of the joy each one receives in knowing Jesus came to earth for us. Here are some suggestions to help celebrate this month at home!

1. Story Time: On January 8th we celebrate the Baptism of Jesus Christ. Read the actual account from the Bible which can be found in Matthew 3:13-17 NAB. A Children's Bible with pictures will work well for younger kids. Or coloring pages may be found online for free too. This can also be used to recount our children's own baptism day. Share about who was there, what was going on, something special that occurred? Describe the joy baptism brings to the world.
2. Prayer Time: The Church has high respect for Mary and honors her in many ways. One of them is to have certain days dedicated to her. The Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God is on January 1st. The day is also a Holy Day. Attend Mass together and pray for the Blessed Mother's intercession for your family. Pray and meditate on the Joyful Mysteries of the Rosary together after dinner.
3. Simple Reminders: The Christmas season ends with the Feast of the Epiphany of the Lord. This year it lands on January 7th. During this day, we recall the visit the Magi made to Jesus. A popular custom is to bless your house for the year with chalk on the front door. This will serve as a visual sign to remember the joy Christ brings into our homes. Here is a step by step link with information for the blessing → <http://www.catholicicing.com/epiphany-house-blessing-and-a-linky/>

Friends in High Places: The Feast of St. Francis de Sales is on January 24th. He was around in the late 1500s through the early 1600s and enjoyed teaching and writing about Christ. He knew from a very young age the mission God had for him. He is known for helping all people strive and live for holiness. St. Francis made it clear that every Christian was called to holiness, no matter what their career or state of life was. With the help of St Francis de Sales, make a list of how each family member can strive and live in holiness.

“Christians are ready to proclaim the Gospel because they can’t hide the joy that comes from knowing Christ” Pope Francis

