

**For The Bulletin of
December 27, 2015**

THE HOLY FAMILY

From Father Robert

One of the great joys of the Christmas Season is to behold the utter joy innocence, beauty that light up the faces of little children. They are filled with wonder, delight, excitement. Year after year they grow into surer expectation about what happens with family and friends during Christmas. They grow into the family holiday traditions. Today's feast and the readings we hear remind us that being a "holy" family is a matter of valuing the memories and traditions that make us who we are – a holy family, a holy people.

So much tradition shapes this event in today's gospel: Passover in Jerusalem, significance of being twelve years old, traveling in caravan, being in the temple, obedience to parents. A surprising interruption of tradition also shapes this event: "the boy Jesus" astounded the teacher "at His understanding and His answers." Each family – the Holy Family, our own families – are called to find a way to keep worthy traditions alive while at the same time remain open to something astoundingly new. Holiness consists in finding that way. We know whether to accept something new into our family tradition when that change in tradition deepens our holiness.

The Holy Family provides us the model we need. They were faithful and obedient to the traditions that formed who they were. They were also open to God's astoundingly new in-breaking and willing to undergo the change that divine in-breaking invited for their lives. They

teach us what it means to be "in our Father's house," where we learn our religious traditions and form the memories that make us who we are as members of the larger family of God. They teach us that we really belong to God, and everything about our living must reflect that we are most at home "in our Father's house." The Holy Family also teaches us to be obedient to the unknown and un-understood things to which God might be calling us. They teach us that our lives are about always growing "in wisdom and age and favor."

It is in giving ourselves over to God's unexpected new invitations that we, too, advance in "wisdom and age and favor before God" and all those who know us. Our families are schools of holiness, for there we learn the memories and traditions that make us who we are and who God wants us to be: holy, God's beloved children. Holiness is finding the way to be who we are in God's sight: people of a tradition and people open to God's new in-breaking.

Living The Paschal Mystery

The familiarity of family life can sometimes blind us to see the goodness in each other. This feast reminds us to open our eyes and be "astonished" at the goodness of each other rather than being anxious about our own concerns. Families grow in holiness when each person in the family – from parents to the smallest child and including anyone extended the hospitality of the family – is treated as a member of God's family and, and therefore holy.

This is challenging when sometimes all we can see is each other's faults. It takes a great deal of dying to get beyond the normal, everyday annoyances that are

part of family life and see others as holy and deserving of our honor, love, and respect. Mary and Joseph were not free from family struggles – they lost Jesus on a trip! And when they found Him they had to struggle to understand Who He was and Who He was meant to become. In doing so, they were able to help Jesus (and themselves) grow in wisdom, age, and grace. In this same love and care for each other we also grow in holiness as a family.

As we bring this calendar year to a close and celebrate this feast of “family,” how have you heard today’s scripture passages? What events, moments, and memories are you treasuring from 2015?

- My most treasured family traditions/memories are... They shape me in holiness in that...
- My family calls me to holiness by... my family models holiness when...
- To deepen my family’s holiness, something astoundingly new we might embrace is...
- To what am I looking forward as we prepare to enter into a new calendar year?

About Liturgy: Feasts of the Christmas Season

Immediately following our celebration of Christmas, the church provides us with a number of related celebrations helpful for strengthening us on our journey: December 26, the Feast of St. Stephen, the first martyr; December 27th, the Feast of St. John the Evangelist; December 28, the Feast of the Holy Innocents. These are all weekday celebrations of which you may not be aware. All three of these feasts remind us that following Christ has its demands, even to the point of giving one’s life in

order to remain faithful to Christian discipleship. Life has its demands but none of these exceed our strength if we remember that God has given us the gift of the divine Son Who dwells within each of us because of our baptism.

The church also celebrates today’s feast of the Holy Family. Although the gospel passages about the Holy Family are few, we know that life wasn’t easy for Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. They model for us a family life not beyond our reach, but one that is very real and built on caring for and loving each other, built upon openness to God’s will, built on a reliance of God for guidance and assurance.

Thank You

Christmas, its Season and Liturgies, does not happen without the contribution of time and talent from so many people. On behalf of all of us, I would like to thank **Don Pearson, Director of Music/Organist/Artist-in-Residence, Our Cantors and Parish Choir** for the inspiring and beautiful gift of music at each of our Christmas Liturgies; to the Lectors, Eucharistic Ministers, Altar Servers, Adult Acolytes, members of the Altar Guild, the Art & Environment Committee, Sacristans, Greeters, Knights of Columbus Security Personnel, our Office Staff, and all those who worked “behind the scenes” to make the church so beautiful and our liturgies so meaningful. Thank you, as well, to all those who contributed to the Flower Fund to provide all the various elements of the Christmas Environment. Your contributions will be acknowledged in one of the bulletins of the Christmas Season. And, finally, a personal thank you to all those who sent Christmas cards, notes, letters, baked

goods, wine, and money gifts for Christmas. I am grateful and humbled beyond words for the love and support I receive from you, not only now, but all year long. You are an incredibly generous and loving community, and I am privileged to be your shepherd and brother. May God continue to bless us as a “Family in Faith” as we build His kingdom here at St. Ignatius of Antioch. I send each of you blessings, love, and all good wishes for the remainder of the Christmas Season and all through the New Year.

Christmas At The Rectory

You are invited to join me at the Rectory today for an afternoon/evening of fellowship, great food, and Christmas “cheer!” The Rectory will be open from 3:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. and I ask that you bring your favorite appetizer (hot or cold) to share and I will provide the “cheer!” The house has once again been decorated by **Theresa Nelms, Rich Confetti, and Don Benson**. This is a wonderful way for us to be together and to continue celebrating God’s wondrous gift of the Word made Flesh in Jesus. I hope you will plan to join us.

Be A King Or A Star For A Day!

You are invited to sign up to be one of the Three Kings for the Solemnity of the Epiphany next Saturday, January 2nd and Sunday, January 3rd. Sign-up sheets are posted on the bulletin board outside of the Sacristy for each liturgy, including a Star-bearer to lead their procession. We already have three individuals signed up to be kings for the Sunday morning 8:00 a.m. Eucharist. This is your chance to be “a king or a star for a day!”

The Christmas Season Continues

**December 31st – Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, New Year’s Eve
Vigil Mass 4:00 p.m.**

**January 1, 2016 – Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God, New Year’s Day, the World Day of Prayer for Peace
11:00 a.m. Solemn Mass of New Year’s Day – *Procession, Incense, The Parish Choir, Cantors, and Organ***

**January 2, 2016 – Solemnity of the Epiphany
Vigil Mass 4:00 p.m. – *Procession, Incense, Procession of The Three Kings, Cantor, and Organ***

**January 3, 2016 – Solemnity of the Epiphany
8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. – *Procession, Incense, Procession of the Three Kings, The Parish Choir, Cantors, and Organ***

**January 9, 2016 – The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord
4:00 p.m. Vigil Mass – *Renewal of Baptismal Promises and Sprinkling Rite***

**January 10, 2016 – The Feast of the Baptism of the Lord
8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. – *Procession, Renewal of Baptismal Promises and Sprinkling Rite – The Parish Choir, Cantors, and Organ; The conclusion of the Christmas Season.***

Happy New Year from the Pastoral Staff, the Pastoral Council, and the Finance Council!

Thank You

...to our faithful volunteer parishioners who cleaned the church on Saturday morning and again on Wednesday to prepare for the weekend of the Fourth Sunday of Advent and for the Christmas Liturgies: **Steve Rojek, Rose Salamanca, Reno Benasfre, Thelma Benasfre, Jun Bajet, Angela Bueno, and Mercy Osborne.**

...to those who so faithfully clean and maintain the bathrooms in both the church and parish hall, especially this week, as they were cleaned on Saturday, on Sunday afternoon before Lessons and Carols, and again on Monday morning before the daily liturgies, as well as on Wednesday in preparation for the Christmas Liturgies: **Robert Goncalves, Mary Ewing, and Harlan Young.**

Lessons and Carols

This was the Second Year that our Parish Choir, under the direction of **Don Pearson**, sang the beautiful service of Christmas Lessons and Carols. Following the hauntingly beautiful Prelude on "Greensleeves" by Richard Purvis (who had been Organist at Grace Cathedral in San Francisco for fifty years), the Choir sang the Introit from the narthex and then the Procession began as all stood to sing "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel." The liturgy was presided over by our Pastoral Associate, **Peter Degl'Innocenti**, who framed the beginning and the conclusion of the liturgy with the Introduction and the concluding prayers and Blessing. The service itself consisted of Seven Lessons from Scripture which proclaim the prophecies of the Messiah as well as the Birth of the Savior. Interspersed between the Lessons were choral anthems from a variety of periods that

enhanced the spoken proclamation of the Word. The Choir was outstanding and many remarked that it sounded as if it were twice its size, not to mention their diction, enunciation of the various texts, and the beautiful harmonies for each anthem. The congregation joined in by singing the Carols that were also a part of the service with the men, women, and the choir alternating the verses. The service concluded with Don playing a glorious "Toccatà on Joy To The World" by Michael Dell which brought the congregation to its feet with rousing applause.

Our thanks to the Lectors: **Theresa Stanek, Cecil Jemera, Frances Rojek, Sophie Zimmerman, Susan Batterton, Rose Necor, and Steve Rojek**; to our Crucifer and Torchbearers: **Frank Kauer, Monika Kauer, and Crespina Malosonan**; to **Don Pearson** and to The Choir: **Geri Abaya, Kirby McNesby, Terri McNesby, Cecille Mirano, Nancy Bachmann, Isabel Renggenathen, Gloria Loyola, Maryann Peddicord, Alicia Perez, Gino Ramos, Stella Renner, Louis Renner, Chip Sharpe, Gary Milano, and Blanca Hernandez**; and to our St. Martha's Guild for the wonderful reception in the parish hall following the Service: **Lorraine Lohmeier, Steve and Frances Rojek, Nancy Newton, Dave and Sharon Simpson, Will Avitabile, and Catherine Vidaurri.**

So many wonderful comments were made by those in attendance about how beautiful the music was, how beautiful the environment is, the hospitality and graciousness of our members, as well as a great reception following. This was truly "one for the books!"

