

Sunday, Dec 29, 2019

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH

A change in plans

Dreamers can't explain themselves. People ask: "How could you? Why did you?" And dreamers shrug and smile. They make the sacrifice, they take the risk, they think differently, they become someone unimaginable. Ask any artist or composer, star athlete or entrepreneur, priest or monk or missionary: How did you become what you are? They shrug and smile, because it's hard to tell someone who hasn't heard the voice themselves: I talk to angels, I listen to the universe, I close my eyes so I can see more clearly. Sit and pay attention to the holy silence.

TODAY'S READINGS: Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14; Colossians 3:12-21 or 3:12-17; Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23 (17). "Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you."

Monday, Dec 30, 2019

SIXTH DAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

Generation to generation

The gospel anticipates the New Year with a child's potential. After Simeon's harsh prediction of a sword piercing Mary's soul, Anna comforts. She directs the conversation back to thanking God. She has had time to prepare for her moment, so when it comes, she rises to the occasion. Pope Francis linked Anna and Simeon to grandparents. In a society that too often dismisses the elderly, grandparents still offer time and presence, just what children need most. Pray for and honor the elders in your own family and community. They carry a consoling message!

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 2:12-17; Luke 2:36-40 (203). "The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom."

Tuesday, Dec 31, 2019

MEMORIAL OF SYLVESTER I, POPE; SEVENTH DAY WITHIN THE OCTAVE OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD

Guard the pearl of great price

We know little of Sylvester I other than that his papacy lasted from 314 until his death in 335. A legend arose around the eighth century, however, based on a forged document known as the Donation of Constantine, that the emperor who famously converted to Christianity also transferred authority over Rome and the entire Western Roman Empire to Sylvester and future popes. While the document was later proven to be a fake, the papacy nonetheless got ensnared in power politics, luxury, and the corruption that comes with trying to rule an empire. As Dante put it in his *Divine Comedy*, "Ah Constantine, how much evil was born / not from your conversion, but from that donation / that the first wealthy pope received from you!" Don't practice your faith for worldly gain—God grants us riches money can't buy.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 2:18-21; John 1:1-18 (204). "He was in the world . . . but the world did not know him."

Wednesday, Jan 01, 2020

OCTAVE DAY OF THE NATIVITY OF THE LORD; SOLEMNITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, THE MOTHER OF GOD

Incarnation in all

The Octave of Christmas reminds us that all people everywhere share in the mystery of Incarnation, the communion of divinity and humanity, revealed in Jesus Christ and realized in all who are likewise born of women. We celebrate this mystery whenever we gather to eat and drink the sacred meal. Our task is to recognize

the divine presence in the least of those with whom we share this mystical communion, from the baby born in Bethlehem to the migrant standing at our wall. Resolve this New Year to lend a helping hand.

TODAY'S READINGS: Numbers 6:22-27; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:16-21 (18). "So they went in haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the infant lying in the manger."

Thursday, Jan 02, 2020

MEMORIAL OF BASIL THE GREAT AND GREGORY NAZIANZEN, BISHOPS, DOCTORS OF THE CHURCH

Let's be friends

"To the Ancients, friendship seemed the happiest and most fully human of all loves; the crown of life and the school of virtue. The modern world, in comparison, ignores it." When C.S. Lewis referred to the "Ancients" he might have had today's saints, Basil and Gregory Nazianzen, in mind. Instrumental in the formation of the Nicene Creed that the church recites each Sunday, these great bishops and doctors of the church can also be remembered simply for being two great and lasting friends. Let them remind us that deep and warm friendships enrich life in ways that accomplishments and honorifics, and even creeds, sublime as they may be, cannot replace.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 2:22-28; John 1:19-28 (205). "All who heard it were amazed by what had been told them by the shepherds."

Friday, Jan 03, 2020

MEMORIAL OF THE MOST HOLY NAME OF JESUS

Called by name

The memorial of the Most Holy Name of Jesus reminds us of the power of names. We honor not just the person Jesus, but the name of Jesus. There is a certain intimacy in knowing a person's name. Think of our litanies, our prayers for people who are sick or who have died. Think of the genealogy we heard on Christmas Eve. When we name people, we acknowledge and see them. Think of the people you see regularly in your school, workplace, gym, grocery store, faith community. Remember to call them by name.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 2:29—3:6; John 1:29-34 (206). "John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Behold, the Lamb of God.'"

Saturday, Jan 04, 2020

MEMORIAL OF ELIZABETH ANN SETON, RELIGIOUS

Be a trailblazer

Elizabeth Ann Seton (1774-1821) was born into a wealthy Episcopalian family. At 19, she married William Magee Seton with whom she had five children. For a brief time, it was a wonderful life, but soon William's business and health failed. Elizabeth was a poor widow and single mother by the age of 30. Inspired by Catholic friends who helped care for her dying husband, Elizabeth became Catholic in 1805. In the following years this first American-born saint established many firsts: the first religious community of women and the first Catholic school, with several more to follow. Elizabeth Ann Seton's deep faithfulness reminds us that nothing is impossible with God.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 3:7-10; John 1:35-42 (207). "They said to him, 'Rabbi (which means Teacher), where do you stay?' 'Come and see,' he answered."

Invest just five minutes a day, and your faith will deepen and grow—a day at a time



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