

Sunday, Dec 31, 2017

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

Endings and beginnings

The generations need each other. Young people seek heroes to look up to and aspire toward. Older folk need the fresh eye, courage, and idealism of newcomers at the table of decision-making. When we work together across generations, we take our surest steps into a future of hope. Elders like Simeon and Anna still haunt sacred places, waiting on God to fulfill old promises. Young families continue to present themselves, bearing their joys and uncertainties. This happy intersection is both consolation and challenge. Let's find out together what it means to be church!

TODAY'S READINGS: Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14 or Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3; Colossians 3:12-21 or Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19; Luke 2:22-40 (17). *"Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace . . . for my eyes have seen your salvation."*

Monday, Jan 01, 2018

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

Share the true gift of the season

Christianity is not a new philosophy or new morality, says Pope Benedict XVI. It is an encounter with the person of Jesus Christ: "We ourselves must be personally involved in an intimate and profound relationship with Jesus." Mary, the Mother of God, whom we honor today, was instrumental in bringing the person of Jesus to us and showing us how to fully embrace a life in Christ. Resolve to deepen your relationship with Jesus and, like Mary, find ways to bring Christ to others.

TODAY'S READINGS: Numbers 6:22-27; Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:16-21 (18). *"He was named Jesus, the name given him by the angel before he was conceived in the womb."*

Tuesday, Jan 02, 2018

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

Faith begins at home

Several giants of the early church, including today's Saints Basil and Gregory Nazianzus, were inspired by Basil's older sister Macrina (whose brothers also included two other saints, Gregory of Nyssa and Peter of Sebaste). Macrina deeply influenced her family with her asceticism. With the help of her younger brother, Peter, Macrina turned the family estate into a monastery and convent, providing a peaceful shelter for study and meditation. What inspiration can you draw from family members as you resolve to deepen your commitment to Christ in this New Year?

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 2:22-28; John 1:19-28 (205). *"I am the voice of one crying out in the desert, 'Make straight the way of the Lord.'"*

Wednesday, Jan 03, 2018

MEMORIAL OF THE MOST HOLY NAME OF JESUS

Dig a little deeper

As Christians, we believe we are called by name to follow Jesus. Do we accept what that belief implies: that Jesus knows us personally and considers us to be an essential part of his ministry? And as we call on Jesus, just how confident are we that we know who he is and what he wants out of the relationship? John the

Baptist knew who Jesus was, but such knowledge took rigorous prayer and questioning. Perhaps you need to do the same to discover why Jesus counts you among his friends.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 2:29—3:6; John 1:29-34 (206). *"And I myself have seen and have testified that this is the Son of God."*

Thursday, Jan 04, 2018

MEMORIAL OF ELIZABETH ANN SETON, RELIGIOUS

Work with what you have

And you thought you were busy? Consider Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, the first native-born citizen of the United States to be canonized. Mother Seton founded the first American religious community for women, the Sisters of Charity. She opened the first American parish school, nursed sick and dying family, friends, and neighbors, and established the first American Catholic orphanage—all while raising five children as a widow! Next time your own responsibilities get you down, remember that you don't have to start out a saint to do some good in the world.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 3:7-10; John 1:35-42 (207). *"Let no one deceive you. The person who acts in righteousness is righteous."*

Friday, Jan 05, 2018

MEMORIAL OF JOHN NEUMANN, BISHOP

Stick it out for the long haul

Ever feel like you don't really belong—not even in the church? John Neumann (1811-60) must have had days like that. Born in Bohemia, his bishop didn't ordain him after seminary because the Hapsburg Empire had too many priests. So he came to America and was ordained within a month but always felt like an outsider. Later, when he was installed as bishop of Philadelphia, not one bishop showed up to support him. Stick around the church long enough, and you will be rewarded for hanging in there.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 3:11-21; John 1:43-51 (208). *"Nathanael said to Philip, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip replied, 'Come and see.'"*

Saturday, Jan 06, 2018

MEMORIAL OF ANDRÉ BESSETTE, RELIGIOUS

Do the ordinary with extraordinary faith

When Brother André tried to enter his religious community, his superiors thought him too sickly and undereducated to amount to much. So they made him the community doorman. In addition to answering the door, he directed visitors, delivered packages and mail, awakened the community, ran errands, cut hair, sewed, fixed things, maintained the wine cellar, swept up, and—yes—he also did windows. When he died after decades of counseling and bringing God's healing to hundreds of thousands of people, a million mourners attended his funeral. Quite a switch for a person who didn't show much "promise." We recognize God's presence when we do our everyday tasks with generosity, love, and devotion.

TODAY'S READINGS: 1 John 5:5-13; Mark 1:7-11 or Luke 23-38 (209). *"The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me."*

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



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