



Solemnity of the Holy Family

Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 or
1 Sam 1:20-22, 24-28
Ps 128:1-5
Col 3:12-21
Luke 2: 41-52

Monday Dec. 28 Holy Innocents

1 John 1:5 – 2:2
Ps 31124:2-5, 7-8
Matt 2:13-18

Tuesday Dec. 29

1 John 2:3-11
Ps 96:1-3, 5-6
Luke 2:22-35

Wednesday Dec. 30

1 John 2:12-17
Ps 96:7-10
Luke 2:36-40

Thursday Dec. 31

1 John 2:18-21
Ps 96:1-2, 11-13
John 1:1-18

Friday Jan. 1 Mary, Mother of God

Num 6:22-27
Ps 67:2-3, 5-6, 8
Gal 4:4-7
Luke 2:16-21

Saturday Jan. 2 Sts. Basil & Gregory

1 John 2:22-28
Ps 98:1-4
John 1:19-28

In paragraph #20 of his encyclical on the Rosary, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*, Pope John Paul II referred to the Gospel passage that we hear at Mass this Sunday. He wrote: "Joy mixed with drama marks the fifth [joyful] mystery, the finding of the twelve-year-old Jesus in the Temple. Here he appears in his divine wisdom... That Mary and Joseph, fearful and anxious, 'did not understand' his words."



We, too, often fail to understand the words of Jesus. His teachings challenge us to accept a more difficult life, a life of doing good to our enemies, taking a stand against injustices, getting persecuted for it, turning the cheek and going the extra mile, a life of courageously adhering to the high moral standards of God.

Our preference, when it's inconvenient or unpleasant

to be so holy, is to rationalize and make excuses for any behavior that is not Christ-like. But if we're sincere about following Christ, we are willing to do what is difficult. And it's usually in the doing that we begin to understand the benefits of becoming more like Christ.

Without this understanding, however, we have to trust

that the words of Jesus are right. Like Mary and Joseph, we need to ponder in our hearts what we don't understand while moving forward and doing what Jesus wants. Then we discover the joy that comes from a life that's lived wholly in Christ.

On this Feast of the Holy Family, let us pray that Mary and Joseph will help us hear Jesus whenever our troubles or temptations get so distracting that we lose sight of him. Let us learn to recognize that Jesus is always present with us, his Holy Spirit, helping us, guiding us, and compassionately loving us, especially in the challenges we face.

Reflect & Discuss:

1. What teaching of the Church have you rationalized away so that you don't have to obey it? Or what teaching of Christ in the Sermon on the Mount (see Matt. 5,6,7) or elsewhere in the Gospels do you excuse yourself from?
2. How much is your disobedience due to not understanding what is really being taught? What will you do to seek and gain a better understanding?
3. How meaningful is the Holy Family to you? What is it about the relationships between Jesus, Mary and Joseph that appeals to you?
4. What has this taught you about God's Kingdom?