

Solemnity of the Holy Family

Sirach 3:2-6,12-14 or
1 Sam 1:20-22,24-28
Ps 128:1-5 or
Ps 84:2-3,5-6,9-10
Colossians 3:12-21 or
1 John 3:1-2,21-24
Luke 2:41-52

Monday December 31

1 John 2:18-21
Ps 96:1-2,11-12,13
John 1:1-18

Tuesday January 1 Mary, Mother of God

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

Wednesday January 2 Sts. Basil the Great & Gregory Nazianzen

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

Thursday January 3

1 John 2:29 – 3:6
Ps 98:1,3cd-6
John 1:29-34

Friday January 4 St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

1 John 3:7-10
Ps 98:1,7-9
John 1:35-42

Saturday January 5 John Neumann

1 John 3:11-21
Ps 100:1b-5
John 1:43-51

Saint John Paul II wrote about today's Gospel story in his encyclical on the Rosary, *Rosarium Virginis* (paragraph #20). This scripture, he pointed out, reveals that Jesus was already wholly dedicated to his Father's affairs. And it shows "the radical nature of the Gospel, in which even the closest of human relationships are challenged by the absolute demands of the Kingdom." Which relationships? Family relationships!

Today, we are like Mary and Joseph in their moment of failing 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, standing up for Christian values, getting persecuted for it, turning the cheek and going the extra mile, a life of courageously adhering to the ways of God.

Our preference, when it's inconvenient or unpleasant to be so holy, is to rationalize and make excuses for any behavior that the world says is good and right but which contradicts the Church's scripture-based teachings.

However, if we are 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 truth. Like Mary and Joseph, we need to ponder in our hearts what we do not understand and at the same time move forward in holy living. 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 in his Holy Spirit, helping us, guiding us, and mercifully 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 in scripture?
2. Assume your disobedience is due to not understanding what is really being taught. What will you do to learn more about it?
3. 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?