

The Most Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

December 26, 2021

Beloved, we are God's children now; what we shall be has not yet been revealed.

— 1 John 3:2a

FAMILY LIFE

Christmas celebrates the Incarnation, the "en-flesh-ment" of God as a human person. In Jesus, God is bodily present in the human story. Today we honor the Holy Family, helping us to see that God is active in daily family life. God is near at hand, amidst the tensions, joys, and uncertainties of family life. As our Gospel passage describes, even with family miscommunications and with limited understanding of Jesus' mission, the Holy Family persevered in their life together. Like many family conflicts, there was no immediate or clear resolution of the issues raised by Jesus and by Mary. God's intentions for the family, and for Jesus, were still unfolding. They continued to stay connected with each other and with God. Within the turbulence of family life, they trusted God to actively sustain and guide them into an uncertain future. We are invited to follow their example.

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PRAYER OF THE WEEK

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

O God, who were pleased to give us the shining example of the Holy Family, graciously grant that we may imitate them in practicing the virtues of family life and in the bonds of charity, and so, in the joy of your house, delight one day in eternal rewards. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever.

Reflection question:

How can I imitate the Holy Family this week?

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READINGS FOR THE WEEK

Monday: 1 Jn 1:1-4; Ps 97:1-2, 5-6, 11-12; Jn 20:1a, 2-8
Tuesday: 1 Jn 1:5 — 2:2; Ps 124:2-5, 7b-8; Mt 2:13-18
Wednesday: 1 Jn 2:3-11; Ps 96:1-3, 5b-6; Lk 2:22-35
Thursday: 1 Jn 2:12-17; Ps 96:7-10; Lk 2:36-40
Friday: 1 Jn 2:18-21; Ps 96:1-2, 11-13; Jn 1:1-18
Saturday: Nm 6:22-27; Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21
Sunday: Is 60:1-6; Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-13; Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6; Mt 2:1-12

SAINTS AND SPECIAL OBSERVANCES

Sunday: The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph
Monday: St. John, Apostle and Evangelist
Tuesday: The Holy Innocents
Wednesday: Fifth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord; St. Thomas Becket
Thursday: Sixth Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord
Friday: Seventh Day within the Octave of the Nativity of the Lord; St. Sylvester I; New Year's Eve
Saturday: The Octave of the Nativity of the Lord;
[Mary, the Holy Mother of God](#); World Day of Prayer for Peace



Finance Corner: Your generosity is greatly needed and appreciated! For the month of **October** offerings: PLEASE put in Mass collection box or mail to St. Philip/St. Teresa Parish, P. O. Box 339, Occidental CA 95465. Or donate at our website www.stphilipstteresa.org via Paypal or card. Please include your offering envelope # [if you have one] with your donation. Bless you!



12/19-12/25: summary provided soon.

12/26: Rural Food. 1/01: Mary, Mother of God. 1/02: Operating Expenses

Mark your Calendar for Future Events & Meetings:

Parish Council [PC]: TBA
Finance Council [FC]: TBA
Liturgy Committee [LC]: TBA
St. Teresa Ladies Guild: Contact Diane, 823-6044
St. Philip Ladies Guild: Contact Penny, 559-367-7403

✠ ♥ ✠ Mass Intentions ✠ ♥ ✠ Schedule

12/25 Sat. 8am Occidental & 9:30am Bodega: Christmas Day Masses (NO 5pm on 12/25 at Bodega)
12/26 Sun. 8am Mass ✠ Johnny Gonnella
12/26 Sun. 9:30am Mass ✠ Arthur Munson & Papke grandchildren
12/26 Sun. 11:15am Mass for the People
1/01 Sat. 5pm Mass ✠ Brendan Smith
1/02 Sun. 8am Mass ✠ Ray Utterback
1/02 Sun. 9:30am Mass for the People
1/02 Sun. 11:15am Mass

Prayer Requests: Please leave a message at 707-408-2650.

Teresa K., Pat K., Thomas T., Susan B., Lorri McC., Sarah, Clifford J., Terri A., Fred P., Theresa S., Sara, Mary Anne P., Barbara, Dave C., Jim P., William, Parson P., Dave, Mary O., Bill Z., Daniel, Sally T., Michael D., Richard M., Kathleen, Peter, Rosa S., Susan B., Joyce D., Anita C., George H., Mimi H, Steve, Barry, Lorrin K., Hugh P., Robert S., Britney N., Chuck, Rebecca A., April K., Jacinta G., Leo A., Ed C. family, Kathy R., Donna W., Jim K., Sherry S., Gail F., Marie N., Christine, James G., Gary S., Peter R., Gerry N., Diane K., River M.; Nikkie; Mr. C., Michelle, Christian A., Samantha S., Gary E.

Mission San Rafael Arcángel (link)



(the California missions are featured in our current bulletins)

THE NAME FOR GOD

Mother is the name for God on the lips and in the hearts of little children.

—William Makepeace Thackeray

Pastor Speaks.....

Sunday, December 26, we celebrate the **Feast of the Holy Family**. The Holy Family is the greatest model and example to all our families and Christian Communities. Each member of the Holy Family has a specific role to play in the plan of God and they fulfill their roles to perfection. It is a family of exemplary virtues of love, obedience, harmony, cooperation and understanding. The Gospel of this feast day shows how the family is united and supportive of each other in the face of danger. We can find the family virtues in Colossians 3:12-21, namely compassion, care, kindness, lowliness, meekness, patience and forgiveness. Of course, Love is fundamental and above all other virtues.

This feast also focuses our attention on Christ, the focal point of our family life. St. Paul says, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him." Do we strive to fulfill our God-given roles as members of our earthly families and Faith Communities?

I cordially wish you all a Happy, Healthy and Peaceful New Year 2022!
Father Bala.

RURAL FOOD PROGRAM UPDATE for December 2021

On Tuesday, December 14, 56 families (135 individuals) received nutritional support and more during our distribution at the St Philips Parking lot and parish hall. Gift cards were presented to all families in our Star Child Program. Each member of every family was presented with a blanket and their choice of a scarf or hat to help with cold winter weather. Each member of every family also received sugar cookies compliments of The Union Hotel. What a festive day it was for all!

We also honored our volunteer **Sylvia Melrose** who retired this month after 27 years of dedicated service to the Rural Food Program. She was honored with a certificate of appreciation, kind words from all who worked with her, many thank-yous, and a well deserved round of applause.



If you are aware of a family which needs nutritional assistance, please let them know about our program. Leave a message at the parish office, (707) 408-2650 to get a call back with additional information.

This program is funded through monthly Rural Food Collection, private donations and the dedicated, awesome volunteers. **Thank you for your generous donations as we**

strive to meet the nutritional needs of all attendees at our food distributions.

RURAL FOOD VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES in the Parish Hall and parking area: Saturday, January 8, 9-10:00am repackaging; **Monday, January 10, 9-11:00am** set-up; and **Tuesday, January 11, 7:30-11:00am** to distribute food to clients.



Nebraska in Winter!

*The first snowfall came early in December. I remember how the world looked from our window as I dressed behind the stove that morning. The low sky was like a sheet of metal; the blond cornfields had faded out into a ghostliness at last; the little pond was frozen under its stiff willow bushes. Big white flakes were whirling over everything. Winter on the still wild prairie of Nebraska in the 1890's as seen by a boy named Jim Burden in Willa Cather's *My Antonia!**

Jim lived with his grandparents who with two hired hands, Otto and Jake, managed a farm on what seemed to Jim to be the outer rim of the known world. All summer and fall the family and hands worked hard cultivating, harvesting, caring for livestock, storing up for winter. And now it had arrived, the snow so deep at times that no one could exit their half underground homestead except to see to the stabled horses and cows. *The basement kitchen seemed heavenly safe and warm in those days - like a tight little boat in a winter sea. Next to getting warm and keeping warm, dinner and supper were the most interesting things to think about. Our lives centered around warmth and food.* In the evening they would pop corn and make taffy and Otto would sing *O Bury Me Not On the Lone Prairie*. On other bitter nights as they sat around the stove they could hear coyotes down by the corral and then Otto and Jake would tell chilling stories about wolves, bears and outlaws they had met - and funny tales as well.

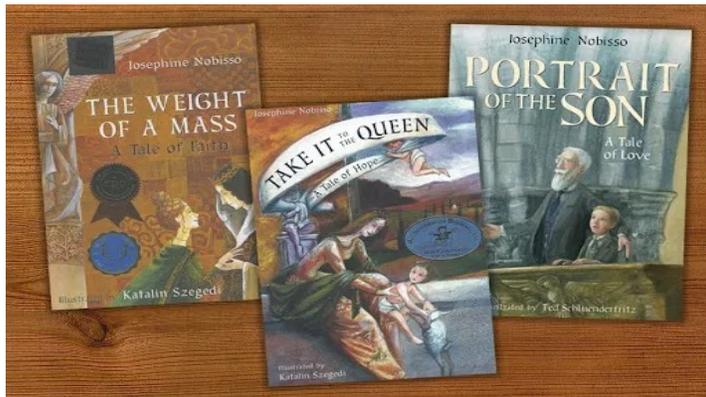
Christmas was an especially welcome time. Unable to get to town, the family made its own presents and put up a cedar tree which grandmother and Otto decorated with gingerbread animals, strings of popcorn, bits of candle and some old German paper figures - a heart, the three wise men, a baby in a manger. Then on Christmas day grandfather would read solemnly from Matthew's story of the birth of Christ and lead them in prayer. He led them in prayer too one day at the burial of a neighbor while Otto led the mourners through that old hymn: *Jesus, lover*

of my soul / Let me to thy bosom fly / While the nearer waters role / While the tempest still is high.

Nebraska in winter! But was that all Willa Cather had in mind when she wrote her story? I think maybe she had in mind all of us, too, who live beneath the transparent ceiling of this homestead we call Earth, situated in the midst of that other cold and boundless prairie called the Universe. We too live in awe of the forces of nature out there. We, too, work hard to acquire the food and warmth to delay the mortality that naturally awaits us all.

But Willa Cather makes it clear that food and fire were not all the Burdens depended on to survive. It was their stories, legends, songs, prayers, festivals that kept them alive in a truly human sense. And so it is with us as we ride this planet from whence to who knows where. It is our stories, our Gospels, our festivals of Christmas and Easter, our hymns that keep us sane, that nurture our sense of infinite worth and our conviction that we shall live forever! Take away those stories, those images, the spiritual nourishment of celebrations like the Eucharist and, no matter how full our larder may be, you take away our lives and humanity.

--Geoff Wood, 12/19/2021



Book Reviews: The trilogy of illustrated books that should be in every Catholic Household

by [Alejandro Bermudez](#)



Alejandro Bermudez, born in Lima, Peru is the Executive Director of the Catholic News Agency and the ACI Group, which includes ACI Prensa, ACI Digital, ACI Stampa, CNA Deutsche, and ACI Africa. He is also the host of the show "Cara a Cara" on EWTN in Spanish.

We Catholics know that the three theological virtues are not only "very important." They are our only path to salvation. All the other virtues will shine on Christians more or less based on education, nature, occasion, particular vocation and so on. But those three... we will go to Heaven by those three.

Enter the trilogy of "The Weight of a Mass: A Tale of Faith;" "Take it to the Queen, a Tale of Hope;" and "Portrait of the Son, a Tale of Love," written and adapted by Josephine Nobisso.

Nobisso is a veteran in the field of children's books. In 2000 she was named "Distinguished Graduate" by the National Catholic Educational Association. For the fascinating, dreamlike illustrations of the first two books, Nobisso teamed up with Hungarian illustrator Katalin Szegedi, who in 2001 won "The Most Beautiful Children's Book Prize" from the Society of Hungarian Publishers and Distributors.

For the third book of the trilogy, Nobisso teams up with one of the best contemporary Catholic illustrators, Theodore Schluenderfritz, who provides his own unique style and beauty, but without breaking the elegant continuity of the collection.

The first book, couched in the language and look of a fairy tale, and rich in solemn beauty, tells the tale of what happens when a destitute widow begs only a crust of bread in return for offering the Royal Wedding Mass. As amazing as it is, the story is based on a true miracle.

The second, tells an original fable: when once-favored villagers transgress against their king, they seek the intercession of the humble, virtuous neighbor who became their queen.

The third tells a fable that has been going around for some time, but with a deliberate Catholic twist that focuses on the love of God the Father for his Son, and the uncalculated graces that awaits for those who love the Son.

The books work magnificently well with young kids -I tested with my God children- but they are good for everyone, since under the flaps of the three hard and soft cover editions, you can find precise, inspiring theological insights into the art and text of the books.

The only downside is that, for reasons unknown, only the first two books can be found in the original publisher, [Gingerbread House](#), while the third has to be purchased anywhere else online.

["The Weight of a Mass: A Tale of Faith;"](#)

["Take it to the Queen, a Tale of Hope;"](#)

["Portrait of the Son, a Tale of Love"](#)

