

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY & JOSEPH

We celebrate with joy the birth of Jesus and the feast of the Holy Family. For family members and friends affected by addiction, this time of year can stir a mix of gratitude, longing, and emotional tension. Yet Christmas reminds us that God enters families not despite their imperfections but within them. The Holy Family becomes both a comfort and a guide for those seeking healing and renewed hope.

As we move through the Christmas season, the Church invites us to reflect on the example of Mary and Joseph. Both responded to God with humility, trust, and willingness, even when circumstances were confusing or frightening. Their openness made space for Christ to enter the world. Family recovery invites us into a similar posture: to let go of what we cannot control, to trust God with our loved ones, and to make room for peace and compassion in our own hearts.

This Sunday's second reading offers a pattern for healthy relationships and renewed family life (Colossians 3:12-17):

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another, if one has a grievance against another; as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do. And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection. And let the peace of Christ control your heart the peace into which you were also called in one body. And be thankful.

Families affected by addiction often experience fear, frustration, and emotional strain. These virtues offer a path toward peace. Compassion softens resentment. Humility helps loosen expectations. Patience allows us

to detach with love. Forgiveness frees us from bitterness. Love becomes the steady anchor that guides our choices.

This Sunday's gospel provides a powerful image of Joseph's fidelity and sensitivity to God's direction during uncertain times (Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23):

When the magi had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him." Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt... When Herod had died, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream in Egypt and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." He rose, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel.

Joseph listens, trusts, and acts quickly in response to God's guidance. Many family members know what it means to protect, to worry, or to make difficult decisions. Joseph reminds us that we do not shoulder these burdens alone. God provides direction through prayer, Scripture, wise companions, and the fellowship of recovery.

Mary models another essential virtue: surrender. Her words, "May it be done to me according to your word," reflect a posture of deep trust. Family members often struggle with uncertainty around their loved one's choices or recovery progress. Mary's surrender invites us to entrust our fears and hopes to God, who sees more than we do and works patiently within each heart.

Christmas offers a chance to embrace renewal—not through perfect circumstances but through God's presence in the midst of them. We may not be able to control outcomes, but we can cultivate compassion, patience, forgiveness, and gratitude. These choices create space for grace to flow into our families.

As we enter the new year, let us draw strength from the Holy Family. Their willingness, humility, and openness to God can shape our relationships and guide our steps. In trusting God with our loved ones, we discover peace that is deeper than circumstance.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Which virtue from Colossians do you feel God inviting you to cultivate in your family relationships?
- How does Joseph's example of trust and responsiveness speak to your journey as a family member?
- What expectations can you release this Christmas to make room for peace?

MASS READINGS

FIRST READING Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14

RESPONSORIAL PSALM Psalm 128:1-2, 3, 4-5

SECOND READING Colossians 3:12-21 or 3:12-17

GOSPEL Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23