

## FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY &amp; JOSEPH

As we celebrate Christmas and the feast of the Holy Family, we enter a season filled with the promise of new life. For those recovering from lust addiction, this time of year can awaken both gratitude and vulnerability. Emotional triggers, loneliness, or old patterns may surface, yet Christmas assures us that Christ comes into precisely these wounded spaces to bring healing, identity, and peace.

The Church invites us to contemplate the example of Mary and Joseph, whose humility and trust allowed God's plan to unfold. Recovery asks us to cultivate the same openness—to surrender our old ways of coping and allow God to reshape our desires, relationships, and hearts.

This Sunday's second reading provides a blueprint for the inner transformation that recovery and grace make possible (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.*

Lust addiction distorts intimacy and often produces shame, secrecy, and fear. But through recovery, we learn new virtues. Compassion softens the harshness we direct toward ourselves. Humility grounds us in honesty. Gentleness teaches us restraint. Patience allows us to tolerate discomfort and build emotional maturity. Forgiveness frees us from resentment—toward ourselves

and others. And love, above all, becomes the new foundation of how we relate to God and to one another.

This Sunday's gospel shows Joseph responding with courage, responsibility, and trust when he is called to protect Mary and Jesus in a time of danger (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 models the spiritual strength we seek in recovery: he listens, he trusts, and he takes the next indicated action. Lust addiction thrives in isolation, impulsivity, and avoidance. Joseph's example invites us into a different posture—one rooted in accountability, obedience to God, and willingness to act even when the path ahead is uncertain.

Recovery requires rising quickly when God prompts us, whether that means calling a sponsor, attending a meeting, deleting a temptation, or practicing honesty in a difficult moment. Like Joseph, our healing grows when we respond to God's guidance with humility and decisiveness.

Mary also shows us what surrender looks like. Her quiet "yes" reflects a heart willing to trust God more than fear.

For those healing from lust addiction, Mary's humility inspires us to receive God's love even when shame tempts us to hide.

As Christmas unfolds, we remember that Christ entered the world gently—born into a humble family with real fears and real challenges. He enters our lives the same way. He enters the hidden places where we struggle and brings light, dignity, and hope. Through fellowship, prayer, and the Twelve Steps, we experience the gradual transformation He promises.

The Holy Family becomes a model for our recovery: Joseph's courage, Mary's humility, and Jesus' presence all form a pattern for the kind of healing we long for.

## REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- Which virtue in Colossians feels most essential to your recovery right now?
- How does Joseph's decisiveness inspire your approach to temptation or triggers?
- Where might God be inviting you to practice humility or surrender this Christmas?

## 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