

Reflection Questions

- What is bringing you hope, love, and peace this Christmas?
- How have you become more reliable, predictable, and consistent by being active in recovery and growing in your faith?
- Referring to the instructions of St. Paul that concludes this reflection, what new attitudes and behaviors are you called to focus on developing?

Merry Christmas!

On behalf of the entire Catholic in Recovery community, we wish you and your family a blessed Christmas filled with hope, joy, love, and peace!

Consider the following ways to experience the fruit of new life in the new year:

- Attend a Catholic in Recovery retreat
- Start a CIR meeting in your community
- Connect with other members outside of meetings
- Give the gift of hope to others and pay it forward by being of service and sharing your resources

Sunday Mass Readings this Week

First Reading: Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 128:1-2, 3, 4-5

Second Reading: Colossians 3:12-21

Gospel: Luke 2:41-52

Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph



We rejoice together in the coming of our Lord at Christmas and the hope of a new year ahead of us. This season carries hope and anticipation for something new, which was the experience of Mary and Joseph as they sought a home for their newborn child. By knowing the family of Jesus, we can learn to love, serve, and understand our own families.

In the readings leading up to Christmas, we are given a chance to reflect upon Mary and Joseph's willingness and humility — two important components of recovery. Mary's "yes" paved the way for Christ's entry into our world, revealing God's ultimate love for us and salvation from bondage. Joseph set aside his pride and cared for Mary throughout the start of their marriage, even though there were plenty of uncertainties.

The Gospel of Matthew (2:14-21) details the patience and trust of both Joseph and Mary. It was needed to withstand the early stages of their family's journey:

*Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt.
He stayed there until the death of Herod,
that what the Lord had said through the prophet might be fulfilled,
Out of Egypt I called my son.
When Herod had died, behold,
the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph 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 is consistent and reliable, leading the way for his family and providing their protection. Mary takes on the role of nurturing Mother for her newborn son and for the world. The Lord did not march into the world in a display of power and might but was instead welcomed into the world by the grace of a humble woman. "Behold, I am the handmaid of the Lord. May it be done to me according to your word," Mary said.

Gathering in fellowship provides us a special opportunity to learn from the experience, strength, and hope of each other. Like us, the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph found support from God's messengers as they began their spiritual journey together.

Let us each show the same willingness to reflect on the magnificence of the Lord this Christmas Season. The love and mercy we receive from Him ought to be shared with the world. We can be guided by the Holy Family while remembering the words of Saint Paul in this Sunday's second reading:

*Brothers and sisters:
Put on, 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 hearts,
the peace into which you were also called in one body.
And be thankful.
Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,
as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another,
singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs
with gratitude in your hearts to God.
And whatever you do,
in word or in deed,
do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God the Father through him.*