

Reflection Questions

- In what ways have you recognized that *the Lord is with you* along your recovery from addiction, compulsions, and their impact on the family?
- Consider, each day over the next week, how well your actions have displayed compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, and forgiveness, over the next week.
- How have you responded to God's invitation to bring the hope of new life to others?

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

May God bless you and those you love as we celebrate the coming of Jesus Christ into the world. We give thanks to God for your life and the gift that we share as we each seek freedom, one day at a time!

*See, the LORD proclaims to the ends of the earth:
say to daughter Zion, your savior comes!"*

—Isaiah 62:11

Sunday Mass Readings This Week

1st Reading: Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14

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

2nd Reading: Colossians 3:12-21

Gospel: Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23

Feast of the Holy Family



We rejoice together in the coming of our Lord at Christmas and the hope of a new year ahead of us. In addition, we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. This season of the year carries hope and anticipation for something new. This was the experience of Mary and Joseph as they sought a home for their newborn child. By knowing the family of Jesus, we get to know him in a deeper way.

In the readings leading up to Christmas, we were 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.

This week's Gospel Reading details the patience, trust, and reliability 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's reliability and consistency leads the way for his family and provides 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, as many faithful Jews were expecting Him to. Rather, He was 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. The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph found similar support from those that sent messages from God as they began her spiritual journey together.

Let us each show the same willingness to reflect on the magnificence of the Lord. We can be guided by the example of the Holy Family while strongly considering the words of Saint Paul's Letter to the Colossians, this week'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.*