

DECEMBER 30, 2018

Scripture Reflection

Today we are invited to reflect on what it means to be part of God's family. The family is our first school of faith. Parents are our first catechists. In the First Reading, we encounter the elderly Hannah. In desperation, she prayed to God for a son, whom she promised to consecrate to God for life, and indeed Hannah gave birth to a son. When it was time to take him to the temple at Shiloh, the family offered the appropriate sacrifice, and then Hannah spoke! Careful attention should be given to her words.

In the Gospel, we learn that the Holy Family went to Jerusalem for Passover. They journeyed in a caravan, because it was the safest way to travel through the countryside. On their way home, when Mary and Joseph realize that their son was not with the caravan, they return to Jerusalem in a panic, only to find him teaching the elders in the Temple. Making the situation even more bizarre, Jesus tells them, "Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" In the ancient world and in some cultures today, childhood stories are regarded as predictors of the child's destiny.

We are all welcome in God's house, but at some point we need to discern the specific role we will play in the divine family. Only through extended listening and questioning will we grow in the wisdom necessary to follow Christ. This process may well mystify the people who know us best, but when we find the place God has made for us, we will feel right at home.

Just as Jesus, Mary, and Joseph worshipped God together with their faith community, we, too, gather in God's house with one another as the family of God. Today is an opportunity to reflect on the blessed gift of worshipping together as one family in faith. The example of the Holy Family of Nazareth shows us that praying together with others strengthens us to face daily challenges.

- **How do you bring hope, unity, and faith to God's family? Are you a productive family member?**

AT HOME with the WORD 2019, Archdiocese of Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications, pg. 31. AMERICAMAGAZINE, "Feeling right at home in the Father's house." Michael R. Simone, S.J., December 14, 2018.

The Nativity Scene

The nativity scene takes its form from the accounts of the birth of Jesus in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. Luke's narrative describes an angel announcing the birth of Jesus to shepherds who then visit the humble site where Jesus is found lying in a manger, a trough for cattle feed. Matthew's narrative tells of wise men who follow a star to the house where Jesus dwelt. Matthew's account does not mention the angels and shepherds, while Luke's narrative is silent on the Magi and the star.

For many centuries there were no nativity scenes displayed at Christmas. Saint Francis of Assisi is credited with creating the first nativity scene in 1223 in central Italy. The Franciscan Friar did this in an attempt to place the emphasis of Christmas upon the worship of Christ rather than secular materialism and gift giving. The nativity scene created by Saint Francis is described by Saint Bonaventure in his Life of Saint Francis of Assisi (1260). The original Christmas scene was a living one, with humans and animals cast in biblical roles. The Pope gave his blessing to this innovative exhibit.

Such reenactment pantomimes became hugely popular and spread throughout Christendom. Eventually, statues replaced human and animal participation, and static scenes grew to elaborate affairs with richly robed figurines placed in intricate landscape settings. Distinctive nativity scenes have been created around the world during the Christmas season in churches, homes, shopping malls, and other venues, occasionally on public lands and public buildings. The public display of nativity scenes has not escaped controversy here in our country provoking court challenges on the grounds of separation of church and state.

Our own nativity scenes displayed here in the Cathedral and in our homes are a reminder of that night when our Savior was born. May we never forget to see in our hearts of faith the Babe of Bethlehem, who came to save us from sin. The Eternal Word of God became human in order to create an eternal covenant with God and all men and women. Moreover, we must never forget that the wood of the manger that held that Infant so securely would one day give way to the wood of the cross. May we embrace the newborn Child with all of the love as did Saint Francis.

THE CHURCH OF ALTOONA-JOHNSTOWN

THE CATHEDRAL OF THE BLESSED SACRAMENT

ONE CATHEDRAL SQUARE, ALTOONA, PENNSYLVANIA 16601-3315
CHURCH OFFICE: 814-944-4603

CHRISTIAN INITIATION OF ADULTS:

The process of formation for those seeking God through membership in the Catholic Christian community.

INFANT BAPTISM:

Arrange in advance for pre-baptismal instructions.

CONFIRMATION:

Ninth, tenth and eleventh grade students are invited to participate in the Confirmation Preparation Process.

RECONCILIATION:

Wednesday: 7:00 PM, Saturday: 12:30 PM.

Communal Penance Services: Advent and Lent.

ANOIDING OF THE SICK:

Communal celebration Easter Season.

MARRIAGE:

Arrange nine months in advance. Couples expected to participate in pre-marriage preparation program.

DEVOTIONS:

Novena of the Miraculous Medal - Monday 7:45 AM.

Charismatic Prayer - Monday 7:00 PM.

Eucharistic Adoration - First Wednesday - 12:30 PM - 8:00 PM

Evening Prayer within Eucharistic Exposition -Advent and

Christmas, Lent and Easter Seasons - Sunday 6:30 PM.

Eucharistic Day - Feast of the Body and Blood of Christ.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM:

September through April: Pre-Kindergarten thru 12.

Sunday morning 8:30 AM - 9:45 AM

Pre-Kindergarten thru 8.

Sunday afternoon 2:00 PM - 4:00 PM

Grades 9 thru 12.

WEB: WWW.ALTOONACATHEDRAL.ORG

FAX: 814-942-4337

E-MAIL: ALTCATHEDRAL@DIOCESEAJ.ORG

EUCCHARIST:

Sunday: 5:00 PM (Vigil)
8:00 AM
10:00 AM
12:00 Noon
5:00 PM

Holyday: 5:30 PM (Vigil)
8:00 AM
12:00 Noon
5:30 PM

Weekday: 6:45 AM
8:00 AM
12:00 Noon
Saturday: 8:00 AM
12:00 Noon

Most Reverend Mark L. Bartchak, J.C.D., Bishop

Reverend Monsignor Robert C. Mazur, Rector

Reverend Father Dennis M. Kurdziel, Parochial Vicar

CHRISTIAN INITIATION TEAM - 944-4603

CATHOLICS RETURNING HOME - 944-4603

MAIL MINISTRY TO ELDERLY, HOMEBOUND,
SERIOUSLY SICK, AND GRIEVING - 944-4603

HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL

Web: www.holytrinitycatholic.school

Altoona Campus (Pre-K thru Grade 4) - 381-7011

Hollidaysburg Campus (Pre-K thru Grade 4) - 695-6112

Middle School Campus (Grades 5 thru 8) - 942-7835

BISHOP GUILFOYLE CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Web: www.bishopguilfoyle.org - 944-4014

DIRECTORS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Chris Laraia - Pre-K thru 8 - 312-7317

Jean Koury - 9 thru 12 - 949-2777

Religious Education Office: Sundays - 943-7424

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC MINISTRY

Leslie C. Thayer, MM, CAGO

Music Ministry Office - 944-2044

E-mail: lthayer@dioceseaj.org

SERVING THE PEOPLE OF GOD IN THE CITY OF ALTOONA SINCE 1851

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

DECEMBER 30, 2018

Readings: 1 Sm 1:20-22, 24-28; 1Jn 3:1-2, 21-24; Lk 2:41-52

MASS INTENTIONS

December 31, Monday: Seventh Day Nativity of the Lord

Readings: 1 Jn 2:18-21; Jn 1:1-18

6:45 AM M. Virginia Jones (Guido & Debbie Santella)

8:00 AM Elizabeth Smith, Birthday (Mary Lysinger)

12:00 PM Michael Dionis (Kevin Kerr)

January 1, Tuesday: Solemnity of Mary, Holy Mother of God

Monday - 5:30 PM - Vigil

Geraldine Petrunak, Birthday (Family)

8:00 AM Patrick Cooney (Trish Hopfl)

12:00 PM Joe Tomlinson (Randy & Jean Koury Fam.)

NO 5:30 PM MASS

January 2, Wednesday: Sts. Basil, and Gregory, Bishops & Dr

Readings: 1 Jn 2:22-28; Jn 1:19-28

6:45 AM Sammy Lynam (M/M and Francis Dambeck)

8:00 AM Joseph Knott (Jeff, Becky and Family)

12:00 PM Vincent Stoehr (Andrea and George Pyo)

January 3, Thursday: The Most Holy Name of Jesus

Readings: 1 Jn 2:29-3:6; Jn 1:29-34

6:45 AM Msgr. Paul Panza (Virginia Rizzo)

8:00 AM John Bauer (Wife)

12:00 PM Irene Schlecht (Mike and Sherry Byrne)

January 4, Friday: Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, Religious

Readings: 1 Jn 3:7-10; Jn 1:35-42

6:45 AM Alberta Weaver, Ann. (Jim and Elaine Weaver)

8:00 AM Joe Wiedemer (Sharon Schmitt)

12:00 PM Regina Osmolinski (Barb Lauver and Family)

January 5, Saturday: Saint John Neumann, Bishop

Readings: 1 Jn 3:11-21; Jn 1:43-51

8:00 AM Herbert Kutruff (Andrea Patterson)

12:00 PM Ray Plummer (Kathy and Bob Ford)

Vigil: THE EPIPHANY OF THE LORD

Readings: Is 60:1-6; Eph 3:2-3,5-6; Mt 2:1-12

5:00 PM Millie Boyle (Boyle Family)

**NO 5:30 PM MASS ON TUESDAY,
JANUARY 1, SOLEMNITY OF MARY**

First Friday Communion Calls This Week

Our priests will be visiting our homebound parishioners on Friday, **January 4**. Please call the Parish Office at 944-4603 to arrange a visit for yourself or a love one.

Holy Day of Obligation

This Tuesday, January 1, is a Holy Day of Obligation. It is the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God. As the early ecumenical councils of the church defined, Mary is more than just the mother of the human Jesus of Nazareth. She is much more; she is the Mother of God. Mary bore in her womb the Eternal Word of God. Check the time for Mass this Tuesday as the Church celebrates with the Mother of God.

Calendars of Prizes 2019

Calendars of Prizes 2019 are being sold at the Cathedral Square door after all Masses. Each calendar costs \$20.00. There is a \$10.00 daily prize; an additional \$1,000.00 in special monthly prizes awarded throughout the year; and a grand prize of \$5,000.00. Due to the state regulations for small games of chance, it is necessary that all one thousand tickets be sold. Otherwise, the parish will lose money on unsold tickets. If you have a favorite three digit number, call the Parish Office (944-4603) weekdays between 9:00 AM and 4:00 PM to check on availability or stop at the Cathedral Square door after Mass. These make great Christmas gifts that last all year!

Christmas Evening Prayer with Exposition and Benediction

On the Sundays of Christmas season, we will gather at 6:30 PM to pray the Hours of the Church. Families are encouraged to make this a part of their Christmas prayer. We are the Parish Family of the Cathedral of the Blessed Sacrament, and all those with a deep love of the Eucharist are invited to be present before the Sacrament in exposition on the altar.

Day of Prayer for World Peace and Justice

On January 1st the Local Church will observe a Day of Prayer for world peace. Please pray the following prayer for peace:
O God, who have revealed that peacemakers are to be called your children, grant, we pray, that we may work without ceasing to establish that justice which alone ensures true and lasting peace. Through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen.

OFFERTORY COLLECTION

Sunday, December 23, 2018 - \$8,163.00

Christmas Season concludes with the Baptism of the Lord on Sunday, January 13th. The Christmas totals of the Christmas Collection will be provided in the January 20th bulletin as the Cathedral continues to receive your generous gifts.

Eucharistic Adoration This Week

Eucharistic Adoration will be this Wednesday, **January 2** from 12:30 PM until 8:00 PM. Please note this in your schedules and plan to spend some quality time in prayer before the Sacrament in exposition. Please remember to pray for vocations to the priesthood during your time before the Blessed Sacrament. A sign-up sheet is on the table at the cross aisle.

Religious Education News PK-8

Classes resume on Sunday, January 6th at 8:30 AM. Until further notice, all classes will be dismissed from the Parish Center lower level alley doors. PK/K parents please continue to go to the classroom to pick up your child.

Sacrament Preparation

First Communion students and parents will meet in the Seton Suite on Wednesday, January 23rd at 6:30 PM. All students and a parent must attend. Please contact Chris Laraia at 312-7317 if you will not be able to attend this session.

Diocesan Marriage Preparation

Marriage Preparation sessions will be held in the Cathedral Parish Hall on Saturdays, January 5th and 19th at 9:00 AM. Please call the parish office at 944-4603 for more information.

New Year's Resolutions

This year may God bless us with more patience, less judgement, more love, less apathy, and more time for prayer and less idle talk.



Liturgical Reflection ...

Our churches and our homes have the scene of the newborn Child surrounded by his Mother and Joseph. Today the Church celebrates with the Holy Family. May all families be grounded in the love of the Holy Family. When parents and children, husbands and wives, brothers and sisters face tough moments at home, turn to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph to find your peace. Pray for right judgement and the strength to live in harmony with God.

2018, Diocese of Altoona-Johnstown, Liturgy Office, 925 South Logan Boulevard, Hollidaysburg, Pennsylvania 16648.

Prayer of Blessing - Feast of the Holy Family

O God,
you have created us in love and saved us in mercy,
and through the bond of marriage
you have established the family
and willed that it should become a sign of
Christ's love for his Church.
Shower your blessings on these families
gathered here in your name.
Enable those who are joined by one love
to support one another
by their fervor of spirit and devotion to prayer.
Make them responsive to the needs of others
and witnesses to the faith in all they say and do.
Through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

Memorials for Christmas Flowers

In memory of

Louise and Clair Conrad, Sally and
Clair Conrad, Jr., Sarah Marie Conrad,
Louise and James Erculiani,
Mary Beth Erculiani, Frances Romani
Mr. & Mrs William Roub

Gifting the Cathedral Parish

As wills and insurance policies are established with your attorney, or financial advisor, remember the Cathedral Parish as a beneficiary of your estate. Perhaps you would like to direct your gift to a particular ministry or project at the Parish. Please realize that Mass Stipends go directly to fulfilling that canonical wish and do not aid the financial life of the Parish.

Did You Remember?

Did you remember to bring non-perishable food items and paper products for the needy of our community? Bins are located at the three doors of the Cathedral.

Please remember our sick in your prayers.