

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly! Alleluia!

Feast of the Holy Family



San Ignacio de Loyola Parish

December 27, 2015

REFLECTION ON THE WORD

One of the great joys of the Christmas season is to behold the utter joy, innocence, beauty that light up the faces of little children. They are filled with wonder, delight, excitement. Year after year they grow into surer expectation about what happens with family and friends during Christmas. They grow into the family holiday traditions. Today's feast and its readings remind us that being a "holy" family is a matter of valuing the memories and traditions that make us who we are—a holy family, a holy people.



So much tradition shapes the event in today's gospel: Passover in Jerusalem, significance of being twelve years old, traveling

in caravan, being in the temple, obedience to parents. A surprising interruption of tradition also shapes this event: "the boy Jesus" astounded the teachers "at his understanding and his answers". Each family—the Holy Family, our own families—must find a way to keep worthy traditions alive while at the same time remain open to something astoundingly new. Holiness consists in finding that way.

The Holy Family provides us the model we need. They were faithful and obedient to the traditions that formed who they were. They were also open to God's astoundingly new in-breaking and willing to undergo the change that divine in-breaking invited into their lives. They teach us what it means to be "in (our) Father's house", where we learn our religious traditions and form the memories that make us who we are as members of the larger family of God. They teach us that we really belong to God, and everything about our living must reflect that we are most at home "in (our) Father's house". The Holy Family also teaches us to be obedient to the unknown and un-understood things to which God might be calling us. They teach us that our lives are about always growing "in wisdom and age and grace".

Words to reflect upon: the unknown and un-understood things to which God might be calling us

Living the Grace of the Incarnation

Knowing that we all share in the grace of the **Incarnation**, how then should we celebrate? First, let's rejoice that God is with us, not just at Christmas but at all times, and that there is no corner of the world in which Christ is not present. The rest of the answer will be found in the morning headlines and evening television news from Syria, Kandahar, Paris and San Bernardino. We will find it in the crime-ridden neighborhoods of our community, in the soup kitchens, the shelters for the homeless, the abused women and children and in the institutions for juvenile offenders. Our hearts will tell us what to do next. It is in our service to the world, in our defense of human rights, in our construction of peace, in the promotion of forgiveness and the fostering of the common good that the power of the **Incarnation** courses through today's world.

Gentle Incarnate God, give us the grace to love each other the way you love us. Make of us a holy family. Amen

THE FEAST OF CHRISTMAS-EPIPHANY

witnesses to the entire arc of Christology:

the One who is both the God who reaches down to us and the human who raises us up to God.



First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all people, 1 Timothy 2:1

LET US PRAY TOGETHER TODAY for the chronically ill: Sylvia Tasner, Fr. Vega and Albert and Jerry Vega, Rudy & Sonia Méndez, and **Maggie Maziarz, who is critically ill**. *Let us all pray as a community this week for the grace of JOY: that we may rejoice and give thanks together for the blessings and surprises of each day.*



MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

The shepherds obeyed the angels' revelation and searched for the newborn babe, the Savior, the Messiah. Mary, the Mother of this wondrous Child, also had a message made known to her by an angel. She heard, accepted and said yes to what God revealed to her. She gave birth to Jesus, the Savior, the Messiah. She is the Mother of God. She is our Mother who helps us bear this same message. When will we go "in haste" and tell everyone we meet what has been told to us?



January 1, 2015 - Friday -
Bilingual Mass at 11:30 am

Praying with Scripture



Gospel Luke Luke 2:41-52

Pope Francis told the people in the Philippines that we are all called to make a home for Jesus. What does he recommend we do to make this happen?

As Christians, you too are called, like Joseph, to make a home for Jesus. You make a home for him in your hearts, your families, your parishes and your communities. ... To hear and accept God's call, to make a home for Jesus, you must be able to rest in the Lord. You must make time each day for prayer. But you may say to me:

Holy Father, I want to pray, but there is so much work to do! I must care for my children; I have chores in the home; I am too tired even to sleep well.

This may be true, but if we do not pray, we will not know the most important thing of all: God's will for us. And for all our activity, our busy-ness, without prayer we will accomplish very little.

POPE FRANCIS continues admonishing us to be strong in our Christian commitment:

"The cry of the poor may never leave us indifferent, the suffering of the sick and of those in need may never find us distracted, the loneliness of the elderly and the fragility of children may always move us, (and) every human life may always be loved and venerated by all of us."

Seems like a good set of New Year's Resolutions doesn't it?

POPE FRANCIS

Midway through **Evangelii Gaudium** (Joy of the Gospels), Pope Francis' Apostolic Exhortation, is a telling prescription. Resituating the story of Moses and the burning bush in the context of Matthew 25, the Pope writes that we must all learn to "remove our sandals before the sacred ground of the other". The other in all her/his complicated reality, in his/her frailty, weakness and sin, is a uniquely immanent reflection of God. She/he is imago Dei, the face of God for us. At the heart of the evangelization that Pope Francis believes to be the joyful mission for the church in the modern world is this extraordinary idea. He calls on Christians to understand anew that **for us the face of God is found on others.**



God is "mercy within mercy within mercy".

— Thomas Merton

MERCIFUL LIKE THE FATHER

By now you probably know that Pope Francis inaugurated a **Jubilee Year of Mercy** last Tuesday, December 8th. This yearlong celebration is an invitation to the everyday personal practice of mercy. In his typical pastoral way, Pope Francis has invited everyone to follow the merciful example of God, who asks people not to judge or condemn but to forgive and to give love. No matter our station in life, each of us is called to reflect God's love and compassion, to profess the faith and to construct a culture of mercy.

Mercy abounds! Fr. Larry often reminds us that we are "beloved children of God" and as such we have all received God's mercy in countless ways throughout our lives. We have all been witness to countless acts of mercy from others around us. Mercy abounds! It's true. Yet there is much still to be done.

Our world today is filled with those who struggle, who hurt, who are troubled, who call upon us to show mercy in action. The Corporal Works of Mercy commend themselves to us this year: Feed the hungry, Give drink to the thirsty, Shelter the homeless, Visit the sick, Visit the prisoner, Bury the dead, Give alms to the poor.

Feed the Hungry There are many people in our communities who go without food. Consider how good stewardship practices of our own food habits can benefit others who do not have those same resources.

Try not to purchase more food than you are able to eat. If you notice that you end up throwing groceries away each week, buying less groceries would eliminate waste and allow you to donate the savings to those in need of food, for example, La Fondita de Jesus in San Juan.