

December 31, 2023

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Gen 15:1-6; 21:1-3 | Heb 11:8, 11-12, 17-19 | Lk 2:22-40 or
Lk 2:22, 39-40

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

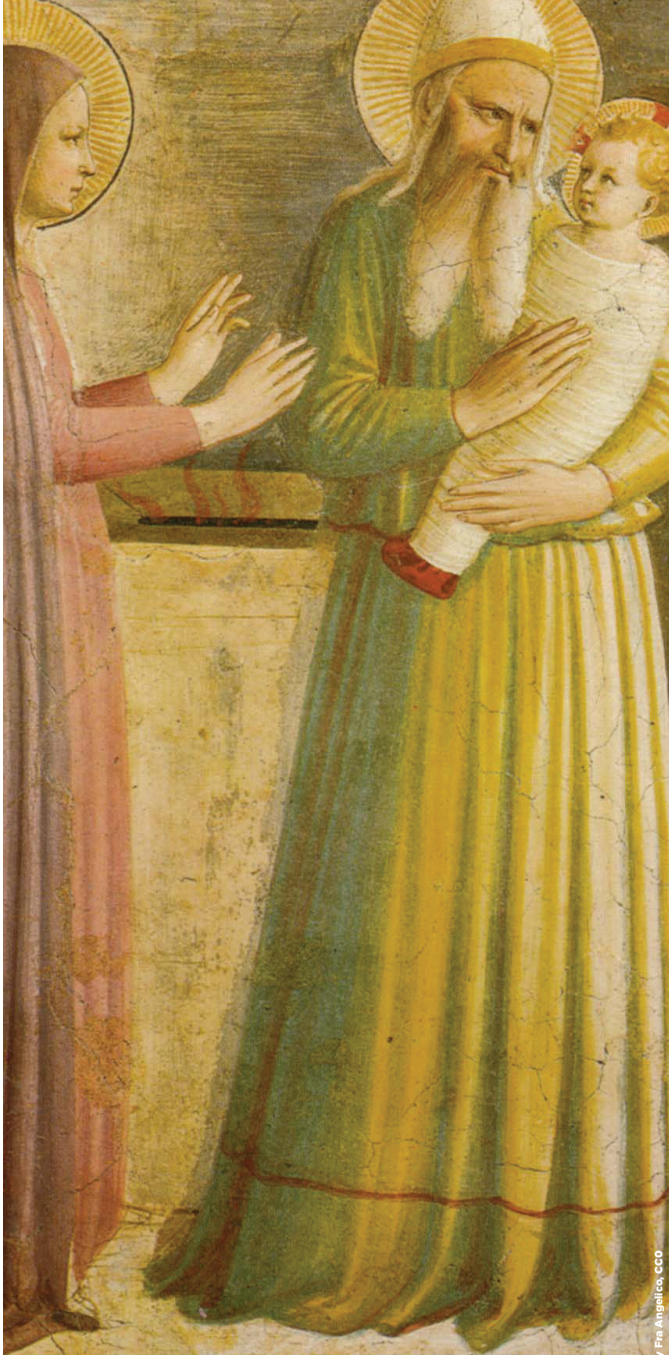
St. Teresa of Calcutta once said, “If we love, naturally we will try to do something. First in our own home, our next door neighbor, in the country we live, in the whole world.” In this quote we see a shift from the idyllic to a hard dose of reality: love means sacrifice and service. Perhaps it’s worth asking ourselves: Does our family always get our best self? None of us is perfect, so the honest answer is probably no. If it’s tempting to think, “well, the Holy Family was perfect, so what does this feast have to do with our family?” let’s remember we are celebrating the Feast of the HOLY Family, not the feast of the perfect family. Yes, they were *holy*. They embodied this in their faith and devotion in those expanding circles of which St. Teresa spoke. They gave to God first - in today’s Gospel we see the family travel to Jerusalem to present Jesus in the temple. They then returned to Nazareth where Jesus grew strong and was “filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.”

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

What does this feast mean for us today? It means that being a *holy* family is not unattainable. St. John Paul II once said: “The Redeemer of the world chose the family as the place for his birth and growth.” (2001) In other words, God’s will was fulfilled in the simplest and most ordinary of human circumstances when Jesus was born to Mary and Joseph in a stable. He sanctified what had been profaned by sin. Are our families perfect? No. But are we holy? That is our baptismal vocation and is within our reach each and every day. With the dawn of the new year, let’s make an effort to place Christ at the center of our lives. Let’s try to love our family members with all our heart, and bear witness in our actions and words. And finally, and most importantly, we must pray with and for one another.

PRAY Family prayer is powerful and transformative, uniting and equipping us to go out into the world each day and bear witness. Pray together: *Jesus, Mary and Joseph, graciously hear our prayer.*



Presentation of Jesus at the Temple by Fra Angelico, c.1400

Church of the Ascension
12033 Miller Ave, Saratoga CA
ascensionsaratoga.org | 408-725-3939

Great Expectations

Family road trips are great memory makers. Details are not soon forgotten. Certainly, Mary and Joseph regaled Jesus with stories of their trip to Jerusalem for his Presentation at the Temple and the amazing words of Simeon about Jesus' destiny as a light for revelation. Wow! That's quite an expectation to live up to. But Jesus did not disappoint. Not only did he grow in strength and wisdom, but he grew in love. Make a plan to do the same in the coming new year. - *Takefiveforfaith.com*

Quotes

"The family is indeed sacred: It is the place in which life - the gift of God - can be properly welcomed and protected."

- Saint John Paul II in *Centesimus Annus*

"If you want to bring happiness to the whole world, go home and love your family."

- Saint Teresa of Calcutta

Eucharistic Revival Study

You're invited to participate in the "**Jesus and the Eucharist**" small group study, starting on January 14, Sunday, after the 9:00 am Mass in Church of the Ascension. Stay tuned for more details.

MASS INTENTIONS

Dec 31	Sun	09 am	Remedios Doria +
		11 am	Anthony Lau +
		05 pm	Bianca Andrews (L)
Jan 03	Wed	08 am	Kelly Bangot (L)
Jan 04	Thu	08 am	Adelaida Sichon +
Jan 05	Fri	08 am	Louisa Whelan (L)
Jan 06	Sat	09 am	Walter Whelan (L)

Acknowledgments

Thank you to all who made our liturgical celebrations, especially the liturgies during the Advent and Christmas seasons, prayerful and beautiful, by sharing their time, talents, and treasure:

- Our liturgical ministers
- Our church environment team
- Those who donated to the Flower Fund.

May the Lord continue to bless them for their service and generosity.

WEEKLY OFFERING - DEC 24 & 25

-**Sunday gifts: \$12,619** (baskets: \$11,714; online: \$905).

Weekly goal: \$6,500.

-YTD: **\$158,466**. Budget: \$169,000. Shortfall: \$10,534.

-**Christmas gifts:** still processing.

Thank you for your generous support, especially during this holy season. God bless you in the new year 2024.



"May the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times and in every way"
(2 Thessalonians 3:16)



World Day of Peace January 1, 2024

"Artificial Intelligence and Peace"

Pope Francis' message for World Day of Peace 2024, divided into eight sections, examines the question of the progress of science and technology as a path to peace and reflects on the **future of artificial intelligence**.

The Pope also encourages that the ethical dimensions of AI, including issues of privacy, prejudice, and impact on human dignity, be addressed in the sphere of education and in the development of international law.



Pope Francis
@Pontifex · Follow



We must make sure that Artificial Intelligence is put at the service of peace in the world, rather than being a threat, and that it make a beneficial contribution on humanity future. I have dedicated the Message for the World Day of Peace to this. [#WDP2024](#) [@vaticanIHD](#)

4:19 AM · Dec 14, 2023



Be a Freedom Fighter

January 2

The term *modern slavery* covers practices such as forced labor, debt bondage, forced marriage, and human trafficking ... situations of exploitation enforced by violence, coercion, or deception. Here's the shocking news: Modern slavery has increased significantly in the past five years. Ten million more people, largely women and children, were trapped in modern slavery in 2021 compared to 2016, bringing the total estimate to 50 million worldwide. Our God is a God of freedom, who releases us from bondage of all kinds. On this U.N. International Day for the Abolition of Slavery, raise your voice in a phone call, email, or letter to elected officials. Let's put an end to this! - *Takefiveforfaith.com*

World Day of the Sick

Feb. 3

The Diocese of San Jose's World Day of the Sick 2024, sponsored by the Order of Malta will be Saturday, February 3, 2024, 11 am at the Cathedral Basilica of St Joseph, 80 S Market St, San Jose 95113. (All will be directed to free parking nearby.)

The Mass for the Sick will be celebrated by Bishop Oscar Cantu in honor of Our Lady of Lourdes and include an Anointing of the Sick, Blessing of Caregivers, distribution of Lourdes holy water and more. Prayer petitions will be hand carried to Lourdes in May 2024.

Holy Season Mass Schedule

**SOLEMNITY OF MARY MOTHER OF GOD
WORLD DAY OF PRAYER FOR PEACE**

-Jan. 1: 9:00 am (Mass with Rosary for Peace)