



MUSIC FOR THE LITURGY

Sunday, December 29, 2019
The Holy Family of
Jesus, Mary, and Joseph

4:00 PM
8:00 AM

Gathering: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing BB 96

Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 98)

All the ends of the earth have seen the power of God. (2x)

Preparation O Little Town Of Bethlehem BB 92

Mass Parts Mass of Christ the Savior

Communion It Came Upon The Midnight Clear BB 76
 Christ, Be Our Light BB 587

Recessional: Angels We Have Heard On High BB 98

10:00 AM

Gathering: Joy To The World BB 84

Dismissal Rite: You Have Called Us BB 636

Responsorial Psalm (Psalm 98)

All the ends of the earth have seen the power of God. (2x)

Preparation Like A Shepherd BB 606
 Where Love Is Found BB 656

Mass Parts Mass of Joy and Peace

Communion What Child Is This BB 105
 Song Of The Stable

Recessional: Hark! The Herald Angels Sing BB 96



Find us on:
facebook®

St. Luke the Evangelist is now on Facebook! Go to www.facebook.com/stlukenh.org/ or **St. Luke the Evangelist Parish – Newton/Plaistow** and give us a Like! Please invite fellow parishioners & friends to do the same.

✠ PARISH TITHING ✠

Our Parish needs to take in \$7,000.00 each week in order to make ends meet. Thank you for your generosity to our parish! Your weekly contribution helps ensure that the parish remains a vibrant community. Please remember to submit your weekly gift even if you will be away. We depend upon your support!

December 15, 2019

Offertory	\$6,648.63
Fuel	\$1,091.00

COLLECTION AMOUNTS FOR
DECEMBER 22, 2019
WILL APPEAR IN NEXT WEEK'S BULLETIN

PARISH GIVING

Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish has engaged *Parish Giving* to provide parishioners with an opportunity to make your offertory and other contributions through Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). Parish Giving is a simple, secure, and convenient way to manage your stewardship without weekly envelopes and without worries. Parish Giving allows you to print out a report detailing your contributions for the year. This program is available to parishioners at no cost. Log on to the St. Luke the Evangelist Parish website at <http://stlukenh.org>, click on the Parish Giving logo, and follow the easy registration instructions.

UPCOMING SECOND & SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

December 29, 2019	No Second Collection
January 1, 2020	Mary, Mother of God
January 5, 2020	Property Management
January 12, 2020	Seminarian Fund

Out of respect, please remember to
 silence or turn off
 your cell phones during Mass.
 Thank you!



Suggested Weekly Contribution Based on Income

Annual Income	5% Commitment annually/weekly	3% Commitment annually/weekly
\$100,000	\$5,000/\$100	\$3,000/\$60
\$75,000	\$3,750/\$75	\$2,250/\$45
\$60,000	\$3,000/\$60	\$1,800/\$36
\$50,000	\$2,500/\$50	\$1,500/\$30
\$40,000	\$2,000/\$40	\$1,200/\$24
\$30,000	\$1,500/\$30	\$900/\$18
\$25,000	\$1,250/\$25	\$750/\$15
\$15,000	\$750/\$15	\$450/\$9

Suggested Weekly Contribution Based on a Percentage Increase

Your Current Offertory Contribution	25% Increase	30% Increase	40% Increase
\$75.00	\$93.75	\$97.50	\$105.00
\$50.00	\$62.50	\$65.00	\$70.00
\$40.00	\$50.00	\$52.00	\$56.00
\$35.00	\$43.75	\$45.50	\$49.00
\$30.00	\$37.50	\$39.00	\$42.00
\$25.00	\$31.25	\$32.50	\$35.00
\$20.00	\$25.00	\$26.00	\$28.00
\$15.00	\$18.75	\$19.50	\$21.00
\$10.00	\$12.50	\$13.00	\$14.00
\$5.00	\$6.25	\$6.50	\$7.00

✠ PARISH NEWS ✠

PAINT THE TOWN!

Our Parish community continues with our Capital Campaign. Our next projects include exterior painting for the church and Parish house in Newton. We'd also like to paint the interior sanctuary of the church in Newton and complete some electrical upgrades to the church.

Other possible projects include work on our Plaistow and Newton parking lots, and ramp access to the church in Plaistow.

Can you help?

Any contribution is welcome. Make checks payable to
Saint Luke the Evangelist – Capital Campaign.

HOLY DAY OF OBLIGATION

On January 1, 2020, we will celebrate the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God which is a holy day of obligation. Liturgies are at **4:00 PM on Tuesday, December 31 in Plaistow** and at **9:00 AM on Wednesday, January 1 in Newton.**

PLEASE NOTE that there will be **NO daily Mass** on Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday of this week.

FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

If you would like an "end of year" financial statement of your contributions to the parish for 2019, **please call Jackie** at the Parish Office at 382-8324. **Financial Statements are issued on a request only basis.**

HOSPITAL VISITATION

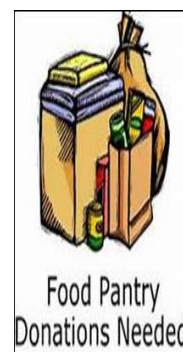
If you or someone you know is in the hospital and wants to receive a visit, please contact the Parish Office at 603-382-8324. If you or someone you know faces a hospital admission, make sure they know to inform the hospital that they are Catholic and are members of St. Luke the Evangelist Parish. If a person cannot make this information known at the time of admission, a family member may be able to make that information known to the hospital staff.



ST. LUKE'S WEBSITE! <http://stlukenh.org>

ST. LUKE THE EVANGELIST FOOD PANTRY

Food or care items are always needed – donations can be dropped off at Church or are welcome at the Parish Office during regular business hours. Cash donations for food are always welcome – make checks payable to **St. Luke the Evangelist Food Pantry**. All donations to the Food Pantry go toward helping the needy of our communities.



FOOD PANTRY HOURS

Wednesday from 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon

Thursday from 6:00 PM to 7:00 PM

Friday from 10:00 AM to 12:00 Noon

For more information, call the St. Luke Food Pantry at **603-819-4949**.

WHILE AWAY THIS WINTER...

We appreciate all of you who remember to send in your Parish Offertory during the Winter even when on vacation or visiting other parishes. Thank you for remembering that our expenses also continue through the Winter months. We invite others to consider doing the same before or even after you return home.

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH

✠ WEEKLY CALENDAR ✠

Sunday, December 29

11:00 AM RCIA Plaistow
6:00 PM Vespers Newton

Monday, December 30

PARISH OFFICE CLOSSES AT 12:00 NOON

Tuesday, December 31

PARISH OFFICE CLOSED

NO DAILY MASS IN PLAISTOW

Wednesday, January 1

PARISH OFFICE CLOSED

HOLY ANGELS CHURCH CLOSED

NO DAILY MASS IN PLAISTOW

Thursday, January 2

PARISH OFFICE CLOSED

NO DAILY MASS IN NEWTON

NO ADORATION IN NEWTON

Saturday, January 4

12:00 PM Clothing Drive Plaistow
3:00 PM Sacrament of Reconciliation Plaistow

Sunday, January 5

10:00 AM Religious Ed – PreK to 8 Plaistow
11:00 AM RCIA Plaistow
11:00 AM Baptism Catechesis Plaistow
12:00 PM Clothing Drive Plaistow
6:00 PM Vespers Newton

**St. Vincent
de Paul
Society**



Don't forget to "Drop Your Dollar" the next time you're at Mass. It may not seem like much to you, but to those we help, it makes a huge difference in their lives.

Keep us in your thoughts and prayers as we head into the colder months and food and fuel may become an issue with neighbors and friends.

Our next meeting on **Wednesday, January 15 at 7:00 PM**. We meet downstairs in the Church Hall in Plaistow. **New members are always welcome!**

If you seek assistance or need information about the St. Vincent de Paul Society, call 603-382-8324 x315.

**Hear, OH LORD, and answer me
for I am poor and needy.**

✠ MASS INTENTIONS ✠

Saturday, December 28 ~ Vigil / Holy Family

Sir 3:2-6; 12-14; Col 3:12-21; Mt 2:13-15, 19-23

4:00 PM Joan Foster by Pat and Janet Hurley
Plaistow

Sunday, December 29 ~ Holy Family

Sir 3:2-6; 12-14; Col 3:12-21; Mt 2:13-15, 19-23

8:00 AM People of the Parish
Newton

10:00 AM Don Nadeau by Bob and Sandy Nadeau
Plaistow

Monday, December 30 ~ 6th Day within Octave of Nativity

1 Jn 2:12-17; Lk 2:36-40

8:00 AM Arlene Collier by Cathy Smith
Newton

Tuesday, December 31 ~ Sylvester I, Pope

1 Jn 2:18-21; Jn 1:1-18 (Day)

Nm 6:22-27; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21 (Vigil)

4:00 PM Intentions of Eleanore Martin
by Ed and Susan Martin
Plaistow

Wednesday, January 1 ~ Mary, Mother of God

Nm 6:22-27; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21

9:00 AM Lea Roberts by her husband, Paul
Newton

Thursday, January 2 ~ Basil the Great and Gregory

Nazianzen, Bishops and Doctors of the Church

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

No Mass

Friday January 3 ~ Holy Name of Jesus

1 Jn 2:29—3:6; Jn 1:29-34

No Mass

Saturday, January 4 ~ Elizabeth Ann Seton, Religious

1 Jn 3:7-10; Jn 1:35-42 (Day)

Is 60:1-6; Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6; Mt 2:1-12 (Vigil)

4:00 PM Giovanni Polichetti by his wife and children
Plaistow

Sunday, January 5 ~ Epiphany of the Lord

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

8:00 AM People of the Parish
Newton

10:00 AM Bill Lueders (16th Anniversary)
by his wife, Carole Lueders
Plaistow

PRAYER LINE

St. Luke's offers a prayer line as a resource for those seeking prayer assistance. To submit your prayer request please call Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 314 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

❖ FAITH FORMATION & PARISH INFORMATION ❖

MEN'S RETREAT

35th Annual Vita Nova Men's Retreat 2020
January 3-5, 2020

The 35th Annual Vita Nova Men's Retreat, led by Fr. Jeff Paveglio, will be held at the Barbara C. Harris Center in Greenfield, NH on the weekend of **January 3-5, 2020**. Register at www.vitanova.org.

RCIA

The **Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults** is the process by which people become members of the Roman Catholic Church. If you or someone you know is interested in inquiring about becoming a member of the Roman Catholic Church, call Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

ADULT CONFIRMATION

Are you an adult who has been Baptized and received Eucharist, but has not celebrated the sacrament of Confirmation? The adult Confirmation process is an opportunity to complete the Sacraments of Initiation. If you would like to prepare for Confirmation, or if you have questions, call Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

PARENTS BAPTISM PREPARATION SESSION

The monthly preparation session for infant Baptism will be held after the 10:00 AM Liturgy on **Sunday, January 5, 2020** in the Parish Office living room. All parents planning to celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism are welcome. Families wishing to celebrate Baptism in the Church must be registered (according to Church Canon Law) and practicing (attending Sunday Mass) for 3 full months before a Baptism can be scheduled. The use of the envelope system is always optional; however, it does guarantee a manner of accountability. For most families, the Pastor or staff can easily verify attendance during these three months. Church Canon Law also regulates baptismal sponsors (godparents). Sponsors must be at least 16, fully initiated (having received Baptism, Eucharist, and Confirmation), and be practicing Catholics living Christian lives consistent with the Church's teaching. Please see Fr. Albert with questions.

CREIGHTON FERTILITYCARE SYSTEM

The Creighton FertilityCare System is a highly effective and morally acceptable natural method of family planning. It is healthy and strengthens marriage. It is used to achieve a pregnancy or avoid a pregnancy and can be useful in the diagnosis and treatment of reproductive disease. Online introductory classes will be held on the first Wednesday and third Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM. For more information, contact Mary Menendez, CFCP, St. Gerard Majella FertilityCare Services, at 603-642-8050 or CreightonFertility@yahoo.com.

CATHOLIC SCHOOLS SURVEY

The Catholic Schools Office for the Diocese of Manchester has launched a state-wide research project to learn more about the perception and influence of Catholic schools. Please help our schools by completing this survey at tinyurl.com/DioceseOfManchesterSurvey.

ADORATION

We are truly blessed to have times for Adoration of Our Lord in our Parish. This time of prayer and intercession is not only a source of great grace for the individual, but it is a great source of grace for us as a parish family, as well.

We have many who have made the commitment to spend an hour each week with our Eucharistic Lord, **but** we need more people so there will be at least two people at each hour. We are also looking for people who would be able to substitute.

Newton – Thursday
8:30 AM – 8:30 PM

If you can commit to one hour a week in Adoration of our Lord, or if you can be a substitute, please contact Cathy Smith at 603-382-8324, ext. 305 or email her at csmith@stluketheevangelist.net.

The Church in Plaistow is open all day on Wednesdays for people to stop by and pray before the presence of Jesus in the tabernacle.

❖ PARISH DIRECTORY ❖

Parish Office	382-8324
Parish Prayer Line	382-8324 x 314
St. Vincent de Paul Society	382-8324 x 315
St. Luke's Food Pantry	819-4949
Preschool	382-9783
Presentation of Mary Convent	382-2744

Fr. Albert Tremblay	fr.albert@stluketheevangelist.net
Cathy Smith	csmith@stluketheevangelist.net
Joyce Szapa	jszczapa@stluketheevangelist.net
Jackie Tremblay	jtremblay@stluketheevangelist.net
Thomas Kondel	tkondel@stluketheevangelist.net
Val Barczak	mvmbarczak@comcast.net
Youth Ministry	youth@stluketheevangelist.net
Parish Council	parishcouncil@stluketheevangelist.net

✠ **Parish News ~ Youth News ~ Around The Diocese** ✠

ANNUAL CLOTHING DRIVE

Kimberly's 14th Annual Holiday Give Away!!!

It's that time again – to clean your closets and start again!!! We all have clothes taking up space in our homes while there are people on the streets who are cold. Because of this, I am holding my 14th Annual Clothing/Coat/Canned Food Drive at St. Luke the Evangelist Parish in Plaistow, NH from **12:00 to 4:00 PM on January 4 & 5, 2020**. The items that will be collected include, but are not limited to: winter jackets, new and used clothing from any season and any decade, non-perishable food items, business clothing, blankets, sheets, hats, gloves, and unused socks and underwear (preferably in their packages). I request that all clothing be cleaned prior to donation. The clothing received will be donated to organizations such as Ruth's House, Emmaus House, and Catie's Closet. The non-perishable food items will be brought to St. Luke's Food Pantry. If there are any questions, or individuals interested in volunteering, please contact me personally at kimberly-andrade@comcast.net. Thank you so much for your generosity. Merry Christmas and God bless you!

Kimberly (Andrade) Clenord

PARISH OFFICE CLOSED

In observance of the Christmas and New Year's holidays, the Parish Office will **close at 12:00 Noon on Monday, December 23, 2019 and will remain closed until Monday, January 6, 2020**.

NO ADORATION

There will be NO Adoration in Newton or Plaistow during Christmas and New Year's weeks.

WINTER WEATHER CLOSINGS

Saint Luke the Evangelist Parish Office, Holy Angels Cemetery Office, Saint Luke Food Pantry and the Parish Liturgical schedule complies with the longstanding inclement weather policy of Saint Luke Religious Education Program and Holy Angels Pre-School-Kindergarten: **If the Timberlane and/or Sanborn regional school districts close because of inclement weather, ALL Parish Offices and Parish programs will be closed or suspended. All activities by any Parish or non-Parish groups will be cancelled for that day/evening on both campuses.** In the event of a weather related closing, the scheduled weekday Liturgy will not be held and the intention (if any) will be moved to a conveniently available date. **Sunday (or Saturday evening) liturgies can never be cancelled, but all are advised to use prudence when deciding to travel to Church during winter storms.**

CATHOLIC CHARITIES NEW HAMPSHIRE ACQUIRES PROGRAM SERVING AT-RISK VETERANS

Building on our commitment to serving the poor and vulnerable across New Hampshire, Catholic Charities NH acquired Manchester-based Liberty House. Liberty House, which is now an official program of Catholic Charities, serves homeless and at-risk veterans through sober transitional housing, clothing and food distribution and various mental and physical wellness programs. Many of these veterans face immense challenges and invisible wounds, such as trauma, addiction and a lack of secure housing. It is our goal to expand on the work Liberty House has done for more than 15 years – and through your support – create more hope, independence and self-sufficiency for this extremely vulnerable and underserved population.

**From the
Pastor's Desk**



HOLY ANGELS CEMETERY CLOSING

Holy Angels Cemetery in Plaistow is closed until Spring 2020. This decision comes as result of the real dangers of snow and ice in the Cemetery and the costs to Parishioners to inter during the winter months. Please contact the Parish Office with any questions.

**KNIGHTS OF COLUMBUS
ST JUDE COUNCIL # 6617
GIVE YOUR PARISH COMMUNITY
1 HOUR A MONTH**

The Knights of Columbus are a vital and vibrant part of the St Luke the Evangelist Parish. We welcome any practicing Catholic man 18 or older to join the Knights, whose main purpose is charitable works in support of our parish and community. Joining is simple – talk to a brother Knight or you can now join on-line. Go to www.kofc.org/joinus. Your Council is involved in many activities from collecting money for people with intellectual disabilities through the Tootsie Roll Drive to the annual St Jude Golf Open which raises money for parish families in need. The list is as long as you want it to be. Do you have a certain passion you would like to get involved in? Come join us and make it a reality! We are Catholic men. We live by principles informed by faith. We are sons, fathers, husbands, and grandfathers. Join us on life's greatest adventure to discover the man God calls you to be. Feel free to call Dan Sullivan at 603-770-4803, email him at dans49@comcast.net, or catch him at the 8:00 AM Sunday Mass in Newton. For more information about the Knights, go to www.kofc.org/un/en/todays-knights/what-we-do.html

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH



Families

God our Father,
we first encounter you in the love of
our families,
and we give thanks for those who have
loved us.
Yet no earthly family is perfect.
All need your grace.
We pray especially for struggling families:

for single-parent households,
for absent parents and their children,
for grandparents raising grandchildren,
for foster parents and for orphans,
and for those with no one left to care for them.
Bring us into your one eternal family,
a family filled with your peace.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Sunday, December 29, 2019

Perfecting our Bonds



Today's Readings: Sirach 3:2–6, 12–14; Psalm 128:1–2, 3, 4–5; Colossians 3:12–21 or 3:12–17; Matthew 2:13–15, 19–23. Today we reflect on the many meanings of *family*. Our first reading elaborates on the Fourth Commandment: “Honor your father and mother.” In cultures that prize youthfulness and autonomy, the aged seem like burdens or even reminders of our mortality. This passage enjoins us to respect and treasure our parents and elders. Acting otherwise offends our heavenly Father.

Joseph and Mary modeled the holiness God wanted for his people. Jesus’ parents could not have guided their son in holiness had they themselves not been open to God’s love and guidance. Today we hear especially how Joseph modeled parental love. When his family was in danger, he fled to

a foreign land in order to protect them. By protecting Mary and Jesus, Joseph ultimately protected the much larger family of God.

During his ministry, Jesus formed a new family. This family is open to everyone and is based not on one’s ancestry but on love and faith in Jesus. St. Paul describes the behavior of those who belong to this family in words that are inspiring and heart-warming. Members of God’s family are people of peace and gratitude who treat one another with the same love God has shown them.

Our treatment of both biological and spiritual family members may fall short of the behavior commanded in these readings. We ask one another for forgiveness as we call upon God to strengthen our family bonds.



THIS WEEK AT HOME

Monday, December 30 The Era of Salvation

Anna tells how a new era of salvation has begun with Jesus. The old world with its deadly vices like anger and pride is passing away. Those who follow Jesus and his life of love become part of God's new world, a world of justice, peace, and mutual love. Today thank someone who has been like Anna to you, teaching you to give thanks to God and to do his will so as to become part of his new world. *Today's Readings: 1 John 2:12–17; Psalm 96:7–8a, 8b–9, 10; Luke 2:36–40.*

Tuesday, December 31 For the World

St. John sometimes uses the term *the world* simply to refer to everyone, but at other times *the world* refers to evil, to hostile elements, and to people who oppose God and his Son. God offers the light of his salvation for all the world, but some people prefer to remain in darkness. Such people might even have been baptized and anointed with the Spirit, professing their belief that Jesus was sent by God to save the world, only to turn away from the truth later. Talk with or pray for someone who has left the Catholic Church. *Today's Readings: 1 John 2:18–21; Psalm 96:1–2, 11–12, 13; John 1:1–18.*

Wednesday, January 1 Mary, the Holy Mother of God

The use of the title Mother of God emerged in the early centuries of the Church during debates about the nature of Jesus. Some theologians claimed that only the human Jesus took flesh in Mary's womb. Others rightly insisted that Jesus wasn't sometimes fully human and at other times fully divine: he was fully divine even while in his mother's womb. Mary is thus the bearer of divinity, the Mother of God. Honor her by praying the Rosary today. *Today's Readings: Numbers 6:22–27; Psalm 67:2–3, 5, 6, 8 (2a); Galatians 4:4–7; Luke 2:16–21.*

Thursday, January 2 St. Basil the Great and St. Gregory Nazianzen

The Gospel of John reads like a great courtroom drama in which Jesus is on trial, witnesses are called, and we must ask ourselves who we believe Jesus is. John the Baptist is the first witness to take the stand. John's true testimony about Jesus, the Son, unites him to the Father. Several centuries later Sts. Basil and Gregory also strove to speak truly about who Jesus was at a time when people denied Jesus' full divinity. Take some time today to reflect first on Jesus' divinity and then on his humanity. *Today's Readings: 1 John 2:22–28; Psalm 98:1, 2–3ab, 3cd–4; John 1:19–28.*

Friday, January 3 Lamb of God

John the Baptist continues his testimony, declaring that Jesus is the Lamb of God. Jesus is the Passover lamb who saves people from death, the food of fellowship between God and his people, a lamb sacrificed for our sins, and the triumphant Lamb who now reigns in heaven. He purifies all who believe in him, all who strive to turn away from sin and toward God's love. Write a prayer or draw a picture that honors Jesus, the Lamb of God. *Today's Readings: 1 John 2:29–3:6; Psalm 98:1, 3cd–4, 5–6; John 1:29–34.*

Saturday, January 4 St. Elizabeth Ann Seton

Today we celebrate the life of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton, who founded the first Catholic school. The First Reading assures us that although we each sin, we are forgiven by God, who dwells with his Church, keeping it pure. When John the Baptist urges his disciples to follow Jesus, the process of forming this purified community begins. The two disciples, soon joined by Peter, stay with Jesus. They will remain with him forever. Imagine that you go to stay with Jesus, too. What do you talk about with him for the rest of that day? *Today's Readings: 1 John 3:7–10; Psalm 98:1, 7–8, 9; John 1:35–42.*



Restore • Renew • Proclaim

the Hope that is Christ



The Diocese of Manchester is in the process of continuing to strengthen and renew faith formation in our parish, school and home school communities. Through this process we are being called anew to “Restore, Renew and Proclaim the Hope that is Christ.”

The goal is to make lifelong faith formation a priority and a reality throughout the diocese. This requires a few things:

- Making adult faith formation a priority in our parishes, which includes formation of catechists, parents and the entire adult community.
- Strengthening our youth ministry programs to include all teens of high school age.
- Reimagining our sacrament preparation processes to include a return to celebrating the sacraments of initiation in their **restored order**: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist.

What is Lifelong Faith Formation?

Lifelong faith formation is a process of growing in the faith that begins with baptism. Immersed in the life of the Trinity, we are adopted sons and daughters of God our Father, brothers and sisters of Jesus Christ and temples of the Holy Spirit. Like all human relationships, developing and deepening our relationship with the Trinity happens gradually and over time. Consequently, lifelong faith formation provides opportunities and experiences throughout the entire life span to strengthen our relationship and knowledge of God, Jesus and the Spirit; to enhance our understanding of Scripture, Tradition and doctrines of our faith; and to sustain us in living as disciples of Jesus Christ.

What does restored order of the Sacraments mean?

Restored order means returning the three sacraments of Christian initiation to the logical order in which they were designed to be celebrated: first Baptism, then Confirmation, then Eucharist. During the first five hundred years or so of the history of the Church, it was always the case that the sacraments of Christian initiation were celebrated in this sequence.

Why is the Diocese of Manchester changing the age of Confirmation?

By placing Confirmation at this age, the Diocese of Manchester will be following the natural sequence of the sacraments of Christian initiation. In addition, by placing Confirmation **prior to the reception of First Eucharist** it makes it easier to view the Eucharist as the summit of Christian initiation.

How is the celebration of Confirmation going to change in the Diocese of Manchester?

By 2021, the standard age of Confirmation is going to be third grade, and Confirmation will be celebrated at the same liturgy as First Communion. As a result, the preparation and reception of the sacraments of initiation throughout the Diocese of Manchester will be Baptism in infancy, Confirmation and Eucharist in third grade. Although not a sacrament of initiation, the Sacrament of Reconciliation will be received in the second grade.

What are the benefits of restored order?

First, it will highlight that the Eucharist, not Confirmation, is the culmination of Christian initiation. Secondly, with the reception of grace of the Holy Spirit at a younger age, it will give children greater courage and guidance in facing the increasing difficulties of living a Christian life. Finally, it will allow for more opportunities for parents to take greater responsibility in their role as the primary educators of their children.

The Gospel at Home

This Week's Gospel: Luke 2:1-14 and Matthew 2:1-12

God blessed us by becoming a member of the human family. This is what Christmas celebrates. The Holy Family and God's incarnation is why there is something so very human about this feast, something that touches us in a way deeper than mere nostalgia. Christmas celebrates God's becoming one of us and one with us.

Jesus comes as an infant, placed in the care of a struggling, but lovely family. We are reminded at Christmas that our families are shrouded in the same holiness that Jesus' family is. We look to their lives together as an example of how to love each other through celebrations and struggles. We also remember the Epiphany in this week's lesson. The Magi remind us that Jesus came for everyone on Earth.

Exploring the Gospel Message

Seeds (Preschool): Your child will be bringing home new characters to add to their manger scene. Place the scene where everyone can see and enjoy it. Invite your child to move the figures around to tell you about the night of Jesus' birth and the visit from the Magi. Remind your child to thank Mary and Joseph for their sacrifices that allowed Jesus to come into their family.

Promise (Grades K–1): Ask your child to show you the connect-the-dots picture of Christmas on the front page of the lesson booklet. Together you can place the figures from the Magi story into the manger scene your child has made. Be sure to visit the manger in your parish church during Christmas time. While you are there, thank Mary for being a wonderful mother to Jesus. Say a prayer there that everyone will hear the Good News of Jesus.

Good News (Grades 2–3): This week's lesson focuses on the birth of Jesus and the visit of the Magi. Have your child lead your family in acting

out the Christmas and Epiphany plays in the lesson booklet. Talk to your child about how Mary fulfilled her calling to be Jesus' mother with her whole heart. Assure your child that you try your best to follow Mary's example. Share why this story is important for all of Jesus' followers. Your child has made a manger scene. Display your child's work where all in the family can enjoy it.

Venture (Grades 4–6): Christmas time is often filled with various activities, and it may be difficult to find time to share as a family. Try to set aside time with your child to talk about the Christmas story. It is good to remember that Jesus Christ came so that all people could be saved. Talk about all the elements of Jesus' birth—the journey to Bethlehem, the vision of the angels, the shepherds at the manger, and the visit of the Magi. Talk about the ways your family celebrates the feast and decide on ways you can make sure that Jesus is at the center of your family's Christmas.

Visions (Grades 7–9): Read together as a family the Christmas story presented as a play in this week's lesson. Talk about why the shepherds were the first to hear of the great mystery of Jesus' birth. Consider doing the same for the Epiphany account from this week. Your youngster's class learned the Greek word *Theotokos* as it refers to Mary. Ask your young person to explain the word to your family. Play the Story Cards Game from this week's lesson.

Pray Together

Pick one of the feast days during the season (not a Sunday) to attend Mass together as a family. Use the opportunity to pay a visit to the manger scene at your parish church and pray that you will always be faithful followers of Jesus and always bring joy to the world.



Bringing Home the Word

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph (A)

December 29, 2019

The Formula for a Holy Family

By Mary Katharine Deeley

At our wedding, my husband and I promised to love and honor each other, to welcome children, and to welcome everyone they knew. Friends came and went, always finding a warm welcome and a bowl of fruit salad. It didn't matter that our house was small—our love was great. We grew together in the understanding that we couldn't do anything we wanted individually; we had to consider each other as we made major decisions.

It wasn't always convenient. Without the grace of God, we might have found

the promise difficult, but we submitted ourselves to God and each other—and found strength in the process. Thirty-plus years later, we're still growing deeper in love and in willingness to put the other first.

What makes for a holy family? We celebrate Mary, Joseph, and Jesus because they—individually and together—submitted their lives to God and grew closer to one another. Today, that's still the formula. It requires every item on Paul's list in Colossians: compassion, kindness, humility, and patience—with a good measure of gratitude and love thrown in.

Is it always easy? No. We will—occasionally, and sometimes suddenly—have to move, change jobs, or deal with emergencies. But the grace of family is a peculiar thing. It gets us through the rough times and makes us appreciate the easy ones.

We're part of God's family. The more we practice the fruits of love, the closer we come to the holiness and example of that First Family. +

The grace of family gets us through the rough times and makes us appreciate the easy ones.

A Word from Pope Francis

Every family should look to the icon of the Holy Family of Nazareth. Its daily life had its share of burdens and even nightmares, as when they met with Herod's implacable violence. This last was an experience that, sad to say, continues to afflict the many refugee families who in our day feel rejected and helpless.

—On Love in the Family (*Amoris Laetitia*), March 19, 2016



Sunday Readings

Sirach 3:2–6, 12–14

Those who respect their father will live a long life; / those who obey the Lord honor their mother.

Colossians 3:12–21 or 3:12–17

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience.

Matthew 2:13–15, 19–23

The angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt."

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION

- Do I strive to make home a welcoming refuge for family and friends?
- Do I reach out to support my extended family as well as my core family?

Honoring Our Parents

By Kathy Coffey

"Honor your father and mother."

—Exodus 20:12

What nugget of wisdom does the Fourth Commandment teach us? Today some parents and children are estranged; others wish their parents were alive to honor them. But the following story shows how delightfully some children still honor their parents.

Jan celebrated her sixtieth birthday with friends, far from her children, who lived in five different states. "No gifts," she had told her kids. "All I need are memories of you." Then the postal service delivered a special box. Within it were sixty slips of paper on which Jan's children had written sixty special memories. She read and cherished each one, mixing laughter and tears.

Why honor our parents? In the world of the Bible and in good homes today, parents provide images of trust, hope, and serenity that enable the young to face formidable obstacles. To their children they convey the message, spoken or unspoken, "You are loved. You are wonderful."

All humans are constantly making the passage from the known to the unknown. Parents who have endured disappointment, even tragedy, can help their offspring travel that passage with dignity. "We've made mistakes," they



say. "We've lost jobs, health, or our dearest loves. But it didn't kill us. Something in people endures, continues to trust, and moves forward in confidence."

Related Roles

Furthermore, parents are memory keepers. When their children hit snags, they remind them what

glorious people they are. And if humor, perspective, or packages from home can lighten the load, they give those, too.

The wisest parents honor their children in turn. They count on their children's good sense to pilot them through difficulties, so they restrain the "free advice." They clarify the boundaries of their role: providing safe harbors, but holding the ropes loosely. They encourage children to explore God's beautiful world, not burdening them with unnecessary anxiety. They recognize the arenas where the young have more expertise, inviting them to shine there.

Many parents struggle with handing on their faith to a generation that seems unenthusiastic at best. There, too, honor comes in. Realizing that the gift of faith, no matter how important, can't be coerced or controlled, parents can follow the advice of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton. Agonizing over her sons' shenanigans, she once said, "What's a mother to do but pray and dote, pray and dote?"

If the roles of parent and child seem too idealized, we need only look to Jesus and his mother for role models. (Unfortunately, Scripture records little of Jesus' relationship with Joseph.)

Learning from Jesus and Mary

The wedding at Cana provides the perfect example of their honoring each other. Mary wisely tells Jesus of the need: "They have no wine." Then she backs off. She trusts his instincts to resolve the crisis.

Despite his reservations ("My hour has not yet come"), Jesus in turn honors his mother. Whether he was responding to her, or to the couple's dire need, we may never know. Despite the exhaustion and pain of his passion, Jesus continues to honor Mary, making sure even from the cross that his beloved disciple would continue to care for her (John 19:26–27).

In Jesus' day, women with no son or husband for protection often became desperate beggars. Knowing that sad reality, Jesus makes sure that John will take her into his own home. Saint Ignatius imagined that the first appearance of Jesus after the resurrection, although not recorded in Scripture, must surely have been to Mary.

As parents and children who follow Jesus, we are called to do likewise. +

PRAYER

Lord, you teach me the importance of family life. Keep my family in peace and deepen my love, respect, and appreciation for all the members of my family.

—From *Joyful Meditations for Every Day of Advent and the 12 Days of Christmas*,
Rev. Warren J. Savage and Mary Ann McSweeney

WEEKDAY READINGS

December 30–January 4

Monday, Sixth Day in the Octave of Christmas: 1 Jn 2:12–17 / Lk 2:36–40

Tuesday, Seventh Day in the Octave of Christmas: 1 Jn 2:18–21 / Jn 1:1–18

Wednesday, Solemnity of Mary: Nm 6:22–27 / Gal 4:4–7 / Lk 2:16–21

Thursday, Sts. Basil the Great and Gregory Nazianzen: 1 Jn 2:22–28 / Jn 1:19–28

Friday, Christmas Weekday: 1 Jn 2:29–3:6 / Jn 1:29–34

Saturday, St. Elizabeth Ann Seton: 1 Jn 3:7–10 / Jn 1:35–42

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