

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

31 DECEMBER 2017

Readings for Sunday, December 31: Genesis 15:1-6, 21:1-3; Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19; Luke 2:22-40.

Family life is rooted in the unconditional love of God as witnessed by the Holy Family. Mindful of His covenant, God blesses the faith of Abraham and Sarah in their son, Isaac. The child Jesus and his parents are blessed by Simeon.

Readings for Sunday, January 7: Isaiah 60:1-6; Ephesians 3:2-3a, 5-6; Matthew 2:1-12.

St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother Parish Special Day of Prayer is Monday.
Adoration of the Most Blessed Sacrament: Monday after 9:00 A.M. Mass to 4:00 PM in the Chapel.

MASSES FOR THE WEEK

<u>Date</u>	<u>Intention</u>	<u>Requested By</u>
1 Jan. MON. 9:00 AM	Marie Dellaquila	Husband & family
3 Jan. WED. 9:00 AM	Charles J. Baldasano	Jim & Anna Baldasano
4 Jan. THU. 9:00 AM	Earl Keck	Wife, Cathy
5 Jan. FRI. 9:00 AM	Paul Peterka, Sr. Family	Francis J. Czeiner Family
6 Jan. SAT. 4:00 PM	People of St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother Parish	
7 Jan. SUN. 9:00 AM	Those Enrolled in St. Gabriel of the Sorrowful Mother Parish Memorial Fund	



ETERNAL REST grant unto them, O Lord. May the souls of the faithful departed rest in peace.

PRAY FOR THE SICK AND SUFFERING of the parish especially those in homes and hospitals.

REMEMBER OUR TROOPS: Pray that God will bless and protect our young men and women in the military.

SOLEMNITY OF MARY MOTHER OF GOD, January 1 -
 Mass at 9:00 AM.

THE PARISH OFFICE will be closed on Monday, January 1.
 A Happy, Healthy New Year to you and your family!

NO ADORATION OF BLESSED SACRAMENT on Monday,
 January 1. Adoration resumes on Monday, January 8.

WOMEN'S SOCIETY MEETING on Thursday, January 4 at
 7:00 PM in the social hall. Hostesses: Ginger Scheidt and
 Marie Hildebrand.

THE ROSARY PRAYER GROUP leads the recitation of the
 Rosary every Sunday before the 9:00 AM Mass. They also
 pray the Rosary before the 9:00 AM weekday Masses. All
 are welcome to join in these special Marian devotions.

MINISTRY SCHEDULE - January 6/7:

4:00 PM Mass

Lector - John Nester

Extraordinary Ministers - Mara Tamaro, Vincent
 Tamaro, Terry Donnelly, John Bracaglia, Tony Vitacco,
 Cindy Nore

Altar Servers - Maeve Donnelly

Greeters - Patty Wade and Monica Bauer

9:00 AM Mass

Lector - Rocco D'Emilio

Extraordinary Ministers - Jim Bucciaglia, Denise
 Bucciaglia, Chris Gerasimowicz, Rita Templin, Helen
 George

Altar Server - Domenic Gerasimowicz

Greeter - Sylvia and Tom Marcheskie

REFLECTIONS FROM THE DESK OF FR. GREGORY J. HICKEY

Holy Family Sunday

Psychologists have isolated about 12 characteristics that happy and successful families share, while most unhappy families are unhappy or dysfunctional in their own unique and individual ways. I want to talk about only one quality that helps marriages and families to be successful and happy and that is holiness, since this is the Feast of the Holy Family. This does not mean that holy families are isolated from the ordinary problems of daily life. Holy people have as many problems to deal with in daily life as anyone else but they usually have a good support system to fall back on and that is God, who helps them deal with difficulties. The word holy in Sacred Scripture does not mean pietistic but fulfilling one's state in life. Each of us is called to do something with our lives and we are called to be holy.

The Holy Family had their share of problems. If you read the early chapters of St. Matthew and St. Luke's gospels you might get the impression their lives were full of problems. What panic Joseph and Mary must have felt when they were not able to find Jesus for three days. I am sure many parents who have been at a mall and have lost a child for ten minutes can relate to that gospel.

The Holy Family was holy because God's will was first in their lives. St. Luke wants us to know this. He pointed out many instances where Mary and Joseph always did what God wanted of them, whether through the message of an angel or by their fidelity to the Jewish law. For example, Luke tells us the Holy Family would go to the Temple every year to celebrate the feast of Passover. That trip from Galilee to Jerusalem was not like taking a drive from Stowe to Harrisburg on a Sunday afternoon. Even though Jerusalem was only about 70 miles from Galilee, it would have taken several days; most people had to travel on foot because they didn't have any other means of transportation. They also had to travel in groups because travel was dangerous. They could have easily met robbers or wild animals along the way.

The willingness to do what God wants brings with it the development of many values such as honesty, fidelity, responsibility, and virtues such as Paul mentions: heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience, forgiving one another and putting up with one another, and above all love, which binds them all together and makes them perfect. These values and virtues help people have good and solid relationships. When I say if we are a holy family our family will more likely be happy and successful, I'm not just making up things or proposing theories that I believe are good ideas. A number of statistical studies have shown that regular church goers live happier and more successful lives and have happier and more successful marriages. A few years ago, the rate of divorce, for example, was twice as high among non-church goers as it was among church goers.

We just celebrated Christmas and it was a joy to see so many families at Church on Christmas Eve and Christmas day. We gathered in our homes or traveled to other homes to be with family on this special day when we welcomed Jesus again to our world. Whether we have good days or bad days, we can always fall back on our family because they will love us unconditionally. This is what the Holy Family is all about. Jesus came into our world because He loves each one of us unconditionally and wants us to love Him back but He will never force us to love him. It is our choice.

This weekend we celebrate the importance of another family, our parish family. Here too we discover who we are as God's children, how to trust God's children, how to trust God and to love God and one another. We learn values here too, values intended to lead us into eternal life. Hopefully we learn how to give as well as take, how to forgive as well as to be forgiven. Here we gather around a family table to be fed, not with perishable food but with food that will nourish us eternally. Our faith community is just as important in its own way as our family of origin. And the Lord's Supper that we share is just as important to our spiritual well-being as being together and eating together as a family is to our emotional well-being.

On the Feast of the Holy Family, we wish all of our families well and we pray for our family of origin as well as all of you who belong to our parish family. We have welcomed 11 new families to our parish this year. We have also said good-bye to 19 families who have moved out of the parish. Some have moved to Florida and North Carolina and others have moved to Royersford and Collegeville and to new parish families.

Going back to my main theme of family, do you want to be a healthy family? If you can keep two rules uppermost in your family relationships (keep God first and love one another), you have most of the battle won. Continue to enjoy your family especially during this season of great joy and may 2018 be filled with much love, hope, and joy.

Happy New Year to each of you!

Fr. Hickey

Parish Support

Due to an early printing schedule, figures from the December 24 collection will be printed in the January 7 bulletin.

“CONSIDER REMEMBERING YOUR PARISH IN YOUR WILL!” For further information, please call the parish office.

“ADVERTISER OF THE WEEK”

ST. GABRIEL LODGE

610-326-4137

ST. GABRIEL OF THE SORROWFUL MOTHER PARISH MEMORIAL FUND DONATIONS received in memory of: ANGELINE TESTA from Barbara & Michael Hipszer, Jeannine Ferrante, Mary Ann Karpinski, Ralph & Gerry Murgia; EDWARD E. HOFFMAN, SR. from Tony & Theresa Vitacco.

2018 MASS BOOK - Requests for Masses to be offered on a specific day during 2018 can be made at the parish office during regular business hours. The Mass stipend of \$10.00 must be paid at the time you request the Mass Intention.



Raffle Drawing

PARISH LOTTERY RAFFLE TICKET based on the PA Pick 3 Evening Number. Winning ticket number must be the exact number drawn for the PA Pick 3 Evening Number. Tickets are \$5.00 each and are sold on a monthly basis. The prize for the winning ticket is \$50.00 on weekdays and \$100.00 on Sundays and one specially-designated weekday. Tickets are available after the Masses on weekends and at the parish office on weekdays. **This is our major fund raiser for the parish. We encourage each family to purchase at least one ticket each month. Your support is greatly appreciated.**

CLEAN-UP PROJECT to begin on Saturday, January 6 at 9:00 AM and if needed on Saturday, January 13 at 9:00 AM. Men and women needed to sort through items all over the church (kitchen, stage, work room, etc.) including the 8 foot tables and chairs. Any usable but unneeded items will be on sale on Saturday, January 20. Details of the sale to be released in upcoming bulletins.



OUR ADVENT-CHRISTMAS GIVING TREE is in the vestibule of church until Sunday, January 7. We are collecting items for Birthright of Pottstown for the babies and mothers in need in our area. Items most needed are: 3

month girls outfits, diapers up to size 3, baby wipes, socks up to size 18 month, receiving blankets, baby wash cloths, bibs, bottles, onesies size newborn and 0-3 month, maternity tops size L and XL and Leggings size XL for expectant mothers. Help us decorate our tree by placing an ornament on the tree for each gift you give. Ornaments are in a box next to the Giving Tree. Thank you for your generosity!

HALUSKY SALE

Saturday, January 20

Pick-up after 4:00 PM Mass in Social Hall

PRE-ORDERS ONLY

Payment due at time of pick-up

NAME _____

PHONE NUMBER _____

_____ Halusky (quart) - \$8.00

Deadline for orders is Sunday, January 14. Please place orders in collection basket or call Kathy at the parish office (610-326-5127).

Sponsored by the Women's Society.

ARCHDIOCESAN HOLY LAND PILGRIMAGE - Walk where Jesus walked. Pray at the site of Jesus' conception at Nazareth's Basilica of the Annunciation and His birth in Bethlehem's Church of the Nativity. Sail on the Sea of Galilee. Walk the Via Dolorosa to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Share the trip of a lifetime with Christians from the Holy Land and fellow pilgrims from the Archdiocese of Philadelphia from February 1 - 11, 2018. For more information about the itinerary, pricing, and registration, contact Susan (1-800-842-4842 or susan@select-intl.com) or visit www.selectinternationaltours.com.