

SUNDAY *Plus*

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph **Divine Office Week I Year A**

The reality of family life



Image: *The Flight into Egypt*, Cairo, Egypt © Sr Janet Fearn

The artistic imagination has often been kindled by the flight into Egypt. Usually, Our Lady is shown as seated in

a meadow, feeding her child with the fruit that St Joseph is industriously pulling down from the trees. Around them flit small and engaging angels. Or, in more serious mode, we may see Mary on a donkey, orderly and composed, while her faithful Joseph either lingers behind or leads the donkey by its reins... But this is really to make light of what must have been a harrowing experience...

Both adults are small-town Jews, running away from an armed pursuer into unknown territory. They have little money. They know nobody in Egypt. All they have is an anguished determination to guard the child who has been entrusted to them. How anxious they must have been, how ashamed by their lack of resources, how profoundly aware of their dependence on God...

Joseph and Mary had a rocky start to their marriage. He, quite naturally, suspected her

of betraying him, both a great sorrow and a scandal. She, on the other hand, must have been wounded that he did not trust her. Then there was the difficult journey to Bethlehem, the astounding events there; and now there is this dangerous crisis. It must have been a time of real growth in marital love for both of them. Each had to trust the other. Only as true partners could they nourish and protect their son.

All relationships go through difficult periods, but God can help us make those very difficulties a source of deeper understanding and love. The example of the Holy Family encourages us to accept the reality of family life, which may at times be a painful reality. They are a source of hope and courage.

Sr Wendy Becket, The Art of Christmas

God loves us, God loves you all, and evil will not prevail! All of us are in God's hands. So, let us move forward, without fear, together, hand in hand with God and with one another!

Pope Leo

Prayer to the Holy Family


Jesus, Mary and Joseph, in you we contemplate the splendour of true love; to you we turn with trust. Holy Family of Nazareth, grant that our families too may be places of communion and prayer, authentic schools of the Gospel and small domestic churches.

Holy Family of Nazareth, may families never again experience violence, rejection and division; may all who have been hurt or scandalised find ready comfort and healing.

Holy Family of Nazareth, make us once more mindful of the sacredness and inviolability of the family, and its beauty in God's plan.

Jesus, Mary and Joseph, graciously hear our prayer. Amen.

Pope Francis

Holy Family of Nazareth, watch over, protect and bless families everywhere, in all their joys and struggles. Bring them closer to you and to each other. I pray in a special way for my own family. You know their needs. Be with them.  Amen.

Jubilee 2025: Pilgrims of Hope

Welcome the stranger

Signs of hope should also be present for migrants who leave their homelands behind in search of a better life for themselves and for their families. Their expectations must not be frustrated by prejudice and rejection. A spirit of welcome, which embraces everyone with respect for his or her dignity, should be accompanied by a sense of responsibility, lest anyone be denied the right to a dignified existence. Exiles, displaced persons and refugees, whom international tensions force to emigrate in order to avoid war, violence and discrimination, ought to be guaranteed security and access to employment and education, the means they need to find their place in a new social context.

May the Christian community always be prepared to defend the rights of those who are most vulnerable, opening wide its doors to welcome them, lest anyone ever be robbed of the hope of a better future.

Pope Francis, Spes non confundit, 13



READINGS

Today:
Ecclesiasticus
3:2-6. 12-14
Colossians
3:12-21
Matthew
2:13-15. 19-23

Monday:
1 John 2:3-11
Luke 2:22-35

Tuesday:
1 John 2:12-17
Luke 2:36-40

Wednesday:
1 John 2:18-21
John 1:1-18

Thursday:
Numbers 6:22-27
Galatians 4:4-7
Luke 2:16-21

Friday:
1 John 2:22 - 28
John 1:19-28

Saturday:
1 John 2:29-3:6
John 1:29-34

Next Sunday:
Ecclesiasticus
24:1-2. 8-12
Ephesians
1:3-6. 15-18
John 1:1-18