

WEEK OF DECEMBER 30, 2018

MONDAY

1 Jn 2:18-21 * Ps 96:1-2,11-13 * Jn 1:1-18

TUESDAY

MARY, HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

9:00am Mass

Nm 6:22-27 * Ps 67:2-3,5-6,8 * Gal 4:4-7 * Lk 2:16-21

WEDNESDAY

No Mass

1 Jn 2:22-28 * Ps 98:1-4 * Jn 1:19-28

THURSDAY

8:00am Mass

1 Jn 2:29 - 3:6 * Ps 98:1,3-6 * Jn 1:29-34

FRIDAY

1 Jn 3:7-10 * Ps 98:1,7-9 * Jn 1:35-42

SATURDAY

4:30pm Mass

1 Jn 3:11-21 * Ps 100:1-5 * Jn 1:43-51

SUNDAY

9:30am Mass

Children's Liturgy of the Word & Nursery

Is 60:1-6 * Ps 72:1-2,7-8,10-13 * Eph 3:2-3,5-6 * Mt 2:1-12



PARISH ACTIVITIES

Thurs., Jan. 3 7:00pm Baptism Prep I

Sun., Jan. 6 10:45am Religious Education

The Parish Office will close at noon on New Year's Eve and re-open on January 2, 2019.

THANK YOU: We are blessed in the parish with the volunteer spirit that prevails in many of our members. This is no more evident than in the preparation and participation necessary for the great Feast of Christmas. Let us be grateful for those who spent many practice sessions getting ready for their role in the children's choir, the hand chimes and adult choir. Let us be grateful for those who decorated the church, and for all the liturgical ministers who made themselves available for the services. We are most grateful for their generous service.

EDUCATION/FORMATION

Family Talk Time Celebrating Sunday for Catholic Families, Sara McGinnis Lee
Whom do you consider family?

► **Reflecting on the Word:** Parents can identify with Mary and Joseph's concern and then be taken aback by Jesus' reply. This reading gives us a chance to consider the mysteries that are part of our lives. Jesus' statement did not give his parents an easy answer; it presented them with a mystery. Joseph and Mary went home with Jesus to live out the mystery. When we are confronted with what we do not understand, we need to hand ourselves over to live out the mystery.

► **Living the Word:** Jesus shows us that our obligation extends beyond our immediate family to all of our brothers and sisters in Christ. Plan to take time to connect with your parish family. As a family, decide to attend an event, invite a new parish family over for dinner, or volunteer for a new ministry. See how bringing your small family into the bigger context of the parish family can grow both the church and your children's experiences.

► **New Year's Resolutions and Your Catholic Faith:**

Melissa Knoblett-Aman, Bella Online's Catholicism Editor

With the New Year comes new hope for a new beginning. A new beginning is a perfect time to decide to strengthen your Catholic faith life. The New Year is here and it's that time of year when many people make New Year's resolutions, oftentimes only to break them soon after. Do you make New Year's resolutions? Do you keep them? Why not tie your faith to some of your New Year's resolutions/goals? Below are some ideas to implement doing just that.

Prayer – Add more prayer to your daily life. There are many ways to pray. Traditional prayers like the Rosary, talking to our Lord, admiring

his wonderful creations, quieting yourself in the presence of God through centering prayer are only a few ways to enrich your life with daily prayer. Get a daily prayer book or daily Catholic devotions book...and read it. *Living Faith* is an excellent resource.

Faith Formation – No matter how old you are (children and adults alike), there are religious education programs designed to deepen your faith knowledge and formation. Find out what your parish offers and join a program or Bible Study group.

Be Active and Get Involved – Going to Mass on Sunday is only part of being a Catholic Christian. There are so many ministries within the Catholic Church and all of them need volunteers to keep them running. What ministries are offered within your parish? What interests you? Do you see a need within your parish that's not being met? Talk to a staff person and share your ideas.

Attend Mass – Of course we should always try to attend Mass on Sundays and other Holy Days of Obligation, but daily Mass is celebrated in most parishes. Try to attend Mass as often as your schedule will allow. What better way to start the day than with our Lord?

Take Your Christianity With You – Don't leave it in the church pew when you leave Mass. Strive to live as Jesus commands us to do. By enriching your Catholic faith through going to Mass, attending faith formation programs, spending time with our Lord in daily prayer and being involved in your parish community, you will have more knowledge and tools to accomplish this goal.

AUBURN AREA CATHOLIC

► **Happy New Year!** May God's love light your way and lead you into a new year that shines with His special joy. The staff & students of AACs.

► **The school office is closed** through January 2. School will reopen Thursday, January 3, 2019.

STEWARDSHIP

Weekly Target: \$10,961.54 * Offering: \$21,647.69

Matching Gift from Dow Foundation: \$1,200.00

In Memoriam: Mary Ann Periard: \$450

Religious Retirement \$415 Christmas Flowers: \$75

► **Dear St. Gabriel Parish,** Thank you so very kindly for all the gift card donations...We are very grateful to have such a caring community. We appreciate all your support of the Toni & Trish House.

► **Dear Teens of St. Gabriel Parish,** Thank you for the wonderful fleece blankets! You are a blessing to the many families that will enjoy the warmth of them. Your friends at Beacon of Hope.

THE PARISH IN THE COMMUNITY

► **K of C Breakfast Fundraiser for Bay County Right to Life:**

Sunday, January 13, 8:30am-12:30pm at Essexville K of C,

1021 Woodside. Assorted meats, eggs, pancakes, waffles,

home fries, toast, beverages. \$8 adults, \$4 ages 6-12, under 5 free.



FROM FR. TOM'S DESK

Feast of the Holy Family

Sr. Mary McGlone, Celebration

The feast of the Holy Family offers the opportunity to reflect on the mystery of family life. In reality, every family and community share the perplexing, frustrating, demanding challenge Luke described. Put most simply, Mary and Joseph faced the difficult discovery that Jesus was not going along with them every step of the way. It is a real story of a family conflict and is symbolic of all kinds of relationships.

Every family and community have its share of the challenges summarized here. We know what it is like when family members do not go along with us on the journey. When Mary and Joseph confronted Jesus in the Temple, they confronted the fact that he would have to discover his own path in life. No matter what they might hope for him, he did not belong to them.

The story reminds us that love is rooted in profound reverence for the mystery of the other. Such reverence cultivates profound respect for the other's mysterious freedom. In that, we learn to desire that the other will become who they are meant to be rather than what we would have them be.

The feast of the Holy Family invites us to celebrate our relationships with those we love most deeply. It reminds us that the greatest gift we can give others is to respect and nurture their freedom to become all God has created them to be. Whether it is with children, spouses, siblings or members of our communities, we know it will not be easy.

Priority of God's Call (1 Sm 1)

Celebration

As Samuel's story goes on, we see him as Eli's faithful servant, groomed to replace Eli in his old age. Then one night, Samuel hears his name being called, and thinking Eli needs him, he wakes up the old man twice to find out what he wants. Finally, Eli realizes that God is calling the boy and tells him to listen and respond. That is the beginning of Samuel's prophetic vocation (1 Sm 3).

Although Hannah's story is rather drastic, both she and Eli exemplify the humble stance of people who understand that everything they have, even their own children, are gifts of God. Hannah wanted her son to become the person God had in mind for him to be. She continued to love him, visiting and bringing him all he needed, but she did not try to control his life. Like her, Eli instructed Samuel to listen to God's call rather than focus solely on serving him. Samuel would grow up to follow the example of his mother and surrogate father.

The history of Hannah and Samuel brims over with the scriptural themes of the season. Hannah who prayed in desperation, hoping against hope, symbolizes God's people through the ages. The barrenness of our lives, our inability to engender new life, will never be obstacles to God.

Hannah and Eli are the models of parents and mentors who realize that their role is to nurture and free the children given into their temporary care. Samuel is the example of the prophet, who from childhood on, learned to listen for God's voice and to respond, "Here I am."

Called into Community (Col 3)

Celebration

The author reminds us that we are God's beloved and chosen people. We are familiar with how the Hebrew Scriptures describe Israel's sense of their unique identity as God's chosen people. This reading invites us into the same self-awareness.

When we think about that, this reading becomes a serious invitation to look around at our family and our worshipping community with awe and holy curiosity. The ordinary people around us, the ones who sniffle and whose shoes are scuffed as well as the well-groomed and athletic, all of us are called *together* to be God's holy people in this moment. Each of us is beloved and created to be a gift to the rest. The more we come to believe and understand that, the more we will be the holy people God has called us together to become.

Aspect of Mystery (Luke 2)

Celebration

The centerpiece of the story is just what we call it in the joyful mysteries of the rosary: the finding of the child Jesus in the Temple. But the mystery was not where Jesus had gone. The real mystery was the process of beginning to find him, to understand who he was. The mystery in this Gospel incident centers on the question of Jesus' identity.

From all the indications we have, Mary and Joseph established what can honestly be called a holy family. Not only did they participate in the communal rituals of their faith, but the child they raised had learned to pray in the style of his mother. The first prayer we hear from her is, "May it be done to me according to your word." As he faced the greatest test of his life, he prayed, "Not my will but yours be done."

Mystery might be our watchword as we celebrate the feast of the Holy Family. Of course, we are invited, as always, into the mystery of knowing Christ. But as we remember how his parents and family faced that challenge, their example invites us to remember that every person is a mystery and beloved of God.



On Letting Go

Joan DeMerchant, Celebration

It is no surprise that parents ultimately must let go of their children. The story of Hannah's offering is framed by religious practices of the period and was required by tradition. Samuel would become both prophet and king related to the lineage of King David; the significance of Hannah's action for Israel's future was understood by later generations. One gesture in one small family had a lasting impact only time would reveal. As parents are well aware, the outcomes of their sacrifices are usually known only in hindsight. Risks are taken of faith; sometimes they exceed a family's wildest hopes and dreams.

Jesus' spreading his wings probably came sooner than expected and brought with it both confusion and consternation. Mary and Joseph were not any better prepared than most parents are for the challenges of parenting. Jesus' interests in the Temple surprised and puzzled them and may even have been contrary to their own. In some ways, they did not understand their child any better than most parents. What Jesus was experiencing and where he was led was probably not what they would have wanted for their son. We don't know what future our children are called to, and we let them go with no small amount of faith, pain and trust that things will work out. How many parents have surrendered saying, "God, it is in your hands."

"Lord, fill my heart with Joy."

For last year's words belong to last year's language

And next year's words await another voice

And to make and end is to make a beginning. T.S. Eliot

HAPPY NEW YEAR