

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

The Holy Family are not just the model for families but for all the ways in which human beings are called to live in connection with each other, because humanity is a family.

1 Samuel 1:20-22. 24-28

Samuel's mother gives Samuel to God, not to lose her son but to find him.

1 John 3:1-2. 21-24

The commandments are life, because they are given to us that we might live the life of God.

Luke 2:41-52

The hidden life of Christ was not hidden from everyone. Christ needed other people to grow, just as we do. Otherwise he would not be fully human.

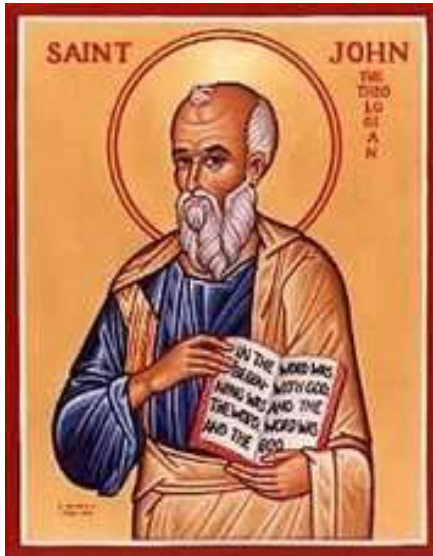


As faithful Jews, Mary and Joseph brought the infant Jesus to the Temple for the rite of purification. Though this poor family could not afford a lamb for the sacrifice, they held the “lamb of God” in their arms. In the Temple that day were two elderly servants of God, Simeon and Anna, who awaited the deliverance of Israel. Simeon praised God for allowing him to see the one who would bring salvation to his people, and “light for revelation to the Gentiles”. Simeon's words to Mary pierced her heart; she would not be spared the suffering of her son.

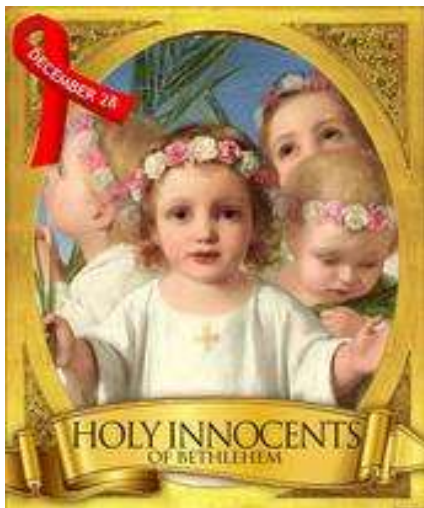
Luke paralleled the account of Simeon with that of Anna, a pious widow who spent her days in the Temple praying and fasting for the redemption of Israel. Anna is called a “prophetess,” one who interpreted God's actions in the world. She gave thanks to God and told everyone that deliverance would come through this child. When they left the Temple, the holy family returned to Nazareth where their son Jesus grew bigger and grew also in wisdom and grace.

The Feast of St Stephen (which we miss this year because of the Sunday) is also known as **BOXING DAY** -- December 26.

Around the 1800s, Boxing Day became a custom in the United Kingdom. People in service positions received their “Christmas boxes” or gifts on the day after Christmas in return for service throughout the year. Churches also opened their alms boxes and distributed the monetary donations to the poor. The Carol “Good King Wenceslas” is about a King in the Middle Ages who brought food to a poor family, ‘on the Feast of Stephen’.



**FEAST OF SAINT JOHN, APOSTLE AND
EVANGELIST
MONDAY, DECEMBER 27.**

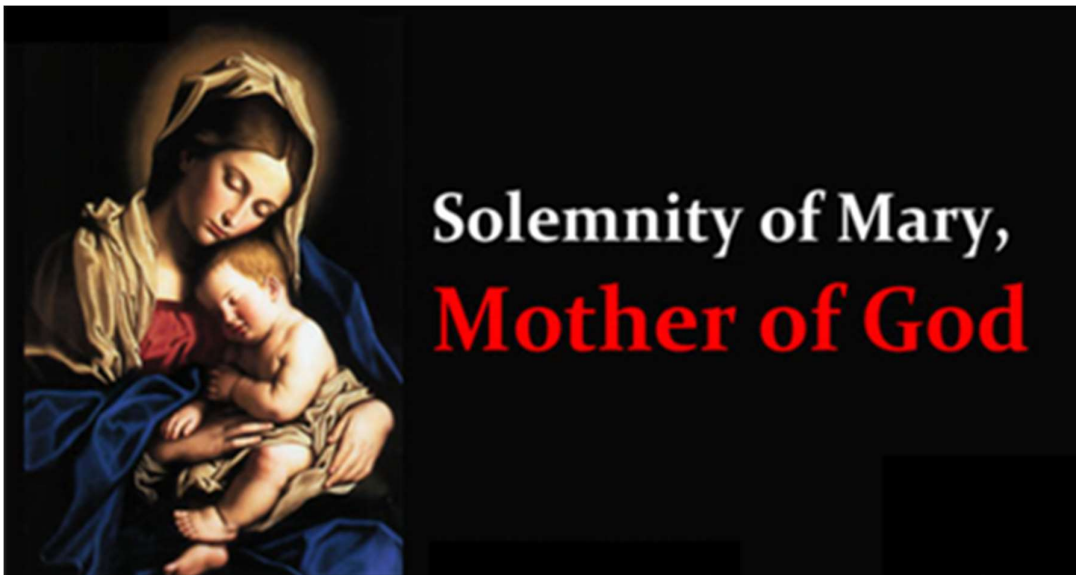


**FEAST OF THE HOLY INNOCENTS,
MARTYRS
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 28.**



Saint Thomas Becket, bishop and martyr

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 29



NEW YEAR'S DAY

SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

The Octave Day of the Nativity of the Lord

SATURDAY, JANUARY 1, LUKE 2:16-21

Mary and Joseph obeyed the law of Rome by going to Bethlehem to register for the census. They obeyed the religious law of Israel by having their child circumcised on the eighth day after his birth (Lv 12:3). In this ceremony, the child entered into the life of the Jewish community and received his name: Jesus (Hebrew: Yeshua, "Yahweh saves"). Jesus' mother Mary was the model disciple who received the Word of God with faith, and pondered its meaning in her heart.

The Church regards Mary as the “new Eve,” whose “offspring” Jesus Christ, the one “born of a woman”, who was destined to defeat the Evil One.

Note: When Did Mary’s Title “Mother of God” Originate?

*At the Council of Ephesus in 431 AD, the Church gave Mary the title “Theotokos” meaning “God-bearer.” This Marian title is really a Christological statement, which affirms that the second person of the Trinity, Jesus, was born into history as **fully human**, and is truly ‘God with us’. The tradition reaches to our own day. Vatican II’s Dogmatic Constitution on the Church includes Mary’s role **in a chapter on the Church**, referring to Mary as the “Mother of God” 12 times. Because she cooperated in our redemption by bringing forth God’s Son to redeem the world, she was also proclaimed the “Mother of the Church” (Pope Paul VI, 1964).*

Since Mary conceived Jesus, true man and true God, she is truly the mother of the Incarnate Jesus, and therefore, the Mother of God, and the mother of everyone who believes in her Son.



JANUARY 1, 2022

Every year on January 1, the Holy Father marks the World Day of Peace with a special message inviting everyone to reflect on the important work of building peace. This year’s message will be the latest in a long tradition of messages for this day that began with Pope St Paul VI in 1967 and continued with Pope St. John Paul II, Pope Benedict XVI, and Pope Francis.



NEW YEAR'S DAY

The month of January was named after the Roman god Janus for his ability to turn one face to reflect upon the past and yet another face pointed to the future.

January marks the New Year. A new beginning.

**Ring out the old, ring in the new,
Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
The year is going, let him go;
Ring out the false, ring in the true.**

Alfred, Lord Tennyson, 1850