

The Bell Ringer

ST. FRANCIS XAVIER, HYANNIS + FEBRUARY 2020



The Holy Family

Our theme for February reflects how our four congregations create one, holy, Catholic family!

The month of February is traditionally dedicated to the Holy Family. The Holy Family of Nazareth – Jesus, Mary, and Joseph – were “united by an intense love and animated by great confidence in God,” according to Pope Francis, speaking at the Angelus on the feast of the Holy Family.

“... The family of Nazareth is holy: because it was centered on Jesus; all the attention and care of Joseph [and Mary] revolved around Him.”

Pope Francis said the anxiety felt by Mary and Joseph when Jesus was lost for three days “should also be our anxiety when we are far from Jesus; when we forget Jesus, going without prayer, without reading the Gospel for several days. Mary and Joseph, he said, found Jesus in the Temple; and we too, should seek Jesus in the house of God – and especially in the liturgy, where we have the living experience of Jesus, in His Word and in the Eucharist, from which we receive the strength to face the difficulties of each day.”

At St. Francis Xavier, where four groups of parishioners worship in two houses of God in four different languages, we represent the diversity of many families. We are all children of the same God, who welcomes us into His home as family with Our Father, our brother Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and Our Blessed Mother Mary. The statue shown above of the Holy Family is a miniature replica of a statue (*Continued on page two*)



On page 4, see what value Jesus placed on a soul.

Also on page 4 read about Hope and its symbol - an anchor!



Bishop Johnston of Kansas City - St. Joseph says the Rosary is a remedy for the lack of faith today. See page 5



The statue, left, from St. Peter's in Rome, shows the Chair of St. Peter, but see page 6 on what the feast means.

Do we really listen to the Lord? Read page 7.

The Holy Family . . .

Continued from page one

to be erected on the grounds of the Hyannis campus adjacent to the Father Duffy Pastoral Center. You may have noticed an arc of evergreens near the rear of the front parking lot. That's where it will be placed illustrating the holy family that gathers every weekend as children of God to offer the sacrifice of the Mass in English, Latin, Spanish and Portuguese.

The inspiration for focusing on our unique parish family came from a statue, *Love's Bond*, that resides in St. Mary's Cathedral in the Diocese of Springfield.

From its founding in 1902, our parish has been a welcoming center of worship for all. In fact, the patron saint of our parish, St. Francis Xavier, the great missionary to many countries, was chosen over the patron of the first mission chapel, St. Patrick, so that all Catholics would feel welcome and not just Irish Americans

who had first gathered at St. Patrick's. America has been called a melting pot as peoples from all over the globe have been able to add the flavor of their cultures to our nation.

Why Family Matters

Certainly our parish family has a unique place in God's plan, as does each family unit that makes up our parish. Whether the family unit is made up of a couple, a couple with children, singles, widows and widowers, each individual has a role to play in God's plan.

The family is the basic unit of society. Strong families form strong communities, where God's love can be felt, returned to Him and to our neighbors. In each Christian home, it is Christ who unites us all in His love. Perhaps that's why the statue selected is so appealing. It's not a static, formal portrait of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. It shows love is the lasting bond.

Graphically, it's a moment of family togetherness — the child Jesus being bounced on Joseph's knees, while Mary bends lovingly over her spouse and son, embracing Joseph and cherishing this moment.

The outdoor shrine will be a place where parishioners can go to pray and ponder this loving closeness of the Holy Family. Children in our parish can see that Jesus enjoyed the same love and affection that they do in their own family.

While the statue has been donated, there will be installation costs and a base. If you wish to contribute to this family outdoor shrine, you can purchase a replica of the shrine's statue for \$100. See facing page for the order form.

Your home will be host to the Holy Family, or you may wish to gift your children or grandchildren with a sculpture.

The Holy Family outdoor shrine should be finished this spring. If you've ordered a brick as well, you might find yours used there too. +

A prayer to the Holy Family for love in your own family

Heavenly Father, we ask You to bless our family.

Open our hearts to receive Your love. May our home be another Nazareth, so that our family may be a place where Your peace and love abides.

Open our eyes to recognize the gift and beauty of life, so that we may find joy in Your presence among us.

Grant us pure hearts seeking holiness, generous hearts full of Your love, merciful hearts ready to forgive and tender hearts full of kindness.

May our family be a sanctuary of life and love, a beacon of hope

drawing others to your Son, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, Holy Family of Nazareth, pray for us.

Become Part of the Family

Purchase a “Love Bond” statue of the Holy Family for your family and help create our outdoor parish shrine!

Reserve a Love’s Bond sculpture and help support St. Francis Xavier Church. Donations are \$100 per sculpture.



Please indicate number of sculptures you’d like to reserve: _____

PLEASE RETURN THIS FORM AND YOUR CHECK PAYABLE TO:

St Francis Xavier Church
21 Cross Street
Hyannis, MA 02601

Name: _____ Phone: (____) _____
Address: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____
Email Address: _____ Amount Paid: _____

What Is the Value of a Soul?

"That which our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ did and suffered for all men, He did and suffered for each one in particular; and He would not have thought it too much to do if it had been a question of saving only a single soul. The salvation of a soul is, then, the price of the blood of God, the price of the death of God, the price of the greatest sacrifice that God, clothed in our human nature, could possibly make! This is incomprehensible!

“. . . It proves that the dignity of a soul is beyond understanding—for God to abase Himself, for God to annihilate Himself, for God to sacrifice Himself, only to save that soul and make it happy forever!

“. . . As for us, who believe humbly and firmly all that God has revealed to us, let us learn, by the contemplation of God upon a Cross, what is the value of our souls. Let us not lose our soul; let us not prostitute it to creatures; and to make sure of our eternal salvation, which cost so much to the Son of God, let us beg of Jesus Christ Himself to take charge of it, to lead us in the right way and guide us always. Such an inestimable treasure runs too great a risk in our

own hands. Let us trust it to God and our Savior. Let us make Him the Master of our liberty, which we may so easily abuse, and the abuse of which may bring about such terrible consequences. Once abandoned to the safe and infallible guidance of His grace, we have no more to fear. He loves us too much, He takes too much interest in our salvation, ever to lose the price of His blood and His sufferings."

— *Excerpt from "The Spiritual Life" by
Fr. Jean Nicholas Grou*

"No human being ever suffered as Our Lord suffered in that physical agony, and the physical agony was a mere drop in the ocean compared with the exquisite agony of His mind and heart. For the heart of the Crucified burned with a more intense love of God than the world has ever known, and the Son's heart was torn by the offenses that men offer to His heavenly Father. And in that same heart there was a fire of love for men, of love for each man . . . the Lover's heart was torn by the thought of the coldness of those whom He loved and the loss they were incurring by their refusal to love Him."

*Excerpt from "This Tremendous Lover" by
Dom Eugene Boylan, O.C.R*



In February, Let's Focus on Hope



Hope (in latin *spes*) is the combination of the desire for something and expectation of receiving it, the virtue is hoping for Divine union and so eternal happiness. While faith is an act of the intellect, hope is an act of the will.

St. Josemaria Escriva tells us: "Mary teaches us to hope. She proclaimed 'all generations will call me blessed.' Humanly speaking, how could she hope for such a thing? Who was she, in the eyes of men and women of her time? The great heroines of the Old Testament — Judith, Esther, Deborah — won a measure of human glory even here on earth, for they were acclaimed by the people.

"Mary's throne, by contrast, like that of her Son, is the Cross. During the rest of her life,

until she was taken body and soul into Heaven, what most impresses us about her is her quiet presence," Father Escriva continues.

“. . . What a contrast between Our Lady's hope and our own impatience. So often we call upon God to reward us at once for any little good we have done. No sooner does the first difficulty appear than we start to complain. Often we are incapable of sustaining our efforts; of keeping our hope alive. Why? Because we lack faith. 'Blessed art thou for thy believing; the message that was brought to thee from the Lord shall have fulfillment.'"

The anchor is symbolic of hope in how when lifted up from the water of a port, it represents a new adventure, a new voyage. +

Help from Mary & the Rosary

By Bishop James V. Johnston of the Diocese of Kansas City - St. Joseph

“The Rosary of the Blessed Virgin Mary ... still remains, at the dawn of this third millennium, a prayer of great significance, destined to bring forth a harvest of holiness. It blends easily into the spiritual journey of the Christian life, which, after two thousand years, has lost none of the freshness of its beginnings and feels drawn by the Spirit of God to ‘set out into the deep’ in order to once more proclaim, and even cry out, before the world that Jesus Christ is Lord and Savior, ‘the way, and the truth and the life’ (Jn 14:6), ‘the goal of human history and the point on which the desires of history and civilization turn.’”

— St John Paul II, *Rosarium Virginis Mariae*

Very often, solutions to our problems are simpler and more available than we realize. In this past Sunday’s Gospel reading, Jesus teaches his disciples “about the necessity for them to pray always without becoming weary” (Luke 18:1). Good advice, that. I suspect that one of the reasons for the decline of Christianity in the western world is due in no small part to the fact that many people never pray.

Life, they think, can be handled without God. This is true in families as well. For some families the only prayer that might be offered at all is the prayer before meals and some have even abandoned that.....

In my opinion, this is partly why a larger percentage of young people abandon the practice of their faith now than in past generations. Many simply don’t think faith is important. If it were, their families would have prayed together and helped their children to develop daily, personal prayer as a life-long habit.

Jesus urged us to pray always because our faith depends upon it. If we don’t pray, we will stop believing.

I would like to offer a simple, yet profoundly powerful corrective to this unhappy trend: Mary and the Rosary. I know, it sounds too simple, even a bit boring. The rosary? Yes, the rosary. I have yet to meet in my life a person who prayed the rosary and left the faith. Never.

I have my own theories on why the rosary is such a powerful prayer. First, it prays with the Word of God. The key prayers of the rosary are taken from Scripture; the Our Father and the Hail Mary are from the Gospels. The rosary also puts us into contact with the saving mysteries of Jesus. Like many adults, I came to realize that my mind and heart were formed over the years by the mysteries of the rosary. I am disappointed that many of our youth are not familiar with the most basic events of salvation history. Yet, they would be if they prayed the rosary!

But, here is my other theory as to why the rosary is so powerful. When we pray the rosary we invite Mary into what we are doing, and she is our Mother. She never fails. She is so good, so full of love for her Son, and for all of us. When we pray the rosary, it is as if we are saying to Mary, “Mother, take my hand and help me.” And she does; she always does. She helps us encounter Jesus

like no other.

The rosary with its repetition can seem uninspiring, even boring. Many think of the rosary the way Naaman the Syrian thought of the Jordan River in the Second Book of Kings, chapter 5. When told that his leprosy would be cured if he washed seven times in the Jordan, he scoffed. He was expecting something more exciting and significant; and if he were to wash in a river, there were better ones than the Jordan. Nevertheless, at the urging of his servants, he relented and was miraculously cured, and he returned home praising the God of Israel. The rosary is the same. Start praying the rosary regularly and see. +

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— Bishop James V. Johnston

The Chair of St. Peter the Apostle

What does this feast on Feb. 22 really involve?

Father Antonin Gilbert Sertillanges, O.P. (1863 - 1948) was a French professor and scholar, greatly admired as a preacher, spiritual director and apologist. He is best known as the author of "What Jesus Saw from the Cross." The excerpt below, however, is from his classic book, "The Intellectual Life," and provides insight into the laity's relationship to the papacy.

The Papacy presents itself to us as the unifying organ of the whole work of Christ and of all the faithful in the Christ whom it represents, of all the scattered souls who benefit by his redemption and of all his offices. All that moves in the Church finds therein its center of movement and its prospect of return. All starts from Rome; all comes back thereto. The brightness from the dome of St. Peter's where it seems to shine, scatters in all directions its active light and sees thousands of answering eyes turn to it.

It is the lighthouse which, on the uneven coast, above the hidden rocks, at the crossing of roads, unexplored and full of pitfalls, guides, warns, or strengthens by means of its light, plays the part of a star, and speaks the

message of hope by calling up the vision of the haven.

When the Great Council calls to Rome hundreds of bishops, coming from all parts of the globe, bearing homage, prayers, and tokens of the religious thought of millions of souls, that is the palpable sign of the unity which the Papacy procures, it is a march towards the star on the part of mankind, which attempts across space to reach a point where it knows that its God rests in his institution of salvation, as he did in the manger of Bethlehem.



But there is nothing more in this visible convergence of travelers than in the calm daily reality. Towards Rome ever goes the road of the heart and of the mind; it can always be traversed; the true faithful traverse it daily. And to an undivided center which allows it to be said, *Ubi Petrus, ibi Ecclesia*; where Peter is, there is the Church.

If bonds of flesh attach us to our families and our countries, which are our mothers according to the flesh, it seems indeed that only the grace of God could attach us durably and deeply to the family of the children of God, who, born only of the Spirit, can subsist only in him. There is more than man in this. There is the witness of a divine presence. +

The Pope's February Prayer Intention

We pray that the cries of our migrant brothers and sisters, victims of criminal trafficking, may be heard and considered.

Prayer for the Holy Father

Almighty and everlasting God, have mercy upon Thy servant, Pope Francis, our Supreme Pontiff, and direct him, according to Thy loving kindness, in the way of eternal salvation; that, of Thy gift, he may ever desire that which is pleasing unto Thee and may accomplish it with all his might. Through Christ Our Lord. Amen.

Our Father. Hail Mary. Glory Be to God.

Do We Really Listen to the Word?

One would need a calculator to figure out how many homilies we have heard in our lifetime since we reached the age of reason. Add that to the classes in religion we've sat through, the prayers we've learned, and the times we've read religious books or watched videos to increase our knowledge of our religion. Could that be why so many of us are jaded and tune out to the word of God? Or maybe we actually sit up and listen to Father speak at Sunday Mass or are impressed with a thought from a book we're reading. But in these situations and others, we often find it difficult to recall those impressive ideas a day or two later.

In the lower grades of Faith Formation, we've been passing out Mass Journals to some students to encourage them to listen carefully while they are at Mass. The children are asked to listen for just one idea, one phrase that seems directed just at them. Then to write that phrase down — whether it's from a prayer at Mass, or perhaps from Father's homily, or maybe from a hymn. At home, they read it over and think about why it meant something to them and what they might do as a result.

Matthew Kelly of Dynamic Catholic champions the idea of Mass Journals, not only for children, but for adults as well. He keeps his journals for years and finds that re-reading some of them brings back times when certain words prompted him to become aware of what was worrying him, where he was in his interior relationship with Christ, and how he went on to resolve the issue or step up his devotion.

I've Heard That Before

Even if the preacher isn't another Fulton Sheen or Bishop Barron, God's word we hear proclaimed at Mass is directed specifically at us. Sure you can recite the parable of the Prodigal Son in your sleep, but do you still put yourself into the place of the wayward son? Maybe it's time for you to listen more closely and see that maybe you should be imitating the forgiving and welcoming parent. Or does the older son, who refused to rejoice with his father

and his brother actually mirror your lack of charity to some member of your family?

Our Life Is a Journey to Heaven

There is no doubt our roles in life change as we age, but our goal should not. When we examine our conscience today, we are not the same people we were 20 years ago. So the commandments that we broke then might not be the same we fracture now. We may find our goals are significantly different now and we may have put our emphasis less on our souls and more on our salaries or successes to the point we have placed "strange gods" before Him. Sure, we know the 10 Commandments, but do we regard them as something that doesn't apply to our daily life now?

Do we set aside time for our prayer life, or has the gym or getting 10,000 steps into each day taken precedence? Now that the kids have left home or we live alone, do we still offer prayers before we eat? Get to Mass on Sunday?

God Speaks Through His Mother

Certainly the requests of Our Lady of Fatima to have Russia consecrated to her and that the Rosary become the faithful's tool to combat communism and all the other heresies are known to us all. But do we pray the Rosary?

In later appearances as Our Lady of America, she reiterated her request for prayer, especially the Rosary, to strengthen families through prayer and conversion, and a return to purity of body and spirit.

We are familiar with her image as it has been on our altar for weeks. But have we taken her requests to heart? Or do we read about her and other events and listen to the "word of the Lord" and the homilies and let that suffice?

Perhaps as our world has become a digital one, we are more content to be observers rather than participants. We listen but do we actually act on what we hear? Have we abandoned the real world for a "virtual reality" so we don't have to really listen to the Word of God? +

— Janet M. Daly

Let's Look at February 2020

Because 2020 is a leap year, February has 29 days. The first 25 days of February fall during the liturgical season known as Ordinary Time which is represented by the liturgical color green.

Green, the symbol of hope, is the color of the sprouting seed and arouses in the faithful the hope of reaping the eternal harvest of heaven, especially the hope of a glorious resurrection.

Ash Wednesday falls on February 26, marking the beginning of Lent. The liturgical color changes to purple — a symbol of penance, mortification and the sorrow of a contrite heart.

The Sunday Gospel readings switch from Luke on February 2, the Presentation of the Lord, to Matthew's Gospel for the remainder of the month.

Feasts and Saints

On Monday, February 3, we celebrate the Feast of St. Blaise. That day all might receive the blessing of the throats. Always a solicitous Mother, the Church offers this sacramental during the wintry month of February, and also sets aside the World Day of Prayer for the Sick (February 11) the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.

The saints we will celebrate this month and try to imitate are St. Agatha (February 5), St. Paul Miki & Companions (February 6), St. Jerome Emiliani and St. Josephine Bakhita (February 8), St. Scholastica (February 10), Our Lady of Lourdes (February 11), Sts. Cyril and Methodius (February 14), Seven Founders of the Orders of Servites (February 17), St. Peter Damian (February 21), and the Chair of St. Peter (February 22). St. Polycarp's feast day (February 23) is superseded by the Sunday liturgy.

What Happened to St. Valentine?

Did you notice that St. Valentine isn't listed above with the saints we honor during February? Well, it seems that although the Church continues to recognize St. Valentine as a saint, he was removed from the General Roman Calendar in 1969 because of the lack of *reliable* historical information about him. [Note:

Hallmark never got that note. Nor did the candy makers or florists.]

Two St. Valentines actually existed. According to a legend, the Valentine who sparks all the romantic cards and gifts today was imprisoned in Rome. He is supposed to have signed a letter "from your Valentine" after he healed his jailer's daughter of blindness.

Lenten Learning Suggestions

How do we prepare for Lent? Philip Kosloski on aleteia.org — a online newsletter — suggests free places online to learn more about your faith, which could be your Lenten activity. First of all, he suggests *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* to find the answers by going to "the source." As a contributor, he also recommends *Aleteia* mentioned above. *Catholics Come Home's* video series entitled *Deep in History*. He writes Fr. Mike Schmitz offers numerous videos on *Ascension Presents*. *The Grotto Network* is another online resource and Kosloski recommends its YouTube series, *Catholic 101*. Finally, if you're philosophically minded, he suggests *Aquinas 101*, a series of free video courses from the Thomistic Institute.

Some of our parishioners have used *Dynamic Catholic's* Best Lent Ever online series for several years. Go to BestLentEver.com/2020 to sign up and receive a daily meditation on your computer or phone. There is also a Journal available to accompany the program this year.

Pray, Fast, Give

That three-fold Lenten mantra is pretty easy to understand. However, just don't abstain from meat when proscribed, consider something else, such as abstaining from your electronic devices for a set time every day or spread Christian joy by treating family, friends and acquaintance better. Kindness, courtesy and smiles help. Be generous too. Also, attending daily Mass, praying the Rosary, or spending a set time in Adoration are highly recommended and may be a habit you will find beneficial to take on for life. +