

Fr. Simon Sez

Due to Christmas Day, December 25th being on a Sunday this year and January 1st being on the following Sunday, the Feast of the Holy Family, which is usually on the Sunday between these two feasts, landed on last Friday, December 30th. I point that out because I do not want us to skip past it.

How appropriate it is to celebrate the Holy Family that was established on Christmas Day just after that day. Notice how the Word of God became flesh and dwelt among us in our world of time through Mary, the Holy Mother of God (today's solemnity) in time and not any other way. God did it according to his own law of marriage coming first. St. Joseph and the Blessed Virgin Mary were married but not yet living together when the Incarnation happened in her blessed womb. This shows to me the importance of marital love and family life as designed by God. Due to our fallen human nature, it doesn't always work out that way. It seems that the secular cultural trend that works against this beautiful plan of God is winning.

We are all called by God to do our part in promoting this design of his who he himself follows. Even though we have the culture against us, we should not be discouraged. God has, does, and will always love us according to his infinite grace and mercy. Everyone needs to hear this good news and experience its life-changing effects! God bless you throughout this new year with his love and life!

"And we are instructed to turn from godless living and sinful pleasures. We should live in the evil world with self-control, right conduct, and devotions to God." (Titus 2:12)



Pope Benedict XVI: Pope Emeritus Benedict XVI passed away this weekend. Pope Francis asks for the faithful people to pray for the repose of his soul. (He is my seventh cousin once removed (one generation from me). My maternal grandmother's Meyer family

line is from the same diocese in Germany as is Pope Benedict XVI's Ratzinger family line. I might have 120,000 seventh cousins. I have a 1.1% chance of sharing DNA with him).

Diocese Chancellor Staffing Change: Bishop DeGroot announced last Friday, December 30, 2022 that Matt Althoff, the Chancellor of the Diocese of Sioux Falls for the past thirteen years, was appointed by Gov. Kristi Noem to be our next Secretary of the South Dakota Department of Social Services effective January 23, 2023. He assisted Bishop Swain in developing the Bishop Dudley Hospitality House and has worked extensively in the administration of Church social ministries in the areas of education, healthcare, feeding, emergency shelter and housing. For more information go to sfcatholic.org (Office of the Bishop > Statements) and news.sd.gov (Recent News Posts).

Children of God: Scott Hahn Reflects on the Feast of Mary, Mother of God



Numbers 6:22–27
Psalm 67:2–3, 5–6, 8
Galatians 4:4–7
Luke 2:16–21

Today we give thanks to Mary, the Mother of God. Her response to the angel, born of a humble heart, brought us life and salvation in the Child conceived in her womb.

From before all ages, God had destined her for this decisive role in salvation history. She was to be the woman who in the fullness of time would bear God's only Son, as Paul tells us in today's Epistle.

In times past, God spoke to His chosen people, the Israelites, through prophets (see Hebrews 1:1–2), and imparted His blessings upon them through His priests, as we hear in today's First Reading.

But now, He has sent His Son to reveal His glory and His kingdom, to make His way of salvation known to all nations, as we sing in today's Psalm. In the Infant lying in the manger, God has shone His face upon us (see John 14:8–9).

Jesus is made a child of Israel, an heir of God's covenant with Abraham, by His circumcision in today's Gospel (see Genesis 17:1–14). And we have been made adopted sons and daughters by Baptism, which is the circumcision of Christ, the true circumcision (see Colossians 2:11; Philippians 3:3).

As children of God, Paul says today, we are heirs of the Father's blessings, which He promised to bestow on all peoples through the descendants of Abraham (see Genesis 12:3; 22:18; Galatians 3:14). This is the blessing that Aaron imparted to Israel, the people descended from Abraham. And this blessing comes to us through Mary and the Child.

This is the good news of great joy that the shepherds make known in Bethlehem today (see Luke 2:10).

Like the shepherds, we too should make haste today to find Jesus with Mary and Joseph, to glorify God for His blessings. And like Mary, we should keep His word and reflect upon it, letting it dwell richly in our hearts (see Colossians 3:16).

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