



St. Joseph Catholic Church

Harlowton, Montana

Missions:

Blessed Sacrament, Shawmut

Immaculate Conception, Judith Gap

Father Cody Williams, Pastor

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The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph December 31, 2023

"The family is the privileged setting where every person learns to give and receive love.... The family is an intermediate institution between individuals and society, and nothing can completely take its place.... The family is a necessary good for peoples, an indispensable foundation for society, and a great and lifelong treasure for couples. It is a unique good for children, who are meant to be the fruit of the love, of the total and generous self-giving of their parents.... The family is also a school that enables men and women to grow to the full measure of their humanity.... O God, who in the Holy Family left us a perfect model of family life lived in faith and obedience to your will, help us to be examples of faith and love for your commandments" (Pope Benedict XVI).

Those who fear the Lord honor their parents.

First Reading; Sirach 3:2-7, 12-14 *2For the Lord honored the father above the children, and he confirmed the right of the mother over her sons. 3Whoever honors his father atones for sins, 4and whoever glorifies his mother is like one who lays up treasure. 5Whoever honors his father will be gladdened by his own children, and when he prays he will be heard. 6Whoever glorifies his father will have long life, and whoever obeys the Lord will refresh his mother; 7he will serve his parents as his masters. 12O son, help your father in his old age, and do not grieve him as long as he lives; 13even if he is lacking in understanding, show forbearance; in all your strength do not despise him. 14For kindness to a father will not be forgotten, and against your sins it will be credited to you.*

Responsorial Psalm: Psalm 128:1-5

R: Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.

1Blessed is every one who fears the LORD, who walks in his ways! 2You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be happy, and it shall be well with you. 3Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table. 4Lo, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD. 5The LORD bless you from Zion! May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life!

Family life in the Lord.

Second Reading: Colossians 3:12-21 *12Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, 13forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. 16Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. 18Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. 20Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. 21Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.*

Alleluia, alleluia. *In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets; in these last days, he has spoken to us through the Son. Alleluia, alleluia.*

The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom.

Gospel: Luke 2:22-40 **22**And when the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord **23**(as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") **24**and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." **25**Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. **26**And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. **27**And inspired by the Spirit he came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, **28**he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, **29**"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; **30**for mine eyes have seen thy salvation **31**which thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, **32**a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to thy people Israel." **33**And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him; **34**and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against **35**(and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed." **36**And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phan'u-el, of the tribe of Asher; she was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years from her virginity, **37**and as a widow till she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. **38**And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks to God, and spoke of him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. **39**And when they had performed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. **40**And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

12:00 noon Sunday Mass at St. Joseph Catholic Church, Harlowton, MT.

Daily Mass on Thursdays at noon at St. Joseph Catholic Church, Harlowton, MT.

*****Confessions before Sunday Mass beginning at 11:30 am or by appointment. Please join us to pray the rosary for our nation and community 1/2 hour before Sunday Mass.**

The Solemnity for Mary, Mother of God, is not a Day of Obligation.

Sunday Mass at 9am at St. Bartholomew, White Sulphur Springs & 4:30pm at Holy Cross, Townsend.

*****Eucharistic Adoration on Thursdays – join us anytime between 12:30–3:30 pm.**

After Mass socials on the 4th Sunday of every month 1/28/24; 2/25/24; 3/25/24

RE is on Thursdays. High school group is the same time & material as the Catholicism 101 series.

Please pray for our seminarians:

Riley Helgoe

Kaleb Mitchell

Jamie Severson

Matt Keck

Mark Bruschein

Dillon Armstrong

Bret Rotz

Carter Anderson

James Semling

John Cooney

Anthony Olmes

Shae Bills

Lane Buus

FYI:

The new 2024 calendars & Parish Directories are available on the back table.

We are doing well with achieving our goal for the **Annual Catholic Appeal**. We have raised 78% of our goal with \$2,407 remaining. If you have yet to contribute, please consider contributing.

No Mass or Catholicism 101 series on Thursday, Jan. 18th.

Christmas Potluck this coming Sunday after Mass, 1/7/24! Since we cancelled our potluck for December, we are going to have a potluck party as a parish to celebrate Christmas.

If you would like offertory envelopes, please contact Fr. Cody.

Homebound Minsters needed! If you are interested in visiting the homebound and bringing them Communion, please contact Fr. Cody.

The Catholicism series continues this Thursday with the topic of What is the Mass?

Father's Cody's Corner:

Basics of Catholicism part 22: Redemption and Salvation part 3

Theory 3: The Ransom or Satisfaction Theory

This theory was best expressed in the work of C. S. Lewis in *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. When Edmond sells out his friends and became a traitor, the witch gets her satisfaction by sacrificing him. In this analogy, sin requires a punishment. Every time we sin, the world is changed for the worse and needs a sacrifice to bring it healing, i.e. when something is killed, something has to die. Thus, the sin we caused created a debt between us and God that needed repayment. In the Old Testament this repayment was the sacrifice of animals. Jesus, however, became the ultimate repayment as the one sacrifice that could end all sacrifices and be the perfect gift to God.

Although this theory is true to an extent, it makes Jesus sacrifice simply a repayment of the debt. Jesus' sacrifice is more than the repayment of the debt. He opens Heaven for us and becomes our judge. He frees us from all sin and the finality of death. He built a relationship with us through his suffering and death and brought life and meaning to our own suffering. We cannot simplify the gravity of Jesus' sacrifice to the mere act of repaying our debt so that we do not need to suffer the effects of our sins. On another note, if Jesus' repayment cancelled out all sins, why do we still have sin and its effects in our world?

The other side of ransom theory we often hear is that Jesus saved us from the clutches of the Devil. The main idea of this side of the ransom theory is that the effects of sin bind us. On one level we are binding ourselves due to our attraction to sin. On the other level we are bound because we cannot undo the effects of sin. As one action spirals outward, its effects continue to grow. Take for instance the simple example of gossip. One person gossips about another and ruins that person's reputation. Now the reputation of that person will be affected by everyone who hears that lie/gossip. How would we ever be able to undo the damage done by one act of gossip?

This side of the ransom theory works. We were caught in the clutches of the Devil and the desire for sin. We were caught in the effects of sin without a way out. Jesus found us a way out. He took on the effects of our sins that we could not undo and brought healing. He gave us a pathway, a route, through which we could choose righteous deeds and not sin. Jesus overcame the effects of the Devil in our lives and *ransomed* us from his power. ~ Fr. Cody

Morality Part 79

Morality: Conclusion

Over the past 78 sessions, I have uncovered the basics of moral reasoning and applied them to many different situations. As this series comes to a conclusion, I want to end with a few thoughts. Many people today dismiss the value of moral reasoning. Instead we default to the morality of our upbringing or to a self-centered attitude toward the world. Although the vast majority of our parents tried to raise us to be moral and upright people, their morality was shaped by the world they lived in. Their sense of morality worked for their time and many moral principles and actions remain true throughout the generations. Yet, each generation must ponder anew the questions on what is right and wrong. If we ignore the questions of morality or refuse to change a moral stance, then we degrade who we are. We are humans endowed with the ability to reason. We need to use these skills for our own good and the good of society. When we choose against using these rational faculties to seek the good, we are promoting evil. The same applies to the opposite stance. If we choose to act out of our own self-interests, then entire society delves into moral relativism and decays. Therefore, nothing is moral and all things are permissible. No, morality is a law that governs the universe like the Law of Gravity or the Conservation of Energy. Learning and applying these principles will show the existence of a moral law and the joy of acting rightly.

We as Christians must take a difference stance than the rest of the world. Where the world says that all people can choose for themselves, we state that we must choose the good for ourselves and everyone. Where the world dismisses truth, justice, and goodness, we must stand for these goods. Where the world tells us that God has no place in society and our world, we must show them that God's laws bring us a greater joy than anything else. Seeking the truth and living the truth is the cause of a Christian's joy. I encourage everyone to continue to reflect on the moral principles and moral teachings of the Church as a way to encourage a freedom and joy that only come through following God's laws. ~ Fr. Cody

Our True Home: Scott Hahn Reflects on the Feast of the Holy Family

[Listen here](#) Readings: [Sirach 3:2–6, 12–14](#); [Psalm 128:1–2, 3, 4–5](#); [Colossians 3:12–21](#); [Luke 2:22–40](#)

Why did Jesus choose to become a baby born of a mother and father and to spend all but His last years living in an ordinary human family? In part, to reveal God’s plan to make all people live as one “holy family” in His Church (see [2 Corinthians 6:16–18](#)).

In the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, God reveals our true home. We’re to live as His children, “chosen ones, holy and beloved,” as the First Reading puts it. The family advice we hear in today’s readings—for mothers, fathers, and children—is all solid and practical. Happy homes are the fruit of our faithfulness to the Lord, we sing in today’s Psalm. But the Liturgy is inviting us to see more, to see how, through our family obligations and relationships, our families become heralds of the family of God that He wants to create on earth.

Jesus shows us this in today’s Gospel. His obedience to His earthly parents flows directly from His obedience to the will of His heavenly Father. Joseph and Mary aren’t identified by name, but three times are called His “parents” and are referred to separately as His “mother” and “father.” The emphasis is all on their familial ties to Jesus. But these ties are emphasized only so that Jesus, in the first words He speaks in Luke’s Gospel, can point us beyond that earthly relationship to the Fatherhood of God.

In what Jesus calls “My Father’s house,” every family finds its true meaning and purpose (see [Ephesians 3:15](#)). The Temple we read about in the Gospel today is God’s house, His dwelling (see [Luke 19:46](#)). But it’s also an image of the family of God, the Church (see [Ephesians 2:19–22](#); [Hebrews 3:3–6](#); [10:21](#)).

In our families we’re to build up this household, this family, this living temple of God until He reveals His new dwelling among us and says of every person: “I shall be his God and he will be My son” (see [Revelation 21:3, 7](#)). ~ Dr. Scott Hahn

Suggested Prayer of the Faithful (Each local community should compose its own Universal Prayer but may find inspiration in the texts proposed here.) December Magnificat page 458

We receive the life of faith through the Church, for she is the mother of our new birth in grace. As joyful members of God’s family, we now pray:

For the Church: that her members will be strengthened, purified, and renewed through the grace of Christ’s Body and Blood.

For those charged with protecting society: that they will build a world in which family life is revered, protected, and promoted.

For the universal respect of the dignity of the human person, and that the culture of life will transform every human heart.

For blessings on all families: that the love, the unity, and the self-donation of the Holy Family will overflow into all aspects of family life.

For families suffering from financial hardships: that they may find hope in the birth of Jesus.

For family members who are alienated or estranged: that the unfailing power of the mercy of Jesus will reunite and reconcile loved ones.

Loving Father, bless us with your love, which we profess to be the bond of perfection. Let the peace of Christ console the hearts we offer to you with thankful prayer. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

Intercessions December Magnificat page 461

Let us adore the Son of the living God and beg him:

R/ Sanctify us, Lord Jesus, by your obedience!

Son of God and Son of Man, you were born into a human family:

– strengthen the bonds of love and reverence in every family. R/

Eternal Word of the Father, you subjected yourself to Mary and Joseph:

– teach us humility. R/

Creator of the universe, you were known as the son of a carpenter:

– teach us to reverence the gift of work. R/

Personal intentions

Our Father....

God and Father of all, you gave us the Holy Family to serve as an example of love and obedience. Grant to all people, in family homes or alone, the grace to hold in honor the bonds of love and respect which bind the human race chosen for adoption as your children, through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God for ever and ever. Amen