



The Meditation

The Feast of the Holy Family

2016

(Commemorate the First Sunday after Epiphany)



Christ in Joseph's Workshop
Painting by Matteo Pagano (1515 - 1588)

Collect for the Feast of the Holy Family

O *Lord Jesus Christ, who by thy wondrous holiness didst adorn a human home, and by thy subjection to Mary and Joseph didst consecrate the order of earthly families: grant that we, being enlightened by the example of their life with thee in thy Holy Family, and assisted by their prayers; may at last be joined with them in thine eternal fellowship. Who livest and reignest with the Father in the unity of the Holy Ghost, one God, forever. Amen.*

The Gospels tell us very little about the life of Jesus in the house of Mary and Joseph. A few events have been recorded: (1) The flight to Egypt by the Holy Family and their living there until Herod's death as recorded in *Matthew's Gospel, Chapter 2...* (2) The return to Nazareth, where Jesus grew and advanced in wisdom with the years, and in favor both with God and with men in *St. Luke's Gospel, Chapter 2...* (3) The yearly pilgrimage to Jerusalem, when Jesus remained in the Temple without His parents' knowledge, and the poignant words of the Evangelist that "*His mother kept all these sayings in her heart.*" (*Luke; Ch.2, Vs. 51*). However few the details, they were enough for the Church to recognize that the Holy Family served as a model for all Christian households. Today's collect clearly denotes this: "*O Lord Jesus Christ, who by thy wondrous holiness didst adorn a human home, and by thy subjugation to Mary and Joseph didst consecrate the order of earthly families: grant that we being enlightened by the example of their life with thee in thy Holy Family, and assisted by their prayers; may at last be joined with them in thine eternal fellowship.*"

The Gospel specifically names one, of all the virtues, that flourished in that little house in Nazareth, *Christ's submission to his parents*; a submission made ever more wonderful by the fact that he had superiority over those who had authority over him. Jesus is God, yet He obeys his creatures. Mary is privileged beyond all other women, yet she recognizes Joseph as head of the house and obeys him as such. It is typical of her attitude towards him that when the Child is found again in the Temple she says: "*Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.*" (*St. Luke; Ch. 2, Vs. 48.*)

The Lord of Hosts, in that house obeyed a woman, accomplishing the tasks she would have him do as would be expected in any family of the time...contributing to the welfare and unity of the family. Mary, who fulfilled all things in loving simplicity, continued to do so as housewife, mother, and teacher. Here in this humble home, God also learned a trade under the patient watchful instruction of the village carpenter, Joseph. Jesus followed this instruction exactly and willingly. He, Who created the world, learned what it was to use His hands to create on earth. Such humility! Such loving condescension!

Msgr. David Greenstock, a great Catholic pastoral theologian, provides us with an excellent insight on these so called "hidden years" of Christ; those years growing up in Nazareth:

"The hidden years of our Lord's life at Nazareth have been the source of curiosity throughout the ages. Some of the false gospels rejected by the Church have given fantastic accounts of the supposed happenings during that period of the life of Christ; but all we really know about those years is summed up in the phrase from the Gospels: Jesus went with his parents to Nazareth and was subject to them as a dutiful son. Yet those hidden years form an important part in Christ's teaching, in spite of the mystery which surrounds them, to read their secret we must first of all

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understand the purpose for which Christ came on earth. He came to redeem us; but he also intended to teach us as many lessons by word and by example.

We might begin with obedience to Mary and Joseph. This picture of the Son of God, obedient to his creatures, gives us a lesson in obedience and humility which can never be forgotten. It also provides us with a motive for being obedient to all lawful authority. It helps us to understand what real family life should be if it is lived for God and in God. In passing we can only admire the admirable composure of Mary, who had no hesitation in educating the Son of God made man for his future tasks. If education of one's children is a big responsibility at the best of times, how much more difficult must it have been to provide the training necessary, when the Child is also one's God!

It is not difficult to imagine what our Lord's life must have been during those years in Nazareth. The neighbors did not notice anything outstanding about him, as we can judge from later events related to the Gospels when he returned to Nazareth during his public life of preaching. They saw only an ordinary boy who later became a young man, obedient to his parents' wishes, attending the local synagogue and helping Joseph in his workshop. After his foster-father's death, Jesus would no doubt have carried on the business by himself to earn enough to keep himself and his Mother. No doubt it was hard work; and we may well meditate with profit on the Son of God holding out his hand to receive payment for his work. Of one thing we can be quite certain – it would be good work, well done and with the best of materials: nor would there be any excessive charges made for it!

During those years our Lord put the whole idea of manual labor on a different plane for us. He redeemed mankind at the carpenter's bench just as much as he did on the wood of the Cross. He taught us, by a living example, that sanctity is to be found in the ordinary daily tasks just as easily as it can be found in extraordinary things, to which not all of us are called.

Only three years of our Lord's life were dedicated to public preaching, healing the sick, and the final scenes of the Passion. The rest of it was passed at Nazareth, working quietly without ostentation, preparing for the time when he would leave to go out into the country as a missionary and Saviour. Jesus teaches us the value of ordinary tasks, provided they are done for God and in union with Him. Fidelity to our daily prayers, cheerful endurance of the trials implied in an ordinary day's work, the family obligations and worries – all these things can become powerful means of sanctification. They can also be an effective example to others.

Religion is not something which can be separated from everyday life, but rather something which is capable of lifting up that human activity to a supernatural and divine level, thus making it capable of earning heaven for us. It is often the daily cross which weighs the heaviest. St. Bernard said that his greatest penance was this daily routine. For all of us it is the greatest means of attaining true sanctity."

*- An extract from **Lenten Meditations on St. Luke**; Ch. 2, Vs. 51*

Our God associated with mankind in His life on earth; most intimately with Mary and Joseph. He made the house in Nazareth a home of love, joy, and peace with them. A home of *love* - never was parental and filial love more true, because it was supernatural. A home of *joy*, there as elsewhere, He brought His Cross with Him and a home of *peace*: in it resided the peace of God which passes all understanding.

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O Lord, Jesus Christ, grant us so to follow the example of thy Holy Family, that by the assistance of thy Mother, the glorious Virgin Mary, and likewise of blessed Joseph, we may be found worthy at the hour of our death to be received by thee into everlasting habitations.



Collect for the First Sunday after Epiphany

○ Lord, we beseech thee mercifully to receive the prayers of thy people who call upon thee ; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfill the same; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

+ Requiescat in Pace +

Rev. Robert Leonard Burns Sr.

1942 - 2016

Of your Christian charity, please pray for the peaceful repose of the soul of the Rev. Robert L. Burns, of Conway, NH who passed away on January 1st. Fr. Burns was a friend of this community, and a long-time friend of Father Prior Kevin. Fr. Burns was a priest of the Charismatic Catholic Church, and also had close ties with St. Margaret's of Scotland Parish in Conway, NH. His priestly ministry focused on nursing-home spiritual care and visitations of the sick. In his secular work, he taught English and Latin at Fryeburg Academy in Fryeburg, Maine and then Kennett High School in Conway, N.H. He was very active as an athletic coach. His love of baseball was passed on to many of his students as he coached winning teams in the Conway region to several victorious seasons. His patience and humility were hallmarks in a personality that affected the many lives that came into contact with him. In your prayers for Fr. Bob, please pray for his wife Linda and children.

Priory Kalendar

For the week of January 10th to January 17th - A.D. 2016
In Epiphany-tide

Sunday, January 10th . . . Feast of the Holy Family..... *comm. 1st Sunday After Epiphany* **L.**

Monday, January 11th*feria in Epiphanytidein the Octave of Epiphany*

Tuesday, January 12th . . . St. Aelred of Reveaulx: Ab, O.C.O. 12th cent France.

Wednesday, January 13th*Octave Day of the Epiphany*

Thursday, January 14th Requiem Mortorum. Pray for the faithful departed.

Friday, January 15th . . . St. Paul the First Hermit; H. & C. 3rd cent Egypt... Pray for all hermits

Saturday, January 16th Saturday of our Lady; Mass and Offices on this day.

Sunday, January 17th . . . The Second Sunday After Epiphany

NOTE 1: The Feast of the Holy Family is kept on the Sunday within the Octave of the Epiphany with the Commemoration of the 1st Sunday after Epiphany on that day.

CALENDAR KEY

Ab. = Abbot, Abs. = Abbess, Abp. = Archbishop, Anc. = Anchorite, Ancs. = anchoress, Ap. = Apostle, Bl. = Blessed, Br. = Brother, Bp. = Bishop, Card. = Cardinal, C. or Conf. = Confessor, Comm. =

Commemoration, Dcn. = Deacon, Doct. = Doctor of the Church, Ev. = Evangelist, H. = Hermit, LBr. = Laybrother, LSr. = Laysister, K. = King, Mat. = Matron, M. = Monk, **M.M. = Month's Mind (30 day requiem for the recently departed)**, Myr. = Martyr, N. – Nun, Obl. = Oblate, P. = Priest, P. or Po. = Pope, Pr. = Prior, Prs. = Prioress, R. = Recluse, **RM = Requiem Mortorum, (monthly requiem of the departed)**, Q. = Queen, Ven. = Venerable, Vir. = Virgin, W. = Widow.

FASTING Key: **A = Abstinence, F = Fast, F & A = Fast and Abstinence**

RELIGIOUS ORDERS: C.O. = Congregation of the Oratory –Oratorians, C.P = Congregation of the Passion – Passionists, C.S.J. = Congregation of the Society of Jesus – Jesuits, Er. Cam. = Camaldolese Hermits, F.P.O. = Franciscans of the Primitive Observance, O. Car. = Carmelite Order, O. Cart. = Carthusian Order, O.C.D. = Order of Discalced Friars = Carmelites, O.F.A. = Augustinian Order, O.F.M. = Order of Friars Minor – Franciscans, O.F.M. Cap. = Capuchins, O.P. = Order of Preachers = Dominicans (Blackfriars), O. Praem. = Order of Canons Regular – Norbertines (White Monks), O.S.B. = Order of St. Benedict – Benedictines, O.S.U = Ursulines, O.C.O. = Order of the Cistercian Observance – Trappists, O.C.S.O. = Cistercian Order of the Strict Observance = Trappists.



Animal News from the Priory



Bless us O Lord, in these thy gifts.

2015 has been an interesting year. We took in some wonderful animals that touched our hearts. We have witnessed each of them change from a creature filled with mistrust and physical, emotional and mental wounds and scars into loving, happy and well fed individuals, still with issues but able to cope in these accommodations. We found homes for some who completely healed and were ready for their forever home and helped many people over the internet to make thoughtful decisions regarding their animals considering the situation that they presently found themselves in.

We also saw some peacefully go home to God.

We find that there are always more waiting in the shadows for a space to open up here for them and some we take, space or not to save their lives. None of this would be possible without the kindness of people like you. Many of our animals will live here 30 or 40 years and many of those are large animals who eat a lot.....

We are grateful, as are the animals for the kind, generosity that you have shown in 2015.

We all send our best wishes and blessings to you all for a happy, healthy, and peace filled 2016.



