

December 28

The Feast of the Holy Family was always an appealing one to me growing up and it still is. I suppose I think this way because I can so readily recall of the blessings of my own family life and because I see the great value of family overlooked by society at large. I recognize that there are many challenges that the family faces today. Notice, however, that the feast day is called the Holy Family, not the celebration of the perfect family. When Jesus went missing in the temple, and Joseph and Mary looked at each other essentially saying, "I thought he was with you!" we get a glimpse into some of the struggles and dysfunction of family life, from which even Jesus' family was not exempt from. And yet, just because things didn't always go as planned or while everyone wasn't on the same page, that didn't prevent them from being holy – fulfilling their religious obligations to God and growing in that communion and love with each other. May we see this as an opportunity to become Holy Families ourselves in the midst of all the struggles we face.

The new year is around the corner. There are many noble resolutions made at this time of year for the betterment of our lives, including these popular goals: Exercise more; Lose weight; Get organized; Learn a new skill or hobby; Save more money or spend less money; Quit smoking; and Spend more time with family and friends. If we are being holistic (think "holy"), then be sure to include a spiritual resolution as well. Maybe, this year I will: pray more, do some spiritual reading, regularly participate in a Church organization or ministry, take a class or listen to a podcast about my faith, do Christian Service to love Jesus in my neighbor. While at the outset of the New Year, we clean the slate, look to the future with hope for ourselves, and we begin honestly and earnestly striving for these things, it also has become a sort of running joke in our culture to see how just long our resolutions will last before they break down and settle for our old routines. Indeed, it is not easy to build new habits and make lifestyle adjustments, even if we know they are for our own good! Therefore, I would suggest to 1) be realistic in your expectations; don't set yourself up for failure, and 2) give your resolutions some legs; put a plan into place that is specific and manageable in the day-to-day; make sure you have the supports and people around you that you need to not only make your goals possible, but to help you through the struggles that inevitably come along; and hold yourself accountable. Nothing changes if nothing changes. Turn your resolutions into reality.

January 1st is the Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God. It is a Holy Day of Obligation. There is the vigil Mass on 12/31 at 6:30pm at St. Bernards. On 1/1/26, St. Peter's has a 7:45am Mass and a 12noon Mass, while Immaculate Conception will host a Mass at 6:30pm.

Peace,~Fr. Luke