

Chronology of the Early Life of Christ (part II)

We are examining the early life of Christ; last week, we ended with the Holy Family's return from exile.

In the third year of the Holy Family's exile in Egypt, an angel instructs Joseph to return to Israel, "...for they who sought the life of the Child are dead." Joseph departs intending, it seems, to resume his residence in Bethlehem. En route, however, Joseph hears that Archelaus (a surviving son of Herod the Great) now reigns in Judah & he was "afraid to go." Praying for guidance, Joseph is told to take his family to Galilee: "Being warned in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee."

Today, we continue with the last event in Christ's early life i.e., the finding of Christ in the temple.

Devout Jews went to Jerusalem at least three times a year to fulfill religious obligations. The feasts, which devout Jews observed, were: **The Pasch**, commemorating the liberation of the Jews from Egypt, fell on the 14th day of Nissan (1st month of the religious calendar or the 7 month of the civil calendar; it corresponds to our April). **The Feast of Weeks**, celebrating the gathering-in of the harvest through seven weeks as well as the time Moses received the Law on Mount Sinai (it is also called, "Pentecost" as occurring 50 days after the Pasch.) **The Feast of Tabernacles**, commemorating the time Israel dwelt in tabernacles in the desert after leaving Egypt, was a joyful celebration 6 months after the Passover, in the month of Tishri, the 7th month of the religious calendar, corresponding to our September – October. (The Life of Christ, Isidore O'Brien, OFM, 1937; p. 104)

In today's Gospel, the Holy Family returns to Nazareth after celebrating the Pasch in Jerusalem when Jesus was twelve years old. After the 8-day feast, the crowds returned to their home region in large groups. According to custom, the men traveled separately from the women. Thus, in the first day of their three day return trip, Joseph thought Jesus was with Mary, and Mary thought Joseph was with Jesus... being twelve, our Lord was still allowed to travel with either the men or the women.

At the end of the first day, Mary and Joseph regroup and discover the missing Child. They return to Jerusalem the next day... the second day. Finally, on the third day of His absence, Mary and Joseph find their Child in the temple engaging the ecclesiastics of Israel, "sitting in the midst of the doctors, hearing them and asking them questions."

Mary asks her son, "Son, why hast Thou done so to us? Behold, Thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing." It is a plea to soften any heart.

Our Lord answers without apparent sympathy, "How is it you sought me? Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" Thereby instructing us, as much as the onlookers then, of why He became man and why we too were created. Moreover, the verse, "they understood not the word that He spoke unto them," does not indicate that Mary & Joseph were ignorant of their Son's mission to redeem mankind. They knew their Child was the Messiah; they simply were unclear about all the details of how the redemption would be accomplished.

Finally, Christ returns to Nazareth with His parents, "and was subject to them" and we read the Christ Child advanced, "in wisdom, and age, and grace with God and with man."



St Francis de Sales Catholic Church

An apostolate of the Priestly Fraternity of St. Peter in the Archdiocese of Atlanta preaching the Gospel & sanctifying souls according to the liturgical books of 1962.

587 Landers Dr SW
Mableton, GA 30126
770-948-6888
www.fsspatl.com

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary & Joseph

January 11, 2026, A.D.

Pastor: Fr Chris Hathaway, FssP – pastor@fsspatl.com

Parochial Vicar: Fr. Joseph Favole, FssP – assistant@fsspatl.com

Fr. Brian Austin, FssP, - in residence

Rev. Mr. Doug Anderson, Deacon

Office Manager: Mrs. Leslie Riney – secretary@fsspatl.com

Director of Religious Education: Thomas Cole- DRE@fsspatl.com

Church Office Hours: 8:00 am to 4:00 pm, Monday – Friday

Bookstore – open Sundays after the 8 am & 10:30 am Masses and 1st Saturdays after the 9 am Mass.

Baptism: Contact the parish at least three months before birth.

Marriage: Contact the parish at least six months before the wedding.

Inquiring about the Catholic Faith? Call the office.

Daily Mass Times

Mon. & Wed.: 6:30 am & 9 am.

Tues. & Thurs.: 6:30 am & 12 noon.

Fri.: 6:30 am & 7 pm (followed by Holy Hour).

Sat.: 7 am & 9 am.

Sunday Mass Times

7 am low Mass (at the church)

8 am low Mass (at the gym)

10:30 am high Mass (at the gym)

1 pm low Mass (at the church)

Confessions are heard in the confessional box ½ hour before each Mass.

Church Hours

Mon.-Thurs.: 6 am - 7 pm

Fri.: 6 am - 9 pm

Sat.: 6:30 am - 7 pm

Sun.: 7 am - 7 pm

Office Hours

Mon. - Fri.: 8 am - 4 pm.

Closed on Holy Days

Liturgical Calendar for the Upcoming Week

DATE	FEAST	CLASS/COLOR	COMMEMORATION
Sun 01-11	Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, & Joseph	2/W	
Mon 01-12	Feria of Epiphany (1st Sunday after Pentecost)	4/W	
Tues 01-13	Comm. of the Baptism of the Lord	2/W	
Wed 01-14	St Hilary, <i>Bishop & Doctor</i>	3/W	St Felix
Thu 01-15	St Paul the First Hermit, <i>Confessor</i>	3/W	St Maurus
Fri 01-16	St Marcellus I, <i>Pope & Martyr</i>	3/R	
Sat 01-17	St Anthony, <i>Abbot</i>	3/W	
Sun 01-18	2nd Sunday after Epiphany	2/W	

Mass Intentions for the Upcoming Week

Sun 01-11	(7 am) <i>Pro-populo</i> (frh) (8 am) FssP & TLM (frf) (10:30 am) Catherine Calta (frr) (1 pm) Benefactors (frh)	rb S Calta
Mon 01-12	(6:30 am) Abel Cardenas+ (9 am) Karen Fickett	rb N Cardenas rb C Frazier
Tues 01-13	(6:30 am) Joe Baccala+ (12 noon) Francisco Antonio Miranda	rb Shryock rb M Diaz
Wed 01-14	(6:30 am) Abel Cardenas+ (9 am) Jeff Antley+	rb N Cardenas rb C Giuffre
Thu 01-15	(6:30 am) Joanne Fortunato (12 noon) Timothy F Pierce+	(not at SFdS) rb K Faith rb B Moroney
Fri 01-16	(6:30 am) Donatilde Zanca (7 pm) Maxwell & family	(not at SFdS) rb N Cardenas rb E Shryock
Sat 01-17	(7 am) Donatilde Zanca+ (9 am) Confraternity of Christian Mothers	(not at SFdS) rb N Cardenas Venassa
Sun 01-18	(7 am) <i>Pro-populo</i> (frh) (8 am) Fr Austin's intention (fra) (10:30 am) Walter Cheeseman+ (frf) (1 pm) Fr Favole's intention (frf)	(Not at SFdS) rb T Nolan

Today, SFdS welcomes Fr Rapoport, FssP, who will offer the 10:30 am Mass.

The KoC thanks you for your food donations to the poor. 1,091 pounds collected!

This week, Monday, staff meeting (1 pm); Tuesday, Home Epiphany Blessings end;

Wednesday, (Fr Hathaway away until January 28; he takes the Mass intentions with him as above); There is NO 6:30 a.m. Mass on Thursday and Friday.

There is NO 7:00 a.m. Mass on Saturday and Sunday.

Confraternity of Christian Mothers meet Saturday at 10:30a.m.

Next Sunday marks the beginning of the Traditional Church Unity Octave. A handout will be available. Fr. Hathaway wishes he could celebrate this with you.

Last week's collection: cash \$5,872.00; online \$58,908.00 total: \$64,780.00

Attendance: 7 am-68; 8 am-153; 10:30 am-273; 1 pm-139; 635 total souls.

Please pray for: Rachel Fender, Anna Maria Fender (1/11); Sydney Markich & family (12/28) & Michael Keyes Jr (12/17).

A possible sequence of events of the early part of Christ's life

Birth of Christ on Dec. 25. According to ancient oral tradition & the earliest written records of the 4th century ~ no surprise as the Church was persecuted the first three.

Adoration by the Shepherds occurs the night of our Lord's birth.

Circumcision occurs 8 days later, by St Joseph in the cave or in the local synagogue as proposed by some.

Presentation in the Temple occurs 40 days later. Following the Mosaic Law, Mary offers 2 doves, the price of the poor, for her purification and Joseph redeems Jesus for 5 shekels (2 ½ ounces of silver or \$68.70 in today's money). Had the Magi come with their gold before this time, I think Joseph would have offered the normal lamb.

The Holy Family moves into a "house" of Bethlehem, as read on the Feast of Epiphany. Again, the Wise men adore at a "domum" (house); no "praesepio" (manger) is mentioned.

The Adoration of the wise men a year later, at the "house," on Jan. 6, when Christ is in his 2nd year, according to ancient oral tradition. Moreover, Christ is said "a toddler" in the Greek, indicating a child who walks or one older than 13 months old.

The Holy Family's Flight to Egypt, according to ancient oral tradition, lasts three Hebrew years i.e., part of the first, all of the second and part of the third.

The Return from exile occurs when Christ is in his 4th or 5th year. The angel commands Joseph: "Arise, and take the young Child and His mother, and go into the land of Israel, for they are dead which sought the young child's life." "They are dead" supports the idea that the angel did not call Joseph only after Herod had died, but others as well; this is the kind of phrasing which makes precision difficult and why, maybe, St. Bernard said the exile lasted 7 years.

Last, in returning, Joseph seems intent to resume his residence in Bethlehem. En route, he hears that Archelaus now reigns in Judah and we read that he "was afraid to go." Perhaps he knew that Archelaus began his rule by putting to death 3000 Hebrews he didn't like; father like son. Praying for guidance, Joseph is told to take his family to Galilee: "Being warned in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee."

To end, after Joseph settles down in Nazareth, for the next 25 years or so, we hear little else about the Holy Family. The little we hear concerns his finding in the Temple about which may be read on the back of this bulletin.

Maxim of St Francis de Sales (w/ a Fr Hathaway addition)

We must not only be willing that God should strike us, but we must accept that He will strike us where He wills (and through whom He wills.)