

St. Therese Catholic Church

Served by The Missionary Society of St. Paul from Nigeria since 2000

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SOLEMNITY OF MARY, THE HOLY MOTHER OF GOD

January 1, 2018

“He was named Jesus..”



Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As we embark upon a new year, we are thankful for the many gifts that God has given us and his message of faith, namely, that God loves us so much that he sent his only Son to redeem us and to show us the way to the Father in heaven.

My hope for us is that we share our faith with loved ones and strangers alike, proclaiming the joyous tidings, “EMMANUEL”, which means 'God is with us.' And we should not just share our faith but we should reach out to one another with all the blessings God has given us, especially the gift of peace, and may the peace of God illumine your heart and lead you to the heart of God.

Fr. Donatus and the Parish Council wishes peace and good will to our parish community, assuring you of our prayers and best wishes always.

***Happy
New
Year!***

Today's Readings

First Reading

Numbers 6:22-27

God gives a blessing for the Israelites.

Responsorial Psalm

Psalm 67:2-3,5,6,8

All the people sing praises to God.

Second Reading

Galatians 4:4-7

God sent his Son to make us children of God.

Gospel Reading

Luke 2:16-21

The shepherds find Jesus in a manger in Bethlehem.

Background on the Gospel Reading

Today's reading is a continuation from the Gospel proclaimed at the Christmas Mass at midnight. In it the shepherds act upon the message they receive from the angel and go to find Jesus in the manger in Bethlehem. In their visit to the manger, the shepherds find things just as the angel had said. The shepherds' visit, therefore, is a moment of fulfillment, manifestation, and the beginning of the salvation we receive through Christ.

In the context of today's Solemnity, this reading also helps us focus on Mary as the Mother of God. The reading tells us at least three things about Mary as a mother. First, Mary is described as a reflective person, keeping the reports of the shepherds in her heart. Second, we are reminded of how obedient Mary was to God when she named the baby *Jesus* as the angel Gabriel had directed. Third, this reading shows Mary and Joseph faithfully observing their Jewish tradition by having Jesus circumcised.

Mary's faithfulness to God is evident in all three of these things. Her reflection upon the events in her life indicates that she was a person of prayer. This prayer made possible her obedience to God and God's will, even if the outcome was not clear. Finally, her faithfulness to a community of faith grounded her relationship with God and enabled her to participate in God's plan of salvation.

Because of Mary's faithfulness to God, she was able to receive the gift of God's Son and accept her role in God's plan for salvation. By doing so, she models for us the path of discipleship and is also called Mother of the Church.

Our call to discipleship also includes these three aspects. First, discipleship means prayer and reflection on the events of our lives that we might see God's presence and work in our lives. Second, discipleship means obedience to God and God's will. Third, discipleship includes fidelity to a community of faith.

Family Connection

In today's Gospel, we learn that Mary honored her commitment to God by naming her child *Jesus*, the name given to him by the angel Gabriel. In Matthew's Gospel, Joseph is told to name the child *Jesus* because he will save the people. The name *Jesus* means "God saves." Even in his name, Jesus announces the mission he came to accomplish.

Your family might use today's feast as an opportunity to talk about names. Reflect together on the name of each member of the family. What does each name mean? Why was each person so named?

Read together today's Gospel, Luke 2:16-21. Recall that the name Jesus means "God saves." Think about how Jesus fulfilled the mission that his name suggests. Pray as a family that each family member will fulfill their mission to be faithful followers of Jesus, in whom we find our salvation. Pray for Mary's help by praying together the Hail Mary or singing together, "Sing of Mary, Pure and Lowly."