

SOLEMNITY OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY  
AND JOSEPH

DECEMBER 29, 2013

## NOTRE-DAME-DES-PHILIPPINES CATHOLIC MISSION

MONTREAL, CANADA



### The Family We All Dream Of

Our family is our "little world" – the place where we feel at home. It is the environment where we first feel loved and where we learn to love and care.

Unfortunately, in our days, in far too many cases, the dream of a happy and faithful family has been shattered by selfishness, jealousy, pride, irresponsibility . . . .

Our celebration of the Feast of the Holy Family re-proposes to all of us both the attractiveness of the dream of a united and happy family and the means to make it a reality by living out the message of God's Word. May the example of Mary Most Holy and Joseph and the teaching of St. Paul be our inspiration in making our families what we dream of and what God wants them to be.

*"I commend all families to the protection of the Holy Family of Nazareth. Following its quiet example, may families help their children to grow in wisdom, age and grace before God and men."*

*~Pope Benedict XVI*



## JESUS, MARY and JOSEPH

Among the many insights that Matthew provides about the Holy Family in his account of the Gospel is that their family life was filled with tension and unexpected turns. In this way, the Holy Family provides for us role models of faith in the face of familial troubles. No parents raising children—the Holy Family included—are free from struggle and pain. But all parents who raise their children in faith and trust in the Lord have built a home with a strong foundation.

In today's Gospel reading, we hear how Joseph is instructed in a series of dreams: first to flee for Egypt, then to return to the land of Israel after Herod's death, and finally to avoid Judea (because of Archelaus, Herod's son), and dwell in Nazareth of Galilee. Joseph was the type of parent who paid attention to warning signs and acted out of faith in the Lord.

The First Reading comes from the book of Sirach. This Jewish wisdom writer extols children honoring, revering, and caring for their father and mother. When children treat their parents in this manner, the wisdom writers tell us that sins are atoned and prayers are heard. In these homes, "a house is raised in justice." From Paul, in today's Second Reading, we hear a similar message on the importance of children obeying their parents. And Paul also offers advice to husbands and wives: be subordinate and loving. When children see their parents loving and caring for each other, they will naturally do the same. The love and care that Jesus showed toward all people he encountered was surely rooted in the love and care he experienced growing up in his home in Nazareth.



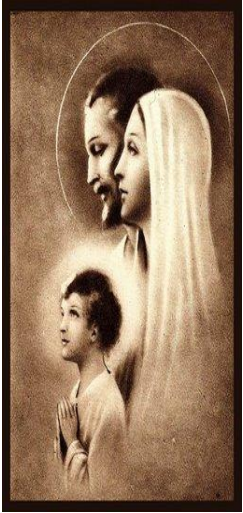
### The Rich Rewards of Family

A recent study began with a search for the U.S. city that had the lowest incidence of cancer and heart disease. The winner was Rosetto, Pennsylvania. Experts descended upon the city expecting to see a town populated by non-smokers who ate the right foods, exercised, and kept close track of their cholesterol. They discovered that most were "none of the above." They found instead that their good health was tied to the close family bonds that prevailed within that community. There's much to be said for a close and loving family.

One of the all-time great Christmas movies is *It's a Wonderful Life!* The classic scene is the final one. The townspeople are gathering in George Bailey's living room. They're pouring money onto a table, all with the intention of rescuing George from financial ruin. It's not long before George's brother enters the picture. Having heard of the hard times George had been going through, he secured a leave from the military, hopped a plane, and flew all day and night to make it to Bedford Falls. He wanted to be of help. Seeing the people and the mountain of money, he raises his glass and toasts his brother: "To my brother George, the richest man in the world!" George Bailey was rich, all right, but not because he was suddenly given money. He was rich because he had family and friends who loved him and cared about him. There's much to be said for the benefits and blessings of family.



## REDISCOVERING THE TREASURE OF THE FAMILY



*The Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph* was an ordinary village family. Its members knew what it means to live by the sweat of their brow. They knew the bitter taste of poverty, rejection, misunderstanding, persecution, and even exile . . . . But they **found the strength to endure all those difficulties in the union and solidarity that bound them together.** “Clothed with heartfelt mercy, kindness, humility, meekness and patience” (see Col 3:12), in their daily lives, they practised all the virtues which St. Paul urges all families to treasure and live by. In other words, the family of Nazareth was **characterized by a sincere and selfless LOVE.**

But that love for one another would not have lasted long, if it had not been **rooted in their love for God.** It was God who was the center of everything in that family. **God was their absolute priority;** their “Number One.” They lived in

His presence, in total trust, availability and hope.

These are some of the features which made the “ordinary” Family of Nazareth *extraordinary.* This is what makes it the object of our admiration, but also of a certain envy because many of our families are so different from such a “model.” **Many of our families, in fact, are no longer a haven of peace but a constant battlefield.** Recriminations, bitterness, jealousy and unfaithfulness have all but shattered the unity and solidarity that used to characterize them.

**In most cases the cause of such a disaster is the fact that God has been shut out of those families.** Many times He has not even been invited to the wedding ceremony. Civil marriages and “live-ins” abound. NPraying together seems no longer fashionable in many families nowadays. This is attributed to the many things to be done, conflict of schedules and priorities. The sad reality is the shallowness of the faith in most of its members.

There are, of course, happy exceptions of parents who, every evening, gather their children for some moments of reflection on the Word of God, shared prayer or recitation of the Rosary and mutual reconciliation if during the day there have been some “scratches” . . . .

A family that renews its covenant with the Lord every day will have no time for endless bickering, jealousy and harsh manners on the part of the parents, or a rebellious attitude on the part of the children. **A family where God is honored and loved is a family at peace. The family that prays together is a “little Church.”** It is when the family gathers together in prayer that both parents and the children see themselves under the common fatherly authority of God.

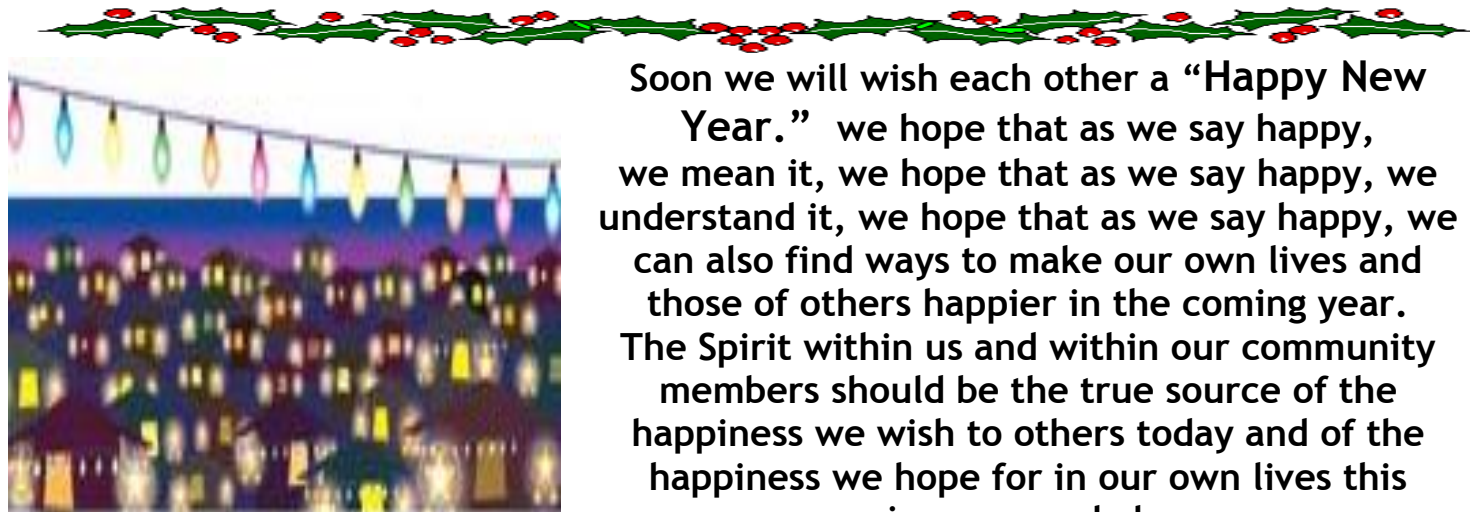
**Every family should have its proper values, respect for the aged, tenderness for the children. It should be one in plan and action, all under God, the Father of all.**

Such was the Holy Family of Nazareth. And the yearly celebration of its feast is not just a well-deserved tribute paid to them, but also an encouragement to make our families what the Holy Family was – a haven of peace and love for God and one another; a “holy family.”



Jess P. Balon ( WORD AND LIFE PUBLICATIONS)



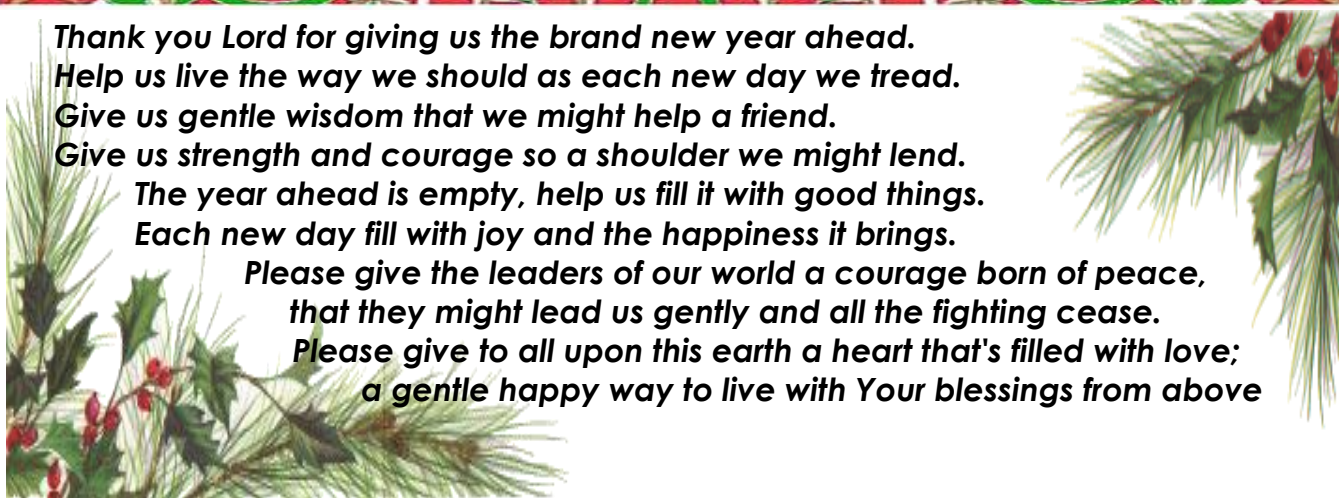


Soon we will wish each other a “Happy New Year.” we hope that as we say happy, we mean it, we hope that as we say happy, we understand it, we hope that as we say happy, we can also find ways to make our own lives and those of others happier in the coming year. The Spirit within us and within our community members should be the true source of the happiness we wish to others today and of the happiness we hope for in our own lives this coming year and always.

**THE FILIPINO CATHOLIC MISSION OF MONTREAL  
WISHES YOU AND YOUR LOVED ONES  
THE BLESSINGS OF A NEW YEAR.  
MAY A RENEWED AND LASTING BEGINNING TO  
PEACE IN THE WORLD AND IN OUR COMMUNITY  
BE GOD’S BLESSING AND OUR WORK.**

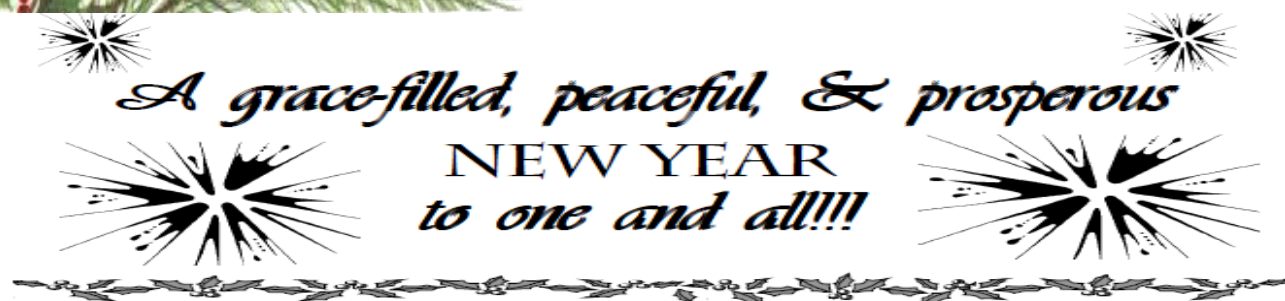


*Thank you Lord for giving us the brand new year ahead.  
Help us live the way we should as each new day we tread.  
Give us gentle wisdom that we might help a friend.  
Give us strength and courage so a shoulder we might lend.  
The year ahead is empty, help us fill it with good things.  
Each new day fill with joy and the happiness it brings.  
Please give the leaders of our world a courage born of peace,  
that they might lead us gently and all the fighting cease.  
Please give to all upon this earth a heart that's filled with love;  
a gentle happy way to live with Your blessings from above*



*A grace-filled, peaceful, & prosperous*

**NEW YEAR  
to one and all!!!**





**CASH, NON – PERISHABLE FOOD ITEMS, PERSONAL HYGIENE SUPPLIES, SCHOOL SUPPLIES** are still being collected this month to be sent to the Archdiocese of Palo (Leyte, Philippines)



**FEAST OF THE STO. NIÑO** – A Special Celebration of the Feast of the Sto. Niño will be held on Sunday, January, 19, 2014 at 11:30 a.m. There will be the recitation of the Novena Prayers, Blessing of Children and Blessing of Images after the Mass. Devotees who would like to sponsor the Mass are requested to contact Mrs. Susie Alejandro, Mrs. Luming Silverio or the FCMM Office. A pot-luck reception and Fiesta Filipino Program will follow after at the Church Basement.



**YEAR 2014 ENVELOPES** are now available for pick-up after each Mass. Please contact Mr. Mel Villanueva, Mr. Pedro Diaz, Jr. or the FCMM Office for information.

**IMPORTANT REMINDER: YOU HAVE UNTIL DECEMBER 31<sup>ST</sup> TO GIVE YOUR DONATIONS WHICH YOU WISH TO BE CREDITED TO THE TAXATION YEAR 2013**



## Worship SCHEDULE



-December 31 (Tuesday)

❖ 7:00 p.m. – NEW YEAR'S EVE VIGIL & THANKSGIVING MASS

January 1, 2014 (Wednesday) SOLEMNITY OF MARY,  
MOTHER OF GOD

❖ 1:00 p.m. –NEW YEAR'S DAY MASS

-January 5 (Sunday) THE LORD'S EPIPHANY

❖ 11: 30 a.m.- MASS

-January 12 (Sunday) THE LORD'S BAPTISM

❖ 11: 30 a.m.- MASS

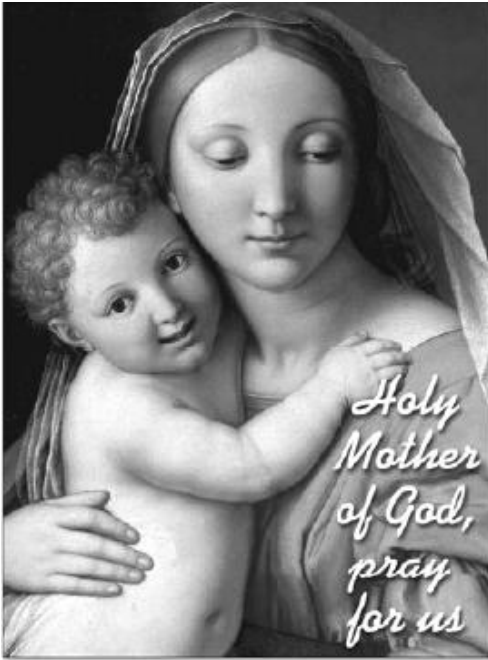
-January 19 (Sunday) FEAST OF SEÑOR STO. NIÑO

❖ 11: 30 a.m.- MASS

❖ 1: 30 P.M.- FELLOWSHIP and FIESTA CELEBRATION



## SOLEMNITY OF THE BLESSED VIRGIN MARY, MOTHER OF GOD



The new year begins with a blessing. For us, blessing speaks of a consecration or setting aside of a thing or space or person, but the biblical use of blessing goes deeper than that.

A blessing is an action of God that leads to happiness and fulfillment. So we begin the new year with a blessing that's bigger than all time.

God's blessing is given to Mary, and through her to all of us. For centuries, since 431 A.D., we have identified Mary as the God-bearer, the Mother of God. When the Council of Ephesus in that year declared Mary as the Mother of God, they were also saying that Jesus is God as well as human. This huge claim, of course, is nothing less than the impenetrable mystery of the Incarnation, which we celebrated only a week ago on December 25.

We revisit the Incarnation today on this first day of the new year. We are greeted with the kindly, peaceful blessing of God. This blessing is fulfilled in the Incarnation. The Gospel for this Mass today is the same as that of the Mass at Dawn on Christmas Day, with the addition of the Jewish rite of circumcision. We move quickly from the scene at Bethlehem to the brief statement about fulfilling the law of Moses, a reminder that this small family is firmly grounded in the tradition and faith of Israel. The name Jesus, proclaimed by the angel Gabriel, is given to this child. It means "the Lord saves." We need to be reminded that for the people of Israel, names are not chosen for superficial reasons. They are not trendy or cute. Names carry great meaning; they identify one's mission in life. Often enough we have read of name changes that describe mission. Abram became Abraham, the father of great nations. Sarai became Sarah. And, in the Christian Scriptures, Jesus gave Simon the new name Peter, which defined his mission.

Today we recall that Jesus is the Lord's salvation. God's active blessing recorded in the book of Numbers is realized in Jesus. God's action is to become one with us, to bring happiness and fulfillment. It is through Mary that this happens. As Paul reminds us, this Son who is God's active salvation has come to us through a woman who was born under the law. Through this daughter of Israel the law is fulfilled. In this time, we are welcomed in. We are adopted children. God's salvation is ours, too. We are blessed ones. We can call the Lord by a new familiar name—Abba. This, says Paul, is God's design.

And what a design! On this oldest of Marian feasts, we see the whole picture. We are among the blessed. Again, not because we are worthy or deserving or clever or rich. We are blessed because God is generous and wills our salvation.



We are at the far end of a long history that began when God brought light and life from chaos at the beginning of time. We are the youngest inheritors of God's blessing, a blessing beautifully enunciated by Moses' brother Aaron. We are the newest Christians in a long train of Christians. We share in the blessing given so explicitly to Mary and reiterated by Elizabeth, "Blessed are you among women." Elizabeth gave us the words that reflected her understanding of blessedness—the Jewish understanding. God's blessing is God's action that brings happiness and fullness of life.

We confess the faith proclaimed at Ephesus that calls Mary the Mother of God, which identifies Jesus as God. Mary retains a privileged place in the Church's life and

prayer. She, who is Mother of God, is also Mother of the Church.

Blessings given must be received, otherwise they are like unopened gifts. As Mary received God's blessing, so must we. She lived as a woman blessed by God; so must we. This blessing is a responsibility as well as a privilege. It asks of us an obedience—literally a deep listening—to the blessing of God among us today. The overflow of exuberant blessings and songs and canticles scattered throughout the gathering prayers and the responsorial psalms is the Church's means of celebration today. We, in turn, must allow them to lead us to the gratitude that finds expression in a life that, like Mary's, is a living witness to God's blessings.

***"I also entrust myself once again to you (Mary)  
and with confident affection***

***I repeat to you: Totus tuus ego sum! I am all yours!"***

***~ Blessed Pope John Paul II on occasion of World Youth Day 2003 ~***



**"Do all the good you can,  
by all the means you can,  
in all the ways you can,  
in all the places you can,  
at all the times you can,  
to all the people you can,  
as long as you ever can."**

**John Wesley**

