

Greetings!

“Why were you looking for me?”

I do hear it often enough and I'm sure you might too. It's usually what every young person as well as those of us who are a 'little' older (*although I can only chuckle when someone says, “Father, don't grow old.”*) dreams about: *a perfect family*. And yet most of us will eventually convince ourselves that there is no *perfect* family. Yet, although all of us have experienced this reality to some degree or another, it is good to recall that there *is* a perfect family, just not in the way we think of as 'perfect'.

Today, the Church celebrates the Feast of the Holy Family (*and oddly enough, I hear their names invoked quite often in conversations*). But, their *perfect* life together was not quite what we think of as perfect: *easy, stress-free, little spilled milk, few disagreements, no yelling* and, of course, *'four cats, three dogs, two gold fish and a partridge in a pear tree'*.

First, this young Jewish girl had already radically consecrated her virgin life to the Lord only to be told He had chosen her to be a Mother. Joseph had prepared to take his young bride into his home for the first time only to find out that she was quite noticeably pregnant. Then the expectant parents had to travel the 80 miles of fairly rough terrain from Nazareth to Bethlehem with Joseph on foot, the pregnant-Mary on a mule, and through a very unsafe region. Add, the rejection of every inn keeper along the way that left the young parents to deliver the Christ Child in a place where animals lay, and the heart-breaking word that hundreds of soldiers were ordered to begin killing every child under the age of two until they found their new-born, sending them frantically into exile, and you begin to think this is far from the definition of 'perfect' family life! Anxious, fearful, tiring, and unstable yet *perfect*.

With such early hardships, we're not too surprised to hear in today's Gospel the added fear that grips Joseph and Mary who come to believe they have not only lost *their* first-born son, but they've lost the *Son of God!* Clearly, a new definition of *perfect* begins to take form and it's no longer 'easy' but rather something in spite of trials and, in fact, maybe this Holy Family can actually relate even more to our family life than we ever thought.

What the Holy Family does live perfectly is the life of *simplicity, poverty and obedience*. And, in a day-and-age when this is thought to be 'old fashioned' or 'ancient history', I might suggest such a (*family*) life properly lived, would actually begin to renew our lives and restore the dream of every people: *happiness!* Joseph and Mary were not 'simpletons' but rather very pure and genuine in living a life of integrity. They neither portrayed themselves as above others or ones 'keeping up with the Jones' (*no offense to the actual Jones families in our parish*) but rather focus daily on what was pleasing to God.

With a few New Year's resolutions in the making this week, a universal invitation to living life more simply for God will be a blessing not only on our family life but on our whole parish. Looking forward to the New Year ... I wish us all a Happy New Year!

God bless!

Mass Intentions for the Week

Saturday, December 26th

4:00PM Lisa Fucile 10th Anniversary

Sunday, December 27th

7:30AM Eugene McCoy Memorial Mass

9:30AM Parishioners of St. Joseph Parish

11:30AM Peter Giovanello 20th Anniversary

Saturday, January 2nd

9:00AM Vocations to the Priesthood

4:00PM Dennis J. Sullivan, Jr. Memorial Mass

Sunday, January 3rd

11:30AM Parishioners of St. Joseph Parish


New Year's Day is a Holyday of Obligation.

The Mass Schedule is:

4:00PM New Year's Eve

and

9:00AM New Year's Day

Wedding  Banns

III. John Murphy and Heather MacDougall

Congratulations! And let us joyfully pray for all our engaged-couples as they prepare for their marriage in Christ!

Christmas Collection

Although it is certainly too soon to give you an update on this year's Collection from Friday, I wish to sincerely thank everyone who was able to give to this very important collection for the healthcare and retirement of our priests. If you were not able to give yet or are able to increase your gift, we will still be able to send your gift in. *Thank you!*

Parish Grand Annual Collection

Thank you! We look to complete this collection, and if you can help us reach our goal of \$38,000, I would be very grateful. We are now at \$30,503. Certainly, your pledge may be paid over any period of time you wish. Whatever offering each individual or family might make will be used to renovate the lower and upper Church this year to provide more space for our adult and youth activities.

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

COMPREHENSIVE YOUTH MINISTRY PROGRAM

There will be a middle school dance on Tuesday December 29th. We are looking to host another social event for our young people during vacation week. Some folks have suggested a movie night, a game night or a New Year's Eve party after the 4:00 Mass until about 8pm. If you are interested in organizing any of these events, please contact Fr Ed or Maura Burke at 781 767 – 0563 ASAP.

WE HAVE A WISH LIST!!! Do you have (or know someone who does) an LCD projector or plasma TV that can be donated to our youth group? We also find ourselves in need of a multi passenger van or bus. There are many times we take trips and the cost of renting transportation is quite high. We would like to partner with someone who can help lower the cost of our transportation needs. Please contact Fr. Ed or Maura Burke at 781 767 0563 if you are able to help.

Pro Life Rally: The Pro Life Rally in Washington DC is scheduled for January 20-22nd and we will be traveling by bus with other parishes in the Archdiocese. If anyone - teenager or up - is interested in attending, please let Fr. Ed know ASAP.

Year of the Priest

As we enter the New Year, we are still celebrating the Year of the Priest. Currently, there are 750 priests serving the Archdiocese of Boston of which 240 priests are 75 years of age or older. Within five years, approximately 40% of our Boston priests will be retired.

As we continue to ask you to invite young men to ask the Lord of they have a vocation to priesthood and to encourage them, so do we need to help provide for the priests who have given much of their lives in service in their time of age and infirmity.

Please consider making a year-end tax-deductible donation towards the healthcare and retirement of our priests. For a video by Cardinal Sean and more information, please go to: www.careforseniorpriests.org/ourpriests.

CHRISTMAS DANCE

Grades 6, 7 & 8
St. Joseph & St. Michael Youth Groups

Tuesday, December 29th
7:00PM – 10:00PM

St. Michael's Church Hall
Avon

Admission \$5.00

Save the Date!

Do you remember the priest who baptized you? Gave you First Holy Communion? Married you? Visited your dying family member? In this *Year of the Priest*, what better way can we show our love for priests assigned to this parish over the years than 'An Evening of Appreciation'. Please save the date: **Saturday, March 20th** for an *Evening of Appreciation of Our Priests* here at St. Joseph with Cardinal Sean! More information to follow (*and an invitation for you to help make this evening one to remember for our whole parish!*)

Tax Laws for Contributions

Just a reminder that due to changes in the federal tax laws for charitable contributions beginning in 2007, parishioners who itemize deductions on Schedule A of their tax returns will no longer be able to deduct contributions to the parish unless they maintain a bank record or receive a written contribution statement from the parish. Cash contributions that are not in a parish envelope **cannot** be tracked by the parish and will not be included in the year-end contribution statement. To ensure tax deductibility the following payments are recommended: use of parish envelopes or written check made payable to the parish.



Jesus said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" But they did not understand what he said to them. - Lk 2:49-50



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DECEMBER 27, 2009

ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL

To the Parishioners of St. Joseph

The faculty and staff at Saint Joseph School would like to wish everyone a very blessed Christmas and a new year filled with good health and happiness!

Did you know...

that St. Joseph School celebrates the birth of Jesus with a Kindergarten Pageant and a school wide Christmas Concert?

St. Joseph School Registration 2010-11

Registrations for the 2010-11 school year are now being accepted. On Monday, February 1st, from 9:00-11:00 AM, there will be an *Open House* for new parents. St. Joseph School offers a full day pre-K **4 year old** program and a full day **kindergarten** program. Aftercare is available. For more information about the school please visit the school website at www.stjosephholbrook.com. To register your child, please call the school office at 781-767-1544.

First Penance

First penance for St. Joseph School grade 2 students will be Saturday, January 9th at 10:30 am.

Skating Party

The St. Joseph School Parent Organization will host a skating party, Sunday, January 10th from 12:00-2:00 at the Carousel Family Fun Center in Whitman. Admission is \$3.00 with a skate rental fee of \$3.00. All are welcome - so tell your friends!

New...Stop & Shop A+ Bucks Program

Please register and help support St. Joseph School by going to www.stop&shop.com and register for the A+ Bucks Program. After a series of questions including the first letters of your last name and your 15-digit card code, the question where do you live will appear. When Holbrook is entered a school list will drop down with St. Joseph School. Thank you for participating and helping our school!

Shaws Supermarket Neighborhood Rewards Program

This holiday season please help support St. Joseph School by registering online at: <http://www.albertsons.com/cp/shaws/> and follow the steps to join by logging on as a *Shopper*. Next you will be prompted to enter your Rewards Card Number and Phone Number. To support St. Joseph's the eleven-digit number to enter is **49001018952**. Thank you!

DECEMBER 27, 2009

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

There will be NO CCD classes the week of December 27th due to the Christmas Vacation.

TENTH GRADE CONFIRMATION CLASS: The second part of our two year Confirmation class begins on Sunday, January 3, 2010. This class is a Prayer Service with St. Michael's Parish and will be held at 2pm at St. Michael's in Avon. Most other classes will be at 5pm. Remember, you must reregister for the second part of the program. No student will be accepted into the program after January 10th.

Advertiser of the Week

Thank you for patronizing the services of our bulletin advertisers! This week we thank *Dunkin Donuts* for advertising with us!

Sacramental Life

Baptisms

Third Sunday of each month at 1:30 PM. Preparation Classes the Saturday evening *before* at 6:30 PM. Please call the parish office in advance.

Confirmation

Please contact a priest if you are an adult or Director of Religious Education if you are a youth.

Confessions

Saturdays from 3:00-3:45 PM or by contacting a priest.

Eucharist

Join us Weekends:

Saturday 4:00 PM Vigil

Sunday: 7:30, 9:30, 11:30 AM

Join us Weekdays:

Monday – Saturday 9:00 AM

Marriage

Please make arrangements with a parish priest six months prior to wedding.

Holy Orders

If you or someone you know is thinking about priesthood (*or religious life*) please contact a priest or religious sister.

Anointing of the Sick

Please call the rectory if you or someone you know is sick, homebound, preparing for surgery, unable to participate in Sunday Eucharist, or would like a visit by a priest.