

# A Word From Fr. Tom Niehaus

December 29, 2019

## Feast of the Holy Family

“They returned to Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him (Luke 2:40).” Nazareth is the hometown of Jesus, Mary and Joseph—the Holy Family. As a pilgrim I have had the opportunity to visit the village-now-city where Jesus grew up. I have visited the site of the Holy Family’s house, St. Joseph’s workshop, the site where the Angel Gabriel spoke to Mary about becoming the Mother of the Redeemer, and read the prophetic scripture of Isaiah that Jesus read in the synagogue. Galilee is a region in north central Israel which is quite hilly and rural. The landscape is swept with wheat fields, dotted with olive trees and scattered with pasturing sheep. Jesus, similar to many of us in the St. Patrick, Most Holy Redeemer & St. Canice area grew up in a rural community. We know for certain that Jesus’ youth, adolescence, and young adult life took place in Nazareth and that he would have been under the care of Mary His mother and Joseph His stepfather. Little is written in the scriptures about the life of Jesus until His baptism at age thirty. However, one can deduce that Jesus learned the carpenter trade from Joseph, was cared for by Mary and would have learned the Hebrew scriptures & worshipped in the Jewish synagogue where as an adult He would read from the scroll of Isaiah and pronounced boldly, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing (Luke 4:21),” causing those present to say, “Is this not Joseph’s son? (Luke 4:22).” The formative years of Jesus are a mystery, but there is a blessing to the hidden life of Our Savior. In the small town of Nazareth Jesus’ life was hidden a lot like our own. Very few of us will have all the events of our lives written about and remembered, yet, all of us live everyday lives, as Jesus did in Nazareth, being taught and cared for by our parents, loving and fighting with our siblings, playing with our friends, learning the challenges of life and earning a living. Jesus was still fully human and divine as He grew up doing ordinary things. No matter where we are we can be formed in holiness and live holy lives. Just because your family didn’t teach you the faith or take time to have God at the center, it doesn’t mean that you cannot start afresh today. Take



time today to thank God for your family and the blessings that He gives to us through our family. If you struggle to love members of your family or have wounds from past family incidents ask the Holy Family to intercede and ask Jesus specifically to bring healing and peace where there is injury and strife. Jesus, Mary, Joseph, I love you very much, save souls!

## Holy Day of Obligation

As we begin the New Year 2020 we do so taking the opportunity to entrust last year’s events into the care of Jesus through Mary and to place our faith in God for the coming year’s schedule. Take some time to thank God for the past year and honor Mary, the Mother of God during the Holy Day of Obligation Mass at 5 pm December 31st at Most Holy Redeemer, 8:30 January 1st at Most Holy Redeemer or 5 pm January 1st at St. Patrick.

## Thank You!

Thanks to everyone who worked so hard to make the times of worship this Christmas Season so meaningful and sacred! Musicians and choirs, decorators & environment teams, liturgical ministers of all types, core staff members, I am humbled by your generous service to our people. It is a great blessing to be able to pray at the Holy Mass in our area at St. Patrick, Most Holy Redeemer & St. Canice! These are the best parishes in the Archdiocese of St. Paul & Minneapolis!!!

Have a blessed Christmas season!

Fr. Tom Niehaus