



Church of the Ascension

ascensionsaratoga.org

Masses: (Sat) 5p; (Sun) 7a, 9a, 11a, 5p
(Mon-Fri) 8a; (Sat) 9a

Confessions: (Sat) 4p - 4:45p

December 29, 2024

Written by
THE
FAITHFUL
DISCIPLE

Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Sir 3:2-6, 12-14 | Col 3:12-21 | Lk 2:41-52

GROW AS A DISCIPLE | PRAY, STUDY, ENGAGE, SERVE

Compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. These are the attributes Paul instructs the Colossians in today's reading to "put on" or to "clothe" themselves with. It's quite a list, isn't it? Paul goes on to talk about the virtues of the Christian family, which is fitting for today's Feast of the Holy Family. It is reasonable to expect, then, that the Gospel passage would follow through by expounding on the virtues of *the perfect family*: Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. Instead, in Luke's Gospel, we have the only story in all of Scripture of Jesus' childhood. The only one that shows the specific interactions of them as a family - it tells the story of Jesus at age 12 who stays in Jerusalem without Mary and Joseph knowing and who are unable to find him for days. Prayerfully reflecting on this unique glimpse of the Holy Family working through misunderstandings, fear, and hurt helps us relate even more to the true humanness of Jesus and the Holy Family.

GO EVANGELIZE

PRAYER, INVITATION, WITNESS, ACCOMPANIMENT

In the Holy Family, we see a model of relationship in human form. We are part of a holy family as well: we are children of God. And like Mary and Joseph, our family is enriched and strengthened when we are attentive to the presence of Jesus in our lives. Luke writes: "[Mary] kept all these things in her heart." Like Mary, let us strive to hold Jesus' words and commandments in our hearts so we can focus on God's divine plan for our lives. In the next line of Paul's letter offering us the "tools" for loving relationships (compassion ... patience) he adds, "bearing with one another and forgiving one another." In other words: love. We must put Jesus, who is love, at the center of our relationships and do everything in his name. Then our family, and our lives, will be holy indeed.

SING

Mary, mother of faithful love;

Joseph, gentle and humble man of God;

Jesus, Son of Mary,

Bless, guide and protect the families you created.

Happy New Year!

January 1 - Solemnity of Mary Mother of God
10:00 AM Mass & Rosary for Peace

Teach the Children Well

Holy families aren't necessarily picture-perfect. But they are faithful and consistent in their values and goals. Like Mary and Joseph and biblical parents before them, holy families consecrate their children early and often to the care of God. They do this by baptizing them and seeing to their sacramental preparation. They do this by praying for and with their little ones. They provide them a religious education and share faith-filled practices of compassion and charity. All the children in our lives look to us for love and acceptance, guidance and Christian example. Teach the children well. *-Preparetheword.com*



Jubilee 2025 & World Peace

On Christmas Eve, Pope Francis opened the Holy Door at Saint Peter's Basilica, inaugurating the Jubilee 2025. He encouraged Christians to use the milestone occasion to dream of a "new world where peace and justice reign." The Holy Father said, "The Jubilee calls us to spiritual renewal and commits us to the transformation of our world, so that this year may truly become a time of jubilation." This is a moment, said the pope, "to recover lost hope, to renew that hope in our hearts, and to sow seeds of hope amid the bleakness of our time and our world."

Record Number of Armed Conflicts

According to data by The Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO), the year 2023 saw the highest number of state-based conflicts since 1946. In addition, the past three years were the most violent in the last three decades, according to new conflict trend analysis.

Last year turned out to be one of the most violent years since the end of the Cold War. A record number of 59 conflicts, involving 34 countries, were recorded.

The data also shows that while the number of battle deaths fell last year, overall the past three years saw more conflict-related deaths than any time in the last three decades. The dramatic increase in battle deaths was driven by three conflicts: civil war in Ethiopia's Tigray region, the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the bombing of Gaza. Overall there were 122,000 battle deaths, with over 71,000 people killed in Ukraine and some 23,000 killed in Gaza in less than three months of 2023.

WEEKLY OFFERING - DEC. 22

-Total **\$5,942** (\$4,174 + online: \$1,768). Goal: \$6,500.

-YTD: \$158,336. Budget: \$162,500.

Thank you for your generosity.

MASS INTENTIONS

Dec 28	Sat	05 pm	Fr. Rey Sarmiento (L)
Dec 29	Sun	07 am	The Gerrard Family
		09 am	Erin Braddi (L)
		11 am	Frank + & Kenneth Martin +
		05 pm	Evan & Lauren Weeks (L)
Dec 30	Mon	08 am	Micaela Phoenix (L)
Dec 31	Tue	08 am	Barbara Rosier (L)
Jan 01	Wed	10 am	<i>(Mary Mother of God)</i>
Jan 02	Thu	08 am	Magdalena Nguyen +
Jan 03	Fri	08 am	Deanne Sorola (L)
Jan 04	Sat	09 am	Fr. Rey Sarmiento (L)



*May the Peace of Christ
reign in your hearts
and in the world
in the coming Jubilee 2025.*

Fr. Hao & Ascension Parish Staff

Pope's Message for World Day of Peace 2025

January 1

Listening to the plea of an endangered humanity.

At the dawn of this New Year given to us by our heavenly Father, a year of Jubilee in the spirit of hope, I offer heartfelt good wishes of peace to every man and woman. I think especially of those who feel downtrodden, burdened by their past mistakes, oppressed by the judgment of others and incapable of perceiving even a glimmer of hope for their own lives. Upon everyone I invoke hope and peace, for this is a Year of Grace born of the Heart of the Redeemer! (...)

May 2025 be a year in which peace flourishes! A true and lasting peace that goes beyond quibbling over the details of agreements and human compromises. [22] May we seek the true peace that is granted by God to hearts disarmed: hearts not set on calculating what is mine and what is yours; hearts that turn selfishness into readiness to reach out to others; hearts that see themselves as indebted to God and thus prepared to forgive the debts that oppress others; hearts that replace anxiety about the future with the hope that every individual can be a resource for the building of a better world.



Mass & Rosary for Peace

SOLEMNITY OF MARY MOTHER OF GOD

-Jan. 1: 10:00 am (with Rosary for Peace) - no 8am Mass

Acknowledgments

Thank you to all who share their time, talents, treasure for our church liturgies, especially in this holy season:

- Our liturgical ministers
 - Our church environment team
 - Those who donated to the Flower Fund.
- May the Lord continue to bless them for their generosity.

Consider Year-End Gift to Ascension

Cash

Make sure your check is dated 2024 and received or postmarked no later than December 31, 2024.

Appreciated Securities

If you own investments that have increased in value (stocks, bonds, mutual funds, real estate), donate them to your parish and take an income tax deduction for the full fair market value and avoid declaring the capital gain.

Retirement Plan Assets

When a distribution is made from your plan to the church, we will receive the full amount of what you gives.

Life Insurance

When the original purpose for a life insurance no longer applies, consider naming your parish a beneficiary. Thank you for your generous support!