



Society of African Missions

“The Mission”

23 Bliss Avenue
Tenafly, NJ 07670
Phone: 201-567-0450
Visit our website
www.smafathers.org



Mass Schedule

Sundays

10:00 am; 12 noon

Weekdays & Holy Days

9:30 am & 11:45 am

Christmas & New Year’s Day

10:00 am; 12 noon

Confessions Saturdays:

After 11:45am Mass.

Or by appointment.

Contact Fr. James McConnell

201-567-0450 Ext. 242

Bereavement & Visit to the Sick

Contact Fr. James McConnell

201-567-0450 Ext. 242

Perpetual Mass Association

Office open Monday-Friday
from 9:30am to 3:00pm

S.M.A. Vocation Office

Fr Dermot Roache, SMA

Director

201-256-0450 Ext. 253

S.M.A. Museum

Open Monday-Sunday from
9:00am –5:00pm

Thank you for your support.
Please remember to support
your local parishes.

Administration:

Fr Ranees A. Rayappan,
Provincial Superior

Fr James McConnell,
House Superior

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

Masses for the week of DECEMBER 31, 2023 – JANUARY 6, 2024

Date	Time	Intention	Requested by:
Sun.-Sat.	8:00	Liv. & Dec. Benefactors of the SMA	
Sun. Dec. 31	10:00	Dominic Francisco+	Cezar & Martina Francisco
	12:00	Ong Kim+ & Fr Dante Venus+	
Mon. Jan. 1	10:00	Desrochers Family (Liv. & Dec.)	
	12:00	Rubio and Lara Family+	
Tue. Jan. 2	9:30	Holy Souls in Purgatory	Louise Coull
	11:45	Sandra Marotte (Healing)	Lucy Lipoma
Wed. Jan. 3	9:30	Clare Connolly+	Martha Paladino
	11:45	Joseph Kong (Liv.)	Cecilia Kang
Thurs. Jan. 4	9:30	Paradis Family (Liv. & Dec.)	
	11:45	Sr. Anne Hamill (Liv.)	Sister
Fri. Jan. 5	9:30	Memory of Joseph Choi & Mariana Cho+	Juliana and Joseph Family
	11:45	Neill & Forgrave Families (Special Intention)	
Sat. Jan. 6	9:30	Stoever & Mongiello Families (Spec. Intention)	
	11:45	Conrad Bing Felix+ & Perla Roque+	

Today’s Readings:

Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3

The Lord promises Abraham and Sarah a son.

Hebrews 11:18, 11-12, 17-19

It is through faith that Abraham receives the gift of his family.

Luke 2:22-40

The child Jesus is presented to the Lord in the Temple and blessed by Simeon and Anna.

The SMA Community
at the Mission
wish you and your loved ones
health and happiness
in the New Year ahead.

Thank you.- We thank you for your unfailing generosity and support to the SMA and its mission. Thank you to all those who donated for our Christmas flowers and to those who sent Christmas cards, messages and goodies.

May the Lord bless you all, always!

“The child’s mother and father stood there wondering at the things that were being said about him.”

Illustration

There is a programme on various national TV channels called, Who do you think you are?, which aims to help well-known personalities delve into their family backgrounds, highlighting the most interesting discoveries. In the British version of the programme, it has proved possible to trace more than one family back to medieval monarchs. More unusual episodes are when expectations are turned upside down. A black woman returning to the Caribbean was surprised to find a black ancestor who owned slaves rather than being a slave himself. Moreover, most of the local population were still named after him. An actress knew that her family was of Irish stock, and her anti-Catholic mother was of the firm belief that they were members of the Anglo-Irish gentry whose name they bore. However, the research team discovered that they were in fact descendants of Irish Catholic Travellers who had taken the name of their local gentry on emigrating to England, as they thought it would help more in their acceptance and settling down in their new home. The actress could not wait to inform her mother, whose reaction to the news was not recorded.

Gospel Teaching

What would be the response if we asked the same question of Jesus and his family? St Mark and St Luke offer us family genealogies of Joseph, heredity deemed to come through the father even if he was not the biological parent. The genealogies are not the same. The evangelists have different intentions. St Mark wants to show how Jesus is descended from Abraham and David, thus continuing the line of the covenant God makes with God’s chosen people. St Luke goes back to Adam because he is more interested in showing Jesus as the one who calls all humanity to salvation.

In their infancy narratives Matthew continues to give Joseph a more central role. He is the one who guides and protects Mary and her child, relying, like his forebear of the same name, on instructions given by angels in his dreams. Luke, perhaps because of his personal acquaintance, has Mary as his dominant person, recording the visit to her of the angel Gabriel, her visit to Elizabeth and the birth of her son in the stable. Both parents bring Jesus to the Temple and marvel at Simeon’s prophetic words, but it is to Mary that Simeon speaks personally, warning that a sword will pierce her soul. When both parents find the boy Jesus sitting in the Temple among the teachers, it is his mother who addresses him with their anxieties.

Joseph is absent from the public life of Jesus, leading commentators to presume his death. All the synoptic evangelists depict Mary as visiting Jesus with relatives – and he seems to give them the cold shoulder, pointing out that his true family are his followers. St John, however, portrays Mary in a very different role. She is the one who propels Jesus into his public life at the marriage feast of Cana. She stands at the foot of the cross at the end of her Son’s life. Jesus gives Mary into the care of the beloved disciple, with whom, according to tradition, she will spend the rest of her days.

Application

The Holy Family has commonly been used as an ideal example of the nuclear family. As we can see from the above examples from Scripture, this idea may mislead us. The Holy Family went through the same trials and misunderstandings that affect any family then and now. What is helpful for us is to see how they reacted in such demanding circumstances. Throughout their lives, their guiding star was a strong belief in, and dependence on, God, the reference point to whom they all turned.

Secondly, particularly in Mary and Joseph, we are given clear examples of parents who care. This care is shown in the way they fulfil the religious traditions on behalf of their son, keeping him out of harm’s way and bringing him up in love and kindness. He in turn accepts their authority and guidance, only differing when it comes to the question of his ultimate calling. At that point we have a sense of Jesus educating his parents in the demands of the role that God has given him. In modern terms, they negotiate, both sides honestly expressing their concerns, and then continue in harmony.

For the contemporary reader there is inevitably a desire to know more. Later, legends grew up about Jesus displaying magical powers, but such instances say more about later generations’ fascination with magic than about the intentions of the evangelists. The latter wish to show how all elements of the life of Jesus reveal him fulfilling the promises made to his people and extending those promises to the whole world. His family relations reveal that same truth, and we, in our turn, are called to try to express that truth in all aspects of our lives.

Living the Word

[Join us for the annual Mass for Life sponsored by the Knights of Columbus. Sunday, January 14.](#)

[2pm Adoration and Rosary](#)

[3pm Mass](#)