



## St. Joseph Catholic Church Harlowton, Montana

**Missions:**  
**Blessed Sacrament, Shawmut**  
**Immaculate Conception, Judith Gap**

Father Cody Williams, Pastor

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### The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph December 29, 2024

*The union of man and woman that establishes family life is a sacred reality at the very foundation of the social order. Bonded in love and in obedience to the Lord of life, the family reflects the holiness of the Holy Family, centered on Jesus. By the grace of union with Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, family life—with its challenges and its joys—becomes a path to holiness. “The Christian family is a communion of persons, a sign and image of the communion of the Father and the Son in the Holy Spirit. In the procreation and education of children it reflects the Father’s work of creation. It is called to partake of the prayer and sacrifice of Christ. Daily prayer and the reading of the Word of God strengthen it in charity” (CCC 2205).*

*Those who fear the Lord honor their parents.*

**First Reading: Sirach 3:2-7, 12-14** *2For the Lord honored the father above the children, and he confirmed the right of the mother over her sons. 3Whoever honors his father atones for sins, 4and whoever glorifies his mother is like one who lays up treasure. 5Whoever honors his father will be gladdened by his own children, and when he prays he will be heard. 6Whoever glorifies his father will have long life, and whoever obeys the Lord will refresh his mother; 7he will serve his parents as his masters. 12O son, help your father in his old age, and do not grieve him as long as he lives; 13even if he is lacking in understanding, show forbearance; in all your strength do not despise him. 14For kindness to a father will not be forgotten, and against your sins it will be credited to you;*

**Psalms 128:1-5** *R/ Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.*

*1Blessed is every one who fears the LORD, who walks in his ways! 2You shall eat the fruit of the labor of your hands; you shall be happy, and it shall be well with you. 3Your wife will be like a fruitful vine within your house; your children will be like olive shoots around your table. 4Lo, thus shall the man be blessed who fears the LORD. 5The LORD bless you from Zion! May you see the prosperity of Jerusalem all the days of your life!*

*Family life in the Lord.*

**Second Reading: Colossians 3:12-21** *12Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, 13forbearing one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. 14And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. 15And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body. And be thankful. 16Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly, teach and admonish one another in all wisdom, and sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs with thankfulness in your hearts to God. 17And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. 18Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. 19Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. 20Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord. 21Fathers, do not provoke your children, lest they become discouraged.*

*Alleluia, Alleluia: Open our hearts, O Lord, to listen to the words of your Son. Alleluia, Alleluia.  
His parents found Jesus sitting in the midst of the teachers.*

*We are all called to be great saints. Don’t miss the opportunity.  
~ Mother Angelica*

**Gospel: Luke 2:22-40** **22**And when the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord **23**(as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord") **24**and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." **25**Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. **26**And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. **27**And inspired by the Spirit he came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, **28**he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said, **29**"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word; **30**for mine eyes have seen thy salvation **31**which thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples, **32**a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to thy people Israel." **33**And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him; **34**and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is set for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is spoken against **35**(and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed." **36**And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phan'u-el, of the tribe of Asher; she was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years from her virginity, **37**and as a widow till she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. **38**And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks to God, and spoke of him to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. **39**And when they had performed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. **40**And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

**OR**

**Luke 2: 41-52** Each year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the feast of Passover, and when he was twelve years old, they went up according to festival custom. After they had completed its days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem, but his parents did not know it. Thinking that he was in the caravan, they journeyed for a day and looked for him among their relatives and acquaintances, but not finding him, they returned to Jerusalem to look for him. After three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions, and all who heard him were astounded at his understanding and his answers. When his parents saw him, they were astonished, and his mother said to him, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety." And he 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. He went on with them and came to Nazareth, and was obedient to them; and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and favor.

**12:00 noon Sunday Mass at St. Joseph Catholic Church, Harlowton, MT.**

**Daily Mass on Thursdays at noon at St. Joseph Catholic Church, Harlowton, MT.**

**\*\*\*Confessions before Sunday Mass beginning at 11:30 am or by appointment. Please join us to pray the rosary for our nation and community 1/2 hour before Sunday Mass.**

**Sunday Mass at 9 am at St. Bartholomew, White Sulphur Springs & 4:30pm at Holy Cross, Townsend.**

**\*\*\*Eucharistic Adoration on Thursdays – join us anytime between 12:30–3:30 pm.**

**Please join us for our monthly parish potlucks on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Mass – 1/26/25; 2/23/25; 3/23/25**

**Please pray for our seminarians:**

Riley Helgoe

Kaleb Mitchell

Jamie Severson

Matt Keck

Jake Smith

Deacon. Dillon Armstrong

Bret Rotz

Carter Anderson

James Semling

John Cooney

Anthony Olmes

Shae Bills

Carson Gorton

\*\*\*Mark Bruschein is no longer with our diocese but will be continuing his studies in Spain.

**Mark Your Calendars:**

Mass for Mary, Mother of God will be on Wednesday, New Year's Day 1/1 at 12:00 pm.

The Catholicism 201 class continues on Thurs. Jan 2<sup>nd</sup> at 5 pm.

No Youth Group on Thursday, January 2, 2025.

The next Chosen Movie Night is next week on Thursday, January 9<sup>th</sup> at 7 pm.

If you would like offertory envelopes, please contact Fr. Cody. They will be coming out the first of the year. As a reminder: we have an online giving platform through which you can set up recurring gifts or one-time gifts. For more information, see the cards in the pews.

I would like to create some updated directories for the parish. Please let me know if your information has changed.

As the winter months approach, I will be contacting the parish due to weather changes through Flocknote. If you are not in Flocknote and would like to receive these notices, please contact Fr. Cody.

## **Father Cody's Corner: Basics of Catholicism part 69 The Sacrament of Penance**

The greatest innovation and reform of the Sacrament of Reconciliation came from the reforms of the Second Vatican Council. After years of a legalistic experience of the Sacrament of Penance and a desire for the people to experience, to a greater extent, the mercy of God through this Sacraments, they made several reforms.

The first major reform was to connect Scripture with the Sacrament both in a penance service as well as in individual confessions. The idea of a "penance service" is new to our time. The goal of a penance service is to recognize the ecclesial dimension of sin. When I sin, I am not the only one affected by the sin. Sin affects everyone. Thus, the penance service illustrates several important aspects of this Sacrament and our faith. 1. We all approach God together as sinners. 2. We are all sinners who need God's mercy. 3. encountering God's word is a way to understand ourselves and what God has done for us. 4. We need to forgive one another and not just feel forgiveness from God. 5. The Church is part of the process of forgiveness and being forgiven. For these reasons, penances services always have a Liturgy of the Word so that we can encounter and reflect on God's word that helps us to know our sins, the forgiveness of God, and the importance of Jesus.

The second major reform was to make the Sacrament more of an encounter with Jesus. Prior to the Council, the Sacrament of Penance focused on the confessing of sins and the receiving of a penance. Vatican II added a part for the priests where they could council or encourage the person in their faith, help them with their sins, or provide council. This human touch gave the Sacrament a feeling of encountering a person who loves so that the person may recognize the power of Jesus' forgiveness.

The third major reform was the reduction in the possible penances and the amount of penance. The goal of this Sacrament is not the penance but the receiving of God's mercy. Therefore, penances which are too harsh or severe, focus on the fulfilling of the penance, or the overcoming of the sin as opposed to the acceptance of God's free gift of forgiveness were highly discouraged. The turn away from harsh or severe penances was a turn towards the free gift of God given to us in Jesus. Too often people would become scrupulous and never feel forgiven. The goal was to reduce that feeling and encourage the feeling of forgiveness. ~ Fr. Cody

## **[Our True Home: Scott Hahn Reflects on the Feast of the Holy Family](#)**

Listen Here: <https://stpaulcenter.com/studies-tools/sunday-bible-reflections/>

Readings: [Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14](#); [Psalm 128:1-5](#); [Colossians 3:12-21](#); [Luke 2:41-52](#)

Why did Jesus choose to become a baby born of a mother and father and to spend all but His last years living in an ordinary human family? In part, to reveal God's plan to make all people live as one "holy family" in His Church (see [2 Corinthians 6:16-18](#)).

In the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, God reveals our true home. We're to live as His children, "chosen ones, holy and beloved," as the First Reading puts it.

The family advice we hear in today's readings—for mothers, fathers, and children—is all solid and practical. Happy homes are the fruit of our faithfulness to the Lord, we sing in today's Psalm. But the Liturgy is inviting us to see more, to see how, through our family obligations and relationships, our families become heralds of the family of God that He wants to create on earth.

Jesus shows us this in today's Gospel. His obedience to His earthly parents flows directly from His obedience to the will of His heavenly Father. Joseph and Mary aren't identified by name, but three times are called "his parents" and are referred to separately as his "mother" and "father." The emphasis is all on their familial ties to Jesus. But these ties are emphasized only so that Jesus, in the first words He speaks in Luke's Gospel, can point us beyond that earthly relationship to the Fatherhood of God.

In what Jesus calls “my Father’s house,” every family finds its true meaning and purpose (see [Ephesians 3:15](#)). The Temple we read about in the Gospel today is God’s house, His dwelling (see [Luke 19:46](#)). But it’s also an image of the family of God, the Church (see [Ephesians 2:19–22](#); [Hebrews 3:3–6](#); [10:21](#)).

In our families we’re to build up this household, this family, this living temple of God—until He reveals His new dwelling among us and says of every person: “I shall be his God and he will be my son” (see [Revelation 21:3, 7](#)).

~ Dr. Scott Hahn

**Suggested Prayer of the Faithful** *(Each local community should compose its own Universal Prayer but may find inspiration in the texts proposed here.)* **page 435 December Magnificat**

**We receive the life of faith through the Church, for she is the mother of our new birth in grace. As joyful members of God’s family, we now pray:**

*For the Church: that her members will be strengthened, purified, and renewed through the grace of Christ’s Body and Blood.*

*For those charged with protecting society: that they will build a world in which family life is revered, protected, and promoted.*

*For the universal respect of all human persons: that the culture of life will transform every human heart.*

*For blessings on all families: that the love, the unity, and the self-sacrifice of the Holy Family will overflow into all aspects of family life.*

*For families who suffer from financial hardships: that they may find in the birth of Jesus a sign of sure hope.*

*For family members who are alienated or estranged: that the unfailing power of Jesus will reunite and reconcile loved ones*

**Loving Father, bless us with your love, which we profess to be the bond of perfection. Let the peace of Christ console the hearts we offer to you with thankful prayer. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.**

**Intercessions** *page 438 December Magnificat*

**Let us adore the Son of the living God and beg him:**

**R/ Sanctify us, Lord Jesus, by your obedience!**

*Son of God and Son of Man, you were born into a human family:*

– *strengthen the bonds of love and reverence in every family. R/*

*Eternal Word of the Father, you subjected yourself to Mary and Joseph:*

– *teach us humility. R/*

*Creator of the universe, you were known as the son of a carpenter:*

– *teach us to reverence the gift of work. R/*

**Personal intentions**                      **Our Father....**

**God and Father of all, you gave us the Holy Family to serve as an example of love and obedience. Grant to all people, in family homes or alone, the grace to hold in honor the bonds of love and respect that bind the human race, chosen for adoption as your children, through our Lord Jesus Christ your Son, who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God, for ever and ever. Amen.**

**Intercessions** *page 449 December Magnificat*

**God’s love endures for ever. Let us pray:**

**R/ Hear your children, O Lord.**

*For all grandparents:*

– *make them strong, loving, and wise. R/*

*For all families blessed with living grandparents:*

– *fill them with respect and love for the aging. R/*

*For all the elderly abandoned by their families:*

– *fill them with peace of heart and grant them the companionship of others in their loneliness. R/*

*For all our family members who have died:*

– *bring them in joy to your eternal home. R/*

**Personal intentions**                      **Our Father....**

**May the Lord of peace himself give us peace at all times and in every way. The Lord be with us all. Amen. (cf. 2 Thes 3:16)**                      **Marian Antiphon**