

**December 30-31, 2017**  
**The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph**  
**Sirach 3:2-14      Colossians 3:12-17      Luke 2:22-40**

Despite advances (?) in science, the particulars of birthing children within a relationship of parents, extended relatives along with a genealogical story strikes many as a time-tested basis for giving our newest human beings a strong footing by which to face the world. That being said, there are many issues that can intrude on providing a relationship-rich environment, otherwise known as a family. A lack of maturity in evaluating whether someone is a proper spouse can lead to cruel recriminations and dissolutions that emotionally scar for lifetimes. Erroneous expectations of the sacrifices that will be required within a healthy marriage can likewise sow seeds of bitterness and resentment. The VAST difference between 'intense-liking' and 'love' is often overlooked by those caught up in the passionate throes of early relationship-building. Lastly, just because two people can biologically conceive a child does not mean they should be married, a relationship that requires an entirely different skill-set of abilities and commitments. On this weekend of honoring the family into which Jesus was born we are nudged to consider our own FAMILIES...and not just the biological ones that 23 & Me highlight. In 2017 the concept of FAMILY means all those who support and journey with us during different stages of our lives. Some may be by our side for a lifetime, some for crucial periods, offering their particular support, love and abilities at critical moments. The traditional concept of FAMILY needs to be reimagined, broadened, to represent any and all who nurture and provide us with a safe environment in which we can most fully develop into the unique people God has imagined us to be. In these continuing days of the Christmas Season, who are those who comprise YOUR family? What have been the experiences by which you have come to recognize those with whom you desire to entwine your life? What have been the sacrifices you have mutually made through which your familial bonds have been built? A family within which to be nurtured, strengthened and most fully launched into the world is a tremendous treasure. Some are lucky to grow up within a genealogical family that is that treasure; others must search for their family in order to find those with whom they can exchange heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and love. Blessed are those who find those for whom they search.

Thank you for joining with our Santa Clara community as we slowly move away from Christmas Day and start to anticipate the New Year of 2018. Thank you as well for your faithful and vibrant participation within our Advent and Christmas Eve/Day celebrations. **In Honor of 'The Solemnity of Mary, the Mother of God' on Monday, January 1<sup>st</sup>, we will celebrate a 5pm Vigil Mass this Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup> and the usual 8:30am morning Mass on Monday, January 1, 2018.** May the New Year be a time of renewed dreams, fresh hopes and earnest desires...as we throw away our old calendars and start a fresh cycle of months, please remember... that you are loved. FKB