

In The Shade?

In my childhood—a while back, admittedly—I looked forward every year to the big New Year’s Eve party my parents had. A number of times, looking for something to do, I wrote and dittoed off a tiny newspaper for the entertainment of everyone in attendance! To my mind that party came second only to Christmas!

But of course, Christmas was the big deal. It was the main holiday—the presents, the Christmas village my mother constructed each year on the mantel, and increasingly for me, the birth of the Christ child.

These holidays always had and have a big footprint, even during the pandemic. That is why I wonder about placing the feast of the Holy Family between them. Won’t family be put into the shade, even if the shopping and decorating have to be curtailed this year, if people adhere to Covid 19 cautions.

How can we make room for Holy Family Sunday, tired or not, curtailed or not? Maybe by looking at what we would miss if we ignored this feast, especially the Gospel.

First, what this “feast” for? The Presentation in the Temple, portrayed in our Gospel, will be celebrated on February 2nd, using exactly the same Gospel reading. Thus the “historical” significance of this event is reiterated later when it can have full significance. It is as if the Church has something besides chronology in mind when it puts this reading right after Christmas.

What would that be? The spiritual content of this Mass.

Some highlights:

1. This Sunday contains one of the few descriptions of the Holy Family in all scripture. Their appearance here emphasizes how important family care is for children and for all human beings. Mary and Joseph seem hesitant but have exquisite care for the baby Jesus.

2. Look at the important words of Simeon, which interpret the Nativity for us, though they may not seem to:

Now, Master, you may let your servant go in peace,
according to your word,
for my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you prepared in sight of all the peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and glory for your people Israel.

Obviously these words refer to the baby born just a few days ago.

They are like using an underliner on the Christmas story. The child brings peace; he is a fulfillment of the Lord’s word that a Messiah would come; he is an entrance of the Word into the whole world, not just to part of it: he is sent to Gentiles as well as to Israel; he is a revelation and he is a glory. Don’t we need this kind of interpretation? Why ignore it?

3. There is not only Simeon, but also Anna. We are told she had done Advent fasting and prayer in the temple until she was 84 years old! At last, poignantly, she begins to speak about the child, addressing everyone who had been awaiting redemption. Isn’t she a symbol of the Advent we have just been through: patient waiting and learning?

These are only three of the quiet beauties found in the Gospel this Sunday. They celebrate family, they bring out spiritual qualities of the birth of Our Lord.

What if we let this Sunday quietly unpack Christmas and our lives for us?

John Foley, SJ

Feast of the Holy Family December 27, 2020

St. Stephens Indian Mission

www.saintstephensmission.com

856-7806

33 St. Stephens Road

PO Box 250

St. Stephens, WY 82524

Fr. Jim Heiser.....Pastor

Sr. Monica Suhayda, CSJ.....Past. Asst./ Gift Shop 856-4330

Patti McMahan.....Director of Religious Education

Blessed Sacrament & St. Josephs

332-9090

Sr. Teresa Frawley, OSF.....Past. Asst./Director of Religious Education

Sacrament of Reconciliation & Sacrament of the Sick

You may call the office to schedule an appointment for confession. If there is no answer please leave your name and phone number and Father Jim will return your call. Please do not schedule an appointment if you are sick, please wait until you are well to protect yourself and the priest. Priest and penitent will be required to wear a mask and maintain a safe six foot distance during confession.

The Sacrament of the sick is available for those who are in need, terminal and to those who have an upcoming surgery. Please call the office if you or a loved one is in need of this sacrament.

.....
Come in seeking; come in wondering; come in hurting. Come into this house
of companionship and compassion. Come in. You are welcome here. Our
faith Family opens its doors to you and in the name of Christ, bids you
Welcome!
.....

*The purpose of St. Stephen’s Indian Mission, the presence of
the Roman Catholic Church among the Eastern Shoshone
and Northern Arapaho, is to grow into a strong
community of believers, sharing our lives in the Holy
Spirit, forming one welcoming People of God, who are
committed to Jesus Christ, His gospel and mission.*

Readings December 28th through January 3rd :

Mon: 1 Jn 1:5-2:2; Ps 124:2-5, 7c-8; Mt 2:13-18
 Tue: 1 Jn 2:3-11; Ps 96:1-3, 5b-6; Lk 2:22-35
 Wed: 1 Jn 2:12-17; Ps 96:7-10; Lk 2:36-40
 Thur: 1 Jn 2:18-21; Ps 96:1-2, 11-13; Jn 1:1-18
 Fri: Nm 6:22-27; Ps 67:2-3, 5, 6, 8; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21
 Sat: 1 Jn 2:22-28; Ps 98:1-4; Jn 1:19-28
 Sun: Is 60:1-6; Ps 72:1-2, 7-8, 10-13; Eph 3:2-3a, 5-6; Mt 2:1-12

Parish Collection

Last week mail in collection \$866
"Each of you must give as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver." Corinthians 9:7

THANK YOU to all who have continued to make financial contributions to St. Stephens Indian Mission through these most trying times! God Bless!

Mass Intentions this week

12/27: Sunday Roger Montoya
 Sunday For the people
 12/30: Wednesday 5pm Karen Brown
 12/31: Thursday 5pm Brenda Cole
 1/1: Friday 9am For the people
 1/3: Sunday Shannon Leonard
 Sunday For the people

As we continue to celebrate Mass at St. Stephens, we are limited to 10 people in attendance as we follow the Wind River Intertribal Council's resolution. If you would like to be added to the rotating list of parishioners for Mass please call the office or email the parish office. Please also email the parish office (melissa.brown@saintstephensmission.com) to make sure your contact information is on file with the Parish as this is our primary way to contact you when things change or if we have an event you might be interested in. Thank you!

Please remember that Bishop Steven's general dispensation from the Sunday Mass obligation will remain in effect for the duration of Mass attendance restrictions. Mass is available for viewing on K2 Television at 9am and/or you may watch via livestream on St. Margaret's or Holy Rosary's FB pages.

Face masks are required at Mass. Please use hand sanitizer, refrain from exchanging handshakes during the Sign of Peace and maintain at least six feet apart from parishioners (except if you are in the same household) including processing to receive the Eucharist. If you are not feeling well and are scheduled to attend Mass please stay home and call the office so we can switch you with another parishioner until you feel well. Please keep our church family safe. We appreciate your cooperation as we move forward, safely, together.

Please pray for the family of the deceased:

+Ernest Willow +Ron Goggles +Chet Killsree

Eternal rest grant unto them O Lord, and let perpetual light shine upon them. May their soul and all the souls of the faithful departed, through the mercy of God, rest in peace. Amen.

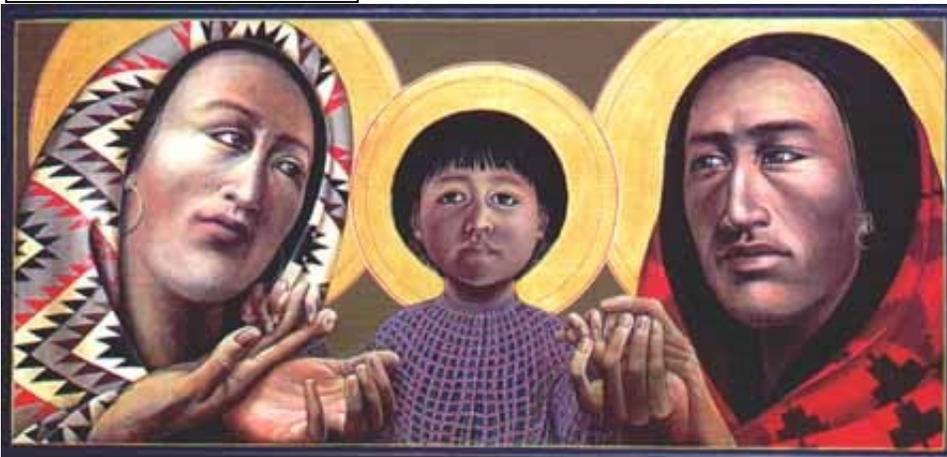
Having Mass offered for an anniversary, marriage, special occasion, or in memory of someone is a special gift. Cards are available at the office. Diocesan guideline is \$10.00 for Mass.

Nominations for Parish Council are being accepted! You may either call Fr. Jim or mail us your nomination or nominate yourself! Please prayerfully consider serving in this capacity.

Thank You!
 Thank you to all those who brought poinsettias for the church!

Act of Solidarity

Father Jim is planning to ring the church bells at St. Stephen's on Thursday, December 31, 2020, at 6 pm. As an act of solidarity with those mourning the death of loved ones and those struggling with loneliness during this time of COVID, his intention is to offer one toll of the bell for every 1,000 people who have died of COVID in the U.S. At the time of this email, the U.S. COVID death toll is a little over 300,000 persons. Please join us physically or spiritually. Hohou.



Praised be Jesus Christ!

Praise Him now and always!