

Holy Family

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The **Holy Family** consists of the Child Jesus, the Virgin Mary, and Saint Joseph.



The Flight into Egypt: Jesus, the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph.

The *Feast of the Holy Family* is a liturgical celebration in the Roman Catholic Church in honor of Jesus of Nazareth, his mother, the Blessed Virgin Mary, and his foster father, Saint Joseph, as a family. The Feast of the Holy Family is celebrated on the Sunday following Christmas, unless that Sunday is January 1st, in which case it is celebrated on December 30th.



Holy Family by Juan Simon Gutierrez

Veneration of the Holy Family was formally begun in the 17th century by Mgr François de Laval, a Canadian bishop who founded a Confraternity.

The feast of the Holy Family was instituted by Pope Leo XIII in 1893 on the Sunday within the Octave of the Epiphany; that is to say, on the Sunday between January 7 through January 13, all inclusive (see General Roman Calendar of 1962). The calendar of the 1962 Roman Missal, whose use is still authorized, keeps the celebration on that date.

In the 1962 calendar, the feast was always on a Sunday and, if it fell on 13 January, it replaced the Commemoration of the Baptism of the Lord, to which the 1962 calendar assigned that date. It was never a holy day of obligation,^[1] but when its celebration fell on a Sunday, there is an obligation to attend Mass on that day.

In the calendar promulgated in 1969, the feast was moved to the Sunday within the Octave of Christmas, between Christmas and New Year's Day (both exclusive), or when there is no Sunday within the Octave (if both Christmas Day and New Year's Day are Sundays), it is held on 30 December, a Friday in such years.

Cultural references

A pious practice among Catholics is to write "J.M.J" at the top of letters and personal notes as a reference to Jesus, Mary, and Joseph as the Holy Family.^[2]

The members of the Holy Family are the patrons of the Congregation of Holy Cross. The Holy Cross Sisters are dedicated to the Immaculate Heart of Mary, the Holy Cross Brothers to St. Joseph and the Priests of Holy Cross to the Sacred Heart.

See also

- Flight into Egypt

References

- ↑ It is not among the ten such feasts listed in canon 1247 of the 1917 Code of Canon, a list repeated unchanged in the Code of 1983
- ↑ Perrotta, Louise Bourassa (2000-03). *Saint Joseph*. Our Sunday Visitor Publishing. p. 149. ISBN 9780879735739.

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