



# Month of the Holy Family

*“May the Holy Family, icon and model of every human family, help walk in the spirit of Nazareth”*

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The month of February is dedicated to the **Holy Family**.

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## **Highlights**

### **February 2**

#### **Presentation**

This feast is a festival of light. The procession, in which the blessed candles are carried by clergy and faithful, recalls by its symbolism the manifestation of Christ, the Light of the world, received in the temple. "A light to the revelation of the Gentiles, and the glory of Thy people Israel."



## **Recipe of the Month**

### **Heart Cakes**

St. Valentine's Day is a joyful feast, and there's no better way to observe it than by exchanging sweet, heart-shaped confections.



## **Activity of the Month**

### **Candlemas Ceremony**

The family, who with lighted candles goes in spirit to the Temple with our Lady, will learn a wonderful lesson of her humility.



## Symbols

### St. Polycarp

The bishop of Smyrna was condemned to death by burning. The flames refused to do their task, billowing about like sails, exposing the bishop's figure in a radiant light. A soldier used his spear to end the spectacle.



### St. Scholastica

The sister of St. Benedict, and founder of a Benedictine convent not far from Monte Cassino. It is related that St. Benedict had a vision of a dove rising just before he received word of her death.



### St. Agatha

During the Decian persecution, St. Agatha, a Sicilian of noble birth, died under torture rather than break her vow of lifelong consecration to Christ.



### St. Dorothy

The patroness of gardens is particularly well known in the little villages of southern Europe. Her feast is locally celebrated on Feb. 6. The symbol is descriptive of her zeal for the Faith.



*Jesus, who hast made Thyself obedient to Thy parents, to Thee be ever glory, with the supreme Father and with the Spirit.*

This year the first half of the month of February falls during the liturgical season known as Tempus per Annum or [Ordinary Time](#) (formerly Time After Epiphany), which is represented by the liturgical color green. Green is a symbol of hope, as it is the color of the sprouting seed and arouses in the faithful the hope of reaping the eternal harvest of heaven, especially the hope of a glorious resurrection. The liturgical color green is worn during prayer of Offices and Masses of Ordinary Time.

The remaining days of February are the beginning of [Lent](#). The liturgical color changes to violet or purple — a symbol of penance, mortification and the sorrow of a contrite heart.

## The Holy Father's Intentions for the Month of February 2026

### For children with incurable diseases.

Let us pray that children suffering from incurable diseases and their families receive the necessary medical care and support, never losing strength and hope. (See also <http://www.popesprayerusa.net/.>)

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### Feasts for February 2026

1. **FOURTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Sunday**
2. **Presentation of the Lord, Feast**
3. *Blaise; Ansgar, Opt. Mem.*
5. *Agatha, Memorial*
6. *Paul Miki and Companions, Memorial*
8. **FIFTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Sunday**
10. *Scholastica, Memorial*
11. *Our Lady of Lourdes, Opt. Mem.*
14. *Cyril and Methodius, Memorial*
15. **SIXTH SUNDAY IN ORDINARY TIME, Sunday**
17. *Seven Founders of the Servite Order; Mardi Gras, Opt. Mem.*
18. *Ash Wednesday, Commem.*
21. *Peter Damian, Opt. Mem.*
22. **FIRST SUNDAY OF LENT, Sunday**
23. *Polycarp of Smyrna, Opt. Mem.*

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### Focus of the Liturgy

The Gospel readings for the Sundays in February are taken from St. Matthew following the Lectionary Cycle A and the Weekday readings follow Year II.

<b>February 1st</b> Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time	<b>Cycle A, Matthew 5:17-37:</b> So it was said to your ancestors; but I say this to you.
<b>February 8</b> Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time	<b>Cycle A, Matthew 5:13-15:</b> You are the light of the world.

**February 15**

Sixth Sunday  
in Ordinary Time

**Cycle A, Matthew 5:1:** So it was said to your ancestors; but I say this to you.

**February 22**

First Sunday  
of Lent

**Cycle A, Matthew 4:1-11:** Jesus fasted for forty days and forty nights and was tempted.

## Highlights of the Month

The month of February is traditionally dedicated to the Holy Family. Between the events which marked Christmas and the beginning of Christ's public life the Church has seen fit to recall the example of the Holy Family for the emulation of the Christian family.

The Feast of the **Presentation** (February 2) or **Candlemas** forms a fitting transition from Christmas to Easter. The small Christ-Child is still in His Mother's arms, but already she is offering Him in sacrifice.

February 21, Shrove Tuesday, will find us preparing for **Ash Wednesday**.

The middle of the month will find us on **Ash Wednesday** accepting the ashes that remind us of our mortality and our need for penance.



The saints that we will focus on this month and try to imitate are:

**St. Blaise** and **St. Ansgar** (February 3),

**St. Agatha** (February 5),

**St. Scholastica** (February 10),

**Our Lady of Lourdes** (February 11),

**Sts. Cyril and Methodius** (February 14),

**Seven Founders of the Orders of Servites** (February 17),

**St. Peter Damian** (February 21),

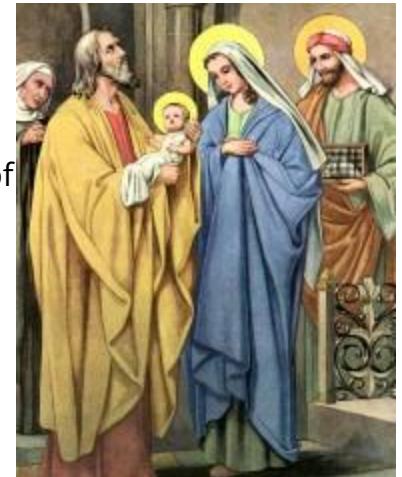
**Chair of St. Peter** (February 22),

and **St. Polycarp** (February 23).

The Optional Memorials of **St. Jerome Emiliani** and **St. Josephine Bakhita** (February 8) and the Feast of **Chair of St. Peter** (February 22), are superseded by the Sunday Liturgy.

## From Feast to Fast

Though the shortest month of the year, February is rich in Liturgical activity. It contains a feast (Presentation of our Lord) that bridges two other seasons (Christmas and Easter). The Feast of the **Presentation of the Lord** on February 2nd harkens back to the Christmas mystery of Light except that now, Christ, the helpless babe, is "the Light of Revelation to the Gentiles who will save his people from their sins." Candles, symbolizing Christ our Light, will be carried in procession this day, as will be the Paschal candle during the Easter Vigil Liturgy. In addition, the faithful may receive in February three of the four major public sacramentals that the Church confers during the liturgical year: blessed candles and the blessing of throats and blessed ashes.



"The Light of Revelation" shines more brightly with each successive Sunday of Ordinary Time, until its magnificence—exposing our sinfulness and need for conversion—props us into the penitential Season of Lent. We prepare to accept the cross of blessed ashes on Ash Wednesday (March 5) and plunge ourselves into anticipating the major exercises of Lent—fasting, prayer, almsgiving—laying our thoughts and prayers on the heart of our Mother Mary. She, who offered her Son in the temple and on the Cross, will teach us how to deny ourselves, take up our cross daily, and follow after her Son.



Members of each family or domestic church have the opportunity to have the candles for their home altar blessed on Candlemas Day (February 2nd); and the next morning, on the Feast of St. Blaise, all might receive the Blessing of the Throats. Always a solicitous Mother, the Church offers this sacramental during the wintry month of February, and also sets aside the World Day of Prayer for the Sick on February 11, the feast of Our Lady of Lourdes.

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The month of February ([Overview](#) - [Calendar](#)) is dedicated to the Holy Family. The special devotion which proposes the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph as the model of virtue of all Christian households began in the 17th century. It started almost simultaneously in Canada and France: the Association of the Holy Family was founded in Montreal in 1663, and by the Daughters of the Holy Family in Paris in 1674. This devotion soon spread and in 1893 Leo XIII expressed his approval of a feast under this title and himself composed part of the Office. On account of the flight into Egypt this feast has been observed by the Copts from early times. The feast was welcomed by succeeding Pontiffs as an efficacious means for bringing home to the Christian people the example of the Holy Family at Nazareth, and by the restoration of the true spirit of family life, stemming, in some measure, the evils of present-day society.

In the words of His Holiness Pope Leo XIII, "Nothing truly can be more salutary or efficacious for Christian families to meditate upon than the example of this Holy Family, which embraces the perfection and completeness of all domestic virtues."

## The Hidden Life of the Holy Family

The home of Nazareth is the school where we begin to understand the life of Jesus—the school of the Gospel. First, then, a lesson of silence. May esteem for silence, that admirable and indispensable condition of mind, revive in us...A lesson on family life. May Nazareth teach us what family life is, its communion of love, its austere and simple beauty, and its sacred and inviolable character...A lesson of work. Nazareth, home of the Carpenter's Son, in you I would choose to understand and proclaim the severe and redeeming law of human work. — Paul VI at Nazareth, January 5, 1964



Since the Holy Family observed the Jewish law in its perfection, we can deduce quite accurately what prayers they recited. *The Psalms*, of course, were the favorites. Three times a day Jesus, Mary, and Joseph said the *Tephillah*, "The Prayer," consisting of eighteen long invocations and blessings. Joseph (and later Jesus when He attained to manhood) was obliged to say the *Shema*, a sort of profession of faith in the one true God, twice daily.

A very interesting Jewish custom of prayer that must have been observed in the house at Nazareth was that of the *Mezuzah*, "the doorpost," and the "phylacteries," small square calfskin boxes with Scripture texts written on parchment inside them.

On the doorpost of the house at Nazareth was fastened a wooden tube containing a rolled parchment inscribed with the passage quoted above from the Book of Deuteronomy and another passage (11:13-21) citing the blessings of serving God. On entering and leaving the house the members of the Holy Family would piously touch this *Mezuzah*, saying, "May God keep my going out and coming in from now on and forevermore." All this was intended to show reverence for the word of God.

Such was the vocal and the more or less formal prayer which Jesus, Mary, and Joseph offered in their home at Nazareth. In their hearts, however, they prayed always. Just as the Heart of Jesus was constantly united with His divinity, so were the hearts of Mary and Joseph so closely bound to God that their every action was a prayer. — Excerpted from *Reflections on the Life of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph*, Francis L. Filas, S.J.

## Imitation of the Holy Family



The Holy Family models for us what family life should exemplify. It is a school of virtue for both parents and children. There we find God, and learn how to connect with God and with others. The family is where love is freely given without self-interest. It is where we learn to love, to pray and to practice the gift of charity. Pope John Paul II has said, "The family, more than any other human reality, is the place in which the person is loved for himself and in which he learns to live the sincere gift of self" (Nov. 27, 2002).

We should ask ourselves if our own families model that of the Holy Family. We need to be open to God's grace to value the positive and to accept our mistakes — and to be willing to rectify them. Parenting is a very challenging responsibility and at times errors are made despite the best intentions. Recognizing this, children should trust their parents and never forget that parents want only what is best for them.

Which leads us to what may be the most important family virtue — forgiveness. Living so intimately within the family nucleus naturally gives rise to unpleasant situations where someone is apt to be offended. St. Paul knew this when he told us to "bear with and forgive one another." The health of our family may depend on how quickly we learn to forgive without harboring feelings of resentment.

No family can thrive and grow without constant work. Even the material details that take time and effort are essential to keeping the family strong. Everyone has to pull together for the good of the family — even to the point of putting ahead of our own needs and ambitions the happiness of other family members, setting aside our own selfish desires.

It is also important to pray as a family, especially the holy rosary. Prayer will help us to intensify our closeness with each other and to learn to forgive.

During this Year of the Eucharist it is essential to discover the relationship between the Eucharist and family life. Pope John Paul II wrote, "In the eucharistic gift of charity the Christian family finds the foundation and soul of its communion and its mission" (*Letter on the Family*, No. 57). — Excerpted from *The Holy Family models what family life should be*, Archbishop Charles J. Chaput, O.F.M. Cap.

## Prayer of the Month

### Consecration of the Family to the Holy Family

Lord Jesus Christ, Who, being made subject to Mary and Joseph, hallowed domestic life by Your ineffable virtues; grant that we, with the assistance of both, may be taught by the example of Your holy Family and may attain to its everlasting fellowship; Who lives and reigns world without end. Amen — *Roman Missal*

### Prayer for a Happy Death

Grant unto us, Lord Jesus, ever to follow the example of Thy holy Family, that in the hour of our death Thy glorious Virgin Mother together with blessed Joseph may come to meet us and we may be worthily received by Thee into everlasting dwellings: Who lives and reigns world without end. Amen — *Roman Missal*

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## Documents

[On the Family \(Familiaris Consortio\)](#) — John Paul II

[Letter to Families](#) — John Paul II

[The Family, the Heart of the Civilization of Love](#) — Alfonso Lopez Trujillo

## Websites

[Lessons We Can Learn from the Holy Family](#)

[Egypt - The Holy Family](#)

[The Holy Family Institute](#)

[Apostolate for Family Consecration](#)

[Jesus, Mary, and Joseph: The Holy Family](#)

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