

# LOOKING THROUGH STAINED GLASS



## A Column by Fr. Tom

### A Family of Peace and Love

Merry Christmas! Yes, it's finally the Christmas season, and all of the preparations we made during Advent hopefully are helping us to find "love, peace, and great joy this Christmas." That was my parting wish for everyone at the end of the last column, but it is also my enduring wish for all families throughout the coming year. In fact, today, as we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family – Jesus, Mary and Joseph, I pray that their intercession and example will help all of us to know "love, peace, and great joy." Individually and collectively, the Holy Family has a lot to teach us, but let's focus on how they can help us learn peace and love.

The Church designates the beginning of each new year to prayer for peace. January 1<sup>st</sup> is the World Day of Prayer for Peace, and this New Year's Day we celebrate the 53<sup>rd</sup> World Day of Prayer for Peace. It is also the Solemnity of the Blessed Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. In last year's column, we discussed how those two feasts fit together so well. In that column, we gave the definition of peace as "true peace is a right relationship with oneself, with others and with God." [*Looking Through Stained Glass*, "Mary, Mother of God, Mother of Peace", Dec. 30, 2018] Looking at the Holy Family as an example of peace, we can see that both individually and as a family they fit this definition. From our readings for Advent and Christmas, we know that both Mary and Joseph put God first in their lives and in their relationship. They both were trying to follow what God had planned for them. [cf. *Looking Through Stained Glass*, "Our Boy is Special! He's Going to be...the Messiah!", Dec. 15, 2019] Of course, Jesus, the Prince of Peace, had a right

relationship with God the Father.

In turning our attention to the Holy Family's relationship between themselves, we learn that it was their love for one another that put them in right relationship with each other. In the column cited above, we have already looked at the relationship between Mary and Joseph and the love they had for each other. [*Ibid.*] We also know that they loved their son. During this Christmas season, we will learn how the Nativity, the Flight into Egypt, and their searching for Jesus in the Temple are good examples of Mary and Joseph's care for their son. [cf. LK 2:1-7; MT 2:13-15; LK 2:41-52]

As we look for peace and love in our world today, we must seek within our own families first. The Holy Family can teach us that we must put God first in our lives and in our homes. Spouses should look to the relationship of Mary and Joseph as an example of what their relationship to one another can be – a sign of God's love for His people. The love of the spouses for one another and for God will help them bring their family into right relationship with God and one another. To do this well, the family should pray together, play together and stay together.

This is what we can learn from the Holy Family – how to be a family of love and peace. All families may not be able to be The Holy Family, but they can strive to be a holy family!

