

## THIS WEEK'S SCRIPTURES

December 31, 2017

The Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3 + Hebrews 11:8, 11-12, 17-19 + Luke 2: 22-40



Reflection by: Alice McCoy, OP

We are living in a time when contemplating on the deeper meaning of the words "holy" and "family" are important to our coming together to build the "kingdom of God." Division, dominance and self-centeredness continue to block growth to new and compassionate life. Our scripture readings call us to see the important role that coming together in care and attentiveness has in providing the support we all need to remain firm in our faith, hope and love.

The image of the Holy Family coming together in their temple, i.e. church, with others who believe and care, like Simeon and Anna, makes me reflect back in my life on all the times before, during and after Mass, I have been blessed by the connections I have experienced with my church family. There have been times when God has given me the grace to listen and respond in ways that have provided support for those who have come to their "church" with distress and confusion. And there have been times when I have been gifted with the presence of that other person who brought to me what I needed to get beyond my hurts, concerns and questions.

The spiritual environments and the liturgical rituals can play a significant role in setting the stage for us to be open to the sacred presence. We come to be with one another to create that sacred space where the presence of God's spirit, in both good and bad times, can move among us and deepen our trust in the saving power of God. It is not to deny that suffering will happen, but to be strengthened by the prayers we share, the peace we offer, the openness to speak and listen to both the proclamations of our faith in the ritual and to each other in the warmth of our presence. Like Simeon who took the child Jesus into his arms and blessed God saying that he could now be let go in peace because he had seen salvation, may we be aware of the importance of the presence we bring to one another in church ritual and beyond.