



## Faith Filled People

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### August

#### Mary, the Mother of Jesus

Mary lived with her parents in a place called Nazareth. She planned to marry a man named Joseph.

God had a special job for Mary. God chose Mary to be Jesus' mother. God sent an angel named Gabriel to see Mary. Gabriel told Mary what God wanted. Mary trusted God. Even though she didn't understand everything the angel said, Mary said "yes" to God.

Another angel talked to Joseph about this. God wanted Joseph to marry Mary.

After Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph raised him. Mary was with Jesus for all of his life. Mary saw Jesus do many special things called miracles.

Mary tells us to pray to Jesus. She wants us to make the world a peaceful place.

We can be like Mary. We can try to do what she asks. We can obey God like she did. It might be hard. We can pray asking God to help us. We can show God's love to someone who is having trouble. We can bring peace with a kind word. We can do something to help another person. Ask Mary to help you. Wish Mary a Happy Birthday on September 8.

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### October

#### Saint Francis of Assisi

Francis loved to have a good time. He never worried about money. His family was very rich. He spent a lot of money on friends and fun. In the late 1100's he fought in a war. He was captured by the enemy. In their prison, he did a lot of thinking. He decided to be more like Jesus. When he got back home, he gave away everything he had. He believed that Jesus wanted us to live simply and love God.

Francis' father was not very happy about his son's decision. His father didn't want anything to do with Francis. Francis did not want anything to do with his father's wealth. Francis wore and ate only what he

needed. He gave anything extra away. Many people liked the way he lived and wanted to be like him. Together, they traveled telling people about Jesus. They lived simply and slept on the ground.

Some things Francis started are still around today. His followers are called Franciscans, and they are all over the world. He made the first crèche, or nativity. Many of us display the manger, holy family, shepherds, angels and animals in our homes at Christmastime. We remember St. Francis in a special way on October 4, but every day, we can try to live more simply. Some things that are really valuable cannot be bought with money.

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## **November**

### **Saint John the Baptist**

John leaped for joy inside his mother. Even before birth, he knew his cousin, Jesus, came from God in a special way and for a special purpose. John's mother and father were old. It was a miracle that they would have a baby. This baby, John, grew up to tell people that Jesus was coming. John preached along the Jordan River. He told people to get ready. He told them to turn away from sin and tell God they were sorry.

One day while John was preaching, Jesus came to the Jordan River. He asked John to baptize him. John was surprised because he knew Jesus was the holy one. Even our baptismal waters today are made holy by Jesus. But John did what Jesus asked. John saw the Holy Spirit come down on Jesus at his baptism. John called Jesus "the Lamb God." John knew that Jesus would die for our sins.

Soon after Christmas we celebrate Jesus' Baptism. On this day and whenever we see someone being baptized, we try to remember John's message. Tell God you are sorry for the bad things you have done. Try not to do them again, but keep Jesus in your heart.

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## **December**

### **Saint Nicholas**

Much of what we know about St. Nicholas is legend. That is, we can't really be sure it's true. But we know that he was born when the Church was new. People who believed in Jesus were punished. Nicholas went to jail because he believed in Jesus. In the early 300's C.E., people were finally allowed to worship. Nicholas became a bishop. He went to one of the first meetings for bishops. It was called the Council of Nicaea. Many rules were made then that still direct our Church today.

Nicholas was born into a family that had a lot of money. When his parents died, he gave all his money away to people who needed it. Legend says that three boys were killed for their money. Nicholas brought them back to life. Another legend tells of three girls who were too poor to get married. Nicholas gave their father money so that they could live good lives as wives. Nicholas did not like to be noticed for the good things he did. He tried to help people without them knowing it.

Nicholas especially tried to help children. That is why many children leave their shoes out on December 6, the day we celebrate the Feast of Saint Nicholas. They hope that St. Nicholas will fill the shoe with a treat. St. Nicholas is remembered as a good and kind bishop. You can honor Nicholas by doing something kind for someone. Try not to let the person find out that you did the nice thing.

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## **January**

### **The Holy Family**

Jesus was born into a family. Mary was his mother. Joseph was Jesus' earthly father. We call their family "The Holy Family." Jesus is divine, but he was also human. Being born into a family helps us see that Jesus was human.

In many ways, Jesus' family is like our own family. We are holy, too. Sometimes we make mistakes in our family. Jesus' family made mistakes, too. One time Mary and Joseph couldn't find Jesus. He didn't think he was lost, but his family did not know where he was. He sat in a temple while his family traveled home. We can make mistakes and still be holy.

Even when a family is holy, things are not always easy. Jesus' family had to rush to Egypt in the middle of the night. King Herod wanted to hurt Jesus. Jesus' family hurried to get away from the danger.

God is present in all families. With God's help we love one another. God helps us not be selfish. God helps us forgive each other. Thank God today especially for your family.

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## **February**

### **Blessed Mother Teresa of Calcutta**

Born in Yugoslavia in 1910, Agnes would someday be called "Mother Teresa." Agnes knew by the time she was 13 years old that God wanted her to help the poor. She became Sister Agnes of the Loreto Sisters. She taught high school for the order in Calcutta, India for 20 years. She liked her students and they liked her, but Sr. Agnes knew the poor people really needed help. After teaching, she took care of sick and dying people in their homes.

Many women joined Sister Agnes. They wanted to love the poor people in Calcutta. Many of these people were dying and had no one to love or care for them. The women formed a group, Missionaries of Charity. Sister Agnes would now be called Mother Teresa. The sisters of this group found dying people in the streets. They brought them to their house. They hugged them, fed them, and prayed with them until they died.

Mother Teresa believed in dignity, or value, for all people. Especially the poor need to know God's love. She also believed in the dignity of work. The sisters did not use any machines because they believed that people felt more worthwhile working with their hands. Mother Teresa and the other Sisters of Charity wanted to work without people noticing them. But the world began to notice these special women and their work. In 1979 Mother Teresa won the Nobel Peace Prize. Even though she won many awards and people kept wanting to meet her, she went about her humble work. She said, "We can do no great things. Only small things with great love." This is a good thing for us to remember, too. We may be small, but our big love can help others.

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## **March**

### **Saint Patrick**

Born around 389 C.E., Patrick lived in Britain. His father was a Roman soldier stationed in Britain. One day when Patrick was sixteen years old, Irish pirates kidnapped him. They took him to Ireland where they made him a slave. His job was to take care of sheep in the mountains. It was cold and rainy, but he took good care of the animals. Patrick really wanted to go home. He prayed to God asking for help. Finally he escaped and found some sailors to take him home.

He studied to become a priest. The Church wanted to send someone to Ireland to help the Irish know Jesus. Patrick wanted to go. He knew the people in Ireland believed in many gods and not the one true God. He helped many people change their mind. They stopped believing in pagan gods. They put their faith in Jesus. Not everyone agreed with Patrick. Some people wanted to get rid of him. He kept on telling them about Jesus anyway.

Legend tells us that Patrick explained the Trinity using a three-leaf shamrock. He wanted the new believers to understand that God was Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To show that God could be all three at the same time, he pointed to the three connected parts of one leaf. Legend also tells us that Patrick drove all the snakes out of Ireland. This may not be true, but it is true that Ireland doesn't have any snakes!

Even before Patrick's day, the Church sent people all over the world to tell them about Jesus. The church still sends people out. They are called missionaries. We can be missionaries, too, when we tell someone about God's love.

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## **April**

### **David**

David lived over 3,000 years ago. He lived with his father and brothers in Israel. David took care of sheep. One day, God sent a prophet, Samuel, to talk to David's father, Jesse. God wanted a good king for Israel. The current king, Saul, was not very good. God told Samuel that the next king would be Jesse's son. When Samuel saw David, he knew right away that David was the king God had been looking for.

David fought in Saul's army against the Philistines. The enemy army had a giant soldier named Goliath. Goliath wanted to fight one battle to end the war. The Israelites were afraid, but David said he would fight. Saul thought it was pretty funny that such a young boy would stand up against a big giant. David trusted God and was not afraid. God helped David. A rock David threw hit Goliath in the head and knocked him out. This scared all the Philistines and they ran away.

When Saul died, David became king. David was not a perfect king, but he tried to be a good leader. He set a place in Jerusalem where all the people could come to worship God. David loved God and trusted him. Since he was a young child, David wrote songs thanking and praising God. We have many of David's songs and psalms in our Bible. We are like David when we trust God. We can use some of David's words to help us thank God and show God we love him.

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## **May**

### **Saint Joseph**

Joseph was Jesus' earthly father. Joseph's family came from David's family. David lived a long time ago. We learn about David in the Old Testament of the Bible. The New Testament tells us that Jesus, the savior, will be a member of David's family. People who knew Joseph said that he was a good person. He obeyed the Jewish law. He was fair and not selfish. Most of all he loved his family.

It could have been very bad for Mary to have a baby before she married Joseph. Joseph planned to protect her by quietly ending their engagement. An angel came to Joseph. The angel explained that Mary's baby came from the Holy Spirit. Joseph trusted God and believed the angel, so he married her. God trusted Joseph to take care of Mary and Jesus.

Joseph took care of his family when they traveled to Bethlehem and then to Egypt. He made sure they went to Jerusalem for Passover each year. Joseph was a carpenter. He taught Jesus how to be a carpenter, too. Thank someone today who protects you and takes care of you. On May 1, we celebrate Joseph the Worker and on March 19, we honor Joseph as Mary's husband.

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## **June 3, 2009**

### **Noah**

Noah's father gave him a special name. Noah means comfort. One day Noah would bring rest and comfort to his family and a lot of animals. Noah lived during a time when people did many bad things. God was disappointed in the way they behaved. God told Noah that he was going to start over. Noah was part of God's plan.

God told Noah to build a big boat, called an ark. The ark would be a floating house. Noah's wife, his three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japheth, and their wives all lived on the ark. God told Noah to collect two of every kind of bird and animal. These animals lived on the boat, too. It rained for a long time. Water covered the earth. The only living things in the world were on the ark. It stopped raining and the ark finally settled on dry ground.

God promised Noah and his family that God would never destroy the world again. God put a rainbow in the sky to remind us of this promise. When we see a rainbow, we remember God's love for us. It reminds us of the beautiful earth God created. It also helps us remember to take good care of the earth and the people in it.