

FAITH IN 5
Christmas Week 2

1. **Do you know what Solemnity we celebrate on January 1st?** January 1st is the Solemnity of Mary, the Holy Mother of God. This glorious feast reminds us of the Blessed Mother's magnificence as Mother of Christ. It also reminds us that she is a mother to us all. Starting the year devoting ourselves to Mary will most certainly bring us closer to her son and our Savior, Jesus. **What does the title of Mother of God mean for us here on earth?** "Divine motherhood is an immense power in the world of grace, the greatest power after the redemptive power of Christ.....In practice the Catholic Church looks upon the Mother of God as being an unbounded power in the realm of grace; in virtue of her divine motherhood Mary is simply the vastest, most efficient, the most universal supernatural power in heaven and on earth outside the the three divine persons." (Dom. Anscar Vonier, O.S.B) Simply stated, Mary is our powerful help in attaining heaven. She is a dispenser of the grace and virtue we need! **Is this Solemnity a Holy Day of Obligation?** Yes, Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God is a holy day of obligation! This year, it falls on a Sunday.

2. **Have you heard of St. Elizabeth Ann of Seton?** St. Elizabeth Ann was born in the American colonies in the year 1774 to a protestant family. She married a wealthy man named William who could provide her with every comfort. Sadly, St. Elizabeth Ann began to endure many trials and hardships. Her husband's business failed and he became very sick. Friends of William's invited the Setons to Italy to help. Unfortunately, William grew even sicker and passed away. It was here in Italy with these generous friends that she discovered the beauty of the Catholic faith and converted. **Did she ever come back to America?** Yes, but upon St. Elizabeth Ann Seton's return to the colonies, she was treated poorly as a result of her conversion. People were very prejudiced against Catholics. Her former friends and family hoped she would leave Catholicism, but instead this only strengthened her faith. **What did St. Elizabeth Ann Seton do?** St. Elizabeth Ann Seton started the first free Catholic school in America, the beginnings of the parochial school system. When she didn't have enough teachers, she founded a religious order of nuns that would be called The Sisters of Charity of St. Joseph. She herself entered the order, with special permission given to her to continue raising her children. St. Elizabeth Ann Seton and her sisters would even open an orphanage later. **What is St. Elizabeth Ann Seton the patron saint of?** She is the patron saint of Catholic schools, widows, educators and children. We remember St. Elizabeth Ann on January 4th.

3. **Is Christmas over?** No, Christmas is not over! Yes, the Octave of Christmas ended on the Solemnity of Mary, Mother of God but the season of Christmas carries on.

Did you notice your church is still decorated and singing Christmas Carols? What color is your priest wearing? He is wearing gold, not the green of ordinary time. Imitate at your home what you see at church! Keep up your Christmas tree if you can and continue celebrating! **Do you know what we will be celebrating next Sunday?** The Epiphany will be celebrated next Sunday. To prepare for the arrival of the The Magi, take your wise men from your nativity scene and have them journey to the manger. Everyday move them a little closer!

4. **Catechism: What is a sacrament?** A sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace. **How many sacraments are there?** There are seven sacraments: Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Eucharist, Penance, Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, Matrimony. The Baltimore Catechism explains "The sacraments are signs of Christ's action of love." Jesus is always with us, always assisting us but we are unable to see him. The sacraments are something we can see, a sign of His presence and His help. (Baltimore Catechism, Lesson 22)

5. Apologetics- How is Mary the Mother of God?! Isn't she just the mother of Jesus' human nature? Jesus did have both a human nature and a divine nature. They can't be separated! When Mary was carrying Jesus in her womb, her cousin Elizabeth identifies Mary "And how does this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Luke 1:43) God is three persons in one nature. Jesus is the second person of that Holy Trinity. If Mary is mother to Jesus' human nature, she is also the Mother of God! "She who was created...gave birth to her Creator!" ([Friendly Defenders](#) by Ascension Press)

REVIEW QUESTION: Who are the Holy Innocents? The Holy Innocents were all the babies murdered by the cruel King Herod in his search for the Christ Child.

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