

- I always love reading those readings from Paul like the one today from Colossians: “*Wives, be subordinate to your husbands, as is proper in the Lord...*” And from Ephesians: “*As the Church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands.*” (Eph 5:24 RSV)
- The women scowl. Husbands look anywhere BUT at their wives scowling...
- But...as God’s Word, these merit due attention...and a look at their true meaning. As Jesus tells us: “*Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.*” (Mat 4:4 RSV)
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- The basis of these readings is not control, but rather love and service...the husband/father remembering that he is, in a way, in the place of Christ in the household...and Christ said: “*I came to serve, not to be served.*”
- The husband is not to be tyrant, but rather lead the family with the wise counsel of his wife...and to remember that with greater responsibility comes greater accountability to God.
- As leader, he is to love his wife and family—as Paul writes—“*as Christ loves the Church...*”
- This means in service, as Christ served...even to death if necessary...for their protection, and for their well-being...most important of which is their closeness to God and following Christ and His Church.
- The greater burden of responsibility falls to the husband and father of the family. Seeing this, the caring wife aids her husband in carrying this burden...in the beauty that is love.
- And the wise husband never forgets that his wife is equal with Him in dignity before God, and thus merits the respect and honor...and love...due her.

- As Paul writes to the Ephesians: “...*husbands should love their wives as their own bodies...For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, as Christ does the Church...*” (Eph 5:28-29)
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- Now today’s feast of the Holy Family—of Jesus, Mary & Joseph--emphasizes the essential nature of all families... “*the domestic Church*”, as Vatican II puts it...teaching knowledge and love of God, and love and respect for those around us.
- We will never reach the perfection of the Holy Family, just like we can never reach the perfection of Jesus in our Christian life.
- But the grace comes from the striving toward that perfection... knowing that the more we emulate and resemble them, the closer to God our families are.
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- Spouses: By the sacrament of marriage, you are bound to one another in the most profoundly indissoluble manner—like Christ with His Church. (cf. *Familiaris Consortio*, 13)
- In a true sacramental marriage the Spirit renders you capable of loving one another as Christ loved us...to live the charity of Christ, who gave Himself upon the Cross.
- As an early Christian writer said: “...*there is no separation between them in spirit or flesh; in fact they are truly two in one flesh, and where the flesh is one, one is the spirit.*” (*FC* 13, quoting Tertullian).
- The sacrament of marriage is both vocation and commandment... that husband and wife remain faithful to each other all their lives, beyond every trial and difficulty, in obedience to the will of the God: “*What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.*”
- And...according to the plan of God, marriage of man and woman is the foundation of the family, since the institution of marriage and conjugal love are ordained first of all to procreation and education

of children...who themselves are blessings from God, reflections of their love, and a sign of their unity. (FC, 14)

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- Now parents--not CCD classes, or even the Church--are the first and primary teachers of their children, because parents have the greatest influence over the children.
- The children learn the faith most perfectly upon their parents' knees...and by seeing their parents on their knees.
- As the father goes, so goes the son; as the mother goes, so goes the daughter. Will it be to your joy--or to your horror--to see your children grow up to resemble yourself?
- Children may stray in later life, but parents will be accountable for what they have taught...or what they failed to teach.
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- The husband and father of the family has his model in St. Joseph—the patient and humble protector, provider, teacher...ever attentive to the will of God.
- He may not always have been able to give them all he would wish for them, but he did what he could gladly and humbly.
- Likewise, you fathers may not make headlines, but you are essential in God's plan for the creation and molding of citizens for God's kingdom.
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- Wives and Mothers: your example is Mary...the faithful wife, the loving and attentive mother...united with her spouse in nurturing her family.
- You mothers will have worries and anxiety for your family until your last breath...so turn to Mary for courage and for help...and she will acquire for you strength to keep going on the hard road of motherhood.
- Like Mary, you, too, have a great task to perform for God; you have the eternal salvation of your family in your hands...the hands that rock the cradle...to teach them love of God and neighbor.
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- Children: your duty: to love, honor and obey your parents.
- St. Paul writes: *“Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.”* (Col 3:20 RSV)
- Your model is Jesus Himself, who in the Gospel obeyed those placed over him by God’s will--Joseph and Mary--even though He Himself was God.
- Likewise, YOU are placed under the authority of YOUR parents, and their authority comes from God...deserving honor and respect.
- How lucky you are to live now. The Jewish law said:
- *“If a man has a stubborn and rebellious son, who will not obey the voice of his father or the voice of his mother, and, though they chastise him, will not give heed to them...Then all the men of the city shall stone him to death with stones; so you shall purge the evil from your midst...”* (Deu 21:18-21)
- Honor and obedience to you parents and elders bring yourself honor, and to dishonor them only shames yourself. Absolutely no one...no culture on earth...honors disrespect toward parents and elders. In fact, such disrespect engenders only disgust by all.
- For scripture tells us: *With all your heart honor your father, and do not forget the birth pangs of your mother. Remember that through your parents you were born; and what can you give back to them that equals their gift to you?* (Sir 7:27-28)
- Only later in life will you fully understand the true love they had for you and the sacrifices they made for you...because only when you are a parent and make those sacrifices yourself will you truly understand.
- What greater motivation do we need than when scripture tells us: *Whoever honors his father atones for sins...When he prays, he is heard; he stores up riches who reveres his mother.”*
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- And, both children and parents, remember St. Paul today:
- *“Put on..., as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience...forgiving each*

other...And above all these put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony... ” (Col 3:12-17).

- For, as Paul tells us, it is faith, hope and love which endure... and the greatest of these is love.

Reading 1

[Sir 3:2-6, 12-14](#)

God sets a father in honor over his children;
a mother's authority he confirms over her sons.
Whoever honors his father atones for sins,
and preserves himself from them.
When he prays, he is heard;
he stores up riches who reveres his mother.
Whoever honors his father is gladdened by children,
and, when he prays, is heard.
Whoever reveres his father will live a long life;
he who obeys his father brings comfort to his mother.

My son, take care of your father when he is old;
grieve him not as long as he lives.
Even if his mind fail, be considerate of him;
revile him not all the days of his life;
kindness to a father will not be forgotten,
firmly planted against the debt of your sins
—a house raised in justice to you.

[Ps 128:1-2, 3, 4-5](#)

Responsorial Psalm

R. (cf. 1) Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.

Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD,
who walks in his ways!
For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork;
blessed shall you be, and favored.

R. Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.

Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine
in the recesses of your home;
your children like olive plants
around your table.

R. Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.

Behold, thus is the man blessed
who fears the LORD.

The LORD bless you from Zion:

may you see the prosperity of Jerusalem
all the days of your life.

R. Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.

[Col 3:12-21](#)

Reading 2

Brothers and sisters:

Put on, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved,
heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience,
bearing with one another and forgiving one another,
if one has a grievance against another;
as the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do.

And over all these put on love,
that is, the bond of perfection.

And let the peace of Christ control your hearts,
the peace into which you were also called in one body.

And be thankful.

Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly,
as in all wisdom you teach and admonish one another,
singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs
with gratitude in your hearts to God.

And whatever you do, in word or in deed,
do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus,
giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Wives, be subordinate to your husbands,
as is proper in the Lord.

Husbands, love your wives,
and avoid any bitterness toward them.

Children, obey your parents in everything,
for this is pleasing to the Lord.

Fathers, do not provoke your children,
so they may not become discouraged.

Gospel Lk 2:41-52

Each year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the feast
of Passover,
and when he was twelve years old,
they went up according to festival custom.
After they had completed its days, as they were returning,
the boy Jesus remained behind in Jerusalem,
but his parents did not know it.

Holy Family

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Thinking that he was in the caravan,
they journeyed for a day
and looked for him among their relatives and acquaintances,
but not finding him,
they returned to Jerusalem to look for him.
After three days they found him in the temple,
sitting in the midst of the teachers,
listening to them and asking them questions,
and all who heard him were astounded
at his understanding and his answers.
When his parents saw him,
they were astonished,
and his mother said to him,
"Son, why have you done this to us?
Your father and I have been looking for you with great anxiety."
And he said to them,
"Why were you looking for me?
Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?"
But they did not understand what he said to them.
He went down with them and came to Nazareth,
and was obedient to them;
and his mother kept all these things in her heart.
And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and favor
before God and man.