

- Now on today's feast of the Holy Family, we honor not only Jesus, Mary and Joseph, but all families, and the closeness of the family relationship... the very building block of human order and civilization...and of the Church.
- It is in the family that we learn our culture and traditions...but much more importantly, it is where we begin to learn the truths of our faith.
- Nothing can replace the importance of family in this....and that is why it is so important for parents to know the faith well, and to live it...for parents are responsible to God for what they teach, or fail to teach, His children that are entrusted to them.
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- And one must not surrender responsibility as is fashionable in our day: "Oh...I'll let them decide for themselves what to believe."
- Already they will be at a disadvantage, because the human tendency is to "go along with the crowd"...and so much of what the world approves goes against teaching of God.
- One might ask:
  - *"Certainly you want your children to know truth. Without firm guidance, how will they navigate the many dangers and errors of this world in their youth and inexperience?"*
  - *Would your attitude be the same if said: 'I want to join the Nazi party, or the KKK, or ISIS, or be a drug dealer?'* *Would you say nothing then, and let them 'decide for themselves?'"*
- Also, I know that many parents simply don't want to deal with fighting sulky teenagers who don't want to go to CCD or Mass.
- But isn't their soul worth the fight?

- Which is better—to be the sheepdog and nip at their heels to keep them with the shepherd...or let them simply stray unguided into the domain of the many wolves who wait to consume them body and soul?
- If you truly understand that the faith is truth, then you are obliged to teach your children the faith...the truth...for their own good.
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- Your children learn to discern on your knee...and even more so by your example.
- Even now almost 50 years later I remember how my mother would often stop in at the Church during the week to pray and to light a candle before Our Blessed Mother.
- And, yes...children may stray as they get older...but I have found that the foundation you establish within them will always be with them...like a thorn in their conscience.
- And when young people (hopefully) finally realize that contentment is not to be found in sex, drugs and rock 'n roll and materialism, they very often will come back to that foundation which you laid within them...especially when they have kids of their own.
- But if there is no foundation to build upon...then the house is ruined when the storms of life blow through.
- So parents: never underestimate your responsibility—to your children, and to God—to rear them in faith and by good example.
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- And remember, too, that CCD is NOT the primary teacher of your children's faith; you are.
- CCD is only a supplement. 1.5 hours a week is not enough to ingrain into your child a firm knowledge and practice of the faith.

- CCD and Sunday school classes are a relatively new phenomenon: for many centuries it was only through the teaching of the family and at Mass that young people were taught their faith...and families carried that faith for many generations and centuries.
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- Finally, some parents say: “I want to be my child’s best friend.”
- Well...don’t confuse that with being their best buddy.
- If you want to truly be their best friend, equip them with what they need not only for this brief earthly life, but even more so for eternal life.

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- Now husbands and fathers, your model is St. Joseph—a leader of the family, in love and service, remembering Christ himself: “*I came to serve, not to be served.*” The husband and father of the family is to be the patient and humble protector, provider, teacher...ever attentive to the will of God...never forgetting that your wife is equal to you in dignity before God.
  - Wives and mothers: your model is Our Blessed Mother herself...of humble, nurturing and attentive service to her family...watching over their welfare with her husband...watching over and guiding her children all her life as Mary did Jesus.
  - You mothers will have anxiety for your family until your last breath...so turn to Mary for courage and for help; she knows your agonies better than anyone, for she experienced them more than anyone...and she will acquire for you strength to keep going on the difficult road of motherhood.
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  - Finally, you children: your model in the Holy Family is Jesus Himself...who loved, honored—and obeyed—His parents... as you seek your own role in furthering the good of your family.
  - St. Paul writes: “*Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord.*” (Col 3:20 RSV)

- And until you live on your own, you are under the authority of your parents, and their authority comes from God...deserving honor and respect.
- Only when you are older will you know the depth of their love for you...when you have your own children.
- Remember that honor and obedience to your parents and elders brings yourself honor, and to dishonor them only bring shame to yourself.
- No one is impressed by a stubborn and rebellious child; in fact, arrogance and disrespect is ugly always...but never more so than in a child toward his parents.
- And absolutely no one...no culture on earth...values disrespect toward parents and elders. On the contrary, such disrespect only elicits disgust...while respect toward elders is held in honor.
  
- And, for all of us...no matter what age, keep before you the words of God: *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)
- And: *Whoever honors his father atones for sins...he stores up riches who reveres his mother.*"
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- And so...St. Paul's exhortation fits the family most of all: "*Put on...as God's chosen ones...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 reminds us: it is faith, hope and love which endure... and the greatest of these is love.

## Reading 1

GN 15:1-6; 21:1-3

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The word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying:

“Fear not, Abram!

I am your shield;

I will make your reward very great.”

But Abram said,

“O Lord GOD, what good will your gifts be,

if I keep on being childless

and have as my heir the steward of my house, Eliezer?”

Abram continued,

“See, you have given me no offspring,

and so one of my servants will be my heir.”

Then the word of the LORD came to him:

“No, that one shall not be your heir;

your own issue shall be your heir.”

The Lord took Abram outside and said,

“Look up at the sky and count the stars, if you can.

Just so,” he added, “shall your descendants be.”

Abram put his faith in the LORD,

who credited it to him as an act of righteousness.

The LORD took note of Sarah as he had said he would;

he did for her as he had promised.

Sarah became pregnant and bore Abraham a son in his old age,

at the set time that God had stated.

Abraham gave the name Isaac to this son of his

whom Sarah bore him.

PS 105:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9

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R/ (7a , 8a) **The Lord remembers his covenant for ever.**

Give thanks to the LORD, invoke his name;

make known among the nations his deeds.

Sing to him, sing his praise,

proclaim all his wondrous deeds.

R/ **The Lord remembers his covenant for ever.**

Glory in his holy name;

rejoice, O hearts that seek the LORD!

Look to the LORD in his strength;

constantly seek his face.

R/ **The Lord remembers his covenant for ever.**

You descendants of Abraham, his servants,

sons of Jacob, his chosen ones!  
He, the LORD, is our God;  
throughout the earth his judgments prevail.  
R/ **The Lord remembers his covenant for ever.**  
He remembers forever his covenant  
which he made binding for a thousand generations  
which he entered into with Abraham  
and by his oath to Isaac.  
R/ **The Lord remembers his covenant for ever.**

**HEB 11:8, 11-12, 17-19**

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Brothers and sisters:  
By faith Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place  
that he was to receive as an inheritance;  
he went out, not knowing where he was to go.  
By faith he received power to generate,  
even though he was past the normal age  
—and Sarah herself was sterile—  
for he thought that the one who had made the promise was trustworthy.  
So it was that there came forth from one man,  
himself as good as dead,  
descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky  
and as countless as the sands on the seashore.

By faith Abraham, when put to the test, offered up Isaac,  
and he who had received the promises was ready to offer  
his only son,  
of whom it was said,  
“Through Isaac descendants shall bear your name.”  
He reasoned that God was able to raise even from the dead,  
and he received Isaac back as a symbol.

**Alleluia COL 3:15A, 16A**

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R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**  
Let the peace of Christ control your hearts;  
let the word of Christ dwell in you richly.  
R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**

**Or HEB 1:1-2**

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R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**  
In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets;  
in these last days, he has spoken to us through the Son.  
R. **Alleluia, alleluia.**  
**Gospel LK 2:22-40**

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When the days were completed for their purification  
according to the law of Moses,  
They took him up to Jerusalem  
to present him to the Lord,  
just as it is written in the law of the Lord,  
*Every male that opens the womb shall be consecrated to the Lord,*  
and to offer the sacrifice of  
*a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons,*  
in accordance with the dictate in the law of the Lord.

Now there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon.  
This man was righteous and devout,  
awaiting the consolation of Israel,  
and the Holy Spirit was upon him.  
It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit  
that he should not see death  
before he had seen the Christ of the Lord.  
He came in the Spirit into the temple;  
and when the parents brought in the child Jesus  
to perform the custom of the law in regard to him,  
He took him into his arms and blessed God, saying:  
“Now, Master, you may let your servant go  
in peace, according to your word,  
for my eyes have seen your salvation,  
which you prepared in sight of all the peoples,  
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,  
and glory for your people Israel.”  
The child’s father and mother were amazed at what was said about him;  
and Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother,  
“Behold, this child is destined  
for the fall and rise of many in Israel,  
and to be a sign that will be contradicted  
—and you yourself a sword will pierce—  
so that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”  
There was also a prophetess, Anna,  
the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher.  
She was advanced in years,  
having lived seven years with her husband after her marriage,  
and then as a widow until she was eighty-four.  
She never left the temple,  
but worshiped night and day with fasting and prayer.

***Holy Family***  
2014 (Year B readings)

And coming forward at that very time,  
she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child  
to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem.

When they had fulfilled all the prescriptions  
of the law of the Lord,  
they returned to Galilee,  
to their own town of Nazareth.  
The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom;  
and the favor of God was upon him.