

- On today's wonderful feast of the Holy Family, we honor not only Jesus, Mary and Joseph, but all families, and the closeness of the family relationship...which is the very building block of human order and civilization...and of the Church.
- As goes the family, so goes society. Strong bricks = strong structure; crumbling bricks = an unstable and crumbling edifice...
- ...for if we have no allegiance and closeness in families, there will be little elsewhere.
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- It is in the family that we learn culture and traditions...but so much more importantly, it is where we begin to learn the truths of our faith.
- Nothing can replace the importance of family in this—the “domestic church,” as the larger Church teaches...and that is why it is so important for you parents to know—and to teach—the faith well, and live it...for parents are ultimately responsible to God for what they teach—or fail to teach—His children entrusted to them.
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- Parents must not surrender responsibility as is fashionable in our day: *“I’ll let them decide for themselves what to believe.”*
- Do you say that about math, science, etc.? If you believe the faith is the greatest and most essential truth, why be so cavalier about it?
- If your child joined the Nazi party, or the KKK, or became a drug dealer, would you say nothing, for he “decided for himself?” Is that your measure of good parenting?
- The faith is not just some arbitrary philosophy of life; it is truth, and eternal life itself.
- Few youth develop the moral strength, individualism and resiliency to seek the good without affirmation...rather, like

electricity, taking the path of least resistance in pursuit of popularity and recognition by their peers...the human tendency to “go along with the crowd,” or to default to that which is easy...and so much of what the world approves goes against the teaching of God.

- Parents understandably often weary of dealing with whiny, argumentative teenagers who don't want to go to CCD or Mass.
- But aren't their souls worth that fight?
- Parents' deepest obligation—for which they will be held to account—is to lead and teach their children the truth of the faith.

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- Your children learn most of all by your example.
  - Almost 50 years later I still remember my mother often taking us to “make a visit” to the Church during the week, to pray and to light a candle before Our Blessed Mother.
  - Yes...children may stray as they get older...but the foundation you lay will always be with them...like a thorn in their conscience.
  - And when young people (hopefully) finally realize that happiness is not to be found in sex, drugs, 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, there is little to build upon.

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- And, parents, remember: CCD is not the primary teacher of your children's faith; you are. CCD is only a supplement.
  - Your practiced faith is their best teacher. You are their “best friend” not by being their “buddy”, but rather by instilling within them that which they need to attain eternal life.

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- Now, husbands and fathers, model yourself by St. Joseph—in leadership, in providing, protecting...in love and service, remembering Christ himself: *“I came to serve, not to be served”*...ever attentive to the will of God.
  - Wives and mothers: your model is Our Blessed Mother herself...of humble, nurturing and attentive service to family...watching over their welfare...guiding her children all her life, as Mary did Jesus.
  - Inevitably, a mother’s anxiety for her family lasts ‘til her dying breath...so turn to Mary for courage and for help; she knows a mother’s agonies more than anyone...and will acquire for you strength to tread faithfully the difficult maternal road.

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- Finally, children—young and old: your model in the Holy Family is Jesus Himself...who loved, honored—and, yes, obeyed—His parents...remembering that your parents’ authority comes from God...and thus they are deserving of honor and respect.
  - Only when you are older will you know the depth of their love for you...when you have your own children.
  - No one is impressed by a stubborn and rebellious child; in fact, arrogance and disrespect is ugly always...but never more so... never more dishonorable...than in a child toward his parents.
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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...”* (Colossians 3:12-17).

**Reading 1** [GN 15:1-6; 21:1-3](#)

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.**

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**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.  
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.