

Holy Family

2018

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- The family bond is, obviously, one of the strongest in society... and, indeed, is the very building block of society.
- We don't normally tend to spend thousands of dollars and seemingly endless hours of travel time going to visit friends, no matter how close they are. But we DO do that with family—especially during the holidays.
- We have that natural desire to be among those with whom we are most comfortable and famili-ar.
- One of the dangers of our family relationships is taking them for granted. But...should we treat those who love us the most with less thoughtfulness just because we know we can? That ain't right.

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- Now the Church gives us this feast of the Holy Family so near to Christmas in order to emphasize family...which Vatican II called “the domestic Church” where knowledge and love of God and neighbor are first taught and emphasized by word and example.
 - All families should try to model their lives on that holiest of families—that of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.
 - Not that we can ever reach such perfection, just like we can never reach the perfection of Jesus in our Christian life...
 - ...but we imitate and emulate them nonetheless...knowing that the more we resemble them, the closer to God we are.

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- Examining the family...let us look at a few things.
 - Spouses: By virtue of the sacrament of true marriage, you are bound to one another “‘til death do you part”—bound as one like Christ with His Church.
 - But Christ never dies, and His bride the Church is undying...so it is a union to last to eternity—bride and bridegroom...head and body.
 - Marriage grants grace for man and woman to love one another as Christ loves His Church—each of us. You are called to live the very charity of Christ who gave Himself on the Cross.
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- As an early Christian writer said: *“How can I ever express the happiness of the marriage that is joined together by the Church strengthened by an offering, sealed by a blessing, announced by angels and ratified by the Father?”* (Familiaris Consortio 13, quoting Tertullian).
- The gift of the sacrament of marriage is simultaneously vocation and commandment...demanding mutual fidelity, through every trial and difficulty, in obedience to the will of God: *“What therefore God has joined together, let not man put asunder.”*
- In the plan of God, marriage is the foundation of family, since the institution of marriage and conjugal love are ordained to the procreation and education of children...who are a living reflection of their love, and a permanent sign of their unity. (FC, 14)
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- Neither CCD class nor even the Church is first and primary teacher of children; that role and privilege belongs to parents...not to be delegated—not even to the Church...because it is the parents who 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 we see so often, as the father goes, so goes the son...as the mother goes, so goes the daughter.

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- The father of the family has his model in St. Joseph—patiently and humbly working at his carpenter’s bench to provide, protect and lead his family.
 - To his neighbors Joseph was just a carpenter, of seemingly no special importance—but his sanctity comes from his fidelity to God and dutiful service to his family.
 - You fathers may not make headlines, but you teach and lead your children towards Heaven...or not. It’s an obligation you take seriously or not...but one for which you will be called to account.
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- Wives and mothers: Mary is your unequaled example...a faithful, diligent, thoughtful, loving wife and mother...struggling in partnership with her spouse and in the nurturing of her child.
- A mother worries for her family until her last breath...but think of your model, and turn to Mary for courage and for help...for she will acquire for you strength to traverse the hard, self-sacrificing road of motherhood.
- Along with her husband, the wife has that great task to perform for God; the eternal salvation of her family in her hands.
- Your greatest joy in Heaven—after the beatific vision of God—will be (we pray) that you will be surrounded by your family... which, aided by God's grace, you led there.

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- Finally...children: your duty in the family is to love, honor and respect your parents...obeying them 'til you reach adulthood...but even then, always being respectful and kind, as we just heard in our first reading.
 - Our model as offspring is none other than Jesus Himself who, though He was God, subjected Himself to Joseph and Mary and obeyed them.
 - Showing honor and obedience to you parents—and to ALL your elders--brings honor to yourself; likewise, to dishonor them dishonors and disgraces yourself. No one respects a child who dishonors his parents; on the contrary, he is disgusting.
 - Because, as 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)*
 - Your parents love you more than anyone except God Himself... and respect their many years more experience of life.
 - 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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- Finally...you brothers and sisters: as much as you might not believe it when you're fighting, you will be one another's best friends and faithful support all of your lives.
- But all...concern yourselves with the good of one another other... remembering the Psalm: "*Behold, how good and pleasant it is when brothers dwell in unity!*" (Psalm 133:1) Nothing pleases parents more than that.
- And, as St. Paul tells us today: "*Put on, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience...forgiving each other...And over all these put on love, that is, the bond of perfection.*" (Colossians 3:12-14).

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.

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

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.

Reading 2 [Col 3:12-21](#)

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.
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.
