

December 27, 2020
Feast of the Holy Family
Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14
Psalms 128:1-2, 3, 4-5
Colossians 3:12-21
Luke 2:22-40 or 2:22, 39-40

THE HOLY FAMILY IS OUR INSPIRATION!

(share this joke for the 5PM, 7AM & 6:30PM Masses)

A Jesuit, a Dominican, and a Franciscan were walking along an old road, debating the greatness of their orders. Suddenly, an apparition of the Holy Family appeared in front of them, with Jesus in a manger and Mary and Joseph praying over him. The Franciscan fell on his face, overcome with awe at the sight of God born in such poverty. The Dominican fell to his knees, adoring the beautiful reflection of the Trinity and the Holy Family. The Jesuit walked up to Joseph, put his arm around his shoulder, and said, **"So, have you thought about where to send him to school?"**

(share this joke for the 9:30AM & 4:30PM Masses)

A catechist asked her students to draw a picture of Jesus' family. After collecting the drawings, she noticed that one little boy's drawing depicted an airplane with four heads sticking out of the windows. **"I see you drew three heads to show Joseph, Mary and Jesus,"** she said to the boy. **"But who does the fourth head belong to?"** The boy replied, **"That's Pontius the pilot."**

We are celebrating today the **Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph**. This feast encourages us to look at their family as an inspiration, example and encouragement for our own family. They were a model family for us simply because they made sure that the atmosphere inside-out was love. They worked hard together. They understood and accepted each other's role. And as parents, Mary and Joseph took good care of their Child's formation in human knowledge and love of God.

What is the Catechism of the Catholic Church saying about the family? Inspired by the example of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph, the catechism offers an advice to our own family. It says, **"The family is the original cell of social life. It is the natural society in which husband and wife are called to give themselves in love and in the gift of life. Authority, stability, and a life of relationships within the family constitute the foundations for freedom, security, and fraternity within society. The family is the community in which, from childhood, one can learn moral values, begin to honor God, and make good use of freedom."** (CCC#2207) Clearly, this advice tells us that everything really starts in the family. The rise and fall of our society depends on what kind/breed of family we are raising.

The Book of the Prophet Sirach provides us with so many good things about living our lives properly in relation to others. One of those things is the piece of advice for children in relation to their parents that we have heard in our 1st reading. Prophet Sirach says: **"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...kindness to a father will not be forgotten."** He is reminding the children that God will bless them if they respect and show compassion to their parents.

St. Paul, in our 2nd reading, offers an advice, not only for parents and children, but for all of us. He encourages us that in our relationship with one another, especially in the context of a family, we have to **'put on love.'** He persuades us to grow in **'heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another.'** He also incites us to be always grateful to God.

In the gospel proclaimed we heard the biblical basis for the **4th Joyful Mystery** in the Holy Rosary – **the Presentation of the Child Jesus in the Temple.** Obviously, the Child Jesus was not capable of presenting himself to the temple for he was only eight-day-old. It was his parents, Mary and Joseph, who brought and presented him in the temple. Here we see the seriousness of Joseph and Mary in doing their religious duties as parents of the Child Jesus. The action they showed conveyed a message that they were serious in bringing their child closer to God.

All of us belong to a family. This Church is our spiritual family. We are brothers and sisters in Christ. However, we do know that we are not yet on that level of holiness of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph. **Why did I say that?** If we are on that level of holiness already, then 100% of us here in this Christian Community should have been practicing or living the 4 pillars of stewardship on a regular basis. Jealousy and conceit will no longer be an issue. Humility in service will not be a scarcity. Gentleness and patience with each other will be the atmosphere. Arrogant words such as, **"I have been here in this parish for many decades. Who are you to tell me what to do and where to sit?"** will be avoided. Yes, it will still be a long way to go for us but the good news is that holiness is not an impossibility. We can be holy. Our family, our spiritual family, can be holy like the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph.

In this Mass, therefore, let us pray for our families, both biological and spiritual, that we may have the courage and strength to work diligently/persistently on following the footsteps of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. May our families continue to get its inspiration from the Holy Family!

God bless our families!