

Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph

1 Samuel 1:20-22, 24-28; Psalm 84; 1 John 3:1-2, 21-24; Luke 2:41-52

Over the last few weeks, many of us have either traveled to be with family or they have come to you. For Mary and I, our five adult children, with their spouses, and our six grandchildren; spent two to four hours on the road so we could all be together for one day to celebrate Christmas. Our day included sharing meals, the grandchildren decorating Christmas cookies, opening presents and the whole family coming to mass. We were so thankful!

Similarly, a long time ago, Mary and Joseph had to make their annual journey to celebrate Passover in the temple in Jerusalem. Surrounded by loved ones, we see the beauty and joy our faith imparts on our family gatherings. However, this may not be the case for every family this season.

Has your journey of faith been a smooth one? Perhaps, it has been on autopilot? Or have you encountered numerous twists and turns on your road this year?

Just like many parents, Mary and Joseph encountered one particular twist and turn on their road – not knowing where their child had gone to. Due to custom, men and women traveled in separate groups in a caravan. For this reason, both Mary and Joseph assumed that Jesus was with the other, only to find out later that he was not. Once Mary and Joseph returned to Jerusalem, to find Jesus in the temple surrounded by teachers. “Why did you do this to us?” asked Mary, when she found Jesus in the temple. Jesus replied, “Did you not know that I needed to be in my Father’s house.”

I wonder if Jesus was initially scared when he could not find his parents? Or if he simply heard God’s voice calling him to the temple to listen and ask questions of the teachers. Maybe this was the time Jesus truly understood that God was his one true father? This is evident when Mary and Joseph found Jesus in the temple, seeing their son responding to questions amidst the teachers and “all who heard him were astounded.” Mary “kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus advanced in wisdom and age and favor before God and man.” Mary and Joseph had taught Jesus well and are models for us.

Whether you are 3, 12, 22, 56, or 87; how is your journey of faith going? Are you growing in your relationship with Jesus? Are you embracing the Catholic faith as your own? Where do you find the answers to your questions? How can others help you be able to grow closer to God?

Pope Francis in his homily on the Feast of the Holy Family December 27, 2015 offered these points:

All families should embark together on a pilgrimage of prayer and praise. Fathers, mothers and children together go to the house of the Lord, in order to sanctify the holy day with prayer. How important it is for our families to journey together towards a single goal! To share in moments of prayer, like giving a blessing to the children at the beginning and end of each day, to trace the sign of the cross on their forehead as they did on the day of their baptism. The importance of prayer at meals and during family prayer. All of these become part of their lives as children so they will hopefully become included in their family life when they have children.

As parents and grandparents, we have the responsibility to teach our children and grandchildren the faith and help them on their own faith journey. We are there to help them

love Jesus more and more with each passing day and to ask Jesus to show them the will of God.

Our holy scriptures today provide an opportunity to review the past and consider what we want to do in the future for ourselves and for our children.

- 1) Consider the amount of time we are spending with Jesus, our children and our friends?
- 2) Is there someone that we need to forgive? To release them from the hurt feelings we are carrying?
- 3) What are the signs and practices that express our belief in Jesus? Offering meal prayer in public. Praying with others at the time they ask. Praying the rosary.
- 4) Including some of the wonderful resources available to enrich our understanding our faith - Catholic radio, Catholic websites, books by Catholic authors.
- 5) Going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation as a family
- 6) Attending a retreat like Christian Experience Weekend for men and women coming up the end of February. You can also find a retreat you can do at home at ForYourMarriage.org.
- 7) Parents – include some type of marriage enrichment, hopefully once a year preferably have a “Date Night” each month to grow your love for each other.
- 8) Living and teaching the virtues - humility, love of neighbor, poverty of spirit/obedience and piety.
- 9) Become informed about internet safety and put filters in place to protect our children from harmful sites to retain their innocence and modesty.

(Resources listed below.)

Deacon Ron Smith

12-30-18

Whether your journey is a smooth, straight road or twisting and turning one; we all need to remember how the twelve year old Jesus was so deeply rooted in his faith and growing closer to God in the temple in Jerusalem that he could have a discussion with the teachers. May we pray for each other that God may continue to guide and strengthen each of us with the power of the Holy Spirit and the intercession of our Blessed Mother to help us grow more deeply in our faith.

Resources

Iowa Catholic Radio – website and app - <https://www.iowacatholicradio.com/>

Relevant Radio – website and app - <https://relevantradio.com/>

Formed – <https://www.formed.org/>

For Your Marriage – <http://www.foryourmarriage.org/>

Real Life Catholic – Chris Stefanick - <https://reallifecatholic.com/>

Word on Fire – Fr. Robert Barron - <https://www.wordonfire.org/>

Fr. Robert Spitzer - <https://www.magiscenter.com/meet-fr-spitzer/>

Fr. Mike Schmitz - <https://media.ascensionpress.com/category/ascension-presents/fr-mike-schmitz/>

Fr. John Riccardo - <http://frjohnriccardo.libsyn.com/>

The Messy Family Project - <https://www.messyfamilyproject.org/>

Faith and Safety – Technology Safety Through the Eyes of Faith - <https://www.faihandsafety.org/>

Integrity Restored - <https://integrityrestored.com/>

Covenant Eyes - <https://www.covenanteyes.com/>

Catechism of the Catholic Church

CCC 531-534: the Holy Family; finding the temple

CCC 1652-1658, : the Christian family, a domestic Church; Openness to fertility in reference to Hannah

CCC 2204 - 2206, 2214-2233: duties of family members; The family and the kingdom

CCC 2221-2228 – Duties of parents

CCC 534, 583, 2599: the Finding in the Temple

CCC 64, 489, 2578: Hannah and Samuel

CCC 1, 104, 239, 1692, 1709, 2009, 2736: we are God’s children now

CCC 163, 1023, 1161, 2519, 2772: we shall see him face to face and be like him

family and change

<https://www.catholicconvert.com/?s=holy+family>

Family honor.org
Messy family. Com

<http://tobinstitute.org/uncategorized/homily-for-the-feast-of-the-holy-family-year-c/>

<https://rorate-caeli.blogspot.com/2015/01/sermon-for-feast-of-holy-family.html>

Holy family

Walked the walk - faith in action

Taught Jesus the scriptures and teachings of Judaism

Jesus came the place of making it his own

Do we come to mass to take or to humble ourselves to become more like Jesus to understand the Father's will in our life, in the life of our family?

Hannah prayed for a child

God answered her prayer

Then she offered her son back to the Lord for service to him.

Journey

Church God centered

Ponder prayer

Husband and wife are co creator with God

Miracle of the eucharist

Preserve the innocents of our children and adults

Instill the virtues - CCC 1803-1845

May we reset and renew our decision personally and as family to grow our relationship with God and with family.