

Feast of the Holy Family

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**“As the family goes, so goes the nation,
and so goes the whole world in which we live.”**

(Pope St. John Paul II

Homily in Perth, Australia: November 30, 1986.)

As we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family, let us ask Jesus to help us to better understand the example of the Holy Family, and to live more like the Family of Nazareth.

In the First Reading, we are presented with a model of family life taken from the life of Hannah. Her conviction and trust regarding the divine plan for her child, Samuel, is outstanding. In her words: “... therefore I have lent him to the Lord as long as he lives he is given to the Lord.” (1 Samuel 1:28) Her prayer teaches us that we should always seek to fulfill God’s Divine plan and to surrender our lives to His Divine arrangements for our family. Hannah surrendered everything to God’s hands, and that is important: to allow God’s intervention in our family life, too.

God has a plan for our family life: that is, to strive to model our family like that of the Holy Family through which God intends the salvation of all who are acquainted with and connected to our family. It is a great and noble mission for Christian families to strive for in this world.

In the Gospel, Luke portrays an adolescent Jesus as full of knowledge and amazing wisdom. Jesus’ first words recorded in Saint Luke’s Gospel points to the core of Jesus’ relationship with his Father in Heaven. Mary’s question and Jesus’ answer to his mother is a call and invitation for all believers and followers of Christ to grow in faith, and to attain a deeper understanding of Christ’s Divine Mission in the world: “Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” (Luke 2:49)

Some essential elements of family life may be derived from the example of the Holy Family:

1. The Holy Family exemplifies how we can become models to our children and the next generation by keeping our families together, sharing the graces with each other, and uniting our family in the name of God.
2. A family as devout as the family of Jesus is always connected with God the Father.
3. Jesus Christ was surely influenced and inspired by the life of Mary and Joseph.



4. Mary and Joseph are portrayed as pious and faithful Jews who loyally observed the custom of undertaking the annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem for the Passover. (Luke 2:41)
5. The cord that binds is Family Prayer; the source and energy of our unity in the family. Pope St. John Paul II exhorts: "...all members of the family are called to holiness, and that through continuous prayer as a family, and adherence to the sacraments, family can grow spiritually in communion and love."

(Pope St. John Paul II
Familiaris Consortio, November 22, 1981)

Dear brothers and sisters, the significance of today's feast is to draw inspiration from the Holy Family, to make our families like the Family of Nazareth that dwelt in togetherness, devotedness, and in grace. In family life, we are not called to just 'stay together' but to 'live together.'

'Staying together' connotes a group of people merely staying under the same roof without any affection, with no desire to have a good relationship between themselves, who may not know each other deeply, and who possess no mutual responsibilities within the house.

'Living together' as a family implies a mutual inclination toward togetherness, a desire for a deeper understanding and relationship with each other, a proclivity to nurture long lasting love in the family, a readiness to accept each other, an eagerness to share and support each other, to instinctively come to each other's aid, and other traits and attitudes that nurture the growth, development, perpetuity, and sustenance of the family.

As a family, we are united in Jesus Christ.

Let us ask Jesus to replenish the scarcity and needs of our families: such as the deficiency of love, affection, understanding, forgiveness, trust, tolerance, and respect; to make our families better and holy.

**“Bring love into your home,
for this is where our love for each other must start.”**

(St. Mother Teresa of Calcutta)