

“The Family Model”

When we look at the Holy Family and think about imitating them, we are left in awe and we feel there is no way we can imitate them. No way could we ever be good enough to be like them. We forget or do not look deep enough to see that they went through everything we go through in life except sin by Mary and Jesus.

All our readings today point us to what God expects of a family. Our first reading tells us that God has honored the family as the foundation of human race. In our second reading, Paul tells us, for us to live as a human family, we need virtues such as compassion, humility, kindness, gentleness, patience, forgiveness, and love, and then we would live in peace. Our Gospel reading tells us about the power of redemptive suffering as pointed out by Simeon. He predicted the suffering of our Lord on the cross for our redemption and that a sword of sorrow would pierce the soul of Mary when she witnesses the crucifixion.

When we look at the birth of Jesus, we will notice that He was born into a poor family. Neither did God provide a 5 Star Hotel for them to stay in when they went down to Bethlehem where Jesus was born in a manger. We see that the first people to come and visit the new born King and congratulate the parents were poor shepherds who were regarded as low class. Therefore, when we think we are failures or when our plans and hopes do not materialize, we should remember the Holy Family and ask Jesus to help us.

We will also notice that the family went through hardship about a couple of years later, when Herod wanted to kill the baby and they became aliens in Egypt so they could hide from him. We should notice that God did not wipe away His Son's enemy just as He does not wipe away our enemies for our convenience. So whenever we have doubts, perplexities, and temptations we should think of the Holy Family and ask Jesus to help us.

At the age of twelve, we found out that Jesus was not with His parents and was considered lost for 3 days in Jerusalem. We should put ourselves in Mary's and Joseph's shoes to imagine what torment they must have experienced when they found out Jesus was missing. When we too have children who do not do what is expected of them, or as children when we think parents do not understand us, we should imitate the Holy Family and ask Jesus to help us.

In Scripture, we are told that Jesus went home obeying His parents, which means as the Son of a carpenter He helped His father and His mother do whatever needed to be done. We too as children, should look towards the Holy Family, imitate Jesus by being obedient to our parents and ask Jesus to help us.

When His step father died Jesus must have been sorrowful similarly to what He did when His friend Lazarus died. We too when we lose a loved one and our hearts are cast down and aching, we should look towards the Holy Family by imitating Jesus and asking Him to help us.

When Jesus was on the cross, being crucified, Mary was there at the foot of the cross, Jesus did not think of Himself but of the welfare of His mother. We too during the hours of loneliness, weariness, and trials, we should imitate the Holy Family and ask Jesus to help us.

When we examine the early years of our Lord, we would see that it is summed up in the Mysteries of the Rosary. Today's Gospel reading is the presentation of Jesus in the Temple which is the fourth Joyful Mystery, said on Mondays and Saturdays. The five Joyful Mysteries are, the Annunciation by Angel Gabriel, visitation of Mary to Elizabeth, Nativity (Birth of our Lord), Presentation of Jesus in the Temple, and finding Jesus in the Temple.

Prayer is the gate way to the heart of God and most especial when we pray as a family. So whenever, we pray the Rosary, we are reflecting on the life of Jesus Christ and walking in God's ways. When we pray together as one body (one family), we "let the peace of Christ control our hearts. When we attend Mass, we are praying the highest prayer we could ever pray. Because we are representing Jesus to His Father as He did on Calvary, and Jesus cleanse us of our Venial sins and presents us to His Father as well, if we have no mortal sin on our soul.

Every family should pray the Rosary together. ***"A family that prays together stays together."*** That was a popular saying of blessed Fr, Patrick Payton an Irish priest who started the *"Family Rosary Crusade"* and was very popular in Latin America and the Philippines.

As we come to receive Jesus in the Eucharist, let us ask Him to help us in imitating the Holy Family as we live our lives.