

HONORING and PRAYING for ALL FAMILIES

Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassion, kindness, lowliness, meekness, and patience, forbearing one another and forgiving each other. Colossians 3:12

The Feast of the Holy Family is not just about the Holy Family, but also about our own families. The main purpose of the Feast is to present the Holy Family as the



model for all Christian families. Our family life becomes sanctified when we live the life of the Church within our homes. This is called the "domestic church" or the "church in miniature." St. John Chrysostom urged all Christians to make each home a "family church," and in doing so, we sanctify the family unit. Just how does one live out the Church in the family? The best way is by making Christ and His Church the center of family and individual life. Ways to do this include: reading scripture regularly, praying, attending Mass weekly, imitating the actions of the Holy Family, and so forth, all done together.

The Holy Family feast is a good time to remember the family unit and pray for our

human and spiritual families. We also may take this feast to reflect on the value and sanctity of the family unit, and to evaluate our own family life. What ways may it be improved? What would Jesus, Mary, and Joseph do? Finally, we can use this feast to ask ourselves what are we doing to promote the family within our own cultures, neighborhoods, and communities.

PRESENCE OF GOD

We pause and remember that we live in the presence of our Triune God, the Father Who is our Creator, the Son Who is our Redeemer, and the Holy Spirit Who is our Life-Giver. Our God is never far from us and loves us more dearly than a mother loves her child.

HYMN

**Joseph of Nazareth, you are the man
Last in the line that rose from David King
Down through the royal generations ran
And ends with Jesus Christ.**

**Gabriel from heaven came to Mary's aide
Came with the joyful promise of a King
Came to you also, Joseph to confide
That God conceived this Child.**

**Guardian and foster father of the Christ
Honor to you, so chosen by our God
Husband of the Virgin Mary, you are first
To show us Christian love.**

Sirach 3: 2-7, 12-14

For the Lord honored the father above the children,
and He confirmed the right of the mother over her sons.

Whoever honors his father atones for sins,
and whoever glorifies his mother
is like one who lays up treasure.

Whoever honors his father will be gladdened by his own children,
and when he prays he will be heard.

Whoever glorifies his father will have long life,
and whoever obeys the Lord will refresh his mother;
he will serve his parents as his masters.

O son, help your father in his old age,
and do not grieve him as long as he lives;
even if he is lacking in understanding, show forbearance;
in all your strength do not despise him.

For kindness to a father will not be forgotten,
and against your sins it will be credited to you.

Matthew 2:13-15, 19-22

Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Rise, take the child and His mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there till I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy Him." And he rose and took the child and His mother by night, and departed to Egypt, and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, "Out of Egypt have I called My Son."

But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, saying, "Rise, take the child and His mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child's life are dead." And he rose and took the child and His mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus reigned over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there, and being warned in a dream he withdrew to the district of Galilee. And he went and dwelt in a city called Nazareth.

CATECHISM of THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

531 During the greater part of his life Jesus shared the condition of the vast majority of human beings: a daily life spent without evident greatness, a life of manual labor. His religious life was that of a Jew obedient to the law of God,²²¹ a life in the community. From this whole period it is revealed to us that Jesus was "obedient" to his parents and that he "increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man."²²²

532 Jesus' obedience to his mother and legal father fulfils the fourth commandment perfectly and was the temporal image of his filial obedience to

his Father in heaven. the everyday obedience of Jesus to Joseph and Mary both announced and anticipated the obedience of Holy Thursday: "Not my will. . ."223 The obedience of Christ in the daily routine of his hidden life was already inaugurating his work of restoring what the disobedience of Adam had destroyed.224

533 The hidden life at Nazareth allows everyone to enter into fellowship with Jesus by the most ordinary events of daily life:

The home of Nazareth is the school where we begin to understand the life of Jesus - the school of the Gospel. First, then, a lesson of silence. May esteem for silence, that admirable and indispensable condition of mind, revive in us. . . A lesson on family life. May Nazareth teach us what family life is, its communion of love, its austere and simple beauty, and its sacred and inviolable character... A lesson of work. Nazareth, home of the "Carpenter's Son", in you I would choose to understand and proclaim the severe and redeeming law of human work. . . To conclude, I want to greet all the workers of the world, holding up to them their great pattern their brother who is God.225

534 The finding of Jesus in the temple is the only event that breaks the silence of the Gospels about the hidden years of Jesus.226 Here Jesus lets us catch a glimpse of the mystery of His total consecration to a mission that flows from His divine Sonship: "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's work?"227 Mary and Joseph did not understand these words, but they accepted them in faith. Mary "kept all these things in her heart" during the years Jesus remained hidden in the silence of an ordinary life.

PRAYERS OF THE POEOPLE

Response: Jesus, Mary and Joseph, intercede on our behalf.

That married couples will be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ (Ephesians 5:21-24)), we pray:

That parents do not exasperate their children; but instead, bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord (Ephesians 6:4), we pray:

That all children, will obey their parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord (Colossians 3:21), we pray:

That parents will be vigilant in making sure that their children will go on the path of righteousness (Proverbs 22:6), we pray:

That parents will keep the commandments of God upon their hearts and impress them on their children (Deuteronomy 6:6,7), we pray:

That parents will tell their children and the next generation the praiseworthy deeds of the Lord, His power, and the wonders He has done (Psalm 78:4), we pray:

That parents will understand that children are a heritage from the Lord, and a reward from Him (Psalm 127:3-5), we pray:

That parents will manage their own family well and see that their children obey them with proper respect (1 Timothy 3:4), we pray:

That all members of the family will show love and respect for one another with mutual affection anticipating the needs of one another (Romans 12: 9-13), we pray:

That all members of the family will rejoice in hope, endure in affliction, persevere in prayer, and contribute to the needs of one another (Romans 12:9-13), we pray:

LET US PRAY

O God,

**You have created us in love
and saved us in mercy,
and through the bond of marriage
You have established the family
and willed that it should become a sign
of Christ's love for His Church.**

**Shower Your blessings on our family.
Enable those who are joined by one love
to support one another
by their fervor of spirit and devotion to prayer.
Make them responsive to the needs of others
and witnesses to the faith in all they say and do.
We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.**



Father,

**We look to Your loving guidance and order
as the pattern of all family life.**

**By following the example of the Holy Family
of Your Son in mutual love and respect,
may we come to the joy of our home in heaven.**

**Jesus, our most loving Redeemer,
You came to enlighten the world
with Your teaching and example.**

**You willed to spend the greater part of Your life
in humble obedience to Mary and Joseph
in the poor home of Nazareth.**

**In this way, You sanctified that family,
which was to be an example for all Christian families.**

**Graciously accept our family,
which we dedicate and consecrate to You this day.**

**Be pleased to protect, guard, and keep it
in holy fear, in peace,
and in the harmony of Christian charity.**

**By conforming ourselves to the Divine model
of Your family,
may we attain eternal happiness. Amen.**

**Jesus returned with Mary and Joseph to Nazareth;
there He lived and was obedient to them.
He grew in wisdom with the years and was pleasing to God and men.**

A PRAYER FOR A CHILD'S RETURN TO THE FAITH

Dear Lord,

**You became Man, suffered, and died
to win salvation for all souls.**

**Look graciously on the soul of my child
who has drifted away from You and the Faith.**

**Grant him/her Your grace
to see the error of his/her ways
and return to the fold of Your care.**

**Teach me to stay close to him/her
during this trying time
and strive to convert him/her by action and prayers
more than by words that I may antagonize.**

**Sacred Heart of Jesus, I trust You
to do everything to bring my child back to You. Amen.**



**Saint John Baptist de La Salle
and all you holy Brothers who have gone before us,
help us to be obedient to the will of God as Jesus was to Mary and
Joseph,**

**Live Jesus in our hearts.
Forever!**