



FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY ***YEAR B – December 31, 2017***

Today's scripture readings have a beautiful message for all of us on this Sunday after Christmas. The message is that we need to invest more of our time, -- quality time, -- in our family life.

The Old Testament is filled with ways to do that. The prophet Sirach (Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14) reminds us that our concern should be, not only for children, but for parents as well. He says, kindness to a father or mother will not be forgotten. It will be counted against the debt of our sins.

In the alternate reading from Genesis (Genesis 15:1-6; 21:1-3), Abram is reminded of the importance of family and the need to trust God that he will provide all that is needed. The key word is “needed”. God does not provide all we want but he does provide all we need.

St. Paul (Colossians 3:12-21) reminds us that in our families, we need heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. We should bear with one another and forgive one another. Every family has reasons for doing that.

The gospel (Luke 2:22-40) reminds us that it was in a loving environment that Jesus grew in wisdom, age and grace. That kind of environment is provided for children by good parents. Why is all of that important? Consider the words of *Dorothy Law Nolte, Ph.D.* Her whole poem can be found on the internet.

- ✦ If a child lives with criticism, the child is going to learn how to condemn.
- ✦ If a child lives with hostility, the child is going to learn how to fight.
- ✦ If a child lives with ridicule, the child is going to learn to be shy.
- ✦ If a child lives with shame, the child is going to learn to feel guilty.
- ✦ If a child lives with tolerance, the child will learn patience.
- ✦ If a child lives with approval, the child will like himself.
- ✦ If a child lives with encouragement, the child will have confidence.
- ✦ If a child lives with praise, the child will learn to appreciate.
- ✦ If a child lives with fairness, the child will learn justice.
- ✦ If a child lives with security, the child will learn to have faith.
- ✦ If a child lives with friendship and acceptance, the child will love the world.

We are reminded today that every member of every family is important in God's eyes - spouses, parents, children, brothers and sisters, grandparents, etc. etc.. We are reminded that families without children and single parent families are important in God's eyes too.

It is the feast of the Holy Family. We all should strive to be holy. It can be done. For a few moments in silence reflect on how well your family is doing at being holy. What part do you play in making it all happen?

Jesus, Mary and Joseph – Pray for us!

