

Homily Summary – Holy Family

Short Overview: On this Feast of the Holy Family (celebrated on the Sunday within the Christmas Octave), Father reflects on the ongoing Christmas season, which has just begun and extends traditionally until February 2 (the Presentation of the Lord). He thanks parishioners for Christmas gifts, encourages keeping decorations up, and highlights the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph as a model for modern families. Despite their challenges—like poverty, misunderstanding, flight from Herod, and threats—the Holy Family remained faithful, teaching us unconditional love, prayer, and mutual service. As the Jubilee Year of Hope concludes, we are invited to seek God's grace for renewal in our families.

Main Points

- The Christmas liturgical season continues—keep celebrating Christmastide, with the upcoming installation of Bishop Joseph Dabrowski on February 2.
- Family time during the holidays brings blessings but also challenges; the Holy Family faced real difficulties (poverty, threats, exile) yet remained united in faith.
- Three key lessons from the Holy Family: Unconditional love and respect — Honoring parents and loving children mutually, as modeled by Joseph, Mary, and Jesus.
- The importance of prayer — Praying individually, as a family, attending synagogue, discussing Scripture, and supporting one another in faith.
- Mutual service — Generous, sacrificial giving (Joseph providing and protecting, Mary creating a home, all attending to each other's needs in body, mind, and soul).
- God calls us to examine our families: What changes does He ask? More love, mercy, peacemaking, prayer, or service? These steps, nourished by grace, transform homes into places of peace and joy.
- Hope endures: Even in loss, we trust in reunion in Heaven's eternal family; the Holy Family intercedes for us.

Key Bible Verses:

- Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14 (First Reading) – "God sets a father in honor over his children; a mother's authority he confirms over her sons. Whoever honors his father atones for sins... Whoever reveres his father will live a long life." (Emphasizes honoring parents and family respect.)
- Colossians 3:12-21 (or alternative; implied in homily) – "Put on... heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another." (Virtues for family life.)
- Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23 (Gospel, referenced) – The flight into Egypt and return, showing the Holy Family's challenges and obedience to God's will.

Catechism References:

- CCC 2207 – "The family is the original cell of social life... Authority, stability, and a life of relationships within the family constitute the foundations for freedom, security, and fraternity within society." (Family as foundation of society.)
- CCC 2218-2219 – Duties of children to honor parents; respect promotes harmony and fills the home with light and warmth.
- CCC 1655 – Christ chose to be born and grow up in the holy family of Joseph and Mary; the Church is the "family of God."
- CCC 2205 – The Christian family is a communion of persons, reflecting the Trinity, called to prayer, sacrifice, and charity.

Reflection Questions:

- The Holy Family faced real hardships—poverty, danger, misunderstanding. Where in my family life do I see challenges, and how can I respond with the same faithfulness they showed?
- How well do I practice unconditional love and respect toward family members, especially parents or children? What small step could I take this week to honor or support them better?

- Does my family pray together regularly—beyond meals? How might we deepen family prayer or discussion of Scripture to grow closer to God?
- Mutual service means sacrificing for others' good. Who in my family needs my generous help right now (listening, help at home, forgiveness)? How can I imitate Joseph and Mary's self-giving?
- As the Jubilee Year of Hope ends, what grace from God do I seek for my family? How can we become peacemakers and instruments of hope in our home and beyond?

Rhyme summary:

The Holy Family, depicted here – a model of love, prayer, and service which is clear. The Holy Family shows us the way - through joys and trials, day by day. Christmas has come but this great season stays – so we can keep shining our lights and Christmas love for forty more days. For family time can bring us grace anew, even if not all families are perfect too. The Holy family faced real fear, hard work, and loss - and yet trusting in God, they supported each other as they carried their cross. They teach us a love that doesn't divide - deep prayer lived lovingly, side by side. Through service shared and mercy shown, our homes can mirror Jesus' home. May hope renew each family's joy, as in Christmas we ponder this Heavenly Boy.

Some Scriptural reasons to come to Mass each weekend

Exodus 20:8 - "Remember the sabbath day, and keep it holy."

Acts 2:42 - "They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers."

Hebrews 10:24-25 - "And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

Luke 22:19 - "Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.'"

John 6:53-54 - "So Jesus said to them, 'Very truly, I tell you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood have eternal life, and I will raise them up on the last day.'"

Matthew 18:20 - "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

Psalm 122:1 - "I was glad when they said to me, 'Let us go to the house of the Lord!'"

Colossians 3:16 - "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God."

Additional resources to learn more about God and the Catholic faith

- Check out the resource list available on www.frmerkley.com
- Catholic Answers: <https://www.catholic.com/>
- Word on Fire: <https://www.wordonfire.org/>
- Formed: <https://formed.org/>
- The Coming Home Network: <https://chnetwork.org/>
- Catholic Exchange: <https://catholicexchange.com/>
- Dynamic Catholic: <https://dynamiccatholic.com/>
- The Augustine Institute: <https://augustineinstitute.org/>
- Ascension Press: <https://ascensionpress.com/>
- EWTN: <https://www.ewtn.com/>
- The Catholic Company: <https://www.catholiccompany.com/>
- Busted Halo: <https://bustedhalo.com/>
- CatholicCulture.org: <https://www.catholicculture.org/>
- The Thomistic Institute: <https://thomisticinstitute.org/>
- Ignatius Press: <https://www.ignatius.com/>
- Catholic Education Resource Center (CERC): <https://www.catholiceducation.org/>