

Feast of the Holy Family – by Father Dave

Wow How quickly time flies! Just born yesterday, and today He is already 12 years old. Of course – you realize that I say this in jest.

On the last Sunday of the year, we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family. On this feast day we are offering our own families and all their members on the altar for God's blessing. The first reading, taken from the book of Samuel, describes how Elkanah and Hannah presented their child Samuel in the Temple, consecrated him to the service of the Lord as a perpetual Nazarite, and left him in the Temple under the care of Eli, the priest.

In the selection from John's 1st Letter, John reminds us that, as children of God the Father, we are members of God's own family, and as such we are expected to obey the greatest commandment of God: "Love one another" so that we may remain united to God in the Holy Spirit.

In today's Gospel, Luke concludes his detailed story of Christ's infancy, with the events of Jesus' visit to the Temple in Jerusalem at the age of twelve, to become "a son of the Law" and to take up the obligations of the Law. Jesus lingered behind in the Temple, attending the Sanhedrin classes on religious and theological questions as an eager student of Mosaic Law. Finally, when Mary and Joseph had found Him in the Temple after three days of anxious search, Jesus explained to them that He was in His Father's house. It was as if He had had a blaze of realization about His Divine Sonship. The Gospel then summarizes the next 18 years of Jesus' life, stating that He grew up at Nazareth like any other young man, obeying His parents, faithfully discharging all His duties to God, to His parents and to the community and "*advancing in wisdom and age and favor before God and man.*"

The Church encourages all Christian families to look to the Holy Family for inspiration, example and encouragement. There was a model family in which both parents worked hard, helped each other, understood and accepted each other as God's gifts, and raised their Son in human and divine wisdom. The Catechism of the Catholic Church reminds parents that they have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children as the Holy family did, by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule (CCC #2223). Let us pray for the grace of caring for one another in our own families, for each member of our parish family, and for all families of the universal Church.

A senior Judge of the Supreme Court once congratulated the bride and groom during a wedding reception with a pertinent piece of advice: "See that you never convert your family into a courtroom; instead let it be a confessional. If the husband and wife start arguing

like attorneys in an attempt to justify their behavior, their family becomes a court of law and nobody wins. On the other hand, if the husband and the wife -- as in a confessional -- are ready to admit their faults and try to correct them, the family becomes a heavenly one."

Let us pray for the Conversion of the World
& for Peace

Feasts celebrated this Week –

St Stephen, St John the Apostle, and the Holy Innocents, whose feasts occur on the following days of December, are seen as special companions of Jesus. They are examples of the different ways of martyrdom for Christ. Stephen voluntarily accepted death and was executed for his faith. John willed to die for Christ, but was not martyred. The Holy Innocents died for Christ without understanding what was happening to them.

December 26 - St Stephen – deacon and 1st Martyr. The story of his persecution and death before the Sanhedrin is told vividly in the Acts of the Apostles.

December 27 - St. John, apostle and evangelist. Born in Galilee, son of Zebedee the fisherman. Along with his brother, St James the Great, was called by Jesus to be one of His apostles. On that 1st Easter Sunday morning, John ran with Peter to see the empty tomb and believed that Jesus was risen from the tomb. John died at Ephesus when he was about ninety-four years old.

December 28 - Holy Innocents – according to the Gospel of Matthew, King Herod ordered the slaughter of all infant boys under two years old in Bethlehem in order to destroy an "opponent" to his rule. The account of this is found in St Matthew's Gospel.

December 29 - St Thomas Becket, bishop and martyr. Born at London on December 21, 1118, the son of wealthy and prominent parents. Obtained a position in the house of Theobald, Archbishop of Canterbury at the age of twenty-four. Became a protégé of Theobald, who would promote him to positions of power in the Church. Ordained deacon in 1154, appointed Chancellor of England by King Henry II, who valued his friendship as well as his advice. After the death of Theobald in 1161, Thomas was nominated as Archbishop of Canterbury by Henry and elected. His friendship with Henry was damaged by a series of conflicts between the government and the Church. Henry wanted a submissive Church that he could control, while Thomas could not in good conscience allow the Church's freedom and rights to be compromised. He ended up escaping to France and remained an exile there for six years. Returned to England in 1170, and was murdered by four of Henry's knights, in the Cathedral of Canterbury on December 29, 1170.

BULLETIN REFLECTION by Father Rody
DEC 26 2021...HOLY FAMILY YR-C...LK 2, 41-52

Dec. 25, Jesus Christ was born...a day after Dec. 26, 2021 He is already 12 years old (gospel reading of the day)...Indeed God works in a miraculous way (I do not know if it is proper to put LOL at the end, I will just leave this open for interpretation).

Dec. 25...the Nativity, "THE WORD BECAME FLESH" (Jn. 1, 14)...and "YOU SHALL CALL HIM EMMANUEL" (which means=God is with us)" (Mt. 1, 23). These two verses present us the **'what'** and **'why'** of reality. The 'what' is, it is the birthday of our Lord Jesus Christ. But God the Father is not satisfied with just telling us 'Hey mankind I will send my only begotten Son on earth.' He went further by saying 'You know why I am sending my only Son it is because I want you to feel that-We (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) are with you.

Dec. 26...and now we are celebrating the 'HOLY FAMILY'. The elementary teaching of family is F=father A=and M=mother I=I L=love Y=you...and this can be said only if you have with you a baby (son/daughter). The Blessed Virgin and St. Joseph should wait first before they could enjoy the term-FAMILY...they need to wait for the birth of Jesus, their Son. ***Isn't it wonderful that the fullness of family comes not only with the birth of a baby Jesus but with the assurance that God is with us...*** Indeed, it is called Holy Family because of God's presence in them.

Aside from the celebration of the Holy Family, the gospel today is also telling us that our Lord Jesus was found in the temple associating with other people that caused his parents anxious. Mingling with other people, Jesus Christ is presenting us another

perspective of life...shall I call it another set of family. When we were born, we were first born to our family. Later on, this family gets extended and our second family is our church...this is our gospel today.

To the children of the modern age, thank you very much for coming to the lives of your parents and may you also be the source of motivation to have an extended family called church.

Say to Jesus, use my heart as your manger...Have a Blessed Merry Christmas!



