

DECEMBER 31, 2017



FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, AND JOSEPH



GENESIS 15:1-6; 21:1-3

PSALM 105:1-2, 3-4, 5-6, 8-9

HEBREWS 11:8, 11-12, 17-19

LUKE 2:22-40 OR 2:22, 39-40

REFLECTION

If someone stopped by where you live and asked, "Where is the Church?" What would you say? Would you simply give directions to the church building? Can you imagine saying, "The Church is right here! My family is the Church." Believe it or not, the Catholic Church at the Second Vatican Council redefined the Church not as a building, but first as a mystery and second as the people of God. It went on to teach that families were genuinely "Church." This teaching gives the Christian family great dignity. In Church language, the family is called "the domestic Church." What does this mean? It basically means that we encounter God through the love, care, and forgiveness in our families. Ideally, our parents teach us how to love.

This Sunday, the Church celebrates the dignity of the family. It celebrates both the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, and our families too, the domestic Church. What can we learn from the Holy Family about being the domestic church? We have to admit that the gospels do not tell us much about Joseph. The Gospel accounts tell us he was a carpenter. He listened to the voice of God and obeyed. He trusted God's call in dreams to do the right things, like quietly marrying the woman who bore a child who was not his and migrating to Egypt to avoid the slaughter by King Herod. We know much more about Mary, the Mother of Christ. We know she is the first Christian disciple. We know her yes to God gave birth to the savior of the world. We also know that Mary was at the Crucifixion of her son. She experienced the horror of this immensely cruel form of murder. Mary's heart was pierced with sorrow. We also know that Mary saw Christ resurrected from the dead. The Holy Family serves as a model for our family. It is a school of faith and love.

ACTION

Do one special action today for a member of your family that shows your love. Be a witness of the love of the Holy Family in your own family.

JOURNALING QUESTIONS

- What are examples of love that you've seen in your family?
- How might your view of Church grow, if you realize that your family is the domestic Church? Does your family need help? Consider asking the Holy Family to guide you and your family.