

HOLY FAMILY SUNDAY - YEAR B – OLPH – 2014
(Genesis 15:1-6; 17:3-5;21:1-7; Hebrews 11:8-19; Luke 2:22-40)

Are you feeling a **little rushed** these days? Or is **total exhaustion** a better description of your current state? Maybe you are lucky and only a little stressed out? With our everyday cares and concerns in mind, it is easy to dismiss this **feast of the Holy Family** as almost irrelevant to us today. After all, what can they have to say to a multi-tasking, high-tech family operating at Internet speed about living out the sacramental vision of marriage.

Perhaps the greatest contribution **Mary and Joseph** can offer to stressed mothers and fathers today is the model for how to live a **God-centred life**. Someone has said that the trouble with family life is that it is *so daily*, and that Santa Claus has it easy: He visits families only once a year. To show love every day is not easy. Yet the Holy Family did it, and we can do it, too.

Mary and Joseph are, as individuals and as a family, **visible examples** of prayerful obedience and trust in God's plan for their lives. From the beginning, Mary said "yes" to the Angel Gabriel and received lovingly the Word of God in her heart and in her body: "I am the handmaid of the Lord," said Mary, "let what you have said be done to me" (Luke 1:38). Unaware of his role in the birth of the Savior, Joseph faced an unexpected situation with the pregnancy of Mary, his betrothed. With conviction, Joseph, an "upright man," trusted in God's plan and chose to believe the message sent to him by the angel of God in a dream and he "did as the angel of the Lord had directed him" (Matthew 1: 24).

We are invited this Sunday to reflect in faith on **family life** as it is guided by God. We picture the Child Jesus living with Mary and Joseph in the Holy Family. We don't have to go there on our feet, and look at the shrine of the little home where Mary dwelt; we don't have to walk down the street to the building where her betrothed Joseph, lived, and later the Holy Family together. But we do have to go there in mind and heart if we want to pattern our families after the model God has given us.

That family probably lived more poorly and primitively, in accord with the times, than any family here today. They had **their struggles**. We hear in today's Gospel how they took the Baby from Bethlehem to the Temple in Jerusalem. For sacrifice they didn't offer anything expensive like a lamb; they offered a couple of pigeons. St. Luke is telling us delicately that they were making the offering of a poor family. They struggled like every ordinary human family.

While the Holy Family did not have to face the **ethical challenges** of technological advancement or answer questions regarding online communications in the home, Mary and Joseph, like all parents, had to make real life choices about what it meant to exercise loving parenting. They had to decide how to

be involved in their son's life and development. They had to answer how – and how much – to incorporate society and its values into their family life. And they continually had to decide what it meant to live a God-centered life as husband and wife, as well as how to share that value with their son, who, as our gospel says "grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him."

Can we imagine Jesus, Mary or Joseph rejecting any of the guidelines for family life God gives? Wise people keep looking for a way to guide their conduct by a few brief rules. Well, here's one set for family life: **Wives**, ask yourselves the question: What would Mary do? **Husbands**, ask yourselves: What would Joseph do? **Children**, yrs that includes you teenagers, ask yourselves: What would the Child Jesus do? **Then do it.** And let's all make it our Prayer of the Week to say daily, "*Jesus, Mary and Joseph, make my family a holy family too.*"