

1. Read — Read the verses slowly and prayerfully several times. Write down any words or phrases that seem to stand out:

2. Meditate — Now begin to reflect on the verses and ask God what it means and how he wants to speak to you through the passage. **God what are you saying to me through this?**

3. Pray — Respond from your heart to what God has been saying to you. **What do you want me to know?** Write down your prayer to him or record whatever he says to you.

4. Contemplate — Be quiet before the Lord enjoying His presence.

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**How is God calling you to act in response to what he has shown you?**

# Quick Connect

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## **Gospel Reading – Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23 – Daily Roman Missal**

When the magi had departed, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, flee to Egypt, and stay there until I tell you. Herod is going to search for the child to destroy him.” Joseph rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed for Egypt. He stayed there until the death of Herod, that what the Lord had said through the prophet might be fulfilled, Out of Egypt I called my son. When Herod had died, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who sought the child’s life are dead.” He rose, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go back there. And because he had been warned in a dream, he departed for the region of Galilee. He went and dwelt in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, *He shall be called a Nazorean.*

## **Spiritual Reading – Excerpt From Pope Paul VI**

Second, we learn about family life. May Nazareth serve as a model of what the family should be. May it show us the family’s holy and enduring character and exemplifying its basic function in society: a community of love and sharing, beautiful for the problems it poses and the rewards it brings; in sum, the perfect setting for rearing children – and for this there is no substitute. Finally, in Nazareth, the home of a craftsman’s son, we learn about work and the discipline it entails. I would especially like to recognize its value – demanding yet redeeming – and to give it proper respect. I would remind everyone that work has its own dignity. On the other hand, it is not an end in itself. Its value and free character, however, derive not only from its place in the economic system, as they say, but rather from the purpose it serves.

## **The Holy Family: The perfect example for families**

**What did the Holy Family do?** Their family was much like our family life. St. Joseph was the head of the house, and was the provider for the home. Mary spent her life raising Jesus. By this, “Mary sanctifies the ordinary everyday things - what some people wrongly regard as unimportant and insignificant: everyday work, looking after those closest to you, visits to friends and relatives.”

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**What does the family do?** The family is “the original cell of social life”, “a sign and image of communion of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit”, and can and should be called a “domestic church”. The family life imitates us into a life in society. More importantly, the family reflects the Father’s work of creation and partakes in the giving and receiving of that love from God the Father. The family imitates the Trinity, which is the perfect community of love. Think of each person of the Holy Trinity, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. “...in the procreation and education of children it [the family] reflects the Father’s work of creation. It is called to partake of the prayer and sacrifice of Christ. Daily prayer and the reading of the Word of God strengthen it in charity. The Christian family has an evangelizing and missionary task.” This evangelizing and missionary task is the way that the family imitates the Holy Spirit. The Father creates, **How does our family create?** The Son prays and sacrifices. **How does our family pray and sacrifice?** The Holy Spirit reaches out to the world being a witness to truth and evangelizing. **How does our family reach out, witnessing and evangelizing to others? Think about your family, how do different members of your family imitate the Holy Trinity?** Your parents sacrifice like Christ to provide and nurture the family, many times without any thanks. Children bring life and creativity to the family, and by creating joy, imitate the Father, creator of all. Your family as a whole may welcome others into your home, thus evangelizing like the Holy Spirit. The presence of your family in the grocery store, Mass, and other public places is a witness. The family as a whole acts as a missionary going out into the world each day. The family is perhaps the most perfect model of the Holy Trinity. There are different persons in the family, with different roles, but yet they are one family. If one person gets something new for example a new car, they are more than willing and excited about sharing their new gift with the whole family. The love between the two persons, mother and father, is so great that the love itself gives life. The love between Father and Son is so great that it is another person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit. **What are all the things our families shares with each other? How can we share more? What are the ways our family is selfless? How can we be more selfless?** “The mystery of the Trinity teaches us the meaning of selfless charity because there is a constant and perfect sharing of the divine nature among the three Persons in God. The love of the Father for the Son and the Son from the Father is so perfect that within the very Godhead there comes forth the Holy Spirit as the perfect expression of love. The Trinity helps us understand Christ’s command to love one another by freely giving ourselves as persons, in order to benefit other persons and thus help in the formation on earth of something like the triune heavenly community in God.” We cannot give up on our family; we must set the standard high. Our goal is to sacrifice, share and practice charity as the Holy Trinity does, we have the perfect model in the Holy Family of Nazareth. **Why has the family been attacked? Why is the family important?** St. Angela Merici said, “Disorder in society is a result of disorder in the family”. There are many many things attacking the family. We see all over the breakdown of society, but it stems from the family. How is the family being

attacked? We can write a whole book of how the family is being attacked. The Devil knows how important it is to rip the family apart because this will affect society and the world. Servant of God, John Paul the Great, seeing this and knowing how important the family is, made 1994 “The Year of the Family”. In a letter to families, John Paul the Great warns of the new “contemporary” family. He wrote, “The contemporary family, like families in every age, is searching for “fairest love”. A love which is not “fairest”, but reduced only to the satisfaction of concupiscence, or to a man’s and a woman’s mutual “use” of each other, makes persons slaves to their weaknesses.

**Do not certain modern "cultural agendas" lead to this enslavement?** There are agendas which “play” on man’s weaknesses, and thus make him increasingly weak and defenseless.” The family is the rock of society and marriage is the rock of family. Marriages and families are based on four pillars. A marriage is to be exclusive, permanent, open to life and heterosexual. These pillars are chiseled away and completely knocked down by what is called the so-called “modern family”. The traditional family which prays together, sacrifices for each other and show charity is mocked. **How is exclusivity attacked?** Members of families do not want to be with each other, but would rather spend countless hours entertaining them self, being with friends, and avoiding family. Adultery attacks the exclusiveness of marriage. **How is permanence attacked?** Divorce causes instability and is many times not just a one-time thing but repeated. **How is openness to life attacked?** Many families are only open to children on their terms, and based on how the children will affect their life-style. Many would say we don’t have time or money for children. “I think the world today is upside down. Everybody seems to be in such a terrible rush, anxious for greater development and greater riches and so on. There is much suffering because there is so very little love in homes and in family life. We have no time for our children, we have no time for each other; there is no time to enjoy each other. In the home begins the disruption of the peace of the world.” We have to learn that while we do need to feed and clothe our children, we don’t have to get them the latest fashions, the latest iPhone, or over-indulge them. We need to give them something that will carry on for the rest of their lives, their Catholic faith. **How is heterosexuality attacked?** Homosexual marriage is one of the biggest agendas in modern society. Marriage, the most basic unit in society, an exclusive and permanent relationship between one man and one woman, is being attacked to the point that people want to redefine the very word. It is within the family that each life should be made holy. Unfortunately, today’s families are not always a place in which life is made holy, but instead places in which life is damaged, destroyed and even unwelcome. “It is necessary to go back to seeing the family as the sanctuary of life. The family is indeed sacred: it is the place in which life — the gift of God — can be properly welcomed and protected against the many attacks to which it is exposed, and can develop in accordance with what constitutes authentic human growth. In the face of the so-called culture of death, the family is the heart of the culture of life”