

Sunday, December 26 | Feast of the Holy Family

(Written by 'The Faithful Disciple' from Faith Catholic)

1st Reading: Sir 3:2-6, 12-14

2nd Reading: Col 3:12-21 or 3:12-17

Gospel: Lk 2:41-52

Some of my fondest childhood memories are of my dad leading my three sisters and me in song as we made the hour-long drive to visit my grandparents every other weekend. Granted, *On Top of Spaghetti* and *Hey, Good Looking* don't qualify as "singing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs," as Paul advised the Colossians, but I do think they reveal that my dad took to heart Paul's advice about family and faith. Paul writes that in putting on holiness, kindness, gentleness, and forgiving one another, we "put on love, that is, the bond of perfection." Whatever we do, in word or deed, we ought to do in the name of the Lord Jesus. Fathers, mothers, and children are to love one another, seeking and choosing the good for one another, and helping each other along life's journey – whether for an hour in the car, a three-day hike, or a lifetime in every situation. On this feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, we honor their perfect holiness and love, and pray that God may continue to perfect us in holiness and love within our own families, that we may bear good fruit for the Kingdom.

Three Days? Mary and Joseph couldn't find Jesus for three days! Any parent who has had a child missing for a few seconds understands the anxiety Mary and Joseph experienced in three long days of searching for Jesus. In the end, though, all is well – they find him, and the peace of Christ casts out their fears. It is a remarkable scene: Jesus' parents are *astonished* to see him teaching in the temple, and Jesus is curious as to why they were looking for him – did they not know where he would be? This event marks a sort of milestone in their lives together, as Jesus has hinted at his future public ministry, and his parents have experienced that first bit of soul-piercing that Mary will later fully undergo. For each of them, love is what directed their actions. Joseph and Mary put aside everything to search for their son; Jesus put aside everything to serve his Father; and they joined together in humble obedience to God's will for them. The Holy Family models a way of living for us to imitate, and to witness to others in that imitation.

Perhaps you have some down time in this coming week between Christmas and New Year's. As a family, choose an activity that allows you to think outside yourselves and serve others. Donate to the food pantry or visit an elderly relative who is homebound. Or make a plan to read the Scripture for each day of the upcoming week; have each person choose a favorite verse to memorize each day. You may be surprised how often these verses enter your mind throughout the week.