

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY



PASTOR'S WEEKLY MESSAGE HOLY FAMILY SUNDAY

In the Gospel, we meet two elderly people: Simeon and Anna. We also meet Mary and Joseph, a young couple, with their first-born child. All of them have something to tell each one of us.

We see both Simeon and Anna, speaking about the child that Mary and Joseph offer to God in the temple. This young couple listened to what the older people were saying about their child. Some of the words Mary heard were hard to receive. She was told that her child was "...destined to be a sign that is rejected—and a sword will pierce your own soul too," Simeon added. Mary listened and kept the words in her heart.

If there were more of this listening to one another, our family life would be happier. So often, the young speak, and the parents have their words ready to correct them, or forbid them, or scold them. And when the parent speaks, the children do not want to hear anything, and they may even shout offensively to the parents as they, themselves walk-away in anger.

Our Gospel, today, tells us that this child who was offered to God, 'grew to maturity.' Perhaps the message of today's Feast is there... In our families, there is the need for all—young and old—to grow to maturity. Growing, is something that is never finished. It ends only with death. What kind of growing is needed in our families? We need to grow in those qualities which make of our living together a truly Christian family life. What are some of these qualities?

We need to grow, first, in the ability to listen. Listening to the other person—every person—with respect and a desire to understand them.

We need to grow in this understanding of the other. Understanding not only the words that a person speaks, but also how they feel—one's hopes, current struggles, fears, and desires...in other words, understanding what the person is experiencing, just now.

We need to grow in the acceptance of others as they are—not trying to change them or attempting to make them as I think they should be—not waiting until they have changed for me to accept them.

We need to grow in the love of one another. This kind of love is the one that allows the others to be themselves. It is a love full of respect and a desire to help.

We need to grow in forgiveness. We all have weaknesses and faults. We are not always as others would need us to be. And they are not always what we need them to be for us. We fail in some things and they fail in others. For a happy family life, there is need for this attitude of being ready to forgive and to ask forgiveness, ourselves.

You may decide in your heart, to grow in this way. But growth takes time. You will need time to change your ways and so will other members of your family. In this Christmas season, we exchange gifts with one another. We enjoy giving presents and receiving, as well. Let us give everyone in our family time to grow, change, and to become more-and-more as God wants us to become.