

Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph December 27, 2020

Many of us know the joy a new baby brings to our families, especially the birth of a first child! I remember when our first baby was born like it was yesterday! The excitement that even being in labour brought, realizing the time was finally here and soon we would meet our little one! Yes, we were now a family of three! It was official. We were “Mum and Dad” and no longer just Julie and Pete. The reality of being Mum and Dad, didn’t hit home until we heard our daughter calling us by our first names. Oops! Time to call each other “Mum and Dad” while in baby’s presence. It seemed like in no time at all, neither one of us had first names! Our new identity was Mum and Dad!

On this the day we celebrate the Holy Family of Jesus, I find myself reflecting on just what exactly, does family mean? There are no two families alike. Each family is unique possessing its own identity, having its’ own makeup. Families have their own traditions, habits and rituals. You can not find one definition that would accurately describe all families.

God could have chosen to send Jesus, his Son, into the world in any manner or form but he chose to send him as a baby to be protected and cared for by family, his parents, Mary & Joseph. Jesus grew up with the love and protection of a mother and father. Jesus is part of the domestic church, an integral and important part of our society.

I sometimes wonder what it must have been like for Jesus to grow up in such a family. There is not much mentioned about his childhood in scripture. What we do know is that Jesus grew up in the traditions of his time, learning as he should, in age appropriate ways. “The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favour of God was upon him.”

As our children grew up, we gave our kids age appropriate chores to do. Simple tasks at first, pick up your toys, put away your clothes, empty your lunch boxes after school and so on. Surely, Jesus would have had some responsibility as he grew into the man he became. Mary and Joseph did not idolize him and give him special treatment. Mary worried about her son just like any mother would when their boy goes missing in a crowd.

As it became clearer and Jesus’ public ministry became imminent, I can only imagine how hard this must have been on Mary. The predictions had been made right from the very beginning that a sword would pierce Mary’s own soul. I often wonder why Jesus waited until he was 30 years old to begin his public ministry. Perhaps part of the waiting was to allow Mary to prepare herself for what was to come.

As parents, we raise our children not as our own, but on loan from God. It is hard to let your kids go! May we follow the example Mary and Joseph gave us of family life with Jesus! In times of need, pray to the Holy Family for support! We are not in this alone!

Father, help us to live as the holy family, united in respect and love. Bring us to the joy and peace of your eternal home. Grant this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen.

Reflection by Julie de Gouw, Pastoral Minister