

## **Holy Family (B)**

Today we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family. A great celebration in our Church, and it is fitting that celebrate it during the Octave of Christmas. There is much that we can learn from the mystery of Christ's birth. Let us look at the Holy Family, Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, to see what each person can teach us.

Let us first look at Jesus. He chose to come into the world as a baby. He comes to us in humility, seen in the innocent and helpless child in Our Lady's arms. This is a huge stumbling block for the world, that Christ comes as Savior and King but also as an innocent baby. What King would not want his power in might on display for all to see? It is in this humility that we can recognize Him. In fact, only the humble were able to recognize Him. It was the shepherds that were the first witnesses of Jesus' entrance in the world.

His whole life was lived out in radical humility, starting from His very birth. He was born, not in a home, but in a stable. He belongs not to one home, or one family, but for all humanity. He came to live totally for others. After He was born He was placed, not in a crib, but in a manger. A manger is a food trough for livestock. We see His humility again here. He was placed in a simple vessel to indicate the simple life that He would live, and the simple life that all of us are called to live as His faithful followers.

His earthly mission is also anticipated here. He was placed in a wooden manger. That wood of the manger prefigures the Cross on which He would die for

us. What was begun in the crib would be completed on the Cross. That gift of His life to us on the Cross is represented to us at every Mass.

The Eucharist is also prefigured with His birth. Food is placed in manger to feed livestock. The manger also points to the Eucharist, by which mankind feeds on His flesh and blood. We get the opportunity at every Mass to receive the very flesh that He took on for our salvation in the Eucharist. May we receive Him in the Eucharist as often as we can, so that we may have the eternal life that He promises us.

Next we have Joseph, who was a carpenter and of the house of David. After learning that Mary conceived of the Holy Spirit, he decided not to divorce her after the Angel visited him in a dream. So Joseph became the foster father of Jesus. He was the guardian and protector of both Mary and Jesus. It was his job to teach Jesus the faith, and also his trade of carpentry, on top of being the provider of the family.

Mary sought nothing else than to give her life totally to God, even making a private promise of virginity at an early age according to Tradition. She gave of herself selflessly to others everyday. She lived for others rather than herself. She was also very humble. We see this in her response to Gabriel, "Behold the handmaid of the Lord." She only wanted to serve rather than be served.

Let us emulate Joseph and Mary, not just during the Christmas Season, but every day of the year. May we be as selfless as Our Blessed Mother who gave totally of herself. Let us seek her aid to help us in our selfishness wants and

desires. As we open ourselves to Christ, let us not forget to be open to His mother as well. She can soften our hearts with her motherly touch. She helps us to desire what God desires, and to serve Him by serving others.

As Joseph guarded and protected the Holy Family, may we too have the strength to guard and protect ourselves and others from the dangers of sin. Let us seek out our Lord's tender mercy in the sacrament of Confession when we have fallen. We can also protect our souls through the virtue of zeal, protecting our hearts and souls from the poison of sin. Sometimes a sadness can set in when we think about what it takes to do good and avoid sin. Zeal can give us the joy with which to do this, saying “yes” to God with joy, and having the spiritual energy to avoid sin and temptation. May we also seek Joseph's aid and intercession in this spiritual battle. He is very powerful in this regard, as one of his titles is “Terror of Demons.”

Let us look to the Holy Family as a great source of strength for ourselves and our families. May families model themselves after the Holy Family. May all families imitate the Holy Family, who shows us what domestic holiness looks like. The image of the Holy Family is the perfect model for all families to follow after, as we see Mary and Joseph centered around the newborn Jesus. May all families be like this, that is being motivated first by charity and love for each other, with everyone centered around Jesus Christ. May the Holy Family bless of you and your loved ones today and everyday.