



Christ in Our Neighborhood



Prayer

Loving Father,
in this season of Christmas, may we celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ. Through the prayers of Mary and Joseph, may we grow closer to Your Son who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, God forever and ever. Amen.

Commentary

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

There are alternate First Readings for this Feast of the Holy Family. For the sake of retaining a common thread through the Second Reading and Gospel, we will concentrate on the Reading from Sirach.

The Book of Sirach has a series of guidelines to help the children of God remain faithful to their covenant with God. This “rule of life” acknowledged a privilege that the Jews had with God. However, with that privilege came a great responsibility. In essence, people of God were expected to be stewards of the earth and of each other.

It is from this perspective that we find Sirach promoting the responsibilities of family members as stewards of the family. He writes, “God sets a father in honor over his children; a mother’s authority he confirms over her sons.” He adds, “My son, take care of your father when he is old.” There is a responsibility - a call to stewardship - laid upon the shoulders of all faithful people. On this Feast of the Holy Family, we see that stewardship begins at home.

Question

How are you a steward of your home?
What responsibilities do you have toward your parents, children, and siblings?

Commentary

2nd Reading: Colossians 3:12-31

Our Second Reading from Colossians offers us some practical tips on how to be stewards within our families.

We are to put on heartfelt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience, forgiveness and - above all - love.

Feast of the Holy Family

Marriage can be difficult. Children can be difficult. Siblings can be difficult. Parents and in-laws can be difficult. St. Paul realized these difficulties.

However, as stewards of God’s creation and of each other, we are expected to tend to the Garden of Souls with the various gifts of virtues that God has placed in our storehouse.

We don’t ask God for the ability to be more compassionate. We have compassion and we simply need to use it. We don’t ask for more patience. We reach into our toolbox and use the virtue of patience God has given us. We don’t ask for more love. We find the love that has been planted in our hearts and put it to work.

Question

What virtues do you need to employ right now?

Christ in Our Neighborhood is a weekly series of Scripture commentaries for group sharing.

If you would like to lead a group this year, visit dphx.org/Christ-in-our-neighborhood for free resources and a leader's guide.

Invite someone you know to break open the Word of God!

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This free program may be found on-line at dphx.org/Christ-in-our-neighborhood

Download free PDFs for your parish groups or family gatherings.

Commentary

Gospel: Luke 2:22-40

Parents are the primary stewards of their children. They are the primary role models, caregivers, and teachers of faith.

However, parents can be molded, receive care, and expand their own horizons of faith through their children.

How often are parents in awe when their child says something profound? How often are parents comforted by the unsolicited kindnesses of their little ones? How often are parents amazed by the simple pieties of their sons and daughters?

We can get a sense from today's Gospel that Mary and Joseph were in awe as they presented their Son to Simeon. St. Luke says, "The child's father and mother were amazed at what was said about him." They also listened to Anna who so lovingly spoke about their child.

As parents are models for children, children can mold their parents. All family members can inspire the whole family to be holy.

Question

Who in your family has inspired you lately?

This Week's Task

In our Church, parents are encouraged to have their children baptized before the age of reason (age 7). If you or someone you know have children who have not been baptized in the Church, consider contacting your local parish to set up an appointment for baptism.

If a child is over the age of reason, they are to participate in what is called The Rite of Christian Initiation. In this case, the child would celebrate the three Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist together. Ask your parish priest or deacon for more information about the Sacraments for your children.

Prayer

PRAYER TO THE HOLY FAMILY Pope Francis

Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
in you we contemplate true love,
to you we turn with trust.
Holy Family of Nazareth, grant that our
families too may be places of communion,
authentic schools of the Gospel
and small domestic Churches.
Holy Family of Nazareth,
may families never again experience violence,
rejection and division:
may all who have been hurt or scandalized
find ready comfort and healing.
Holy Family of Nazareth,
make us once more mindful of the sacredness
and inviolability of the family,
and its beauty in God's plan.
Jesus, Mary and Joseph,
graciously hear our prayer.

The Prayer continues with Psalm 128

Psalm

Response: Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.

Blessed is everyone who fears the LORD,
who walks in his ways!
For you shall eat the fruit of your handiwork;
blessed shall you be, and favored.

R. Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.

Your wife shall be like a fruitful vine
in the recesses of your home;
your children like olive plants
around your table.

R. Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.

Conclude with an Our Father