

## **Feast of the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph**

**December 30, 2018**

God, as our Father, gave us parents as a gift here on Earth. He “sets a father in honor over his children; a mother’s authority he confirms over her sons.”

In this week’s readings, it is easy to see that they all pertain to family, both our earthly and heavenly ones. But, what is He trying to tell us?

The first reading speaks of how children should treat their parents, honoring and revering them. However, is this guide just for children? I do not think so. It seems as though God is reminding each and every one of us how to treat those we love. Yes, our children should honor and revere us, but shouldn’t we do the same to them? More importantly, shouldn’t we follow these guidelines in our relationship with God?

The Responsorial Psalm tells us children shall be “like olive plants around [our] table.” According to [olivetreegrowers.com](http://olivetreegrowers.com), “it is okay to prune olive trees to achieve a desired shape. However, remember the fruit on branches that grew during the previous spring and summer. Cutting off a lot of such growth will preclude or greatly reduce fruiting potential for the next season.” Think about this for a moment, if we try too hard to “prune” our children to the correct “shape” we may kill their “fruit”. What if that means we kill the talents God has given them to bless the world with? As long as we teach our children to follow God and guide them, they will do okay. It is hard to not push too much but we need to remember, “Blessed are those who fear the Lord and walk in his ways.”

In the second reading, we are reminded that we are all God’s children. Yes, our relationships with our family, parents and children are especially important; but the most important relationship we have is with God. Remember, in all relationships, the example God sets as our Father. We shall “love one another just as he commanded us.”

This week’s Gospel has always been a favorite of mine. We do not know many stories about Jesus, Mary and Joseph. This one reminds us all that they were human. Jesus went off and nobody knew where he was. Mary and Joseph searched and searched for him as if he was just any little boy. Both sides could be seen as having made mistakes. Jesus should not have gone off alone and Mary and Joseph should have remembered that Jesus wasn’t a typical little boy; he was God’s son. They were a family. Families have conflict and resolution. They also have a lot of love.

So, through all these readings, what is God telling us? I believe he is reminding us that children need to respect their parents and honor them, but parents need to be sure and return that kindness to their children. Parents need to also remember not to smother their children but give them room to grow on their own and make their own mistakes. Most importantly, we need to remember that God is our Father and how He treats us is how we should treat those we love each and every day. When we make mistakes, we should admit it, apologize and move on. Often parents say, “there is no owner’s manual

for children” but these readings show us that God has given us many guidelines and who better to learn how to parent from, than Him?

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