

WSC REFLECTION GUIDE

Readings: Sirach 3:2-6, 12-14
Psalm 128:1-5
Colossians 3:12-21
Luke 12:41-52

Feast of the Holy Family
December 27, 2009

Word: **Redemption is at hand for those who are vigilant for the coming of Jesus, the Son of Man.**

Theme: **We are vigilant for the coming of Jesus when we honor the sanctity of the family.** [Respect]

Promise: *“When he prays, he is heard; he stores up riches who reveres his mother. Whoever honors his father is gladdened by children.” (Sir 3:5)*

Reflection

As early as five months ago we made sure that our son had a confirmed airline booking from New York to Manila before December 25. We would always spend Christmas together as a family and this year will be no different. As of “press time” however, there is a record-breaking snowstorm that is raging in Northeast America resulting into many flight delays and cancellations. The thought of our only son spending Christmas by himself, several thousand miles away from home in the midst of a fierce blizzard, is unbearable. It makes it easy enough to relate to Mary’s anxiety when Jesus was nowhere in sight on their way to a Passover feast in Jerusalem.

Indeed without a family, one can feel lost. It is therefore for a good reason that the church commemorates the Feast of the Holy Family, the name given to the family unit of Jesus. This Feast which usually falls on the Sunday after Christmas, is also a celebration of all Christian families including our own. It is a good time to reflect upon the holy life led in the house at Nazareth by Jesus, the Son of God and Son of Man, Mary his Mother, and Joseph his foster father. Pope Leo XIII instituted this feast in 1892 to remind the laity of the sacredness of the family and to provide a model upon which to structure their own.

As members of BLD, the best way to celebrate this Feast is to go back to the vision of our Community and align our family life accordingly, as encountered individuals, couples and families. We ask ourselves what Jesus, Mary and Joseph would do as we make Christ and His church the center of our family and individual life. We strive to be good witnesses by being faithful to our 8-point covenant pledge and unselfishly share our love and kindness to our family members following the footsteps of the Holy Family.

Our readings reveal the Lord's loving guidance and order as the pattern of our family life. In the gospel, Jesus although He is God, remains subservient and obedient to His parents. **"He went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them."** (Luke 2:51) In the 1st reading, we are reminded to honor, obey, revere and show kindness to our fathers with a promise of a long life. **"Whoever honors his father is gladdened by children, and, when he prays, is heard. Whoever reveres his father will live a long life; he who obeys his father brings comfort to his mother."** (Sir 3:4-5) While in the 2nd reading, wives and husbands are reminded to live a life of subordination and love, while children are told to be obedient. **"Wives, be subordinate to your husbands, as is proper in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and avoid any bitterness toward them. Children, obey your parents in everything for this is pleasing to the Lord."** (Col 18:18-20)

How blessed we are that Jesus came to us from within a real human family giving us a perfect model of domestic life. Let's pray for those areas that need improving and follow the model that ultimately leads all the family members to a life of salvation. Sadly, we are witnessing a breakdown of the traditional family in our country where one parent or both are forced to work abroad for economic reasons, ripping families apart in the process. Ironically, mothers make big sacrifices leaving behind their own children to take care of other parents' children, while neglecting their own along the way.

The prevalence of same sex marriage in many countries blatantly violates the sanctity of marriage. Embryonic stem-cell research is likewise a cause for concern along with abortion, contraception, polygamy, divorce, and spousal and child abuse. All these evil influences are shaking up the institution of marriage inside-out, upside-down. As followers of Christ, we are to remain steadfast in protecting our families, especially our children who are at most risk. It is our role to keep them rooted in the Word of God so they may build a strong foundation for their own family life. **"Everyone who listens to these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and buffeted the house. But it did not collapse; it had been set solidly on rock."** (Mat 7:24-25)

Our thoughts go back to our son who by God's grace is aboard a plane enroute to Manila as this reflection is being completed. Once again, the Lord has manifested His faithfulness to our family as we go about serving Him. In a matter of hours, our family will be complete again.

Prayer: Consecration to the Holy Family

O Jesus, our most loving Redeemer, who having come to enlighten the world with Thy teaching and example, didst will to pass the greater part of Thy life in humility and subjection to Mary and Joseph in the poor home of Nazareth, thus sanctifying the Family that was to be an example for all Christian families, graciously receive our family as it dedicates and consecrates itself to Thee this

day. Do Thou protect us, guard us and establish amongst us Thy holy fear, true peace and concord in Christian love: in order that by living according to the divine pattern of Thy family we may be able, all of us without exception, to attain to eternal happiness.

Mary, dear Mother of Jesus and Mother of us, by the kindly intercession make this our humble offering acceptable in the sight of Jesus, and obtain for us His graces and blessings.

O Saint Joseph, most holy Guardian of Jesus and Mary, help us by thy prayers in all our spiritual and temporal needs; that so we may be enabled to praise our divine Savior Jesus, together with Mary and thee, for all eternity. Amen

Suggested Personal Reflection Guide:

1. What areas in our family life can I improve to follow the way of life of the Holy Family?
2. How can I be the Lord's instrument in strengthening the bond within our family in mutual love and respect?

Next Week's Daily Mass Reading Guide:

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| December 28, 2009 (Mon): | 1 Jn 1:5-2:2; Ps 124:2-5, 7-8; Mt 2:13-18 |
| December 29, 2009 (Tue): | 1 Jn 2:3-11; Ps 96:1-3, 5-6; Lk 2:22-35 |
| December 30, 2009 (Wed): | 1 Jn 2: 12-17; Ps 96:7-10; Lk 2:36-40 |
| December 31, 2009 (Thur): | 1 Jn 2:18-21; Ps 96:1-2, 11-13; Jn 1:1-18 |
| January 01, 2009 (Fri): | Nm 6:22-27; Ps 67:2-3, 5-6, 8; Gal 4:4-7; Lk 2:16-21 |
| January 02, 2009 (Sat): | 1 Jn 2:22-28; PS 98:1-4; Jn 1:19-28 |

“Ignorance of the Bible is ignorance of Christ. Read your Bible daily!”