

FEAST OF THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY AND JOSEPH

(1Samuel 1:1:20-22, 24-28; 1John 3:1-2, 21-24; Luke 2:41-52)

A little boy greets his father as he returns from work with a question: "Daddy, how much do you make an hour?" The father is surprised and says, "Look, son, not even your mother knows. Don't bother me now, I'm tired." "But Daddy, just tell me please! How much do you make an hour?" the boy insists. The father finally gives up and replies, "Twenty dollars." "Okay, Daddy," the boy continues, "Could you loan me ten dollars?" The father yells at him, "So that was the reason you asked how much I earn, right? Now, go to sleep and don't bother me anymore!" At night the father thinks over what he said and starts feeling guilty. Maybe his son needed to buy something. Finally, he goes to his son's room. "Are you asleep, son?" asks the father. "No, Daddy. Why?" replies the boy. "Here's the money you asked for earlier," the father said. "Thanks, Daddy!" replies the boy and receives the money. The he reaches under his pillow and brings out some more money. "Now I have enough! Now I have twenty dollars!" says the boy to his father, "Daddy, could you sell me one hour of your time?" Today's readings have a message for this man and for all of us, and the message is that we need to invest more of our time in our family life.

On the last Sunday of the year, we celebrate the Feast of the Holy Family. We offer our own families and all the members on the altar for God's blessing. Today's gospel describes how the Holy Family of Nazareth lived according to the will of God, obeying all the Jewish laws and regulations, and training Jesus in wisdom as well as favor of God.

On this Feast of the Holy Family, the Church encourages us to look to the Family of Jesus, Mary and Joseph for inspiration, example and encouragement. They were a model family in which both parents worked hard, helped each other, understood and accepted each other, and took good care of their Child so that He might grow up not only in human knowledge but also as a Child of God. Jesus brought holiness to the family of Joseph and Mary as Jesus brings us holiness by embracing us in His family. **The Catechism of the Catholic Church (2223)** gives the following advice to the parents: "Parents have the first responsibility for the education of their children. They bear witness to this responsibility first by creating a home where tenderness, forgiveness, respect, fidelity, and disinterested service are the rule. The home is well suited for education in the virtues. This requires an apprenticeship in self-denial, sound judgment, and self-mastery - the preconditions of all true freedom. Parents should teach their children to subordinate the 'material and instinctual dimensions to interior and spiritual ones.' The CCC adds: "Parents have a grave responsibility to give good example to their children." (2223).

Today as we celebrate the Feast of this Holy Family let us pray for the grace of caring for one another in our own families, for each member of the parish family, and for all families of the universal Church.