

Homily: The Feast of the Holy Family (Dec 28, 2025)

On this last Sunday of the year, the Church invites us to celebrate a very beautiful and meaningful feast - the Holy Family of Jesus, Mary, and Joseph. As we stand at the threshold of a new year, we gather not only to thank God for the past year but also to place our own families on the altar, asking God's blessing, protection, and guidance for the days ahead.

Today's readings remind us that family life is not always easy, but it is sacred, and it is where holiness is meant to grow.

In the first reading, Sirach reflects on the fourth commandment: "*Honor your father and your mother.*" This is not just about obedience when it is convenient. Sirach speaks realistically, reminding us that honoring parents can sometimes be difficult, especially when they are weak, aging, or demanding. Yet God attaches a promise to this commandment: blessing, peace, and long life. Respect, compassion, and gratitude within the family open the door for God's grace to flow.

In the second reading, Saint Paul gives practical advice for Christian households. He tells us to "*put on love,*" along with compassion, kindness, humility, patience, and forgiveness. These words form what scholars call the "household code." While written long ago, the message is timeless. A truly Christian family is not perfect, but it is one where members care for one another, forgive one another, and remain thankful. In such a family, every person- young or old- is respected, cherished, and supported.

The Gospel shows us the Holy Family in a moment of crisis. Joseph and Mary flee to Egypt to protect the Child Jesus from King Herod. This reminds us that even the Holy Family faced fear, uncertainty, and danger. Yet they trusted God and worked together. Their holiness did not come from an easy life, but from faithfulness in difficult circumstances.

From today's feast, we can draw three important life lessons.

First, we must learn from the Holy Family. Jesus, Mary, and Joseph were an ordinary family in many ways. Both parents worked hard, supported each other, and took responsibility for their child's growth - not only human growth, but spiritual growth. Our families, too, are called to be places where faith is taught, love is practiced, and God is honored in daily life.

Second, we are called to make our families a confessional rather than a courtroom. A wise judge once advised newlyweds: “Never turn your family into a courtroom.” In a courtroom, everyone argues to prove they are right, and no one truly wins. But in a confessional, people admit their faults, seek forgiveness, and try to change. When family members learn to say “I’m sorry” and “I forgive you,” the home becomes a place of healing and peace.

Third, marriage is a sacrament of holiness. Through the Sacrament of Matrimony, Jesus sanctifies not only husband and wife, but the entire family. Holiness is not achieved by extraordinary actions, but by faithful love, daily sacrifice, prayer together, and trust in God. When spouses live their vocation sincerely, they help each other- and their children- grow closer to God.

As we honor the Holy Family today, let us ask for the grace to make our homes places of faith, forgiveness, and love. May Jesus be the center of our families, Mary our gentle model, and Joseph our protector and guide.