

THE HOLY FAMILY OF JESUS, MARY, & JOSEPH DEC. 27TH, 020.

*I don't have to tell you that family life may be as **complicated** as it has ever been in human history. My guess is that, just **a few generations ago**, roles were much more defined and people had relatively **fewer choices** in life. Go back further than that and you'll find even greater differences in regard to how spouses related to each other and how parents related to their children. There just seems to be a complexity to modern family life that can be a little **overwhelming** at times. As I said, these are all things that parents are well aware of.*

Today we gather to celebrate the feast of the Holy Family, a day in which we **recognize and give thanks to God** for the beautiful, loving example shown to us by Mary, Joseph and Jesus. One thing we should not forget is that they had their fair share of sorrow and heartache and "what does this all mean?" Simeon, in his heartfelt words found in today's Gospel passage seems to have even prophesied that very thing regarding Mary.

"...and you yourself a sword will pierce."

There is no doubt that they could never have imagined the **way the event surrounding the life of their son would play out**. The suspicion he was under. The friends he probably lost. And of course, the violence...resulting in a death we wouldn't wish on our worst enemy. No, life for the Holy Family was almost certainly filled with struggle and sorrow and confusion...**not unlike ours at times**. I guess you could say that we make plans and well, **life happens**.

And so, maybe in the Holy family we can find a certain kind of **hope....** that in the messiness of life, amidst the difficulties and disappointments...**love and faithfulness can triumph over all of that**. This hope in the Lord and in his promises can give us the strength to keep moving down the path to greater and greater holiness and peace. In the end, the **depth of Jesus' love** and his willingness to remain faithful to his Father no matter what, **won an eternal victory over every sorrow and every disappointment and every struggle**, even over death itself. For those who loved Jesus it must have seemed as though their world was crashing down around them, and well, ...new life happened, and the world would never be the same again.

Thank you, Joseph, for your **compassion and understanding and basic decency**. Thank you, Mary, for **saying "yes"** to the most outrageous and awe-inspiring request a human being has ever received. And thank you Jesus for, well...**everything**.

May we **draw strength** from this holiest of families. And may we, like them, continue on our journey not filled with complete understanding. But with a **deep and abiding faith**, finding **hope and strength** and **peace** even when life isn't going as we had planned, by knowing where to find it, in our God, **Jesus**, who has won it for us.